

PROSPERITY UNDER PERSECUTION NO. 997

**A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Come on let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falls out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Raamses. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.”
Exodus 1:10-12.***

THE children of this world are wise in their generation. Their policy may be short-sighted and their stratagems crooked, nevertheless the world admires the wisdom of their counsels, and makes light of the craftiness of their projects. In their opposition to the Christian Church the men of the world might certainly have been as well able to outwit her by the variety of their maneuvers as to overwhelm her by the force of their numbers were it not that there is an unseen One in her midst who is more than a match for the guile of their hearts and the might of their hosts. Looking back at the early struggles of the Hebrew race to gain a footing among the nations, it is very clear that had the contest been merely between Pharaoh and Israel, the Egyptian king could exercise power and policy enough to defeat the sons of Jacob and reduce them to serfdom.

But when a new name is brought in, and the contest appears to be truly between Pharaoh and Jehovah, the God of Israel, it is quite another matter—and a far different issue may be counted upon. There is One behind the curtain that takes Israel's part. He sees through all Pharaoh's plots. Before his thoughts have ripened into plans they are forestalled. As fast as they are set up, they are upset. For every intrigue there is a reprisal. Thus He takes the wise in their own craftiness. The whole history of the long feud between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent illustrates the subtlety of the serpent's seed, and the simplicity of the woman's seed.

But still more does it bring to light the infinite wisdom of Him who rules the seed of the woman. And who will, in the end, bruise the serpent's head and give unto His people and the cause they have espoused a complete triumph. Whatever has been done by the enemies in rage or in recklessness, God has always met it calmly and quietly. He has shown Himself ready for every emergency. And He has not only baffled and utterly defeated all the inventions of wicked men, but He has turned their strange devices to good account—for the development of His own sovereign purposes.

He has made His enemies work for Him, aiding the enterprise they eschewed—He has turned their curse into a blessing—He has made evil productive of good—He has extracted sweetness out of their bitter spleen, and distilled healthful medicine out of their deadly animosity. He has His way in the whirlwind—the clouds are the dust of His feet. He does not only meet evil with good, but He takes the evil and subjects it to His own eternal purpose. And from it He brings forth a course of events that results in His own Glory, the benefit of His children, and the fulfillment of their destiny.

Of this general principle we shall now proceed to consider three special illustrations. First, *the circumstances of the children of Israel*. Secondly, *the history of the Church of Christ*. Thirdly, *the experience of individual Christians*.

I. IN THE CASE OF ISRAEL, it did seem to be a deep-laid plot, very political and crafty, indeed, that as the kings of Egypt, themselves of an alien race, had subdued the Egyptians, they should prevent the other alien race, the Israelites, from conquering them. Instead of murdering them wholesale, it did seem a wise, though a cruel thing, to make them slaves. To divide them up and down the country. To subject them to toil till their spirits were broken. To appoint them to the most menial work in the land that they might be crushed down and their spirits become so base that they would not dare to rebel.

Thus we may suppose it was hoped that their physical strength would be so relaxed, and their circumstances so reduced, that the clan would soon be insignificant if not utterly extinct. But God met and overruled this policy in various ways. “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied.” The census proved the error of their calculation. The cause looked likely, but it was not productive of the consequence expected. Had it been another people, the tactics might have been successful. But they were God’s people, endeared to Him by their ancestry, ennobled in His sight by their Covenant destiny and encompassed with His favor as with a shield.

No conspiracy formed against them could thrive. And so it came to pass that like certain herbs which spring up when trod down, or like certain trees that grow taller if loaded with weights, Israel rose superior to all her disadvantages. “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” The glory of God shines forth conspicuously in the use to which He turned the persecutions they endured. The severe treatment they had to bear from the enemy became to them a salutary discipline. This comes of the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.

From that time the children of Israel began to feel a disgust with Egypt. They had settled down very quietly in Goshen and thought that it was their rest. They had imbibed much of the manners and customs of the Egyptians. We have it on record that they worshipped the gods of Egypt. They seemed greatly to have appreciated what they afterwards called the luxuries of the land—the leeks, the garlic, the onions, the melons and the cucumbers. They appear to have been almost naturalized to that country.

They were little better than Egyptians. Perhaps persons traveling, except by certain tones of language and contour of countenance, would

scarcely have known but what they were descendants of Ham. But now their masters treat them cruelly and they loathe the Egyptians. They are scattered up and down throughout the land, and Goshen is no longer dear to them. They are treated like strangers, and they feel they *are* strangers. Now that they hear from morning till night the taskmaster's oaths and the crack of the cruel whips—and are subjected to incessant toil and bondage—they think far less of Egypt than they used to do.

This is what the Lord designed. He never intended that His people, Israel, should be absorbed into any other family. He never meant them to be other than sojourners on that soil. He had some better thing for them than that they should dwell in that land and be as the heathen were. God was thus answering one purpose. And He did more than this. Now they began to remember, as their bondage waxed more and more severe, the God of their fathers whom they had forgotten.

I have reminded you that they had fallen into the worship of the gods of Egypt. But now they turn with abhorrence from the gods of their oppressors and they think themselves of the Covenant which Jehovah had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and they betook themselves to their knees. In secret they utter their groanings before the Most High, and when their taskmasters make them smart, they lift their eyes, suffused with bitter tears, and silently appeal to Heaven, to the God of their fathers, that He would have mercy upon them. They had forgotten to pray until then. The mass of them had been unused to call upon the name of the Lord.

But now the scourge drives them to seek help from above. Their terrors, their pains, their griefs, and their vexations compel them to lift up that cry to Heaven which came into the ears of Jehovah and moved His hands to help them. More than that, remember that it was necessary for this people to be altogether rescued from that land which for many a year had taxed their labor and bounded their enterprise—because it was not the land which had been promised them as an inheritance.

It was God's intention and Covenant purpose to give them the Land of Canaan, a land that flowed with milk and honey. But it is not very easy to induce a nation, numbering some millions, to leave a country in which they have been born and nourished and found a home. Only some very fearful evil can induce them to expatriate themselves. Had Moses gone to the children of Israel before the time of their bondage, and said, "Up! Get you from here unto the land which the Lord swears that He will give you," he would have seemed to them as one that mocked—they would have laughed him to scorn.

In order to cut loose the bonds that bound them to Egypt, the sharp knife of affliction must be used. And Pharaoh, though he knew it not, was God's instrument in weaning them from the Egyptian world, and helping them as His Church to take up their separate place in the wilderness and receive the portion which God had appointed for them. Once more—and here you may see the wisdom of God—the very means which Pharaoh devised for the effectual crushing of the people—the destruction of the male children—became the direct, no, the *Divine* provision for educating a deliverer for them.

Moses had never been, in all probability, trained in the courts of Pharaoh if he had not been put in the basket of bulrushes on the brink of the Nile. And his mother would certainly never have put him there if there had not been a pitiless edict that the male children should be put to death. Moved by maternal instinct to save her child, and moved by faith in God not to obey the king's command, she places her child in the ark. Pharaoh's daughter finds the child, has compassion on it because of its cries, extricates it from peril, loves it fondly, adopts it capriciously, and educates it in the very court of Pharaoh!

That child grows up to be the man who should vex the fields of Zoan—the man of God, who with a high hand and an outstretched arm would lead forth the slaves of Egypt to become a great nation which God should bless. So you see the Lord, in all points, meets Pharaoh and foils him. This Pharaoh was the great representative in those days of the power of evil, and he stands still to the Christian Church as the type of the seed of the serpent. But the Lord withstands him, despoils him of his purpose, and turns all he does to the very highest and best end. Such is the narrative full of instruction, and charged with portent that serves as a type of the Lord's doing when He makes bare His arm for the salvation of His own heritage.

II. Let us now carry the same thought a stage farther and take a brief survey of THE HISTORY OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD. The like means will appear in manifold operation. Men meditate mischief but it miserably miscarries. God grants protection to the persecuted and provides an escape from the most perilous exposure. Full often the dark conspiracy is brought to the direst confusion. No sooner does Christ gather a Church in any place, be it a renowned empire or a paltry village, than opposition is stirred up.

“If you were of the world, the world would love his own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed,” is the first check for the serpent's wiles, the first ray of hope for his helpless victims. And the prediction will continue to be fulfilled till at last, according to the Word of the Lord, the tares are bound in bundles to burn and the wheat is gathered into His garner.

Whenever there has been a great persecution raised against the Christian Church, God has overruled it, as He did in the case of Pharaoh's oppression of the Israelites, by making the aggrieved community more largely to increase. The early persecutions in Judea promoted the spread of the Gospel. After the death of Stephen, the disciples were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles, the result is thus given—“Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word.”

So, too, when Herod stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the Church, and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword. What came of it? Why Luke tells us in almost the same words that Moses had used—“The Word of God grew and multiplied.” Those terrible and bloody persecutions under the Roman Emperor by no means stayed the progress of the Gospel—but strangely enough seemed to press forward for the

crown of martyrdom. The Church probably never increased at a greater ratio than as when her foes were most fierce to assail and most resolute to destroy her.

It was so in after times. The Reformation in this country and throughout Europe never went on so prosperously as when it was most vigorously opposed. You shall find in any individual Church that wherever evil men have conspired together, and a storm of opposition has burst forth against the saints, the heart of the Lord has been moved with compassion and the hand of the Lord has been raised to succor. We have come to look upon opposition as an omen of good, and persecution for righteousness' sake as a tearful seed-time, quickly to be followed by a harvest of joy!

We have looked on our adversaries, though they seemed like stormy petrels, as being the index of a favorable wind to the good boat of Christ's Church. Persecution seems to be the wave that, when it leaps up around her, speeds her course. Let the mountains be removed and cast into the midst of the sea. But after long experience of Jehovah's faithfulness towards His people, we are confident that His Church shall not be moved—in quietude shall she possess her soul. Persecution has evidently aided the increase of the Church by the scattering abroad of earnest teachers. We are very apt to get hived—too many of us together—and our very love of one another renders it difficult to part us and scatter us about.

Persecution, therefore, is permitted to scatter the hive of the Church into various swarms, and each of these swarms begins to make honey. We are all like the salt if we are true Christians, and the proper place for the salt is not massed in a box, but scattered by handfuls over the flesh which it is to preserve. We are of good service when we are kept together in great bands—happy we certainly are in the presence of each other. But we are to separate and scatter—and then we shall conquer as we are scattered abroad.

You remember the days of our Puritan forefathers, when the dominant Church of the day determined to crush out pure evangelism? To what extent did it succeed? Did it destroy their faith and their confidence? No, my Brethren—by driving them out of an apostate Church, and compelling them to take up their stand as separated Believers without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach and Cross—an everlasting testimony for pure Truth was enshrined. Was the crisis prolonged? Were deeds of violence legalized?

By the increasing rigor of such persecution our forefathers were forced to leave their native shores, and they had to pass in the *Mayflower*, and afterwards in some succeeding vessels, across the blue Atlantic, sadly but surely to found another center for the proclamation of the Gospel. And upon the wide continent of a new world they became the progenitors of another nation holding fast the fundamentals of the faith, and rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.

There might have been no Church in the United States if it had not been that our sires were driven to the wilds among the Red Indians, there to establish themselves, and set up a banner for the Truth as it is in Jesus. It will always be so. I could almost wish that in this island—though I dread calamity—I could almost wish, for the Master's honor, that some ir-

resistible impulse should force His disciples to go abroad to the regions beyond our present sphere of life and labor.

I rejoice, though I love not to miss my friends, when I find them led or driven, as it may be, to emigration. Whether it be to Australia, Canada or anywhere else, I trust that if they are living seed they will be as a handful of corn sown in the new land, and the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon. Christian men are sometimes called to leave positions of great comfort and to occupy stations of great hardship. They may account it a reverse of fortune, while God designs it as an appointment to special service. If they bear Christ's Gospel with them to a people sitting in darkness, that will be great gain, in the long run, to the Church.

Your being sent to a village, though you like it not, may be a lasting blessing to the hamlet. Your residing among strangers, when you would far rather find a more congenial home among your own kindred, may be for the good of that neighborhood. Who knows? Where should lamps be set up but in dark places? Where should we have a guard for Christ's army but where the enemy is most likely to make the assault? Be patient, then, my Brethren, amidst the persecutions or trials you may be called upon to bear. And be thankful that they are so often overruled for the growth of the Church, the spread of the Gospel, and the honor of Christ.

Moreover, Beloved, persecution in the Church—even when it does not take the form of burning or imprisonment, but of slander, of cruel mockings, jesting, jeering, and venomous spite—in whatever form it is sent—persecution helps to keep up the separation between the Church and the world. I fear most the rich when they bring gifts. I loathe the world most when it fawns and flatters. When I heard of a lady who had put on Christ by Baptism and that the cold shoulder was given her in all the circles in which she moved—do you think I felt more disposed to console or to congratulate?

It was said that now she had but few invitations to such places and such society as she had previously frequented. But I rejoiced, and thanked God for it! I was glad of it, for I felt she was farther removed from temptation. When I heard of a young man that, after he joined the Church—those in his workshop met him at once with loud laughter and reproached him with bitter scorn—I was thankful, because now he could not take up the same position with themselves. He was a marked man—they who knew him discovered that there was such a thing as Christianity—and such a one as an earnest defender of it!

It is no evil to the Church, depend upon it, to have a great gulf fixed between her and the world. The worst thing that ever could happen for us is when affinities are made between the sons of God and the children of Belial. This brought on the Deluge. And if it could ever be carried out thoroughly again, it would bring on judgments terrible to think of. It is ill for the worldly since, "they that are far from God shall perish." But it is a thousand times worse for the professing when they play foul with their profession—for so it is written, "You have destroyed all them that go a whoring from You."

Summary vengeance is their lot. "Come out from among them, and be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing. And I will receive you, and

will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters.” This is a text that needs to be thundered in trumpet tone. What says the great King unto the spouse? “Forget, also, your own people, and your father’s house. So shall the King greatly desire your beauty: for He is your Lord. And worship you Him.” “Be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

Too much laxness, giving way to the world a friendship foil of fascination brings on leanness of spirit and causes us to be scarcely known as Christians. It weakens our testimony, and in every way promotes Satan’s ends. But when persecution breaks forth barriers are set up—distinctive colors are worn, so the two camps are kept in open hostility. And when brought to battle with each other, the Church is kept pure with bright armor! Victory waits her march, and her champions win their laurels.

Again, persecution in the Christian Church acts like a winnowing fan to the heaps gathered on the threshing floor. In these soft and silken days any man may be a Christian professor. Oftentimes it pays well to make a profession of godliness. Men think the better of you—it brings customers to the shop. No one knows how many conveniences may attach to the profession of religion—but if it is pretense without pretext, everlasting destruction awaits such violation of Truth—for God will surely avenge hypocrisy.

But in days of persecution to profess Christ is very inconvenient. Then to be baptized in water may involve a Baptism of blood. Then for the soul to burn with zeal for Christ would probably be followed with the body being burnt at the stake. Then a word for Jesus would bring a word of conviction from the judge’s mouth, and, close at the heels of that word, death. Then they who loved not Christ betake themselves to the other side. The cowards and the spies shrink away. Demas went, and Judas went, and all of that brood to their own company, and then only the true and the brave, the regenerate, the elect of God were left.

They stood fast and firm—all the stronger for losing such ill company. Then in those days the Church was like a heap of golden wheat, all winnowed and clean grain, fit for a burnt offering to the Most High, to be offered up as a meat offering upon His altar. Her martyrs were among her noble sons and daughters—the very Glory of the Church and of the Lord Jesus Christ! So you see persecution is overruled for this great good. It ought never to be, while there are sinners in this world—it ought never to be that the Christian escapes opposition.

I take it that if a man makes an advance in life and comes to a position of fame, he ought to win it—ought to fight for it. Men ought not to be crowned until first of all they have strived for the mastery. And it should be so in the Church of God that we must fight if we would reign. It should not be that we should think it an easy thing and a light matter to be a follower of Him whose life was sorrow and whose death was the death of the Cross. If we are to be conformed to Him, it cannot be by ease and sloth. Not the downy couch, but the crown of thorns! Not the triumph, but the shame must be the portion of the imitators of the Crucified!

Persecution has a further beneficial use in the Church of God, and it is this. It may be that the members of the Church want it. It is a sorrowful

thing that slander should be so often used against God's people. It is a grievous thing that their little faults should be severely criticized and magnified. But, on the whole, it is good and profitable. It is a great blessing to be made to walk carefully. The Roman who professed that he would like to have a window in his bosom, that everybody might see his heart, would have wished, I should think, before long for a shutter to that window.

Yet it is no slight stimulus to a man's own circumspection for him to know that he is observed by unfriendly eyes. Our life ought to be such as will bear criticism. As Christian men we serve a jealous God, and our works will have to stand the test of fire at the Last Great Day. The wood, the hay, the stubble that we have built will be consumed, and only the gold, the silver, and the precious stones will remain.

Are we, therefore, to be afraid of the ordinary ordeal of human censure and malignity? If we run with the footmen and they weary us, what shall we do when we contend with horses? And if in this land of comparative peace we are weary, what shall we do in the swelling of Jordan? This is the opposition appointed for us. It is through much tribulation we are to inherit the kingdom. And if we are sincere, and honest and true, we shall not flinch at this—we shall feel that God will overrule it for our sanctification by making us take heed unto our ways—because the wicked watch our paths.

And this persecution, dear Brethren, has a further usefulness. Often does it happen that the enmity of the world drives the Christian nearer to his God. How many prayers have been offered up as the result of persecution that would never have been offered otherwise? Heaven, alone, can tell! How many a groan, and sigh, and tear acceptable to God have been forced from true hearts by their sufferings? God alone knows! Ah, in the soft days, the summer days of peace and prosperity, we are apt to gad abroad after vain delights.

But when the winter comes, with its keen and cutting blast, we hasten to our own abode. We cleave to our own hearth. We love to dwell with our own kindred. Even so, right frequently, with hearts all chill and cheerless, we have sought the House of our Father and our God, drawn near to His altar, and found a refreshment we gladly could wish that we might never leave. Why, oh why, are we so fickle? If we could find succor and solace apart from the Rock, away from the Sun, absent from our Lord—our wayward hearts would do so. But when the waters of affliction have covered all the earth, then we fly back to our Noah, our Ark, and find rest for the soles of our feet.

The friendship of this world is enmity to God. It rivals God's friendship. It deceives and deludes many hearts. But when the world frowns, it is a blessed frown that makes me seek my Savior's smile. Anything that drives me to my knees is good. Anything that makes me trust in the promise and wait only upon God because my expectation is from Him, is healthful to my soul, infuses courage, inspires confidence and invests her with fresh strength. O Brethren, the very Glory of the Church is to live nearer to God. The more she thinks of her great and glorious Head, and the more she leans upon the invisible arm of the Eternal, the more invincible she is!

Persecution, in driving her to her stronghold, is overruled to her help! And yet, further, the dark days of fiendish persecution have witnessed bright deeds of Christian heroism never to be forgotten. How often have the richest and the ripest fruits of the Spirit been put forth by the Lord's people when they have been most grieved and smitten! Then the saints have been like clusters thrown into the winepress. But who shall bring forth the red wine? Whose but the feet of God's enemies shall tread the grapes?

And as with exultation they bruise and trample down, they shall crush nothing in the dust but husks—the living wine shall flow, and God shall receive the whole of it. They work—these foes work—and think that with axes they can break down our carved work and cast fire into the sanctuary of God. But all the while they burn not the true sanctuary—they burn but the base wooden erection with which man has defaced the living temple. Let them burn on—they do no hurt—only good ensues.

If you read "Foxe's Book of Martyrs," or any of the martyrologies of earlier ages, you will find there patience, self-denial, consecration, confidence in God and all the finer Divine Graces of temper in full bloom, perfuming the air with their fragrance. One is astonished at what our poor, weak humanity has been able to endure for the Truth of God, when strengthened by the Spirit of God. Verily humble, weak, and timid women have shown true mettle, waxing valiant, and cheering on men of muscle and sinew, whose hearts had grown faint. We could mention the names of many saints, if this were the time, who have endured torment as severe as inquisitors could devise, or relentless executioners could inflict, and yet they have not denied their Lord.

This was the patience of the saints, I think, when the martyrs perished in the Roman Amphitheatre, and the cruel crowd looked down to watch their agonies as their bones were crushed between the jaws of wild beasts. I think angels gathered in tiers, invisible multitudes of them gathered and looked on with eyes of admiration at the spectacle of mortal men ravished with the love of God—waving the banner of immortal Truth—while from frightful wounds and horrid gashes their life-blood streamed.

Oh, what God can do by us when He works in us! Perhaps Heaven itself, except when it gazed upon the Cross, never saw a nobler spectacle than when men and women who bore the Cross of Christ in their hearts, gave themselves up wholly as living sacrifices unto Him. The Church looks fairer and shines brighter when she is in the furnace. The smell of fire does not pass upon her. Her Lord is with her—and if the fire is heated seven times hotter—His Glory is seven times brighter.

Thus, again, the principle of the text is brought out—"the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied." Their enemies try to deal wisely with them to put them down, but their wisdom is folly. God has blessed the Church by her persecution. And do you not think that persecution and opposition—such little oppositions as we meet with now— little indeed, compared with those of olden times—are permitted for our good as in Israel's case, to make us feel that this is not our rest, and cause us to long for the better land?

Perhaps, dear Christian, if you lived in a Christian household, where all the accustomed order helped your piety, if you were put into the conservatory of a gracious Providence, you might be content to dwell below always. We soon take root in this soil, for we are earthy by nature and we cling to earth—like to its like. But when there comes the jeer, the unkind remark, the cruel innuendo, the bitter sarcasm—then we feel, “This is not my rest. I must seek better company than this, a better land and a better portion than I shall find this side of Jordan.”

And then we long for the home-bringing, when the King, the Husband, shall fetch home His spouse, and the marriage shall be consummated in the skies. Oh, how sometimes, when the world has been very very cold you have longed for the warm bosom of your Savior! You would have nestled in the world’s bosom if you could, but when she would not receive you but thrust you forth, then you came to your true self and exercised your right senses, and you said, “I will return unto my Husband. It was better with me then, than now.”

O that our hearts were always set on Heaven! *There* is our treasure—there let our hearts be also. There is our Lord and King—to Him should our hearts fly. There are the best ones of our families, our relations, who are everlastingly our associates—Brothers and Sisters whose brotherhood and sisterhood no death can bring to an end—

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

We ought to long for that land—and I say the whip of persecution is helpful, because it makes us learn that *this* is the house of bondage—and moves us to long after and seek for the land of liberty—the land of joy.

III. And now I close this address by just very briefly hinting that THIS GREAT GENERAL TRUTH APPLIES TO ALL BELIEVERS. But I will make a practical use of it. Dear Brothers and Sisters, are you passing through great trials? Very well, then, to meet them I pray that God’s Grace may give you greater faith. And if your trials increase more and more, so may your strength increase. You will be acting after God’s manner, guided by His wisdom if you seek to get more faith out of more trial—for that trial does strengthen faith. Through Divine Grace experience teaches us, and as we make full proof of the faithfulness of God, our courage, once apt to waver, is confirmed.

Do pray the Lord that when the trials multiply He may give you faith to meet them. That out of the eater you may get meat. And out of the strong find strength. So, too, if you know the Truth of God to be at any time assailed, and your own mind is beset with doubt about any doctrine, always ask God to open that particular Truth to your understanding and endear it to your heart—that by the assaults you are enabled to repel your faith may be the more confirmed. Oh, there is a right way of holding Truth, and there is a tenacious way of grasping it.

I have held doctrines, as it were, in my hands, like a boy’s ball that might be thrown away. But it is another thing when the King prints the mark of the doctrine right into your very soul so that you could no more part with it than you could part with life itself. Trials often burn doctrines into us, and heresies and infidelities make the good confession dear in our

sight as a prize which we could never part with. Thus opposition to the Truth leads to the multiplication of evidences in its support. And the more we are assailed with the arguments of science, falsely so-called, the firmer we adhere to the oracles of God.

Or it may be, dear Christian worker, that of late you have met with a great many discouragements. You seem to have labored in vain and spent your strength for nothing. Ask then, in prayer, and act accordingly, that the more you are defeated the less you may be disposed to yield. Ask that you may be endowed with fresh energy for the service, and strive with increased assurance for the victory. When you feel, "I am foiled in that point," say, "Nevertheless, I cannot be beaten—I belong to a seed that cannot be vanquished. If I did not belong to the house of Israel, I might have been destroyed and overcome. But none can stand against the Hebrew race, against true Israelites—they must win the day."

Therefore, settle it in your mind that if you do not win souls one day, you will another. And if you cannot press into your enemies' territory in one part, you will in another. And if he defeats you at any time, then multiply your efforts to do good. Always take revenge on Satan, if he defeats you, by trying to do ten times more good than you did before. It is in some such way that a dear Brother now preaching the Gospel, whom God has blessed with a very considerable measure of success, may trace the opening of his career to a circumstance that occurred to myself.

Sitting in my pulpit one evening, in a country village where I had to preach, my text slipped from my memory, and with the text seemed to go all that I had thought to speak upon. A rare thing to happen to me. But I sat utterly confounded. I could find nothing to say. With strong crying I lifted up my soul to God to pour out again within my soul the Living Water that it might gush forth from me for others.

And I accompanied my prayer with a vow that if Satan's enmity thus had brought me low, I would take so many fresh men whom I might meet with during the week and train them for the ministry—so that with their hands and tongues I would avenge myself on the Philistines. The Brother I have alluded to came to me the next morning. I accepted him at once as one whom God had sent, and I helped him, and others after him, to prepare for the service, and to go forth in the Savior's name to preach the Gospel of the Grace of God.

Often when we fear we are defeated, we ought to say, "I will do all the more. Instead of dropping from this work, now will I make a general levy and a sacred conscription upon all the powers of my soul. And I will gather up all the strength I ever had in reserve and make, from this moment, a tremendous life-long effort to overcome the powers of darkness, and win for Christ fresh trophies of victory." After this fashion you will have an easier time of it, for if you do more good, the more you are tempted, Satan will not so often tempt you.

When he knows that all the more you are afflicted, so much the more you multiply, very likely he will find it wiser to let you alone, or try you in some other method than that of direct and overt opposition. So whenever you have a trial, take it as a favor! Whenever God holds in one hand the rod of affliction, He has a favor in the other hand. He never strikes a child

of His but He has some tender blessing in store. If He visits you with unaccustomed affliction, you will have unusual delight. The Lord will open new windows for you and show His beauty as He shows it not to others. As your tribulations abound, so also shall your consolations abound in Christ Jesus.

In the deeper waters you shall find Him nearer, for He has said, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." He will be with you always, but He has promised to come to you specially and peculiarly, and, as it were, by appointment, when you are driven out into the wilderness, or harassed by the foe. He comforts those that are cast down. Rejoice, therefore, in your afflictions—if you have faith—believe that they shall be blessed for your good.

What is all this to the unconverted? Ah, Sirs! While the men of God flourish in adversity, the men of this world are ruined by their *prosperity*. Even the cup of pleasure and sensual enjoyment, of which you delight to drink, has its bitter dregs which you shall be compelled to swallow. Even now all your days are not passed in sunshine. You have your troubles. But you have no God to resort to. You will have many sorer plagues than you have ever yet been visited with. And if you continue in unbelief, you will still have no God to trust in.

Perhaps you go to some friends in any emergency now, but no friend can help you in the dying hour. No brother can go with you through the swellings of Jordan. O friendless One, O Christless Sinner! Do you not want God to be your Helper, and Christ to be your Friend? If you do, then behold the Savior on the Cross. Turn your eyes to Him—penitently trust Him—rely upon Him and He is yours!

And then from now on the Lord of Hosts shall be with you, and God of Jacob shall be your Refuge, and your afflictions shall also work your good. May God bless each one of you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[MR. SPURGEON hopes to be permitted to preach on July 2. He is most thankful to inform all friends that he is better in health, and trusts he may be able again to occupy the pulpit of the Tabernacle from Sunday to Sunday.]

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

ISRAEL'S CRY AND GOD'S ANSWER NO. 2631

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 16, 1899.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 23, 1882.

“And it came to pass in process of time that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them... Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me: and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”
Exodus 2:23-25; 3:9, 10.

GOD had chosen the children of Israel, and He had determined to make of them a great nation and a peculiar people to whom He could communicate the Law and the Testimony, that they might keep the heavenly lamp burning until Christ should come. Jacob and his family had gone down into Egypt and, for a long time, they and their descendants were very happy there. The land of Goshen was very fruitful and the Israelites were greatly favored by the Egyptian king. The mass of them, therefore, had little thought of ever leaving that country—they resolved that they would settle there permanently. In fact, though God would not have it so, they became Egyptians as much as they could. They were a part of the Egyptian nation and they began to forget their separate origin. In all probability, if they had been left to themselves, they would have been melted and absorbed into the Egyptian race and lost their identity as God's special people. They were content to be in Egypt and they were quite willing to be “Egyptianized.” To a large degree, they began to adopt the superstitions, idolatries and iniquities of Egypt. And these things clung to them, in later years, to such a terrible extent that we can easily imagine that their heart must have turned aside very much towards the sins of Egypt. Yet, all the while, God was resolved to bring them out of that evil connection. They must be a separated people—they could not be Egyptians, nor yet live permanently *like* Egyptians, for Jehovah had chosen them for Himself, and He meant to make an abiding difference between Israel and Egypt.

Now see the parallel. God still has a people whom He has chosen to be His own in a very peculiar sense, but they are, at present, mixed up with

the world. They are in the world and they are, at least in appearance, *of* the world. They are as fond of sin and as much slaves to sin as others are. They even love the world and the things of it—and many of them are quite happy where they are. They have no wish whatever to become a part of the separated people, set apart unto the Lord. They would rather remain in the world. But God will bring His redeemed out from the rest of mankind. He that bought them with blood will deliver them by power. Christ did not offer His Atonement in vain, but, “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” God will yet call every one of His sons and daughters out of Egypt, even as He called His Firstborn, and He will bring His chosen out of the midst of the people among whom they are sojourning until the time appointed for their emancipation.

The first thing to be done with the Israelites was to cause them to be anxious to come out of Egypt, for it is not God's way to make men His servants, except so far as they willingly yield themselves to Him. He never violates the human will, though He constantly and effectually influences it. Jehovah wants not slaves to grace His throne and, therefore, God would not have the people dragged out of Egypt, or driven out in fetters, against their own glad consent. He must bring them out in such a way that they would be willing to come out, so that they would march forth with joy and delight, being thoroughly weary and sick of all Egypt and, therefore, rejoicing to get away from it. How was this to be done? It was accomplished by a new king coming up who knew not Joseph and his eminent services. This Pharaoh began to be jealous of the people, fearing that, some day, when Egypt was at war, Israel might turn and side with the Egyptians' enemies. He looked upon the people, therefore, as being a great danger, and determined, if he could, to thin their ranks. Hence, he issued the barbarous edict to slay all the male children and, to effectually break their spirit, he put them to hard labor in making bricks and erecting vast structures, so that the treasure cities of Egypt and, perhaps, some of her huge pyramids were built by the unpaid labors of Israelite slaves. The whip fell often and heavily upon their backs, for they were put under brutal taskmasters who beat them most shamefully. They had no rest. They had to toil on and on and on, and scarcely had bread enough to eat to keep body and soul together. At last, the yoke of bondage became altogether intolerable and then, as we have it in the first part of our text, “The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.”

I want to use this subject in showing to any here who are in soul-trouble and do not understand why they have such sorrows and distress, that God is seeking to make them sick of the world, sick of sin and, therefore, He is putting them into a condition of spiritual bondage so that they may be willing to come out of Egypt! Yes, that they may, by-and-by, with the utmost joy and gladness, leave the land of their captivity!

I. The first thing I have to speak about is THE CRY OF MISERY. “The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning.”

Notice, first, that they began to sigh, and to cry because their *time of prosperity had passed*. The land of Goshen might still be very fruitful, but their taskmasters devoured their substance. The country might be fair to look upon, but they had no time to enjoy the prospect. They were worked well-nigh to death and they could no longer get any rest in Egypt. All their prosperity and happiness had departed. Am I addressing any who were once very well content and satisfied to live as ordinary worldlings do? And has everything changed with you? Is there now no joy in what was once such a pleasure to you? Does it seem very dull and dreary if you go where you used to find so much merriment? Those haunts which were once the scene of your greatest delight—are they now avoided by you because you cannot endure them? Do you now feel that you would gladly give up all those things which once you doted on? I am thankful to hear that it is so, for when God is about to give a man a drink of the cup of salvation, He often first puts his taste right by washing out his mouth with a draught of bitters to take away the flavor of the accursed sweets of sin! I always regard it as a good and hopeful sign when a man becomes tired of the world, altogether weary of its sins, and says, “I find no pleasure in them.” This happens to some while they are still young and their passions are strong—while their substance is undiminished, while their health is vigorous—while their friends are numerous. In the very middle of the day, their sun of enjoyment seems to go down. There is the honey, but it is no longer sweet. There is the wine cup, but it has no further fascination for them. Their joy has departed just when one would have thought that it would have been most abiding with them. Do I speak to any in this condition? If so, I think that I bring a message from the Lord to them!

But, next, the Israelites had not only lost their former prosperity, but *they began to feel that they were in bondage*. An Israelite in Egypt was at first a gentleman—in fact, a nobleman—for was he not related to the great prime minister, Joseph, who was second only to Pharaoh himself? Every Jew walked through Goshen as an aristocrat, for he was intimately connected with almost the highest in the realm! But now all that was changed with them and they felt that they were slaves—they were in bitter bondage—they must act and move at the will of others. There were hard laws and regulations made for them and cruel taskmasters to put those laws in action. They must rise, not when they chose, but when they were told to, and they might get to their beds only when they were allowed to do so at the slave driver's will. And they felt that they could not bear it any longer.

This was God's way of bringing them out of bondage, by first making them feel that they were in slavery. Have I any here who realize that they are also in slavery? Am I addressing a man who feels that he is in bondage to evil habits which he cannot break, although he wishes that he

could and counts himself degraded by the fact that to will is present with him, but how to perform that which he would, he finds not because he is a slave? His passions rule him. His companions control him. He dares not do what his conscience tells him is right, for there is a fear of somebody or other that makes him into a coward, and so into a slave. I am always glad when the fetters begin to gall. They who are content to be in bondage will never be freed! But when they feel that they cannot and that they will not any longer endure their captivity, then has the hour of freedom struck! It is an untold blessing when the Grace of God makes a man feel that what was once a pleasure has now become a servitude—and what he formerly found to be liberty has now become utter slavery to him.

The Israelites went further than that. They now felt that *their burdens were too heavy to be borne*. They had worked and toiled very hard and they had lived through the work, but now they were made to serve with rigor and their bondage was too heavy to be endured. They could not bear it. And it is the same spiritually! As long as a man can carry his sins, he will continue to carry them. And as long as a man can be content with the pleasures of this world, rest assured that he will delight in them. It is a blessed thing when sin becomes an awful load, so that it crushes a man until he seems to sink utterly hopeless beneath it! It is well with him, for now he will welcome the Deliverer. He will be glad of pardon from Him who, alone, can forgive sins. He will rejoice to accept the word of absolution from the lips of the Great High Priest and, therefore, although it is often a sore sorrow, it is also a very great mercy to be made to feel the intolerable load and burden of sin. If I am speaking to any who are in such a condition—and I hope that I am—I congratulate them on what is yet to come to them!

Oh, well do I remember when I was such a slave—when, as I rose in the morning, I resolved to live better than I had previously done, yet, long before noon, I had made a worse mess of the day than ever! Then I thought that, perhaps, by increasing my prayers, or reading more of the Scriptures, I might get ease from my burden. But I found the more I prayed and the more I read, the heavier my burden became! If I tried to forget my sorrow and so to shake off my gloom, I found that it would not forget me—and I had to cry unto the Lord, with David, “Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.” I remember all that painful time so vividly that I can speak to some of you like an experienced friend who is well acquainted with the dark and stony road on which you are walking. I know all about your painful pathway of grief and I long to help you to get over it quickly, and to come to a better and happier place! But this trial is God’s way of fetching you out of Egypt. He is making the house of bondage too hot for you. He does not mean to let you stay there, so He is permitting all this to come upon you that you may cry unto Him to deliver you! He will bring you forth and you shall march out with joy and gladness, thankful and happy to do what now seems like a hardship and like self-denial to you.

These Israelites also felt one more thing, namely, their powerlessness to escape out of Pharaoh's hand, and *they thought that there was nobody to help them*. When the young man of 40, who had been educated in Pharaoh's court, came forward and was reckoned to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter. When he came forward like a true hero, he threw in his lot with the despised people and smote one of their adversaries. He thought, perhaps, that it would be the signal for a general revolt and that the banner of Israel would wave defiantly in the face of Pharaoh and that the people would boldly march to liberty. But they were too enslaved—they had been too long ground down and oppressed to act like that—they had lost all spirit and they did not hope to ever be free! They were a nation of hopeless slaves.

Am I speaking to any here who have lost all heart and hope—who have come to this place of worship with a sort of feeble wish for salvation, but with no expectation of receiving it? Are you so shut up in the prison of sin that you cannot come forth? Are your chains clanking in your ears? Do you feel yourself to be in the low dark dungeon out of which you will never come alive? It is to you I have to say that I bless God that you are where you are! Despair is a blessed preparation for faith in Jesus! The end of the creature is the beginning of the Creator. Your extremity is God's opportunity. Now that you are helpless and hopeless, God will come to your rescue!

You notice that in my text there is a gradation, and such a gradation as some of us have felt in spiritual things. "The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage." "Ah, miserable wretch! Woe is me! Alas! Alas!" That is how they sighed when they were at their labor. That is how they sighed when they went home at night, or lay down among the pots by the kiln. And that is how they sighed when they woke up in the morning. When a boy was born, they sighed as they looked at him, for they knew that he must be killed. "The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage." And, then, as their misery grew, a sigh was not enough. "And they cried." Ah, I cannot imitate the expressive language of their grief. There were often many tears and there was the voice of grief which made itself audible in piercing cries. "O God, how long shall this bondage last?" They sat them down and begged for death—and sought it as if they were seeking for hidden treasure, for the life of a slave in Egypt was intolerable to them. And, often, the sigh and the cry were merged into a groan, for we read, "God heard their groaning."

Is that how it has been going on with you, my Brother? You used to sigh a good deal. Sometimes people noticed that you were very absent-minded and that you seemed to have some sorrow upon your spirit which you could not express. Now you have gone further than that, for you have begun to cry and in prayer to God, you pour out your very soul! Perhaps—and that is the worst plight of all—you feel that you cannot pray. You do not seem to be able to offer what you regard as a real prayer. You can only weep—yes, and perhaps you cannot even weep—and so you sigh and groan because you cannot pray. You are troubled because you cannot be troubled enough. And that is the worst kind of

trouble that there is in the world! There are none so brokenhearted as those that are brokenhearted because they are not brokenhearted! I have reminded you that the Israelites groaned and that "God heard their groaning." Ah, from the very bottom of their heart came up their groaning! It was no mere heaving of a sigh. It was no mere utterance of a cry. But all day long it was groaning, groaning, groaning—each breath seemed to be yet another sorrowful groan!

I hope that many of you will find the Savior before you know much about this terrible groaning, but it was not so with me. I became so full of groans that I understood what Job meant when he said, "My soul chooses strangling and death rather than my life." It would be better never to live than to live forever under conviction of sin, for the arrows of God drink up the very fountains of our life, pour fire into the blood and make us feel as if a thousand deaths were preferable to living under an awful sense of God's wrath! Perhaps I am speaking to some who, even when they fall asleep, are startled by dreams concerning the Day of Judgment, the sound of the archangel's trumpet and the setting up of the Great White Throne. And when they wake and go out to their business, they make strange blunders—and all day long they are like men walking as in a dream.

Still, dear Friends, if that is your experience, I am heartily glad of it, for it is to me a sign of better days coming! Looking down upon Egypt, the angels must have been glad when they heard the sighs and cries and groans of Israel. "Why," you ask, "how is that?" Because the angels would say to themselves, "God's greatest difficulty is overcome! He wanted to incline these people to come out of Egypt and now they long to come out—so they will be willing to accept the leader whom God will send to them and, with music and dancing, they will come forth when Moses brings them out of the iron furnace and the house of bondage." Those of us who were, only a little while ago, in the house of bondage, rejoice that we have been set free from it! And we are praying that you who are still in it and are beginning to feel what a horrible place it is, may not stay there long. May tomorrow's sun not see you there, but may you escape at once from that terrible captivity!

That, then, is the first head—a cry of misery.

II. The second is a very blessed one, THE GOD OF PITY. Let me read part of the text again. "They cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His Covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them."

Here, then, is the poor sinner's hope—not at all in himself, but wholly in God! Note the gradations here with regard to God's pity for these people. First, "*their cry came up unto God.*" When it rose up sharp, shrill and intense, it burst through the gates of Heaven and "came up unto God." Not that He does not really hear everything, but, speaking after the manner of men, when it was a mere sigh, it did not reach Him. But when it got to be a cry and deepened into a groan, then it came up before Him and He seemed to stop and say, "What is that? It is the cry of the seed of

Abraham in Egypt.” Oh, poor Soul, when your cry comes up from the depths of your very soul, then God will stop and say, “What is that? It is the cry of a man in misery. It is the voice of a soul that is in bondage under sin.” “Their cry came up unto God.”

Notice, next, for it is a step further—“and God heard their groaning.” Do you know what that means? There are some people who seem to hear things, but the sounds pass through their ears and there the matter ends. But if you go to visit a sick woman and you sit down, and she tells you all about her ailments and about her poverty, she is cheered because you listen to her kindly and because you are willing to hear her even if you cannot help her—but it does help her even to tell her sad story. Well now, God heard Israel’s crying and groaning. He heard them not merely as men hear a sound and take no notice of it, but He seemed to stand still and listen to the sighs, and groans, and cries of His people. Sinner, tell God your misery even now and He will hear your story! He is willing to listen, even, to that sad and wretched tale of yours about your multiplied transgressions, your hardness of heart, your rejections of Christ. Tell Him all, for He will hear it. Tell him what it is you need—what large mercy—what great forgiveness! Just lay your whole case before Him. Do not hesitate for a single moment! He will hear it, He will be attentive to the voice of your cry. Oh, what comfort there is for you in this Truth of God if you can but grasp it! Dear Christians, pray that some poor sinners may grasp it even now! Pray that they may lay hold upon the sweet thought that God is hearing the sighs and cries of the penitent souls in our midst!

God’s pity went further than that, for we read, next, that having heard their groaning, “*God remembered His Covenant.*” I wish I knew how to preach upon that 24th verse—“God remembered His Covenant.” He looked on the children of Israel and He did *not* remember their sins—their practically becoming Egyptians, their loving Egypt and Egypt’s idols—but He remembered His friend, Abraham. He remembered Isaac. He remembered Jacob whom He loved, and He remembered how He had promised to bless them and to make them a blessing. And not because of any merit in the Israelites, themselves, but for the sake of those whom He had loved and honored, and for the sake of the Covenant which He had made with them, He said, “I will break the power of Pharaoh, and I will bless My people; I will bring them out of bondage, and set them at liberty.” Sinner, if God were to look on you to all eternity, He could not see anything in you but what He is bound to punish! But when He looks on His dear Son whom He loves, and remembers how He lived and loved, and bled and died, and made atonement for the guilty. And when He remembers His Covenant with His Well-Beloved, He says, “I will bless these people whom I gave unto Him by an Everlasting Covenant. I promised that He would see of the travail of His soul and so He shall. I will break the power of sin and I will set these captives free to the praise of the glory of My Grace. And they shall be accepted in the Beloved.” It is a great blessing that although God cannot see any reason for mercy in us, He can see the best of all reasons for mercy in the Covenant of His Grace

and in His dear Son with whom He made it! “God remembered His Covenant.” Do not forget it, dear Friends, but think much upon the Covenant ordered in all things and sure, and upon all the blessings that are to come to you through that Covenant.

God did still more for His people. “*And God looked upon the children of Israel.*” He had given them His ear. He had given them His memory. Now He gives them His eyes. He stood still and He looked upon them in pity and in love. And it is further said, “And God had respect unto them.” The margin renders it, “God *knew* them,” which is the true meaning of the original. He looked upon a man and He said, “That is one of My children.” He looked upon another and He said, “Yes, Egyptian though he is in dress, he is one of my Israelites.” He looked upon others and He said, “I know them. I know their sorrows, I know their sins, I know their weaknesses. And I will surely deliver them.” Oh, that these lips could utter language in which I might fitly tell you how God looks upon you, my dear brokenhearted fellow sinner—how He looks upon you, my poor troubled Friend who cannot break loose from sin, but feels like a bull in a net and cannot get free from it! I tell you that He is looking upon you in love and pity and that He knows your condition and is ready to help you! I will close my discourse by telling you what He has done to help you and, oh, may He give you Grace to lay hold of it, that you may find liberty this very hour!

III. The last point is THE INSTRUMENT OF DELIVERANCE.

God's power was quite sufficient to bring the people of Israel out of bondage, but He chose to deliver them by means of human instrumentality. God works for men *by* men, so He raised up Moses, and it was through Moses that the children of Israel were delivered. Now, for you, dear Captive, God has raised up a Prophet like unto Moses. One who is infinitely greater than Moses has come to deliver you!

First, remember that *Jesus, the Savior of men, is a Man like ourselves.* This ought to encourage you to come to Him. Full of grief and broken down under a sense of sin, you dare not approach an absolute God—it would not be right that you should attempt to come to Him without a Mediator. But you may come to the one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, for He can fully sympathize with you! He is able to have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, for He, Himself, in the days of His flesh, was compassed with infirmity. Well did Dr. Watts sing—

**“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind!
But if Immanuel's face appears,
My hope, my joy begins!
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His Grace removes my sins!”**

Jesus Christ is a Man—therefore come boldly to Him, even as Israel might come to Moses! And *Jesus is clothed with Divine authority and power*, as Moses was. But more than that, He is what Moses was not, and could not be—*Jesus is actually Divine! Jesus is God!* Oh, come, poor

trembling Sinner, and trust your case in His hands, because nothing ever fails that He undertakes! He can break the power of the Pharaoh of your sins and set you free! Yes, even now He can bring you forth out of Egypt with the silver and gold of His abounding Grace. Only trust Him and follow Him, and be obedient to His commands, and all will be well with you.

This Moses, being a man, yet clothed with Divine authority, gave himself entirely up to the people. He was such a lover of Israel that he lived entirely for the people and once, you will remember, he even said, as he pleaded for them, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold! Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written." Our Lord Jesus Christ, whom it is our joy to preach, was really made a curse for us. He actually stood in the sinner's place and bore the penalty of the sinner's guilt. Therefore, oh, trust Him! Perhaps I may be the means of leading some poor sinner to end his delaying and now to commit his spirit into the hand of the faithful Creator and Redeemer who died for him. And, dear Friend, if you will but trust Jesus with yourself, you shall be saved at once! I hope you are willing to come out of Egypt. If you are, you may do so. Christ has broken all the power of sin and He is willing, now, to set you free if you will but trust Him and give yourself up, once and for all, entirely to His power!

Lastly, Moses did bring the people out, every one of them. He left not a little babe in Egypt. No, not so much as a sheep or a goat remained there. He said, "There shall not a hoof be left behind." All that belonged to Israel went marching out when Moses led the way. And God's elect and Christ's redeemed shall all come out of the Egypt of sin. Pharaoh's power—the devil's power—cannot hold the very least of them in captivity! No, not even a bone of one of God's children shall be left in the grasp of death and the devil! They shall die and their bones shall be put into the sepulcher, but not the least *atom* of one of God's own chosen ones shall be left in the power of death! They shall come again from the hand of the enemy.

Yet remember, O you Sinners, that I do not urge you to trust Christ as though He cringed at your feet and could not have honor and glory if you did not welcome Him as your Savior! If you will not come to Him. If you will turn your backs on Him, I shall only say of you, "You believe not because you are not of His sheep, as He said unto you." It is not for Christ's sake, but for your own sake that I plead with you! Oh, that you would come to Him and trust Him! Weary of self, and weary of sin, and hopeless of self-salvation, come and lay yourselves at Jesus' feet, even at the feet of Him whom God has "exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" He has laid help upon One who is mighty! He has exalted One chosen out of the people! Therefore, come and trust Him even now, and you shall be saved! May God grant repentance and faith to this whole congregation for Jesus' sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ACTS 7:14-43.**

Verses 14-17. *Then sent Joseph, and called his father, Jacob, to him, and all his kindred, seventy-five souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem. But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt.* Note those words, “the time of the promise,” and remember that every promise has its due time of fulfillment and that there is a time of promise to all the Lord’s chosen people, when He will surely bring them out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

18-20. *Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born, and was exceedingly fair, and nourished up in his father’s house three months.* In the darkest night of Israel’s bondage in Egypt, her star of hope arose—“Moses was born and was exceedingly fair,” or, as the margin has it, “was fair to God”—with a beauty something more than human.

21, 22, *And when he was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.* He was well qualified for the work to which God had called him, but how much more fully qualified is that great Prophet, like unto Moses, whom God has raised up, in these latter days, for the salvation of men, even Jesus Christ, His Son! He knows more than all the learning and wisdom of the Egyptians! He knows more than the cleverness of the devil, so He can deliver us from all his crafty wiles.

23-25. *And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God, by his hand, would deliver them: but they understood not.* Alas, it is just the same with Israel now! The Lord Jesus came to His own and, according to one of His parables, the Father said of Him, “They will reverence My Son.” But they did nothing of the kind! They said, “This is the Heir. Come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours.” And, alas, how many, nowadays, are imitating their evil example! They say, “We will not have this Man to reign over us!” They refuse to yield themselves to the Sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

26-30. *And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, you are brethren; why do you wrong one to another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Will you kill me, as you did the Egyptian yesterday! Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian where he begat two sons. And*

when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, an Angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. So that he was 80 years of age when he began his great lifework! Perhaps, as a rule, the larger part of our time is occupied in getting ready to work. Yet, if we are able to perform a work as good as that which Moses did, it will well repay us for a long season of preparation.

31-34. *When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and dared not look. Then said the Lord to him, Take off your shoes from your feet: for the place where you stand is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them.* All this must have been very pleasant to the ears of Moses. It was solemn, yet it was exceedingly sweet. But notice what comes next.

34. *And now, come, I will send you into Egypt.* Oh, dear! What a falling-off there seems to be in these words! God first says, "I have heard their groaning and am come down to deliver them." And then He adds, "I will send you into Egypt." Yes, truly, from the grandeur of the Divine working down to the insignificance of our instrumentality is a tremendous stoop! Yet the God who says, "I will save sinners by My Grace; none but Myself can save them," also says to me, "Go and preach the Gospel to them." The same Lord who says, "I will change the heart of stone into a heart of flesh and work a miracle of mercy in renewing those who are dead in trespasses and sins," also says to you, "Speak to the persons sitting with you in the pew and seek to point them to the Savior." It is an amazing stoop, but it is the condescension of Almighty Grace and it brings great honor to the poor, trembling, unworthy person to whom the message is addressed! Moses thought himself very unfit for the task of delivering Israel and he would, if he had dared to do so, have refrained from that task. But God said to him, "Now come, I will send you into Egypt." Ah, Brothers, how different a man did Moses then become! When he went out by himself, without any commission, he was impatient to get to his work and he slew an Egyptian—and so had to flee the country. But when he was sent in God's name, when the Lord said to him, "Now come, I will send you," then the work was accomplished! O my Brothers and Sisters, in your service for the Savior, always seek for power from on high! Ask to be sent of God and pray your Master to go with you—then will you succeed in the task which He entrusts to you.

35. *This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made you a ruler and a judge? The same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel which appeared to him in the bush.* Is not that a shadow of that grander Truth of God, "The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner"?

36, 37. *He brought them out after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me;*

Him shall you hear. Now you see that Moses was thus a type of Christ. God grant that we may not reject Christ, as the Israelites rejected Moses, but may we be willing that He should be to us our Judge and our Deliverer!

38, 39. *This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the living oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.* Though Moses had brought them out of Egypt, they were not obedient to him and they wanted to go back to the land of bondage. And, ah, Brothers and Sisters, this is the great crime of the present day—the crime of mankind in general—that, after all Jesus has done, there is still within so many, the evil heart of *unbelief* in departing from the living God!

40, 41. *Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.* This again is another of the ways by which men attempt to make an idol god out of something which they can see and to rejoice in what they, themselves, do, instead of trusting in what the Lord Jesus has done.

42, 43. *Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the Prophets, O you house of Israel, have you offered to Me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yes, you took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your God, Remphan, figures which you made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.* There was still idolatry in their hearts and Moses was rejected by them. God grant that we may not be idolaters and so reject the Prophet like unto Moses, whom the Lord has sent unto us! Amen!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—440, 561, 608.

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

THE TWO PIVOTS

NO. 2633

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JULY 30 1899.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 18, 1882.

*“I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”*
Exodus 3:6.

*“Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God:
for He has prepared a city for them.”*
Hebrews 11:16.

YOU remember, dear Friends, that Paul is writing to the Hebrews concerning Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and he says, “God is not ashamed to be called their God.” Then, when you turn back to our text in Exodus, you find that God was called their God at the burning bush and, oftentimes, on other occasions, He is called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. We must not forget that at the time when God appeared to Moses, in the desert, in the bush that burned, but was not consumed, the condition of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was very terrible. They were slaves to the Egyptians. They were an oppressed and downtrodden race. Their male children were taken from them and cast into the river. They were entirely in Pharaoh’s hands. They were a degraded people, as all slaves gradually become, and they were unable, of themselves, to rise out of that degradation. Yet, at that very time, God was not ashamed to be called their God! There, with Israel in bondage, Jehovah, whose name is the great I AM—a name which makes all Heaven bright with ineffable Glory—did not disdain to say to Moses, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” I do not wonder that the Apostle should note it as a remarkable thing, that He was not ashamed to be called their God!

I have been looking into this text very earnestly and trying to find out exactly what was the meaning of the Holy Spirit in it, and I think I have discovered a clue in two words which it contains. First, “Therefore.” “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God”—and next, “for.” “For He has prepared for them a city.” As a door hangs upon two hinges, so my golden text turns upon these two pivots—“therefore” and, “for.”

I. I shall ask you to keep your Bibles open at the 11th of Hebrews, that you may see, first, “THEREFORE.” Therefore God is not ashamed to be

called the God of His people. Look at the 13th verse—“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” and so on. “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

To begin with, then, the Lord was not ashamed to be called His people’s God *because they had faith in Him*. You read here of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob—and then Paul says, “These all died in faith.” If a man believes in God, trusts Him—believes that His promise is true and that He will keep it—believes that God’s command is right and, therefore, ought to be obeyed—God is never ashamed to be called that man’s God. He is not the God of unbelievers, for they act contrary to His will. They set up their own will in opposition to His—many of them even doubt His existence, they deny His power, they distrust His love—and, therefore, He is *not* called their God. But when a man comes to trust God and to accept His Word, from that moment God sees in that man the works of His Grace which are very precious in His eyes, and He is not ashamed to be called that man’s God.

Notice that it is said, “These all died in faith,” so that they did not believe in God for a little while and then become unbelievers, but, throughout the whole of their lives, from the moment when they were called by God’s Grace, they continued to believe Him—they trusted Him till they came to their graves—so that this epitaph is written over the mausoleum where they all lie asleep, “These all died in faith.” Ah, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, it is very easy to say, “I believe,” and to get very enthusiastic over the notion that we have believed. But so to believe as to persevere to the end—*this* is the faith which will save the soul! “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” The faith that many waters cannot drown and the fiercest fires cannot burn—the faith that plods on throughout a long and weary life—the faith that labors on, doing whatever service God appoints it. The faith that waits patiently, expecting the time when every promise of God shall be fulfilled to the letter when its hour has come—that is the faith which, if it is in a man, makes him such a man that God is not ashamed to be called his God! I put it to every one of you, have you a faith that will hold on and hold out—not a faith that starts with a fine spurt, but a faith that runs from the starting place to the goal? Some of you, I know, have believed in God these twenty, thirty, forty, or even fifty years. Just before I came to this service, I stood by the bedside of a dear Brother who is the nearest to Job of any man I ever saw, for he is covered from head to foot with blisters—I might almost say, “wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores”—and yet he is as happy as anyone among us, joyful and cheerful as he talks about the time when he shall be “with Christ, which is far better.”

Oh, that is the faith we want! “These all died in faith,” “therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.” He is not the God of apostates, for He has said, “If any man draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure

in him.” If he has put his hand to the plow and looks back, he is not worthy of the Kingdom of God. It is the man who steadily and perseveringly, resting in his God and believing Him against all that may be said by God’s foes, holds on until he sees the King in His beauty in the land which is very far off. Of such a man it may be truly said that God is not ashamed to be called his God!

Now let us come back to the Scripture. We cannot do better than keep close to it, for our text is only to be understood by the context. Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture. The locks of Scripture are only to be opened with the keys of Scripture! There is no lock in the whole Bible which God meant us to open without a key to fit it somewhere in the Bible—and we are to search for it until we find it. Now read on in the 13th verse, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises.” That is to say, the things that God *promised* to them, He did not *give* them in their mortal life, and they did not always expect that He would do so. *They were a waiting people.* God loves those who are like Himself. I am not now speaking of His love of benevolence, for with that love He loved us even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, but I am speaking of the love of complacency which makes Him not ashamed to be called our God. In that sense, God loves those who are like Himself—and God is a waiting God—He is never in a hurry. How wondrous is the leisure of the Eternal!

When He is coming to help His people, He is quick, indeed! “He rode upon a cherub, and did fly, yes, He did fly upon the wings of the wind.” But, oftentimes, He waits and tarries till some men count it slackness. But He does not reckon time as we do. With God, a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. So, being a waiting God, He loves a waiting people. He loves a man who can take the promise and say, “I believe it. It may never be fulfilled to me in this life, but I do not need that it should be. I am perfectly willing that it should be fulfilled when God intends that it should be.” Abraham saw Christ’s day afar off, but he never saw Christ—yet he rejoiced in the promise of which he did not receive the fulfillment! Isaac did not see Christ except in a vision of the things that were long afterwards to come to pass. Jacob did not hear that joyful sound, which—

**“Kings and Prophets waited for,
And sought, but never found.”**

But they were perfectly willing to wait and God was not ashamed to be called the God of such a waiting people!

You remember Mr. Bunyan’s description of the two children, Passion and Patience? Passion would have his best things now, and he had them. But he soon spoiled them, misused them and abused them. But Patience would have his best things last and, as Bunyan very prettily says, “There is nothing to come after the last.” Therefore, when Patience got his best things, they lasted on forever and forever. God, loves not the passion, but He loves the patience. “The husbandman waits for the precious fruit of

the earth and has long patience for it.” And I would gladly imitate him. “My Soul, wait only upon God, for my expectation is from Him.” The worldly man lives in the present, but that is a poor way of living, worthy only of the beasts that perish.

Look on the sheep and bullocks in the pasture—what kind of life is theirs? They also live in the present. If they have grass enough for today, they are perfectly satisfied. The butcher’s knife has no terrors for them and neither do they, in the cold of winter, look forward to the bright days of summer. They cannot look before them and God loves not men who are like the beasts of the field! He is ashamed to be called their God. But He loves the man who gets to live in eternity, for God Himself lives there! To God there is no past, present, or future—He sees all at a single glance. And when a man comes to feel that he is not living simply in today which will so soon end, but that he is living in the eternity which will never end. When he is rejoicing in the Covenant, “ordered in all things, and sure,” made from before the foundation of the world—when a man feels that he is living in the future as well as the present, that his vast estates are on the other side of Jordan, that his chief joy is up there where Christ sits at the right hand of God, and that his own heart has gone up there where his treasure is, for “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”—when the affection is set, not upon things below, but upon things above—that is the man whom God loves because he has learned how to live in God’s atmosphere, in God’s own eternity! He has risen above the beggarly elements of time and space. He is not circumscribed by Almanacs, days, months and years—his thoughts range right away from that glorious declaration, “I have loved you with an everlasting love,” to those endless, dateless periods when the everlasting love of God will still be the constant delight of His people!

I see, then, why it is written that “God, is not ashamed to be called their God,” because they are content to live without having received the promises, but to keep on patiently waiting with a holy, joyful confidence, till the hour of God’s gracious purpose shall arrive and the promise shall be fulfilled.

Now read on in the 13th verse, and see whether this description fits yourself, dear Friend. “But having seen them afar off.” So *they were a far-seeing people*. God, you know, sees everything. And He loves people who can see afar off. The gods of the heathen have eyes, but they see not. And the Psalmist says, “They that make them are like unto them.” So they that worship a blind god are a blind people! But they that worship a seeing God are, themselves, made to see, for they are numbered with the pure in heart who shall see God! It is a grand thing when a man can see infinitely further than these poor eyes can carry, far beyond the range of the strongest telescope, when he can see beyond death—and see beyond the Judgment Seat and see right into Heaven and there behold the Lamb leading His glorified flock to the living fountains of waters, and the saints, with tearless eyes, forever bowing before the Throne of God and

the Lamb! God is not ashamed to be called the God of the people who can do this! God is ashamed to be called the God of you blind people, whose eyes have never been opened. But when He opens your eyes, then He becomes your God and He is not ashamed to be so called, for He it is that gives us this blessed power to see! Until spiritual sight is thus bestowed upon us, we are blind. But when God has given us sight, then He is not ashamed to acknowledge us as His children, nor is He ashamed to acknowledge that He, Himself, is our God!

I appeal to you whom I am now addressing and ask whether you can see God's promises afar off? There are some who say, "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." Yes, it may be so with the poor birds that sing here, but, for my part, I am willing to wait till I can have the one in the bush if it is in the bush that burned with fire because God was there! You may have the bird in the hand, if you will. You will soon pluck off its feathers, it will speedily die in your hand and there will come an end to it. But there are other birds which, as yet, we cannot reach, but which are really ours, and if we cannot at present grasp them, we are willing to wait God's time—because we can see that they will be in our hands in the future, we can already see them "afar off." Unhappy is the man who sees nothing but what he calls, "the main chance," or who sees nothing but that which is within a few feet of him. Wretched, indeed, is he who lives only to get money, or to gain honor—whose whole life is spent in the pursuit of personal comfort, but who never had his eyes opened enough to see the eternal things, and who never was able to set a value upon anything but what could be paid for with pounds, shillings and pence. Beloved, have you seen the promises afar off? Has the Lord opened your eyes to see eternal things? Then it is written concerning you, also, "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God."

Now pass on to the next sentence, for every word is fruitful with meaning—"and were persuaded of them, and embraced them." *They were people who rejoiced in things unseen.* You will find that, in the Revised Version, the words, "persuaded of them," are left out, and very properly so, for there is no doubt whatever that they were not in the original, but were added by somebody who wished to explain the meaning to us. The Greek is properly rendered, "but having seen them afar off, greeted them," but I like, even better, the translation, "embraced them." It means that as for the things which are promised to us, if we are Believers, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, we have, from afar, seen those promised things and we have welcomed them. Or, to use our Authorized Version, we have "embraced them." We have pressed them to our bosom, we have hugged them to our heart, we have loved them in our very soul, we have rejoiced in them! They have filled our spiritual nature full of music and all the bells of our being are ringing merry peals because of the blessed promises of our God. Now, when a man is of that mind, God is not ashamed to be called his God!

Let me ask you then, dear Friend—What is it that you are embracing? Is it some earthly thing? Does your heart love and cling to that which you can see, and touch and handle? Is that your chief delight? Then God is ashamed to be called your God because you are an idolater! You are worshipping some created thing. But if you can say of Christ, “He is all my salvation and all my desire,” then God is not ashamed to be called your God. Remember what David said—“Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart,” for God is able to give to a man his desires when all his heart is delighting in his God—and God is not ashamed to be called his God. The Lord’s love is not set upon merely material objects. The infinite heart of God loves truth, righteousness, purity and everything that is holy and glorious. And if your heart does the same, God is not ashamed to be called your God. But if you do not love these things, you have neither part nor lot in God—you are a stranger to Him and, though I speak this solemn Truth of God in gentle language, I pray that it may drop like lye upon your spirit and burn its way into your very soul! What an awful thing it must be to be without God—to have no part nor lot in Him—never to be able to say, “My God, my Father,” but only to speak of Him as a God—an unknown God, another man’s God, but no God to you! May it not be so with you, my Friends! If you can say that you have seen the promises from afar and have, by faith, embraced them, then God is not ashamed to be called your God.

Pass on to the next sentence—“and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” *They acknowledged that they were not at home here.* Abraham never built a house! Isaac never lived anywhere but in a tent and, though Jacob tried to dwell in a settled habitation, he got into trouble through it and he was bound, still, to be a tent-dweller. The reason why they lived in tents was because they wanted to show to all around them that they did not belong to that country. There were great cities with walls which, as men said, reached to Heaven, but they did not go to dwell in those cities. You remember that Lot did, yet he was glad enough to get out again—“saved, yet so as by fire.” But Abraham, Isaac and Jacob kept away from other men, for they were commanded to dwell alone and not to be numbered among the nations. Nor were they—they kept themselves apart from other people as strangers and sojourners here below, so, for that very reason, God is not ashamed to be called their God!

Remember how David said to the Lord, “I am a stranger with You, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.” That is a very amazing expression—“a stranger with You”—blessed be God, not “a stranger to You,” but, “a stranger *with* You.” That is to say, God is a stranger here—it is His own world and He made it, but when Christ, who is the Son of God, and the Creator of the world, came into it, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” And they soon made Him feel that the only treatment which He would receive at their hands was this—“This is the Heir. Come, let us kill Him, that the inheritance may be ours.” There was no man

who ever lived who was a truer Man than was Christ the Lord. But there was never a Man who was more unlike the rest of men. He was a homely Man, a home-loving Man to the last degree, yet He was never at home. This world was not His rest. He had nowhere to lay His head and what was true, naturally, was also true spiritually. This world offered Christ no rest whatever.

Now, dear Friends, how is it with us? Do we belong to this world, or to the unseen? How do you feel about this matter? Do you feel at home here? I think that we are often compelled to cry with the Psalmist, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" We wish to do good to others as far as we can. We are men of peace, but when we speak, they are for war and we realize the truth of our Lord's words, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household." The more a man comes right straight out for God, the more opposition he is sure to meet with! Be half-asleep and nobody will say much against you. But wake up and be active for God and for His Christ and you will soon discover that the seed of the serpent still has the serpent's venom in it—and it hates the Seed of the woman as much as it ever did! It must be so and, therefore, always feel that you are only a stranger here and that your business is to go through this world as a traveler passes through a foreign country. He does not speak the language of the people. He does not follow their customs. He is not one of the citizens of the land. He is just a temporary dweller here below and he is on his journey home. If that is the kind of man you are, God is not ashamed to be called your God.

But He is not the God of the earthworms that only want to burrow down into the soil. He is not the God of those who build their nests and say, "Here would we live forever." He is not the God of the man who can say, "Give me a knife and fork, and plenty to eat and drink. Give me suitable clothes to wear in the day and a nice soft bed to sleep on at night. Give me wealth, give me fame—that is all I need—and I will let Heaven go to anyone who wants it!" Jehovah is not the God of Esau, who sells his birthright for a mess of pottage, but He is the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob who have a heritage that they cannot see, and who count the land in which they dwell to be a place of strangers and of sojourners—and they think of themselves as only strangers and sojourners in it.

Now read on a little further. "For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country." The word translated, "country," might, I think be better rendered, "fatherland." "They who say that they are strangers here declare plainly that they seek a fatherland." The word is sometimes translated, "their own country." "A Prophet is not without honor, save in his own country." It is the same word here in the Greek. *It signifies that they sought their own country—their fatherland.* Therefore God, who is the Father of all His people, and whose Heaven is their fatherland, is not ashamed to be called their God. Now, dear Friends, are

you seeking a fatherland? I put the question to every hearer here—Are *you* looking for a fatherland? Sir Walter Scott wrote—

***“Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said,
‘This is my own, my native land’?
Whose heart has ne’er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he has turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?”***

So said the patriot poet and we have said it, too, for we are patriots! But yet I venture to say that this is not my home, this is not my fatherland—

***“I’m but a stranger here!
Heaven is my home.”***

My fatherland lies out of sight, beyond the everlasting hills, where God dwells and where Christ sits at the right hand of the Father. Now, the men who, by Grace, have been brought to say this, “We are out of our own country, we are seeking a fatherland,” these are the people of whom it is written, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

Paul goes on to say, “And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from where they came, they might have had opportunity to have returned.” Brothers and Sisters, this is another characteristic of Believers—*we have left the world as our home, and joy, and comfort, to seek a better country, but we may go back if we like.* There is no compulsion to keep a man a Christian but the compulsion of love. He who is enlisted in the army of Christ may desert if he pleases, but the blessed Grace of God will hold us so that we shall do no such thing! We have plenty of opportunities to return. Oh, how many invite us to turn back! I know how they beckon some of you who have lately come out on the Lord’s side. Sometimes it is a female voice that would charm you and there is a great fascination about it, and you have to mind what you are doing lest you become unequally yoked together. Sometimes it is the voice of the world promising you wealth—offering you a better situation, perhaps, if you will go back. But, like Moses, you esteem “the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” You have plenty of opportunities to return. There are back entrances to Satan’s Kingdom—he does not require you to come in at the front door—he lets you sneak in, again, by the back gate. If you want to go into slavery, again, there are many opportunities of returning! But if you are made by Christ to be, in this respect, like God, immutable, so that you say, “I cannot turn. I cannot change. I must be what Christ has made me. I must stand fast for truth and for holiness, and stand fast as long as I live, so help me, my God”—if you are able to talk like that, then God is not ashamed to be called your God! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, you can get back to the old country whenever you like. But they never will go back—the deep dividing river rolls between them and that land, even as, today, there rolls between some of us and the world the stream in which we have been buried with Christ and, by God’s Grace, we shall never cross it again! And, because of that holy determination, God is not ashamed to be called our God.

I finish up my remarks upon the word, “therefore,” which is very full of matter, by noticing how the Apostle says, “But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly.” That is to say, *instead of going back, we are pressing forward towards heavenly things*. “God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” “The Father seeks such to worship Him.” That is, those who are *spiritual*, who are seeking after heavenly things with all their heart. These are they whom God loves, for God is spiritual. God is heavenly and when He has made us spiritual and made us pant after heavenly things, then He is not ashamed to be called our God.

I have put these points before you as briefly as I could, wishing every moment to be examining myself, and asking you to examine yourselves. Have you a life within you which makes you pant and pine after heavenly things? Whatever you have in this world, do you hold it with a loose hand? Do you feel that it is not your real riches—it is not your true treasure? You know that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all rich men. God blessed them and gave them a great increase to all that they had, but, still, they did not live simply to gather riches! They did not make that their chief delight. If you had asked them, they would have told you that they were inheritors of a mysterious Covenant by which God had bound Himself to be their God, and the God of their seed. And in that Covenant was included the promise that Christ Himself should come out of their loins—and for Him they waited—He was the hope of their spirit. Now, dear Friends, if that is the case with you, also, you can understand the meaning of my text, “Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

II. I must give but a few minutes to the second part of the text, yet it needs a good deal of thought, for it says, “for He has prepared a city for them.” The second pivot word is, “for.”

Now go back again to the text in Exodus, “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Yet Paul says, “These all died,” and we know that our Lord said to the Sadducees, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Is He not ashamed to be called the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, seeing that they all died? No, because they are not dead, though they died, “for He has prepared for them a city.” These men, though they *lived and died, and passed out of the world without having received the heritage, are not dead!* There is the glory of the matter. When they lay a-dying, the devil might have come and said to them, “Now, what have you got by your Covenant with God? You left father, mother and everything that you had, and went and lived the separated life—and now you are dying out here—what have you got? Nothing but some little holes in the Cave of Machpelah into which they will push your bodies! That is all that you have!”

Oh, but the devil does not know! Or if he does, he is a liar, for they gained *everything* by that life of faith, for they still live and God has prepared a city for them. And now they have entered that city! Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob are at the very head of the celestial company, for our Lord said, “Many shall come from the east, and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven.” And, by-and-by, Machpelah shall yield up her dead and Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Jacob shall live, again, in the fullest sense, for their bodies as well as their souls shall live again! And Joseph’s bones, which he would not allow to lie in Egypt—for he would not let the Egyptians have a scrap of him—shall live, and thus, in their flesh, shall they see God and shall rejoice before Him. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called the God of these people who all died in faith because they are still living—and they shall continue to live forever and ever!

Somebody may, perhaps, say that these people did not receive the promises. Well, they did not *literally* receive the fulfillment of them. They did not see Christ. They did not witness the descent of the Holy Spirit. They did not hear the Gospel preached. They did not see those wonders that they looked for—so is not God ashamed to be called the God of people who, after all, did not receive the promises? No, because “He has prepared for them a city.” *They have received the promises now* and they shall receive them yet more and more! God will yet cause the Believer’s life to be all blessing. Do not be afraid of the consequences of trusting in Christ—you may have the rough side of the road, here, but what we sang, just now, is quite true—

***“Afflictions may press me, they cannot destroy,
One glimpse of His love turns them all into joy!
And the bitterest tears, if He smiles but on them,
Like dew in the sunshine, grow diamond and gem!
Let doubt, then, and danger my progress oppose—
They only make Heaven more sweet at the close.
Come joy or come sorrow, whate’er may befall,
An hour with my God will make up for them all!”***

If God gave to His children gall and wormwood to drink here—yes, if they never had anything but aches and pains from the moment of their conversion till they died—yet they would have the best of the bargain, after all, for there is an eternity of bliss in the Heaven which is prepared for them!

But, further, these people were a sort of gypsies, always moving about and living in tents, different from everybody else. Yes, *they were strangers among the people where they dwelt*. And men often say of us, now, that we cannot be content to go on as other people do. Those Patriarchs were strangers, odd folk, peculiar people. Is not God ashamed to be called their God? No, because they have now gone where they are all right, for their manners and customs are exactly suitable to the place. A very dear old woman, whom I visited when she was dying, said to me, “One thing comforts me, Sir, I do not think that God will ever send me among the wicked, for I never could get on in their company. The best times I have ever had were when I could sit with a few of the Lord’s people and hear them talk about Him. And though I could not always be

sure that I was, myself, a Christian, yet I was very much like them and I was very happy when I was with them. I think I shall go to my own company, Sir." Yes, dear Soul, and so she did! And if we are strangers here, we are going to that company where we shall not be strangers! They will understand our language when once we get across the river into the King's own country. "Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God" because they speak the language which He speaks, the language of His own courts—and He is not ashamed to say, "These are My people, and I acknowledge them before you all."

Notice, yet again, that *these people were seekers and desirers all their lives*. "They seek a country." "They desire a better country." Is this a right state of heart for a Christian—to always be seeking and always desiring? Well, Brothers and Sisters, that is the state in which I often am and I wish, still, to stay in that condition—always seeking, always desiring. Whenever God gives me any spiritual blessing, I always seek more. And if He gives me more, I seek for still more! And if He gives me my heart's desire, I pray Him to enlarge my heart that I may desire some greater gift. For, in spiritual things, we may be as covetous as we like! We may say, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended. But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And God is not ashamed to be called the God of those who are thus seeking and desiring because He has laid up for them all that they seek! And He has prepared for them all that they desire! I would be ashamed to set a poor person desiring if I could not gratify the desire. I would be ashamed to set a man seeking if I knew that he could not get what he sought after. But because God has prepared a city for these seekers and desirers, He is not ashamed to be called their God!

As I stood, this evening, by the bedside of the dear Brother whom I mentioned to you a little while ago, I could not help saying, "Here is a poor soul covered with boils and blisters, but God is not ashamed to be called his God." And there may be a child of God who is very poor, indeed, with hardly sufficient garments to cover him, but God is not ashamed to be called his God, either. Perhaps his own brother is ashamed to be called his brother. I have even known cases where men have been so wicked as to be ashamed of their own parents because they were not so well off as themselves. But God is never ashamed of His poor people. Yes, and if God's people are persecuted, and ill-used. If they are covered with mud from head to foot, or if they are cast into prison, God is not ashamed to be called their God. In those days when God permitted His people to be fastened up to the cross, or when others were taken to the stake and burnt, and everybody hissed at them, and cast out their

name as evil, and said that they were the offscouring of all things—God was not ashamed to be called their God!

I am almost ashamed to say what I am going to say. I really feel my very heart blush that I should have to say it. I have known some professors who have been ashamed to call God their God! Is it not strange that the glorious God of Heaven and earth should call a worm His own, and take mean wretches such as we are, and say, “I am not ashamed to be called their God,” and yet that some of these creatures should be so miserably cowardly that they are ashamed to be called the people of God? Oh, write His name on your foreheads! Never be ashamed of it! Ashamed of God? Ashamed of Jesus? Ashamed of the Truth? Ashamed of righteousness? I do not wonder that there is such a text as this—“The fearful”—that is the cowardly—“and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

If you really do love the Lord, come out and show yourself on His side! And if He is not ashamed of you and if your prayer is, “Lord, remember me when you come into Your Kingdom,” acknowledge Him as your Lord and Savior now! You who are not members of any Christian Church—you who have believed in Christ, or think you have—and yet have never confessed Him. You who are hiding like rats behind the wall—come out and confess Christ! What are you doing? How can you be soldiers of the Cross and followers of the Lamb if you fear to acknowledge His cause and blush to speak His name? Come out of your hiding places! May God the Holy Spirit draw or drive you out at once! If anything could do it, surely, it should be such a blessed fact as this—that you are numbered among those of whom it is said that “God is not ashamed to be called their God.”

God bless you, dear Friends, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—854, 847, 848.

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***“And you shall say unto Pharaoh, thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: and I say unto you, Let My son go, that he may serve Me.”
Exodus 4:22, 23.***

***“Then the Lord said unto Moses, Now shall you see what I will do to Pharaoh.”
Exodus 6:1.***

GOD had a people in Egypt. They were His own, the people of His choice. Although they had been grievously oppressed and had sunk into ignominious slavery, His interest in their welfare had in no degree lessened. The Lord's purpose in sending Moses down into Egypt was that He might fetch out that people from among the nations to make them a separate people to Himself that He might give them an inheritance, even the land which flowed with milk and honey and that they might dwell there as witnesses of His Covenant and keep His Testimonies. Now precisely what God was doing towards His people, Israel, in the land of Ham, He is doing towards His own chosen ones throughout the whole world.

From one point of view the object of the Gospel is to gather out from among the nations a people whom He did foreknow, whom He did predestinate, whom He has redeemed unto Himself to be His peculiar heritage. These are to be fetched out from among others. They are to be made a separate people to be brought into a distinct position and to have a distinct experience. “The people shall dwell alone; they shall not be reckoned among the nations” and they are ultimately to be brought to a prepared place for which they are to be especially prepared that they may abide there and that the Lord may verify the thing that He has predicted of them, “They shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels.”

The work of rescuing perishing sinners out of the present evil world is as worthy of God as the work of delivering Israel out of Egypt. The same right hand of Jehovah, glorious in power, which released the sons of Jacob from the thralldom of Pharaoh, is now stretched out to ransom us from the dominion of Satan! The song of praise to Jesus Christ our Redeemer shall be more exultant than that which Miriam and the daughters of Israel lifted up by the Red Sea when they said, “Come let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” Indeed, we shall sing at the last, the song of Moses, the servant of God and the song of the Lamb, clearly indicating that the redemption out of Egypt was always meant to be a leading type of the redemption of God's people from out of the midst of the world, for Christ has a people whom He has redeemed from among

men, and there is a Church of which it is written, “Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it.”

Now, in the process of bringing out these people of God from among the mass of mankind, God sometimes uses instrumentality just as He did in the former case. He may employ an instrument that is apparently as little adapted for the work as Moses felt himself to be. Yet the work is done and to God belongs the honor of accomplishing it. As for those of us whom He uses, we are more than content to yield the honor to Him. We rejoice in His excellency while we feel that we cannot take to ourselves any credit whatever—for we are less than nothing in His sight—and even in our own sight we are weak and worthless, so that unto God, alone, shall the glory redound when redemption’s work is finished and complete!

I invite you to think, first of all, upon the voice of God. According to our text, it is, “Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: and I say unto you, Let My son go, that he may serve Me.” When we have dilated a little upon that, we shall need to have a few words upon the voice of *man*. This was to be the voice of man, “You shall say unto Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord.” What God had spoken was to be repeated by His servant, Moses. Then we shall close by noticing, in the third place, the power which was to go with this voice of man. “I will be with your mouth and you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh.”

I. Let us endeavor, then, at the outset, to fix our thoughts upon THE VOICE OF GOD which was a real power to bring up His people out of Egypt. That voice was threefold—asserting His proprietorship in them, demanding their freedom and ordaining their destiny. With imperial authority He claims the people as His own. “Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn.” The Lord knows them that are His and the Lord declared them to be His own with a jealousy of His inalienable right to their allegiance and an assertion of His unfailing interest in their welfare. The children of Israel were, at that time, in a very sordid condition. They were up to their necks in clay, making bricks. They were a band of slaves, degraded, brought down to the lowest condition. They were so spiritless that they submitted to any exaction of the tyrant and when the day of deliverance dawned on them, they could not think emancipation possible, or welcome the joyful change in their prospects.

They had, as a nation, lost the very thought of liberty! It was trodden out. The people seemed as if they must lose their nationality or only retain it as a nation of slaves. Yet all begrimed and beslaved as they came to be, they were still beloved. The Lord loved them! He said, “Israel is My son, even My firstborn.” Surely Pharaoh might have said in his heart, “This is a fine son! What must the God be who says of these brick makers, this abject race, ‘This is My son?’” Yes, and these ill-conditioned, unkempt serfs—these debased men and women, He says of them—“Even My firstborn, My son and heir.” A man is naturally proud of his son and heir, yet here is the mighty *God* speaking after the language of mortal men, ac-

knowledging these cheerless, crestfallen, despised and dispirited people and saying, "Israel is My son, even My firstborn."

He was acknowledging them, too, in the teeth of proud Pharaoh, whose firstborn was saluted as a prince of the blood royal when he rode through the land, before whom every knee bowed and to whom, as the son of the great king, homage was constantly rendered. "Israel is My son," says God, "even My firstborn." He is not ashamed of His people! He acknowledged His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sin, just as He loved His people Israel when they were still in bondage and in degradation. "He loved my soul out of the Pit," said one of old. He loved us when we were lying in our blood like an infant cast out unswaddled and unwashed. When no eye pitied us in the day of our nativity and we were cast out in the open field, He passed by and it was a time of love. And He said unto us, "Live." Oh, wondrous Grace of God, that He acknowledges His son when that son is still an Egyptian slave!

Moreover, God acknowledged His people when they did not acknowledge Him, for His name, "Jehovah," was scarcely known to them. Although Moses presented himself to them with evident credentials, they were ready enough to reject him. We are informed in other parts of the Scripture that they had gone aside to false gods. During their sojourn in Egypt the Israelites fell into the prevailing superstition of the country and they forsook the Lord. Some little light still lingered among them. Some traditions were treasured and transmitted from sire to son in solemn trust. Doubtless there was a remnant of pious souls, faithful to the God of Abraham. The bones of Joseph, preserved in Goshen as a memorial of the oath that he took of their tribes, subsequently were carried through all their devious wanderings in the wilderness and ultimately buried in Sechem, as you read in the last chapter of the book of Joshua and they, I say, vouch for a fidelity we cannot wantonly forget.

But the bulk of the people had fallen into the snares which surrounded them and conformed to the fashions of those among whom their fortunes were cast—whose many gods and lords were superstitiously served in secret. They were not a people who could have scraped together so much as a molehill of merit if they had tried! They were a vain and vicious people, prone to supplant, yet utterly supplanted. They were especially sinful because their marked proclivities which might have developed on the side of virtue were perverted into stains and stigmas on their reputation. Yet Jehovah says, "Israel is My son, even My firstborn." And does the Lord acknowledge His people when they know Him not? Ah, blessed be His name, He does, or else they would never come to know Him! We love Him, now, because He first loved us and if there had not been that antecedent knowledge of us—and love towards us—we had not now been what we now are.

Oh, the freeness and spontaneity of the Grace of God that He should know His people and call them His own even when, as yet, they know Him

not! He acknowledged this people by affirming His Covenant. "Israel is My son." He was referring to the Covenant which He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob of old. And the Lord knows His people and shows favor to them, not because of anything personal to recommend them, for there is no superiority in their nature, no brightness in their intellect, no beauty in their disposition that can be pleasing in His sight! The only title to Grace in His eyes is that ancient Covenant ordered in all things and sure which He has made, not with Abraham, but with our Lord Jesus, who stands as our Covenant Head!

We do not sufficiently reflect upon the Covenant as the great deep that lies under the fountain of many waters out of which all the wells of salvation continue to be filled with the living waters of Grace—

***"Never had you felt the guilt of sin,
Or sweets of pardoning love,
Unless your worthless name had been
Enrolled to life above."***

If you had not an interest in that Covenant which He made in the eternal council chamber long before the earth was most assuredly in hapless, hopeless obscurity, you would have lived and died! This was the reason why He called Israel His son! An ancient Covenant had made Israel to be so regarded. How sweet it is that He does not merely speak about the people as being His people, but He says, "Israel is My son." There is a love between father and son which cannot be found elsewhere. Blood is thicker than water. Relationship has ties that cannot be relaxed.

"Yes, but," says one, "Does God ever call His people, in any place, His sons before they are regenerate?" Well, there is a text that says, "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, whereby you cry, Abba, Father." It is because, in the purpose of God, His people are really His sons before they know anything at all about it, that in due time He sends the Spirit of His Son to give them the nature of children that they may enjoy the adoption of children and say, "Abba, Father." O Beloved, it is delightful to think that the Lord should look upon us before we are born—before we are *born again*—with a love that cannot be measured and cannot be broken! The gist of this affirming was thus—"Israel is My son. You, Pharaoh, may call him your slave, but he is My child. He was Mine before he was yours. Israel is My son. You say, 'No, he is my serf.' I say, though he has fallen under your yoke, I will maintain My right to him as My firstborn. He is a prince and to that estate he shall be raised."

The Lord has a claim upon His people—a claim which all the claims of Law and all the clamors of sin and death and Hell shall never be able to deny. And though they basely submit to the claims of the Wicked One and make a covenant with Death and a league with Hell, yet shall Jehovah's claim upon them stand, for thus says the Lord, "Your league with Death is broken and your covenant with Hell is disannulled." The Lord Jesus will not suffer those whom He has made to be His own people and ransomed

by the bloody purchase upon the Cross to remain the slaves of sin and Satan! They are His. His Father gave them to Him. They are His! He bought them. They are His! Their names are written on His hands and engraved on His side. They are His! He will not suffer so much as *one* of them to remain in bondage to the adversary.

By thus acknowledging His people, He puts in a positive claim which puts all other claims on one side. With the bare assertion of absolute right He demands their unconditional freedom. "Thus says the Lord, Israel is My son, even My firstborn: and I say unto you, let My son go." What a grand verse that is! What an imperial edict it contains! As in the narrative of the Cosmos, God said, "Light be, and light was," so in the history of the exodus, short words are launched with Sovereign force—"Let My son go." Well might the proud heart of Pharaoh have quailed before the Almighty, whose lips asserted a right which His arm was instantly able to enforce. How aptly those tones apply to our deliverance from under the Law! The Law includes all mankind under its curse—the god of this world claims the whole human race as his subjects. In due time our Redeemer appears.

The Lord Jesus comes, identifies Himself with the enslaved family, bears the curse, fulfils the Law and then on the ground of simple justice demands for them full and perfect liberty, having fulfilled for them the precept and for them endured the penalty! "Let My son go." On what pretext could the Law, unless it were lawless and unjust, put in a claim which has been discharged, or urge a right which has already been fulfilled? No, from under the Law the people of God go free and their joy is that they are not under the Law but under Grace! And how gloriously do those tones sound when they come with force and power to rescue us from the tyranny of sin and Satan! The Prince of the power of the air holds men in subjection. He prejudices them and so stops their ears against the Gospel. He seals their eyes against the Eternal Light, but thus says the Lord, "Let My son go," and immediately the prejudice vanishes, the ears are opened, Eternal Truth shines into the heart, scales drop from the eyes and the soul beholds the Heaven-born Light and begins to rejoice!

Satan will tie a soul down, sometimes, in very heavy bondage. I have known him fasten a soul down with steel chains of despair such as could not be snapped. The man has said, "There is no hope," and he has given up all thought of pardon and eternal life. But, "Thus says the Lord, let My son go." The iron bands have snapped in a moment and the man has risen to hope and liberty, for the Lord's voice breaks the chains! Fast bound by fearful habits which seemed impossible to give up—having plunged into one sin after another—the man has been shut in by one iron gate and then by another and another and was enclosed in the innermost ward of the prison. But at midnight he has been struck on the side when he was asleep in his senseless carelessness.

Around him has shone a great light—the Covenant Angel has come to him and led him through gate after gate! The iron gates have opened of

their own accord and the man has found himself free and scarcely knew whether it was true or not! He knew not that it was true, but thought he saw a vision. The thing has been scarcely done before he has found himself to be alive and delivered from the bonds of sin, filled with astonishment at himself and saying, "How can this be?" His tongue has been filled with singing and his mouth with laughter and he has said, "The Lord has done great things for me, of which I am glad."

Well, Beloved, the tones of that august voice which said, "Let My son go" will continue to echo as long as you and I are here below! We shall *continue* to be let go! This glorious liberty shall be made more manifest to us daily. Are we not as creatures made subject to vanity and compassed with infirmity? By-and-by we shall be liberated from the bondage of the flesh! Our bodies shall go down into the grave and lie there for a while in the prison of the tomb, but that voice which quickened us into spiritual life will resuscitate our bodies and cause them to enter into the resurrection-life of Christ! Through the dark, dismal vaults will sound the loud, cheerful voice "Let My son go," and there shall not a bone of a Believer be left.

As it was said of old, "not a hoof shall be left behind," so nothing that belongs to redeemed man shall be left in the grave. "Of all that You have given Me I have lost nothing," says Christ, and truly, of person and of things—of all the people and of all that shall belong to the people to make up their manhood—there shall nothing be lost—the Lord shall have His own and His Grace shall triumph! This voice of God is an acknowledgment of His people and a claim for their deliverance—but no less is it an ordaining of their destiny. "Let My son go, that he may serve Me." Oh yes, Beloved, we are no sooner set free from serving Pharaoh than we begin to serve Jehovah! "Let My son go, that he may *serve* Me."

And in what capacity did Israel serve God? It was in the loftiest capacity possible! Israel became Jehovah's priest. It was in Israel that the sacrifice was offered. In Israel the incense was burnt. From Israel went up the sacred Psalm. Israel stood before the Lord in that high position of sacred privilege. So, likewise, is it that as soon as a man is brought out of the bondage of sin, he presents unto the Lord the sacrifice of Christ by *faith* and afterwards goes on to present himself a living sacrifice. Thus his thanksgivings and his broken and contrite heart are perpetual oblations and offerings of a sweet smelling savor, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Israel became the servant of God by way of preserving the Testimony. His were the Oracles. Israel kept the knowledge of the one God. Israel kept the Revelation of the Most High. While all the world outside was dark, Israel preserved the Light.

To this end, in like manner, Brothers and Sisters, you and I are called of God. If He has brought us up out of the Egypt of sin, we are to present daily sacrifice. We are to bear daily testimony to the Truth of God. And oh, if we do not—should we begin to stagger through unbelief, or speak with

bated breath of the Truth that has been surely made known to us. Should the fear of man, or the fashion of the age so beguile our hearts, becloud our eyes, belie our good profession and utterly befool our common sense that we shall blush to bear our testimony—what shame must cover us! What confusion must take hold upon us! But, blessed be His name, He will keep His own true to His Word. If it were possible, the free-thinkers and the false teachers in these days would deceive the very elect—but that is out of the question—it is beyond the range of possibility!

All God's children shall be taught of the Lord and they shall hold His Truth and bear witness to it, even to the world's end! Israel was to be God's servant to serve Him by walking by faith. What a wonderful 40 years' walk that was in the wilderness! They did not live up to it but still, the spirit of that march of mystery was very wonderful. Without sowing or reaping they were fed! They were supplied with water without fountain, reservoir, or watercourse. They were guided without a compass and without one sign of track way over shifting sand! Yet they were always well-fed, well-housed and, what was still more marvelous, their camps were well shaded by day and well lit by night! They had a choice experience of having nothing and yet possessing everything! With no fertile fields or fruitful trees, yet Israel was made to live upon the fat of the kidneys of wheat and to ride upon the high places of the earth. She had all things and she abounded. The Lord was her Shepherd and she did not want!

We are often called upon to serve God and that very conspicuously, though we may be little conscious of it when we are required to walk by faith. This is the work of God, the grandest work a man can do—to believe on Him whom He has sent. The godlike work, the work of works is this—to walk by faith, living upon the unseen God! Israel was to be God's servant by continually dwelling in happy fellowship with God and waiting upon Him with holy worship. Nowhere else, in all the world, was a Pass-over or a feast of tabernacles kept to do Him homage—and nowhere else was the Sabbath hallowed and observed. With them, alone, Jehovah dwelt and among them Jehovah shone forth. And so, Beloved, if you and I have been called out of bondage, it is that we may serve the Lord!

Are we all alive to our obligation? Are we faithful to our higher calling? Are we doing our sworn, sacred duty? If anyone here is rescued this night from the grip of the Destroyer, delivered from the bondage of this evil world, saved from the damning power of sin—know that when you leave one corps, you must enlist into another corps! You come in fresh from the enemy's camp, not to be treated as a prisoner, but as a recruit! You must enlist to assail the powers and passions you once defended. God would have you become His servant that you may serve Him with joy and gladness all your days. Thus, then, I have opened up the voice of God as far as my time or strength or knowledge has permitted.

II. Now, secondly, here was THE VOICE OF MAN. What a comedown it seems to be. "You shall say unto Pharaoh, Thus says the Lord, Let My son

go.” Why did not the Lord say it Himself? Why did He need to pick up a Moses and send him to say it? Well, dear Friends, had the Lord said it Himself to Pharaoh, it would have been very startling and Pharaoh must have yielded ultimately to the Divine fiat—but don’t you see the deeper marvel in the milder proceeding—when Jehovah, as it were, hides His power and cloaks it in weakness?

Instead of appealing to Pharaoh with that Voice which breaks the cedars of Lebanon and makes the hinds to calve, He speaks to him by one who was slow of speech and of a stammering tongue! Now, if God’s voice can vanquish Pharaoh when it masks itself behind the feebleness of a stuttering, stammering Moses, it will be more glorious than it would have been if it had used no instrumentality whatever! Why does not the Lord speak to every sinner directly and bring him out and save him? Well—He might do so. He might do it if He would—but when He condescends, instead, to take us poor mortals who have tasted of His love and says to us, “Now you go and be My voice: you go and speak for Me,” oh, then His Grace and power are not *less* conspicuous, but they are far more admirable! In using such ill-adapted tools for the accomplishment of His great designs, He shows His own transcendent power!

That famous well-cover at Antwerp, just opposite the cathedral—one of the finest pieces of worked iron that was ever known—is said to have been made by Quintyn Matsys with nothing but a hammer and a file, his fellow workmen having taken away his tools. If it is so, the more praise is due to his consummate skill. All the works of God redound to His Glory—but when the tools He uses appear to be totally inadequate to the results He achieves—our reverence is excited, while our reason is abashed and we marvel at a power we cannot understand! This comes home to some of us very closely. Let us put it to ourselves. Does the Lord take you, my Brother, or has He taken me—and does He speak words of eternal power through our poor little tongues—through these unruly members that are prone to do so much mischief?

If He really wins souls through them, or pulls down the pride of Pharaoh through them, then shall it ring through eternity that the Lord has done marvelous things! He has taken the worm and made him to be a sharp thrashing instrument, having teeth—and made him to thrash the mountains! He has chosen the weak things of the world to confuse the things which are mighty! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has He ordained strength because of His enemies, that He might still the enemy and the avenger. Unto His name be Glory forever and ever!

The feebleness of the human voice has never appeared more palpable than when it has attempted to repeat the sentences which have been uttered by the mouth of the Lord. Moses seems to think that there must be some mistake! Can it be that God means to bring Israel out of Egypt by *him*? Whenever God designs to make His servants eminently useful, He lets them know their frailty. The more treasure there is in the vessel, the

less will its comeliness be vaunted. It is mere common ware, an earthen vessel that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us! But when Moses found that he really was employed of God, how fearless he was of ridicule! He went in unto Pharaoh and delivered his Master's message.

The interview with Moses and Aaron must have seemed supremely ridiculous to Pharaoh. It put him into a great rage. These two Israelites, wretched slaves, coming to tell the great king of Egypt that he must let Israel go! How absurd! Even to the Israelites it must have appeared preposterous, for two persons such as these to go in before the king. Why, with a word he could have said, "Take off the dogs' heads," and so have ended all the business directly! Yet they went and bearded him in his royal palace and delivered what he might think a vain menace, but what they knew to be a veritable message from God! Insignificant as we, of ourselves, may be, the very fact that God instructs us to speak might suffice to quell our fears. We must go and speak the Lord's message and must not be afraid of being thought infatuated.

When I have sometimes bid a sinner live and believe in Christ, I have heard a mutter, "What is the good of telling a dead man to live?" Some wise Brother has said, "You might as well shake a pocket handkerchief over a grave." Yes, Brother, it is true—quite true. So might Moses as well have shaken a pocket handkerchief outside Pharaoh's palace but, when God bid him to go and tell Pharaoh to let His people go, he went and did it. And when the Lord bids any of us go to a sinner and say, "Believe," *we* cannot make the sinner believe—neither can he make himself believe—but the preacher sent of God is an echo of God's voice! God speaks *through* him! With authority he is commissioned to say to the sinner, "Turn you, turn you; why will you die? Repent and be baptized, every one of you."

We are bid to speak peremptorily, as ambassadors of the King—not because of any prerogative we assume—but as we commend ourselves to every man's conscience, there is power in our message. The voice that speaks by stammering Moses is Divine, notwithstanding the ridicule that may be heaped upon it. Moses, having such a command to go and speak, must be undeterred by refusal. "I know not the Lord," said Pharaoh, "neither will I let His people go." Now, dear Brother, you cannot win souls unless you are prepared to meet with strong rebuffs. Yes, but some are heartbroken if any resistance is offered them! You may expect it. Old human nature does not know the Lord.

You remember how Melancthon thought he was going to convert any number of people when he began to preach, but when he found out his mistake, he said, "Old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon." So he is. You will come across a bit of grit every now and then which will break your knife. Be not dismayed, the Lord will sharpen you and make you stronger and stronger yet, for even that Pharaoh who said, "I will not let the people go," will be down on his knees presently begging the people to

depart! We must be prepared for opposition and neither flinch nor quail, but brace ourselves up for the struggle.

So, too, the man whom God sends ought to be assured of *success*. I am persuaded that Moses, after he got over his first little difficulties with the people and recovered from his own diffidence, parleyed not with doubt, but was strong in faith. There he stood with the wondrous rod, turning waters into blood and slaying all their fish; covering the heavens with blackness; turning the dust into living creatures; bringing hail and grievous murrain and doing it all as calmly and quietly as he should do who feels that he is the voice of God! How steadily he kept at his work! With what diligence he persevered in it, till at last the 10th plague found Moses unmoved, ready to conduct the people away to the Red Sea and to bring them out into the wilderness!

O servants of God, be calm and confident! Go on preaching the Gospel! Go on teaching in the Sunday school! Go on giving away tracts! Go on with steady perseverance! Be sure of this—you shall not labor in vain or spend your strength for nothing! Do you still stutter? Are you still slow of speech? Nevertheless, go on! Have you been rebuked and rebuffed? Have you had little else but defeat? This is the way to success! You shall pave the road with the rough flints of your failure! Toil on and believe on! Be steadfast in your confidence, for with an high hand and an outstretched arm the Lord will fetch out His elect and He will fetch some of them out by *you*! Only trust in the Lord and hold on the even tenor of your way!

III. Our last word is upon THE POWER OF GOD. Without the power of God the voice of man would have been an utter failure. What effect was produced by the voice of Moses? Went there not forth with it a power which plagued Pharaoh? It filled the sinful land of Egypt with plagues! So men that preach God's Gospel with God's power fill the world with plagues. "I know that," a man says. "I wish I had never listened to that fellow. I could not sleep last night." No, the frogs were his bedchamber! The true preacher finds his hearer sometimes saying, "I will never go again. Wherever I am, I seem to be haunted and tormented with the Truth of God that man has spoken so badly and so boldly. The commands he enforces run counter to the prejudices I cherish! They alarm my conscience and worry me incessantly."

Yes, he has made a simple sermon bring forth all manner of flies—thoughts that will sting a man wherever he goes and he cannot escape from them! He still kicks and strives against the Gospel—rebels against it, won't have it—gets angry; goes to the theater one night; joins in a little social revelry another night, but to no purpose. He does not enjoy anything! He scarcely knows why. Soon a thick darkness comes over the whole scene of life, as the darkness came over all the land of Egypt. All that was beautiful and brilliant is now obscured. All that was pleasant and joyous is now eclipsed. The man finds that he does not even enjoy the ordinary comforts of life! He does not know why. He does not intend to yield to the

Gospel, yet his very bread seems sour and the water he draws from the well is brackish and bitter.

His troubles multiply and follow one another in quick succession. Now a hail storm that leaves desolation behind! Then a grievous disease among the cattle. The hand of the Lord is not confined to the farm. It will visit your home. His terrible judgment reaches your family, your fondest love, your firstborn son. As of old there was a cry going up in the land of Egypt so that it was intolerable to stay there, so God lays bare His arm in the exceedingly great plagues which His terrible Law brings upon a man! When He means to fetch him out and bring him to Himself, God's servants become the harbingers of plagues! Jesus Himself said, "I came not to send peace on the earth, but a sword."

That sword is unsheathed and families are divided against each other with the grand intent that Israel should be brought out and peace established by the Redemption which Jehovah has provided. What will occur, by-and-by? Why, the oppressor will be glad to part with his bondmen. It sometimes happens that the ungodly become very glad to get rid of God's chosen people whom they are prone to persecute. "Their melancholy ill agrees with our liveliness," so they say. They did all they could to invite them to their parties and get them into their frivolities again—they laid traps for them to keep them away from hearing the Gospel—but now the Lord has begun to deal with them!

Their old companions say, "Now we must leave him." "I have tried all I could to get our old comrade back to our old parties," says one, "but, really, he said such things that he quite poisoned all our pleasures. We could not enjoy ourselves! I say, let us get rid of him. Do not let him be in our company any more." Yes, it is a grand thing when the preaching of the Gospel makes the ungodly want to keep the converts away from their cliques—when they say, "Oh, go off to the Tabernacle! We do not want you here. You have pestered us enough with your religion, your prayers, your crying, your tears, your talk about being lost and your needing to find a Savior! You are bad company and you had better be gone."

A lady who joined this Church some years ago, moving in the higher circles of society, said to me, "I was quite willing to continue my acquaintance with my friends, but I found they gave me the cold shoulder and did not want me." Just so. It is a great mercy when the Egyptians say, "Get you gone," and when they are ready to give you jewels of silver and jewels of gold to get rid of you! The Lord wants His people to come right out and to be separate! He knows how to, by the simple utterance of the Gospel, put such a division between His people and those who are not His people, that even the ungodly shall begin to say, "Get you gone! We want to have nothing further to do with you!" Glory be to God when such a thing as that happens!

And the Lord knows how to make all opposition cease, for it is written that when Israel came out of Egypt, not so much as a dog moved his

tongue against the children of Israel. Before, they were such slaves that if a cur barked at them they dared not turn against it, for fear it should be the dog of an Egyptian who would be surely down upon them for meddling with his dog. How dare a slave do that? Everybody was against them. But when the Lord brought them out, there was not a dog that dared bark that night! The Egyptians were all anxious that they should be gone and willing that they should go. And Pharaoh, too, must have astonished his subjects with his sudden zeal to see this strange people gone. Do you know what that means?

Oh, what fights and battles; what wars and strife there were in my soul when I was trying to find Christ! My old sins came up against me! My memory unearthed buried trespasses—faults and failings gathered in force like a flood and threatened to overwhelm me. Everything in my constant studies and in my daily experiences seemed to drive me back from Christ. But on that memorable Sabbath morning when I heard the word, “Look unto Me, and be you saved, all the ends of the earth,” I did look and lo, against me not a dog did move his tongue! My sins did not complain! They were drowned in the Red Sea of Jesus’ blood! My old corruptions—I did not know at the time that I had any—they were so very quiet! Temptations ceased to trouble me!

For that little while, at any rate, the warrior seemed to sheathe his sword and the brick maker laid down his clay to go out of Egypt with jewels of silver and jewels of gold! I could sing unto the Lord, for He had triumphed gloriously! I have met some of these old Egyptians since then—a good number of them—and I have had some hard dealings with them. But, at that time, all was still and quiet, happy and blessed—

**“Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!”**

With the Paschal Lamb in our mouths nobody dares to challenge us. The blood on the door is an unanswerable answer to every accuser, caviler, or adversary! Glory be to God, then, who thus can fetch out His people and deliver them from their sins, their lusts, their habits, their passions—deliver them from death—deliver them from going down into the Pit and so deliver them that none shall lay anything to their charge, since God has justified them and Christ has absolved them!

May the Lord grant us Grace to be used as His instruments as Moses was. And may we, each one of us, cry unto the Lord if we are in bondage, just as Israel did in Egypt! May the Lord in mercy send forth concerning every poor sinner here just such a message as He sent concerning His people in the house of bondage—“Thus says the Lord, Let My son go, that he may serve Me.” If He will thus work among us as in the olden times, to Him shall be the glory now at this present, yes, and forevermore. Amen!

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

TO THE SADDEST OF THE SAD NO. 2026

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, JUNE 3, 1888,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“And Moses spoke so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage.”
Exodus 6:9.*

LITTLE words often contain great meanings. It is often the case with that monosyllable “so.” In the present instance we must lay stress upon it and read the text thus—“Moses spoke so unto the children of Israel.” That is, he said what God told him to say. He did not invent his message. He did not think out the Gospel that he had to carry to the people. He was simply a repeater of the Divine message. As he received it, so he spoke it. “Moses spoke so unto the children of Israel.” If he had not done so, the responsibility must have rested upon himself, whether the nation was moved by his words or not. But when he was simply God’s ambassador, saying only what God would have him say, his responsibility was limited.

If he delivered the Lord’s own Word and it failed to win the heart of Israel, he could not be blamed. Although it was a great sadness of heart to him that the people did not and even could not receive the Divine message, yet as far as he was concerned, his conscience was clear. It is ever so with the preacher of the Gospel—if he declares the Word of the Lord as he has received it, whether men will hear or whether they will not, he is clear before God, whatever his hearers may do or may not do.

I often wonder what those preachers do who feel called to make up their message as they go on. For if they fail, their failure must be attributed in great measure to their want of ability to make up a moving tale. They have to spread their sails to the breeze of the age and to pick up a Gospel that comes floating down to them on the stream of time, altering every week in the year. And they must have an endless task to catch this new idea, or, as they put it, to keep abreast of the age. Unless, indeed, like chameleons, they have a natural aptitude to change color, they must have a worrying time of it and a horrible amount of shifting to get through.

When they have done their best to preach this gospel of their own, then they are accountable for having made that gospel. For every bit of its teaching they are accountable because they were the manufacturers of it and it came forth from *their* foundry, bearing *their* stamp. If they take this yoke upon them and so refuse to learn of Christ, they will find no rest for their souls. To me the preaching of the Lord’s own Gospel is a joy and a privilege. Concern for your souls loads me with the burden of the Lord—it is His burden and not one which I have selected for myself. I often feel on

a Sabbath night when I go home weary—"I know that I have preached what I believe to be God's Gospel."

*I have not said anything—I have not intended to say anything that was my own. I have not left out, at least I have not intended to leave out, anything that was in the text, nor anything which I believe to be the teaching of the Gospel of Christ. And then if you do not receive it, that is a sorrowful business, but it is no concern of mine so that I shall have to answer for it at the Last Great Day. When a man-servant goes to the door with a message from his master, if you do not like what he tells you, do not be angry with *him*. What has he to do with it? Has he said what his master told him to say? If he has, then be angry with *his master* if you must be, or accept what his master says if you think fit. But let the poor man that brought the message be held clear if he has faithfully reported his master's words.*

I claim that if I have preached my Master's Gospel, whether men are saved or lost, whether they accept it or reject it, I must leave that with themselves and not have their sin laid at my door. How heartily do I cry to God that the Word may not be a savor of death unto death but a savor of life unto life. But oh, my Hearers, if you perish after hearing the Gospel of God, do not think that you can cast the blame on me.

Now, the message Moses brought was rejected and he knew why it was rejected. He could see the reason. The people were in such bondage, they were so miserably ground down, they were so unhappy and hopeless, that what he spoke seemed to them to be as idle words. There are hundreds of reasons why men reject the Gospel. We will not go into them tonight. He that wants to beat a dog can always find a stick and he that wishes to reject Christ can always find a reason for it. And, however unreasonable a reason may be, it will serve a sinner's turn, when that turn happens to be the making of some excuse for himself why he should not yield to the Savior. Oh that men were less cunning in making apologies for refusing the Lord Jesus!

Among all the reasons, however, that I ever heard, that with which I have the most sympathy for, is this one—that some cannot receive Christ because they are so full of anguish and are so crushed in spirit that they cannot find strength of mind enough to entertain a hope that by any possibility salvation can come to them. It is to their sad case that I desire to speak. I think that I can speak to the case, if God help me, for I have felt the same myself. I do remember when I could not believe even Jesus Himself by reason of sore anguish and straitness of spirit. And, therefore, as one who has worn the chains, I speak to those who are still in chains.

I know the clanking of those fetters. I know what it is to feel the damp of the stone walls and to fear that there is no coming out of prison. I know and have felt the despair that even when the emancipator turned the great key in the lock and set the door wide open—yet still my heart had made for itself a direr cage. And I could not believe in the possibility of liberty—therefore I sat bound in a dungeon of my own creation. Ah, there is no Bastille so awful as that which is built by despair and kept under the cus-

tody of a crushed spirit. Many are the desponding ones whose eyes fail so that they cannot look up or look out. To such I speak. May God speak through me by the Holy Spirit, the Comforter!

I. And first, will you notice that what Moses brought to these people was glad tidings. **IT WAS A FREE AND FULL GOSPEL MESSAGE.** To them it was the Gospel of salvation from a cruel bondage, the Gospel of hope, the Gospel of glorious promise. It is a very admirable type and metaphorical description of what the Gospel is to us. Moses' word to them was singularly clear, cheering and comforting. But they could not receive it. "They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and cruel bondage."

First, Moses spoke to them about their God. He said, "You have a God, and His name is Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob." They looked up from their bricks and they seemed to say, "God? What have we to do with Him? Oh, that the straw were given us to make our bricks! We are up to our necks in this filthy Nile mud making bricks. And you come and talk to us about God. Go and preach to Pharaoh and the taskmasters that rule us. But as for us poor creatures, slaves that we are, we do not understand you. What do you mean by Jehovah, our God? Bring us more garlic and onions, or lessen our daily tasks, or take away the sticks from our drivers and then we will listen to you."

And so they shook their heads and said that such mysteries and theologies were not for them. And yet, dear Sirs, if any of you are in such a case, it is for you—Jehovah, Israel's God, was indeed their only hope and He is your only hope, also. Alas, that they should be so unwise as to refuse to let the light shine upon them, for light it was! What a poor reason for refusing light because the night is so dark! Man's best hope lies in his God. O you whose lives are bitter with toil and want, there is something for you after all, much better than the hard saying, "What shall we eat and what shall we drink?"

There is an inheritance above the grinding toil of everyday life. There is a portion much better than this killing care which frets so many of you and makes life a calamity to you. Do not, therefore, because of the heaviness of your lot, refuse to hear about God, your Maker, your Benefactor. In that direction lies your only real hope. Have this God for a Father and a Friend, and life will wear another aspect and you will be another man.

Then Moses went on to tell them about a Covenant. He said, "You have a God and that God has said, 'I have also established My Covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.' " Covenant? Why, many of them would hardly know what it meant. "Covenant?" they said, "God make a Covenant with us poor brick makers, that have to slave from morning to night without wages and now are forced to make bricks without straw?" God and a Covenant—these are strange words in ears that hear the curses of taskmasters and the crack of their whips. It sounded like mockery to them to talk of such high matters.

I doubt not they muttered to themselves, “This Moses is a mad philosopher who has grand and full words. But what words to us? A bit of fish out of the Nile, or a cucumber from the irrigated fields would be a deal better than talking to us about a Covenant.” And yet, hearken. If any of you are in a sad condition, your best hopes may lie this way. What if God has entered into Covenant with you that He will bless you for Jesus Christ’s sake? There may be a mint of wealth for the sons of poverty in this Everlasting Covenant. And the best kind of wealth, too. There may be for you a promised emancipation which will break the fetters which now hold you—and set you free.

I tell you that in the Covenant of Grace lies the charter of the poor and needy. At any rate, if you come under that Covenant it cannot be worse with you than it is now. You seem now to be under a covenant of bondage and of sorrow and any change will be for the better. If there be another covenant—a Covenant of Grace and love and peace and everlasting faithfulness—it were worth while to hear about it and to seek it out until you discover whether you have part and lot in it. I entreat you, look into this matter. Harken diligently to the voice of the Gospel. Hear and your soul shall live.

So, when Moses had spoken of the Covenant, he went on to speak yet more about God’s pity to them. He reported that Jehovah had said, “I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage and I have remembered My Covenant.” I fancy that those words opened their eyes a little. They looked up and said to one another, “Is there, indeed, a God who has heard our groanings? Oh but,” they muttered, “look at the many years we have been groaning. Why, it is forty years since this man Moses first came out and saw our burdens. Where has he been these forty years? What is the use of pity that is so tardy in its movements?”

And yet, dear Sirs, if you are inclined to talk so, it may be that if God is slow He is nevertheless sure. And if He is slow to you it is out of patience and longsuffering to others. He knows best when and how to save His people. Remember that when the tale of bricks was doubled, *then* Moses came. And when you are getting to your very worst and your night is darkening into a sort of hellish midnight it may be that your darkness is coming to an end. Therefore, be not so bowed down as to let the brick—earth—get into your ears and eyes and make you deaf and blind. But listen to see if there is anything to be heard that is better than your daily moans and groans. Listen to the messenger of God who comes to tell of what God is about to do. He is a God full of compassion and He has respect unto broken hearts and tearful eyes.

And then Moses went on further with his blessed Gospel message to tell them about the Lord’s resolve to rescue them by a great redemption. The Lord had said, “I am Jehovah and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you out of their bondage.” Do you notice that all along the Lord uses strong words and speaks like a great king? “I am Jehovah. I will. I will. I will.” When you go home just notice

what a number of “I wills” there are in this declaration of the great God. When God says, “I will,” He means it. Depend upon it. He does not ask our leave, or wait for our help. “I will” is omnipotence putting itself into speech.

Jehovah will accomplish what He promises. He told them, therefore, that He meant to come to their rescue. “I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you out of their bondage. I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments.” God means to save you. Poor, troubled, confessedly guilty Sinner, believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God and trust yourself with Him and the Lord will save you. He will deliver you from all the guilt of your past life, from the evil habits of your present life and from the temptations of your future life. He will break the yoke of Satan from off your neck and make you to be no more the slave of sin but you shall become the child of the living God.

Moses told them about the Lord’s ways of Divine Grace and the inheritance which He had prepared for them. My message is after the same sort. Thus says Jehovah tonight, in the preaching of the Gospel to everyone that will believe in Jesus, “I will save and I will deliver you. And I will be to you a God—and you shall know that I am your God, which brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. And I will give it you for an heritage—I am the Lord.”

These are great words but they come from the mouth of the great God who cannot lie. Therefore believe them and take heart of hope. God will take you, poor guilty ones, to be His children. He will promote you to be His willing servants. He will use you for His Glory though now you dishonor His name. He will sanctify you and cleanse you and He will bring you to Heaven, even you who have lain among the pots and have been defiled in the brick kilns of sin. He will never rest till He makes you sit upon His Throne with Him, where He is glorified, world without end. This I speak to you who are in bondage. Even as Jesus said of old, so say I in my measure as His messenger—“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. Because he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

Believe in Christ Jesus and He who has come to save the lost will give you as clear and clean a deliverance from the power of sin as Jehovah gave Israel deliverance from the power of the Egyptian tyrant. He will bring you out of bondage and guide you through the wilderness till you come into the eternal rest, even to a better land than Canaan, though it flowed with milk and honey.

II. We come now to note that IT WAS RECEIVED WITH UNBELIEF CAUSED BY ANGUISH OF HEART. The message was from the Lord and it was full of hope for them but they were too much broken down to receive it. We can quite understand what that meant. Let us look into the scene. They could not now receive this Gospel because they had at first caught it and had been disappointed. They were under a misapprehension, for they expected to be free at once, as soon as Moses went to Pharaoh. And as

they did not get immediate relief, they fell back into sullen despair. When Moses came to them and said that God had appeared to him at the bush and had sent him to deliver them, they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Great things they looked for on the morrow, for they were at the end of their patience. But after that, when Moses went in unto Pharaoh and the tyrant doubled their labor by denying them straw, then they could not believe in God or in His messenger. In the process of salvation it often happens—I have seen it many times—after persons have come to hear the Gospel, after they have, in some measure, become attentive to its invitations, they have for a season been much more miserable than they were before. Have you never noticed, in taking a medicine, how often you are made to feel more sick before you are made well? It is often so in the workings of the great remedy of Divine Grace—it shows us our disease that we may the more heartily accept the heavenly medicine.

Yes, and in special cases there may be evils within the spiritual system which must be thrown out in the flesh to be made visible and so to become the subjects of repentance and abhorrence. The man who judges with shortness and straitness of judgment demands a remedy that will cure his soul of all evils on the spot. And if it does not evidently and immediately do this, he cries, “Away with it.” I find that the Hebrew word translated “anguish” here signifies shortness. Your marginal Bibles have “straitness.” So they could not believe because of the shortness of their judgment—they measured God by inches. They limited the great and infinite God to minutes and days.

And so, as they found themselves, at first, getting into a worse case than before, they said to Moses, deliberately, “Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians.” They did as good as say—“You have done us no good. Indeed, you have increased our miseries. And we cannot believe in you or accept your message as really from God, seeing it has caused us a terrible increase of our sufferings.” Grace may truly and effectually come to a heart, and for a while cause no joy, no peace. I have known many a man coming to this Tabernacle who has been prospering in business, and so on, and yet he has been going down to Hell as fast as ever he could travel.

By God’s Grace he has come and heard the Gospel and he has made a great many improvements in his conduct. And he has even become a regular and attentive hearer. And at that very time he has fallen into an affliction, the like of which he had never experienced before. And he has consequently complained, “Why, I am worse instead of better. I find my heart grows more rebellious against God than ever it was before.” I do not wonder that it should be so, for I have seen so many examples of it. The discipline of the household of God begins very early. But a present increase of sorrow has nothing to do with what the main result will be, except that it works towards it in a mysterious manner.

Perhaps what you at first thought was genuine faith was not faith—and God is going to knock down the false before he builds up the true. If you

had an old house and any friend of yours were to say, "John, I will build you a new house. When shall I begin?" "Oh," you might say, "begin next week to build the new house." At the end of the week he has pulled half your old house down. "Oh," you say, "this is what you call building me a new house, is it? You are causing me great loss—I wish I had never consented to your proposal." He replies, "You are most unreasonable—how am I to build you a new house on this spot without taking the old one down?"

And so it often happens that the Grace of God does seem in its first work to make a man even worse than he was before, because it shows to him sins which he did not know to be there, evils which had been concealed, dangers never dreamed of. Thus the work of Divine Grace even makes his bondage seem to be heavier than ever it was. And yet this is all done in wisdom, in love and in fulfillment of the promise which God has given. I am never very much astonished when I find people ready almost to turn away from the hearing of the Gospel, because, after having at first heard it with pleasure, they find that, for the time being, it involves them in even greater sorrow than before.

How earnestly would I persuade them to overcome their very natural tendency to a hasty judgment! Press on, dear Friend. Be of good courage. Pharaoh will not long be able to make you keep up that enormous number of bricks. Within a very few days he will be glad to get rid of you. Wait hopefully. For the God who begins in darkness will end in light and before long you will come to understand those ways of mercy which are now past finding out. Not many weeks after the sobbing and sighing at the brick-yards, Moses and the children of Israel sang this song unto the Lord—"Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously—the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea." The work of deliverance began very grimly but it ended very gloriously.

The inability of Israel to believe the message of Moses arose also from the fact that they were earthbound by heavy oppression—the mere struggle to exist exhausted all their energy and destroyed all their hope. The extreme hardness of their lot made them despondent and sullen. They had to work from morning to night. The Egyptian of the present age knows what it is to work very, very hard and to let their earnings go into the coffers of their precious princes. It seems always to have been so with wretched Egypt—it is ever the house of bondage. But these Israelites, being not even Egyptians, but strangers in Egypt, were worked without any pity or mercy. It was a daily question with them whether life was worth living under such cruel conditions.

I do not wonder that a great many are unable to receive the Gospel in this city of ours because their struggle for existence is awful. I am afraid that it gets more and more intense, though even now it passes all bounds. If any of you can do anything to help the toil-worn workers, I pray you, do it. The poor workwoman who sits so many hours with the candle and needle and does not earn enough, when she has worked all those hours, and can just pay the rent and keep body and soul together—do you wonder

that she thinks that this Gospel of ours cannot be for her and does not care to listen to it? I know that it would be her comfort but her soul refuses to be comforted, she is so crushed.

The dock laborer who comes home five days out of the six having earned nothing and hears his little children crying for bread—is it any wonder that he cannot hear about heavenly things? Why, it is with our white population very much as it was with the Negro population of Jamaica. When there was work to be had and they could get enough to eat and more, our Churches were crowded with them. They were the best of hearers and the speediest of converts. They were soon gathered into immense Churches. But when everything went badly with them and they had to work very hard barely to live, there were groups of backsliders and multitudes who did not feel that they could go to the House of God at all.

They said that they had no garments to wear and no money to spare. And do you wonder at it? Their poverty was so grinding and their toil so severe that the services they had once delighted in they had no heart for. It is all very easy to say that it ought not to be so. But it is so. And it is so with multitudes in London. And yet, dear Friend—if such a one has come in here tonight—I pray you do not throw away the next world because you have so little of this. This is sheer folly. If I have little here, I would make sure of the more hereafter. If you have such a struggle for existence here, you should seek that higher, nobler, better life, which would give you, even in penury and want, a joy and a comfort to which you are a stranger now.

May the Holy Spirit come upon you and raise you out of this present evil world into newness of life in Christ Jesus! I do not find that God's people get into a condition of utter desolation—they are, at their very worst, kept from total desertion. For the Lord has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." They have to work hard and they may come very near to want but my observation satisfies me that they are happy still. They are joyful still. They are uplifted by the inner life above the down-dragging depression of external trials. I would to God that I could say a word that might comfort any child of poverty who should happen to be here tonight. And I pray the Lord Himself to be their comforter and helper.

But, worst of all, there are some who seem as if they could not lay hold on Christ because their sense of sin has become so intolerable and the wretchedness which follows upon conviction has become so fearful. They have grown almost to be contentedly despairing. I hardly know any condition of mind that is worse than chronic despair when at last that which seemed alarming enough to drive to madness settles down into a lifeless, sullen moroseness. These Israelites had at last sunk so low that they said, "Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians."

But your lot is terrible. "We know it is," they said, "but we shall never get out of it." But your bondage is horrible. "Yes but you may make it worse by interfering. You will only aggravate our taskmasters and bring upon us that last straw which breaks the back. Let us alone. We are doomed to suffer—we are predestined to be bondsmen. Let us go on as

quietly as we may in our slavery. It may be that like poor fishes in the cave, we may lose our eyes yet and then we shall not know that it is dark, for we shall have lost the capacity for light.”

Oh, it is a dreadful thing when a heart gets to that—when a man desires that Christ would depart from him and let him alone to perish. Do not some men virtually say, “I know I am lost. Let me enjoy myself as well as I can. I cannot—I cannot enjoy sin. But don’t vex my conscience. Do not worry me with your talk, for I shall suffer enough hereafter. Do not tantalize me about saving faith, for I shall never believe. Do not begin talking to me about repentance. I shall never have a soft and tender heart. I know I never shall.”

A man who has begun to be numbed with cold, cries to his comrades, “Leave me to sleep myself to death.” And thus do despairing ones ask to be left in their misery. Dear Soul, we cannot, we dare not, thus desert you. I will tell you what you shall do, dear Soul—give me a hearing. In the name of God, believe that there is yet hope—that even now Christ Jesus invites men and especially such as you, to put their trust in Him. O you who are burdened with sin, He calls you to let him be your Savior! If there is a man in the world He died for, you are the man.

If I see a physician hurrying down the street in his brougham and anybody says to me, “Where is that doctor going?” If I knew every house in the street, I should pick out the case of a man that I knew to be in the worst condition and most near to death’s door. “Sir,” I should say, “the doctor is going there. That dying person needs him most and I believe that he is hurrying to his bedside.” If there is one man here that is worse than any other, more sad, more sick, more sorry, more despairing than another, my Lord Jesus Christ, who is here, has come to meet with such a one.

O troubled Heart, Jesus has come to seek and to save you! I am sure it is so. Hope! Just hope! Hope! You are not beyond hope of salvation—

**“See, O Soul, you are yet alive,
Not in torment. Not in Hell.
Still does His good Spirit strive,
With the chief of sinners dwell.”**

Lift up your eyes, for you are not yet where the rich man was after his death and burial. Do not yet despair. Maybe there awaits you yet a happy life of joy in God. The sun may yet bring you brighter days, days of peace and rest and usefulness.

Did you ever hear the story of John Newton on the coast of Africa? He had got himself into such a state by his sins, his drunkenness, his vice, that at last he was left on the coast of Africa and virtually became a slave. Did John Newton dream, when he wandered up and down with a hungry belly, full of fever and at death’s door that the day would come when he would be the companion and dear Friend of Cowper? And did he dream that the Church of St. Mary Woolnoth, over there in the city, would be crowded every time he stood up to preach of Free Grace and dying love? He did not think it but it was so predestined.

Something equally gracious may be ordained for you. Blasphemer, you may even preach the Gospel! O you Magdalene, full of filthiness, you will yet wash his feet with your tears and wipe them with the hairs of your head. You sin-stained villain, you may yet stand among that white-robed host of whom the angel asked, "Who are these and from where came they?" You, even you, will sing more sweet and loud than any of them unto Him that loved you and washed you from your sins in His precious blood. God make it so and unto His name shall be praise forever and ever!

III. I have many more things to say but I might weary you with them rather than bless you. The message was at first not received by Israel by reason of their anguish of soul but IT WAS TRUE FOR ALL THAT AND THE LORD MADE IT SO. What did the Lord do when He found that these people did not hearken to Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage? What did the Lord do? He was not going to give them up because of their wretched condition. He had said, "I will bring them out," and he meant to do it.

The first thing the Lord did to prove His persevering Grace was to commission Moses again. (Exo. 6:1; 7:2). So the Lord God, in everlasting mercy, says to His minister, "You have to preach the Gospel again to them. Again proclaim My Grace." It seems a terrible thing to have to pour our souls into deaf ears. Yet I shall not give up, for I have done it with some here for nearly thirty-three years and I may as well go on. Why should I lose so much labor? I will try again, like Peter, who, after toiling all night and taking nothing, yet let down the net at the Lord's bidding. One of these days those dead ears will be made to live. God in mercy says, "Go on with it. As long as there is breath in your body, tell them to believe in My Son and they shall live. Tell them till you die that, 'He that with his mouth confesses and with his heart believes that God has raised Christ from the dead shall be saved.'"

But the Lord did more than that for Israel. As these people had not listened to Moses, He called Moses and Aaron to Him and He renewed their charge. He laid it upon them—gave them again their marching orders—"He gave them a charge unto the children of Israel and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt." A monstrous thing it did look like. They would not even hear Moses. But the Lord will have His servants stand to their work. Moses and Aaron have to do it, however impossible it may appear. There is to be no backing out of it. They must know of a surety that Israel is to be delivered by their means.

It is a grand thing when the Lord lays the conversion of men on the hearts of His ministers and makes them feel that they must win souls. Moses was bound to bring out Israel. "But there is Pharaoh." Pharaoh is included in the Divine charge. They have to beat Pharaoh into submission. "But these children of Israel will not obey." The Lord put them in the charge—did you not observe the words, "He gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh"? Moses and Aaron, you have to

bring Israel out. Pharaoh is to let them go and Israel is to go willingly. God has issued His royal decree and be you sure it will stand.

I believe that God is saying to His Church, "You have to do it. You have to gather out My elect out of every nation under Heaven." To the Church in London He says, "Bring this people out of the bondage of sin." That terrible London with all its poverty, its drunkenness, its infidelity and licentiousness—you are to save it in the name of the Lord Jesus. Its darkness is dense. You are to shine till it is enlightened. You have to save London. So do not back out of it.

"Oh," says one man, who lives down some street near this place, "Sir, I can hardly live in the street. It teems with ill-living women." You have to save them. Passing a little shop as I did the other day, I saw written up in the window, "If any poor girl that wishes to lead a better life will only step inside she will find a friend." That is one of our dear members. I felt so pleased as I saw it. I should like to see such a notice in a great many windows. I would like to see you live among the wicked and put up in your windows, "If anybody wants a friend, there is one inside. Come in."

You are called to save them! They must not be lost. Somebody says, "What are you talking about, Mr. Spurgeon? We cannot save them." I am talking as God said, when He told Moses and Aaron that He gave them a charge to bring His people out of Egypt. They could not do it—but yet they did it. Anyone can do what he can do but it is only God's servant that can do what he cannot do. We, my Brethren, are called to perform the impossible. We are to be familiar with miracles.

Look at Ezekiel. There is a valley full of dry bones. Ezekiel is to go and say to them, "Thus says the Lord, you dry bones, live." What a preposterous thing! An able Divine of good repute once said that to preach the Gospel to dead sinners was as preposterous as to wave a pocket-handkerchief over a grave. Ah, just so! Therefore, I would not have him do it. If the Lord has not sent him to do it he would do no good if he were to attempt to preach to the sinner dead in sin. But it is a different thing when it is my case, for I feel that I am sent to do it and therefore I am not vexed at being thought to be acting absurdly.

If God had sent me to wave a pocket-handkerchief over the dead in Nunhead Cemetery that they might live, I would go and wave that pocket-handkerchief, and they would live. To the eye of reason there is no use in preaching to men dead in sin. I freely admit that. But if it is a commission from God, then it is not ours to raise questions but to do as we are bid. God has commissioned His servants to preach the Gospel to every creature. Whatever those creatures may be, we are to say to them, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. But he that believes not shall be damned." This is our message and our mission and we are just to tell the Truth of God and leave God to apply it to the heart.

Oh that He may give us Divine Grace to tell the Gospel and to keep on doing it till He has brought His own elect out of the bondage of sin and Satan and saved them with an everlasting salvation!

Once more—as I told you in the reading, I greatly admire this chapter. I cannot help admiring the next thing that God did when He told His servant what to do. The Lord began to count the heads of those whom He would redeem out of bondage. You see the rest of the chapter is occupied with the children of Reuben and the children of Simeon and the children of Levi. God seemed to say, “Pharaoh, let My people go!” “I will not,” said the despot. Straightway the Lord goes right down into the brick-town where the poor slaves are at work and he makes out a list of all of them, to show that He means to set them free.

So many there of Simeon. So many here of Reuben. So many here of Levi. The Lord is counting them. Moreover He numbers their cattle, for He declares, “There shall not a hoof be left behind.” Men say, “It is of no use counting your chickens before they are hatched.” But when it comes to God’s counting those whom He means to deliver, it is another matter. For He knows what will be done, because He determines to do it and He is almighty. He knows what is to come of the Gospel and He knows whom He means to bless. And so let Satan rage and let adversaries do what they will, “The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, the Lord knows them that are His.”

And to prove this, He goes on writing down their names and taking an account of them. “They shall be Mine, says the Lord, in that day when I make up My jewels.” Now, my Hearers, if you do not come to Christ, it will be your own loss and not His. If you refuse Him, it will be because you are not Christ’s sheep. As He said to you, He has a people and He will save them, whether you, my Hearer, believe in Jesus or willfully refuse to do so.

Out of the mass of mankind a company shall come to Him and shall glorify His name, as it is written, “This people have I formed for Myself. They shall show forth My praise.” Oh, that you had such a mind in you that you would accept His Gospel! Will you do so even now? Trust Christ and you are saved. Look unto Him and be saved. The Lord bless you, for His name’s sake. Amen.

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

THE POWER OF AARON'S ROD

NO. 521

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 26, 1863,
 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“But Aaron’s rod swallowed up their rods.”
Exodus 7:12.

WE shall not attempt to discuss the question as to whether these magicians actually did turn their rods into serpents or not. It is probable that they, by dexterous sleight of hand, substituted living serpents for dry rods and so deceived the eyes of Pharaoh. On the other hand, it is possible that God was pleased to permit the devil to aid their enchantments, and so the old serpent produced a brood. But into that question, I say, I shall not enter. It is of no importance which opinion we may hold. Curious questions must this morning give way to important Truths of God.

I call your attention to the fact that Aaron’s rod proved its Heaven-given superiority and silenced all the boastings of Jannes and Jambres by readily swallowing up all their rods. This incident is an instructive emblem of the sure victory of the Divine handiwork over all the opposition of men. Whenever a Divine thing is cast into the heart, or thrown upon the earth, it swallows up everything else. And though the devil may fashion a counterfeit and produce swarms of opponents, as sure as ever God is in the work, it will swallow up all its foes. “Aaron’s rod swallowed up all their rods.”

Without any preface, let me ask you, first of all, *to observe this fact.* When we have duly considered it, let us, in the second place, *draw an inference from it.* And then, in closing, let me endeavor to *show some reasons why it is right that it should be so.*

I. Let us turn aside to see this great sight—the Divine triumphant over the diabolical—the spiritual subduing the natural—AARON’S ROD SWALLOWING ALL ITS RIVALS.

1. Let us take the case of the awakened sinner. That man was, a few days ago, as worldly, as carnal, as impassive as he well could be. If anyone should propose to make that man heavenly-minded, to lead him to set his affection upon things above, and not on things on the earth, the common observer would say, “Impossible! The man has no thought above what he shall eat, and what he shall drink, and how he shall be clothed—his heart is buried in a grave of cares. He rises early. He sits up late. He eats the bread of carefulness. He is glued and cemented to the world—as in old Roman walls, the cement has become so strong that the stone is no longer a separate piece, but has become a part of the wall itself—so this man is cemented to the world. He cannot be separated from it. You must break him in pieces with the hammer of death. You cannot separate him in any other way from the cares of life.

Ah, but Aaron’s rod shall swallow up this rod. The man listens to the Word. The Truth of God comes with power into his soul. The Holy Spirit has entered him. And the next day, though he goes to his business, he

finds no true contentment in it, for he pants after the living God. Though still he will buy and sell and gain, yet there is a craving within—an awful hunger—a thirst unquenchable—which above the din and clamor of the world's traffic, will be heard crying, "Seek you first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Now his spirit pleads its needs, and outstrips the body in the contest for his warmest love. He spurns the trifles of a day—he seeks the jewels of eternity. The groveling swine which wallowed in worldliness is transformed into an eagle. The man who lived for this shadowing earth has now an eye for the upper spheres and a wing to mount into celestial heights. Divine Grace has won the day and the worldling seeks the world to come.

It may be that the man is immersed in pleasure. He is at this theater and at that. In all gay society he bears the palm. You shall find him at every horserace and fighting ring—ah, and worse still, you may track him to dens of licentiousness and learn that he is diving deeper than others in the turbid streams of vice. What power can make this gay sinner become a saint? As well ask over a moldering grave, "Can these dry bones live?"—how shall he find joy in the praise of God, or interest in waiting upon the worship of the Most High?

"Absurd!" cries Unbelief, while Worldliness shouts, "Ridiculous!" The man is too far gone for regeneration! He is married to pleasure and he wears the ring upon his finger! Yes, but Aaron's rod can swallow up this rod. For we have seen such a man loathe the very joys he loved till there was no charm in the music of sin—no mirth in the society of folly. He fled away to hide himself. He sought seclusion that he might weep alone. Where are now the sweetness of your bowls and the melody of your viols? Where now the charms of the earth's harlotry? Where now the giddy delights of chambering and wantonness? They are gone, for Aaron's rod has swallowed up these rods of the magicians, and the mad sinner is sitting yonder—a penitent at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

His companions follow him. With many weighty reasons, as they seem to think, they invite his return. They plead with him not to make a fool of himself by joining those melancholy fanatics. They point out the faults of many professors. They remark that hypocrisies are common. They describe the inconsistencies of good men. And they say, "What? Will you throw away the joviality of youth, the bloom and flush of life, to be united with a miserable band of enthusiasts and deceivers like these?" Then they insinuate cunning doubts. They thrust into the man's way certain strange things, of which he had never heard before, which startle him like thunder, and almost drive him from his purpose. If God's Grace is in him, the world's best magicians may throw down all their rods—and every rod may be as cunning and as poisonous as a serpent—but Aaron's rod will swallow up their rods.

The sweet attractions of the Cross will woo and win the man's heart. The blessed arguments, fetched from the bleeding wounds of Jesus, will answer all the blandishments of Madam Wanton and the reason of her sister, Madam Bubble. Everything shall be set aside when true religion comes in. The man shall have a longing so intense that he cannot stop it, nor can he stop himself from obedience to it—a longing after pardon by blood and salvation by Divine Grace.

Oh, have you not seen the trembling penitent, when under conviction of sin, apparently oblivious to everything else? How changed the man! The furrows of that brow prophesy a harvest of hope. Tears, those jewels of repentance, bedeck his eyes. He is dressed in the sackcloth and ashes which are the court robes of those blessed mourners who shall be comforted. For a season even righteous joys yield him no solace. The comforts of his household, and the enjoyments of the fireside fail to reach his case. There is no balm in Gilead for him—Heaven alone can supply him a fit physician. His cry has become, "These can never satisfy! Give me Christ, or else I die."

You have marked the stag when it is let down for a royal hunt. Away it flies. The dogs are behind it. It flies over flowery meads but it does not pause to smell the fragrance of the dale. It dashes along the wood but it waits not for shelter beneath yon shady oak! It scatters the sparkling waters of the brook, but it scarce has time to bathe its limbs. Onward, up the hill, the scenery is grand. But those wild eyes, starting from its head, is solaced by no sight of beauty. The birds are singing sweetly in yonder thicket, but those startled ears are not comforted. The bay of the dog is all the noble victim hears. The wrath of the hunter is all it dreads.

On—on—on it flies, panting for life. Such is the soul hunted by the dogs of conscience. Such is the awakened spirit, when the wrath of God is let loose upon it. No comforts can charm it. No joys can delight it. It flies on—on—on—resting never until it finds a shelter and deliverance in the clefts of the Rock of Ages. It is in vain that Satan tries to attract it from the one master thought. The Divine life must and will have its course. As some lofty mountain casts its shadow all along the valley, so a sense of condemnation throws its dark influence over the whole life. Then follows a longing for mercy, which, like a swollen torrent, bears all before it.

To use another illustration—the man has found the pearl of great price and for joy thereof he parts with all to buy it. No matter how dear the old ancestral homestead, it must be sold. The favorite horse. The faithful dog—all must go. He will sell his dearest joys, and his most prized luxuries of sin, that he may buy this priceless, peerless pearl. Aaron's rod swallows up all other rods, and serpents, too.

2. Beloved, the same fact, with equal distinctness, is to be observed in the individual when he becomes a Believer in Jesus Christ—his faith destroys all other confidences. Once that man could trust in his self-righteousness. He was rich and increased in goods and had need of nothing. He was honest. Who could say that he ever fraudulently failed in business, or robbed a creditor? For integrity he boasted that none could say he lacked the highest. He was, moreover, kind and charitable—amiable in his deportment and tender in heart towards the poor. He trusted that if any man went to Heaven by his merits, he should.

But where is that rod now? Lo, Aaron's rod has swallowed it up. For now that man can say with the Apostle Paul, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes doubtless and count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. And be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

The man once could rely upon ceremonies. Was he not sprinkled in infancy in the customary manner? Was he not confirmed afterwards by Episcopal hands? Did he not receive the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper? What more was wanted? He was regular at his Church, or punctual at his Chapel. He paid the contribution expected of him, and perhaps a little more. He had family prayers and went through a private form at his bedside. What more did he want? But Aaron's rod swallows this up, too. For all our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags.

This is the cry of the man now—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." My Hearers, you are no Christians unless your faith in Christ has devoured every other confidence—unless you can say—

***"On Christ, the solid Rock I stand!
All other ground is sinking sand."***

It is not to trust Christ, *and* to trust self. To rely on Jesus somewhat, and then upon our prayers, and our works to some degree. *Jesus ONLY* must be your watchword. Christ will never have a partner. He trod the wine-press alone, and He will save you alone. He stretched His hands on the Cross and none but He could bear the burden of sin—nor will He divide the work of salvation, lest at the last He should have to divide the crown. The rod of the one only High Priest must swallow up all other rods.

My dear Friends, what multitudes of foes has our faith had to meet with! But how it has swallowed them all up! There were our old sins. The devil threw them down before us and they turned to serpents. What hosts of them! What multitudes! How they hiss in the air! How they intertwine their many coils. How horrible are their deadly fangs, the gaping jaws, their forked tongues! Ah, but the Cross of Jesus, like the rod of Amram's son, destroys them all. Faith in Christ makes short work of all our sins, for it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleans us from all sin."

Then the devil stirs up another generation of vipers and shows us our inbred corruptions, our neglect of duty, our slackness in prayer, our unbelief, our backslidings, our wanderings of heart. And sometimes you and I get so tormented by these reptiles that we grow alarmed and are half inclined to flee. Do not run, Brother, but throw down Aaron's rod and it will swallow up all these serpents, even though they were poisonous as the cobra, fierce as the rattlesnake, or huge as the python. You shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb. "Jesus is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him."

The battle is the Lord's, and He will deliver them into your hands. The old enemy will throw down another host of serpents in the form of worldly trials, diabolical suggestions, temptations to blasphemy, ill thoughts of God, hard thoughts of His Providence, rash thoughts of His promises, and such like till you will be almost distracted. You will wonder how you can meet such a host as this. Remember to stand fast and throw down Aaron's rod—your simple trust and faith in Jesus Christ—and it must, and shall, swallow up all these rods. There is not one doubt which the craft of Hell can insinuate—there is not one difficulty which the infernal wisdom of Diabolus can suggest—but simple faith in Christ can disarm, tread under foot, and utterly destroy.

On a certain railroad there is a viaduct. The arches are of considerable height. Wooden centers, of course, were used for the building of these

arches and they remain there till this day because there is some suspicion that if the wooden centers were knocked out, the brick arches might not be strong enough and might come tumbling down. Now, there are some professors whose faith is of that kind—it is supported by wooden centers of human persuasion, reasoning, or excitement—which they cannot afford to lose. But the Christian man can say that if by Providence all the earthly props of his confidence should fail. If feelings, graces, and excitements were all gone—still the Cross, alone, is an all-sufficient dependence—and faith could bear the most terrible strain which earth or Hell could put upon it.

I would to God we were more and more possessed of that faith which leans on God, and God, alone. For remember, the faith which is supported by anything except the Word and promise of God is no faith at all. It is a bastard faith which has the Cross for a buttress, but finds its foundation elsewhere. The Cross must be the foundation, cornerstone, and buttress, too. None but Jesus! None but Jesus! We need to have a faith which can endure every form of trial and as long as life lasts.

One day last week, when I was preaching, it began to rain. A gentleman asked why the largest Chapel in the neighborhood could not be used for the occasion? The reply was, "Why, the galleries are not safe." I thought, "what was the good of galleries into which they were afraid to let the people?" Pull them down and get fresh ones! So there are some people who have a faith like that good-for-nothing gallery. It is not safe. It will not sustain a crowd of afflictions and temptations, difficulties, and troubles. It would all come down with a crash in the day of trial, and great would be the fall of it.

Brethren, if you have such a faith as I have described, pray God to take it away. It is worthless and dangerous. For remember, in the hour of death, if it cannot stand the tramp of the eternal feet, it will give way—and your everlasting ruin will be the result. Have a faith which is built upon God, which will bear whatever comes. But mind you, mix not with it wood, hay, stubble of your own gathering. Let Aaron's rod swallow up all other rods. Let your faith in Christ overturn every refuge of lies.

3. The same fact is very manifest after faith in all who truly love the Savior. It will be found, I am sure, that every true lover of Jesus has an all-consuming love—coals of juniper—which have a most vehement flame. They who love Christ aright, love no one in comparison with Him. The husband is dear. The father is cherished. The children are precious. But after all, Jesus Christ is better than all kin. We can look upon all and say, "Yes, it were a bitter pang to lose you, but we would sooner lose you all ten times over than once lose our Savior."

For, oh, if we lose Him, we have lost all, even if all else remained. But if all is gone and we still keep our Savior, we have all in Him. The Christian, as he loves nothing in comparison, so he loves nothing in contradiction to Christ. Whatever comes between him and his Savior, the true lover of Jesus abhors and rejects in a moment. He holds no deliberation or debate about the matter. He counts *that* vile, which, precious in itself, becomes evil through interposing between him and his Lord—

***"The dearest idol I have known,
Whatever that idol be"—***

though it is a golden idol—though it be myself—whatever that idol is—

***“Help me to tear it from its throne,
And worship only You.”***

The Christian's love to Christ is of such a kind that he would forego honor and think it honor to be dishonored for Christ. Persecution's flame cannot, by any means, consume bands of union which unite his soul and his Lord. Through fire and through water this love can march. For, "many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." That is not true love to Jesus which governs only one part of the man out of twenty. It must be *all* the passions bound into one. This is the reason why our Apostle does not say, "Set your *affections* on things above." But, "Set your *affection* on things above." Tie up the affections in one bundle. There is not to be a host of them. They are to be made into one. Bind them into a bundle of camphire and then offer them to your Beloved Jesus.

Oh, if I pretend to love Christ and have other lovers, too—He cares not for such a heart as mine—it must be an undivided heart. "Their heart is divided. Now shall they be found faulty," said Hosea. "Unite my heart to fear your name," cried the Psalmist, and let each of us pray so, too. "My Beloved is mine and I am His." Let that be without any sort of reserve. Let the giving up of ourselves to Christ, and the taking of Christ to ourselves be done heartily and earnestly, with all the powers of the soul.

This love to Christ reminds me of the fire which fell of old upon Elijah's sacrifice—there stood the altar made of twelve rough stones. On it lay the bullock and the wood—and over all the Prophet had poured water, until it saturated the bullock, and stood in the trenches. But when the fire came down from Heaven, it devoured not only the wood, and the sacrifice, but the very stones of the altar—and licked up the water from the trenches. So when this heavenly fire of love comes down upon our hearts in very deed and truth, it not only burns the sacrifice and the wood—our own true intentions and our renewed heart—but the stones, the very flesh that seemed as dull and cold as a stone!

Yes, and those old corruptions which seemed to quench the fire of Divine Grace like water—this love licks the whole up, and the whole man goes up to Heaven—a living sacrifice unto God. "My heart and *my flesh*," said the Psalmist, "cry out for the living God." I used to wonder however he made his flesh to do it, for the flesh lusts against the Spirit. But there are times when Aaron's rod does swallow up all other rods, and even the heart and the flesh cry out for the living God. Our love to Jesus should be like the love of David to Jonathan and of Jonathan to David. As Jonathan was ready to take off both his sword, and his bow, and his girdle, and give them to David, so should we make no reserve—our selfishness being swallowed up—giving to Jesus all that we are and all that we have evermore.

I have heard of one good man who carried out to the letter this love to Christ. He was rich. He prospered much in business. A very sincere friend who might take great liberties called upon him and said, "My dear Brother, you are so prosperous that I am afraid lest your heart should depart from God." The other replied, "No, my Brother, I thank you for the warning, but I am not in that danger, for I enjoy God in everything." Years went on—riches took to themselves wings and fled away. The rich man was brought to the depths of poverty. He even knew what it was to want bread. The same friend came to see him and he said, "My dear Brother, you remember what I said to you in your prosperity? Now, I am afraid, lest

in your adversity, you should grow unbelieving and so dishonor your Lord." But the other said, "Dear Brother, I thank you for your warning as I said before, but I am not in danger, for before I enjoyed God in everything, and now I enjoy everything in God."

Oh, this is a sweet way of living, when our love to Christ is such that we find Christ in everything. We see the marks of His pierced hands on our daily bread. We see the blood mark upon the garments which we wear. It is good, too, when suffering and wanting times shall come, to find we are rich because we have Christ and can sing—

***"You, at all times, will I bless;
Having You, I all possess;
How can I bereaved be,
Since I cannot part with You?"***

4. Brethren, you will notice this in the man who makes his delight in the Lord Jesus. He who makes his delight in Christ after a true sort will discover that this delight swallows up all other delights. There is none equal to this. The Christian man enjoys himself as others do. He is not denied the sweets of this life any more than another man. But to him all these things are brown bread. He has eaten manna from Heaven! His mouth has tasted angels' food! And he feels that the choicest mirth and delight his soul can know in all the bounties of God's rich Providences are mere ashes compared with what he finds in Christ. His delight in Christ is of such a kind that nothing can stop it.

In disease he still rejoices in his God, who makes his bed in his sickness. When he comes to die, that last of foes cannot interrupt the music of his soul. "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord," he has said. And he carries out his vow. He has little to delight in besides. But he has more delights than those who have all the world. Though he were rich as Solomon, and had singing men, and singing women, and gardens, and houses and chariots and all manner of delights, he would not be so contented as he is with Christ, and with his Christ, alone.

I speak experimentally—I who am but a babe in Christ, even *I* know that there is such joy to be found in Jesus. Such rapture, such ecstasy—what shall I say?—such Heaven to be found in His dear name and in communion with Him, that if I could have but five minutes of my Lord's company, I would sooner have it than a whole year of the society of princes rolling in wealth and exalted in fame. One glance of His eyes outshines the sun. The beauties of His face are fairer than all flowers. There is no such fragrance as in the breath of His mouth. "Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth: for Your love is better than wine."

5. Yet more is it so in a man who is devoted to God's service. The service of God swallows up everything else when the man is truly God's servant. When a man gets fully possessed with an enthusiastic love for Jesus and there is no other love worth a moment's care, difficulties to him become only things to be surmounted. Dangers become honors, sacrifices pleasures, sufferings delights, weariness rest. Life he looks upon but as a loan and gives it back to Jesus Christ with interest. Look in the olden times how the martyrs despised death. Aaron's rod swallowed up the terrors of fire, and stake, and rack, and dungeon.

Poverty, nakedness, peril, sword—the love of Christ made short work of these. In later days, in the Reformer's times, to meet the score of the mul-

itude and the wrath of princes, was a thing of every day. They laughed at all sufferings for the love of Jesus. Today some of our missionary Brothers and Sisters prove the same fact. Williams staining Eromanga with his blood. Knibb spending a weary life in the midst of his swarthy Brothers and Sisters. Moffat at this hour cut off from contact with those whom he holds dear, pressing on in the work of saving the Bechuana and the Bushman. These men and men like them of whom the world is not worthy prove that the love of Jesus will swallow up everything else.

I hope there are some in this Church in whom the service of Christ has become the main object of their lives. If you stand up and preach in the streets, and you are mocked at, Aaron's rod will swallow up all the ribaldry of scoffers. You can bear all that, and rejoice in it! If you go home and find persecutors there, you can patiently endure their cruel mockery. Aaron's rod will swallow up that rod very speedily. Perhaps you have to lose customers by closing your shop on Sunday. Perhaps friends forsake you because of your godly walk. Perhaps adversaries gather round you and say spiteful things of you because Jesus is yours. Aaron's rod will swallow up those rods.

I would to God there were more Christians, however, in whom all their business cares and their worldly pursuits were subjugated and subservient to their devotion to their Master. For he is not a Christian of any standing who lives for anything but to extend the name of Christ and to spread His kingdom among the sons of men.

Brethren, we are waiting for the time in which my text shall have a more splendid significance than I can give it just now. In every neighborhood wherever Christ's Truth is preached, like Aaron's rod it swallows up all the serpents of sin. Go to the dark alleys in London, take Jesus Christ there and Aaron's rod shall swallow up the rods of ignorance, vice, and ungodliness. Go to popish countries—spread the Bible—let the name of Jesus Christ be proclaimed and there is no lie of the Pope which the Cross cannot overcome. Go to the heathen land, where Juggernaut sits in bloody contentment on his throne. Or go to the islands of the South Seas, or to Africa's wondrous plains! Wherever you go, cast down Aaron's rod, and whatever the form of superstition or error, it shall swallow all up.

Wait yet a little while, when from eastern coast to western, one song shall be heard, the Hallelujah to the Lord—when Jesus' name shall be exalted, and every knee shall bow—and every tongue shall confess that He is Lord. Then admiring angels looking from the battlements of Heaven, or flying down and mingling with the sons of earth, shall rejoice to see that *Jannes* and *Jambres*, who withstood Moses, were not more totally defeated than the foes of Christ shall be when Aaron's rod shall swallow up their rods and the chorus shall be heard, "Hallelujah, Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!"

II. WE NOW DRAW AN INFERENCE. If it is so, that wherever true religion—the finger of God—comes into a man it becomes a consuming passion till the zeal of God's house eats the man up—then there are many persons who profess religion who cannot have found the right thing. I will picture you one or two of them. There are some who sit and listen to the Gospel and who somewhat delight in its doctrines. They feel an attachment to the Truth and find some degree of comfort in it. But the one thing

they think of is how they shall scrape together money—how they shall, by some means or other, fill their bank account.

As for God's House, though it has many claims, it is looked upon as a nuisance when it once entrenches upon their pocket. They give—well, what per cent do they give of their incomes? So small is the fraction that we will not waste our time in calculating it. I dare say they give as much as their religion is worth. We have heard of one who said that his religion did not cost him above a quarter of a dollar a year. And somebody said he thought it was very dear at that price. I dare say most people are pretty good judges of what their religion is worth and their payment for its support may be taken as a fair estimate.

Those who are mean, miserly and miserable in the cause of Christ—whose only expenditure is upon self—and whose main object is gain, what can we say of them? Why, that they look upon religion as some great farmers do upon their little off-hand farms. They think it is well to have a little religion. They can turn to it for amusement sometimes, just to ease them a little of their cares. Besides, it may be very well, after having had all in this world, to try to get something in the next. They are not honest people. Serving the devil all their lives, the devil has a sort of deferred interest in them and will no doubt see to his claims. But, instead of doing justice, they want to cheat him at the last. No doubt, in the end, they will have their due. There are many of these in our Churches with whom we can find no fault in other respects. They are moral and decent in all ways. They can pray very nicely in Prayer Meetings, yet they never dream of consecrating their secular employments unto God. Aaron's rod, in their case, has never swallowed up their rods.

I heard of a minister, who, having need to have a Chapel built, told the collector to call upon a certain person. The collector said, "Oh, he will not give anything. He never gives anything." "Well," said the minister, "if he gives as he prays, I should think he would give all he has!" So the collector called. "Well," the gentleman replied, "really, he had so many calls." You know all the fibs which are customary on such occasions. He would give nothing. So the collector said, "Sir, our minister said if you were to give as you pray, he thought you would give a large amount." Well, that touched his conscience. "Our minister said, he thought when you prayed, you would give yourself away."

There are many who say that who are a long way from meaning to carry it practically out. But give me the man who, with all worldly discretion, feels that it is as much his business to get money for God, as it is mine to preach for God. He sells his calicoes, his slabs of meat, his earthenware, or his groceries, for Christ, as truly as I come upon this platform to speak for Christ. He sanctifies his ordinary calling to the cause of Christ and makes himself the Lord's servant in everything, saying, "Here, Lord, I give myself to You. It is all that I can do."

I am afraid the inference I am to draw from what I have already said, is that those who love the world have a religion they had better get rid of. There are other persons who profess to be Christians, but who spend all the week round without ever brushing against their religion. They expect it to call upon them as the postman does, at regular hours. It may wake them up on Sunday morning, but it must mind it does not intrude upon

the Monday. What are the books they read? Those yellow volumes of one shilling or two shilling trash which abound at the railway bookstalls?

What is their talk about? Well, anything you like, except what it should be. What do they do during the week? Oh, they do twenty things. But what do they attempt for Christ? *Do for Christ, Sir?* With what surprise they look at you, when you ask them that question! What did they do all the week? Well, let us see—beginning with Monday and going on to Saturday—hear it all—and what is its sum total? As far as the Church or the world is concerned, these people might just as well have been in bed and asleep all the time—they do nothing whatever. They have a name to fire and practically they are dead.

If a young man joins a rifle corps, there he is. He stands in the rank. He learns his practice and drills. He tries to get a prize by hitting the target. But when a man joins the Christian Church, where is he? I do not know where he is. You may find his name seven hundred and something in the attendance book. He is there, but what is he? You find him at Chapel on Sunday, but where is he, and what is he doing for the cause of Christ during the week? The smallest scrap of paper would be too large to record his deeds of faith. He thinks he adorns his profession. But what kind of adornment is it, or who ever sees that adornment? I cannot tell. I believe that the man who does not make his religion his first and last thought, who does not subject all his actions, his eating and drinking, too, to the cause of Christ, has not the work of God in his soul. "Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

The man who has not consecrated the lap stone—who has not dedicated the counter to God—who has not made the desk and the pen holiness unto the Lord has yet to learn what the Christian religion is. It is not a uniform to be worn one day and cast away the next. It ought to be a part of the woof and warp of your being. It ought to run in your blood, penetrate the marrow of your bones, work in the arms, gaze from the eyes and speak from the tongue. O to be baptized, saturated, immersed in the Spirit of God and so, wherever we go to say to men who put our Lord at the bottom of the scale, "For us to live is Christ"! Only such, I say, will ever be able to add, "For me to die is gain."

I hope this may come home to some of you. And if it does, may it produce from this day forth a more thorough love to Jesus—a more practical way of showing a more entire devotedness to that great cause which is either an awful imposition, or else deserves to have our whole heart, our whole spirit, soul and body devoted to it.

III. Now, I will close, by trying to GIVE SOME REASONS WHY I PUT THE SERVICE OF GOD SO PROMINENT, AND THINK THAT AARON'S ROD OUGHT TO SWALLOW UP ALL OTHER RODS.

What does the great Gospel revelation disclose to us? Does it not show us an awful danger and only one way of escape from it? Yonder is the place where the wrath of God burns without abatement, where souls suffer pangs indescribable. "Tophet is ordained of old. Yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large: the pile there is fire and much wood. The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, does kindle it." Horrors, past imagination are revealed to us by the words of Jesus when He speaks of the worm that dies not, and of the fire that never shall be quenched.

If we could once, but for an instant, have an idea of the wrath to come. If but for a moment the scathing lightning of God could flash before our vision—if we could taste, but for an instant, the bitterness of that cup of trembling, the dregs of which the wicked earth must drink—I am sure we should feel that the religion which teaches us how to escape from it must be worthy of a man's most solemn consideration! And we should give to it all the strength of our mind. To escape from Hell—O Sirs—if you do but manage this, though you die in an attic, you will have done well! Oh, if you have but escaped from the wrath to come, you will have been wise. Though you have lived as paupers here, wiser far than he who has piled—like the tower of Babel—wealth on wealth, only to find his way to despair at last.

Does not our religion also reveal to us the joyous reward of another world? It opens to us yonder pearly gates and bids us gaze on angels and glorified spirits. It tells us of celestial glories, of immortality, the crown of life which fades not away. It brings to our ear the melody of heavenly harps and bids our eyes look upon the splendors of the Son of God upon the Throne. Heaven—if there is a Heaven, and we, by calling ourselves Christians, accept it as Truth. Should it not, then, be our first and last thought, the Alpha and Omega of man's existence, to seek and find it—so that we may not be shut out like the foolish virgins, but may enter with the wise into the marriage supper? By Hell and by Heaven, therefore, I do entreat you, let Aaron's rod swallow up all other rods. And let love and faith in Jesus be the master passion of your soul.

Moreover, do we not learn in our holy faith of a love unexampled? Where was love such as that which brought the Prince of Glory down to the gates of death and made Him pass the portals amid shame and scoffing? Oh, matchless love which draws the Prince of Life down to the shades of death! That takes the crown from His lofty brow, removes His purple robe from His shoulders, loosens His glittering garment and strips His fingers of their golden rings. That wraps Him in clay, clothes Him in rags, houses Him nowhere, gives Him no place to lay His head! That makes Him eat the bread of penury and drink the water of affliction.

Shall such a love as this have half our hearts? Shall it have a cold love in return? Shall Jesus sit at the bottom of the table? Shall we stow Him away in some back chamber of the heart? Shall we treat Him to cold meats, to dogs' meat? God forbid! Let us make Him King of kings within our hearts, as He is today King of kings in the highest heavens. If Christ is anything, He must be everything. If He deserve not to be everything, He deserves to be less than nothing.

But, my Brothers and Sisters, does not the Grace of God create in us a new and noble nature? And if new and noble, should it not predominate? He is accursed who lets his body rule his mind, who lets his eating and drinking chain the immortal spirit. And he is equally accursed who shall let his mind rule his new-born spirit. No, let that nature which feeds on Christ, which breathes Christ, and which ascends to Christ—as flame ascends up to the central source of fire—the sun—let that nature always have its full liberty. Let it be ruling in us! Though the Law in our members strives against it, yet let it rule and reign—like the rod of Aaron—let it swallow up all other rods.

And since, dear Brothers and Sisters, since God has been pleased to ennoble us by giving us the high dignity of being His children, shall we make our being a son of man a greater thing than being a son of God? Shall men, as they look at me, say of me first, "He is a tradesman"? O let me live so that the first thing they may say shall be—"He is a Christian"!

I heard of one, speaking of a certain earnest man's religion, as riding his horse. I knew that the person who so spoke of him knew nothing about it. For this is a steed which you may ride all day and all night long. It is a very Pegasus which will bear you up to Heaven and carry you aloft up to the starry spheres. Never dismount, Christian—having been once set upon Christ's own beast—continue to ride till He brings you safely home. Whatever others may be with their religion, let yours be of a sort which you cannot lay aside. You *must* hold it, you *must* speak about it.

The Brahmins and the Hindus practice caste. A Hindu one day asked our missionaries whether they had caste in England. The missionary replied, No, all men might eat and drink together. The Brahmin said this was very disorderly and even immoral. But the missionary said, "Well, but upon your great feast day—for instance, the great feast of Juggernaut—the Sudra eats with the Brahmin." "Oh," says he, "that is because we are in the presence of our god." "So," said the missionary, "that is the reason why we have no caste in England, because we are *always* in the presence of our God."

I would that we thought of this. And being always in the presence of our God, let us live every day as the idolater does some days. As the Romanist does now and then. Talk of holy days! Why, every day ought to be to you a holy day. Speak of keeping the Sunday holy! Every day should be kept holy. Only the Sunday is a day of rest unto us more than the others. Write upon the bells of the horses, "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD," and let the pots in your own house be like the bowls before the altar.

I shall not say any more upon this subject. Only pray that the Lord may give to this Church a larger number of consecrated men and women—and ask of you, for I make a point of it—to remember that this must always be a labor of love if it is to be acceptable. No man ever does anything for the Lord acceptably which he would rather not do—no man ever gives to the Lord acceptably that which he would rather withhold. The service of Christ is perfect freedom—to serve Him day and night is to enjoy perpetual liberty.

Only try it, dear Brothers and Sisters! You that are low in Divine Grace and weak in your faith, doubting and unbelieving, do more for Christ! Make your consecration more perfect. and your light shall come forth as brightness and the glory of your soul as a lamp that burns. May the Lord now add His blessing. Amen.

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

A DIVINE CHALLENGE!

NO. 322

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH EVENING, APRIL 22, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.**

***“Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”
Exodus 8:1.***

ON two or three former occasions I have endeavored to insist upon the fact that God always puts a distinction between Israel and Egypt. He constantly speaks of the Israelites as “My people”—of the Egyptians, he speaks to Pharaoh as being “your people.” There is a continual and eternal distinction observed in the Word of God between the chosen seed of promise and the world—the children of the Wicked One. The great object of God’s interference with Egypt was not the blessing of Egypt at large, but the gathering out of His Israel from the midst of the Egyptians.

Beloved, I have the conviction that this is just what God is doing with the world now. Perhaps, for many a year to come, God will gather out His elect from the nations of the earth as He gathered His Israel from the midst of the Egyptians. You and I may not live to see that universal reign, of which we so joyously sang this morning. But the wheat will be gathered sheaf by sheaf, if not ear by ear. The tares will be left to ripen here, perhaps, until the great and terrible day the Lord comes.

At any rate, looking at the signs of the times we do not see any considerable progress made in the evangelization of the world. Egypt is Egypt still—the world is the world still—and as worldly as it ever was and God’s purpose seems to be, through the ministry which He now exercises, to bring His chosen ones out. In fact, the Word which Jehovah is now speaking to the entire world with the solemn authority of an imperial mandate is this—“Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

It will be necessary in addressing you this evening to recall to your minds the position which the Israelites held in Egypt. It is a type of the position of all the Lord’s people before the Most High God, who with a high hand and an outstretched arm brings them out of their bondage. The people of the Lord are slaves. Though their names are in His book, yet they are slaves, engaged like Israel of old in labors that savor more of earthly than of heavenly things—brick-makers, building houses not for themselves, for they find no city to dwell in. But toiling and laboring here as unwilling servants, thinking, perhaps, they shall receive goodly wages, but they receive no wages, except the whip upon their shoulders.

Every man in his unrenewed state is a slave. Even God’s people are slaves as well as others, till they hear the trumpet of jubilee and at the Word and by the power of God are brought forth out of the place of their slavery. We are slaves—slaves to a power which we never can overcome by

our own unassisted strength. If all the inhabitants of Goshen—the Israelites, I mean—had concerted measures to rebel against Pharaoh and had said, “We will be free”—in but a few hours, the tremendous power of that great monarch of Egypt would have crushed out the last spark of hope. With his terrible army, his horses and his chariots, the rabblement of Israel would soon have been given to the dogs. They had no hope in the world of ever delivering themselves by their own power.

Nor more have we, Beloved. By nature we are slaves to him who is infinitely our superior, namely, to Satan and all his hosts of sin. We may seek sometimes to snap the fetter when a hectic flush of health comes over the cheek. But oh, we may make the fetters grind into our flesh, we cannot snap them. We may even sometimes think that we are free and talk of liberty—but our walk is a walk within a prison and our apparent liberty is but a deeper delusion of slavery. Men may bid us be free, but they cannot make us so. They may use the best means they can by education, by training, by persuasion, but these fetters are not to be filed by any instruments so weak.

God’s ministers may continually exhort us to snap our fetters. But alas, it is not in *our* power to do what, nevertheless, is *their* duty to command us to do. We are such slaves, that unless a mightier than ourselves and a mightier than Satan shall come out to our assistance, we must continue in the land of bondage—in the house of our sin and of our trouble. Nor, again, can we ever hope to redeem ourselves with money. If the children of Israel had given up all they had, they were so poor they could not have ransomed their own bodies.

The poor brick-makers could not buy themselves from their masters. The least thought of such a thing would have brought down the whip with ten-fold fury upon their poor bleeding shoulders. And so you and I may think we can buy our freedom by our good works, but the result of all our offers of purchase-money will be to make us feel the whip the more. You may go and toil and think you have gathered together something that can be acceptable in the sight of your taskmaster—but when you have done all—he will tell you that you are an unprofitable servant, command you to yet sterner labors, make you feel yet viler durance in your prison, for you cannot by such means escape.

Really, apart from God, the view of humanity which is given in the Scriptures is the most deplorable picture that even despondency itself could paint. Ah, men talk about some remnants of good that are left in humanity, some sparkling of Divine fire and the like, but the Bible does not say so. It expresses, in its solemn words, the meaning of that hymn, which begins—

***“How helpless guilty nature lies,
Unconscious of her load;
The heart unblest can never rise,
To happiness and God.”***

The slavery of Israel in Egypt was hopeless slavery. They could not get free unless God interfered and worked miracles in their behalf. And the slavery

of the sinner to his sin is equally hopeless—he could never be free—unless a mind that is infinitely greater than he can ever command shall come to his assistance and help. What a blessed circumstance it is, then, for those poor chosen children of God who are still in bondage, that the Lord has power to say and then power to carry out what He has said—“Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

Having thus introduced my subject, by showing you the helpless condition of God’s people by nature and the utter impossibility of their ever getting free by themselves, let me observe that today God is saying—saying in His own decree—saying by Providence—and saying through the lips of His faithful ministers, that emancipating sentence which of old made Pharaoh relax his grasp and caused the land of Egypt to loose its captive ones—“Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

I shall dwell upon this emancipating sentence tonight, as God shall give me strength, in this way. I shall first notice the fullness of the sentence, then the rightness of the sentence. Next, the repetition of it. And finally, the Omnipotence which is concealed in it.

I. First, then, THE FULLNESS OF THE SENTENCE. “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” I don’t doubt but what there are some of God’s people here tonight who have not any idea they are His people. Perhaps they are slaves to drunkenness, bond slaves to every evil passion, yet, being bought by the blood of Christ, their names are in His book. And they must and they shall be saved. They think, perhaps, that they never, never can be. It may even happen that they have not any desire to be. But Israel shall come out of Egypt even though Israel may love the flesh-pots, the garlic and the cucumber.

Israel shall be delivered by might and by power, even though Israel himself may blindly imagine that he is at peace and at ease in the enemy’s land—that is to say, God will have His own people. Though they are content in their sin, though they have no will towards Him, yet He will come and make them discontented with their sins. He will turn their wills—change the bias of their hearts and they who once despised God, shall, with free consent, against their natural inclination, be led captives at the wheels of His Sovereign Grace.

God not only saves those who are willing to be saved, but those who are unwilling to be saved he can make willing in the day of His power. There have been many instances of that in this House of Prayer. Men have come in here merely from curiosity—to laugh, to make jests and fun—but God has had His time and when that time has come—“Thus says the Lord, let My people go free”—they have gone free. They have been saved. Their fetters which they were unconsciously wearing before, have begun to grate upon their soul, to eat their flesh and then they have sought mercy. And their fetters have fallen off, they have gone free.

Well, then, though I have run away from what I was going to say, I come again to this point—the fullness of the Divine sentence, “Let My people go free.” If you notice, it does not say “Let them have partial liberty. Let them have two or three days’ rest from their toil.” No. But, “Let them

go free,” free altogether. God’s demand is not that His people should have some little liberty, some little rest in their sin—no, but that they should go right out of Egypt and that they should go through the wilderness to Canaan. The demand was not made to Pharaoh, “Make their tasks less heavy. Make the whip less cruel, put kinder taskmasters over them.” No, but, “Let them go free.”

Christ did not come into the world merely to make our sin more tolerable, but to deliver us from it. He did not come to make Hell less hot, or sin less damnable, or our lusts less mighty. But he came to put all these things far away from His people and work out a full and complete deliverance. Perhaps Pharaoh might have said at length, “Well, they shall have kind masters. Their tasks shall be shortened. They shall have the straw given them, with which to make their bricks.” Yes, but Devil, this will not do! You may consent to it, but God never will. Christ does not come to make people less sinful, but to make them leave off sin altogether—not to make them less miserable, but to put their miseries away and give them joy and peace in believing in Him. The deliverance must be complete, or else there shall be no deliverance at all.

Again—you will mark, it says, “Let My people go.” It says nothing about their coming back again. Once gone, they are gone forever. Pharaoh thought he would let them go two or three days journey, yet they never went back to Egypt again. They went through the wilderness forty years to the Promised Land and no Egyptian could ever drive them back. Egypt went forth with all its chivalry to overtake them, but they perished in the sea—and Israel went through as on dry land and was blessed of God. That sentence which said of me, “Let My child go free,” gave me eternal liberty. Not liberty for yesterday and today and tomorrow, but liberty forever and forever.

You know when the Negro slaves run away from the Southern States and get to the North they are free, but still the man-hunter will soon be on their track and they may be taken back again to their masters. Yes, but you and I are like the slave when he gets to Canada. When he sets his foot on British soil and breathes the English air, that moment he is free. Once ferried over the stream that parts the land of slaves from the land of freedom, he stands on soil that cannot be stained by the slave’s foot. He breathes an air that never was received into lungs that were in bondage yet. He is free.

And so is it with us. We go not into slave states where the devil has got a fugitive law to hunt us up again, but into states where we are wholly free. There is not a fetter left. We have not a chain upon our wrist with half of it filed away, but we are free—the free men of God—and Satan has no claim, no right, no, no power, ever to enslave us again. “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” It is a large demand because it is a demand that requires entire liberty and that liberty perpetual, too.

But, methinks, I hear one say, “Well, I have not yet entered into the fullness of that sentence.” No, Brother, nor have I yet—into the *fullness* of

it—though I have into some of the *sweetness* of it. You must know that this emancipation is often gradual in our own experience, though it is effectual and instantaneous in God's mind.

Time was—and let me speak to you to whom I can speak, whose experience will agree with what I utter—time was when you were born slaves to hardness of heart. You despised God—religion was a toil to you—in fact you never exercised your mind or will with it. Well, there came a time when the Lord said, “Let My people go free,” and you began to think. Your heart began to melt. You groaned under the burden of sin, you began to cry to God. You were delivered, then, from the hardness of your heart and were free. But still sin tormented you. Your guilt went with you every day like your own shadow. And like a grim chamberlain, with fingers bloody red, it drew your curtains tight and put its finger upon your eyelid, as if to crush darkness into your very heart. But the day came when, standing at the foot of the Cross you saw your sins atoned for, “numbered on the scapegoat's head of old.” You felt the burden roll from your back, you were free—free from your past sins and you could rejoice in that most glorious liberty.

But, then, after a season, you went out into the world and you felt that, “when you would do good, evil was present with you.” How to will you found, but how to do you found not. Well, you have had partial deliverance from that, as one evil passion has been overcome and a virtue has been learned. You have achieved a triumph over one bad habit and a victory over another evil temper. The sentence has been going on, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go.”

And remember the day is coming when you shall lay dying. Yes, but you shall then begin to live. There shall be heard a voice speaking by your death pillow saying, “Loose him and let him go.” You will understand what that means and in a moment, loosed from every fetter, like Lazarus when the napkin was taken from his head and the grave clothes from his feet, you start up perfectly free. There shall not be a shadow of bondage about you. You shall fly to Heaven and walk its free and happy streets and never more shall you say, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

I say, therefore, we don't know in all its fullness the meaning of this passage experimentally. Still it is all ours and we ought to receive it all by faith, as being our precious blessing. God has said to sin, to Satan, to death, to Hell, to doubts, to fears, to evil habits and even to the grave itself—“Let My people go, that they may serve Me.”

II. So much, then, for the fullness of the demand, I shall now notice, in the second place, the RIGHTNESS OF IT. The Lord had a perfect right to say to Pharaoh, “Let My people go free.” Tyrannical despot! What right had he to enslave a free nation? They came down there by the invitation of his predecessor. Did not Pharaoh invite Jacob and his family to come down to the land of Goshen? It was never in the stipulation that they should be made slaves. It was a violation of a national compact for Pharaoh to exact

toil from free-born Israelites. Had they been brave and strong enough, they ought to have resisted the encroachments of his tyranny.

They were not Pharaoh's people. Pharaoh never chose them. He had never brought them where they were. He had not fought with them and overcome them. They were not captives in war, nor did they dwell in a territory which was the spoil of fair conflict. They were guests—honored guests—invited to come and to dwell in a land which they themselves enriched and blessed by their representative Joseph. It was not right, then, that they should be in bondage—there was no right on Pharaoh's part. The right lay exclusively with God.

You notice the lightness of the demand concentrated in that little word "My"—"Let *My* people go free. Let your *own* people kiss your feet if they will—make *them* dig canals and build pyramids if you like, for I interfere not with them. But *My* people—let them go free. You have no right to their unpaid toil. They have no right to endure this cruel servitude. "Let *My* people go free."

Do you see the parallel in our case? The Word of God is His own heavenly mandate. The Voice of justice and pity and mercy, cries to death and trol and sin, "Let My people go free—Satan, keep your own if you will, but let My people go free, for they are Mine. This people have I created for Myself—they shall show forth My praise. Let My people go free, for I have bought them with My precious blood. You have not bought them, nor have you made them—you have no right to them. Let My people go free." All this is our comfort for poor sinners and we hope that some of them, though they don't know it, are God's people.

You must not imagine when you hear a man swear, or when he is going on in sin—you must not write his name down in the black book and say, "I am quite sure that man will go to the devil." No. It may be that God ordains to save that man and one of these days you will meet him lifting up his voice in prayer, outstripping you, perhaps, in the heavenly race and serving his Master better than you have done. Jesus Christ takes many to His bosom whose company we would have shunned when they were in their evil state.

Sovereign mercy can dash into the prize ring and make captives. Free Grace can go into the gutter and bring up a jewel. Divine love can rake a dunghill and find a diamond. There is no spot where God's Grace cannot and will not go. This, we pray, is our great hope when we have a congregation before us—not a hope that they will be willing, that they will be attentive in themselves, that they will give heed to what we say, but our hope is this—"Doubtless God has much people in this city," and God having brought some of these within the sound of His Word, we have a hope that many are His chosen ones and God will have them.

I trust we never entertain a doubt but that God will have His own and that Christ will say as we preached to you this morning, "Not a hoof shall be left behind." "They shall be Mine," says the Lord—"they are Mine now and they shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels." Lost though God's elect are, they *never* belonged to Satan. They were lost, but that

does not say they belong to the finder. A thing may be lost, but it is mine still when I have lost it, that is to say, I have a right to it and any man finding it and appropriating it, has no right to do so.

If I leave a piece of land having a right to it and another shall take possession for a time, yet if I hold the title deeds, I will have him ousted and take my property. The Lord has got the title deeds of some of you, though the devil has got possession of you. Satan rules you with a rod of iron and makes you his captives and willing servants. But my Master is a match for your master. There has been a great duel fought between life and death for you and life has won the victory and Free Grace claims the prize. And that prize Free Grace will give and your poor guilty soul shall yet be set as a signet on Jehovah's hand and shall yet glitter as a jewel in Jehovah's crown.

Oh, how I delight to talk about this Omnipotence of grace—of that grace that does not tarry for the sons of men, that does not stop but rides on in triumph and leads captivity itself captive. Oh, what a joy it is to think that we have not to wait on man—that it does not rest with man whether he should belong to Christ or not. If Christ has bought that man—if the Father has ordained him to be Christ's—then Christ's that man shall be. Rampart yourselves about with prejudices, but Christ shall scale your ramparts. Pile up your walls, bring up the big stones of your iniquity—but Christ shall take your citadel and make you a captive. Plunge into the mire if you will, but that strong arm can bring you out and wash you clean.

I see you curl your lips and say, "I shall never be a Methodist. I shall never make a profession of religion." I don't know, Sir. Many have said the same as you are saying and yet they have been brought down and if Christ will, He can bring you down, too, Sir. There is not strength enough in sin to overcome His Grace. When He puts forth His arm, down you fall. Let Him but once strike and you may stand and rebel, but the victory is His. You may will to be damned, but if He wills to save you, His will is more than a match for your will. And you will come crouching down to His feet, saying, "Lord, I will that You save me."

Then, methinks He will say this, "How is it you were not willing then! How is this that you are willing *now*?" "O Lord, You have made me willing and unto You be all the glory forever and forever." So then, we need not say more. I think about the rightness of this sentence of God. They are His people, they are His blood-bought people. He created them for Himself and it is neither more nor less than right that God should say, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me."

III. Let me now call your attention to THE REPETITION OF THIS SENTENCE. I have just read carefully through these first chapters of Exodus and I am not quiet sure how many times this phrase occurs, but some five or six times I know it is repeated. The first time, Moses said, "Thus says Jehovah, the Lord God of Israel, let My people go, that they may feast before Me in the wilderness." The second time, he says, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me." Some five or six times Moses went unto Pharaoh.

The first time he said it, Pharaoh laughed in his face. “You are idle,” he said, “you are idle. You don’t like your brick-making. You want to go and serve your God to get an idle holiday. Go to your tasks, the taskmasters had need make the toil a little more rigorous. What business have you with religion? Go on with your bricks.”

Now, that is how the worldling taunts you, when for the first time that sentence comes into his head. “Your religion,” he says, “your religion? Go to your shop, take down your shutters on a Sunday and see whether you can’t earn an honest living. Go on with your bricks. What business have you to talk about feasting before God in the wilderness? It is all romance.” And, you know, we hear worldlings say to us poor Christians that we don’t know what real life is. Of course we don’t—“real life”—well, when putrid carrion is the representation of real life, we may be pretty content with our ignorance!

Vain show! Vain disquietude! Vain question! Such was the Psalmist’s picture. That is the real life of the world, but we want a better life than that—a life more true and real, too, though the world despises it. Brick-making, brick-making, brick-making—that is Pharaoh’s joy and so it is with the sinner before he is renewed—money-making, dirt-making, heaping together to himself bricks that he may build for himself a fortune. Oh, don’t these fellows turn round and look with supreme contempt on us poor fellows—that we should think that eternity is better than time? That God is better than the devil? That holiness is better than sin? That the pleasures of Heaven are better than the poor pomps and vanities of this world?

Such simpletons as these will look down and say, “Poor fellow he does not know better.” They, indeed, are the rational men, the intellectual men—they are, in fact, the king Pharaoh. Pharaoh gives a laugh, a hoarse laugh, “Let My people go free?” Yes, but there will come a blow in your face that will make you laugh after another fashion by-and-by. You with others shall join in weeping and crying and tears and you with all your chivalry shall sink into the waters and shall you go down and the Red Sea shall swallow you up.

Moses goes to Pharaoh yet again and says, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” And at one time the haughty monarch says, he will let some go, at another time he will let them all go, but they are to leave their cattle behind. He will hold on to something. If he cannot have the whole he will have a part. It is wonderful how content the devil is if he can but nibble at a man’s heart. It does not matter about swallowing it whole—only let him nibble and he will be content. Let him but bite at the ends and be satisfied, for he is wise enough to know that if a serpent has but an inch of bare flesh to sting, he will poison the whole.

When Satan cannot get a great sin in he will let a little one in, like the thief who goes and finds shutters all coated with iron and bolted inside. At last he sees a little window in a chamber. He cannot get in, so he puts a little boy in, that he may go round and open the back door. So the devil has always his little sins to carry about with him to go and open back

doors for him. And we let one in and say, "O, it is only a little one." Yes, but how that little one becomes the ruin of the entire man! Let us take care that the devil does not get a foothold, for if he gets but a foothold, he will get his whole body in and we shall be overcome.

Observe now, as Pharaoh would not give up the people, the sentence had to be repeated again and again and again, until at last God would bear it no longer, but brought down on him one tremendous blow. He smote the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength and then He led forth His people like sheep by the hands of Moses and Aaron. In like manner, Friends and Brethren, this sentence of God has to be repeated many times in your experience, and mine. "Thus, says the Lord, let My people go free," and if you are not quite free, don't despair—God will repeat that sentence till at the last you shall be brought forth with silver and gold and there shall not be a feeble thought in all your soul.

You shall go forth with gladness—and with joy you shall enter into Canaan at last—up yonder where His Throne is glittering now in glorious light that angel eyes cannot bear. It is no wonder then, if it is to be repeated in our experience, that the Church of Christ must keep on repeating it in the world as God's message. Go, missionary, to India and say to Juggernaut and Kalee and Brahma and Vishnu, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go free." Go, you servants of the Lord, to China. Speak to the followers of Confucius and say, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go free." Go to the gates of the harlot city, even Rome and say, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me."

Think not though you die that your message will die with you. It is for Moses to say, "Thus says the Lord," and if he is driven from Pharaoh's sight the, "Thus says the Lord" still stands, though His servant fall. Yes, Brothers and Sisters, the whole Church must keep on throughout every age, crying, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go." We must continue to send our missionaries to lands like Madagascar, where the people of God are speared by hundreds and they must say to the haughty queen, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go." We must still send our Livingstones and our Moffats through all the wastes of Africa—

***"Through her fertile plains,
Where superstition reigns,
And binds the man in chains."***

And they must continue to say, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go."

Our Brethren must continue in the theatres and in the streets—in the highway and in the byway—saying, not in so many words, but still in fact, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me." And it will be a happy time for the Church when every minister feels that he is sent of God—and when he speaks as Moses did. Conscious of Divine authority, he looks sin and evil and error in the face and says, "Thus says the Lord, let My people go." When we are galled to enter a protest against an error, we shall sometimes be disappointed, because people don't see with us. Very well, very well, but when we have entered the protest we have done

all. It was not meant to convince the Egyptians, but it was meant to constrain them—"Thus says the Lord, let My people go."

When there is a pretended Church of Christ, wherein error is preached, the Christian minister is bound faithfully to point out the error, confident that God's people will hear the warning voice and come out of Babylon. And as for the rest, they must remain where they are, for the mandate is to those whom it concerns—those in whom the Lord has an interest, the people who are His "portion" to go.

IV. Now, my last point, which must, as time and strength alike fail me, be brief—is this—THE OMNIPOTENCE OF THE COMMAND—"Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me."

"They shall never go," says Pharaoh. And his counselors say, "Yes, so be it, O king, they shall never depart out of this land." "By my father I swear," says the king of Egypt, "they shall be my slaves forever." "Back, back, you sons of the Hebrew shepherds, to your bricks and to your clay. Dare not to stand before Pharaoh's son and dictate to him. I swear by my father's bones again, you shall never go free."

Behold the rivers of Egypt run with blood! There is no fish in Egypt to be found through all the land and the Egyptians loathe to drink the waters of the river which they once worshipped, for it is full of blood. Now, come these two troublesome men in once more before Pharaoh—"Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews let My people go, that they may serve Me." The king pauses a minute—his haughty soul relents. "You may serve God in the land," says he, "but you shall not go out of the land. You may have a three days rest and serve your God."

"No," says Moses, "we cannot serve God in the land of your abominations and we should be an abomination to you as well as you to us. We must go." Then the king tells them to be gone. They may go. He holds a counsel of wise men and they determine while they have breath left, they will never lose their claim upon those slaves who have so long served them and built such mighty cities. Yes, Pharaoh, but God is mightier than you. Open wide your gates you hundred-gated Thebes and send out your myriads of armed men swarming like locusts on a summer's day. Come up, you mighty hosts of Zoar and you troop of populous No. Come up like swarms of frogs from old Nile. Come up against them and they shall break you—you shall be as potter's vessels before them—for His redeemed must and shall go free!

And now I stand tonight to many among yourselves in the position of Amram's son of old and it is my business and that of all God's minister's, to cry to Satan, to sin, to Rome, to Mohammedanism, to idolatry, to every evil—"Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me." We hear the hoarse laughter. We hearken to the cry of the kings of the earth as they stand up and the rulers take counsel together. Do you see the priests with their treacherous devices—the sons of Belial now plotting in the dark to destroy us? Yes, but you may go on to be broken in pieces. You may go onward like the sea, but the Rock stands fast and shall break

you into spray and send you back and you shall know that there is a God who is greater than you all.

Just as all Israel came forth despite of the determination of Pharaoh, so shall all God's elect be saved, despite the power of Satan, of evil men, of false priests and false prophets. "Thus says the Lore, let My people go," and go they must and shall.

And now, my dear Hearers, have you ever heard the voice of God speaking in your hearts, "Let My people go"? There are some here tonight that have never been made free—no, what is worse than that—they *think* they are free while they are the slaves to sin. You think you are free, but this is the worst part of your slavery. You dream that you are saved while you are standing over the mouth of Hell—and this is the worst part of your danger—that you think you are saved. Ah poor souls, poor souls! Your gilded slaveries going to the ale-house and the tavern, to the seat of the scornful, drinking down sin as the ox drinks down water, the thought starts within me—"there will be an end to all that and what will they do when the end shall come?"

When your hairs grow gray and your bodies become feeble. When you are drawing near the grave, what will your worldly pleasures do for you then? There was a young man died not long ago of extreme old age. I am not contradicting myself—that young man died of extreme old age some time ago at the age of twenty-six. He had sinned himself into the grave and into Hell by a course of debauchery and sin. Perhaps you are not such a fast sinner as that, but you are taking in the poison by slower degrees. But what will you do when the poison begins to work—when sin begins to pull out the core of your spirit, when the froth has been swept from your cup and you begin to taste its dregs.

Yes, when you are dying you will want to set that cup down, but there will be an evil hand that will thrust it to your mouth and say, "No, no, you have drunk the sweets and now you must drink the bitters." Though there is damnation in every drop, yet to the dregs must you drink that cup which you have begun to drink now. Oh, for God's sake, dash it to the ground—have done with it. "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts." There is hope yet. There is mercy yet. Sin is a Pharaoh, but God is Jehovah. Your sins are hard—you cannot overcome them of yourself—but God can. He can overcome them for you.

There is hope yet. Let that hope arouse you to action. Say to your soul tonight, "I am not in Hell, though I might have been. I am still on praying ground and pleading terms and now, God helping me, I will begin to think." And when you begin to think you will begin to be blessed. There are more souls lost by thoughtlessness than anything else. If you want to go to Heaven there are a great many things to think of. If you want to go to Hell it is the easiest thing in the world. You can go and swear and drink as you like. It is only a little trifling matter of neglect to destroy your soul. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

Well, then, if you begin to think, let me propose to you just this. The way of salvation is mapped out before your eyes tonight. He that believes

on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. To believe is to trust. Trust Him who hangs upon the tree and you are saved. Just as you are—guilty, helpless, weak and ruined—give up your soul to Christ. Ah, while I am thus advising you, I think I hear the voice behind me saying, “My servant, you are speaking according to My will and pleasure, for I, too, am saying in the heart of your hearers, ‘Go free.’ I, too, am saying to their enemies, ‘Thus says the Lord, let My people go.’”

Be it so, good Lord, and may my voice be but as Your voice. Rise, you slaves of Satan and be free. Break your bonds asunder and be delivered. Jesus comes to rescue you. His arm is strong and His heart is tender. Trust Him and be free. Oh, may God grant you grace that you may be free now and find Him, whom to find is to find everlasting life! Amen.

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

“TAKE AWAY THE FROGS”

NO. 3340

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1913.**

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

***“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.”
Exodus 8:8.***

When it pleases God by His judgments to humble men, He is never at a loss for means—He can use lions or lice, famines or flies. In the armory of God there are weapons of every kind, from the stars in their courses down to caterpillars in their hosts. The dust of the earth, out of which man is formed, will at God’s command forget its kinship and overwhelm a caravan, while the waters will forsake their channels, invade the tops of the mountains and drown a rebellious race. When the Lord contends against proud men, He has but to lift His finger and countless legions throng around Him, all loyal to their Lord and valiant for His name! Know you not that the beasts of the field are His servants and the stones of the street obey His bidding? Every wave worships Him and every wind knows its Lord. If you would war against Him, it would be well for you to know what His forces are—consider the battle—do no more.

In the case before us Jehovah has to deal with Pharaoh and He humbles him by frogs. Strange! Amazing! One would have thought that such despicable means would never have been used. The Lord began with the proud monarch by turning the waters into blood, but it may be that Pharaoh said in his heart, “What a great man I am! If Jehovah comes forth against me, He must needs work a terrible miracle in order to conquer.” He goes his way to his house unhumbled. This time the Lord will deal with him in another style. I grant you that the conflict was still sublime in the truest sense, but in Pharaoh’s estimation the croaking frogs which came up from all the banks of the Nile were a mean sort of adversary! From every reservoir and marsh they marched up in countless hordes, entering into his chamber and coming upon his bed and his kneading trough. He could neither sleep nor eat, nor walk abroad without encountering the loathsome reptiles. The Lord seemed by this to say, “Who are you that I should do great things to conquer you? I will even vanquish you by frogs.”

There was a suitableness in God’s choosing the frogs to humble Egypt’s king, because frogs were worshipped by that nation as emblems of the Deity. Images of a certain frog-headed goddess were placed in the catacombs and frogs, themselves, were preserved with sacred honors. These are your gods, O Egypt! You shall have enough of them! Pharaoh himself shall pay a new reverence to these reptiles. As the true God is

everywhere present around us—in our bedchambers and in our streets, so shall Pharaoh find every place filled with what he chooses to call Divine! Is it not a just way of dealing with Him?

The Lord has sure ways of reaching the hearts of proud men and if He does not use frogs, today, He can use other means, for He has servants everywhere prepared for each emergency. He knows how to reach the rich and make them sit by the wayside, like Belisarius, begging for food. The strong and healthy man, He can soon place among the invalids and make him cry like a sick girl, “Give me a drink, Titinius.” Your children are about you today—your pride and joy—but He can make you childless in an hour. His arrows can pierce through a sevenfold harness of steel—no man is so encompassed as to be beyond the reach of the Almighty! Let me speak of Pharaoh by way of observation and I will begin by remarking that—

I. IN SORE TROUBLE, THE SERVANTS OF THE LORD ARE GREATLY VALUED.

“Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron.” The frogs had taught him good manners and he longs to see the ministers of the Lord. How is this? *The man was somewhat brought to his senses*—and when this happens, men begin to value those whom they aforesaid despised. Listen to this story. There came a man of God to Bethel where king Jeroboam was setting up the golden calves and he began to cry against the altar. Then Jeroboam stretched forth his hand and cried, “Lay hold upon him.” In a moment the rebel’s right arm withered, and hung by his side, useless! Then he turned to the man of God, whom he was about to arrest, and said, “Entreat the Lord for me.” Thus have persecutors been forced to crouch at the feet of those whom they would have destroyed! Another story will set forth the same truth. King Saul had been forsaken of God and the Philistines pressed hard upon him. In his extremity he resorted to a woman who professed to deal with the spirits of the dead. With whom would he speak? He cries, “Bring me up Samuel.” Samuel was the man who had most sternly rebuked him! One would have thought that Samuel was the last person he would wish to see, but in his need, he asks for no one else but Samuel. When ungodly men get into straits, how they wish they could consult with one who has gone home, against whom they pointed many a jest. They never say, “Bring me up the jolly fellow who filled and quaffed the bowl with me.” In their tribulation they think not of such. They never cry, “Bring me up the wanton with whom I sported in sin, that I may again enjoy her company.” No, in their distress they desire other advisers—they would rather cry, “Bring me up my holy mother! Oh, for a sight of her dear, loving face as I saw it on her dying bed, when she urged me to follow her to Heaven! Bring me up that old friend whom I ridiculed when I turned aside from the ways of God! Oh, for an hour with the man of God whom once I scorned!” Do you not see that it is the old tale repeated—Pharaoh, when his troubles are multiplied, calls for Moses and Aaron!

This is also to be accounted for by the fact that *God puts a mysterious honor upon His faithful servants*. The painters place halos about the heads of the Bible saints—there were no such crowns of light upon them,

literally, and yet within the legend there slumbers a great truth. He who leads an upright, holy, gracious life has a power about him which impresses the beholder—his presence in an ungodly company has an influence on wicked men like that of Zephon, of whom Milton sings in *Paradise Lost*. To the great fallen angel his presence was a rebuke. God hedges the good with a dignity which men feel even when they are not conscious of it. It was so in the case before us. Moses was made to be as a god unto Pharaoh. Pharaoh had said, “Get you unto your burdens,” addressing Moses and Aaron as if they were slaves! But now he sends for them and entreats their prayers on his behalf! This was like the case of Joseph. His brothers hated him and sold him for a slave—but how different the scene when they bowed before him and trembled as he said, “I am Joseph!” The archers had shot at him and wounded him, but still his bow abode in strength!

Remember, too, Jeremiah, whom Zedekiah, the king, treated with great indignity till the Babylonians had surrounded the city—and then he sent to him and said, “Enquire, I pray you, of the Lord for us.” Our Lord describes an instance still more remarkable. It belongs to the next world, but the same principles rule in all worlds. A poor saint was laid at a rich man’s door, full of sores. He begged for the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table, “moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.” The rich man, clothed with purple and fine linen, took small note of this saint of God. But what a change happened on a day when the beggar died and was carried by angels into Abraham’s bosom—and the rich man also died and was buried! In Hell the rich man lifted up his eyes, and Lazarus had honor before him, for he begged that Lazarus might be sent to cool his burning tongue with the tip of his finger dipped in water. They had changed places, for God had crowned His poor servant with glory and honor! The halo was around the head of Lazarus most assuredly.

A light shone upon the face of Moses and a glory settled upon the brow of Jesus. “Such honor have all the saints” in a spiritual sense—and the proudest of men shall be made to know it!

Once more, let me note that this honor is doubtless set on saints that they may be of service to ungodly men. God intends, by their means, to bless the penitent. When it was wheat harvest and a thunderstorm came because Israel desired a king, you remember that while peal on peal the dread artillery of God was heard, the people trembled and besought Samuel the Prophet to pray for them. And he said, “God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.” Holy Samuel’s prayer was heard for them!

Much later an earthquake shook the foundations of a prison and loosed the bands of the prisoners. Then the jailer woke up in his fright and feared that his prisoners had escaped—and that he should have to die for it—but there stood Paul, the man whom he had thrust into the inner prison, and whose feet he had made fast in the stocks! And the jailer, trembling before him, cried out, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” The answer was given. He was directed to believe and to be baptized—and the jailer and his house were saved! If God’s servants are treated

with scorn and harshness they need not fear, for they are put just where they are, that unconverted men may be blessed by their agency. Like Moses to Pharaoh, saints will yet have to say, “Glory over me. I will pray for you, or teach you, so that I may but lead you to the Savior.”

It is clear that in times of trouble godly men and women are at a premium! Secondly, with ungodly men—

II. IN TIMES OF SORE TRIAL PRAYER ALSO BEGINS TO BE VALUABLE.

Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, “Entreat the Lord.” Pharaoh begs an interest in the prayers of good men—this is a fine change since the day wherein he said, “Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice?”

When men are sick and near to die, they send for us to pray with them. That old philosopher, Bion, showed much wisdom in his biting sarcasm. He was on shipboard and found that among the passengers there were certain foul-mouthed desperadoes. While they were venting all manner of abominations, a storm came on, and they began to pray! Then Bion cried out to them, “Hold your tongues, for if the gods only know that *you* are here, they will sink the vessel! Be quiet, lest your prayers should be our ruin.” One’s thoughts have taken somewhat of that form when we have seen men fulfilling the old adage—

“When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be.”

Such prayers are too often an insult to the holiness of God!

Why is it that reprobates take to praying when they are in deep trouble? Frequently *superstition moves them*. They regard a prayer as a spell or magical charm. So in their folly they send for a minister and cry, “Entreat the Lord for me!” Among many Londoners, so dense is this superstition that after a poor soul is dead, I have heard relatives say, “We sent for the minister and *he came and prayed to him*.” Mark that word, “prayed to him”! Does not this discover the ignorance and superstition of the people? They do not know the design and object of prayer. This superstition needs to be spoken of with great truthfulness and fidelity.

In certain instances the man’s hope in prayer is the result of a *condemning faith*. There is a justifying faith and a condemning faith. “What?” you say, “does faith ever *condemn* men?” Yes, when men have faith enough to know that there is a God who sends judgments upon them, that nothing can remove those judgments but the hand that sent them and that prayer moves that hand—there are persons who yet never pray, themselves, but eagerly cry to friends, “Entreat the Lord for me.” That is a measure of faith which goes to increase a man’s condemnation, since he ought to know that if what he believes is true, then the proper thing is to pray himself! It would have been a wonderfully good sign if Pharaoh had said, “Join with me, O Moses and Aaron, while I pray unto Jehovah that He may take the frogs from me.” But, no, he had only a condemning faith which contented itself with other men’s prayers!

In many instances this desire for prayer is *one of the movements of the Spirit upon the heart of man*. When a poor, afflicted man, in the depth of poverty, struck with consumption or laid aside by some other deadly disease, desires that a minister would come and pray with him, we will nev-

er treat such a wish with neglect. While it is our duty to expose the superstition which often lurks beneath the wish, we also hope that some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel may dwell in it. It is, perhaps, the prodigal saying, “I will arise and go unto my Father, and I will inquire the way home.” I hope it is so.

Take warning, you that do not pray—you will yet need to pray! There will come a time to the most of you when you will not be able to bear yourselves without crying unto God. May God, in His Infinite Mercy lead you to begin at once! For when it can be said of you, “Behold, he prays,” it will be the best of news! Beginning to pray is the turning point of life! Why not at once set a high price upon that which in times of trouble you will seek for with tears? Our third observation is this—

III. IN SORE TROUBLE THE PRAYER IS OFTEN A WRONG ONE.

The petitions which men offer when they are in distress are often wrong prayers. Pharaoh said, “Entreat the Lord, that He may take away the frogs from me.”

A fatal flaw is manifest in that prayer. It contains no *confession of sin*. He says not, “I have rebelled against the Lord. Entreat that I may find forgiveness!” Nothing of the kind—he loves sin as much as ever. A prayer without penitence is a prayer without acceptance. If no tear has fallen upon it, it is withered. You must come to God as a sinner through a Savior, but by no other way. He that comes to God like the Pharisee, with, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are,” never draws near to God at all! But he that cries, “God be merciful to me, a sinner,” has come to God by the way which God has, Himself, appointed! There must be a confession of sin before God or our prayer is faulty.

Pharaoh’s prayer *dealt only with the punishment*. “Take away the frogs! Take away the frogs! Take away the frogs!” That is his one cry. So we hear the sick exclaim, “Oh, Sir, pray that I may get well.” The drunkard begs that he may be helped out of his poverty. The impenitent sinner cries, “Pray that my child may not be taken from me.” It is not wrong to pray, “Take away the frogs.” We should all have prayed so if we had been surrounded by such pests. The evil is that this was the whole of his prayer. He said not, “Take away my sins,” but, “Take away the frogs.” He did not cry, “Lord, take away my heart of stone,” but only, “Take away the frogs.” Perhaps I am addressing those who are in poverty, sickness, or distress and all they are crying about is, “Lord, take away the frogs! Deliver me from my poverty, my trouble, my hunger, my disgrace, my punishment!” Now, if you have brought yourself into evil by a vicious life, your prayer must not be, “Take away the disease and the poverty,” but “Take away the sin.” The drunkard’s prayer must not be, “Lord, take away the result of my intoxication,” but, “Remove from me the poisoned cup.” Lay the axe at the root and cry, “Lord, take the sin away.” Alas, most of the prayers of men in trouble are only like Pharaoh’s selfish prayer, “Take away the frogs.” The Lord did hear his petition, but nothing came of it. The frogs were gone, but flies came immediately after and all sorts of plagues followed in rapid succession—and his heart was still hardened.

When ungodly men are under a sense of Divine Wrath they turn not to God aright—*their prayer is devoid of spiritual requests*. When Cain had murdered his brother, did he express a regret? No. He only murmured, “My punishment is greater than I can bear.” Esau sold his birthright. Did he repent of the sin of having been a profane person, and seek pardon carefully? Not he! He sought carefully with tears to get back his birthright, but he found no place for repentance in his father Isaac! The blessing had gone to Jacob and on Jacob it must remain. Another telling case is that of Simon Magus. When Peter told him that he was in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity, he replied, “Pray you to the Lord for me that none of these things which you have spoken come upon me”—that was all he cared about. He expressed no desire to be delivered from his evil way, but only to be screened from the consequences of it! Every knave cries out against punishment—but he is attaining to honesty who entreats to be freed from his pilfering habits! Our last remark is that—

IV. THE SINNER IN HIS SORE TROUBLES IS VERY APT TO MAKE GREAT PROMISES.

Pharaoh cried, “Take away the frogs and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.” In this way one of you talked when you were down with fever, or when you were likely to lose your employment through your folly. You said, “Please God, if You let me escape this once, I will be a very different man.” Such promises are *generally boastful*. Notice here the proud language of Pharaoh. “I will let the people go.” He does not long talk in this fashion, but now he is a great king and he gives his royal word, “I will let the people go.” Some folks are very big when they promise God, “I will do this and I will do that.” But you cannot, my Friend! You reply that you are going to have a new heart and a right spirit. Are you looking to create them yourself? You talk as if you were! I think you said that you were going to “turn over a new leaf,” but a new leaf in a bad book may be worse than the old leaf! But you are going to be entirely new, are you? Are you to do all this yourself? You are greatly mistaken—true conversion does not begin by talking of what “I” will do! It begins in casting ourselves upon the Lord and begging Him to work all our works in us!

But this man’s promises were *all a lie*. I daresay that for the moment he meant them—but he did not keep his word, for he did *not* let the people go. “When Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the Lord had said.” Has not that been the case with many others? You promised “faithfully,” as you said. You pledged yourself that it would be so, but it is not so. Stand still awhile and hear a message from the Lord—“You have not lied unto men, but you have lied unto God.” Let that sentence pierce the innermost heart of your conscience! “You have lied unto God.” Remember Ananias and Sapphira and what followed upon their falsehood? Be astonished that it has not followed upon yours, for you made the promise before witnesses in the Presence of the Lord Himself!

Mark well that in all this, Pharaoh *increased his guilt*. His vows heaped up his transgressions. He forgot his promises, but God did not. They

were laid by in store against him—and the blows of God upon him fell heavier and heavier until, at last, Jehovah drowned him and his chosen captains in the Red Sea! Oh, Sirs, if God comes to deal with you in this fashion, what will become of you? Your promises are filed in Heaven to be witnesses against you! God reaches out these promises of yours at this hour and holds them up before your eyes. And what does your conscience say? If you had promised a kind friend and broken your word, it would have been base enough, but you have been ungrateful to your God in whose hands your breath is, and whose are all your ways! Let a sense of guilt overwhelm you and, in the name of Jesus Christ, ask mercy of your God!

I will tell you how God deals with His own children and then leave you to infer how He will deal with you if you are not His children. A certain man, to all appearances, feared God. Yes, and did so with a sincere heart. He was once an earnest Christian, a member of the Church and a worker in the service—faithful to his light and fervent in spirit—but he grew cold. He had a farm and it occupied nearly all his time. He was filled with an intense desire to grow rich and, therefore, he devoted his attention to his business till he grew colder and colder in Divine things—and the means of Grace on the weekdays were forsaken. Work for God was dropped, communion with God ceased and the religious professor became to all appearance an utter worldling. But yet he was a child of God and this is how his Father restored him. He took from him the wife of his youth, to whom his heart was knit. But this made him more worldly than before because his wife had been a great help to him in the farm—but now she was gone—so he must stick to it more than ever! Nothing came of the first chastisement except increased sin. He had only one son, for whom he was saving up his money and working his business—and he saw that son cut down with consumption, like his mother. This also made him still more worldly. It ought to have brought him to his knees, but it did not. He carried on the practice of prayer, but with little heart. He said, “Now, my dear son, who was such a comfort to me, has gone, I can hardly get out on Sundays at all. I *must* look after the cows and attend to the stock.” So he sank deeper in the mire.

Then the Lord began to deal with him in another way. He had a bad season and lost money farming, careful as he was. Next year was worse, and the cattle plague emptied his stalls. He was brought down to poverty. He could scarcely keep the farm, for he could not pay the rent. Still he did not yield. He had tender moments now and then, but he was usually hard, for he felt that God was dealing severely with him. He felt angry against God and stuck to his business more than ever, while the things of God were forgotten. Then the Lord took His erring child more closely in hand than before, and sent him an incurable disease in his body. The worldly farmer lay upon a sick bed fretting about his business—he did not turn to the Lord even then! Last of all, his house took fire and as the barn and the ricks and the house were all ablaze and all that he had was going, they carried him out into the open air upon the bed from which he could not stir, and he was heard to say, “Blessed be the Lord! Blessed be

the Lord! I am cured at last.” But, dear Friends, nothing would cure him till everything was gone from him! Was not that a pity? He was saved so as by fire. He would be “as the horse and the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle” and, therefore, he had to suffer for it. I pray you do not copy him. People of God, do not make rods for your own backs in that way! Do not drive your heavenly Father to hard measures.

But oh, you ungodly, *if He will deal thus with His children, how will He deal with you who are not His children?* If He means to bless you, He will not let you go unpunished, but He will smite you with heavy strokes. I remember one who used to bless God for a broken leg—he said that he never ran in the ways of God until he was lame. I believe that some parents never loved the heavenly Father till their dear infant child was taken away. The shepherd tried to get the mother sheep into the fold, but she would not come, so he took up her lamb and carried it away in his arms—and then the mother followed him! He has done that to some of you. You would never have come to Christ if dear little Johnny had not gone Home to Jesus. You lost one and another for that same purpose—have you not had enough strokes? You have been smitten till your “whole head is sick and your whole heart faint.” Will you not turn unto your God without more ado? His blows are sent in mercy! It is far better that you should have a Hell here than Hell hereafter! It were better for you to live a lifelong agony than to be cast into Hell forever! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! He died for sinners—died for aggravating, guilty, willful sinners! And if they look to Him, they shall at once be forgiven! I cannot give the look of faith for you, or I would gladly do so, but I beseech you to look and live! May God the Holy Spirit lead you to do so, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EXODUS 3:1-14; ROMANS 9:1-25.**

This Chapter in Exodus tells of the appearance of God to Moses in the Wilderness. Has He departed from us, Brothers and Sisters? He used to be seen by godly souls by mount and stream and sea—and even bushes were alive and blazing with the indwelt Godhead! Oh, that He would reveal Himself to us tonight! I am going to read this Chapter with this longing in my heart. I pray that the same longing may be in the heart of every child of God—“Show me Your face: show me Your face, my God, tonight!”

Verse 1. *Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back side of the desert, and came to the Mountain of God, even to Horeb.* There is nothing dishonorable about common trade and matters of business at all. Here is a shepherd who keeps his flock—and God keeps him and reveals Himself to him. When God wants a man to lead His people, He seeks for him not among idlers, but busy, active men. And God was pleased to show Himself more to Moses, as a shepherd, than He had ever shown Himself to him as a prince in Egypt. I find no glowing Deity in the halls of Pharaoh,

but I find the Consuming Fire manifested in the lone wastes of the Sinai Desert!

2. *And the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.* Well might it say, “Behold.” I have seen a bush set alight by a match. It blazed in a moment, but it was gone in another moment! It burned up fiercely and hastily. But God was pleased to make a poor consumable bush to be the unharmed place of His abiding. He dwells today in the Human Person of the Savior. The Godhead is in Christ. He dwells today in the Church which might well enough be consumed by His Presence—but it is not. He can come and dwell in my heart and in yours, tonight, and yet we shall bear the Presence of Deity to the hour of our death! He has a way of so throwing Himself into our feebleness that it becomes strong—and that which might otherwise have been destroyed, is even preserved by His Presence! The bush burned with fire and was not consumed.

3, 4. *And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.* Oh, that personal call—that voice from God to the heart! How much we need it. Do you not remember when first the Lord called some of you? Then He says to you tonight, “I have called you by My name. You are Mine.” Acknowledge that sweet impeachment, confess that you are His and say to Him, “For suffering or for service, here am I ready, yes ready, even as Moses was. Here am I.”

5. *And He said, Draw not near here: take your shoes from off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.* Stand as a servant stands in the presence of his master in the East. He is not expected to wear, in the court of his master, the shoes which have trodden in the mire of the world. Now, put away your cares, put away your carnal thoughts, put away yourself, put away your sins. When God is near, solemnity and deep reverence become us. “The place where you stand is holy ground.”

6. *Moreover He said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.* You need not hide your face if God shall appear to you, though I am sure you will do it. You may come boldly. It is your Father’s face! It is the face of One who is reconciled to you in Christ. Therefore open your eyes and look—and may the Lord show Himself to you!

7. *And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows.* Now, you troubled ones, are not these verses real music to you? God has seen your afflictions—there are God’s eyes! God has heard your cry—there are God’s ears. “I know their sorrows.” There is God’s mighty understanding. He is thinking about you. He knows all that which tries you tonight.

10. *“Come now therefore”*—This was a very extraordinary thing to follow after all that. God has seen the affliction of His people. What then?

Does He say, “I am come down to deliver them”? What then? Why, the next thing is that He is going to use this trembling man who stands awe-struck with his shoes off in the presence of the still burning bush! “Come now, therefore”—

10. *And I will send you unto Pharaoh, that you may bring forth My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.* You have been praying for a blessing. God is going to give it *through you*. You have been looking east and west and north and south for some deliverer that shall win souls and stir up the Church. God calls *you* to do it! He invites you to undertake this gigantic service and I think that I see the color come into your face and then fly away again! You are ready to faint at the thought of such a charge laid upon you!

11. *And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?* Now, catch this—

12. *And He said, Certainly I will be with you.* What more does Moses need? He said, “Who am I?” This showed his weakness. God said, “Never mind who *you* are. Certainly I will be with you.” Here was strength enough for him!

12. *And this shall be a token unto you, that I have sent you: When you have brought forth the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain.* And he did! You know how Sinai trembled while God made it His Throne and how Moses must have been strengthened when he did exceedingly fear and quake before God when he remembered that this same God had appeared to him when he was alone in the desert—and had promised that they should worship Him there.

13. *Then Moses said to God, Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, The God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they say to me, What is His name? what shall I say to them?*

14. *God said unto Moses, I AM WHO I AM.* That is His name—The Infinite, Eternal and Unchangeable God!

14. *And He said, Thus shall you say unto the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you.* Oh, what a glorious commission—to receive it direct from the self-existent God, who is the same forever and ever, and only has immortality! Speak to us tonight, you great I AM, JAH, Jehovah, God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob. Speak to this company in this House of Prayer tonight, because of Jesus, Joshua, Jehoshua, Jehovah, Jesus. I have tried to show you how that name of Jesus has the name “Jehovah” hidden away in it. Because of Him, draw near to us, O Lord!

ROMANS 9:1-25. The Jews thought that God must certainly save them. They thought they had a birth claim. Were they not the children of Abraham? Surely they had some right to it. This Chapter battles the question of right. No man has any right to the Grace of God. The terms are inconsistent. There can be no right to that which is free favor. We are all condemned criminals, and if pardoned, it must be as the result of pure mercy, absolute mercy, for there is no good in any one of us!

Verses 1, 2. *I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit that I have great heaviness and continual*

sorrow in my heart. He never thought about his unbelief, Brothers and Sisters, without the deepest imaginable regret. How far is this from the spirit of those who look upon the ungodly without tears—settle it down as a matter that cannot be altered and take it as a question of hard fate—but are never troubled about it! Not so the Apostle. He had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart.

3. *For I could wish that I, myself, were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.* He had just that self-sacrificing spirit of Moses, that he would lose anything and everything if they might but be saved. And this is the spirit which ought to actuate every Church of Christ. The church that is always caring for her own maintenance is no church. The Church that would be willing to be destroyed if it could save the sons of men—which feels as if, whatever her shame or sorrow, it would be nothing if she could but save sinners—that Church is like the Lord, of whom we read, “He saved others: Himself he could not save.” Oh, blessed heartbreak over sinful men which makes men willing to lose everything if they might but bless and win men to Christ! “My kinsmen,” he says, “according to the flesh.”

4, 5. *Who are Israelites; to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the Covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises. Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.* What dignity has God put upon ancient Israel! How favored far beyond any of us in these particulars! They had the Light of God when the rest of the world was in darkness! Theirs was the Law of God, and theirs the Covenant promises! Above all, of them it was that Christ came! Our Savior was a Jew! Forever must that race be had in respectful honor and we must pray for their salvation.

6, 7. *Not as though the Word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but in Isaac shall your seed be called.* Now the Apostle is getting to his point. You Jews claim to have the mercy of God because you are of the seed of Abraham, but there is nothing in that, he says, for God made a distinct choice of Isaac to the rejection of Ishmael, as he did afterwards of Jacob, and then Esau was left out.

8. *That is, your flesh which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.* Now Isaac was not the child of Abraham’s flesh. He was born according to promise, when his mother was past age and his father well stricken in years. His was the birth according to the promise and that is the way the line of Grace runs—not according to the flesh, but according to the promise! If, then, all my hope of Heaven lies upon my being a child of godly parents, it is an Israelite hope and good for nothing! If my hope of Heaven lies upon my having been born according to the promise of God—born of His Grace and of His power—in that line the Covenant stands! God has determined that it shall be so.

9-13. *For this is the word of promise. At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only this, but when Rebecca also had con-*

ceived by one, even by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calls) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. So, then, there is no claim of birth, for he that had the claim of birth, even Esau, is passed by! There is, indeed, no claim at all, for God gives freely according to His own will, blessing the sons of men.

14. *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid!* There is no unrighteousness in anything that He does! And in the winding up of all affairs, it shall be seen that God was righteous as well as gracious.

15-16. *For He says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.* That is where it must begin. When men are condemned, what can they appeal to, but the mercy of God? Where is the hope of men, but in the sovereignty of the Most High?

17-24. *For the Scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised you up, that I might show My power in you, and that My name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore has He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will, He hardens. You will say then unto me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? 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 before prepared unto Glory, even us, whom He has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?* There was the sting of it. They could not endure that God should, in His Divine Sovereignty save Gentiles as well as Jews! But He has done so and He has sent the Gospel to us while they, having refused it, are left in the darkness which they chose.

25. *As He says also in Hosea, I will call them My people, which were not My people: and her beloved, which was not beloved.* Oh, what a splendid verse is this! Let some here who have been far from God until now and never had a gracious thought, nevertheless hear what He has done and will do again! "I will call them My people that were not My people, and her beloved which was not beloved."

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

CONFESSION OF SIN—A SERMON WITH SEVEN TEXTS NO. 113

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 18, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“I have sinned.”
PHARAOH—Exodus 9:27.***

MY sermon this morning will have seven texts and yet I pledge myself that there shall be but three different words in the whole of them. For it so happens that the seven texts are all alike, occurring in seven different portions of God’s Holy Word. I shall require, however, to use the whole of them to exemplify different cases. And I must request those of you who have brought your Bibles with you to refer to the texts as I shall mention them.

The subject of this morning’s discourse will be this—CONFESSION OF SIN. We know that this is absolutely necessary to salvation. Unless there is a true and hearty confession of our sins to God, we have no promise that we shall find mercy through the blood of the Redeemer. “Whoever confesses his sins and forsakes them shall find mercy.” But there is no promise in the Bible to the man or woman who will not confess his sins. As upon every point of Scripture, there is a liability of being deceived, so more especially in the matter of confession of sin. There are many who make a confession and a confession before God who, notwithstanding, receive no blessing because their confession has not in it certain marks which are required by God to prove it genuine and sincere and which demonstrate it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. My text this morning consists of three words, “I have sinned.” And you will see how these words, in the lips of different men, indicate very different feelings. While one says, “I have sinned,” and receives forgiveness—another we shall meet with says, “I have sinned,” and goes his way to blacken himself with worse crimes than before and dive into greater depths of sin than heretofore he had committed.

**THE HARDENED SINNER
PHARAOH—“I have sinned.”—Exodus 9:27.**

I. The first case I shall bring before you is that of the HARDENED SINNER who, when under terror, says, “I have sinned.” And you will find the text in the book of Exodus, the 9th chapter and 27th verse—“And Pharaoh sent and called for Moses and Aaron and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous and I and my people are wicked.”

But why this confession from the lips of the haughty tyrant? He was not often likely to humble himself before Jehovah. Why does the proud one bow himself? You will judge of the value of his confession when you hear the circumstances under which it was made. “And Moses stretched forth his rod toward Heaven. And the Lord sent thunder and hail and the fire ran along upon the ground. And the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So that there was hail and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation.” “Now,” said Pharaoh, while the thunder is rolling through the sky, while the lightning-flashes are setting the very ground on fire and while the hail is descending in big lumps of ice—“now,” he says, “I have sinned.” He is but a type and specimen of multitudes of the same class. How many a hardened rebel on shipboard, when the timbers are strained and creaking, when the mast is broken and the ship is drifting before the gale, when the hungry waves are opening their mouths to swallow the ship up alive and quick as those that go into the pit of Hell—how many a hardened sailor has then bowed his knees, with tears in his eyes and cried, “I have sinned”? But of what use and of what value was his confession? The repentance that was born in the storm died in the calm! That repentance of his that was begotten amidst the thunder and the lightning ceased as soon as all was hushed in quiet. And the man who was a pious mariner when on board ship became the most wicked and abominable of sailors when he placed his foot on *terra firma!*

How often, too, have we seen this in a storm of thunder and lightning? Many a man’s cheek is blanched when he hears the thunder rolling. His eyes start to tear and he cries, “O God, I have sinned,” while the rafters of his house are shaking and the very ground beneath him reeling at the voice of God which is full of majesty! But alas, for such a repentance! When the sun again shines and the black clouds are withdrawn, sin comes again upon the man and he becomes worse than before! How many of the same sort of confessions, too, have we seen in times of cholera and fever and pestilence? Then our churches have been crammed with hearers, who, because so many funerals have passed their doors, or so many have died in the streets, could not refrain from going up to God’s house to confess their sins! And under that visitation, when one, two and three have been lying dead in the house, or next door, how many

have thought they would really turn to God? But, alas, when the pestilence had done its work, conviction ceased and when the bell had tolled the last time for a death caused by cholera, then their hearts ceased to beat with penitence and their tears flowed no more!

Have I any such here this morning? I doubt not I have hardened persons who would scorn the very idea of religion, who would count me a cant and hypocrite if I should endeavor to press it home upon them—but who know right well that religion is true and who feel it in their times of terror! If I have such here this morning, let me solemnly say to them, “Sirs, you have forgotten the feelings you had in your hours of alarm. But, remember, God has not forgotten the vows you then made!” Sailor, you said if God would spare you to see the land, again, you would be His servant. You are not so, you have lied to God, you have made Him a false promise—you have never kept the vow which your lips did utter! Many of you have said, on a bed of sickness, that if He would spare your life, you would never again sin as you did before—but here you are and this week’s sins shall speak for themselves! You are no better than you were before your sickness. Could you lie to your fellow man and yet go unreprieved? And do you think that you will lie against God and yet go unpunished? No! The vow, however rashly made, is registered in Heaven and though it is a vow which you cannot perform, yet as it is a vow which you have made yourself and made voluntarily, too, you shall be punished for not keeping it. And God shall execute vengeance upon you at last because you said you would turn from your ways and then, when the blow was removed, you did not!

A great outcry has been raised of late against tickets-of-leave. I have no doubt there are some men here who before high Heaven stand in the same position as the ticket-of-leave men stand to our government! They were about to die, as they thought. They promised good behavior if they might be spared and they are here today on ticket-of-leave in this world—and how have they fulfilled their promise? Justice might raise the same outcry against them as they do against the burglars so constantly let loose upon us. The avenging angel might say, “O God, these men said if they were spared they would be so much better. If anything, they are worse! How have they violated their promise and how have they brought down Divine wrath upon their heads!” This is the first style of penitence. And it is a style I hope none of you will imitate, for it is utterly worthless. It is of no use for you to say, “I have sinned,” merely under the influence of terror and then to forget it afterwards.

THE DOUBLE-MINDED MAN

BALAAM—“I have sinned.”—Numbers 22:34.

II. Now for a second text. I beg to introduce you to another character—the *double-minded* man who says, “I have sinned,” and feels that he has and feels it deeply, too, but who is so worldly-minded that he “loves the wages of unrighteousness.” The character I have chosen to illustrate this is that of *Balaam*. Turn to the book of Numbers, the 22nd Chapter and the 34th verse—“And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned.” But yet he went on with his sin afterwards. One of the strangest characters of the whole world is Balaam! I have often marveled at that man. He seems really, in another sense, to have come up to the lines of Ralph Erskine—

***“To good and evil equal bent
And both a devil and a saint.”***

For he did seem to be so. At times no man could speak more eloquently and more truthfully, but at other times he exhibited the most mean and sordid covetousness that could disgrace human nature! Think you see Balaam. He stands upon the brow of the hill and there lie the multitudes of Israel at his feet. He is bid to curse them and he cries, “How shall I curse whom God has not cursed?” And God, opening his eyes, he begins to tell even about the coming of Christ and he says, “I shall see Him but not now: I shall behold Him but not near.” And then he winds up his oration by saying—“Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like His!” And you will say of that man, he is a hopeful character. Wait till he has come off the brow of the hill and you will hear him give the most diabolical advice to the king of Moab which it was even possible for Satan, himself, to suggest! Said he to the king, “You cannot overthrow these people in battle, for God is with them. Try and entice them from their God.” And you know how, with wanton lusts, they of Moab tried to entice the children of Israel from allegiance to Jehovah, so that this man seemed to have the voice of an angel at one time and yet the very soul of a devil in his heart! He was a terrible character. He was a man of two things—a man who went all the way with two things to a very great extent. I know the Scripture says, “No man can serve two masters.” Now this is often misunderstood. Some read it, “No man can *serve two masters*.” Yes he can, he can serve three or four! The way to read it is this—“No man can serve two *masters*.” They cannot both be masters! He can serve two, but they cannot both be his *master*. A man can serve two who are not his masters, or twenty. He may live for twenty different purposes, but he cannot live for more than one master purpose—there can only be one master purpose in his soul. But Balaam labored to serve two—it was

like the people of whom it was said, “They feared the Lord and served other gods.” Or like Rufus, who was a loaf of the same leaven. For you know our old king Rufus painted God on one side of his shield and the devil on the other and had underneath, the motto—“Ready for both, catch who can.”

There are many such, who are ready for both! They meet a minister and how pious and holy they are! On the Sabbath they are the most respectable and upright people in the world, as you would think. Indeed they even effect a drawling in their speech, which they think to be eminently religious. But on a week day, if you want to find the greatest rogues and cheats, they are some of those men who are so sanctimonious in their piety! Now, rest assured, my Hearers, that no confession of sin can be genuine unless it is a whole-hearted one! It is of no use for you to say, “I have sinned,” and then keep on sinning. “I have sinned,” you say, and it is a fair, fair face you show. But, alas, alas, for the sins you will go away and commit! Some men seem to be born with two characters. I noticed when in the library at Trinity College, Cambridge, a very fine statue of Lord Byron. The librarian said to me, “Stand here, Sir.” I looked and I said, “What a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!” “Come here,” he said, “to the other side.” “Ah, what a demon! There stands the man that could defy the Deity!” He seemed to have such a scowl and such a dreadful leer on his face even as Milton would have painted Satan when he said—“Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.” I turned away and said to the librarian, “Do you think the artist designed this?” “Yes,” he said, “he wished to picture the two characters—the great, the grand, the almost superhuman genius that he possessed—and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul.” There are some men here of the same sort. I dare say, like Balaam, they would overthrow everything in argument, but with their enchantments, they could work miracles.

And yet at the same time there is something about them which betrays a horrid character of sin—as great as that which would appear to be their character for righteousness! Balaam, you know, offered sacrifices to God upon the altar of Baal—that was just the type of his character. So many do. They offer sacrifices to God on the shrine of Mammon. And while they will give to the building of a church and distribute to the poor, they will, at the other door of their counting-house, grind the poor for bread and press the very blood out of the widow, that they may enrich themselves. Ah, it is idle and useless for you to say, “I have sinned,” unless you mean it from your heart! That double-minded man’s confession is of no avail.

THE INSINCERE MAN
SAUL—“I have sinned.”—1 Samuel 15:24.

III. And now a third character and a third text. In the First Book of Samuel, the 15th Chapter and 24th verse—“And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned”

Here is the *insincere man*—the man who is not like Balaam, to a certain extent sincere in two things. But the man who is just the opposite—who has no prominent point in his character at all but is molded everlastingly by the circumstances that are passing over his head. Such a man was *Saul*. Samuel reproved him and he said, “I have sinned.” But he did not mean what he said—for if you read the whole verse you will find him saying, “I have sinned: for I have transgressed the Commandment of the Lord and your words, *because I feared the people,*” which was a lying excuse! Saul never feared anybody. He was always ready enough to do his own will—he was the despot! And just before this, he had pleaded another excuse, that he had saved the bullocks and lambs to offer to Jehovah and, therefore, both excuses could not have been true. You remember, my Friends, that the most prominent feature in the character of Saul was his insincerity. One day he fetched David from his bed, as he thought, to put him to death in his house. Another time he declares, “God forbid that I should do anything against you, my son, David.” One day, because David saved his life, he said, “You are more righteous than I. I will do so no more.” The day before he had gone out to fight against his own son-in-law in order to slay him! Sometimes Saul was among the Prophets, easily turned into a Prophet and then afterwards among the witches. Sometimes in one place and then another and insincere in everything. How many such we have in every Christian assembly! Men who are very easily molded! Say what you please to them, they always agree with you. They have affectionate dispositions, very likely a tender conscience. But then the conscience is so remarkably tender that when touched, it seems to give and you are afraid to probe deeper—it heals as soon it is wounded! I think I used the very singular comparison once before, which I must use again—there are some men who seem to have rubber hearts. If you do but touch them, there is an impression made at once. But then it is of no use—it soon restores itself to its original character! You may press them whatever way you wish, they are so elastic you can always effect your purpose. But then they are not fixed in their character and soon return to be what they were before. O Sirs, too many of you have done the same—you have bowed your heads in church and

said, “We have erred and strayed from Your ways.” And you did not mean what you said. You have come to your minister. You have said, “I repent of my sins.” You did not, then, feel you were a sinner! You only said it to please him. And now you attend the House of God—no one more impressive than you. The tears will run down your cheeks in a moment but yet, notwithstanding all that, the tears are dried as quickly as they are brought forth and you remain, to all intents and purposes, the same as you were before! To say, “I have sinned,” in an unmeaning manner, is worse than worthless, for it is a mockery of God thus to confess with insincerity of heart!

I have been brief upon this character, for it seemed to touch upon that of Balaam—though any thinking man will at once see there was a real contrast between Saul and Balaam—even though there is an affinity between the two. Balaam was the great bad man, great in all he did. Saul was little in everything except in stature—little in his good and little in his vice, but he was too much of a fool to be desperately bad, though too wicked to be at any time good. Balaam was great in both—the man who could at one time defy Jehovah and yet at another time could say, “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord, my God, to do less or more.”

THE DOUBTFUL PENITENT ***ACHAN—“I have sinned.”—Joshua 7:20.***

IV. And now I have to introduce to you a very interesting case. It is the case of the doubtful penitent, the case of *Achan*, in the book of Joshua, the 7th Chapter and the 20th verse—“And Achan answered Joshua, indeed I have sinned.”

You know that Achan stole some of the prey from the city of Jericho—that he was discovered by lot and put to death. I have singled this case out as the representative of some whose characters are doubtful on their death beds. They apparently repent, but the most we can say of them is that we hope their souls are saved at last but, indeed, we cannot tell. Achan, you are aware, was stoned with stones for defiling Israel. But I find in the Mishna, an old Jewish exposition of the Bible, these words, “Joshua said to Achan, the Lord shall trouble you *this* day.” And the note upon it is—“He said *this* day, implying that he was only to be troubled in this life, by being stoned to death but that God would have mercy on his soul, seeing that he had made a full confession of his sin.” And I, too, am inclined, from reading the Chapter, to concur in the idea of my venerable and now glorified predecessor, Dr. Gill, in believing that Achan really was

saved although he was put to death for the crime, as an example. For you will observe how kindly Joshua spoke to him. He said, “My son, give, I pray you, glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession unto Him and tell me now what you have done, hide it not from me.” And you find Achan making a very full confession. He says, “Indeed, I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonian garment and two hundred shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them and took them and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it.” It seems so full a confession that if I might be allowed to judge, I would say, “I hope to meet Achan the sinner before the Throne of God.” But Matthew Henry has no such opinion. And many other expositors consider that as his body was destroyed, so was his soul. I have, therefore, selected his case as being one of doubtful repentance. Ah, dear Friends, it has been my lot to stand by many a deathbed and to see many such a repentance as this! I have seen the man, when worn to a skeleton, sustained by pillows in his bed—and he has said, when I have talked to him of judgment to come—“Sir, I feel I have been guilty, but Christ is good. I trust in Him.” And I have said within myself, “I believe the man’s soul is safe.” But I have always come away with the melancholy reflection that I had no proof of it, beyond his own words, for it needs proof in acts and in future life in order to sustain any firm conviction of a man’s salvation. You know that great fact, that a physician once kept a record of a thousand persons who thought they were dying and whom he thought were penitents. He wrote their names down in a book as those, who, if they had died, would go to Heaven. They did not die, they lived. And he says that out of the whole thousand he had not three persons who turned out well, afterwards, but they returned to their sins again and were as bad as ever.

Ah, dear Friends, I hope none of you will have such a deathbed repentance as that! I hope your minister or your parents will not have to stand by your bedside and then go away and say, “Poor fellow, I hope he is saved. But alas, deathbed repentances are such flimsy things, such poor, such trivial grounds of hope that I am afraid, after all, his soul may be lost.” Oh, to die with a full assurance! Oh, to die with an abundant entrance, leaving a testimony behind that we have departed this life in peace! That is a far happier way than to die in a doubtful manner, lying sick, hovering between two worlds and neither ourselves nor our friends knowing to which of the two worlds we are going! May God grant us Grace to give in our lives evidences of true conversion, that our case may not be doubtful!

THE REPENTANCE OF DESPAIR
JUDAS—“I have sinned.”—Matthew 27:4.

V. I shall not detain you too long, I trust, but I must now give you another bad case—the worst of all. It is THE REPENTANCE OF DESPAIR. Will you turn to the 27th Chapter of Matthew and the 4th verse? There you have a dreadful case of the repentance of despair. You will recognize the character the moment I read the verse—“And Judas said, I have sinned.” Yes, Judas the traitor, who had betrayed his Master. When he saw that his Master was condemned, he “repented and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood, and he cast down the pieces in the temple and went”—and what?—“*and hanged himself.*”

Here is the worst kind of repentance of all—in fact, I know not that I am justified in calling it repentance. It must be called remorse of conscience! But Judas did confess his sin and then went and hanged himself. Oh, that dreadful, that terrible, that hideous confession of despair! Have you ever seen it? If you never have, then bless God that you were never called to see such a sight! I have seen it once in my life. I pray God I may never see it again—the repentance of the man who sees death staring him in the face and who says, “I have sinned.” You tell him that Christ has died for sinners. And he answers, “There is no hope for me. I have cursed God to His face. I have defied Him. My day of Grace I know is past, my conscience is seared with a hot iron. I am dying and I know I shall be lost!” Such a case as that happened long ago. You know it and it is on record—the case of Francis Spira—the most dreadful case, perhaps, except that of Judas, which is upon record in the memory of man! Oh, my Hearers, will any of you have such a repentance? If you do, it will be a beacon to all persons who sin in the future! If you have such a repentance as that, it will be a warning to generations yet to come!

In the life of Benjamin Keach—and he, also, was one of my predecessors—I find the case of a man who had been a professor of religion but had departed from the profession and had gone into awful sin. When he came to die, Keach, with many other friends, went to see him, but they could never stay with him above five minutes at a time, for he said, “Get you gone! It is of no use your coming to me. I have sinned away the Holy Spirit. I am like Esau, I have sold my birthright and though I seek it carefully with tears, I can never find it again.” And then he would repeat dreadful words, like these—“My mouth is filled with gravel stones and I drink wormwood day and night. Tell me not, tell me not of Christ! I know He is a Savior, but I hate Him and He hates me. I know I must die. I

know I must perish!” And then followed doleful cries and hideous noises, such as none could bear. They returned again in his placid moments only to stir him up once more and make him cry out in his despair, “I am lost! I am lost! It is of no use your telling me anything about it!”

Ah, there may be a man here who may have such a death as that. Let me warn him, before he comes to it. And may God the Holy Spirit grant that that man may be turned unto God and made a true Penitent. And then he need not have any more fear, for he who has had his sins washed away in a Savior’s blood need not have any remorse for his sins, for they are pardoned through the Redeemer!

THE REPENTANCE OF THE SAINT ***Job—“I have sinned.”—Job 7:20.***

VI. And now I come into daylight. I have been taking you through dark and dreary confessions. I shall detain you there no longer but bring you out to the two good confessions which I have to read to you. The first is that of Job in the 7th Chapter at the 20th verse—“I have sinned, what shall I do unto You, O You preserver of men?” This is the *repentance of the saint*. Job was a saint, but he sinned. This is the repentance of the man who already is a child of God, an acceptable repentance before God. But as I intend to dwell upon this in the evening, I shall now leave it, for fear of wearying you. David was a specimen of this kind of repentance and I would have you carefully study his penitential Psalms, the language of which is always full of weeping humility and earnest penitence.

THE BLESSED CONFESSION ***THE PRODIGAL—“I have sinned.”—Luke 15:18.***

VII. I come now to the last instance which I shall mention. It is the case of the prodigal. In Luke 15:18, we find the prodigal says—“Father, I have sinned.” Oh, here is *a blessed confession!* Here is that which proves a man to be a regenerate character—“Father, I have sinned.” Let me picture the scene. There is the prodigal. He has run away from a good home and a kind father and he has spent all his money with harlots. And now he has none left. He goes to his old companions and asks them for relief. They laugh him to scorn. “Oh,” he says, “you have drunk my wine many a day. I have always been paymaster to you in all our revelries. Will you not help me?” “Get you gone,” they say. And he is turned out of doors. He goes to all his friends with whom he had associated but no man gives him anything. At last a certain citizen of the country said—“You need

something to do, do you? Well, go and feed my swine.” The poor prodigal, the son of a rich landowner who had a great fortune of his own, has to go out to feed swine. And he a Jew, too!—the worst employment (to his mind) to which he could be put! See him there, in squalid rags, feeding swine! And what are his wages? Why, so little, that he “would gladly have filled his belly with the husks the swine eat, but no man gave to him.” Look, there he is, with the fellow commoners of the sty, in all his mire and filthiness. Suddenly a thought put there by the good Spirit, strikes his mind. “How is it,” says he, “that in my father’s house there is bread enough and to spare and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you and am no more worthy to be called your son—make me as one of your hired servants.” Off he goes. He begs his way from town to town. Sometimes he gets a lift on a coach, perhaps, but at other times he goes trudging his way up barren hills and down desolate vales, all alone. And now, at last, he comes to the hill outside the village and sees his father’s house down below. There it is—the old poplar tree—and there are the stacks round which he and his brother used to run and play. And at the sight of the old homestead, all the feelings and associations of his former life rush upon him and tears run down his cheeks—and he is almost ready to run away, again. He says “I wonder whether Father’s dead. I daresay I broke Mother’s heart when I went away. I always was her favorite. And if they are, either of them, alive, they will never see me again. They will shut the door in my face. What am I to do? I cannot go back—I am afraid to go forward.” And while he was thus deliberating, his father had been walking on the housetop, looking out for his son. And though he could not see his father, his father could see him! Well, the father comes down stairs with all his might, runs up to him and while he is thinking of running away, his father’s arms are round his neck and he begins kissing him, like a loving father, indeed! And then the son begins—“Father, I have sinned against Heaven and in your sight and am no more worthy to be called your son,” and he was going to say, “Make me as one of your hired servants.” But his father puts his hand on his mouth! “No more of that,” he says. “I forgive you all. You shall not say anything about being a hired servant—I will have none of that. Come along,” he says, “come in, poor prodigal.” He says to the servants, “bring here the best robe and put it on him and put shoes on his poor bleeding feet. And bring here the fatted calf and kill it. And let us eat and be merry. For this, my son, was dead and is alive again! He was lost and is found. And they began to be merry.” Oh, what a precious reception for one of the chief of sinners! Good Matthew Henry says—“His father saw

him, there were eyes of mercy. He ran to meet him, there were legs of mercy. He put his arms round his neck, there were arms of mercy. He kissed him, there were kisses of mercy. He said to him, there were words of mercy—bring here the best robe, there were deeds of mercy, wonders of mercy—all mercy! Oh, what a God of mercy He is.”

Now, prodigal, you do the same! Has God put it into your heart? There are many who have been running away a long time now. Does God say, “Return”? Oh, I bid you return, then, for as surely as ever you do return, He will take you in! There never was a poor sinner, yet, who came to Christ, whom Christ turned away! If He turns you away, you will be the first. Oh, if you could but try Him! “Ah, Sir, I am so black with sin, so filthy, so vile.” Well come along with you—you cannot be blacker than the prodigal! Come to your Father’s house and as surely as He is God, He will keep His word—“He that comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out.”

Oh, if I might hear that some had come to Christ, this morning, I would indeed bless God! I must tell, here, for the honor of God and Christ, one remarkable circumstance and then I have done. You will remember that one morning I mentioned the case of an infidel who had been a scorner and scoffer but who, through reading one of my printed sermons, had been brought to God’s House and then to God’s feet. Well, last Christmas day, the same infidel gathered together all his books and went into the marketplace at Norwich and there made a public recantation of all his errors and a profession of Christ! And then taking up all his books which he had written and had in his house, on evil subjects, burned them in the sight of the people! I have blessed God for such a wonder of Divine Grace as that and pray that there may be many more such, who, though they are born prodigal, will yet return home, saying, “I have sinned.”

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

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

ALL OR NONE—OR, COMPROMISES REFUSED— A SERMON WITH FIVE TEXTS NO. 1830

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 29, 1885,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON NOVEMBER 25, 1883.**

I SHALL have five texts—one of them a good one, the other four bad. The first text is good. It is God's text.

“There shall not an hoof be left behind.”
Exodus 10:26.

That is God's text and the whole sermon will illustrate it by exposing the compromises with which it was met. The other four are Pharaoh's texts, or, if you like, the devil's, for that is exactly what the devil says to men. Exodus 8:25—*“Pharaoh called for Moses and for Aaron, and said, Go you, sacrifice to your God in the land.”* That is his first proposal. Then we find him saying, at the 28th verse, *“I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away.”* That is the second of his compromises. In the 10th chapter, at the 8th verse, you have the third. He said to them, *“Go, serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go?”* Adding, *“Go now, you that are men, and serve the Lord.”* And Pharaoh's fourth and last proposal is in the 24th verse of that same 10th chapter—*“Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Only let your flocks and your herds be stayed.”*

Satan is very loath to give up his hold on men. He is quite as loath as Pharaoh and he must be driven to it by force of arms—I mean by force of Divine Grace—before he will let God's people go. Having once got them under his power through the Fall, through their sin and through their hardness of heart, he will not lose his subjects if he can help it. He will put forth all his craft and all his strength, if possible, to hold them in his accursed sway! Many of Satan's slaves altogether disregard the voice of God. For them there are no Sabbaths, no Bibles, no religion. Practically, they say, “Who is Jehovah that we should obey His voice?” Now, when God means to save men—when the eternal purpose so runs and the Divine determination is to be accomplished, He soon puts an end to this. For some reason quite unknown to the man—it may be quite unthought of by him—he feels uneasy. He is disturbed. He thinks, one morning, that he will go up to a place of worship—not that he cares much about it—but he thinks that he shall, perhaps, be a little easier there. He takes his Bible—he begins to read a chapter. A very striking passage comes before his eyes.

He is not more easy, for the text has fixed upon him. Like a barbed shaft it has stuck into his soul and he cannot possibly draw it out. He is more troubled than ever! He begins to enquire a little about the things of God—there is now some outwardly respect to religion—the man is considerably changed.

But do not imagine that the work is accomplished! Our blessed Master has to fight for every inch of ground which He wins in human hearts. With the matchless artillery of His love, He drives the enemy back farther and farther, till, at last, He conquers! But it is often a long and slow process and, were He not possessed with infinite patience, He would give it up. But where it is His resolve that a man shall come out of the world and shall be saved, that resolve must and will be carried into effect! And the man, though he is only brought so far that he begins to *think* a little about Divine and eternal matters, he will have to go a great deal farther than that.

You see him sitting under the Word of God and, perhaps, Satan now says, “Well, you are a fine fellow! You are beginning to occupy a seat Sunday after Sunday in the house of prayer. You have given up your evil habits to a large extent. You are quite a different man. Now that you have done something very pleasing to God, you may rest content with this.” And it is a very sad thing when men do rest content with such a paltry hope as can have come out of poor performances like these! But still, they will stop just there if they can, for Satan does not mind where he makes men stop so long as they will stay under the dominion of sin and refuse to come to Christ.

Now the Lord begins to deal with the man, perhaps, in a way of affliction and trouble. His wife sickens. A child dies. He is, himself, unhealthy—he fears he is about to die and his fancied righteousness evaporates before his eyes and he thinks that now, surely, he must seek after something better. Then will Satan come in and say, “There is time enough! Do not be in too much of a hurry.”

If the Lord drives a man from that, by the solemn movements of the Spirit upon his soul, then the devil will say to him, “How do you know that this is all true?” And he has not to go far before he finds infidels to help his unbelief. I am sorry to say that he can find them in the pulpit pretty plentifully, preaching their infidelities as “advanced thought!” And so poor souls get bewildered and scarcely know their right hand from their left! They begin, again, to relapse into a condition of indifference and remain where they were.

Blessed be God, if He means to save such, He will, by push of pike and point of bayonet, carry the day! They shall not rest where they are. The right hand of the Lord is still stretched out and He will make the Pharaoh of evil yet know that Jehovah is stronger than he! Grace is mightier than nature and the eternal purpose more sure of fulfillment than all the resolves of case-hardened consciences! And so, at last, it comes to this—that the man is driven to yield to God and when he *is* driven to that point Satan comes in, again, with his promises.

We are going to speak about these four compromises tonight. The first compromise is found in the 8th chapter at the 25th verse.

“Sacrifice to your God in the land.”

“Yes,” says the devil, “you must be a Christian, that is evident. You cannot hold out any longer, for you are too uneasy in your sins. You will have to be a Christian.” “But,” he says, “stay in the world and be a Christian. Remain where you are. ‘Sacrifice to your God *in the land*’—by which he sometimes means this—live in sin and be a Believer. Trust yourself with Christ and then indulge yourself in whatever your heart desires. Do you not know that he is a Savior of *sinners*? Therefore stay in your sin and yet trust in Him.

Oh, I charge you, by the living God, never be duped by such a treacherous lie as this, for it is not possible that you can find any rest or salvation while you live in sin! My dear Hearers, Christ came to save us *from* our sins, but not *in* our sins! He has built a hospital of mercy into which He receives the worst possible cases. All are welcome, but He does not receive them that they may continue to be sick! He heals them and make sound men of them. When the Lord Jesus Christ takes hold upon a thief, the man is a thief no longer! His inmost heart becomes honest. When the Lord meets with the harlot, He blots out her iniquity and she is affected with deep repentance for her crimes—and she turns to her Savior, desiring, from that time on, to walk in purity all her days. It is impossible that you should serve God and yet continue to indulge in knowing sin!

What a fool that man is who thinks that he may drink and be a Christian! That he may cheat in his business and be a Christian! That he may act like the ungodly world in all respects and yet be a Christian! It cannot be. Mark Anthony yoked two lions together and drove them through the streets of Rome—but he could never have yoked together the lion of the Pit and the lion of the tribe named Judah! There is a deadly hate between these two. The principle of good, if it is yielded to, will destroy the mastery of evil. There cannot be a compromise between them. *No man can serve two masters*. He may serve two, but not two when each determines to be master! Satan will be master if he can, and Christ will be master and, therefore, you cannot serve the two! It must be one or the other.

If you are to have your sin forgiven you, you must leave your sin. Remember that voice which came to Master John Bunyan when he was playing tip cat on Elstow Green on Sunday morning? He thought that he heard a voice say, “Will you leave your sins and go to Heaven, or will you have your sins and go to Hell?” That problem is proposed to you if you are unconverted and undecided. But as to the idea of keeping your sins and going to Heaven, shut that out of the question, for it must not, cannot and shall not be! It is a compromise proposed by Satan, but the Lord will not have it.

Yes, but then Satan, retreating a little, says, “Well, now, of course I did not mean that you were not to give up your *grosser* sins, but I mean to tell you of something better. Love the world and live with worldlings—and find your company and your joy among them—and yet be a Christian. Surely you are not going to throw up everybody, are you? You know you must not be singular. You must not make yourself altogether an oddity! You have many merry companions—stay with them. They do not, perhaps, do

you much good, but you must not be too particular and precise.” So he says, “Continue in the world and be a Christian!”

Shall I tell you God’s Word about that? “If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” That is short, though not sweet. A man says, “Well, I shall be a Christian, but I shall find my chief pleasure and my amusement where the world finds theirs.” Will you? “I shall be a Christian, but I shall hold with the hare and run with the hounds. I shall be with the church on Sunday, but nobody shall know that I am not the best worldling on the week-day. Can I not put my hymn book in one pocket and a pack of cards in the other, and so go to Heaven and stay friends with the world?” No, it is not possible. “Let My people go, that they may serve Me,” is God’s Word. Not, “Let them stay in the land and still serve you and serve Me, too.” It cannot be!

“Know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?” That text is another sharp, drawn sword cutting to the quick and there are professors who ought to feel it go to their very hearts, for they are trying all that they possibly can to go as near as ever they can to the border and yet to keep up a hope. What would you think of a man who went as near as he could to burning his house down, just to test how much fire it would stand? Or of one who cut himself with a knife to see how deep he could go without mortally wounding himself? Or of another who experimented as to how large a quantity of poison he could drink? Why, these are extreme follies! But not so great as that of a man who tries how much sin he may indulge in and yet be saved! I pray you, do not attempt such perilous experiments. “Come you out from among them; be you separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” Shun with horror Satan’s old compromise—dream not that you can love the world and yet have the love of the Father in you.

When the enemy cannot get on with that, he draws back a little and cries, “That is very proper; you are hearing very faithful teaching this time, but listen to me—you can live for yourself and be a Christian! Do not go out into worldly company, but enjoy yourself at home. You see, you need to have your own soul saved. Well, live for *that*.” This is only a subtler and uglier form of selfishness. It is nothing better. “Look,” says Satan, “I do not ask you to be profligate with your money, be penurious with it—be very thrifty. Everybody will pat you on the back and say, ‘He is taking care of number one and he is doing the right thing.’ Come, now, and make a good thing of religion. Believe in Jesus Christ, of course, in order that you, yourself, may be saved, and then live all the rest of your life trying to hear sermons that will feed you and read books that will comfort you—and become a great man among religious folks.”

Hateful advice! Do you not know, dear Friends, that the very *essence* of Christianity is for a man to *deny* himself? Self can never properly be the end-all and be-all of a man’s existence. Self is to religion, in fact, nothing but the flesh in a pretended spiritual form! If a man lives to himself, he is under the dominion of an evil spirit just as much as if he went out into open sin. So you must come out of that. Selfishness will not do. You must love the Lord with all your heart, and you must love your fellow men. There must be an obedience to that command that you “love the Lord your

God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself,” or else there is no coming out into safety. Thus the first compromise will not hold at all.

Pushed back from the first compromise, Pharaoh proposes a second, and this is found in the 28th verse of the 8th chapter—

“Only you shall not go very far away.”

Satan says, “Yes, I see your conscience tells you that you must come out from the world and come out from sin, but do not go very far away, for you may want to come back, again. In the first place, do not make it public. Do not join a church. Be like a rat behind the wainscot—never come out except it be at night to get a mouthful of food. Do not commit yourself by being baptized and joining the church—do not go so far as that! Just try, if you can, and save yourself from the wrath to come by secret religion, but do not let anyone know it. There really cannot be any need of actually saying, ‘I am a Christian.’”

My Friend, this is the very depth of Satan! When a soldier goes to the barracks, if he is a child of God, he may say, “I shall not kneel down to pray because they might throw a boot at me, as they generally do in the barracks. I can keep my religion to myself.” That man is wrong. But if he boldly says, “I will fly my flag. I am a Christian and I will never yield that point, come what may”—he will stand! The beginning of yielding is like the letting out of water—no man knows to what a flood it will come. This is what Satan would have with some of you, that you may fall by little and little. Therefore defeat him—come out boldly! Take up your cross and follow Jesus. “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.”

The Tempter also says, “Do not be so very precise and exact. The Puritan saints—well, people point the finger at them. You need not be quite so particular.” By which he means this—that you may sin as much as you like so long as you do not violate propriety and that, after all, you are not to obey God *thoroughly*, but only to obey Him when it pleases you. This is flat rebellion against God! This will never do!

“Well,” he says, “if you are to be so precise, yet do not be so desperately earnest! There are some of those friends down there at the Tabernacle who are always looking after the souls of others and trying to proclaim Christ to everybody. You know they are a very dogmatic lot and they are a great deal too pushy and fanatical. Do not go with *them*.” Just so. He means, stand and serve the Lord because you dare not do any other, but never give Him your heart. Never throw your soul into His cause. That is what Satan says—and do you think that such traitorous service will save you? If Moses had thought that going a little way into the wilderness would have saved Israel, he would have let them go a little way into the wilderness and that would have been the end of it. But Moses knew that nothing would do for God’s Israel but to go as far away as ever they could—and put a deep Red Sea between them and Egypt! He knew that they were never to turn back, come what might, and so Moses pushed for a going forth to a distance—as I would, in God’s name, push for full committal to Christ with everybody who is tempted to a compromise.

“Oh, but,” Satan will say, “be earnest, too. Yes, be earnest. Of course that is right enough. And be precise in all your actions—but do not be one of those people who are always praying in secret. You can keep an open

religious profession going without much private praying, without heart-searching, without communion with God. These are tough things,” he says, “to keep up. You will find it difficult to maintain the inward life and preserve a clean heart and a right spirit. Let these go by default and attend to *externals*—be busy and active—and that will do.” But it will not do, for unless the heart and soul are renewed by the Spirit of God, it little matters what your externals may be. You have failed before God unless your very soul is joined unto Him by a perpetual covenant that shall never be forgotten.

What a blessing it is when a man can say, “I have done with these compromises! I do not want to serve God and win favor with the world. I do not want to go just a little way from the world. I pray God to divide me from the world by an everlasting divorce, just as it was with Paul when he said, ‘The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.’” Happy man who has come right out under Divine guidance to seek the eternal Canaan! His is the path of safety and acceptance! But they that temporize and parley with sin and Satan will find mischief come out of it.

Pushed back from that, the enemy suggests another compromise in the 10th chapter, at the 8th and 11th verses—“*Go, serve this Lord your God: but who are they that shall go? Go now, you that are men, and serve the Lord.*” Yes, that is his next point. “Yes,” he says, “we see what it has come to. You are driven, at last, to this—that you must be an out-and-out Christian. But, now,” he says, “do not worry your wife with it; do not take it home.” Or he says to the woman, “You are to follow Christ. I see you must. You seem driven to that, but never say anything to your husband about it.” Was not that a pretty idea of Pharaoh’s—that all the men were to go and were to leave the women and children to be his slaves? And that is just the idea of Satan. “You have plenty to do to look after yourself—but your wife—well, leave her to her own ways. Your husband—leave him to his irreligion.”

Let us answer him thus—“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” So said Joshua of old and so let every man here say! Remember Paul’s words to the Philippian jailer, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, *and your house.*” Let us pray that we may have the whole house for Christ! Up to your measure of influence over your family, say within yourself, “My Lord, I will never rest until I see all my family brought to Your dear feet. Lord, save my wife: save my husband: save my father: save my brothers and sisters! Bring these out of bondage!” You cannot be a Christian unless that is your heartfelt desire. He that cares not for his own house is worse than a heathen and a publican!

And then the children. “Oh,” Pharaoh says, “leave the children!” Do you not see he knew very well that if they did that, they would, themselves, come back? What man among us would go away into the wilderness and leave his wife and children in slavery? Should we not want to come back to them? Should we not think that we heard their cries? Should we not want to look into their dear faces again? Leave them in slavery? Oh, that cannot be! And yet, let me sorrowfully say that there are many professing

Christians who seem as though they were, themselves, determined to be the Lord's, but their children should belong to Pharaoh and to the devil!

For instance, the boy is getting to be a certain age. Let him be sent to a foreign school, and, preferably, a Roman Catholic school. Will that be useful to his religion? Yet if he should turn out a Papist, his foolish father will almost break his heart! It was all his own doing, was it not? Well, the girls, of course, they must go into society—of course they must, “go into society.” And so everything is done to put them into places of danger, where they will not likely be converted and where, in all probability, they will become frivolous, vain and light. Then a situation is looked for the boy. How often there is no question about the employer being a Christian! Is it a business that the lad can follow without injury to his morals? “No, it is a fine roaring trade, and it is a cutting house, where he will pick it up in a smart way. Let him go there.”

Yes, and if he goes to Hell? Alas, there are Christian men who do not think of that! The children of some professors are offered up to the Moloch of this world. We think it a horrible thing that the heathens should offer their children in sacrifice to idols and yet many professors put their children where, according to all likelihood, they will be ruined. Do not let it be so! Do not let the devil entangle one of you in that compromise, but say, “No, no, no! My house, God helping me, shall be so conducted that I will not put temptation in my children's way. I will not lead them into the paths of sin. If they will go wrong, despite their father's exhortations and their mother's tears, why, they must—but, at any rate, I will be clear of their blood, for I will not put them into places where they would be led astray.”

I am sure there is a great deal of importance in this remark—and if it cuts anybody very closely and he says, “I think you are very personal,” that is exactly what I mean to be—the precise thing I am aiming at! I desire to put this thing before every individual Christian, that all may see the right and the wrong of it—so that they may resolve, “Our women and our children shall go with us to worship God. They, as well as ourselves, shall leave this Egypt, as far as God's Grace can help us to accomplish it.”

Now the devil is getting pushed into a corner. Here is the man's whole house to go right for God and the man gives himself up to be a Christian out and out! What now? “Well,” says the enemy, in the 24th verse of that 10th chapter—

Go you, serve the Lord; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed.

Just so. What does Moses say to that? “You must give us, also, sacrifices and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto Jehovah our God. Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not a hoof be left behind; for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come there.” This was the Divine policy of, “No surrender!” And I plead for it with you. Satan says, “Do not use your property for God. Do not use your talents and your abilities! Especially do not use your *money* for the Lord Jesus. Keep that for yourself! You will need it one of these days, perhaps. Keep it for your own enjoyment. Live to God in other things, but as to that, live to yourself.”

Now, a genuine Christian says, “When I gave myself to the Lord I gave Him everything I had. From the crown of my head to the sole of my feet I am the Lord’s. He bids me provide things honest in the sight of all men and care for my household—and so I shall, by His Grace. But yet I am not my own, for I am bought with a price and, therefore, it becomes me to feel that everything I have, or ever *shall* have, is a dedicated thing and belongs to the Lord, that I may use it as His steward, not as if it were mine, but at His discretion and at His bidding. I cannot leave my substance to be the devil’s. That must come with me and must be all my Lord’s, for His it is, even as I am.”

The Christian takes the line which Moses indicated—“I do not know what I may be required to give. I know that I am to sacrifice unto the Lord my God, but I do not know how much. I cannot tell what may be the needs of the poor, the needs of the Church, the needs of Christ’s Church all over the land. I do not know, but this I do know—that all that I have stands at the surrender point. If my Redeemer wants it, He shall have it. If Satan wants it, he shall *not* have a penny of it! If there is anything that is asked of me that will not contribute to good morals—that will not contribute to the promotion of that which is right in the sight of God—I withhold it! But if there is anything that is for Christ’s Glory and for the good of men, then, as the Lord shall help me, it shall be given freely and not be begrudged as if it were a tax. It shall be my joy and my delight to devote all that I am and all that I have to Him who bought me with His precious blood.”

Now, Brothers and Sisters, you that profess to be Christians, come, stand right square out and acknowledge yourselves wholly and altogether the Lord’s—

***“Tis done! the great transaction’s done;
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine.”***

“My house is His and my all is His. Whether I live or die—whether I work or suffer, all that I am and all that I have shall be forever my Lord’s.” This is to enter into peace—this, indeed, is to be totally delivered from the power of Satan! This is to be the Lord’s free man and what remains but with joyful footsteps to go onward toward Canaan, shod with shoes of iron and brass, fed with heavenly bread, guarded by the Lord, Himself, guided by His fiery-cloudy pillar, enjoying all things in Him and finding Him in all things? This is to be a Christian of the true order! The Lord make you so by faith in His dear Son! Amen and Amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Selections from the 8th and 10th chapters of Exodus.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—645, 656, 658.**

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

FULL REDEMPTION

NO. 309

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 22, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“There shall not a hoof be left behind.”
Exodus 10:26.***

THE controversy between Jehovah, the God of the whole earth, and Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was intended to be remembered and spoken of throughout all generations. On that occasion God permitted human nature to arrive at its highest degree of stubbornness and obstinacy. But He, nevertheless overcame it. He did, indeed, raise up Pharaoh for this purpose, that He might show forth His power in him. Pharaoh, as an absolute monarch, is permitted to go to the utmost degree of hardness of heart and yet the Lord would show to all coming generations that His decrees shall stand and He will do all His pleasure.

You will remember that the quarrel was about this—God had sent His people into Egypt in the olden times, there to dwell in the land of Goshen. They had multiplied exceedingly. They had been favorably treated by succeeding kings, till at length a new king arose who knew not Joseph. He began to oppress the people, but the more he oppressed them, the more they increased. He made their lives bitter with hard bondage. In mortar and in brick and in all manner of service of the field, did he make them to serve with rigor. Probably they were employed in building many of those mighty piles, the pyramids, which now stand upon the plains of Egypt.

He subjected them to the most rigorous tasks. They worked under the whip continually and had to make bricks without straw, the hardest possible exaction that even a tyrant could have imagined. At last the cry of the people went up to their God in Heaven. He saw their affliction, He heard their cry, He knew their sorrows and He determined, with His own bare arm, to be avenged on Pharaoh and to bring out all his people, the seed of Jacob, from their house of bondage.

He raised up Moses and He sent him in with this message to Pharaoh, “Thus says the Lord, let My people go, that they may serve Me.” Pharaoh laughs at it, “You are idle,” says he, “you are idle, you shall not go.” A plague at once is God’s answer to Pharaoh’s laughter. He turns their water into blood and the fish that were in the river died. Pharaoh gives way a little. For, if he must yield, it must be by degrees. “You shall have,” says he, “two or three days of rest, to serve your God, but it must be in this land.” “No,” says Moses, “We cannot serve our God in this land, we must go forth into the wilderness.” Pharaoh bids them be gone.

Another plague and yet another. And now Pharaoh yields this much—“They may go into the wilderness, but they must not go very far.” “No, but,” says Moses, “we will have no such stipulation.” Pharaoh, therefore, again deals deceitfully, again refuses, again grows angry and waxes proud. And God smites the land with lice, with flies, with a very grievous

disease, with all manner of plagues. Then Pharaoh says, "You may go, you may go into the wilderness. But only the strong men among you shall go. You shall leave your wives and your little ones." "No," says Moses, "we must all go, with our wives and with our little ones must we serve the Lord our God." Pharaoh again refuses—his heart is hardened. He will not yield.

Moses, at the command of the Lord, then stretched forth his hand toward Heaven and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt, even darkness that might be felt. Then Pharaoh's subjects clamored to him, "Let these men go." Pharaoh yields again—"For," he says, "You shall go, your wives and your little ones, but you shall leave your cattle and your goods behind." "No," says Moses, "We must have all or none. Not a hoof shall be left behind. Not a single sheep shall stay in Egypt. The whole of God's host and all they have, their sick, their aged and all their possessions must go forth out of Egypt." And you will remember that the Lord never yielded a single point to Pharaoh, but exacted all of him and at last buried him with his horses and his riders, in the depths of the sea.

Now it seems to me, that this grand quarrel of old is but a picture of God's continual contest with the powers of darkness. The mandate has gone forth to earth and Hell—"Thus says the Lord, let My people go that they may serve Me." "No," says Satan, "they shall not." And if he is compelled to yield one point, he still retains his hold upon another. If he must give way, it shall be inch by inch. Evil is hard in dying, it will not readily be overcome. But this is the demand of God and to the last will He have it—"All My people." The whole, every one of them and all that My people possess, all shall come out of the land of Egypt. Christ will have the whole. He will not be contented with a part and this He vows to accomplish. "Not a hoof shall be left behind."

I think you will now see the drift of the discourse. I use the text as an aphorism which I hope to be enabled to illustrate. God bless it to our souls. "Not a hoof shall be left behind." Christ will have all that He has died to purchase. All that He has bought with blood He will have. Not a fraction of the purchased possession will He lose.

First, then, Christ will have the whole man—"Not a single hoof shall be left behind." In the next place, He will have the whole Church—"Not a hoof shall be left behind." In the next place, He will have the whole of the lost inheritance of His Church—"Not a hoof shall be left behind." And at last, in the fourth place, He will have the whole world to serve Him—"Not a hoof shall be left behind."

I. First, then, Christ will have THE WHOLE MAN. In His people whom He has purchased with His blood, He will reign without a rival. As for the world that lies in the Wicked One, the prince of this world shall have his power over it, until his time shall be accomplished. But as for the Lord's people whom He has redeemed, on whom His heart is set, He will not have a single hair of their heads to be alienated from Himself. "They shall be Mine," says the Lord, "they shall be wholly Mine." Christ will not be part proprietor of any man. He will not have one part of the man and leave the other part to be devoted to Satan.

In entering upon this point, that Christ will have the whole man, I shall have to notice that He does already possess the whole of His people in their intent and purpose and that by-and-by, when He has sanctified them wholly, He will then actually possess the whole spirit and soul and body of the man whom He has purchased with His precious blood. Mark then, my Hearers, if you are children of God, if you are saved, you belong wholly and entirely to Christ. By this may you know this morning whether you are subjects of that old Pharaoh, or whether Jehovah is the Lord your God and your great Deliverer. Are there not multitudes of men who seem to imagine that if they save a corner in their souls for their religion, all will be well? Satan may stalk across the broad acres of their judgment and their understanding and he may reign over their thoughts and their imaginations—but if in some quiet nook there is preserved the *appearance of religion*, all will be right.

Oh, be not deceived, Brothers and Sisters, in this. Christ never went halves in a man yet. He will have the whole of you, or He will have none of you. He will be Lord paramount, Master supreme, absolute Lord, or else He will have nothing to do with you. You may serve Satan, if you will, but when you serve him, you shall not serve Christ, too. He will not permit you to have your right hand in His service and your left hand employed for the black designs of Hell. The whole man, Christ died to purchase, and if you are not wholly given up to God, if in the intent and purpose of your souls every thought and wish and power and talent and possession, are not devoted and consecrated to Christ, you have no reason to believe that you have been redeemed by His precious blood.

Christ will not allow us to spare a single sin. We may not select some favorite evil and say, I will give my heart wholly up to God, but this vice is to be spared. No, no, my Hearers, you are not Christ's if you have one pampered lust, one sin which you fondly indulge. Sin you will, even though you are Christ's, but if you indulge sin, if you *love* it and delight in it, if it is not to you a plague and a curse, you have no reason whatever to conclude that your name is on His breast, or that you belong to Christ at all.

Suppose a house is attacked by seven thieves. The good man of the house has arms within and he manages to kill six of the thieves. But if one thief survive and he permits him to be in his house, he may still be robbed, perhaps still be slain. And if I have seven evil vices and if by the grace of God six of these have been driven out, should I yet indulge and pamper the one that remains, I am still a lost man. I am not His so long as I willingly yield and joyfully hold fellowship with a single evil and false thing.

I contend not for creature *perfection*—I believe it to be impossible for us to attain it in the present life—but I do contend for perfection in purpose, perfection in design and if we wantonly and willfully harbor a solitary sin, we are no friends of Jesus Christ. Not one sin, then, is to be spared. And as no sin is to be spared, so no duty is to be neglected. If I am Christ's, I am not to look down His Law and say, "Such-and-such a precept is agreeable to me, I will keep it."

No, as I hate every foolish way, so must I love every right one. I count all Your precepts concerning all things to be right. We have not come to be Christ's verified property, to be Christ's disenthralled people—unless we feel that in all the commandments of God we desire to walk blamelessly. "Not a hoof is to be left behind." As no sin is to be spared and no service to be shunned, so no power is to be reserved from entire consecration. Christ bought the whole man and the whole man must be devoted to Christ. I am not to use my judgment for the Savior and let my imagination lie idle. I am not to reserve for sin the freedom of my will, while I give to God my conscience. The whole man is to be given up to Christ—he is not enlisted in Jesus Christ's army, who has not given up to Christ—head and hands and feet and heart and all.

I am told that in Scotland, in the olden times, the farmers used to save one field which they did not sow. They saved that for the devil, it was called, "The gude man's croft"—so that Satan might roam there as much as he liked and not disturb the crops elsewhere. A strange whim. Oh, how many Christians have tried to do the same in their hearts? They have had just the gude man's croft, a little corner where Satan might have his way, but, oh, this will never do—the whole land must be tilled. Every acre must be sown with the good seed, for it is all Christ's, or else it is none of it Christ's—we are wholly consecrated, or else unconsecrated. We belong from the crown of our head to the sole of our feet to Christ, or else we do not belong to Christ at all. Man—the entire nature must be surrendered. The demand is imperative. To the letter it shall be verified, "there shall not a hoof be left behind."

Yet, further—if no power is to be unconsecrated, how much less will Christ ever permit our hearts to be divided? If we seek to serve God and mammon, God and self, God and pleasure, we don't serve God at all. When the Romans erected the statue of Christ and put it up in their pantheon, saying that he should be one among their Gods, their homage was worthless. And when they turned their heads, first to Jupiter, then to Venus, and then to Jesus Christ, they did no honor to our Lord, they did but dishonor Him. Their service was not acceptable and so if you imagine in your heart that you can sometimes serve God and sometimes serve self—and be your own master—you have made a mistake.

Christ will have no such service as this—He will have all or nothing. And indeed, Brothers and Sisters, it is necessary for us to escape entirely from the snares of sin, or else we cannot be saved. A quaint old Divine uses the following figure—"If," says he, "a hart be caught in a trap and it shall extricate all its limbs except one foot, it has not escaped as long as the foot is in the trap. And if a bird is taken and if with much struggling it gets its liberty all but one wing, yet when the fowler comes he will seize it unless that wing also is delivered."

So is it with you and me. If any part of our heart is devoted to Satan we might as well devote the whole, for we are still his bond slaves. If you say, "Well, I was once bound hand and foot, but now I have broken off the chain from my hand." Yes, but if the ring of iron encircles one foot and it is fastened down to the floor, you are still a slave. You may have filed through the chain of your drunkenness, but if you have not filed through

the chain of your self-righteousness, you are still as much a bondman as ever. It is all in vain for you to fight half the battle. It is not the half but the whole that gives the victory.

It is not the slaying of here and there a sin, like the stopping of here and there a leak in the ship. She must be re-keeled, or else she will sink. She must be new-bottomed and newly made. And so must you. All those slight amendments and improvements, good as they are in a moral aspect, are worthless as to any spiritual salvation of your soul. Remember this, you who think you are a Believer, see whether it can be said of you, "I have wholly come out of Egypt in my heart's intent, 'not a hoof has been left behind.'"

But to proceed—what is already true in our intent and purpose shall before long be true in reality. Tarry a little while, Christian, a few more struggles against the flesh, a little more battling and of warring against the evil powers within you and you shall put your foot upon the neck of your old corruptions—sin and self shall both be slain and Jesus Christ shall reign triumphantly. What a joy it is to the Christian to believe that he shall one day be perfect. As we have worn the image of the earthy, so shall we also wear the image of the heavenly. The tongue that has spoken many an evil thing—bought with the blood of Christ—shall one day be full of the sonnets of Paradise.

There shall be no strife in the soul. The Canaanite shall no more dwell in the land. We shall be vessels fully purged as by fire, fully sanctified and made fit for the Master's use. When we shall come up dripping from the shelving banks of Jordan, we shall have left behind us all our sins. Up those celestial hills our feet shall climb and our garments shall be whiter than any fuller can make them. Not Jesus in His transfiguration shall be more complete and perfect than we shall be in ours. The black drops of depravity will have been wrung out of our hearts. The virus of deep corruption shall have been extracted and we shall take our place among the angels, pure as they—among the perfect spirits, the Prophets and the glorious host of martyrs—as truly sanctified, as fully redeemed, as effectually delivered from sin, as even they are. The redemption shall be complete—"not a hoof shall be left behind."

Before I leave this point, let me remark that there is one part of man seemingly the most worthless, which we sometimes think will be left behind. The poor body! It shall be put into the grave, the worms shall hold a carnival within it and soon it shall crumble down into a few atoms of dust. But Christ, who redeemed His people, bought their flesh and their bones as well as their souls, "and not a hoof shall be left behind." Not the eye shall be left any more than the judgment, nor the arm any more than the spiritual vigor. For the Redeemer lays claim to the organs of the body as well as the faculties of the mind. He will raise from the dead the very bones of His people and as the whole host shall go marching up behind their conquering Leader, He shall cry, "Of them that You have given Me I have lost none, not a bone in My own body has been broken and not a bone of their bodies has been left behind."

The whole man, body, soul and spirit—all consecrated—all filled with the Spirit, shall stand before the Throne and clap its hands and sing the

everlasting song of glory unto God forever and ever. “Not a hoof shall be left behind.”

II. To proceed to the second part of our discourse—it is equally true of THE WHOLE CHURCH as of the whole man—“Not a hoof shall be left behind.” I never have subscribed—I think I never shall—to the doctrine of universal redemption. I believe in the limitless efficacy of the blood of Christ. I would not say, with some of the early Fathers, that a single drop of Christ’s blood would have been sufficient for the redemption of the world. That seems to me to be an expression too strained, though doubtless their meaning was correct. I believe that there is efficacy enough in the blood of Christ if it is applied to the conscience to save any man and every man. But when I come to the matter of *redemption* it seems to me that whatever Christ’s design was in dying, that design cannot be frustrated, nor by any means disappointed.

When I look at the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot imagine that such an One, offering such a sacrifice, can ever be disappointed of the design of His soul. Hence I think that all whom He came on purpose to save He will save—all who were graven on the strong affections of His heart as the purchase of His blood He assuredly shall have. All that His heavenly Father gave Him shall come to Him. All that He chose from before the foundation of the world, He will raise up at the last day. All who were included among the members of His mystic body, when He was nailed to the tree, shall be one with Him in His glorious resurrection—“not a hoof shall be left behind.”

I know there are some who believe in a disappointed Christ, who affect to lament concerning Christ a design not accomplished—a frustrated Cross, agonies spent in vain—blood that was poured out on the ground as water that cannot be gathered up. I believe in no such thing. God creates nothing in vain, nor will I believe that Jesus Christ died on the Cross in vain in any sense or in any degree whatever. Not a hoof of all His purchased flock shall be left behind.

Come, then. Methinks I see before my mind’s eye the countless multitudes whom Jesus bought with His blood. The day shall come when their great Shepherd, walking in front of them, shall lead behind Him the entire flock and not one shall be absent. But suppose for an instant—we take that ground to see how untenable it is—suppose for an instant that one of those purchased ones should be absent. Of what sort shall that one be?

Suppose it to be a suffering one, one that has lain tossing on the bed of pain for many months and years, some aged disciple filled with twitching and convulsions, who for the last few years seemed to suffer pains like those of Hell, though she lay on the borders of Paradise—shall she be left behind? Such a supposition impugns the love of Christ. If He left any, certainly it should not be the suffering ones. If one should be cast away, certainly not of that martyr band who for His sake endured, nor of that pilgrim band of the despised who through much tribulation inherit the kingdom of Heaven.

Who, then, shall it be? Shall it be the strong ones that shall be lost? Imagine it so. But how were they strong? They were strengthened through Christ and yet can they perish? Such a supposition impugns the immuta-

bility of God. Did He gird them with strength one day and leave them helpless the next? What? Did God pour the full vigor of His Grace into a heart and then restrain that vigor and suffer the strong one to perish? Samson, shall you be lost after you have slain heaps upon heaps, your thousand men? Shall you at last die ingloriously? No, if you die upon earth you shall hear the groans of your Philistine enemies about you, and die, as a warrior should, in the midst of battle, an undefeated one.

Shall the minister of Christ whom God has greatly blessed be deserted by the faithful God and shall the shame of his fall ring round the world and become the jest and mockery of drunkards and harlots? God forbid! He shall keep the strong and they shall enter into life. But suppose for a minute it should be one of our weak ones, our poor friend, Mr. Feeble Mind, or our excellent sister, Miss Despondency. Suppose these must perish? Ah, then this would impugn the *power* of God, for then the enemy would cry, "Aha! Aha! He kept the strong but He could not keep the weak. Those who took care of themselves He kept, but the weak ones He suffered to perish." Yes, Beloved, but there shall "not a hoof be left behind." Not that poor lingering sheep, not that poor newly-born and feeble lamb. They shall, every one of them, be brought in. No, "not a hoof shall be left behind."

"But," says one, "perhaps it will be the erring ones among them." Ah, but if the erring ones in the Church are lost then should all be lost, for they all err. "But suppose there be some that specially err?" Well, if these were lost, it would be to impugn the Grace of God, because then it might be said and said with truth, "It was of works and not of grace." For if it is of Divine Grace, then must the erring be brought back and forgiven and even those sheep that break the hedge and leave the pasture—these must be brought in, that it may be said on earth and sung in Heaven that it was of Divine Grace, free grace and grace alone, that any were saved—that all were saved—that none are left behind.

Methinks I see the great Shepherd, now, and there are all His sheep. They have been wandering. They have got into a dark glen in the mountains and a snowstorm is coming on and He goes to seek them. There they are. The grim spirit of the tempest, the Prince of the power of the air meets Him and says, "Back, Shepherd! What are You doing here?" "I have come to reclaim My own." "They are not Yours now," says Satan, "they have strayed into my grounds and they are mine, not Yours." "No, Fiend," Jesus says, "they are Mine. They have My blood-mark on them. They were given Me of My Divine Father and I am bound by solemn obligations to keep every one of them safely."

"You shall not have them," says Satan. "I must, I will," says Jesus. They fight and the Good Shepherd overcomes. He dashes down the enemy and tramples him under foot and crushes him—crushes the serpent. Then the serpent with wily craft replies, "They are Yours—Yours I confess, and I will give You some of them—the fattest of them." "No," says Jesus, "No, Satan, I have bought them all and I will have them all." And there they come, a goodly company. But He keeps back a few.

"They are not all here," says the Shepherd, "and I will have all." "But," says Satan, "there are some of them that are speckled sheep and some

that are black and diseased. Do You want them, too? Let me have a few at least.” “No,” says He, “No. I must have the black ones, the speckled ones, the diseased ones—let them all come. Fiend, stand back, let them come, I tell you, or my right arm shall fell you to the ground again.” And now they all come but one, and Satan says, “No, but this is such a little one. This one is so weak. You would not have such a shriveled, scabby one as this in Your bright flock, You fair Shepherd of God.” “Yes,” says He, “but sooner than lose one of them I will die again and shed My blood once more to buy it back. All that My Father gave Me I will have.”

And now methinks I see Him in the last tremendous day when the sheep pass again under the hand of Him that counts them. He cries, “Of all You have given Me, I have lost none. They have none of them perished. The lion has not devoured them, nor has the cold destroyed them. I have brought them all safely here, “not a hoof is left behind.”

III. The third point was to be this—Jesus Christ will not only have all of a man and all the men he bought, but He will have ALL THAT EVER BELONGED TO ALL THESE MEN. That is to say, all that Adam lost, Christ will win back. All that we fell from in Adam, Christ will restore us to and that without the diminution of a single jot or tittle. Not an inch of Paradise shall be given up, nor even a handful of its dust resigned. Christ will have all, or else He will have none—“Not a hoof shall be left behind.”

Very briefly let me run through a list of all those precious things which we lost in Adam. And first, with reference to God. Christ’s blood-bought ones once enjoyed in their father, Adam, Divine likeness. “Let Us make man in Our own image, in Our own likeness,” says God. Alas, that likeness has been defiled and debased. Like the king’s superscription on the coinage, which has been worn for many a year, you cannot tell whose image and superscription it now is.

Yes, but we shall have that back again. God will re-stamp His precious things—re-engrave His name upon His gems and we shall wear the likeness of God as Adam did, when he came fresh from his Maker’s hand. We have lost, too, as we know to our cost, by nature, the Divine favor. God loved Adam, He showed that love to him, but when Adam sinned, though God was merciful, He could not show love to one who had become a rebel. I mean—not the love of complacency—though the love of benevolence never ceased for a moment.

Yes, but God delights in His people now in Christ. Christ has gotten back for us the full light of God’s favor. The sun shone fully on Adam, and it will not shine on us with less brightness. God loved Adam very tenderly but He loves us just as much. We have gotten back the two Divine privileges of heavenly likeness and heavenly favor. But you will remember, also, Adam had the celestial blessing of Divine fellowship—“The Lord God walked with Adam in the garden in the cool of the day.”

And some of you know what it is to have that blessing again, for he has walked with us and God has talked to his people till our eyes have shone and our hearts have been ready to break for very joy. Our poor weak body was not able to contain its overflowing bliss. Christ will get back for his people all the *likeness* of God, all the *favor* of God and all the *fellowship* with God, of which Satan robbed them. Not a particle less shall they

have—but I think I may venture to say even more—God loved Adam for Adam's sake—He loves you and me for Christ's sake and that is a better motive. A higher, a deeper and grander consideration, than loving a man for his own sake. Because of His only-begotten and well-beloved Son, He loves all His people with an infinite, unfailing affection. This is the first part of the inheritance which we lost and which Christ will get us back.

Then again, Adam lost happiness and we have lost it, too. And we have become the heirs of sorrow—and like our Master we are acquainted with grief. Yes, but He will get us back our happiness. We have had some portion of it already. That well of living water into which Satan cast a great stone so that it could not spring up—Christ has rolled away the stone and now we drink the water. If a man drinks, he shall never thirst and shall never need to go to earthly fountains to draw. Oh, courage, courage, Christian, in all your sorrows—Christ will win you back that glorious happiness which Adam lost for you. Besides, you all know that in Adam we lost the right to live. “In the day that you eat thereof, you shall surely die.” Man became a dying soul and not a living soul any more. But Christ has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel and because He lives, we shall live also.

And yet again, Adam of old was king. Wherever he went there was a dignity about him that made the lordly lion crouch and lick his feet. The birds of the air did him homage. He bade the fish of the sea leap in their waters and they did it—for he was king—God's crowned cherub who walked in the Garden of Eden like a king in his palaces. But now, what are we? The servants of servants, toiling creatures that wipe the sweat from our face and strain our nerves and empty out our veins with labor. Yes, but that dignity is restored already to the people of God, for He has raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And visibly shall that dignity come back to us. When the leopard shall lie down with the kid, when the lion shall eat straw, like the ox—man on earth shall be lord of the creation just as he was of old. The master of the sea, the leviathan, shall do his bidding and the behemoth shall stay in his course to hasten to the voice of puny, but redeemed man. We shall have back, I believe, everything that Adam had and much more. “Not a hoof shall be left behind.”

And yet further, not to keep you longer, we believe that in Adam we lost sonship—but in Christ we have received the adoption. In Adam we lost safe standing—but he has plucked us out of the miry clay and set our feet upon a rock. In Adam we lost righteousness—but he that believes is justified from all things. Whatever Adam lost, Christ has found and infinitely more. A man once wrote a book to prove the devil a fool. Certainly, when all matters shall come to their destined consummation, Satan will prove to have been a magnificent fool. Folly, magnified to the highest degree by subtlety, shall be developed in Satan.

Ah, you trailing serpent, what have you now, after all? I saw you but a few thousand years ago twining around the tree of life and hissing out your deceptive words. Ah, how glorious was the serpent then—a winged creature, with his azure scales. Yes, and you did triumph over God. I

heard you as you did go hissing down to your den, I heard you say to your brood—vipers in the nest as they are—“My children, I have stained the Almighty’s works—I have turned aside His liege subjects, I have injected my poison into the heart of Eve and Adam has fallen, too. My children let us hold a jubilee, for I have defeated God.”

Ah, Satan, I think I see you now, with your head all broken and your jaw-teeth smashed and your venom-bags all emptied and you, yourself, a weary length of agony, rolling miles afloat along a sea of fire—tortured, destroyed, overcome, tormented, ashamed, hacked, hewed, dashed in pieces and made a hissing and a scorn for children to laugh at and made a scoff throughout eternity. Ah, well, Brethren, the great Goliath has gained nothing by his vaunting. Christ and His people have really lost nothing by Satan. All they lost once has been retaken. The victory has not simply been a capture of that which was lost, but a gaining of something more. We are in Christ *more* than we were before we fell. “Not a hoof shall be left behind.”

IV. I shall want your patience and your prayers while I now attempt to dwell upon my last illustration. CHRIST WILL HAVE THE WHOLE EARTH—“not a hoof shall be left behind.”

God has made this world for Himself and when He made it He looked around on all His works and He said, “They were very good.” All creation was meant to be a grand orchestra, the angels occupying the higher seats and sounding the higher notes, while descending in the scale, the inhabitants of the various worlds, which are perhaps countless in multitude, taking their places in the one harmonious song.

In one place there was an old and almost empty spot without a singer—blessed be God, the singers have, many of them, taken their places already and there are others on the way. That spot was left for men to sing in, for men who should praise God and magnify His name always. Yes, but Satan came and took away all the singers, spoiled their voices and ruined them, and now this world, instead of being an orchestra for God’s praise, has become an arena for evil passions, a battlefield for lust and plunder and murder and sin.

But mark this, God will not be disappointed of His purpose. This ruined world shall yet sing forth His praises and without a marring or a jarring voice, the whole of His creatures shall magnify His holy name. Satan is now lord of most of the world and he seems to say today, “You King of kings, take England for Yourself and America be Yours, here and there You shall take an island, or a city, but let me have the masses of mankind, I will be lord of China’s teeming multitudes and India shall lie within my coils.”

Brethren, shall it be so? Shall it be so?—Are you content in your Master’s name to resign those mighty empires to the Prince of Darkness? Unanimously your hearts speak out your Master’s language, “it must not and it shall not be!” The tramp of Christian heroes shall yet shake those nations and the trumpet of Jubilee shall proclaim liberty to those sons of Adam that are weeping there in bondage. They must—they shall belong to Christ. And now the black prince comes forward and he proposes another thing. “Oh,” says he “great King why this perpetual duel, why must Your

servants fight and live, and my servants continually be defeated? Let us divide the empire.”

You remember that in the olden times of England, when Chanute and the Danes were fighting against the Saxons under Edmund, it was decided at last that the two kings should fight it out. A most agreeable and proper method. I only would that it were always taken in hand and that all kings who choose to engage in warfare had to fight their own battles. I am sure we should all be patrons of their encounters and we should sincerely thank God that there was such a saving of blood. Let them fight if they will, but why should their poor *subjects* die?

The fight went on with various success and at last, the champions having parted, it was decided that one should take one part of England and the other the other and so a truce was made. And so, black fiend, you propose this to the king of Heaven, do you? A division, shall it be, shall the fight be suspended, shall Christ have half and Satan the other half? No, listen to the cry of that half, which we might give up. “You men, you men of Israel, come here, help! Help! Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty! Why should we be given up to intolerable tyranny and devoted forever to Hell’s monarch and his mighty power?” No, we cannot consent, you Fiend! that you should have one half.

Imagine, then, that the Gospel has spread in every country, but one, and now Satan pleads, “No missionaries shall be sent there to disturb their unhallowed peacefulness. Let me reign there,” says he, “and I will be content.” But it must not be—Soldiers of Christ to the battle! To the battle! All the line, all the rampart must be stormed. Not a single castle must be left in the possession of the enemy. We must dash him down from his hills and rend him up from his valleys. He must not have a single spot whereon to place his foot.

Now I hear him flap his broken wings and fly into the grim north. “There are a few Eskimos,” says he, “who live in the dreary region long consecrated to my power. I will betake myself to the land of icebergs and of rocks, of the wild bear and of the dog and there will I keep my last resting place.” Brethren, shall it be, shall it be? Shall he reign king of the icebergs and lord even of the frozen north? No, by Heaven and Him that redeemed the earth, out even of that region must he be dashed—as of old he fell from Heaven, so must he fall from earth.

And now I see the Icelanders bowing before Christ and the vilest and most depraved of men submitting to Jehovah’s sway. But Satan has one dark-soured being—the *last man* that is left unconverted. Ring your Sabbath bells, my Brethren! Go up to your House of Prayer! Be happy! But I see a gloom upon your face. What does it mean? You reply, “there is one man left unsaved, Satan has still a lodging place in the heart of *one man*—surely our songs would lose their melody if that were the case.” No, Master, no! “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” You shall walk through this world and meet no more with sin. There shall not be found one inhabitant of this globe who is not Your subject, not a single being who is not fully consecrated to Your will.

That is a consummation devoutly to be wished. Equally may I say, it is a consummation confidently to be *expected*. Wait a little while, labor a lit-

tle longer, and He that will come shall come and will not tarry—then shall the world see and Hell shall tremble at the sight—that Christ has conquered and has taken back all His possessions. “Not a hoof shall be left behind.”

And now, before you disperse, I have just a word or two of practical doctrine to deliver, Give me your solemn attention. I will not detain you more than one or two minutes. On whose side are you, Man, Woman? Are you Christ’s, or are you Satan’s? Remember, if your soul belongs to sin, living and dying as you are, Hell’s greedy jaws must devour you. For Satan says, as Christ says, “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” The waves of the deluge of wrath shall drown every man who is not in the ark. Not a single thorn, or tare, shall be left to grow—they must all be bound up in bundles to be burned and cast into the fire. Answer that question, then—Whose are you?

Answer now, another. If you hope that you are Christ’s, Christ’s motto with every man is, “Aut Caesar, aut nullus.” He will be Caesar in your hearts, king, emperor, or nothing at all. He will reign entirely over you, or not at all. Christ will not go shares in your heart. Are you wholly Christ’s, then? “Oh,” says one, “I hope so.” Yes, but take care it is not mere *hope*, but that it is the *fact*. And lift up your heart and pray, “Great God sanctify me wholly—spirit, soul and body—take full possession of all my powers, all my members, all my goods and all my hours, all I am and all I have. Take me and make me what You would have me to be.” God hear that prayer for you and make you wholly Christ’s.

Yet, one other question. Is there one who says, “I fear I am not Christ’s, but I wish to be”? Is that a sincere wish? I am happy, happy, thrice happy, that you feel thus—for you could not even *wish* to be Christ’s—unless Christ’s Grace had made you wish. Oh, remember, if you will to have Christ, there is no question about Christ’s willingness to have you. Come just as you are and with a full surrender, say—

**“Just as I am without one plea
But that His blood was shed for me,
And that He bids me come,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come.”**

Trust Christ and you are saved. Rely on Jesus and your sins are forgiven and you are Christ’s and shall be Christ’s in that day when He makes up His jewels. May God bless these thoughts and meditations to each and all of us. Amen.

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

THE QUESTION BETWEEN THE PLAGUES NO. 2503

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1897.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MAY 24, 1885.

*“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”
Exodus 10:3.*

PHARAOH is the type and image of proud men. God permitted him to be left to the natural hardness of his heart and he stood up against Jehovah in a very remarkable way. Those who are students of the ancient history of Egypt, those especially who have seen the remains of the colossal statues of the kings and those tremendous pyramids which probably were the places of their sepulture, will know that man worship was carried on to the very highest degree in connection with the ancient kingdom of Egypt. Our modern civilization has deprived kings of much of the dignity which once hedged them round. We have grown wonderfully familiar with our fellow men in the very highest places of the earth, but in those old monarchies, when the king was absolute and supreme, when his wish, even though he was little better than a maniac—was the law that governed the people—when not a dog dared move his tongue against the despot, then kings seemed to be like little gods and they lorded it over their subjects with a vengeance!

No doubt they grew intoxicated with the fumes of the incense which their subjects willingly offered to them and so came to think themselves almost, if not quite, Divine—and assumed the position and honors of God, Himself. It is not so very amazing, therefore, that Pharaoh should have thought that, in the God of the Hebrews, he had merely met with just another one of the same stamp as himself, against whom he could carry on war and whom he might even subdue. He said within himself, “Who are these Hebrews? Their fathers were a company of shepherds who came and settled in Egypt! And as for these people, they are my *slaves*. I have built cities with their unpaid labor and I mean to hold them in captivity. They talk about their God, their ‘Jehovah.’ Who is Jehovah that I should obey His voice? Let it be a battle of Pharaoh against Jehovah and let it be fought out to the bitter end! I will show these people that I care not for them, or their Prophets, or their God.”

That same pride which grew so strong in Pharaoh—growing upon that whereon it fed until it came to a colossal form—that same kind of pride is in the hearts of men even to this day! They do not take upon themselves the same high and mighty airs, but, as far as their circumstances will allow, it is still a duel between man and his Maker, between the sinner and his Judge. In the case of some here present, there is now going on a battle between yourselves and your God. Oh, that you would consider this

matter in the right light! That you would look at it with calm, steady and reasonable consideration, for then, I think, you would at once throw down your weapons and beg for peace on Gospel terms—and this would be the happiest hour that you have ever lived! God grant that it may be so! I am going to make a running application of my text all through my discourse, and I pray that the Holy Spirit, Himself, may make a direct application of it to anyone whom it may concern.

I. To aid your memory, let me say, first of all, that THIS QUESTION HAS ABOUT IT AN AIR OF ASTONISHMENT—“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?” I have no doubt that as Moses and Aaron uttered this question, they put it in tones indicative of surprise—“How long is it to be that you, proud Pharaoh, will refuse to humble yourself before the only living and true God?”

And, surely, that astonishment must have arisen partly *from the judgments which God had inflicted upon Pharaoh*. You know what Jehovah had already done. He had turned the water into blood and destroyed the fish. He had made frogs to come even into the king’s bedchamber. He had brought innumerable lice and flies throughout all the land. He had sent disease upon the cattle, boils and sores upon man and beast, storms of hail and rain and mighty thunder! With stroke after stroke, almost without a pause, Jehovah had smitten the proud king! Yet still, after seven plagues, Pharaoh stood out as proud and obstinate as ever and, therefore, the Lord sent to him the question of our text, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”

I think I know some cases that are almost parallel with that of Pharaoh. Here is a man who has been very lofty and proud, but already he has been brought from wealth to poverty. At this moment he scarcely knows where to lay his head, yet in his poverty he has not turned to God. He has been smitten with sickness and that not merely once or twice, but many times. Turning over the pages of his diary he can note on such a day, fever—on such a day some other deadly disease—and these strokes have followed one after another. Yet, on being able to creep out again and to come into the place of public worship, he is still found as hardened in heart as ever he was. How long will it be, my Friend, before you humble yourself before God? The Prophet Isaiah might well ask concerning you the question he put in his day, “Why should you be stricken any more?” The rod seems to be wasted upon you—you have been struck till “the whole head is sick and the whole heart faint,” and you are covered with “wounds, bruises and putrefying sores.” Yet you turn not unto the God who smites you, but you grow prouder and yet prouder still notwithstanding all His chastisements and judgments!

What shall God do next with you? Where shall the next arrow be aimed? An eye, a hand, a foot—shall these be struck? Or shall the Lord lay the cold hand of death upon your heart? Shall “the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern”? I cannot tell how or when the summons may come for you, but I would very earnestly say to any of you who have been the subjects of many Providential trials and Divine

judgments, “How long will it be before you humble yourselves before God?”

The question of our text may have been put in astonishment from another point of view, namely, *because of the many false pretences of humility which Pharaoh had made*. When he was struck, he sent for Moses and Aaron again and again, and he cried out to them, “I have sinned, pray for me. Forgive me just this once.” Then, when his prayer had been heard and the plague had been removed, Pharaoh went back to his old natural hardness and said, “I will not let the people go.” Therefore the Lord sent to him the question, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?” Is it not much the same with some of you, my Hearers? I want to speak right home to your hearts and consciences! Have you ever, in the time of your sickness, promised God that if you should get better, your life should be altogether different? Yet, though the Lord spared you, there has not been any true change in you! Did you not say, “Please God, if I am delivered this time, I will be a better man in all respects”? Yet you are not any better than you used to be! Remember that those resolves of yours are all preserved upon God’s file in Heaven—you have the counterfoils of those resolutions in your memory, but the resolutions, themselves, are registered in the Court of King’s Bench above! And one of these days you shall see those broken resolutions again and, as you hear them read, you shall have to answer for having acted falsely towards the Omniscient God and for having lied to Him! God deliver you from the great sin of thus mocking Him!

Meanwhile, I press this question upon the heart and conscience of any to whom it applies, “How long will it be before you humble yourselves before the Lord? Will you go on all your lifetime with the mimicry of repentance, with the mere *pretense* of faith? Will you always be trying to play fast and loose with God? Will you never shake yourselves clear of this shameful play-acting and come to downright earnest repentance before your God? Will you play yourselves into Hell? Will you go on sporting with eternal realities as if they were only a child’s game?” Oh, let it not be so! Let this question of the Lord, Himself, come rolling, like a peal of thunder, into your heart and conscience, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”

Do you not think, too, that this question came from Moses with surprise as remembered the many mercies of God to Pharaoh? God had heard the prayers of Moses on behalf of Pharaoh. The proud king might think it a little matter, but he who had prayed for him and obtained the answer to his petitions did not think it a small thing. When the frogs were in all the land—only by the prayer of Moses were they all slain! When the swarms of flies came and defiled the whole country, it was the prayer of Moses that removed the plague so that there remained not one! It might be a little matter to Pharaoh—for men who receive favors often think but little of them—but they who win favors from God by prayer always highly esteem them! So Moses seems to be astonished as he says to Pharaoh, “Has God done all this for you? Has He removed His rod from you? Has He said to the executioner, ‘Put back the axe’? Has He fetched you out of the prison of His judgments, taken the chains off your wrists

and set you free—and do you still stand out against Him? How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Him?”

Let me put this question to some who are here. God has been very gracious to you, my Friend, in delivering you from many accidents and diseases—and you are spared till your hair is turning gray. It would have been easy enough for your life to have come to an end long ago, yet here you are, still spared by God’s mercy! You are not a pauper, as you once thought you would be. You are still living in comfortable circumstances and that great trial which, at one time, darkened your life like a heavy cloud, has passed away. And you can now look up with a cheerful countenance and remember times of great despondency and threatened distress. Will you not, then—won by this mercy, subdued by this great love—humble yourself before your God? What more can He do for you than He has already done? See how He has made you the special objective of singular Providential care! I refer you to your diary and ask you to remember how kindly and tenderly and graciously God has dealt with you these many years. O Sirs, if terrors will not move you, let *love subdue you!* Oh, that the Grace of God might find out the secret spring of your heart and bring you now, at once, to humble yourselves before the Lord!

So I think I am right in saying, in the first place, that there is an air of surprise about this question to Pharaoh, because of wasted judgments, forgotten promises and neglected mercies—“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”

II. Now, in the second place, to change the strain a little, and but a little, let me add that THE QUESTION BREATHES A SPIRIT OF KINDNESS.

You know that when a person does not intend another’s good, he strikes the fatal blow at once without a word of warning. But he who is a father, though he must use the rod, speaks many times and pleads, and admonishes, and persuades before he gives a stroke. This is just what God did with Pharaoh by His servants Moses and Aaron. He said, “How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?”

In Pharaoh’s case, that which God required of him was right. It was humbling to his pride, but it was right. What right had Pharaoh to hold the Israelites as his slaves? They were not his people—they had been admitted into the kingdom as honored guests. One of that race had saved the nation in the time of famine. Joseph had preserved Egypt and made the king strong in the midst of his people. Gratitude to Joseph ought to have caused the Israelites to be treated in a very different way. At any rate, if Pharaoh did not wish to have them in Egypt, he ought, at least, to have permitted them to go in peace and not to have held them in bondage. This was all that God asked of him—“Let My people go. They are none of yours, they are Mine. Let them go that they may serve Me.”

And, Brothers and Sisters, that which God requires of a sinner is a right thing. He bids you leave your sin. Is not that right? He bids you break off your sins by righteousness. Is not that right? He has provided a way of salvation through the Atonement of His Son, Jesus Christ, and He bids you accept it. Is not that right? All that He asks you to do is to confess and forsake your sin. Is not that right? If you cannot undo your sin,

the least you can do is to acknowledge it like a man—and that is what God asks of you. He bids you trust His dear Son. Is that a hard thing, an unreasonable thing? If He has appointed a Savior and equipped Him for the service of salvation, and has bid you, who *need* salvation, to trust Him to save you and never think of self-salvation, but to take Jesus Christ to be the beginning and the end of salvation to you—is not that a right thing? Well, then, how long will it be that you will still refuse to humble yourself before Him? A right-minded man never desires to postpone a right action! If it is just and right, He wishes to let it be done at once. And, oh, dear Friends, it is the most just and right thing that can be conceived of, that a sinner, guilty against the God of Love, should confess his guilt, seek mercy and accept pardon in the way in which God provides it for men!

This question is put in a spirit of kindness and I desire to put it very kindly to any one of you who has not yet yielded to the Lord—“How long will you refuse to humble yourself before God?” Dear Friend, you say that you intend, one day, to humble yourself beneath the mighty hand of God. Do you think it will grow any easier while you delay? Is it difficult, now, to yield yourself to the Lord? It will be more difficult in a year’s time, even if you are spared till then, for a man’s habits harden every day that he lives! They spin new webs about him. They hold him fast, poor fly that he is, every hour that he lives. If it ever is an easy matter to bow before the Lord, it is easier at this moment than it will be tomorrow. Say not, therefore, “I am waiting for a more convenient season,” for the most convenient season that ever can come is now! There will be greater inconveniences tomorrow than there are tonight—and so will it be *ad infinitum*! If you would be free from your bondage, break loose at once! You have waited too long, already, and you do not find it easier from day to day, neither will you if you still delay to submit to the Lord. Therefore, yield to Him at once. God help you to do so!

Do you not know that if God means to save you, *He will send heavier plagues upon you than any you have felt as yet?* If you will not come to Him with one blow, you shall have two! And if two will not suffice, you shall have twenty, for He *will have you*. It would be better to yield at once! There is no greater wisdom than the moment the Lord says, “Seek you My face,” to answer, “Your face, Lord, will I seek.” “Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding,” which must be driven to their work and goaded on in their labor. There are some who come to Christ like vessels towed into port, all but wrecked, with torn sails and broken timbers. It is better by far that you be gently wafted into the haven by the soft south wind of Love, or that you spread your canvas to a favoring gale and fly before the breeze into the Fair Havens of salvation by Christ! I would put it to you, dear Friend—Why do you want to be beaten, bruised, cut and wounded? Why not, as you are, say tonight—

**“Just as I am—without one plea
But that Your blood was shed for me,
And that You bid me come to You,
O Lamb of God, I come”?**

At any rate, there is one other thing I will say to you—a *time for decision should be set*. I would like to press the question of the text, “How

long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?" I remember a man of God who was talking with a young lady to whom he had spoken many times about her soul. At last he said to her, "Well, Hannah, you do intend to come to Christ one day?" "Yes, Sir," she replied, "I do intend." "Well, now," he said, "will you give me a date when you will come to Christ? You are 20 now, will you come to the Lord Jesus Christ when you are thirty? Will you put that down as a definite promise?" The young lady answered, "Well, Sir, I should not like to promise that because I might be dead before I was thirty. Ten years is a long time and I might be dead and gone before that time. I hope I shall know the Lord before that." "Well, Hannah," the good man said, "we will say nine years, then. That is to be the time that you fix when you will yield to the mercy of God." "Well, Sir," she said, "I hope it will be before then." "No," he said, "the bargain is made—you will have to run risks for nine years, you know. You make the bargain that you will come to Christ in nine years' time. Let it stand so and you must run the risk."

"Oh, Sir!" she exclaimed, "it would be an awful thing, a dreadful thing, for me to say that I would wait nine years, because I might be lost in that time." The friend then said, "Well, suppose we say that you will serve the Lord in 12 months' time? Will you just take this year and spend it in the service of Satan, and then, when you have enjoyed yourself that way, give your heart to Christ?" Somehow, the young woman felt that it was a long time and a very dangerous time, so she answered, "I should not like to be hung over an awful chasm and for somebody to say, 'I will pull you up at the end of a year and set your feet on a rock.'" No, she could not bear that thought! And as her minister pressed her to set a time and brought it down by little and little, at last she said, "Oh, Sir, it had better be tonight! It had better be tonight! Pray to God that I may now give my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ, for it is such a dreadful thing to be without a Savior! I would have Christ as my Lord this very night." So I put it to you—yield to Christ at once and do not keep on saying, "I hope it will not be long before I become a child of God."

You know how people often talk when they owe you money—they promise to pay you "next Monday." Then, when the next Monday comes, they say that, unfortunately, there was a remittance which they fully expected on the Saturday, but it did not come. They feel quite certain it will come on Wednesday morning, so they will be round at your house with it, or, would you mind calling upon them at noon on Wednesday? When you call on Wednesday, they are so sorry—such a thing never happened to them before, but they lost a purse when they were out in the street, so could you allow them another month's credit? That is how they go on, until at last you say, "Well now, look here, will you tell me once and for all when you will pay me? Do fix a day." And you think you have done something when you get a day for payment fixed at last. So shall I think that there is something gained—though, mark you, I have not much confidence in such an arrangement—if there is a deliberate attempt made to fix some kind of time when you will yield yourself to Christ! And, of all the times that I can think of—if I may, for once, be your solicitor and sit down quietly and give you my best advice—my experience suggests to me

that I had better quote to you this passage of Scripture, "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Today is in your power, it is here at present! It has almost gone, flying with the setting sun, but you have today at present—therefore use it, for tomorrow is not yours, and tomorrow may never come for you!

The question of our text is asked, then, not only with an air of surprise, but also with a great measure of kindness. And in that kindly spirit I wish you to suppose that I am walking round the front of this lower gallery and shaking hands with every unconverted person and asking, "How long will it be before you trust in Jesus?" And then, mounting the stairs to get to you who are in the upper gallery, that I may put to you the same question. And, after making the round of the whole building, threading my way as best I can through these crowded aisles and taking each one by the hand, giving a hearty grip, and saying, "How long is it to be? How long is it to be?" And, "Had it not better be now?" God grant that it may be now that you will humble yourself before the Lord, for Jesus' sake!

III. In the third place I will deal with the text in rather a different style, yet still keeping to the same objective though I change the line of argument. THIS QUESTION IS ASKED IN A TONE OF POWER.

If I could speak it as Jehovah would speak it by His servant Moses, I think it would run like this—"Thus says Jehovah, God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go that they may serve Me." God as God says to Pharaoh, "*It is no use for you to stand out against Me. As well might a moth contend with the furnace. It is of no use for you to lift your puny hand against Me. You know not how great My power is. I have given you a taste of it, but I have yet more terrible plagues in the rear which I will bring forward—and you will have to bow before Me.*" And you know, Brothers and Sisters, how Pharaoh *did* at last have to bow before Jehovah! The firstborn of his strength was cut off in the dead of night and there was wailing in the palace and in all the land. And then, when Pharaoh said, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil. My lust shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them"—he dashed forward to pursue the hosts of the Lord and you know what followed. "For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them." Then was heard the song of Miriam, "Sing you to Jehovah, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea." As the rushing waters bore him away, proud Pharaoh learned when, too late, how great a fool he had been to contend against the Infinite Majesty of Almighty God!

And I say to you, Brothers and Sisters, who are fighting against God, *you must either bend or break!* As God lives, you must bow before Him in repentance, or you shall be crushed beneath Him in the day of His anger! Think not, when we talk to you of God's mercy, that we come to you as your equal might come, and reason with you as though God were afraid of you! Do you talk of your great strength? He is almighty! As for you, your breath is in your nostrils and the Lord could cause you, in a mo-

ment, to fall dead in a fit, as many have done before you! If you will not yield to Him, He is infinitely glorious without you! And if you rebel against Him, in what way can you affect the supremacy of His empire? As well might a drop of spray hope to shake the cliffs of Albion as for you to contend against the Majesty of God!

O Brothers and Sisters, fight not against your God! What profit can there be to you in this rebellion? Already you have found no profit in it. Therefore be not so mad as to continue warring against your God. "Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." He is a God ready to forgive! "He delights in mercy." He wills not the death of any, but that they turn to Him and live. Still, if you will persist in contending against Him, see what your end will be—"Everlasting destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." Jesus Himself put the final issue thus, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

IV. I conclude my sermon by trying to show that THE QUESTION OF OUR TEXT IS OF WIDE APPLICATION.

Let me try to put the case to you who are here present. Forget Pharaoh and only think of yourself. Let the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, with the thorn-crowned head and the pierced hands stand by your pew and, looking right down into your soul, say in His matchless tone of music—the music of the heart of love—"How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?"

What is your difficulty, dear Friend? What is the cause of your quarrel with your Lord? *Do you even refuse to think about religion?* I know that many do. They get up late on Sunday morning and loiter about the house all day, with no care to go to what they call these "preaching-shops." They would rather go for a walk. The Bible is never read by them—they say that it is such a dreary book—which shows how unacquainted they are with its contents. Religion they regard as a mere make-up of priests, though they have never fairly examined its claims. Well, Friend, will you not at least give the Gospel a hearing before you condemn it? Will you not listen to God's message of salvation that you may form a sober judgment concerning it? Will you not, at any rate, read that Book which you have hitherto despised, that you may find out whether it really is the Book of God? Oh, no, you know too much to read the Bible! You are far too cultured to listen to the common preaching of such poor folk as we are. That is how you talk, but are you not ashamed to speak so? Do you not, yourself, judge that when a man thinks he knows everything, he really knows very little? And that when he affects to be such a very superior person, he is not so high and mighty as he thinks himself to be? Humble yourself enough, at least, to be wise? Humble yourself enough to listen to this question of Nicodemus, "Does our law judge any man before it hears him and know what he does?" Hear the story of Christ and examine and weigh the evidence of His Messiahship. Consider the claims of Christ and confess that you have not met them. And then give your whole heart and soul to seek to know the way of salvation!

But, suppose you have thought of religion, what is your trouble? You say, "Well, I understand that *I cannot be saved except by confessing myself a sinner.*" You would not need salvation, would you, if you were not a sinner? Surely, there is no hardship in refusing to you what you profess you do not need! If I opened a doctor's shop and posted in the window a notice stating that I would give away no pills or draughts to men who were perfectly well, nobody would accuse me of a lack of humanity because I acted like that. Those who are well have no need of a physician! So, to qualify yourself for being saved, you must first confess that you need to be saved! Come, Friend, have you always been perfect? I should like to see you stand in the middle of the congregation and let us all look you up and down! If you did not blush, I should know that you were not perfect—and if you did blush, it would be a confession that you were imperfect! We have all transgressed the Law of our God. Some in one way and some in another, but, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and we must confess that it is even so. When we have done this, then will be fulfilled to us the ancient promise, "Whoso confesses and forsakes his sins shall have mercy."

If you have made a confession of sin, what is further the matter with you? "Why," you say, "I am told that *I must be saved by Divine Grace.*" Yes, and how else would you like to be saved? Do you wish to be saved by your own merits? You have not any! You would like to set up some merit of your own, but why try to set up a lie? God is the God of Truth and He cannot endure that which is false. If ever any of us gets to Heaven, it will be by the free and undeserved mercy of God—why should you quarrel with such terms as these? When a thing is to be given away for nothing, I would be the last man to try to run it up in price! The richest man can have it for nothing and that is a price which exactly suits the poorest. Blessed be God that salvation is all of Grace from first to last! Humble yourself to accept it "without money and without price."

"But I understand," says one, "that *I am to be saved simply by believing in Christ,* and I do not like that way of salvation." Why do you not like it? Salvation by the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, through the sinner simply trusting in Christ, will greatly glorify Him. This makes the way of salvation possible to lame feet, blind eyes, deaf ears and enables poor guilty souls to find perfect righteousness which they could never find in any other way! Humble yourself, therefore, and submit to God's plan of salvation! Really, it seems to me that if a man gives anything away, he has a right to give it in his own way. And if God gives salvation, surely He has the right to give it in His own style! And if He will give it to all who confess their need of it, and come and freely accept it because Christ has worked it out, who shall quarrel with such terms as these?

In closing, I would very affectionately press home this passage upon all whom it concerns. Listen to the Lord, Himself, as He puts to you this solemn question, "How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me?" Here are many of us who, long ago, came to Jesus and humbled ourselves before Him, and we did not think it any degradation. I would sooner have some men to put their foot on my neck than I would have the best words of certain other men. One might be willing to sit still and

be abused by some men and then say, "It is a pleasure, even, to be noticed by such persons," while, if certain others were to praise you, you might ask as the philosopher did of old, "What have I been doing amiss that this wretch should speak well of me?"

Ah, poor Sinner! If you once get a view of the Lord Jesus Christ and know who He is, and what He is—if you can, by faith, perceive His beauties, you will say, "To fall at His feet is a high privilege! To submit myself to such an One as Jesus Christ of Nazareth is a higher honor than to receive a peerage from an earthly sovereign." Therefore, let us go together—you who never went and some of us who have often been—let us go together and let us cry to Christ, "Lord, receive us! We are nothing but a mass of sin and misery! Receive us and save us, for Your mercy's sake, and unto Your name shall be the glory forever and ever!" Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EXODUS 10:1-20; PSALM 105:26-38.**

Exodus 10:1, 2. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants, that I might show these My signs before him: and that you may tell in the ears of your son, and of your son's son, what things I have worked in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them; that you may know how that I am the Lord.* God would stamp the early history of Israel with the deep impression of His Godhead. His overthrow of the proud Egyptian king should let Israel know in the very beginning how great a God had chosen her to be His own peculiar portion.

3. *And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me.* Can you imagine these humble individuals, Moses and Aaron, thus bearding the great king whose word could make their heads roll upon the ground? They were not afraid, for God was with them, and they who speak in God's place are traitors if they are not brave. The ambassadors of so great a King must not demean themselves by fear! Therefore right boldly said they to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me."

4-6. *Else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow will I bring the locusts into your coast: and they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remains unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which grows for you out of the field: and they shall fill your houses, and the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither your fathers, nor your fathers' fathers have seen since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.* Moses had delivered his message. He had uttered his solemn warning, so he waited no longer in the tyrant's presence.

7. *And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God; know you not yet that Egypt is destroyed?* The seven former heavy judgments had so effectually bruised Egypt that the people began to cry against their king for his obstinacy in still farther resisting God.

8, 9. *And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: but who are they that shall go? And Moses said, We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we must hold a feast unto the LORD.* Pharaoh was inclined to make terms with Moses, but God will have no conditions with men who are rebelling against Him! An unconditional surrender is all that God will accept.

10, 11. *And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you. Not so: go now you that are men, and serve the LORD; for that you did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.* See how proud, how stout-hearted towards evil is this wicked and foolish king! When his people appeal to him to yield, he only does so for a moment, and then he drives out the messengers of God in anger.

12-17. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, even all that the hail has left. And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind upon the land all that day, and all that night; and when it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such. For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt. Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you. Now therefore forgive, I pray you, my sin only this once, and entreat the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only.* See how he is obliged to come to his knees at last? He will be soon up again, for his heart is not humbled, though he is eating his own words! An unhumiliated heart is not subdued by judgments—it is apparently so—but really it is still a heart of stone.

18-20. *And he went out from Pharaoh, and entreated the LORD. And the LORD turned a mighty strong west wind which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt. But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.* God kept His Divine Grace back from him, so that he relapsed into his natural state of obduracy. Pharaoh is the great mirror of pride and obstinacy! I wonder whether we have a Pharaoh here? Now let us turn to the 105th Psalm and see further what God did against this proud Pharaoh.

Psalm 105:26-28. *He sent Moses, His servant, and Aaron whom He had chosen. They showed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made it dark; and they rebelled not against His Word. So cowed were they by that awful darkness, that for a time they seemed to repent of their rebellion against the Lord.*

29, 30. *He turned their waters into blood, and slew their fish. Their land brought forth frogs in abundance, in the chambers of their kings. Though the fish could not live, the frogs could. When good was taken away, evil came. What a strange succession of miracles was this—the fish slain, but the frogs multiplied!*

31-34. *He spoke, and there came divers sorts of flies, and lice in all their coasts. He gave them hail for rain, and flaming fire in their land. He smote their vines, also, and their fig trees; and broke the trees of their coasts. He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number. There is great sublimity in this expression. God had only to speak and whole battalions of devouring locusts and caterpillars seemed to leap out of the earth, or to drop from the clouds—“He spoke, and the locusts came, and caterpillars, and that without number.”*

35-37. *And did eat up all the herbs in their land, and devoured the fruit of their ground. He smote also all the firstborn in their land, the chief of all their strength. He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes. It was a notable miracle that, after all the oppression they had endured, they should be in such a state of health that “there was not one feeble person among their tribes.” When God makes His people march, He puts them into marching trim!*

38. *Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them. Yet this was the mighty nation whose proud king had defied the Lord! At last they had had enough of the combat; they were glad that the people of God should retire out of their land and they themselves bowed low before Him. May we be taught humility of heart, so that we can sing the hymn I have chosen!—*

***“Sovereign Ruler, Lord of all,
Prostrate at Your feet I fall.
Hear, oh, hear my earnest cry!
Frown not, lest I faint and die!”***

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—605, 597, 596.

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

SEPARATING THE PRECIOUS FROM THE VILE NO. 305

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, MARCH 25, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“That you may know how that the Lord has made a difference
between the Egyptians and Israel.”
Exodus 11:7.***

THE difference between the Egyptians and Israel was exceedingly manifest. At first sight it seemed to be very greatly to the advantage of Egypt. They had the whip in their hand and poor Israel smarted under the lash. Egypt possessed the toil of the Israelites. The sons of Jacob made bricks and the subjects of Pharaoh inhabited the houses which the sons of Jacob built. How soon, however, were the tables turned! God worked plagues in Egypt. But Goshen was spared. He sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that might be felt. But in all the land of Goshen there was light. He sent all manner of flies and lice in all their borders, but throughout the habitations of Israel not a fly was to be seen, neither were they molested by the living things which crept upward from the quickened dust of the earth.

The Lord sent hail and a disease upon all the cattle of the Egyptians. But the cattle of the children of Israel were spared and on their fields fell no desolating shower from Heaven. At last the destroying angel unsheathed his glittering sword to smite his last decisive blow. In every house throughout the land of Egypt there was weeping and wailing. He smote the firstborn of Egypt, the chief of all their strength. But as for His people, He led them forth like sheep—He led them through the wilderness like a flock—by the hand of Moses and Aaron. They came to the Red Sea and He divided a path for them—they went through the sea on foot, there did they rejoice in Him. The flood stood upright as a heap and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

They passed through the depths as through a wilderness, which the Egyptians attempting to do, were drowned. The Lord, in all these things, put a glorious difference between Egypt and Israel. The fiery cloudy pillar which gave light to Israel was darkness to the eyes of Egypt. Whenever God blessed Israel, He cursed Egypt—the same moment that He sent the benediction to the one, He sent the malediction to the other. He looked on Israel and the tribes rejoiced, but when He looked on the Egyptians, their host were troubled.

Now, in your ears this day, Egypt and Israel are declared to be types of two people who dwell upon the face of the earth—the men that fear the Lord and the men that fear Him not. The Egyptians are the pictures of those who are dead in trespasses and sins, enemies to God by wicked works and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. The Israelites, God's

ancient people, are set before us as the representatives of those who have, through Divine Grace, believed in Christ, who fear God and who seek to keep His Commandments. The task of this morning will be to show you, first, the difference. Secondly, when that difference is seen. And thirdly, the reason why it should be seen, upon which last point I shall stir up your minds, urging you to make the difference more and more conspicuous in your daily life.

I. First, then, THE DIFFERENCE. The Lord has made a difference between those who are His people and those who are not. There are many distinctions among men which will one day be blotted out—but permit me to remind you at the outset that this is an *eternal* distinction. Between the different classes of men, the rich and the poor, there are channels of intercommunication and very properly so, for the less class distinctions are maintained, the better for the happiness of all. The social fabric is not to be kept up by maintaining one pillar at the expense of another, or by gilding the roof and neglecting the foundations. The commonwealth is one and the prosperity of one class is proportionally the prosperity of all.

But there is a distinction so wide that we may truly say of it, “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed,” and the broader the line of demarcation, the happier for the Church and the better for the world. There is a distinction of infinite width between the sinner, dead in sin, and the child of God, quickened by the Spirit, who has been adopted into the family of the Most High. Concerning this distinction, suffer me to make the following remarks.

First, the distinction between the righteous and wicked is most ancient. It was ordained of God from before the foundation of the world. In the Everlasting Covenant Jehovah wrote the names of His elect. For them Christ entered into engagements that he would be their surety and their substitute to suffer in their place. Covenant engagements were made for them, and for them only. Their names were from of old inscribed in the Book of God and engraved upon the precious stones of their great High Priest’s breastplate. They were then in the Covenant set apart—“The Lord has set apart him that are His godly for Himself.”

While the whole world lay in the Wicked One, these precious jewels were selected from the dunghill of the Fall. Better than other men by nature they certainly were not. Yet Divine Sovereignty, linked arm in arm with Divine Grace, selected some to be the vessels of mercy, who should be fitted for the Master’s use, in whom Jehovah should show forth not His long-suffering merely, but the plenitude of His grace and the riches of His love. Other distinctions are merely temporary. They are things that grew up yesterday and will die tomorrow. But this is older than the everlasting hills. Before the starry sky was spread, or the foundations of the earth were dug, the Lord had made a difference between Israel and Egypt. This, however, is a mighty secret and though we are to tell it as we find it in the Word, yet we are not intrusively to pry into it.

God has made another distinction, namely a vital one. Between the righteous and the wicked there is an essential distinction of nature. There are some of you who imagine that the only difference between the true Christian and another is just this—that the one is more attentive to his

place of worship—that he is more regular in the practice of ceremonies—that he could not live without private prayer and the like. Permit me to assure you that if there is no greater difference than this between you and another man, you are not a child of God. The distinction between the unconverted and the converted is far wider than this. It is one not of dress or of outward form but of essence and of nature. Bring here a serpent and an angel—there is a distinction between the two of such a character, that the serpent could not grow into an angel let it do its utmost. The angel could not eat the dust which forms the serpent's food, nor could the serpent lift up its voice and sing the seraphic song of the blessed.

As wide a distinction as that is there between the man that fears God and the man that fears Him not. If you are still what you always were by nature, you cannot be a true Christian. And it is utterly impossible for you to grow into one by all your doings. You may wash and cleanse, you may clothe and dress. You will be the child of nature finely dressed—but not the living child of Heaven. You must be born again. There must be a new nature put into you. A spark of Divinity must fall into your bosom and must burn there. Fallen nature can only rise to nature, just as water will only flow up as high as its source. And as you are fallen in nature, so must you remain—unless you are renewed by Divine Grace.

God, by His infinite power, has quickened His people—He has brought them out of their old nature, they now love the things which they once hated and they hate the things they once loved. Old things with them are “passed away. Behold all things are become new.” The change is not that they speak more solemnly and religiously, or that they have left off going to the theater, or that they do not spend their lives in the frivolities of the world—that is not the change—it is a *consequence* of it, but the change is deeper and more vital than this. It is a change of the man's very essence. He is no more the man that he once was. He is “renewed in the spirit of his mind,” born over again, regenerated, re-created—he is a stranger and a foreigner here below. He no more belongs to this world, but to the world to come. The Lord, then, in this respect, has made a difference between Israel and Egypt.

We would remark, further, that this difference of nature is followed by a difference in God's judicial treatment of the two men. With both, His dealings are just and right. God forbid that He should be unjust to any man! The Lord is never severe beyond what justice demands, nor gracious beyond what justice allows. Here comes the unrenewed, the ungodly man—he brings up his good works, his prayers, his tears. The Lord will judge him according to his works and woe is the day to him! It will be a day of sorrow, indeed, for he will soon discover his best perfections are as filthy rags and that all his good works only seemed to be good because he was in the dark and could not see the spots that defiled them.

Another man approaches, it is the renewed man. God deals with him justly, it is true, but not according to the scale of the Law—He looks at that man as accepted in Christ Jesus, justified through Christ's righteousness and washed in His blood and now He deals with that man, not as a judge with a criminal, nor as a king with a subject, but as a Father with a child. That man is taken to Jehovah's bosom. His offense is

put away, his soul constantly renewed by the influence of Divine Grace and the dealings of God with him are as different from the dealings of God with another man, as the love of a husband differs from the sternness of an incensed monarch. On the one hand, it is simple justice. On the other hand, fervent love. On the one hand, the inflexible severity of a judge and on the other hand, the unbounded affection of a parent's heart. The Lord, then, in this also, has made a difference between Israel and Egypt.

This distinction is carried out in Providence. It is true, that to the naked eye one event happens to both. The righteous suffer as well as the wicked and they go to the grave which is appointed for all living. But if we could look more closely into God's Providence, we should see lines of light dividing the path of the godly from the lot of the transgressor. To the righteous man every Providence is a blessing. A blessing is wrapped up in all our curses and in all our crosses. Our cups are sometimes bitter, but they are always healthful. Our woe is our weal. We are never losers by our losses, but we grow rich towards God when we become poor towards men.

To the sinner, however, all things work together for evil. Is he prosperous? He is as the beast that is fattened for the slaughter. Is he healthy? He is as the blooming flower that is ripening for the mower's scythe. Does he suffer? His sufferings are the first drops of the eternal hailstorm of Divine vengeance. Everything to the sinner, if he could but open his eyes, has a black aspect. The clouds are to him big with thunders and the whole world is alive with terror. If earth could have its way it would shake off from its bosom the monsters that forget God.

But to the righteous all things work together for good. Come foul, or come fair, all shall end well. Every wave speeds him to his desired haven and even the rough blast swells his sails and drives him the more swiftly towards the port of peace. The Lord has made a difference between Israel and Egypt in this world.

That difference, however, will come out more distinctly on the Judgment Day. Then, when He shall sit upon the Throne of His glory, He shall divide them, the one from the other, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. He shall cry unto His angels and say, "Gather out of My kingdom all things that offend and them that do iniquity." Then, with the sharp sickle in his hand, will the angel fly through the midst of Heaven and reap the tares and gather them together in bundles to burn. But, stepping from his Throne, not delegating the delightful task to an angel, the King Himself, the crowned Reaper, shall take His own golden sickle and shall gather the wheat into His barn.

Oh, then, when Hell shall open wide its mouth and swallow up the impenitent, when they shall go down alive into the pit, as Korah, Dathan and Abiram did of old—then, when they shall see the righteous streaming up to Heaven, like a stream of light, in their bright and glistening garments, shouting triumphant hymns and choral symphonies—then shall it be seen that the Lord has made a difference. When across the impassable gulf the rich man shall see Lazarus in Abraham's bosom—when from the lowest pit of Hell the condemned one shall see the accepted one glorified in bliss—then shall the Truth of God stand out written in

letters of fire—"The Lord has made a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."

II. We pass on to our second point—WHEN IS THIS DIFFERENCE SEEN? Our answer is, it is often seen in God's temple. Two men go up to the temple to worship. They take their seats side by side in God's House. The Word is preached to them both. They both hear it, perhaps with like attention. The one goes his way to forget, the other remembers. They come again—the one listens and the minister is to him as one that plays a goodly tune upon an instrument—the other listens and weeps. He feels that the Word is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword. It comes home to his conscience. It pierces him, cuts him to the quick. Every word seems to be as an arrow shot from the bow of God and finding a target in his conscience.

And now they come again. The one feels the Word at last to be his. He has been led to repentance and faith in Christ through it and now comes up to sing God's praises as His accepted child. The other remains to sing as a mere formalist—to join in worship in which he feels but little interest—to lift up his voice in a prayer when his heart is far absent. If I had here this morning a heap of steel filings and of ashes mixed together and I wanted to detect the difference between the two, I should have nothing to do but to thrust in a magnet. The filings would be attracted and the ashes would remain.

So with this congregation. If I would know today who are those who are of God's Israel and who are still the base-born Egyptians, there is nothing needed but to preach the Gospel. The Gospel finds out God's people. It has an affinity to them. When it comes to them they receive it, God's Holy Spirit opening their hearts. They lay hold of it and rejoice in it. While those who are not God's, who have no part or interest in the redemption of Christ, hear it in vain and are even hardened by it and go their way to sin with a higher hand, after all the warnings they have received.

Come now, my Hearer—to come right home to you—have you ever seen this difference made between you and another man? Do you hear the Gospel now as you have never heard it before? This is the age of hearing. There are more people attending our places of worship now than ever there were but still it is not the hearers, but the *doers* of the Word that are blessed. So, then, have you been made to hear the Word as you never heard before? Do you listen to it, hoping that it may be blessed to you, desiring that your conscience may be subjected to it—just as the gold is subject to the goldsmith's hand? If so, there is the first sign of a difference which God has put between you and the Egyptians.

But it goes further. If the Israelite is consistent with his duty, as I think he must be—in a little while he feels it incumbent upon him to come out from the rest of mankind and to be united with Christ's Church. "The Lord has made a difference," says he, "now I will *show* this difference. My Master has said, 'He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.' I put no trust in Baptism, but I must show that I am no longer what I was. I desire to be obedient to my Lord and Master. I desire to cross the Rubicon. To draw my sword against the world, once and forever to throw away the

scabbard. I long to do a something that shall make the world see that I am crucified to it and that it is crucified to me.

“Let me then be buried in water, ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,’ is the picture of my death to all the world. Let me rise out of the water, as the picture of my resurrection to a new life. And God help me from that blessed hour to go on my way walking as one who is not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world.” As often as the Table is spread, upon which we celebrate the memorial of the body and the blood of Christ, God again seals that difference. The unconverted, if the minister is faithful, are warned to go their way, or if they eat there, they will eat and drink damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord’s body. They are invited to come, and they, only, who are Believers in Jesus, who have a hope that they are changed men and have been renewed by Divine Grace in the spirit of their minds. Thus do we show to the world in the two outward symbols that the Lord has made a difference.

But further—the whole of a Christians life, if he is what he should be, is showing forth to the world that the Lord has made a difference. Here are two men in trial, the same trouble has befallen them both. They are partners in business. Their money is all gone. The house has gone to ruin. They are brought down to beggary and have to start in the world again. Now, which of these two is the Christian man? There is one ready to tear his hair. He cannot bear that he should have worked all his life and now should be poor as Lazarus. He thinks Providence is unfair. “There is many a vagabond,” says he, “getting rich and here am I, after toiling hard and paying every man his own, brought down to the round, having nothing left.”

But the Christian man—if he really is a Christian, (mark that, for there are a great many that profess to be Christians and are not, and it is the rough wind that tries them)—says, “The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.” “I know,” says he, “that all things work together for good. I will put my shoulder to the wheel and work up once more.” And so with courage and with confidence in Christ he goes again to his labor and God blesses him yet once more, no, blesses him in his trials more than he was ever blessed in his prosperity.

Here are two men again—they have both been doing wrong and when the righteous fall as well as the wicked, who is to know the difference? The next morning one of them rises and is quite easy about the matter—he knows no wounds in his conscience, or if he is uneasy it is because he is afraid of being found out. He is like one who, having fallen into the mire, lies and rolls there.

But here comes the Christian. He feels he has done wrong. “What shall I do?” says he, “to make reparation to man and to show my repentance towards God?” He would be ready to go down on his knees before anyone he has injured and confess how wrong he has been. He hates himself, he loathes himself, because he has done wrong. He would sooner die than sin. And now that he finds he *has* sinned, he wishes he had died sooner than he should ever have dishonored his Lord and Master.

If you see a sheep fall into the mire, it is quick enough up again. But if the swine falls there, it wallows in it again and again and nothing but the

whip or the stick can make it rise. So that there is an essential difference between the righteous and the wicked, even in their sins. "A righteous man falls seven times, but he rises up again." As for the wicked, he rolls and revels in his sin, abiding and continuing in it. God has set a difference and even when that difference is obscured it may yet be discerned. There is a ring about the Christian man that is not to be mistaken. Do what you will with him, he is not what the other man is and you cannot make him so.

Here is a new coin which looks amazingly like a sovereign and I turn it over. It is so clever a counterfeit that I cannot discover whether it is gold or not. Here is another—it is a light sovereign, I find. I look at them both and at first sight I am inclined to think that my new-minted sovereign is the better of the two. For, say I, the other is evidently much worn and light. But there is a ring about the Christian that proves him to be gold, after all, even when he is worn and short in weight. You may deface him so that the king's image is not apparent upon him, but he is gold for all that. He only needs to be tried and in the hour of trial that golden sound of grace will detect him and he will prove still to be one in whom God has made a difference.

This distinction also comes out in a godly man when he is under the pressure of some strong temptation. There are two tradesmen—both seem to trade in the same way. But at last a rare chance occurs to them. If they have no conscience they can make a fortune. Now will be the test. One man looks out for the opportunity and unscrupulously grasps it. That man is no Christian—put that down as certain. There is another man—he feels a longing for the gain, for he is human, but his heart hates the sin, for it is renewed by Divine Grace. "No," he says. "Better shut up shop than earn my living by dishonesty—better for me to be ruined in this life than that I should be ruined in the world to come."

The maxim of the establishment on the other side of the road is, "We must live"—the maxim of this shop will be, "We must die." You who are customers soon know in which place you will be dealt with more honestly and there you discover in some degree that the Lord has made a difference between Egypt and Israel.

But not to keep you long on this point—that difference shines forth very vividly in the dying hour. Oh, how distinct is that difference sometimes! The last time the cholera visited London with severity, though I had many engagements in the country, I gave them up to remain in London. It is the duty of the minister always to be on the spot in times of visitation and disease. I never saw more conspicuously in my life the difference between the man that fears God and the man that fears Him not, than I did then.

Called up one Monday morning at about half-past three, to go and see a man who was dying, I went to him and entered the place where he was lying. He had been down to Brighton on the Sunday morning on an excursion and came back ill. And there he lay on the borders of the tomb. I stood by his side and spoke to him. The only consciousness he had was a foreboding of terror, mingled with the stupor of alarm—soon even that was gone and I had to stand sighing there with a poor old woman who had watched over him, hopeless altogether about his soul.

I went home. I was called away to see a young woman. She was also in the last extremity, but it was a fair, fair sight—she was singing, though she knew she was dying. Talking to those round about her, telling her brothers and sisters to follow her to Heaven, bidding good-bye to her father, smiling as if it were a marriage day. She was happy and blessed. I then saw very clearly, that if there is not a difference in the joy of life there is a difference when we come to the dying hour.

But the first case I mentioned is not the worst I have ever seen. Many have I seen dying, whose histories it would not do to tell. I have seen them when their eyeballs have been glaring from their sockets—when they have known Christ and have heard the Gospel, but yet have rejected it. They have been dying in agonies so extreme that one could only fly from the room, feeling that it was a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God and to enter into that all-devouring fire. On the dying bed it will be manifest that the Lord has made a difference between Israel and Egypt.

III. I have hurried over these first two points because I want to dwell very strongly and very solemnly upon my last. We spoke about the difference being seen between the righteous and the wicked. My last point is, WHY SHOULD THAT DIFFERENCE BE SEEN? I have here a practical aim and drift. And I hope that if the first of the sermon has fallen dead upon you, this, at least, may quicken your conscience.

This is an age which has many hopeful signs in it. But yet, if we judge according to the rule of Scripture, there are some very black marks upon this century. I sometimes fear that the only age to which we can be truly likened is the time before the flood, when the sons of God intermarried with the daughters of men and when there ceased to be a distinction between the Church and the world. It is but the part of candor to acknowledge that there is such a mixture nowadays—such a compromise, such a giving and a taking on both sides of religious questions—that we are like a leavened mass, mingled and united together. All this is wrong. For God has always intended there should be a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, as clear and as palpable as the distinction between the day and the night.

My first argument is this. Whenever the Church has been thoroughly distinct from the world, she has always prospered. During the first three centuries the world hated the Church. The prison, the stake, the heels of the wild horse—these were thought too good for the followers of Christ. When a man became a Christian, he gave up father and mother, house and lands, no—his own life, also. When they met together they must meet in the catacombs, burning candles at high noon, because there was darkness in the depths of the earth. They were despised and rejected of men. “They wandered about in sheep’s skins and goats’ skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented.”

But then was the age of heroes. That was the time of giants. Never did the Church so much prosper and so truly thrive as when she was baptized in blood! The ship of the Church never sails so gloriously along as when the bloody spray of her martyrs falls upon her deck. We must suffer and we must die, if we are ever to conquer this world for Christ. Was there ever such a surprising miracle as the spread of the Gospel

during the first two or three centuries? Within fifty years after Christ had ascended to Heaven, the Gospel was preached in every known part of the world and there were converts to Christ in the most inhospitable regions. Further than the ships of Tarshish had the Gospel flown.

The pillars of Hercules had not bounded the industry of the Apostles. To wild and uncivilized tribes, to Picts and Scots and to fierce Britons, was the Gospel proclaimed. Churches were founded, some of which have lasted in their purity to this day. And all this, I believe, was partly the result of that striking, that marked difference between the Church and the world. Certainly, during the period after Constantine professed to be a Christian, changing with the times, because he saw it would strengthen his empire—from the time when the Church began to be linked with the State—the Lord left her. He gave her up to barrenness and Ichabod was written on her walls.

It was a black day for Christendom when Constantine said, “I am a Christian.” “By this sign I conquer,” said he. Yes, it was the true reason of his pretended conversion, If he could conquer by the Cross it was well enough. If he could have conquered by Jupiter he would have liked it equally as well. From that time the Church began to degenerate. And coming down to the middle ages, when you could not tell a Christian from a worldling, where were you to find piety at all, or life or grace left in the lands?

Then came Luther and with a rough grasp he rent away the Church from the world—pulled her way at the risk of rending her in pieces. He would not have her linked in affinity with the world and then “The kings of the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed.” But He that sits in the heavens did laugh at them. Jehovah had them in derision. The Church went forth conquering and to conquer and her main weapon was her non-conformity to the world, her coming out from among men. Put your finger on any prosperous page in the Church’s history and I will find a little marginal note reading thus—“In this age men could readily see where the Church began and where the world ended.” Never were there good times when the Church and the world were joined in marriage with one another.

But though this were sufficient argument for keeping the Church and the world distinct, there are many others. The more the Church is distinct from the world in her acts and in her maxims, the more true is her testimony for Christ and the more potent is her witness against sin. We are sent into this world to testify against evils. But if we dabble in them ourselves, where is our testimony? If we ourselves be found faulty, we are false witnesses. We are not sent of God, our testimony is of no effect. I do not hesitate to say there are tens of thousands of professing Christians whose testimony before the world is more injurious than beneficial.

The world looks at them and says, “Well, I see—you can be a Christian and yet remain a rogue.” “Ah,” says another, “you can be a Christian, I perceive. But then you will have to be doleful and miserable.” “Ah,” cries another, “these Christians like to drink sin in secret behind the door. Their Christianity lies in not liking to sin *openly*. But they can devour a widow’s house when nobody is looking. They can be drunkards, only it

must be in a very small party. They would not like to be discovered tipsy where there were a hundred eyes to look at them.”

Now, what is all that? It is just this—that the world has found out that the visible Church is not the unmixed Church of Christ, since it is not true to its principles and does not stand up for the uprightness and integrity which are the marks of the genuine Church of God. Many Christians forget that they are bearing a testimony—they do not think that anybody notices them. Yes, but they do. There are no people so much watched as Christians. The world reads us up, from the first letter of our lives to the end. And if they can find a flaw—and, God forgive us, they may find very many—they are sure to magnify the flaw as much as ever they can. Let us therefore be very watchful, that we live close to Christ, that we walk in His Commandments always—that the world may see that the Lord has made a difference.

But now I have a very sad thing to say—I wish that I could withhold it, but I cannot. Unless, Brothers and Sisters, you make it your daily business to see that there is a difference between you and the world, you will do more hurt than you can possibly do good. The Church of Christ is at this day accountable for many fearful sins. Let me mention one which is but the type of others. By what means think you were the fetters riveted on the wrist of our friend who sits there, a man like ourselves, though of a black skin?

It is the Church of Christ that keeps his Brethren under bondage. If it were not for that Church, the system of slavery would go back to the Hell from which it sprung. If there were not found Christian ministers (?) who can apologize for slavery from the pulpit and Church members who sell the children of nobler beings than themselves—if it were not for this, Africa would be free. Albert Barnes spoke right truly when he said slavery could not exist for an hour if it were not for the countenance of the Christian Church.

But what does the slaveholder say when you tell him that to hold our fellow creatures in bondage is a sin and a damnable one, inconsistent with Divine Grace? He replies “I do not believe your slanders; look at the Bishop of So-and-So, or the minister of Such-and-Such a place, is not he a good man and does not he whine out ‘Cursed be Canaan?’ Does not he quote Philemon and Onesimus? Does he not go and talk Bible and tell his slaves that they ought to feel very grateful for being his slaves, for God Almighty made them on purpose that they might enjoy the rare privilege of being cowed by a Christian master?”

“Don’t tell me,” he says, “if the thing were wrong, it would not have the Church on its side.” And so Christ’s free Church bought with His blood, must bear the shame of cursing Africa and keeping her sons in bondage. From this evil, good Lord deliver us. If Manchester merchants and Liverpool traders have a share in this guilt, at least let the Church be free of this Hell-filling crime. Men have tried hard to make the Bible support this sum of all villainies, but slavery, the thing which defiles the Great Republic—such slavery is quite unknown to the Word of God. By the laws of the Jew It was impossible that it ever could exist. I have known men

quote texts as excuses for being damned and I do not wonder that men can find Scripture to justify them in buying and selling the souls of men.

And what do you think is it, to come home to our own land, that props up the system of deceit that is carried on among us? You all know that there are businesses where it is not possible for a young man to be honest in the shop, where, if he spoke the downright truth, he would be discharged. Why is it, think you, that the system of ticketing goods in the window differently from what they are sold indoors, or exhibiting one thing and then giving another article, the system of telling white lies across the counter with the intention of getting a better price, is maintained? Why, it would not stamp an hour if it were not for the professing Christians who practice it. They have not the moral courage to say once and for all, "We will have nothing to do with these things." If they did, if the Church renounced these unholy customs, business would alter within the next twelve months. The props of felony and the supports of roguery are these professing Christian men who bend their backs to do as other men do. Who, instead of stemming the torrent, give up and swim along with it—the dead fish in our Churches—that flow with the stream, unlike the living fish which always go against it and swim upward to the river's source.

I would not speak too severely of Christ's Church, for I love her. But because I love her I must therefore utter this. Our being so much like the world, our trading as the world trades, our talking as the world talks, our always insisting upon it that we must do as other people do—this is doing more mischief to the world than all our preachers can hope to effect good. "Come you out from among them, touch not the unclean thing, be you separate, says the Lord, and I will be a Father unto you and you shall be My sons and daughters "

This surely, a stern rough argument, might move us to be separate from the world. But once again, how is it possible for us to honor Jesus Christ, while there is no difference between us and the world? I can imagine that a man may not profess to be a Christian and yet he may honor his Master—that however is a matter of imagination. I do not know of an instance, but I cannot imagine a man professing to be a Christian and then acting as the crowd acts and yet honoring Christ.

Methinks I see my Master now. He stands before me. He has more than those five blessed wounds. I see His hands running with blood. "My Master! My Master!" I cry, where did You get those wounds? Those are not the piercing of the nails, nor the gash of the spear-thrust. From where came those wounds?" I hear Him mournfully reply, "These are the wounds which I have received in the house of My friends—Such-and-Such a Christian fell, Such-and-Such a disciple followed Me afar off and at last, Peter-like, denied Me altogether. Such an one of My children is covetous, such another of them is proud, such another has taken his neighbor by the throat and says, 'Pay me what you owe,' and I have been wounded in the house of My friends."

O, blessed Jesus forgive us, forgive us and give us Your Grace that we may do so no more, for we would follow You where ever You go. You know, Lord, we would be Yours, we would honor You and not grieve You. O give

us now, your own Spirit, that we may come out from the world and be like Yourself—holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.

I have but just these two things to say and then I have done. To professors of religion in this word. There are some of you professors of religion that are base coin. When you come to the Lord's Table you lie and when you say of yourself, "I am a member of such-and-such a Church," you say what is a disgrace to you. Now let me remind you, Sirs, that you may hold your profession here, but when you come before God's bar at last you will find it a terrible thing not to have had a reality in your profession. Tremble, Sirs, at God's right hand. There hangs the scale and you must be put into it and if you are found wanting, your portion must be among the deceivers and you know where that is—it is in the lowest pit of Hell.

Tremble, Sir Deacon, tremble, Church-member, if you are not what you profess to be, there is a doom awaiting you of a fiercer, a direr sort than even for the ungodly and the reprobate. From the height of your profession you shall be plucked down. You have built your nest among the stars, but you must make your bed in Hell. You have decked your head with a crown, but you must wear a crown of fire. You must have those fine robes plucked off you, that tinsel and that paint must all be removed. And you, naked to your shame, the hooting-mark of devils, shall become a hissing even to the damned of Hell, as they shall point to you and cry, "There goes the man who destroyed himself by deceiving others. There is the wretch who talked of God and talked of Christ and did not think himself such an one as we are and now he, too, is bound up in the bundle to be burnt."

The last word is to those who are not professors at all. God has made a difference between you and the righteous. Oh, my dear Friends, I beseech you turn that thought over in your minds! There are not three characters, no intermediate links. There is no borderland between the righteous and the wicked. Today you are either a friend to God or an enemy to Him. You are at this hour either quickened or dead and oh, remember, when death comes it is either Heaven or Hell with you—either angels or fiends must be your companions and either the flames must be your bed and fiery coverlet, or else the glories of eternity must be your perpetual inheritance.

Remember, the way to Heaven is open. "He that believes in the Lord Jesus shall be saved." Believe on Him, believe on Him and live! Trust Him and you are saved. Cast your soul's confidence on Jesus and you are now delivered. God help you to do that, now, and there shall be no difference any more between you and the righteous. You shall be of them and with them, in the day when Jesus comes to sit upon the Throne of His father David and to reign among men.

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

THE BEGINNING OF MONTHS

NO. 1637

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 1, 1882.

“And the Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, this month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.”
Exodus 12:1, 2.

In all probability up to that time the year had been supposed to begin in the autumn. The question has been raised at what season of the year did God create man and it has been decided by many that it must have been in autumn, so that when Adam was placed in the garden he might at once find fruits ripe and ready for his use. It has not seemed probable that he would have begun his career while as yet all fruits were raw and green—therefore many have concluded that the first year of human history began in the time of harvest—when fruits were mellowed for man's food. For this reason, perhaps, in the old times the new year began when the feast of harvest had been celebrated.

Here, at the point of the Exodus, by a decree of God, the commencement of the year was altered and, so far as Israel was concerned, the opening of the year was fixed for the time of our spring—in the month called Abib, or Nisan. We know that a little before the barley was in the ear, (see Exodus 9:31), and on the Sabbath after the Passover, the produce of the earth was so far advanced that the first fruits were offered and a sheaf of new barley was waved before the Lord. Of course, when I speak of spring and then of ears of barley, you must remember the difference of climate, for in that warm region the seasons are far in advance of ours.

You must pardon me if my ideas should become a little mixed—you can correct them easily at your leisure. From the time when the Lord saved His people from destruction by passing over them, the ecclesiastical year began in the month of Abib, in which the Passover was celebrated. The Jubilee Year was not altered, but began in the autumnal equinox. The Jews seem to have had two or three beginnings of the year in relation to different purposes, but the ecclesiastical year, the great year by which Israel reckoned its existence, commenced, from then on, in the month Abib, when the Lord brought His people out with a high hand and an outstretched arm.

It is with God to change times and seasons as He pleases and He has done so for great commemorative purposes. The change of the Sabbath is on the same manner, for whereas the day of rest was formerly the seventh, it is now merged in the Lord's Day, which is the first day of the week. As Herbert says, “He did unhinge the day,” and He set the Sabbath on golden hinges by consecrating the day of His Resurrection. To every man God makes such a change of times and seasons when He deals with him in a way of Grace, for all things are become new within him and, therefore, he begins a new chronology. Some of us used to think our

birthday fell at a certain time of the year, but now we regard with much more delight another day as our true birthday, since on that *second* natal day we began truly to live! Our calendar has been altered and amended by a deed of divine Grace!

This morning I want to bring to your mind the fact that, just as the people of Israel, when God gave them the Passover, had a complete shifting and changing of all their dates and began their year on quite a different day, so when God gives to His people to eat the *spiritual* Passover, there takes place in their chronology a very wonderful change. Saved men and women date from the dawn of their true life—not from their first birthday—but from the day wherein they were born again of the Spirit of God—and entered into the knowledge and enjoyment of spiritual things.

The Passover is, as we all know, a *type* of the great work of our redemption by the blood of Jesus, and it represents the personal application of it to each Believer. When we perceive the Lord's act of passing over us because of Christ's atoning Sacrifice, then it is that we begin to live and from that day we date all future events. So this morning we shall first describe the event. Secondly, mention varieties of its recurrence and thirdly, consider in what light the day of this grand event is to be regarded according to the Law of the Lord.

I. First, then, let us describe this remarkable event which was to stand at the head of the Jewish year and, indeed, at the commencement of all Israelite chronology. First, this event was an act of salvation by blood. You know how the elders and heads of families, each one, took the lamb and shut it up, that they might examine it carefully. Having chosen a lamb without blemish, in the prime of its life, they kept it by itself as a separated and consecrated creature. And after four days they slew it and caught its blood in a basin. When this was done, they took hyssop, dipped it in the blood, and sprinkled the lintel and the two side posts of their houses with it.

By this means the houses of Israel were preserved on that dark and dreadful night when, with unsheathed sword, the Angel of Vengeance sped through every street of Pharaoh's domain and slew the first-born of all the land, both of men and of cattle. You will remember, dear Friends, the time when you, yourselves, perceived that God's vengeance was out against sin. You can even now remember your terror and your trembling! Many of us can never forget the memorable time when we first discovered that there was a way of deliverance from the wrath of God. Memory may drop all else from her enfeebled grasp, but this is engraved on the palms of her hands!

The mode of our deliverance is before us in the type as Moses describes it. The angel could not be restrained; his wings could not be bound and his sword could not be sheathed—he must go forth and he must kill. He must kill us among the rest, for sin was upon us and there must be no partiality—"the soul that sins, it shall die." But do you remember when you discovered God's new way—His blessed ordinance by which, without abrogating the destroying Law—He brought in a glorious saving clause by which we were delivered? The clause was this—that if another could be

found who could and would suffer instead of us and, if there could be clear evidence that this surety did so suffer—then the sight of that evidence should be enough for our deliverance.

Do you remember your joy at that discovery? For, if so, you can enter into the feelings of the Israelites when they understood that God would accept an unblemished lamb in the place of their first-born! And if the blood was displayed upon the door post as the clear evidence that a sacrifice had died and a substitute had suffered, then the angel would know that in that house his work was done—and he might, therefore, *pass over* that habitation. The avenger was to demand a life, but the life was already paid, for there was the blood-mark which proved it and the exactor might go on his way! It was the night of God's Passover, not because the execution of vengeance was left undone in the houses passed over, but for a reason of the opposite kind—because in those houses the death-blow had been struck, the victim had died—and, as the penalty could not be exacted *twice*, that family was clear!

I do not know whether there is any truth in the statement of a correspondent that whatever part of the earth the lightning once strikes, it never strikes it again. But whether it is so or not, it is certain that wherever the lightning of God's vengeance has once struck the sinner's Substitute, it will not strike the sinner! The best preservative for the Israelite's house was this—vengeance had struck there and could not strike again! There was the insurance mark, the blood-streak! Death had been there, no matter though it had fallen on a harmless lamb—it had fallen on a victim of God's own appointment—and in His esteem it had fallen upon His Christ, the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world!

Because the claims of retribution had been fully met there was no further demand and Israel was secure. This is my eternal confidence and here is my soul's sweet hymn—

***“If You have my discharge procured,
And freely in my place endured
The whole of wrath Divine—
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hands
And then, again, at mine!
Turn then, my Soul, unto your rest.
The merits of your great High Priest
Have bought your liberty—
Trust in His efficacious blood,
Nor fear your banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee.”***

It was to me the beginning of my life, that day in which I discovered that judgment was passed upon me in the Person of my Lord and that there is, therefore, now no condemnation to me! The Law demands death—“The soul that sins, it shall die.” Lo, there is the death it asks and more! Christ, my Lord, has died, died in my place—as it is written, “Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” Such a Sacrifice is more than even the most rigorous law could demand!

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.” “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us.” Therefore do we sit se-

curely within doors, desiring no guard outside to drive away the Destroyer, for, when God sees the blood of Jesus, He will pass over us! "In His days Judah shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:6). I say again, it was the beginning of life to me when I saw Jesus as dying in my place! I beheld the first sight that was worth beholding, let all the rest be darkness and as the shadow of death! Then did my soul rejoice when I understood and accepted the substitutionary Sacrifice of the appointed Redeemer. That is the first view of this event—the blood of sprinkling made Israel secure.

Secondly, that night they received refreshment from the lamb. Being saved by its blood, the believing households sat down and fed upon the lamb. They never ate as they ate that night! Those who spiritually understood the symbol must have partaken of every morsel with a mysterious awe mingled with an unfathomable delight. I am sure there must have been a singular seriousness about the table as they stood there eating in haste—and especially if, every now and then, they were startled with the shrieks that rose from every house in the land of Egypt because of the slain of the Lord. It was a solemn feast, a meal of mingled hope and mystery.

Do you remember, Brothers and Sisters, when first you fed upon Christ? When your hungry spirit enjoyed the first morsel of that food of the soul? It was dainty fare, was it not? It was better than angels' bread, for—

***"Never did angels taste above
Redeeming Grace and dying love!"***

I hope you have never risen from that table, but are daily feeding upon Jesus. It is a very instructive fact that we do not go to our Lord's Table, like Israel, to eat in haste, with a staff in our hand. We come there to recline at ease with our heads on His bosom, reposing in His love! Christ Jesus is the daily Bread of our spirits. Observe that the refreshment which Israel ate that night was the lamb "roasted with fire." The best refreshment to a troubled heart is the suffering Savior—the Lamb roasted with fire.

A poor sinner, under a sense of sin, goes to a place of worship and he hears Christ preached as an example. This may be useful to the saint, but it is scant help to the poor sinner! He cries, "That is true. But it rather condemns than comforts me." It is not *food* for him—he needs the lamb roasted with fire—Christ, his Substitute, Christ suffering in his place! We hear a great deal about the beauty of Christ's moral Character and, assuredly, our blessed Lord deserves to be highly exalted on that score. But that is not the aspect under which He is food to a soul conscious of sin! The chief relish about our Lord Jesus to a penitent sinner is His sin-bearing and His agonies in that capacity.

We need the *suffering* Savior, the Christ of Gethsemane, the Christ of Golgotha and Calvary! Christ shedding His blood in the sinner's place and bearing for us the fire of God's wrath! Nothing short of this will suffice to be meat for a hungry heart. Keep this back and you starve the child of

God. We are told in the chapter that they were not to eat the lamb raw. Alas, there are some who try to do this with Christ, for they preach a half-atonement Sacrifice! They would make Him in His Person and in His Character to be meat for their souls, but they have small liking for His Passion! And they cast His Atonement into the background, or represent it to be an ineffectual expiation which does not secure any soul from vengeance. What is this but to devour a raw Christ?

I will not touch their half-roasted lamb! I will have nothing to do with their half Substitution, their half-complete Redemption. No, no, give me a Savior who has borne all my sins in His body and so has been roasted with fire to the fullest! "It is finished," is the most charming note in all Calvary's music! "It is finished," the fire has passed upon the Lamb! He has borne the whole of the wrath that was due to His people—this is the royal dish of the feast of love! What a multitude of teachers there are who must necessarily have the Lamb boiled with water, though the Scripture says, "Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water."

I have heard it said that a great number of sermons are about Christ and about the Gospel, but yet neither Christ nor His Gospel are preached in them! If so, the preachers present the lamb boiled in the water of their own thoughts and speculations and notions. Now, the mischief of this boiling process is that the water takes away a good deal from the meat. Philosophical discourses upon the Lord Jesus take away much of the essence and virtue of His Person, offices, work and Glory. The real juice and vital nutriment of His glorious Word is carried off by interpretations which do not explain, but explain away!

How many boil out the soul of the Gospel by their carnal wisdom! What is worse, still, when meat is boiled, it is not only that the meat gets into the water, but the water gets into the meat—and so, what Truth of God these Gospel-boilers *do* hand out to us is boiled with error and you receive from them dishes made up partly of God's Truth and partly of men's imaginations! We hear in some measure solid Gospel, but in larger measure mere watery reasoning! When certain divines preach the Atonement, it is not Substitution pure and simple—one hardly knows what it is! Their atonement is not the vicarious Sacrifice, but a performance of something they are long in defining!

They have a theory which is like the relics of meat after months of boiling, all strings and fibers. All manner of schemes are tried to extract the marrow and fatness from the grand soul-satisfying doctrine of Substitution, which, to my mind, is the choicest Truth of God that can ever be brought forth for the food of souls. I cannot make out why so many divines are afraid of the shedding of blood for the remission of sin and must stew down the most important of all the Truths of Revelation!

No, no! As the type could only be correct when the lamb was roasted with fire, so the Gospel is not truly set forth unless we describe our Lord Jesus in His sufferings for His people and those sufferings in the place of sinners, presenting absolutely and literally a *substitution* for them. I will have no dilution—it is substitution—"He bore our sins." He was made sin for us. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes

we are healed.” We must have no mystifying of this plain Truth of God—it must not be “boiled at all with water,” but we must have Christ in His sufferings fresh from the fire.

Now, this lamb they were to eat, and the whole of it. Not a morsel must be left. Oh that you and I would never cut and divide Christ so as to choose one part of Him and leave another! Let not a bone of Him be broken, but let us take in a whole Christ up to the full measure of our capacity. Prophet, Priest and King—Christ Divine and Christ human, Christ loving and living, Christ dying, Christ risen, Christ ascended, Christ coming again, Christ triumphant over all His foes—the whole Lord Jesus Christ is ours! We must not reject a single particle of what is revealed concerning Him, but must feed upon it all as we are able.

That night Israel had to feed upon the lamb then and there. They might not put by a portion for tomorrow. They must consume the whole in some way or other. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, we need a whole Christ at this very moment! Let us receive Him in His entirety. Oh for a splendid appetite and fine powers of digestion so as to receive into my inmost soul the Lord’s Christ just as I find Him! May you and I never think lightly of our Lord under any light or in any one of His offices. All that you now know and all that you can find out concerning Christ you should now believe, appreciate, feed upon and rejoice in. Make the most of all that is in the Word concerning your Lord. Let Him enter into your being to become part and parcel of yourself.

If you do this, the day in which you feed on Jesus will be the first day of your life, its day of days, the day from which you date all that follows! If once you have fed upon Christ Jesus, you will never forget it in time or in eternity! That was the second event which was celebrated in each succeeding Passover. The third event was the purification of their houses from leaven, for that was to go in a most important way, side by side, with the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the lamb. They were told that they must not eat leaven for seven days, for whoever did partake of leaven should be cut off from Israel. It shows the deep importance of this purification, that it is put in equal position with the sprinkling of the blood. At any rate, it might not be separated from it upon pain and penalty that he who divided the two should, himself, be divided from the congregation of Israel.

Now, it is always a pity when we are preaching Justification by Faith, to bring in *sanctification* as to make it a *part* of justification—but it is also a horrible error when you are preaching justification, to preach it as to deny the absolute *necessity* of sanctification—for the two are joined together by the Lord. There must be eating of the lamb as well as the sprinkling of the blood. And there must be the purging out of the old leaven, as well as the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the lamb. Very carefully, the Jewish householder looked into every closet, corner, drawer and cupboard to sweep out every crumb of stale bread—and if they had any bread in storage, even if it was new and they intended to eat it, they must throw it all away—for there must not be a *particle* of leaven in the same house with the lamb.

When you and I first came to Christ, what a sweep there was of the leaven! I know I was clean delivered from the leaven of the Pharisees, for all trust in my own good works went, even the last crumb of it. All confidence in rites and ceremonies must go, too. I have not a crust left of either of these two sour and corrupt confidences at the present moment—and I wish never to taste that old leaven again! Some are always chewing at that leaven, glorying in their own prayers, alms and ceremonies. But when Christ comes in, this leaven all goes out.

Moreover, the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, must be cleared out. “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” Guile must go, or guilt will not go. The Lord sweeps the cunning out of His people, the craftiness, the deceit—He makes them true before His face. They wish that they were as clear of every sin as they are clear from insincerity. They once tried to dwell before the Lord with double dealing, pretending to be what they were not, but as soon as they ate of Christ and the blood was sprinkled, then they humbled themselves in truth, laid bare their sinnership and stood before God as they were—with their hypocrisy torn away. Christ has not saved the man who still trusts in falsehood. You cannot feed on Christ and at the same time hold a lie in your right hand by vain confidence in yourself, or by love of sin. Self and sin must go! But oh, what a day it is when the old leaven is put out—we shall never forget it! This month is the beginning of months, the first month of the year to us, when the Spirit of Truth purges out the spirit of falsehood.

A fourth point in the Passover is not to be forgotten. On the Passover night there came, as the result of the former things, a wonderful, glorious and mighty deliverance! That night every Israelite received promise of immediate emancipation and, as soon as the morning dawned, he left the house in which he had sheltered during the night and leaving his home, he left Egypt, too. He left forever the brick kilns! He washed the brick-earth for the last time from his hands, looked down on the yoke he used to carry when he worked amid the clay, and said, “I have done with you.” He looked at every Egyptian taskmaster, remembered how often he had been struck with the stick, and he rejoiced that he would never be struck again, for there he was, at his feet, begging him to be gone lest all Egypt should die!

Oh what joy! They marched out with their unleavened bread still on their backs, for they had some days in which they were still to eat it and I think before the seventh day of unleavened bread was over they had reached the Red Sea. Still eating unleavened bread they went down into the depths of the Red Sea. And still with no flavor of leaven in their mouths, they stood on its shore to sing unto the Lord the great Hallelujah because He had triumphed gloriously and the horse and his rider had been cast into the sea! Do you remember when the Lord purged you from the love of sin, from trust in self and when He brought you clean out and set you free and said, “Go on to the promised rest. Go on to Canaan”?

Do you remember when you saw your sins drowned forever, never to rise in judgment against you—not merely your destruction prevented, not merely your soul fed with the finest food, not merely your heart and your house cleansed of hypocrisy—but yourself delivered and emancipated, the Lord’s free man? Oh, if so, I am sure you will grant the wisdom of the ordinance by which the Lord decreed—“this month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you.” Thus much, then, on describing the event.

II. Now, secondly, I want to mention the varieties of its recurrence among us at this day. The first recurrence is, of course, on the personal salvation of each one of us. The whole of this chapter was transacted in your heart and mine when we first knew the Lord. Our venerable Brother and Elder White, when I saw him the other night, said to me, “Oh, Sir, it is very precious to read the Bible, but it is infinitely more delightful to have it here in your own heart.” Now, I find it very profitable to read about the Passover, but oh, how sweet to have a Passover transacted in your own soul by the work of the Holy Spirit!

Moses wrote of something that happened thousands of years ago, but the substance of it all has happened to me and to thousands who are trusting in the Lord in all its details! Can we not read this story in Exodus and say, “Yes, it is even so”? Every word of it is true, for it has all occurred to me, every atom of it, even to the eating of the bitter herbs, for I recollect right well that at the very moment when I had the sweet flavor of my Lord’s Atonement in my mouth, I felt the bitterness of repentance on account of sin and the bitterness of struggling against the temptation to sin again! Even the minute touches of that typical festival are all correct, as thousands know who have participated in its antitype. This Passover record is not a story of olden times, alone—it is the record of your life and mine—I hope it is. Thus by each separate saved man, the paschal feast is kept.

But then, it happens again in a certain sense when the man’s house is saved. Remember, this was a *family* business. The father and mother were present when the lamb was slain. I dare say the eldest son helped to bring the lamb to the slaughter; another held the knife; a third held the basin and the little boy fetched the bunch of hyssop. And so they all united in the sacrifice. They all saw father strike the lintel and the side posts. And they all ate of the lamb that night. Everyone that was in the house—all that were really part of the family partook of the meal—they were all protected by the blood! They were all refreshed by the feast and they all started the next morning to go to Canaan.

Did you ever hold a family supper of that kind? “Oh,” some fathers might say, “it would be the beginning of family life to me if I might eat bread in the Kingdom of God with all my sons and daughters! Oh that every chick and child around my table truly belonged to Christ.” A family begins to live in the highest sense when, as a family, without exception, it has all been redeemed, all sprinkled with the blood, all made to feed on Jesus, all purged from sin and all set at liberty to go out of the domains of

sin, bound for the Kingdom. Joy! Joy! Joy! “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the Truth of God.”

If any of you enjoy the privilege of family salvation, you may well set up a monument of praise and make a generous offering to God, by whom you are thus favored. Engrave it upon marble and set it up forever—“This household is saved and the day of its salvation is the beginning of its history in connection with the Lord’s Israel.” Extend the thought—it was not only a *family* ordinance but it was for all the tribes of Israel! There were many families, but in every house the Passover was sacrificed. Would it not be a grand thing if you that employ large numbers of men should ever be able to gather all together and hopefully say, “I trust that all these understand the sprinkling of the blood and all feed upon Christ”?

Dear men and women that are placed in such responsible positions, you might, indeed, say, “This shall be the beginning of months to us.” Labor for it, therefore, and make it your heart’s desire! If you live to see a district in which you labor permeated with the Gospel, what a joy! If we shall live to see London with every house sprinkled with the redeeming blood! If we should live to see all England feeding, not as many do at Christmas to excess, on the delicacies of earth, but feasting *spiritually*, where there can be no excess, upon Christ, oh, what a beginning of years it would be to our happy island! What a paradise it would be! If it should be so with France; if it should be so in any country, what a day to be remembered! Commence a nation’s annals from its evangelization! Begin the chronicle of a people from the day when they bow at the feet of Jesus!

There will come a day to this poor earth when all over it Jesus shall reign! It may be far away, yet, but the day shall come when Christ shall have dominion from sea to sea! The nations which are called Christians, although they so little deserve the title, do already date their chronology from the birth of Christ—and this is a sort of faint foreshadowing of the way in which men shall one day date all things from the reign of Jesus—for His unsuffering kingdom shall yet come. God has decreed His triumph and on all the wings of time it hastens. When He comes, that month shall be the beginning of months unto us! I say no more.

III. And now, in the last place, I come to show in what light this date is to be regarded if it has occurred to us in the senses I have mentioned. Primarily, if it has occurred in the first sense to us personally—what about it, then? Why, first, the day in which we first knew the Savior as the Paschal Lamb should always be the most honorable day that has ever dawned upon us! The Israelites placed the month Abib in the first rank because it was the month of the Passover—put down the date at which you knew the Lord as the premier day, the noblest hour you have ever known! It eclipses your natural birthday, for then you were born in sin! Then you were “born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.” But now you are born into spiritual life, born unto eternal bliss!

It eclipses your marriage day, for union to Christ shall bring you greater felicity than the happiest of conjugal bonds. If you have ever known a day in which you received the honors of the State, or gained distinction in learning, or attained to a position in society, or arrived at a lar-

ger wealth—all these were but dim, cloudy, foggy days compared with this “morning without clouds!” On that day your sun rose never to go down again! The die was cast, your destiny for Glory was openly declared! I pray you never in your thoughts degrade that blessed day by thinking more of any pleasure, honor or advancement than you do of the blessing of salvation by the blood of Jesus!

I am afraid that some are striving and struggling after other distinctions and if they could once reach a certain event, then they would be satisfied. Is not your *salvation* worth vastly more than this? They would feel that they were made of life if a certain matter turned out right. Brothers and Sisters, you were made for life when you were made anew in Christ Jesus! You came to your estate when you came to Christ! You were promoted when He received you to His friendship! You gained all that you need desire when you found Christ, for a saint of old said, “He is all my salvation and all my desire.” Do not, therefore, if the Queen should knight you, or the people should send you to Parliament, think that the event would overshadow your conversion and salvation!

Think of that act of Grace as the Lord thinks of it, for He says, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable and I have loved you.” Unto you that believe, Jesus is honor—in Him you boast and glory—and well you may! The blood-mark is a Believer’s chief adornment and decoration—and his being cleansed and set free by Grace is his noblest distinction! Glory in Grace and in nothing else! Prize the work of Grace beyond all the treasures of Egypt! This date is to be regarded as the beginning of life! The Israelites reckoned that all their former existence as a nation had been death. The brick kilns of Egypt, the lying among the pots, the mixing up with idolaters, the hearing of a language which they understood not—they looked on all Egyptian experience as death—and the month which ended it was to them the beginning of months. On the other hand, they looked upon all that followed after as being life. The Passover was the beginning and only the beginning—a beginning implies something to follow it.

Now then, Christian men and women, whenever you speak about your existence before conversion, always do it with shamefacedness, as one risen from the dead might speak of the morgue and the worm of corruption. I feel grieved when I hear or read of people who can stand up and talk about what they used to do, before they were converted, very much in the way in which an old seafaring man talks of his voyages and storms. No, no, be *ashamed* of your former lusts in your ignorance! And if you must speak of them to the praise and Glory of Christ, speak with bated breath and tears and sighs. Death, rottenness, corruption are all most fitly left in silence, or, if they demand a voice, let it be as solemn and mournful as a knell. Let your sin story be told in a way which shall show that you wish it had never been true. Let your conversion be the burial of the old existence and as for that which follows after, take care that you make it real life, worthy of the Grace which has quickened you.

Suppose these Israelites had loitered about in Egypt? Suppose one of them had said, “Well, I did not finish that batch of bricks. I cannot go out

just yet. I should like to see them thoroughly well baked and prepared for the pyramid”—what a foolish fellow he would have been! No, but they left the bricks, the clay, the stuff behind and went straight away—and they let Egypt take care of itself. Now, child of God, quit the ways of sin with determination. Leave the world, leave its pleasure, leave its cares and get right away to Jesus and His leadership! You are now the Lord’s free man—shall the blood be sprinkled for nothing? Shall the lamb be eaten and mean nothing? Shall the leavened bread be purged out in vain? Shall the Red Sea be crossed, the Egyptians drowned and you remain a slave? The thought is abhorrent!

That was the mischief about the Israelites, that they had, still, a hankering after the leeks and garlic of Egypt! These strong smelling things had scented their garments and it is hard to get such vile odors out of one’s clothes. Alas, that Egyptian garlic clings to us—and the smell of it is not always so abominable to us as it ought to be! Besides, they pined for fish which they ate in Egypt in plenty, muddy fish though it was. There were better fish for them in Jordan, Gennesaret and the Great Sea, if they had gone ahead. And there were sweeter herbs on Canaan’s hills than ever grew in Egypt’s mire. Because of this evil lusting, they were kept dodging about for 40 years in the wilderness. They might have marched into Canaan in 40 *days* if it had not been for that stinking garlic of theirs and their Egyptian habits and memories!

Oh, that God would cut us quite free and enable us to forget those things of which we are now ashamed! I have nearly finished when I have added this, that inasmuch as the Passover was now the beginning of the year to them, it was the putting of all things right. I told you that the year had formerly begun in autumn, according to most traditions—was this really the best season to pitch upon? Upon second thoughts, was autumn the best season in which to begin life, with winter all before you and everything declining? By the institution of the Passover, the year was made to begin in what is our spring. If I judge from the condition of our land I should ask—When could the year begin more fitly than in the springtide of early May? It seems to me that it actually does begin in the spring.

I do not see that the year naturally begins today, though it does so arbitrarily. We are in about the middle of winter and the year, as yet, lies dead. When the birds sing and the flowers rise from their beds on earth, then the year begins! It seems to me a strange supposition that our first parents commenced life in autumn, amid lengthening nights and declining forces. No, we say, by all means let the date be fixed in spring, so that the salutations of the new year shall be sweet with fragrant flowers and rich with joyous songs. Nor would the time of our spring in the East be a season without supplies, for in April and May the first ears of corn are ready and many other fruits are fit for food. It was good for the Israelites to have the feast of the first fruits in the month of Abib, to bring the first ears to the Lord and not to wait till they were ripe before they blessed the Giver of all good.

We ought to be grateful for green mercies and not tarry till everything comes to ripeness. In some parts of the East there is fruit all the year

round and why not in Eden? In the delightful country where I have sojourned, which bears a very close resemblance to the East, there are fruits still ripening upon the trees and one tree or another will be found to bear fruit every month all the year round, so that if Adam had been created in the month of April there would have been food for him, followed by a succession of fruits which would have supplied all his needs. Then he would have had summer before him with all its ripening beauties—and this is a more paradisiacal outlook than winter. It is right that the year should begin with the first fruits and I am sure it is quite right that the year should begin with you and with me when we come to Christ and receive the first fruits of the Spirit.

Everything is out of joint till a man knows Christ! Everything is disorderly and bottom upwards till the Gospel comes and turns him upside down—and then the right side is up again! Man is all wrong till the Gospel puts him all right. Though Grace is above nature, it is not contrary to nature, but restores true nature. Our nature is never so truly the nature of a man as when it is no longer man's sinful nature. We become truly men, such as God meant men to be, when we cease to be men such as sin has made men to be! Our life, beginning, as it does, at our spiritual Passover, and at our feeding upon Christ, we ought always to regard our conversion as a festival and remember it with praise. Whenever we look back upon it, the memory of it should excite delight in our hearts.

I wonder how long a man ought to thank God for forgiving his sins? Is life long enough? Is time long enough? Is eternity too long? How long ought a man to thank God for saving him from going down to Hell? Would 50 years suffice? Oh no, that would never do—the blessing is too great to be all sung of in a millennium! Suppose you and I never had a single mercy except this one, that we were made the children of God and co-heirs with Christ Jesus? Suppose we had nothing else to enjoy? We ought to sing about that, alone, forever and ever! Yes, if we were sick, cast on the bed of pain with a hundred diseases—with our bones sticking through our skin—yet since God's everlasting mercy will sanctify every pain and every affliction, should we not still continue to lift up happy Psalms to God and praise Him forever and ever?

Therefore, let that be your watchword all through the year—"Hallelujah, praise the Lord!" The Israelite always closed the Passover with a hymn of praise and, therefore, let us close our sermon this morning with holy joy and continue our happy music till this year ends, yes, till time shall be no more! Amen.

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THE SACRED LOVE-TOKEN

NO. 1251

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 22, 1875,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And the blood shall be to you for a token.”
Exodus 12:13.***

You remember that last Lord's-Day morning we spoke upon the witness within the child of God. We tried to show that Believers did not need any man to assure them that they are forgiven, that they could get on exceedingly well without absolution from a priest and could know their salvation altogether apart from the ghostly father, seeing that they have the evidence of it in their own souls by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. We shall not think or speak much of that miserable impostor, the priest, this morning, for he really is not worth thinking of. But we shall continue our consideration of the witness which the Lord has given to His believing people concerning their safety in Jesus Christ. May the Holy Spirit help us while we meditate upon the most vital of all subjects, which lies at the very heart of true religion.

There are some, as we have said, who desire a token of their safety from *man*—a poor thing when they get it and not worth asking for! And there are others who desire it from God in the form of a sign or a wonder, or else they will not believe. “Show me a token for good” is a prayer which is often used in a very mistaken sense. They desire some special transaction of Providence, or remarkable dream, or singular feeling. But God says to all those who desire a token for good, “The *blood* shall be to you for a token.” What more can we desire? All the squadrons of the angelic host could not better assure us if each one brought a message from Heaven. The best of all evidences of Divine Love is the Cross!

The strongest of all assurances of safety, the surest of all pledges of favor, the best token of Grace that a man can possibly behold is the sprinkled blood by which he is cleansed from sin. “The blood shall be to you for a token.” Before we dive into this subject, let us notice that the blood which was a token to God's people was not merely that which had been shed by the sacrifice of all unblemished lambs, but blood which had been caught in a basin, had been taken by the person at the head of the household in his own hands and recognized as shed for him.

Then a bunch of hyssop was laid to soak in a basin and afterwards the blood was sprinkled upon the lintel and the doorposts—this blood, thus appropriated, was the token. By an appropriating faith we must take Christ to be ours. We must, in a word, believe in the Atonement which He has made, for an Atonement which is not believed in is no Atonement to us. Our Lord Jesus laid down His life for us, but He that believes not in Him shall by no means partake of any of the blessings of His death. The *sprinkled* blood preserved the houses of the Israelites and it is the blood of

Jesus accepted by us, relied upon and applied to our consciences which delivers us from death.

This sprinkling, moreover, was done in a very public manner. They stained the lintel and the two side posts, so that every passerby might see it, yes, and *must* see it. So salvation is promised, not alone, to believing, but to *confession* with the mouth. "He that with his heart believes, and with his mouth makes confession of Him shall be saved." And so the grand commission at the end of the Gospel by Mark puts it, not, "he that believes shall be saved," but "he that believes and is baptized shall be saved." For if we believe in Christ we must not be ashamed of Him! Shame about faith would argue insincerity of faith. True faith in the Savior is so potent a principle of our lives that it must be seen whether we publish it or not—and we must be willing that it should be seen!

Yes, this should be the most visible point in our lives—our glory and our delight—that we do, indeed, believe in the Savior, Jesus Christ. Oh, that every one of you, my dear Hearers, used the Cross for its proper purpose! I grieve that any among you should need to have it asked of you—

***"Is it nothing to you, oh you that pass by,
Is it nothing to you that Jesus should die?"***

The Lamb is slain but you have never caught the blood, you have never sprinkled it with the hyssop of faith and, consequently, you are not saved! Oh that each one of you could say, "My faith is resting in the substitutionary work of Jesus." I could, indeed, sing that blessed hymn just now, and I drank it in with all my heart! And I heartily wish you could all sing it, too—

***"Complete Atonement You have made
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whatever Your people owed:
Nor can His wrath on me take place,
If sheltered in Your righteousness,
And sprinkled with Your blood!"***

Now, to the text. The blood of Jesus Christ is to Christians a token and in order to bring out the whole sense we must have five words—it is a *distinguishing token*, an *assuring token*, a *significant token*, a *love-token*, and a *recognition token*.

I. First, then, the blood shall be to you for a token, A DISTINGUISHING TOKEN. You could tell where the Israelite dwelt, for the blood-mark was there that night. You knew the Egyptian's abode, for he knew nothing of the token. Nothing so truly distinguishes Christians as the blood of Jesus Christ. Where the blood is not believed in, nor prized, you have dead Christianity, for "the blood is the *life* thereof." A bloodless Gospel is a lifeless Gospel! If the Atonement is denied or frittered away, or put into a secondary place, or obscured—in that proportion the life has gone out of the religion which is professed.

But we, Brethren, bear this distinguishing token, the mark of the blood. Our religion is, in many respects, a very singular one—one open to a world of objection and ridicule from carnal minds. It is one which always has been criticized and always will be, for we believe, first, that *our sin deserves death*. We do not believe transgression to be a trifle, or a mere mis-

demeanor of the first class. We know it to be a capital offense deserving the death penalty! When the Lord says, "The soul that sins, it shall die," our conscience says, "Amen," to the sentence of the Most High. The blood on the doorpost meant that those who dwelt there confessed that they deserved to die as much as others and would have done so had it not been for the paschal lamb.

The crimson mark was virtually a confession of deserving death. So every Believer feels that his sin is great and grievous, terrible and overwhelming. He does not subscribe to theories which make little of man's guilt. He has no ear for those who try to mitigate the penalty and endeavor to make the guilt appear small. He does not call sin a mistake, a failure or a lapse. I think I have heard all those words, lately, used about sin, by those who say, "Poor unhappy man! So mistaken, seeking after the light and crying after God in the dark. How sad that he should stumble! Surely God will not be so harsh as to punish him forever."

Such talk has no charm for us! We admit the heinous criminality of sin and the justice of the awful sentence which declares that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. Our God is just and takes vengeance on iniquity. The God who smote all the first-born of Egypt and overthrew Pharaoh in the Red Sea, is the God whom we adore! And as we bow before Him we admit that He might righteously have smitten us, also, and have utterly destroyed us. For us the blood-mark is virtually an acknowledgment that we have the sentence of death in ourselves and dare not trust in ourselves.

We are singular enough to believe in *Substitution*. The blood upon the lintel said, "Someone has died, here, instead of us." We also hold and rest in this Truth of God, that Christ died, "the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God." We believe, "He was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." The belief in the greatness of sin distinguishes Christians from Pharisees, and all other self-justifiers. And the belief in Substitution separates Christians from all those philosophic adulterators of the Gospel who are willing to hold up Christ's example, but cannot endure His expiatory Sacrifice. They will speak to you of Christ's spirit and the power of His teaching, but reject His vicarious death.

We do not subscribe to the lax theology which teaches that the Lord Jesus did something or other which, in some way or other, is, in some degree or other connected with the salvation of men! We hold as vital Truths of God that He stood in His people's place and for them endured a death which honored the Justice of God, and satisfied His righteous Laws. We firmly believe that He bore the penalty due to sin, or that which, from the excellence of His Person, was fully equivalent thereto. My Brothers and Sisters, this is and always will be assailed, but it is the keystone of the Gospel arch!

As at Waterloo all the battle seemed to rage around the chateau of Hugoumont, so does the conflict center around the doctrine of the atoning death of our great Substitute—and we are not going to shift our ground for a moment—nor adopt any other phraseology. We stand to the *literal*

Substitution of Jesus Christ in the place of His people and His *real* endurance of suffering and death in their place. And from this distinct and definite ground we will not move an inch! Even the term, "*the blood*," from which some shrink with the affectation of great delicacy, we shall not cease to use, no matter who may take offense at it, for it brings out that fundamental Truth of God which is the power of God unto salvation.

We dwell beneath the blood-mark and rejoice that Jesus poured out His soul for us unto death when He bore the sins of many. But we believe more—and what will seem very strange to some—we believe that *we died in Jesus*. The Israelite knew that when the angel went through Egypt he meant to exact a life at every house, and so he exhibited the blood, as much as to say, "The first-born is dead here." The lamb had died instead of the first-born and, virtually, the first-born is dead, and there is no cause for smiting, because the smiting has been done. So, when Jesus died, His elect died in Him and their sins received the vengeance due in that day when on the accursed tree He yielded up His life a ransom for many.

How can we die? We are already dead in Him and have been buried with Him by virtue of our union with His blessed Person. This is a most precious Truth of God and those who hold it are thereby distinguished from the rest of mankind. Believing this, we next come to the conclusion that *we are safe*, for when the Hebrew had struck the blood upon the door-posts of his house, he went in to feast, not to fret—he went into the house to eat the lamb whose blood had been sprinkled—and to stand at the table with his loins girt about, expecting not to die, but to go forth to a land which the Lord his God would give to him!

This is the distinguishing mark of a Christian that he knows himself to be saved and, therefore, he keeps the feast rejoicing in the Lord! And, standing with his loins girt, he is expecting, soon, to be called away to the land which the Lord his God has given to him, that he may inherit and dwell there forever. Other men are not saved, nor dare they profess that they are! They acknowledge that they have a great deal to do before they will be saved—present salvation they know not. Or if they think they are saved, yet they dream that their continued salvation depends upon themselves—there is still something needed besides the sprinkled blood. The Israelite needed nothing but the blood—his was perfect satisfaction with that.

And so is the Believer! He has believed in Christ as dying in his place. He is delighted to know that he is complete in Him and accepted in the Beloved. He waits till the summons shall come and he shall be called to ascend to the Glory Land where Christ has gone to prepare a place for him. The Israelite in Egypt made this distinction prominent. As we have already said, he put it upon upper part of his door and upon the two side posts, too. We read in Revelation that those who received the mark of the beast sometimes bore it in their forehead, but sometimes also on their right hand, while he who had the mark of God always received it on his forehead, never on his right hand where it could be hidden within the palm.

It has been very well remarked that there is a back door to Hell, but there is none to Heaven. The way to Heaven is the King's Highway, a way which is not made for concealment, but for honest travelers who have nothing to hide! Believers must be seen, for they are the lights of the world! Yet there are some who try to go to Heaven up the back stairs and serve the Lord only by night. It must not be! Strike the blood where all can see it, and let men know that you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ's atoning Sacrifice! Whether they like it or not, let them know that this is all your salvation and all your desire.

I had the pleasure of riding into the Leonine city in Rome a short time after the Italian troops had taken possession, and I noticed that every house had marked up, most conspicuously, the arms of the kingdom of Italy and the name of Victor Emmanuel. They were not content to have it over their doors, but all over the front of the houses you read, "Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy," showing that they were right glad to escape from the dominion of the Pope and to avow their allegiance to a constitutional king. Surely if for a *human* monarch and the earthly freedom which he brought, men could thus set up his escutcheon everywhere, you and I who believe in Jesus are bound to exhibit the blood-red token, and to keep it always conspicuous!

Let others believe the priest, we believe Jesus! Let others trust their works, we trust the sprinkled blood! Let others rely on frames and feelings, discipline and development, we believe in Jesus Christ and Him only! And we nail to the mast the blood-red banner of the atoning Sacrifice!—

***"My faith is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."***

Thus much, then, upon the blood as the *distinguishing token*.

II. Now, secondly, the blood was an ASSURING TOKEN. When we mean to do a special kindness for a friend it may be we say to him, "That you may be sure I shall do it, here is a token of my faithfulness." God gave to His people the blood of sprinkling as the token that He would preserve them safely. And surely, the more the Israelite studied that token, the more at ease would he be, for he would say, "God has appointed this unblemished lamb to take our place, and seeing that He appointed it, and the lamb has been slain, we are sure He will not run back from the substitution which He has, Himself, ordained, so we are perfectly safe."

Now, I want you, for a few minutes, especially you who have any doubts and fears, to look upon the blood of Christ and see its suitableness to be an assuring token to your consciences. Remember, first, what it was—blood, *the token of suffering*. Your sin deserves suffering. Christ has suffered for sin. Think what suffering He endured, what contradiction of sinners and what forsaking of His Father! Suffer no one to depreciate the physical sufferings of Christ, but still, remember that His mental sufferings were greater! His soul sufferings were the soul of His sufferings. Go to

dark Gethsemane, go to shameful Gabbatha, go to deadly Golgotha and as you see your Lord and mark that wondrous spectacle of woe, will you not feel that He can put away your sin and that if He so terribly suffered, *you need not suffer?*

God has accepted an expiation worthy of His Justice! That Heaven-rending cry, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" shows how keen were the pangs with which our hope was born! Think, further—*blood* signifies not only suffering but *death*—for our Lord could only put away sin by actually dying. All His tears, all His holy living, all His painful sufferings, even, could not recompense for sin till the death penalty was paid, for death was that which God had appointed as the reward of sin, and Jesus died.

Oh see Him die—see HIM die! Was ever such a spectacle? Every drop that distils from His pierced hands cries aloud, "Safety for the Believer! The ransom price is paid!" That gash in His side, like the mouth of love, speaks eloquently to our hearts, "Pardon, acceptance, eternal love!" I cannot see that bowed head, those eyes glazed in death and that dear body taken down to be laid in the tomb without feeling, "If Christ has died, there must be boundless mercy for the guilty sons of men." Think of it and I pray God the Holy Spirit to lead you to see the sweetness and comfort which lie in this token.

Remember, too, that you rest, not merely on suffering and death, but on the excellence of the Person so suffering and dying. Ask *whose suffering and death it is?* In the Israelites' case it was an unblemished lamb. In your case and mine it is the spotless Lamb of God! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, think of the life of Jesus in its innocence and disinterestedness! Was ever such a life, was ever such a death of such a sacred Person? He was God, "very God of very God." Those hands that were pierced had healed the sick with their touch! And those nailed feet had trod the sea! Those eyes, all closed in death, had looked into men's hearts and those silent lips had spoken miracles! It was God, Himself, who, on the bloody tree, offered expiation for sin against Himself!

There must be power in such a death as that to put away sin. Do you not admit that it must be so? Is not the token full of comfort to you? Think, again, that it was not merely the lamb, but it was *the Lamb of God*. That is to say, when the Israelite killed the lamb he was doing what God commanded him to do, and when Jesus died in our place, He did not die as an amateur Savior, but as one *appointed by God*. Now, if God appointed the Atonement, He must accept it. Surely if He said that Christ should die in our place, if *He* "laid upon Him the iniquity of us all," then the Atonement must be accepted since God, Himself, set it forth, provided it and ordained it!

How sweetly do I rest in this! I feel, when I look up to my dear Lord, and I desire evermore to do so, as if I could say to the Justice of God, "What can You do against me? Do I not present to You all You can demand—a death? I bring before You a death which You did appoint to be instead of my death? If You have appointed it, I know You will not refuse it." This is one of the sweetest parts of the whole matter of Atonement and

fills the token with assurance. One other thought, and a sweet one, this token was that of *blood which was shed*—not to be shed, but shed already! They had killed the lamb, they had taken the warm blood in the basin and smeared the door-posts, it was *all done* and all over!

You and I, also, are resting in a *finished* Sacrifice, not in a sacrifice to be offered, nor in a sacrifice which continues to be offered, according to this Anglican Popery which reeks in so many parish Churches, but a *complete* Sacrifice, for, “by one offering He has perfected forever them that are set apart.” There is no continuance of the offering of Christ in the sacrifice of the “mass”—it is a barefaced lie before Almighty God, for Christ declares that when He had once offered Himself, He forever sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. By that word, “It is finished!” He has put an end to all sacrifices and offerings by way of expiation for sin, because they are not needed—one death has accomplished it all!

Beloved, what joy is here! Suffering, suffering to the death, the suffering of the Son of God, a suffering ordained of God to be the vicarious Sacrifice and a suffering which is perfect and complete! Let us look at the token and let our hearts be glad within us from now on and forever. One of our kings once gave a ring to his favorite, and said to him, “I know that at the council tomorrow a charge of heresy will be brought against you. But, when you come in, answer them if you will, but you need be in no fear—if you find yourself brought to a strait, simply show them the ring and they will go no further.”

It is even so with us. The Lord has given us the precious blood of Christ to be like a ruby ring upon our finger and now we know how far conscience may go, and how far accusations from Satan may go—we have only to produce that token and bar all further proceedings. “He that believes in Him is not condemned,” neither can he be. God cannot and will not go back from His promise! The blood is the faithful assurance of the security of all the saints.

III. But now, thirdly, this is A MOST SIGNIFICANT TOKEN. Tokens generally mean something. Some inner sense is implied in them. Now, our token of the blood means four things. When the Jew smeared the blood upon the lintel and the two side posts he meant redemption. He did as good as say, “We are redeemed by blood! The people who live in this house are free! They have been slaves but they are redeemed! They are going out tomorrow morning and old Pharaoh and all his army cannot hold them.”

That is just what the blood of Jesus Christ means to us. We are bought and paid for and we are a free people! And if the Son has made us free, we are free, indeed! “O Lord, I am Your servant! By Your Grace I am Your servant! You have loosed my bonds. You have brought me up out of the house of bondage and out of the iron furnace. You have broken all my chains—the sprinkled blood declares it.” Then the blood meant, next, that the people who lived beneath that sign *belonged to God*. It was the mark of the Lord’s property—“You are not your own, you are bought with a price.”

He who redeemed us ought to possess us. The blood, when it bought us, also set us apart to be forever the property of the Redeemer. Whenever you think of Jesus, crucified, think of yourself also as crucified to the

world, as no more belonging to self or sin or Satan—no longer bound by worldly customs, fashions, maxims, laws—but under law to Christ, for you are the Lord's freeman. Give up the members of your body to His service! Yield them as servants unto righteousness, because you have not been purchased—spirit, soul, and body—with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot! The token set forth our redemption and also God's property in us.

This token next means *acceptance*. He who has the blood of Christ sprinkled on him has that to show which renders him acceptable before the Lord. There has been a war and a wounded soldier comes home. He goes to the house of a father and mother who have a son out in the army, and he inquires, "Does So-and-So live here?" "Yes." "Can I see him?" "Yes." "I have a letter from your son, whom I left in the army, he was my dear comrade." "Are you sure you have such a letter?" The man looks disreputable, his garments are torn, and he is evidently very poor, but he replies, "Yes, I have a letter from your son." He puts his hands into his pockets, and he cannot find it. The master of the house is angry and says "It is of no use your coming here with this tale, you are deceiving me."

He fumbles, still, in his pockets and at last he brings it out. Yes, there is the token, the father knows the handwriting of his dear boy. The letter says, "Father, this is a choice companion of mine and I want you, when he reaches home, to treat him kindly for my sake. Tell mother that anything she does for him shall be the same as if she had done it to her own boy." See how well he is received at sight of that token! And even so, when we present the blood-mark, we say to the Lord, "There is the token that we are Jesus' friends," and the Lord does not look at the rags in which our poor nature is arrayed, but He looks at the token of His own Son's blood and accepts us for His sake. What surer and more suggestive token could we desire? When cleansed in the blood of Jesus we are comely with His comeliness and dear to the heart of God for His Son's sake.

Yes, Beloved, and it moreover means *perfect safety*. As soon as ever the blood was on the lintel those inside the house were perfectly secure. The angel could not strike them, for if he had done so he would have struck his Master and insulted the Lord of Angels. To use his sword while the Divine shield was exhibited outside the door would have been to bid defiance to God's honor, and that no angel of God could ever do! Oh, Brothers and Sisters, there is no shield for a guilty soul like the blood-red shield of the Atonement! Stand beneath the purple canopy of Sacrifice and the great hailstones of wrath can never fall upon you! You must be safe if Christ's Atonement interposes between you and God. So you see the sprinkled blood is a very significant token.

As I went, a few days ago, through a piece of forest much overgrown with undergrowth and saplings, I noticed certain straight young trees distinguished by a red mark, and I discovered that the woodmen were about to cut down all the undergrowth and clear the ground for the better growth of the timber. Those marked trees were to be spared to become large oaks. I can see the red marks and the small trees in my mind's eye

at this moment—and there come the woodmen chopping down everything with their axes and billhooks! Down goes all the brushwood and many a pole falls, too, but they stop at the marked trees—these must not be touched—the red mark saves them!

So is it with you and with me if we have known the sprinkling of the blood! The Lord will not only say, “Let them alone this year, also,” but He will say to the destroyers, “Come not near unto those upon whom is the mark.” By this token you may know that you shall live and not die! Like Rahab, we hang this scarlet line in our window, and when all Jericho goes down with terrible destruction, our house must stand, for the red line secures it evermore!

IV. The fourth point is that THE BLOOD IS A LOVE-TOKEN. The blood is a token of *ancient love*, for it was shed more than 1800 years ago. Oh my Soul, the Lord has given you an ancient token which sets forth His great love with which He loved you, even when you were dead in trespasses and sins! Before you were born, the blood was poured forth which is today the ensign and pledge of everlasting love! It is a token of *intense love*, for it is a pledge taken from the heart of Christ and it denotes not the love of the lips, not love which begins and ends with outward deeds of mercy, but a love which wells up from the Essence of the Redeemer’s being—from His inmost heart which was reached by the cruel spear.

What a token is this, a token taken not from the lilies of my Lord’s garden, nor from the jewels of His crown, nor even from the hair of His head, but drawn from the inner sanctuary of His soul—from that Holy of Holies—the *heart* of Emanuel, God With Us! Oh Believer, since you have such a token as this, you should be ready to *die* sooner than doubt the love of the Lord! It is a token, too, of *mighty love*, for it testifies that He who gave it possessed a conquering flame of love which many waters could not quench nor Death, itself, destroy. See, He gives you the blood which is the token of *death*, His death for you, and thus shows that He went to the grave for your sake, “and Death, by dying, slew”!

Wear this token near your heart, I pray you, for it is the richest that was ever given by the hands of Love to the choicest object of affection. O You who are our Well-Beloved, You have loved us even to the end, for You have loved us to the death! It is a token, too, of a wise all-seeing love, for it shows that our Lord knows our sin and has known it all. When He gives us the blood, He does as much as declare, “My child, I am aware of the evil which is in you, for I have suffered its penalty. I know your sin, but you shall know it no more, for I have carried it away and cast it into the depths of the sea.” By this token Believers know that their sin is covered, and that in the sight of the Lord they are “all fair,” for He has cleansed them from every stain.

The day is come when if their sins were searched for, they would not be found. No, they shall not so much as *exist*, for the blood has washed them white! And it is the token of *a love unlimited* which will deny nothing to its object. “He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” If you have received the blood of His dear Son, what will the Lord refuse you? Do

you think your God will deny you Providential mercies when He has already given the bleeding heart of Jesus to redeem you? Do you imagine that He will leave you without bread and water, or garments to cover your backs when He has yielded up the Jewel of His soul, the Delight of His heart, to you?

Prize the token of His love, and look at it till your soul weeps for very joy! Blessed is that man to whom the Lord has said, "The blood shall be to you for a token."

V. Lastly, it is A RECOGNITION TOKEN. The man who has this token is known to *the angels* as one of the heirs of salvation to whom they minister. As soon as they see the blood applied to the soul by faith, there is joy among them, for this is a sure sign of repentance. All God's children have this family mark at their birth and there is no mistaking it, so that at the sight of it, the angelic guardians commence their tender care and begin to bear up the newly begotten one in their hands lest at any time he dash his foot against a stone.

The devil also knows that mark and, as soon as *he* sees it, he begins to assail the man who bears it, seeking in all sorts of ways to destroy him. If the Believer is not destroyed, it will not be for lack of enmity or industry on Satan's part. He knows the mark of the "seed of the woman," and he roars and rages, but at the same time he trembles, for well he knows that he cannot prevail. At the sight of the sacrificial token the great enemy stands confounded—like a raging lion he would gladly devour the sheep of the Lord, but the mark of the blood upon them saves them from his teeth.

And, Brothers and Sisters, this blood-mark is known among *the saints*, themselves, and has a wonderful power for creating and fostering mutual love. I have often noticed that as soon as we begin to discourse upon the atoning death of our Divine Lord, we are at home with one another. There may be Brethren present from various Churches and they may not be well at ease when we handle other subjects, but when we come to the precious blood we come to the heart of the matter and are all as one! This is one of the secret signs of our spiritual freemasonry! I have had my heart warmed and cheered against my own will, sometimes, by devout writers whose doctrinal theories I do not believe, and whose Churches I could not join, and yet when they write about my Lord, they win my heart!

"*Aliquid Christi*," as one old Divine used to say—the *something of Christ* in them awakens our affections and draws us near. Even books which are corrupt with Sacramentarianism have, occasionally, such a sweet savor of Christ in them that we cannot utterly cast them away. Sometimes we feel bound to very carefully pare the apple and cut out the rotten places, and remove the objectionable core for the sake of the sweet morsels flavored with the love of Christ. As the sweet honey-bearing flowers attract the bees, so does the name of Jesus draw all His saints to Him, and so to each other. Give me your hand, my Brother, for if you know my Lord, we belong to the same family—the Infallible mark of the redeemed is upon us both!

Best of all, *the Lord* knows this token! When we go to the Mercy Seat, if we would prosper, we must produce the sacred passport of the precious

blood. With this it is impossible to fail. The Primitive Methodist Brother, when he was in a meeting where a friend could not pray, cried out, "Plead the blood, Brother!" and the advice was wise. Yes, plead that, and say, "For Jesus' sake—by His agony and bloody sweat—by His Cross and passion." What mighty blows are given to the gate of Heaven by that battering ram! These are arguments to which Heaven always yields. Our God recognizes the blood-mark in the hour of death and attends His people through the solemn article.

Death's terrors are gone to him who has the blood for a token. Lay me down on my bed! There let me endure the allotted pain and weakness till the clammy sweat stands on my brow and needs to be constantly wiped away! Lay me down, I say, and I will calmly fall asleep like a child tired with a day's play, if I have but the token! Distresses and poverty and anguish of body may molest me, yet shall I be perfectly at ease and ask for no exchange. Why is this, you ask? Many a man possessed of health and wealth is not one-half so blessed as the poor saint upon his death pallet! From where does this blessedness come?

Here is the secret. The Lord has passed by and given a token! "A token," you say, "what is it? Is it some line extracted from the golden book of God's election? Is it a gem taken from the diadem which is prepared for him in Heaven?" No, no, it is not this. "Has he, in his sleep, beheld a vision and seen the shining ones walking the golden streets, or has he heard an audible celestial Voice saying to him, 'You are mine?'" No, he has none of these! He has neither dream nor vision nor anything that men call superhuman. He is resting in the precious *blood*—and this blood is the token of friendship between God and his soul! By this he knows the love of God and by this, God communes with him. They meet at the blood!

God delights in the sacrifice of Christ and the believing soul delights in it, too. They have, thus, a common love and a common joy—and this has bound the two together by a bond which never can be broken! This is it which makes some of us sing—

***"And when I'm to die,
Receive me, I'll cry,
For Jesus has loved me,
I cannot tell why.
But this thing I find,
We two are so joined,
He won't be in Heaven
And leave me behind."***

Oh what a blessing to feel that the blood of Jesus has united us to Him eternally!

Suffer this last word. Some of you, perhaps, have said, "Oh, I wish I had the blood of Jesus Christ for a token." Then let me tell you, first, that *you* have not to provide a sacrifice, for that is done! The Lamb is slain, the blood of the Everlasting Covenant is ever before the Presence of God. What have you to do? You have *nothing* to do but to have the blood sprinkled upon you. You know how they sprinkled it—it was with a bunch of hyssop. Hyssop is a common herb to be found everywhere in and around eastern cities, growing even on walls where but little soil is found. It was a

plant with a great many stalks, so that it would hold the blood and act as a sort of brush. Indeed, its only excellence was its power to hold the blood.

Now, *faith* is a very simple thing, and it is the act not of refined and educated minds, only, but of the poorest and simplest. The efficacy of the hyssop did not lie in what the hyssop was, but in its being put into the basin to drink up the blood. My poor faith is just as common as a bit of hyssop pulled up from the wall, but then I lay it to soak in the Atonement, while I muse upon who Jesus was, and what He suffered, and for what purpose, till it is wet, saturated, and all crimsoned with the vital blood.

The hyssop was an insignificant item in the whole business, it is only mentioned once, the second time the sprinkling is commanded it is not mentioned at all. And, so, after all, faith is but the humble instrument of salvation—the blood is the main matter—it is the life, the shelter, the token, the everything! Let your trembling faith lay to soak in the precious blood and then say, “I believe You, Jesus, and I tell the world I believe You. Sinner as I am, Your precious blood was shed for me and I trust in You alone.”

Thus you crimson the lintel and the door posts! Let all men know that whatever you may have been, and whatever you are now, you do now believe in the substitutionary death of Jesus, oppose who you may. Witness, you men and angels and devils, that Jesus’ blood is our sole hope! He who thus believes is saved. Brother, go your way, and leap for joy! No man ever perished who from his heart rested in the atoning blood. God bless you. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Exodus 12:1-15; 21-30.*
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—152, 280, 404.**

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

THE BLOOD

NO. 228

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 12, 1858,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

***“When I see the blood, I will pass over you.”
Exodus 12:13.***

GOD’S people are always safe. “All the saints are in His hand.” And the hand of God is a place of safety, as well as a place of honor. Nothing can hurt the man who has made his refuge God. “You have given commandment to save me,” said David. And every believing child of God may say the same. Plague, famine, war, tempest—all these have received commandment of God to save His people. Though the earth should rock beneath the feet of man, yet the Christian may stand fast and though the heavens should be rolled up and the firmament should pass away like a scroll that is burned by fervent heat, yet need not a Christian fear. God’s people shall be saved—if they cannot be saved *under* the heavens, they shall be saved *in* the heavens. If there is no safety for them in the time of trouble upon this solid earth, they shall be “caught up together with the Lord in the air and so shall they be ever with the Lord,” and ever safe.

Now, at the time of which this Book of Exodus speaks, Egypt was exposed to a terrible peril. Jehovah Himself was about to march through the streets of all the cities of Egypt. It was not merely a destroying angel, but Jehovah Himself. For thus it is written, “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast.” No one less than I AM, the great God, had vowed to “cut Rahab” with the sword of vengeance. Tremble, you inhabitants of the earth, for God has come down among you, provoked, incensed and at last awakened from His seeming sleep of patience. He has girded on His terrible sword and He has come to smite you. Quake for fear, all you that have sin within you, for when God walks through the streets, sword in hand, will He not smite you all?

But hark! The voice of Covenant mercy speaks. God’s children are safe, even though an angry God is in the streets. As they are safe from the rod of the wicked, so are they safe from the sword of justice—always and ever safe. For there was not a hair of the head of an Israelite that was so much as touched—Jehovah kept them safe beneath His wings. While He did rend His enemies like a lion, yet did He protect His children, every one of them. But, Beloved, while this is always true, that God’s people are safe, there is another fact that is equally true, namely, that God’s people are

only safe through the *blood*. The reason why God spares His people in the time of calamity is because He sees the mark of blood on their brow.

What is the basis of that great Truth of God, that all things work together for good to them that love God? What is the cause that all things so produce good to them but this—that they are bought with the precious blood of Christ? Therefore it is that nothing can hurt them, because the blood is upon them and every evil thing must pass them by. It was so that night in Egypt. God Himself was abroad with His sword. But He spared them, because He saw the mark of blood on the lintel and on the two side-posts. And so it is with us. In the day when God in His fierce anger shall come forth from His dwelling place, to frighten the earth with terrors and to condemn the wicked, we shall be secure. If covered with the Savior's righteousness and sprinkled with His blood, we are found in Him.

Do I hear someone say that I am now coming to an old subject? This thought struck me when I was preparing for preaching, that I should have to tell you an old story over again. And just as I was thinking of that, happening to turn over a book, I met with an anecdote of Judson the missionary to Burma. He had passed through unheard-of hardships and had performed dangerous exploits for his Master. He returned, after thirty years' absence, to America. Announced to address an assembly in a provincial town and a vast concourse having gathered from great distances to hear him, he rose at the close of the usual service and, as all eyes were fixed and every ear attentive, he spoke for about fifteen minutes, with much pathos, of the precious Savior, of what He had done for us and of what we owed to Him. And he sat down, visibly affected.

"The people are very much disappointed," said a friend to him on their way home—"they wonder you did not talk of something else." "Why what did they want?" he replied, "I presented, to the best of my ability, the most interesting subject in the world." "But they wanted something different—a story." "Well, I am sure I gave them a story—the most thrilling one that can be conceived of." "But they had heard it before. They wanted something new of a man who had just come from the antipodes." "Then I am glad they have it to say, that a man coming from the antipodes had nothing better to tell than the wondrous story of the dying love of Jesus. My business is to preach the Gospel of Christ. And when I can speak at all, I dare not trifle with my commission. When I looked upon those people today and remembering where I should next meet them, how could I stand up and furnish food to vain curiosity—tickle their fancy with amusing stories, however decently strung together on a thread of religion? That is not what Christ meant by preaching the Gospel. And then how could I hereafter meet the fearful charge, 'I gave you one opportunity to tell them of ME. You spent it in describing your own adventures!'"

So I thought, Well, if Judson told the old story after he had been thirty years away and could not find anything better, I will just go back to this

old subject, which is always new and always fresh to us—the precious blood of Christ, by which we are saved. First, then, the blood. Secondly, its efficacy. Thirdly, the one condition appended to it—“When I see the blood.” And fourthly, the practical lesson.

I. First, then, **THE BLOOD ITSELF.** In the case of the Israelites it was the blood of the Paschal Lamb. In our case, Beloved, it is the blood of the Lamb of God, which takes away the sins of the world.

1. The blood of which I have solemnly to speak this morning, is, first of all, the blood of a Divinely appointed Victim. Jesus Christ did not come into this world unappointed. He was sent here by His Father. This, indeed, is one of the underlying groundworks of the Christian’s hope. We can rely upon Jesus Christ’s acceptance by His Father because His father ordained Him to be our Savior from before the foundation of the world. Sinner, when I preach to you the blood of Christ this morning, I am preaching something that is well-pleasing to God. For God Himself did choose Christ to be the Redeemer. He Himself set Him apart from before the foundation of the world and He Himself, even Jehovah the Father, did lay upon Him the iniquity of us all. The sacrifice of Christ is not brought to you without warrant. It is not something which Christ did surreptitiously and in secret. It was written in the great decree from all eternity, that He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. As He Himself said, “Lo, I come. In the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will O God.” It is God’s will that the blood of Jesus should be shed. Jesus is God’s chosen Savior for men. And here, when addressing the ungodly, here, I say, is one potent argument with them. Sinner! You may trust in Christ, that He is able to save you from the wrath of God, for God Himself has appointed Him to save.

2. Christ Jesus, too, like the lamb, was not only a Divinely appointed Victim, but he was spotless. Had there been one sin in Christ, He had not been capable of being our Savior. But He was without spot or blemish—without original sin, without any practical transgression. In Him was no sin, though He was “tempted in all points like as we are.” Here, again, is the reason why the blood is able to save, because it is the blood of an innocent Victim, a Victim only because His death lay in us and not in Himself. When the poor innocent lamb was put to death, by the head of the household of Egypt, I can imagine that thoughts like these ran through his mind. “Ah,” he would say, as he struck the knife into the lamb, “This poor creature dies, not for any guilt that it has ever had, but to show me that I am guilty and that I deserved to die like this.” Turn, then, your eye to the Cross and see Jesus bleeding there and dying for you. Remember—

“For sins not His own, He died to atone.”

Sin had no foothold in Him, never troubled Him. The prince of this world came and looked, but he said, “I have nothing in Christ. There is no room for me to plant my foot—no piece of corrupt ground, which I may

call my own.” O Sinner, the blood of Jesus is able to save you because He was perfectly innocent Himself and, “He died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.”

But some will say, “Why has the blood of Christ such power to save?” My reply is not only because God appointed that blood and because it was the blood of an innocent and spotless being, but because Christ Himself was God. If Christ were a mere man, my Hearers, you could not be exhorted to trust Him. Were He ever so spotless and holy, there would be no efficacy in His blood to save. But Christ was “very God of very God.” The blood that Jesus shed was God-like blood. It was the blood of man, for He was Man like ourselves. But the Divinity was so allied with the manhood, that the blood derived efficacy from it.

Can you imagine what must be the value of the blood of God’s own dear Son? No, you cannot put an estimate upon it that should so much as reach to a millionth part of its preciousness. I know you esteem that blood as beyond all price if you have been washed in it. But I know also that you do not esteem it enough. It was the wonder of angels that God should condescend to die. It will be the wonder of all wonders, the unceasing wonder of eternity, that God should become *Man* to die. Oh, when we think that Christ was Creator of the world and that on His all-sustaining shoulders did hang the universe, we cannot wonder that His death is mighty to redeem and that His blood should cleanse from sin.

Come here, Saints and Sinners. Gather in and crowd around the Cross and see this Man, overcome with weakness, fainting, groaning, bleeding and dying. This Man is also “God over all, blessed forever,” Is there not power to save? Is there not efficacy in blood like that? Can you imagine any stretch of sin which shall prove greater than the power of Divinity—any height of iniquity that shall overtop the topless steps of the Divine? Can I conceive a depth of sin that shall be deeper than the Infinite? A breadth of iniquity that shall be broader than the Godhead? Because He is Divine, He is “able to save to the uttermost, them that come unto God by Him.” Divinity appointed, spotless and Divine—His blood is the blood whereby you may escape the anger and the wrath of God.

4. Once more—the blood of which we speak today is blood once shed for many for the remission of sin. The paschal lamb was killed every year, but now Christ has appeared to take away sin by the offering up of Himself and there is now no more mention of sin, for Christ once and for all has put away sin by the offering of Himself. The Jew sacrificed the lamb every morning and every evening, for there was a continual mention of sin. The blood of the lamb could not take it away. The lamb availed for today, but there was the sin of tomorrow—what was to be done with that? Why, a fresh victim must bleed.

But oh, my Hearer, *our* greatest joy is that the blood of Jesus has been once shed and He has said, “It is finished.” There is no more need of the

blood of bulls or of goats, or of any other sacrifice. That one sacrifice has “perfected forever them that are sanctified.” Trembling Sinner! Come to the Cross again. Your sins are heavy and many but the atonement for them is completed by the death of Christ. Look, then, to Jesus and remember that Christ needs nothing to supplement His blood! The road between God and man is finished and open—the robe to cover your nakedness is complete—without a rag of yours. The bath in which you are to be washed is full, full to the brim and needs nothing to be added thereunto. “It is finished!” Let that ring in your ears. There is nothing now that can hinder your being saved, if *God has made you willing* now to believe in Jesus Christ. He is a complete Savior, full of Grace for an empty sinner.

5. And yet I must add one more thought and then leave this point. The blood of Jesus Christ is blood that has been accepted. Christ died—He was buried. But neither Heaven nor earth could tell whether God had accepted the ransom. There was wanted God’s seal upon the great Magna Charta of man’s salvation and that seal was put, my Hearer, in that hour when God summoned the angel and bade Him descend from Heaven and roll away the stone. Christ was put in vile confinement in the prison of the grave, as a hostage for His people. Until God had signed the warrant for acquittal of all His people, Christ must abide in the bonds of death. He did not attempt to break out of His prison. He did not come out illegally, by wrenching down the bars of His dungeon, He waited—He wrapped up the napkin, folding it by itself—He laid the grave clothes in a separate place.

He waited, waited patiently. And at last down from the skies, like the flash of a meteor, the angel descended, touched the stone and rolled it away. And when Christ came out, rising from the dead in the glory of His Father’s power, *then* was the seal put upon the great charts of our redemption. The blood was accepted and sin was forgiven. And now, Soul, it is not possible for God to reject you, if you come this day to Him, pleading the blood of Christ. God cannot—and here we speak with reverence, too—the everlasting God *cannot* reject a sinner who pleads the blood of Christ—for if He did, it were to deny Himself. And to contradict all His former acts. He has accepted blood and He will accept it. He never can revoke that Divine acceptance of the resurrection. And if you go to God, my Hearer, pleading simply and only the blood of Him that hung upon the tree, God must un-God Himself before He can reject you, or reject that blood.

And yet I fear that I have not been able to make you think of the blood of Christ. I beseech you, then, just for a moment, try to picture to yourself Christ on the Cross. Let your imagination figure the motley crew assembled round about that little hill of Calvary. Lift now your eyes and see the three crosses put upon that rising knoll. See in the center the thorn-crowned brow of Christ. Do you see the hands that have always been full of blessing, nailed fast to the accursed wood? Look at His dear face, more

marred than that of any other man? Do you see it now, as His head bows upon His bosom in the extreme agonies of death? He was a real Man, remember. It was a real Cross. Do not think of these things as figments and fancies and romances There was such a Being and He died as I describe it. Let your imagination picture Him and then sit still a moment and think over this thought—"The blood of that man, whom now I behold dying in agony, must be my redemption. And if I would be saved, I must put my only trust in what He suffered for me, when He Himself did 'bear our sins in His own body on the tree.' " If God the Holy Spirit should help you, you will then be in a right state to proceed to the second point.

II. THE EFFICACY OF THIS BLOOD. "When I see the blood I will pass over you."

1. The blood of Christ has such a Divine power to save that nothing *but* it can ever save the soul. If some foolish Israelite had despised the command of God and had said, "I will sprinkle something else upon the doorposts," or, "I will adorn the lintel with jewels of gold and silver," he would have perished. Nothing could save his household but the sprinkled blood. And now let us all remember, that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ," for "there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved." My works, my prayers, my tears, cannot save me. The blood, the blood alone, has power to redeem. Sacraments, however well they may be attended to, cannot save me. Nothing but Your blood, O Jesus, can redeem me from the guilt of sin.

Though I should give rivers of oil and ten thousand of the fat of fed beasts. Yes, though I should give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul—all would be useless. Nothing but the blood of Jesus has in it the slightest saving power. Oh, you that are trusting in your infant Baptism, your Confirmation and your Lord's Supper, you are trusting in a lie! Nothing but the blood of Jesus can save. I care not how right the ordinance, how true the form, how Scriptural the practice, it is all a vanity to you if you rely in it. God forbid I should say a word against ordinances, or against holy things, but keep them in their places. If you make them the basis of your soul's salvation, they are lighter than a shadow and when you need them most you shall find them fail you.

There is not, I repeat it again, the slightest atom of saving power anywhere but in the blood of Jesus. That blood has the only power to save and anything else that you rely upon shall be a refuge of lies. This is the rock and this is the work that is perfect. But all other things are day dreams. They must be swept away in the day when God shall come to try our work of what sort it is. THE BLOOD stands out in solitary majesty, the only rock of our salvation.

2. This blood is not simply the only thing that can save, but it must save alone. Put anything with the blood of Christ and you are lost. Trust

to anything else *with* this and you perish. "It is true," says one, "that the Sacrament cannot save me, but I will trust in that, and in Christ, too." You are a lost man, then. So jealous is Christ of His honor, that anything you put *with* Him, however good it is, becomes, from the fact of your putting it with Him, an accursed thing. And what is it that you would put with Christ? Your good works? What? Will you yoke a reptile with an angel—yoke yourself to the chariot of salvation with Christ? What are your good works? Your righteousnesses are "as filthy rags." And shall filthy rags be joined to the spotless celestial righteousness of Christ? It must not and it shall not be.

Rely on Jesus only and you cannot perish. But rely on anything with Him and you are as surely damned as if you should rely upon your *sins*. Jesus only—Jesus only—Jesus only! This is the Rock of our salvation. And here let me stop and combat a few forms and shapes which our self-righteousness always takes. "Oh," says one, "I could trust in Christ if I felt my sins more." Sir, that is a damning error. Is your repentance, your sense of sin, to be a part-Savior? Sinner! The blood is to save you, not your tears—Christ's death, not your repentance! You are bid this day to trust in Christ. Not in your feelings, not in your pangs on account of sin. Many a man has been brought into great soul distress, because he has looked more at his repentance than at the obedience of Christ—

**"Could your tears forever flow,
Could your zeal no respite know—
All for sin could not atone,
Christ must save and Christ alone."**

"No, says another, "but I feel that I do not value the blood of Christ as I ought and therefore I am afraid to believe." My Friend, that is another insidious form of the same error. God does not say, "When I see your *estimate* of the blood of Christ, I will pass over you. No, but when I see the *blood*." It is not *your estimate* of that blood, it is *the blood* that saves you. As I said before, that magnificent, solitary blood, must be alone. "No," says another, "but if I had more faith then I should have hope." That, too, is a very deadly shape of the same evil. You are not to be saved by the efficacy of your *faith*, but by the efficacy of the blood of Christ. It is not your *believing*, it is Christ's dying. I bid you believe, but I bid you not to look to your believing as *salvation*. No man will go to Heaven if he trusts to his own faith. You may as well trust to your own good works as trust to your faith. Your faith must deal with Christ not with itself.

The world hangs on nothing—but faith cannot hang upon itself—it must hang on Christ. Sometimes, when my faith is vigorous, I catch myself doing this. There is joy flowing into my heart and after awhile I begin to find that my joy suddenly departs. I ask the causes and I find that the joy came because I was thinking of Christ. But when I begin to think about my joy, then my joy fled. You must not think of your faith but of

Christ. Faith comes from meditation upon Christ. Turn, then, your eye, not upon faith but upon Jesus. It is not *your hold* of Christ that saves you, it is *His hold* of you. It is not the efficacy of your believing in Him. It is the efficacy of His blood applied to you through the Spirit.

I do not know how sufficiently to follow Satan in all his windings into the human heart but this. I know he is always trying to keep back this great Truth of God—the blood, and the blood alone, has power to save. “Oh,” says another, “if I had such-and-such an experience then I could trust.” Friend, it is not your *experience*, it is the BLOOD. God did not say, “When I see your experience,” but, “When I see the blood of Christ.” “No,” says one, “but if I had such-and-such graces, I could hope.” No, but He did not say, “When I see your graces,” but, “When I see the blood.” Get grace, get as much as you can of faith and love and hope, but oh, do not put them where Christ’s blood ought to be. The only pillar of your hope must be the Cross and anything else that you put to buttress up the Cross of Christ is obnoxious to God and ceases to have any virtue in it, because it is an anti-Christ. The blood of Christ, then, ALONE, saves. But anything with it and it does not save.

3. Yet again we may say of the blood of Christ, it is all-sufficient. There is no case which the blood of Christ cannot meet. There is no sin which it cannot wash away. There is no multiplicity of sin which it cannot cleanse, no aggravation of guilt which it cannot remove. You may be double-dyed like scarlet. You may have lain in the lye of your sins these seventy years, but the blood of Christ can take out the stain. You may have blasphemed Him almost as many times as you have breathed, you may have rejected Him as often as you have heard His name. You may have broken His Sabbath, you may have denied His existence, you may have doubted His Godhead, you may have persecuted His servants, you may have trampled on His blood, but all this the blood can wash away. You may have committed whoredom without number—no, murder itself may have defiled your hands—but this fountain filled with blood can wash all the stains away.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleans us from all sin. There is no sort of a man, there is no abortion of mankind, no demon in human shape that this blood cannot wash. Hell may have sought to make a paragon of iniquity, it may have strived to put sin and sin and sin together, till it has made a monster in the shape of man, a monster abhorred of mankind—but the blood of Christ can transform that monster. Magdalene’s seven devils it can cast out. It can ease the deep-seated leprosy, it can cure the wound of the maimed, yes, the lost limb it can restore. There is no spiritual disease which the great Physician cannot heal. This is the great panacea, the medicine for all diseases. No case can exceed its virtue, be it ever so black or vile. All-sufficient, all-sufficient blood.

4. But go further. The blood of Christ saves surely. Many people say, “Well, I hope I shall be saved through the blood of Christ.” And perhaps, says one here, who is believing in Christ, “Well, I hope it will save.” My dear Friend, that is a slur upon the honor of God. If any man gives you a promise and you say, “Well, I hope he will fulfill it”—is it not implied that you have at least some small doubt as to whether he will or not? Now, I do not *hope* that the blood of Christ will wash away my sin. I *know* it is washed away by His blood and that is true faith which does not hope about Christ’s blood, but says, “I know it is so. That blood does cleanse. The moment it was applied to my conscience it did cleanse and it does cleanse still.”

The Israelite, if he were true to his faith, did not go inside and say, “I hope the destroying angel will pass by me.” But he said, “I know he will. I know God cannot smite me. I know He will not. There is the mark of blood there, I am secure beyond a doubt, there is not the shadow of a risk of my perishing. I am, I must be saved.” And so I preach a sure Gospel this morning—“Whosoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish but have everlasting life.” “I give unto My sheep eternal life,” said He, “and they shall not perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” O, Sinner, I have not the shadow of a doubt as to whether Christ will save you if you trust in His blood. O no, I know He will. I am certain His blood can save. And I beg you, in Christ’s name, believe the same. Believe that that blood is sure to cleanse, not only that it *may* cleanse, but that it *must* cleanse, “whereby we *must* be saved,” says the Scripture. If we have that blood upon us we must be saved, or else we are to suppose a God unfaithful and a God unkind. In fact, a God transformed from everything that is God-like into everything that is base.

5. And yet again—he that has this blood sprinkled upon him is saved completely. Not the hair of the head of an Israelite was disturbed by the destroying angel. They were completely saved—so he that believes in the blood is saved from all things. I like the old translation of the chapter in the Romans. There was a martyr once summoned before Bonner. And after he had expressed his faith in Christ, Bonner said, “You are a heretic and will be damned.” “No” said he, quoting the old version, “There is therefore now no damnation to them that believe in Christ Jesus.” And that brings a sweet thought before us. There is no damnation to the man who has the blood of Christ upon him—he cannot be condemned of God. It is impossible. There is no such a thing, there can be no such thing. There is no damnation. He cannot be damned. For there is no damnation to him that is in Christ Jesus. Let the blood be applied to the lintel and to the doorpost—there is no destruction.

There is a destroying angel for Egypt, but there is none for Israel. There is a Hell for the wicked, but none for the righteous. And if there is none, they cannot be put there. If there is no damnation they cannot suffer it.

Christ saves completely—every sin is washed, every blessing ensured—perfection is provided and glory everlasting is the sure result. I think then, I have dwelt sufficiently long upon the efficacy of His blood. But no tongue of seraph can ever speak its worth. I must go home to my chamber and weep because I am powerless to tell this story and yet I have labored to tell it simply, so that all can understand. And I pray, therefore, that God the Spirit may lead some of you to put your trust simply, wholly and entirely, on the blood of Jesus Christ.

III. This brings us to the third point, upon which I must be very brief and the third point is—THE ONE CONDITION. “What?” says one, “Do you preach a conditional salvation?” Yes I do, there is the one condition—“Where I see the blood I will pass over you.” What a blessed condition! God does not say, when *you* see the blood but when *I* see it. Your eye of faith may be so dim that you cannot see the blood of Christ. Yes, but God’s eyes are not dim—He can see it—yes, He must see it. For Christ in Heaven is always presenting His blood before His Father’s face. The Israelite could not see the blood—he was inside the house. He could not see what was on the lintel and the doorpost—but God could see it. And this is the only condition of the sinner’s salvation—God’s seeing the blood. Not your seeing it.

O how safe, then, is everyone that trusts in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not his faith that is the condition of his assurance. It is the simple fact that Calvary is set perpetually before the eyes of God in a risen and ascended Savior. “When *I* see the blood, *I* will pass over you.” Fall on your knees, then, in prayer, you doubting souls and let this be your plea—“Lord, have mercy upon me for the blood’s sake. I cannot see it as I could desire, but Lord, You see it and You have said, ‘When I see it, I will pass over you.’ Lord, you see it this day, pass over my sin and forgive me for its dear sake alone.”

IV. And now, lastly, WHAT IS THE LESSON? The lesson of the text is this to the Christian. Christian, take care that you do always remember that nothing but the blood of Christ can save you. I preach to myself today what I preach to you. I often find myself like this—I have been praying that the Holy Spirit might rest in my heart and cleanse out an evil passion and presently I find myself full of doubts and fears and when I ask the reason, I find it is this—I have been looking to the Spirit’s work until I put the Spirit’s work where Christ’s work ought to be. Now, it is a sin to put your own works where Christ’s should be, but it is just as much a sin to put the Holy Spirit’s work there. You must never make the Spirit of God an anti-Christ and you virtually do that when you put the Spirit’s work as the groundwork of your faith.

Do you not often hear Christian men say, “I cannot believe in Christ today as I could yesterday, for yesterday I felt such sweet and blessed enjoyments.” Now, what is that but putting your frames and feelings where

Christ ought to be? Remember, Christ's blood is able to save you in a good frame or in a bad frame. Christ's blood must be your trust, as much when you are full of joy as when you are full of doubt. And here it is that your happiness will be in danger, by beginning to put your good frames and good feelings in the place of the blood of Christ. O, Brethren, if we could always live with a single eye fixed on the Cross, we should always be happy. But when we get a little peace and a little joy, we begin to prize the joy and peace so much, that we forget the source from where they come. As Mr. Brooks says, "A husband that loves his wife will, perhaps, often give her jewels and rings—but suppose she should sit down and begin to think of her jewels and rings so much that she should forget her husband? It would be a kind husband's business to take them away from her so that she might fix her affections entirely on him."

And it is so with us. Jesus gives us jewels of faith and love and we get trusting to *them* and He takes them away in order that we may come again as guilty, helpless sinners and put our trust in Christ. To quote a verse I often repeat—I believe the spirit of a Christian should be, from his first hour to his last, the spirit of these two lines—

***"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Your Cross I cling."***

That is the lesson to the saint.

But another minute, there is a lesson here to the sinner. Poor, trembling, guilty self-condemned Sinner, I have a word from the Lord for you. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleans us," that is, you and me, "cleans us from all sin." That "us" includes you, if now you are feeling your need of a Savior. Now that blood is able to save you and you are bid simply to trust that blood and you shall be saved. But I hear you say, "Sir," you said, "If I *feel* my need. Now I feel that I do not feel, I only *wish* I did feel my need enough." Well do not bring your feelings then, but trust only in the blood. If you can rely simply on the blood of Christ, whatever your feelings may be, or may not be, that blood is able to save.

But you are saying, "How am I to be saved? What must I do?" Well there is *nothing* that *you* can do. You must leave off doing altogether, in order to be saved. There must be a denial of all your doings. You must get Christ first and then you may do as much as you like. But you must not trust in your doings. Your business is now to lift up your heart in prayer like this—"Lord, You have shown me something of myself, show me something of my Savior." See the Savior hanging on the Cross, turn your eye to Him and say, "Lord, I trust You, I have nothing else to trust to, but I rely on You. Sink or swim, my Savior, I trust You."

And as surely, Sinner, as you can put your trust in Christ, you are as safe as an Apostle or Prophet. Not death nor Hell can slay that man whose firm reliance is at the foot of the Cross. "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.” He that believes shall be saved, be his sins ever so many. He that believes not shall be damned, be his sins ever so few and be his virtues ever so many. Trust in Jesus NOW! Sinner, trust in Jesus ONLY.

**“Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.
But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away—
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.”**

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

THE BLOOD OF SPRINKLING AND THE CHILDREN NO. 1988

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 23, 1887,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning. For the Lord 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 suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And you shall observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever. And it shall come to pass, when you come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as He has promised, that you shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses.”
Exodus 12:21-27.

I WANTED, dear Friends, *earnestly* wanted, to continue the subject of last Lord's-Day morning, for I felt it important that we should bear again and again our witness to the doctrine of the vicarious Sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord. But, at the same time, I promised that I would endeavor to keep “the feast of the children” and have a sermon which should be specially addressed to Sunday school teachers. I could not preach a school sermon at the appointed time, so as to open your children's week, but thought a discourse might come in, none the less suitably, if I brought up the rear by closing your meetings. How am I to fulfill both my purposes? I think the subject before us will enable me to do so. We shall preach of the sprinkled blood and of Jesus, the great Sacrifice for sin—and then we shall press upon all who know the value of the great Redemption that they teach the young in their earliest days what is meant by the death of Jesus and salvation through His blood.

The Paschal lamb was a special type of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are not left to gather this from the general fact that all the ancient sacrifices were shadows of the one true and real Substance—we are assured in the New Testament that “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor 5:7). As the Paschal lamb must be without blemish, so was our Lord, and its killing and roasting with fire were typical of His death and sufferings.

Even as to time our Lord fulfilled the type, for the time of His Crucifixion was the Passover. As the impression answers to the seal, so does the Sacrifice of our Lord correspond with all the items of the ceremonial Passover. We see Him “drawn out” from among men and led as a lamb to the slaughter. We see His blood shed and sprinkled. We see Him roasted in the fire of anguish. By faith we eat of Him and flavor the feast with the bitter herbs of penitence. We see Jesus and salvation where the carnal eye sees only a slaughtered lamb and a people saved from death.

The Spirit of God in the ceremonial Passover lays special emphasis upon *the sprinkling of the blood*. That which men so greatly oppose, He as diligently sets forth as the head and front of Revelation. The blood of the chosen lamb was caught in a basin and not spilled upon the ground in wastefulness, for the blood of Christ is most precious. Into this bowl of blood a bunch of hyssop was dipped. The sprays of that little shrub would hold the crimson drops, so that they could be easily sprinkled. Then the father of the family went outside and struck with this hyssop the lintel and the two side posts of the door—and so the house was marked with three crimson streaks. No blood was put upon the threshold. Woe unto the man that tramples upon the blood of Christ and treats it as an unholy thing! Alas, I fear that many are doing so at this hour, not only among the outside world, but among those who profess and call themselves Christians.

I shall endeavor to bring forward two things. First, *the importance attached to the sprinkled blood* and, secondly, *the institution connected with it*, namely, that the children should be instructed in the meaning of sacrifice, so that they also may teach their children and keep afire the memory of the Lord’s great deliverance.

I. First—THE IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO THE BLOOD OF SACRIFICE is here made very plain. Pains are taken to make the sacrifice observable, yes, to force it upon the notice of all the people!

I note, first, that *it became and remained the national mark*. If you had traversed the streets of Memphis or Rameses on the night of the Passover, you could have told who were Israelites and who were Egyptians by one conspicuous token. There was no need to listen under the window to hear the speech of the people within the house, nor to wait till any came into the street so that you could observe their attire. This one thing, alone, would be a sufficient guide—the Israelite had the blood mark upon his doorway—the Egyptian had it not. Mark you, this is still the great point of difference between the children of God and the children of the Wicked One. There are, in truth, but two denominations upon this earth—the Church and the world—those who are justified in Christ Jesus and those who are condemned in their sins. This shall stand for a never-failing sign of the “Israelite, indeed.” He has come to the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than that of Abel. He that believes in the Son of God as the one accepted Sacrifice for sin, has salvation and he that believes not in Him will die in his sins.

The true Israel are trusting in the Sacrifice once offered for sin—it is their rest, their comfort, their hope. As for those who are not trusting in the atoning Sacrifice, they have rejected the counsel of God against them—

selves, and thus have declared their true character and condition. Jesus said, "You believe not because you are not of My sheep, as I said unto you"—and lack of faith in that shedding of blood, without which there is no remission of sin—is the damning mark of one who is a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel. Let us make no question about it—"Whoever goes onward and abides not in the teaching of Christ, has not God." (See 2 John 9 in the Revised Version). He that will not accept the Propitiation which God has set forth must bear his own iniquity! Nothing more just and yet nothing more terrible can happen to such a man than that his iniquity should not be purged by sacrifice nor offering forever. I care not what your supposed righteousness may be, nor how you think to commend yourselves to God—if you reject His Son, He will reject you! If you come before God without the atoning blood, you have neither part nor lot in the matter of the Covenant inheritance and you are not numbered among the people of God! The Sacrifice is the national mark of the spiritual Israel and he that has it not is an alien—he shall have no inheritance among them that are sanctified—neither shall he behold the Lord in Glory.

Secondly, as this was the national mark, *it was also the saving token*. That night the Angel of Death spread His wings on the blast and as He flew down the streets of Egypt He smote high and low, the first-born of princes and the first-born of beasts, so that in every house and in every stall there was one dead. Where He saw the blood-mark He entered not to smite, but everywhere else the vengeance of the Lord fell on the rebellious. The words are very remarkable—"The Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." What holds back the sword? Nothing but the bloodstain on the door! The lamb has been slain and they have sprinkled their houses with the blood and, therefore, they are secure. The sons of Jacob were not richer, nor wiser, nor stronger, nor more skilled than the sons of Ham—but they were redeemed by the blood and, therefore, they lived, while those who knew not the redeeming token died. When Jericho fell down, the one house that stood was that which had the scarlet line in the window—and when the Lord visits for sin—the man that shall escape is he who knows Jesus, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of His Grace."

I call your very special attention, however, to the words that are used in the 23rd verse—"The Lord 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." What an instructive expression! "When *He* sees the blood." It is a very comforting thing for you and for me to behold the Atonement, for thus we gain peace and enter into rest. But, after all, the grand reason of our salvation is that the Lord Himself looks upon the Atonement and is well pleased for His righteousness' sake. In the 13th verse we hear the Lord, Himself, say—"When I see the blood I will pass over you." Think of the holy eyes of God being turned to Him that takes away the sin of the world—and so fixed on Him that He passes over us! He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, but He looks upon the face of His

Anointed and forgives the sin. He accepts us with our Sacrifice. Well does our hymn-writer pray—

**“Him and then the sinner see;
Look through Jesus’ wounds on me.”**

It is not *our* sight of the sprinkled blood which is the basis of salvation, but *God’s* sight of it! God’s acceptance of Christ is the sure guarantee of the salvation of those who accept His Sacrifice. Beloved, when your eyes of faith are dim; when your eyeballs swim in a flood of tears; when the darkness of sorrow hides much from your vision, then Jehovah sees the blood of His Son and spares you! In the thick darkness, when you cannot see at all, the Lord God never fails to see in Jesus that with which He is well pleased and with which His Law is honored. He will not suffer the destroyer to come near you to harm you, because He sees in Christ that which vindicates His justice and establishes the necessary rule of Law. The blood is the saving mark! At this moment this is the pressing question for each one in the company gathered in this house—Do you trust the Divine Propitiation or do you not? Bring to me what you will to prove your own personal excellence. I believe in no virtue which insults the Savior’s blood which alone cleanses us from all sin! Rather, confess your multiplied transgressions and shortcomings—and then take heart and hope—for there is forgiveness large and free for the very chief of sinners through Him who has made peace by the blood of His Cross!

O my Hearer, guilty and self-condemned, if you will now come and trust in Jesus Christ, your sins, which are many, shall be all forgiven you and you shall love so much in return that the whole bent and bias of your mind shall be turned from sin to gracious obedience! The Atonement applied to the conscience saves from despair and then, acting upon the heart, it saves from the love of evil. But the Atonement is the saving sign! The blood on the lintel and on the two side posts secured the house of the poorest Israelite. But the proudest Egyptian, yes, even Pharaoh on the throne, could not escape the destroyer’s sword. Believe and live! Reject the Atonement and perish!

Note, next, that *the mark of the blood was rendered as conspicuous as possible*. The Israelites, though they ate the Paschal lamb in the quiet of their own families, yet made no secret of the sacrifice. They did not make the distinctive mark upon the wall of some inner chamber, or in some place where they could cover it with hangings, that no man might perceive it. No, they smote the upper part of the doorway and the two side posts of the door so that all who passed by the house must see that it was marked in a peculiar manner—and marked with *blood*! The Lord’s people were not ashamed to have the blood thus put in the forefront of every dwelling—and those that are saved by the great Sacrifice are not to treat the doctrine of Substitution as a hole-and-corner creed, to be secretly held, but not openly avowed. The death of Jesus in our place is not a redemption of which we are ashamed to speak in *any* place! Call it old-fashioned and out of date—our critics may—but we are not ashamed to publish it to the four winds of Heaven and to avow our confidence in it! He that is ashamed of Christ in this generation, of him will Christ be ashamed when He comes in the Glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him!

There is a theology abroad in the world which admits the death of Christ to a certain indefinable place in its system, but that place is very much in the rear. I claim for the Atonement the front and the center—the Lamb must be in the midst of the throne! Atonement is not a mystery to be scarcely spoken of, or if spoken of at all, to be whispered. No, no, it is a sublime simplicity, a fact for a child to know, a truth for the common people to rejoice in! We must preach Christ Crucified whatever else we do not preach! Brothers and Sisters, I do not think you ought to hear a minister preach three sermons without learning the doctrine of Atonement! I give wide latitude when I say this, for I would desire never to preach at all without setting forth salvation by faith in the blood of Jesus! Across my pulpit and my tabernacle shall be the mark of the blood—it will disgust the enemy—but it will delight the faithful! Substitution seems to me to be the soul of the Gospel, the life of the Gospel, the essence of the Gospel! Therefore must it be always in the front.

Jesus, as the Lamb of God, is the Alpha, and we must keep Him first and before all others. I charge you, Christian people, do not make this a secondary doctrine! Keep your perspective right and have this always in the foreground. Other Truths of God are valuable and may most worthily be placed in the distance, but this is always to be in the foreground. The center of Christianity is the Cross and the meaning of the Cross is *Substitution*—

***“We may not know, we cannot tell,
What pains our Jesus bore,
But we believe it was for us
He hung and suffered there.”***

The great Sacrifice is the place of gathering for the chosen seed—we meet at the Cross, even as every family in Israel met around the table whereon was placed the lamb—and met within a house which was marked with blood. Instead of looking upon the vicarious Sacrifice as placed somewhere in the remote distance, we find in it the center of the Church. No, more—it is the vital, all-essential center, that to remove it is to tear out the heart of the Church! A congregation which has rejected the Sacrifice of Christ is not a church, but an assembly of unbelievers! Of the Church I may truly say, “The blood is the life thereof.” Like the doctrine of Justification by Faith, the doctrine of a vicarious Sacrifice is the article of standing or falling to each Church—Atonement by the substitutionary Sacrifice of Christ means spiritual life—and the rejection of it is the reverse. Therefore we must never be ashamed of this all-important Truth of God, but make it as conspicuous as possible. “For the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

Further, the sprinkled blood was not only most conspicuous, but *it was made very dear to the people, themselves, by the fact that they trusted in it in the most implicit manner.* After the doorposts had been smeared, the people went inside their houses and shut the door, never to open it again till the morning. They were busy inside—there was the roasting of the lamb, the preparing of the bitter herbs, the girding of their loins, the getting ready for their march and so forth—but this was done without fear of danger, though they knew that the destroyer was abroad. The command

of the Lord was, "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." What is going on in the street? You must not go to see. The midnight hour has come. Did you not hear it? Hark, that dreadful cry! Again a piercing shriek! What is it? The anxious mother asks, "What can it be?" "There was a great cry in Egypt." The Israelites must not heed that cry so as to break the Divine Word which shut them in for a little moment till the tempest was passed.

Perhaps persons of doubtful mind, during that dread night, may have said, "Something awful is happening. Hear those cries! Listen to the tramping of the people in the streets, as they hurry to and fro! It may be there is a conspiracy to slay us in the dead of night." "None of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning" was sufficient for all who truly believed! They were safe and they knew it, and so, like the chicks beneath the wings of the hen, they rested in safety. Beloved, let us do the same! Let us honor the precious blood of Christ not only by speaking of it boldly to others, but by a calm and happy trust in it for ourselves. In full assurance let us rest. Do you believe that Jesus died for you? Then be at peace! Let no man's heart fail him, now that he knows that Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Let the Cross be the pillar of our confidence, unmoved and immovable. Do not be agitated about what has been or what is to be—we are housed in safety in Christ Jesus both from the sins of the past and the dangers of the future! All is well, since love's atoning work is done! In holy peacefulness let us proceed with our household work, purging out the old leaven and keeping the feast. And let no fear or doubt disturb us for an instant.

We pity those who die without Christ, but we cannot quit our Lord under the pretence of saving them—that would be folly. I know there are terrible cries outside in the streets—who has not heard them? Oh, that the people would but shelter beneath the blood-mark! It pierces our heart to think of the doom of the ungodly when they perish in their sins. But, as Noah did not quit the ark, nor Israel leave her abode, so our hope is not larger than the Cross will warrant. All who shelter beneath the blood of the Atonement are secure! But as for those who reject this great salvation, how shall they escape? There are great and sad mysteries in this long night, but in the morning we shall know as much of God's dealings with men as it will be good for us to know. Meanwhile, let us labor to bring our fellows within the pale of safety, but yet let us be, ourselves, peaceful, composed, restful and joyful. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement."

Possess your souls in patience. Oh, rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him! Feed upon the Lamb, for His flesh is meat, indeed. That same Jesus who has preserved your life from destruction will be the sustenance of that life evermore. Be happy beneath the saving blood-mark! Make a feast of your Passover. Though there is death outside, let your joy within be undisturbed.

I cannot stay long on any one point and, therefore, notice, next, that *the Paschal blood shedding was to be had in perpetual remembrance*. “You shall observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever.” As long as Israel remained a people, they were to keep the Passover—as long as there is a Christian upon earth, the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus must be kept in memory! No progress of years or advance of thought could take away the memory of the Paschal sacrifice from Israel. Truly it was a night to be remembered when the Lord brought out His people from under the iron yoke of Egypt. It was such a wonderful deliverance, as to the plagues which preceded it and the miracle at the Red Sea which followed it, that no event could possibly excel it in interest and glory! It was such a triumph of God’s power over the pride of Pharaoh and such a manifestation of God’s love to His own people, that they were not merely to be glad for one night, nor for one year, nor even for a century—they were to remember it forever!

Might there not come a time when Israel would have achieved further history? Might not some grander event eclipse the glory of Egypt’s overthrow? Never! The death of Egypt’s first-born and the song of Moses at the Red Sea must remain forever woven into the tapestry of Hebrew history. Evermore did Jehovah say, “I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” Beloved, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ is to be declared and showed by us until He comes. No Truth of God can ever be discovered which can put His sacrificial death into the shade. Whatever shall occur, even though He comes in the clouds of Heaven, yet our song shall be forever, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

Amid the splendor of His endless reign He shall be “the Lamb in the midst of the Throne.” Christ, as the Sacrifice for sin, shall always be the subject of our hallelujahs—“For You were slain.” Certain vainglorious minds are advancing—advancing from the Rock to the abyss! They are making progress from truth to lies. They are thinking, but their thoughts are not God’s thoughts, neither are their ways His ways. They are leaving the Gospel! They are going away from Christ and they know not where. In denying the substitutionary Sacrifice, they are denying the only hope of man! As for us, we hear the Lord saying to us, “You shall observe this thing for an ordinance to you and to your sons forever”—and so we will! “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever,” is our boast and Glory! Let others wander where they will, we abide with Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

Notice next, dear Friends, that when the people came into the land where no Egyptian ever entered, they were still to remember the Passover. “It shall come to pass, when you have come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as He has promised, that you shall keep this service.” In the land that flowed with milk and honey there was still to be the memorial of the sprinkled blood! Our Lord Jesus is not for the first day of our repentance, only, but for *all* the days of our lives—we remember Him as well at our highest spiritual joys as in our deepest spiritual griefs. The Paschal lamb is for Canaan, as well as for Egypt, and the Sacrifice for sin is for our full assurance as well as for our trembling hope. You and I will

never attain to such a state of Grace that we can do without the blood which cleanses from sin! If we should ever reach perfection, then would Christ be even more precious than He is today, or, if we did not find Him so, we might be sure that our pretended attainment was a wretched delusion! If we walk in the Light as God is in the Light, and have constant fellowship with Him, yet still the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin!

Moreover, Brothers and Sisters, I want you to notice carefully that *this sprinkling of the blood was to be an all-pervading memory*. Catch this thought—the children of Israel could not go out of their houses—and they could not come in, without the remembrance of the sprinkled blood. It was over their heads—they must come *under* it. It was on the right hand and on the left—they must be surrounded by it. They might almost say of it, “Where shall we go from Your Presence?” Whether they looked on their own doors, or on those of their neighbors, there was the same threefold streak, and it was there both by day and by night. Nor was this all. When two of Israel married and the foundation of a family was laid, there was another memorial. The young husband and wife had the joy of looking upon their first-born child and then they called to mind that the Lord had said, “Sanctify to Me all the first-born.” As an Israelite, he explained this to his son and said, “By strength of hand, the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of beast! Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that opens the matrix, being males, but all the first-born of my children I redeem.”

The commencement of every family that made up the Israelite nation was thus a time of special remembrance of the sprinkling of the blood, for then the redemption money must be paid, and thus an acknowledgment made that they were the Lord’s, having been *bought with a price*. In many ways and everywhere present, the people were reminded of the need of sacrifice! To the thoughtful, every going down of the sun reminded them of the night to be remembered, while the beginning of each year in the month Abib brought home to them the fact that the beginning of their nation dated from the time of the killing of the lamb. The Lord took means to keep this matter before the people, for they were wayward and seemed bent upon forgetting—even like this present age.

In the 13th chapter, in verse 9, we read, “It shall be for a sign unto you upon your hand, and for a memorial between your eyes.” And again, in verse 16, we read, “And it shall be for a token upon your hand, and for frontlets between your eyes: for by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt.” By this is meant that they were, from then on, to *do* everything with regard to redemption—and they were from then on to *see* everything in connection with redemption. Redemption by blood was to consecrate each man’s hand so that he could not use it for evil, but must employ it for the Lord. He could not take his food, or his tools in his hand, without remembrance of the sprinkled blood which had made his food and his labor a blessing. All his acts were to be under the influence of atoning blood! Oh, what service you and I would render if it were always redeemed

labor that we gave! If we went to our Sunday school class, for instance, feeling, "I am bought with a price," and if we preached with redeemed lips the Gospel of our own salvation, how livingly and lovingly we would speak! What an effect this would have on our lives!

You would not dare, some of you, to do what you now do if you remembered that Jesus died for you! Many a thing which you have left undone would at once be minded if you had a clearer consciousness of redeeming love. The Jews became superstitious and were content with the *letter* of their law—and so they wrote out certain verses upon little strips of parchment called "tephillin," which they enclosed in a box—and then strapped upon their wrists. The true meaning of the passage did not lie in any such childish action—it taught them that they were to labor and to act with holy hands, as men under overwhelming obligations to the Lord's redeeming Grace. Redemption is to be our impulse for holy service, our check when we are tempted to sin. They were also to wear the memory of the Passover as frontlets between their eyes, and you know how certain Jews actually wore phylacteries upon their foreheads! That could be no more than the mere shell of the thing! The essence of the command was that they were to look on everything in reference to *redemption by blood!*

Brothers and Sisters, we should view everything in this world by the light of redemption—and then we shall view it aright. It makes a wonderful change whether you view Providence from the standpoint of human merit or from the foot of the Cross. We see nothing truly till Jesus is our light! Everything is seen in its reality when you look through the glass, the ruby glass of the atoning Sacrifice. Use this telescope of the Cross and you shall see far and clear. Look at sinners through the Cross! Look at saints through the Cross! Look at sin through the Cross! Look at the world's joys and sorrows through the Cross! Look at Heaven and Hell through the Cross! See how conspicuous the blood of the Passover was meant to be and then learn from all this to make much of the Sacrifice of Jesus, yes, to make *everything* of it, for Christ is All.

One thing more—we read in Deuteronomy, in the 6th chapter, and the 8th verse, concerning the Commandments of the Lord, as follows—"And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the posts of your house, and on your gates." See, then, that the Law of God is to be written hard by the memorials of the blood. In Switzerland, in the Protestant villages, you have seen texts of Scripture upon the doorposts. I half wish we had that custom in England. How much of Gospel might be preached to wayfarers if texts of Scripture were over Christian people's doors! It might be ridiculed as Pharisaical, but we could get over that. Few are liable to that charge in these days through being too religious. I like to see texts of Scripture in our houses, in all the rooms, on the cornices and on the walls. But outside on the door—what a capital advertisement the Gospel might get at a cheap rate! But note that when the Jew wrote upon His doorposts a promise, or a precept, or a doctrine, he had to write upon a surface stained with blood! And when the next year's Passover came round he had to sprinkle the blood with the hyssop right over the writing.

It seems to me so delightful to think of the Law of God in connection with that atoning Sacrifice which has magnified it and made it honorable. God's commands come to me as a redeemed man. His promises are to me as a blood-bought man. His teaching instructs me as one for whom Atonement has been made. The Law in the hand of Christ is not a sword to slay us, but a jewel to enrich us! All the Truths of God taken in connection with the Cross are greatly enhanced in value! Holy Scripture, itself, becomes dearer to a sevenfold degree when we see that it comes to us as the redeemed of the Lord—and bears upon its every page marks of those dear hands which were nailed to the tree for us.

Beloved, you now see how everything was done that could well be thought of to bring the blood of the Paschal lamb into a high position in the esteem of the people whom the Lord brought out of Egypt. And you and I must do everything we can think of to bring forward and keep before men forever the precious doctrine of the atoning Sacrifice of Christ! He was made sin for us though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

II. And now I will spend a short time in reminding you of THE INSTITUTION THAT WAS CONNECTED WITH THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE PASSOVER. "It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that you shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover."

Inquiry should be excited in the minds of our children. Oh, that we could get them to ask questions about the things of God! Some of them enquire very early, but others of them seem diseased with much the same indifference as older folks. With both orders of mind we have to deal. It is well to explain to children the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for this shows forth the death of Christ in symbol. I regret that children do not more often see this ordinance. Baptism and the Lord's Supper should both be placed in view of the rising generation, that they may then ask us, "What mean you by this?"

Now, the Lord's Supper is a perennial Gospel sermon and it turns mainly upon the Sacrifice for sin. You may banish the doctrine of the Atonement from the pulpit, but it will always live in the Church through the Lord's Supper. You cannot explain that broken bread and that cup filled with the fruit of the vine without reference to our Lord's atoning death! You cannot explain "the communion of the body of Christ" without bringing in, in some form or other, the death of Jesus in our place! Let your little ones, then, see the Lord's Supper, and let them be told most clearly what it sets forth. And if not the Lord's Supper—for that is not the thing, itself, but only the *shadow* of the glorious fact—dwell much and often in their presence upon the sufferings and death of our Redeemer. Let them think of Gethsemane, Gabbatha and Golgotha—and let them learn to sing in plaintive tones of Him who laid down His life for us. Tell them who it was that suffered, and why. Yes, though the hymn is hardly to my taste in some of its expressions, I would have the children sing—

***"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall."***

And I would have them learn such lines as these—

"He knew how wicked we had been,

***And knew that God must punish sin—
So out of pity Jesus said,
He'd bear the punishment instead.”***

And when attention is excited upon the best of themes, let us be ready to explain the great transaction by which God is just and yet sinners are justified. Children can well understand the doctrine of the expiatory Sacrifice—it was meant to be a Gospel for the youngest. The Gospel of Substitution is a simplicity, though it is a mystery. We ought not to be content until our little ones know and trust in their finished Sacrifice. This is essential knowledge and the key to all other spiritual teaching. May our dear children know the Cross and they will have begun well. With all their getting may they get an understanding of this and they will have the foundation rightly laid.

This will necessitate your teaching the child his need of a Savior. You must not hold back from this necessary task. Do not flatter the child with delusive rubbish about his nature being good and needing to be developed. Tell him he must be born again! Don't bolster him up with the fancy of his own innocence, but show him his sin! Mention the childish sins to which he is prone and pray the Holy Spirit to work conviction in his heart and conscience. Deal with the young in much the same way as you would with the old. Be thorough and honest with them. Flimsy religion is neither good for young nor old. These boys and girls need pardon through the precious blood as surely as any of us. Do not hesitate to tell the child his ruin—otherwise he will not desire the remedy. Tell him, also, of the punishment for sin and warn him of its terror. Be tender, but be true. Do not hide from the youthful sinner the Truth of God, however terrible it may be! Now that he has come to years of responsibility, if he believes not in Christ, it will go ill with him at the Last Great Day. Set before him the Judgment Seat and remind him that he will have to give an account of things done in the body. Labor to awake the conscience and pray God the Holy Spirit to work by you till the heart becomes tender and the mind perceives the need of the great salvation.

Children need to learn the doctrine of the Cross that they may find immediate salvation. I thank God that in our Sunday school we believe in the salvation of children as children! How very many has it been my joy to see of boys and girls who have come forward to confess their faith in Christ! And I again wish to say that the best converts, the clearest converts, the most intelligent converts we have ever had have been the young ones! And, instead of there being any deficiency in their knowledge of the Word of God and the Doctrines of Grace, we have usually found them to have a very delightful acquaintance with the great cardinal Truths of Christ. Many of these dear children have been able to speak of the things of God with great pleasure of heart and force of understanding. Go on, dear teachers, and believe that God will save your children! Be not content to sow principles in their minds which may possibly develop in later years, but be working for immediate conversion! Expect fruit in your children while they are children! Pray for them that they may not run into the world and fall into the evils of outward sin—and then come back with broken bones to the Good Shepherd. Pray that they may, by God's rich

Grace, be kept from the paths of the Wicked One and grow up in the fold of Christ—first as lambs of His flock—and then as sheep of His hand.

One thing I am sure of, and that is that if we teach the children the Doctrine of the Atonement in the most unmistakable terms, we shall be doing ourselves good. I sometimes hope that God will revive His Church and restore her to her ancient faith by a gracious work among children. If He would bring into our Churches a large influx of young people, how it would tend to quicken the sluggish blood of the supine and sleepy! Child Christians tend to keep the house alive. Oh, for more of them! If the Lord will but help us to teach the children, we shall be teaching *ourselves*. There is no way of learning like teaching—and you do not know a thing till you can teach it to another. You do not thoroughly know any Truth of God till you can put it before a child so that he can see it. In trying to make a little child understand the Doctrine of the Atonement you will get clearer views of it yourselves and, therefore, I commend the holy exercise to you.

What a mercy it will be if our children are thoroughly grounded in the doctrine of redemption by Christ! If they are warned against the false gospels of this evil age, and if they are taught to rest on the eternal Rock of Christ's finished work, we may hope to have a generation following us which will maintain the faith and will be better than their fathers! Your Sunday schools are admirable, but what is their purpose if you do not teach the Gospel in them? You get children together and keep them quiet for an hour-and-a-half, and then send them home—but what is the good of it? It may bring some quiet to their fathers and mothers and that is, perhaps, why they send them to the school. But all the real good lies in what is taught the children! The most fundamental Truth of God should be made most prominent—and what is this but the Cross? Some talk to children about being good boys and girls and so on. That is to say, they preach the Law to the children, though they would preach the Gospel to grown-up people!

Is this honest? Is this wise? Children need the Gospel, the whole Gospel, the unadulterated Gospel! They ought to have it and, if they are taught of the Spirit of God, they are as capable of receiving it as persons of ripe years. Teach the little ones that Jesus died, the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God! Very, very confidently do I leave this work in the hands of the teachers of this school. I never knew a nobler body of Christian men and women, for they are as earnest in their attachment to the old Gospel as they are eager for the winning of souls. Be encouraged, my Brothers and Sisters—the God who has saved so many of your children is going to save many, many more of them! And we shall have great joy in this Tabernacle as we see hundreds brought to Christ. God grant it, for His name's sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Exodus 12:21-36; 13:1-10; 14-16.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—414, 370, 281.**

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A QUESTION FOR COMMUNICANTS NO. 2268

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY AUGUST 7, 1892.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 1, 1890.**

*What do you mean by this service?"
Exodus 12:26.*

IN a spiritual religion everything must be understood. That which is not spiritual, but ritualistic, contents itself with the outward form. Under the Jewish dispensation there was a very strong tendency in that direction, but it was kept in check to some extent. Under the Christian faith this tendency must not be tolerated at all. We must know the meaning of what we do, otherwise we are not profited. We do not believe in the faith of the man who was asked what he believed and replied that he believed what the church believed. "But what does the church believe?" "The church believes what I believe." "Well, but what do you and the church believe?" "We both believe the same thing." He would not explain himself any further. We look upon such expressions as the talk of ignorance and not the language of *faith*. Faith knows what she believes and can give a reason for the hope that is in her meekness and fear.

Concerning the Passover, the young people among the Jews were encouraged to ask their parents this question, "What do you mean by this service?" Children should be encouraged to ask such gracious questions now. I am afraid they are not prompted to do so as they used to be in Puritan times. After the sermon always came the catechizing of the children when they were at home—and every father was bound to be attentive to the sermon—because he had to ask the boys and girls in the evening what they had heard. The children were more attentive, then, than now, because they had to be prepared to answer any questions of their parents. Cultivate in your children a desire to understand everything connected with our holy faith!

In this chapter, from which I culled my text, the parents are taught how to answer their children. If the parent is ignorant, a question from his child is inconvenient. He finds his ignorance exposed and he, perhaps, is vexed with the child who has been the innocent means of unveiling him to himself. Be ready to tell your children what the ordinances of the Gospel mean. Explain Baptism to them, explain the Lord's Supper to them and above all, explain the Gospel—and let them know, as far as words can make it plain, what is that great mystery whereby we are saved, whereby sin is forgiven, and we are made the children of God.

I thought it would be profitable, if God gave me strength for the exercise, very briefly to answer the question supposed to be put by an intelligent youth, "What do you mean by this service?"—this service that is called, by some people, "Holy Communion." Which is sometimes called the "Eucharist." And among us is called, "the Lord's Supper," or, "the breaking of bread." What does it mean?

It means many things, but chiefly five, of which I will now speak.

I. This supper is, first of all, A MEMORIAL.

If you want to keep something in mind from generation to generation, you may attempt it in many ways. You may erect a bronze column, or you may engrave a record of it upon brass in the church. Eventually the column will get sold for old bronze and somebody will steal the brass plates from the church—and the memorial will disappear. You may write it upon marble if you please, but in our climate, at any rate, the inscription is very apt to be obliterated and the old stones, though they last long, may, after a time, be as dumb as the treasures of Nineveh and Egypt were for centuries. These monuments did preserve the records, but they were hidden under the sand, or buried beneath the ruins of cities. And though they now have a tongue and are speaking forcibly, yet whatever had been entrusted to them would have been forgotten while they were lying under the sand of the desert, or in the debris of the palaces of Koyunjik. There are other ways of preserving memorials, such as writing in books, but books can be lost. Many valuable works of the ancients have entirely ceased and no copies of them can be found. Some of the books mentioned in the Old Testament which were not *inspired* books, but still were books which we should greatly value, have quite passed out of existence.

It is found that upon the whole, one of the best ways of remembering a fact is to have some ceremony connected with it which shall be frequently performed so as to keep the fact in memory. I suppose that Absalom will never be forgotten. He built himself a pillar in the king's dale—he knew his own infamous history and he thought it might be forgotten. No one would care to remember it, so he built himself a monument. And there it stands—or what is reputed to be that monument, to this day—and every Arab who passes by the spot throws a stone at it. Absalom will better be remembered by the ceremony of throwing stones at his tomb than by any record in marble!

To turn your thoughts to something infinitely higher, I cannot conceive of a surer and better method of keeping the death of Christ in mind than of meeting together, as we shall do tonight, for the breaking of bread and the pouring out of the juice of the vine in memory of His death. Other facts may be forgotten—this one can never be. Tonight and every first day of the week, in 10,000 places of worship, Believers meet together for the breaking of bread in remembrance of Christ's Cross and passion, His precious death and burial. Those great facts can never pass out of mind. Jesus said to His disciples, "This do in remembrance of Me." In obeying His command, you are doing what is most effectual in keeping your Lord in remembrance. As I preach, tonight, having no sort of reliance upon my own words, I want you to practice them as I go along. Then you will be like

the woman who said that when she heard a sermon about light weights and short measures, though she forgot what the preacher said, when she got home, she remembered to burn her bushel, which was short. So, if you can just *practice* the sermon as you hear it, it will be well.

Remember, then, that you come to this Table tonight to *remember an absent Friend*. Jesus has gone away. He who loved us better than any other ever loved us, has left us for a while. We sometimes take little parting gifts from friends, and they say to us—

***“When this you see
Remember me.”***

Probably, almost everybody here has, at some time or other, had certain tokens of remembrance by which they might be reminded of some dear one who is far away across the seas—out of sight—but not out of mind. You come to the Communion Table, then, to remember your absent Friend.

You come, also, chiefly to *remember His great deed of love*. This supper is a memorial of what Jesus did for you when He was on the earth. “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” He laid down His life for you—remember that tonight. “He loved me, and gave Himself for me”—dwell on that fact. Let these words wake the echoes in your hearts, “Gethsemane!” “Gabbatha!” “Golgotha!” Can you forget all that Jesus suffered there on your behalf? If you have let these things slip in any degree from your heart’s affections, come and write them down again! Come to the Table and there celebrate the memorial of His love, wounds, agonies and death for you—

***“In memory of the Savior’s love,
We keep the sacred feast,
Where every humble contrite heart
Is made a welcome guest.
By faith we take the bread of life,
With which our souls are fed.
And cup, in token of His blood
That was for sinners shed.”***

You are also called upon to *remember a dear Friend who*, although He has gone away, *has gone about your business*. It was expedient for you that He should go away. He is doing you more good where He has gone than He could have done if He stayed here. He is interceding for you tonight. Your business would miscarry were it not for Him—within the veil that hides Him from you, He is pleading for you. His power, His dignity, His merit are all freely being employed for you. He is pleading the causes of your soul. Can you, will you, forget Him? Will you not now forget everything else and indulge the sweet memory of your faithful Lover, your dear Husband who is married to you in ties of everlasting wedlock? Come, I pray you, keep the memorial of this dear Friend!

And you have to *remember a Friend who will return very soon*. He only tells you to do this till He comes. He is coming back to us. His own words are, “Behold, I come quickly!” That is not quite the meaning of what He said—it was, “Behold, *I am coming quickly!*” He is on His way! His chariot is hurrying towards us. The axles of the wheels are hot with speed. He is coming as fast as He can. The long-suffering of God delays Him till sin-

ners are brought in—till the full number of His elect shall be accomplished—but He is not delaying! He is not lingering! He is not slack, as some men count slackness. He is coming quickly. Will you not remember Him? Soon will His hand be on the door. Soon for you, at any rate, He may cry, “Arise, My love, My dove, My fair one, and come away.” And soon He may be here among us and then we shall reign with Him forever and ever.

I charge my own heart to remember my dear Lord, tonight, and I pray you, Brothers and Sisters, let not the feebleness of my reminder deprive you, now, of the happiness of thinking much of Christ your Lord! Sit still and let all other thoughts be gone—think only of Him who loved you and died for you. Let your thoughts go back to Calvary, as you sing, in mournful accents—

**“O sacred head once wounded,
With grief and pain weighed down,
How scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Your only crown!
How pale are You with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn!
How does that Visage languish,
Which once was bright as morn!”**

Oh, eyes full of tears! Oh, shoulders once beaten with the gory lash! Oh, hands once nailed to the cruel Cross! Oh, feet once fastened to the bitter tree! Soon shall we behold the Christ who loved us and died for us. Therefore let us observe this sacred feast in remembrance of Him.

II. But I must be more brief on my second point. The second meaning of the Lord’s Supper is that it is AN EXHIBITION. “As often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you show the Lord’s death till He comes.” We are helped to remember it by the type, the emblem, the metaphor which is supplied to us by this supper. How is that? Is there any likeness to the death of Christ in this supper? I answer, there is a *great* likeness.

There is *His broken body*, represented by the bread which is broken and intended for use. His dear body was broken, marred, sadly marred, given over to the hands of death, laid in the sepulcher, wrapped about with fine linen, left there, as His enemies thought, never to rise again. In that broken bread, broken that even *believing children* may eat their morsel, you see Christ’s body given up for His people’s sake. But there stands a cup. It is full of the red juice of the grape. What does it mean? He, Himself, shall explain it—“This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.” Now, *the shedding of blood* is the great token of *death*. One would not long talk of killing without speaking of shedding blood. In fact, bloodshed usually means dying by a violent death, and so did Jesus die. They pierced His hands and His feet. A soldier thrust his lance into His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. That stream of blood was the token that He really was dead. He has poured out from His veins His precious life to purchase His redeemed! The broken bread, the cluster pressed into the cup and leaving nothing but its blood-red juice—these two things symbolize Christ’s death.

But, most of all, this is an exhibition of *the two things separate*—the bread and the cup. We have heard of some mixing the bread with the wine—that is *not* the Lord's Supper! We have heard of others partaking of the wafer, as they call it, and leaving the cup—this is *not* taking the Lord's Supper! They must be both there—the bread here, the wine cup there—because the separation of the blood from the flesh is the surest token of death! “The blood is the life thereof” and if the blood is drained away, there is death. Therefore the blood is represented by the cup—and the flesh is represented by the bread. These two, *separated*, are the great token and emblem of Christ's death.

We show, display, exhibit, symbolize the death of our Lord at this Table in this fashion—we partake of both symbols—eating of the bread, drinking of the cup, *the whole ministering to the support of our life*. At this Table we say to all of you who do not know Christ—Christ's death is our life—and the *remembrance* of Christ's death is the food of our life! If any of you are spectators of the ordinance, this is the meaning of our little acted sermon—Christ has died. Christ's death is the support of our faith, the food of our souls, in token whereof we take this bread and this cup, and eat and drink. So this supper is a showing forth of Christ's death. How many here can say that Christ's *death* is their *life*? How many of you can say that you *feed* upon Him? Dear Friends, *you must not come to the Table unless you can say it*. But if you can, come and welcome! But if you cannot, oh, may the Lord teach you the lesson that is so necessary, the lesson that is so blessed, when it is once learned—that Christ on the Cross is the one hope of eternal glory!

You have thus had two meanings of the Lord's Supper. First—it is a memorial. And next—it is an exhibition.

III. The Lord's Supper is, next, A COMMUNION. We must have this brought out prominently, or we shall miss a great deal. *We are at the Lord's Table*—we eat of *His* bread, we drink out of *His* cup. This betokens friendship. When, in the East, a man has eaten of an Arab's salt, he is from that time under his protecting care. And he who has spiritually eaten of Christ's bread has come under Christ's protection—Christ will take care of Him. All feuds are ended. An eternal peace is established between the two. It was a tender parable in which Nathan spoke of a man who had a little ewe lamb which did eat of his own meat and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom. This is your privilege—to lie in Christ's bosom, to drink out of His cup and to eat of His bread! This is a very sweet fellowship! Enjoy it tonight to the fullest.

We go further than that, for we not only eat of His bread, but symbolically *we feast upon Him*. His flesh is meat, indeed, and His blood is drink, indeed! Can I really feed upon Christ? *Really*, yes! *Carnally*, no! There is no such thing as the carnal eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood—that were a horrible thing! That were to make a man a cannibal! But the *spiritual* feeding upon the Incarnate God—this is what we mean. He gives us His flesh to eat and we thus enter into a fellowship of the most intense and mysterious kind—not merely eating *with* Him, but eating *Him*—not merely receiving *from* Him, but receiving Him, *Himself*, to be the life of our

hearts! May you get to that point tonight! I believe in the real Presence of Christ, but I do *not* believe in the carnal presence of the Roman Catholic. I believe in the real presence of the Believer, but that reality is none the less real because it is *spiritual*—and only *spiritual* men can discern it!

Now, Beloved, if we really come in the right spirit to this Table, when we have eaten the bread, it becomes part of us. When the wine is sipped, the juice of the grape enters into our constitution—we cannot separate it from ourselves. Such is our fellowship with Christ. *He is one with us and we are one with Him.* “*Quis separabit?*” “Who shall separate us from the love of God?” We are one with Christ, partners with Him. All that He has is ours—all that we have is His. He gives Himself to us—we yield ourselves to Him. It is Christ and Co., only the little, “Co.,” drops its name to be swallowed up in Him who is All in All! That is the meaning of the bread and the cup. We take Christ into ourselves, as He has taken us up into His greater Self.

But communion also means that *we are one with each other*. I wish that you would catch that thought. I am afraid there are some members of the Church, here, who have never realized their union with all the rest of the members. “We, being many, are one body in Christ, and everyone, members, one of another.” One is our Master, even Christ, and all we are Brethren. There should be an intimate feeling of fellowship, a readiness to help and love one another. Rejoice with them that rejoice and weep with them that weep!

I cannot shake off from myself the idea that this makes up a large part of the meaning of the Lord’s Supper, the communion of saints with each other as well as the communion of the saints with Christ. May we enjoy it tonight! For my part, I like to feel, when I come to the Table, that I am going to have communion, not only with this Church, large as it is, not merely with the members of one denomination, (I wish there were no denominations), not merely with the company of one body of Christians—would to God, there were but one body of Christians throughout the world!—but freely inviting all who belong to any part of the visible Church! I delight to think that at this Table, tonight, I shall have fellowship with the Brothers and Sisters in the United States, of all names, and sorts, and ages, and ranks. There cannot be two churches of Christ. There is but one Church, one Head and one body. Though there are some very naughty children in the Lord’s family, they must not be kept without their supper—there is some other way of chastening them! And as long as there is true living communion between one Christian and another, where God has given the thing signified, I dare not keep back the sign. If He gives them to have fellowship with Christ, who am I that shall say, “You shall have not fellowship with Him”? I dare not say it!

The meaning of this Supper, then, is communion.

IV. But a fourth meaning of the Lord’s Supper is A COVENANTING. Our Lord said to His disciples, “This cup is the new testament, or Covenant, in My blood.” We do well to sing—

***“Your body broken for my sake,
My bread from Heaven shall be;
Your testamental cup I take,***

And thus remember Thee.

When we come to the Lord's Table, we must be careful that we there *take Christ to be our God in Covenant*. We take the one living God forever and ever. He gives Himself to us and we take Him, and we declare, "This God is our God forever and ever. He shall be our Guide even unto death." Do you understand that Covenant relationship, everyone of you? Do you know what you are doing when you take the piece of bread and eat it—and take the cup and drink of it? If you are truly a Believer in Christ, God is in Covenant with you through the body and the blood of Christ—and you recognize that blessed Truth of God—and take Him to be your God.

Now, the Covenant runs thus, "They shall be My people, and I will be their God." When, therefore, we come to this covenanting Table, we *agree that we will be the Lord's people*—therefore, not the devil's, not the world's, not our own—but the Lord's. When the Lord's people are chastened, we expect to be chastened with them. When the Lord's people are persecuted, we expect to be persecuted with them. We must take them for better or for worse, to have and to hold, and death, itself, must not part us from the Lord's people. That is the meaning of coming to this Table—recognizing that between you and God there is an agreement made that must not be broken, a Covenant ordered in all things and sure by which God becomes yours and you become His—so that you are forever to be one of those that belong wholly to Him.

Here, at the Communion Table, God, the Covenant God, *seals His love to us*. "Come here, My child," says the Lord, "I love you and I gave Myself for you, in token, whereof, put this bread into your mouth, to remind you of how I gave Myself for you. I love you so that you are Mine. I have called you by My name, in token, whereof, I remind you that I bought you with My precious blood. Therefore, let that sip of the juice of the vine go into your body to remind you that by My precious blood, which was shed for many, I have redeemed you from going down into the Pit." There are seals at that Table, new seals of the Covenant, new tokens, new love gifts from the Lord, to remind you of what He has done for you!

And you are to come here, tonight, *to testify anew your love to God*. Here you say, "My Master, let me eat with You." If any of you have lost your first love and have grown spiritually cold, the Savior stands at the door and knocks—and He says, "Open to Me"—and He also says that if we open to Him, He will come in and sup with us, and we with Him. He said that to the angel of the Church of the Laodiceans, the Church which was neither cold nor hot, which He threatened to spew out of His mouth. If you are only fit to make Christ sick, yet if you will open the door to Him, He will come and feast with you tonight—and all shall be well with you! He testifies His love to you. Come and testify yours to Him tonight. That is the meaning of this bread and this cup. Your covenant with death is broken, your agreement with Hell is annulled! And now you are in Covenant with God and He is in Covenant with you—even in an everlasting Covenant which shall never be broken!

V. Lastly, and very briefly, this supper signifies A THANKSGIVING. It is often called, by friends who love hard words, the "Eucharist." We have

some friends who always carry a gold pencil, on purpose, to put down every word that nobody understands, that they may use it next Sunday in their sermon. Such people call the Lord's Supper the "Eucharist," which signifies "the giving of thanks." This is the thanksgiving service of the Church of God. It ought to be celebrated *every* Lord's Day. Every Sabbath should be a thanksgiving Sunday, for Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week and we ought to give thanks every time we celebrate His Resurrection. Certainly we should do so when we celebrate His death! What are we going to do tonight by way of thanksgiving?

Well, we are coming to a festival, not a funeral! The choice festival of the Jewish faith was the Passover. The Lord's Supper takes its place with higher joys! We come to this feast to *testify our joy in Christ*. There is bread, but there is also wine upon the table. This is to show that it is a festival for joy and delight. And you cannot praise Christ better and give thanks to Him better than by rejoicing in Him! Praise Him by your grateful joy! I think that we should always come to the Lord's Table with a feeling of deep reverence, but that reverence should never tend to bondage. We want you not to come here quivering and shaking, as if you were slaves that came to eat a morsel of your master's bread, under fear of the lash. No, no! Come, children! Come, beloved ones of the Lord! Come, table companions of Christ, and sit at the festival He has prepared and let your joy be full of thanksgiving!

We come to the Table, next, actually to *praise the Lord for giving Christ to us*. When our Lord broke the bread, He gave thanks. So shall we tonight. Come, Beloved, to thankfully praise the Father for the gift of Christ. And as you take the bread into your mouth, say in your heart, "Bless the Lord!" And as you drink of the cup, say in your spirit, "Blessed be His holy name! Blessed be the Father for His eternal love to us! Blessed be Jesus for His love which has saved us to know all these precious things!"

One way in which we show our thanks to Christ is that *we receive with gratitude the emblems of His death*. Each one who communes with us will receive the bread and eat it, and take the cup and drink it. We do not hold it up and look at it. We do not kneel down and pay it homage—we *receive* it. We have done so now these many years. How long is it since we began this holy feast? Well, with some of us, it is over 40 years since our first communion, and we do not need any better food. We desire to keep in memory the same Christ, to feed upon the same doctrine of the Incarnation and atoning Sacrifice. And if we should be spared, Beloved, another 40 years, which is far from likely, we shall have a sweeter tooth for Christ even than we have now! He will be more dear to us, more precious, more delightful, even, than He is to-night! So we come to the Table to show our gratitude by receiving and receiving again.

Let me whisper in your ears, when this communion is over and you shall leave this Table, "Pray, Beloved, that you may *go away in the same spirit as your Lord and Master did* when, after rising from supper, He went out to the Garden, not there to have a sweet hour of lonely communion with God, but there to sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground! He went there to be *arrested*, to be hurried off to the bar of An-

nas, and Caiaphas, and Pilate, and Herod, and the rest of them. He went there, in fact to die! But He went away singing.” So I want you to go away from this communion singing praises to God!

As my dear Brother said in prayer, you must have your Gethsemanes, your Golgothas—but I want you to go away from this Table singing! Whatever comes, high or low, bright or dark, Heaven or another age in this dark wilderness, Brothers and Sisters, let us sing! We often say, “Let us pray,” but tonight, at the Table, I say, “Let us sing!” Let us sing unto the Lord because of His great gift to us, which we, tonight, remember, and set forth, and commune with, and Covenant with! Let us sing unto the Lord as long as we live, for we can never sufficiently praise Him for all that He has done for us—

**“We’ll praise our risen Lord,
While at His feet we sit!
His griefs a hallowed theme afford
For sweetest music fit.”**

Thus I have explained all about the Lord’s Supper. Do you know anything about it? Some of you are going away. You are going away! Yes, and the day shall come when you will not have anywhere to go! When the great marriage supper is spread and the feast of the gracious shall be held, and the whole universe shall be gathered, oh, where will you go? You will not be allowed to linger at the door, neither will you go home to wait till others shall return from the festival. You must be driven from God’s Presence if you come not by faith in Christ to that great feast! The fiery swords of the angel guards shall be unsheathed and they shall pursue you through the blackness of eternal darkness, down to infinite despair! The Lord have mercy upon you, tonight, that He may have mercy upon you in that day, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON
MATTHEW 26:26-30 and 1 CORINTHIANS 11:20-34.**

We will read, first, Matthew’s account of the institution of the Lord’s Supper.

Matthew 26:26. *And as they were eating.* In the middle of the Paschal Feast our Lord instituted the sacred festival which was always afterwards to be known as, “the Lord’s Supper.” The one ordinance was made to melt gradually into the other—“as they were eating.”

26. *Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take eat; this is My body.* “This represents My body.” He could not possibly have meant that the bread was His *body*, for there was His body sitting at the table, whole and entire! They would have been astonished beyond measure if they had understood Him literally! But they did not do so any more than when Christ said, “I am the door,” or, “I am the Goof Shepherd.”

27. *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink you all of it.* “Everyone of you.” Was this the Lord’s Supper? Yes. What say the Romanists about it? Why, that the people may not drink the cup! Yet our Savior said to His disciples, “Drink you all of it.”

28. *For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* Now they were to have a perpetual pledge of the pardon of sin, in the cup, which was the emblem of Christ's blood, "shed for many for the remission of sins."

29. *But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom.* Jesus took the Nazarite vow to drink no more, to partake no more of the fruit of the vine, till He should meet us again in His Father's Kingdom. He has pledged us once and for all in that cup, and now He abstains until He meets us again. Thus He looks forward to a glorious meeting, but He bids us take the cup and thus remember Him until He comes.

30. *And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.* To His last great battle the Champion goes singing, attended by feeble followers who could not protect Him, but who could sing with Him! I think He must have led the tune—His disciples were too sorrowful to sing until His clear voice started the Hallelujah Psalms—but they joined Him in the holy exercise, for, "they," as well as their Lord sang the hymn. When you are about to face a trial, offer a prayer. But, if you can, also sing a hymn! It will show great faith if, before you enter into the burning fiery furnace, you can sing Psalms unto the Lord who redeems His people!

Now let us read Paul's version of this same matter.

1 Corinthians 11:20, 21. *When you come together, therefore, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating everyone takes before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunk.* These Corinthians had fallen into a very strange state. I do not think that any Baptist Church that I have ever known of has acted in this fashion, but when churches have no ministers—when there is an open ministry where everybody talks and nobody listens—they fall into a strange condition, especially into divisions and heart-breaking strifes. It was so in the case of this Church at Corinth. Here everybody brought his own provision and some ate to the full, while others had not enough—and they thought that they were observing "the Lord's Supper!"

22. *What? Have you not houses to eat and to drink in?* There is your proper place if you need a meal. Go home and eat and drink! Do not come to the sanctuary for such a purpose—"Have you not houses to eat and to drink in?"

22, 23. *Or despise you the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not! For I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you.* He had received it by a special Revelation. Poor Paul was brought in late and he was like one born out of due time. He had not been present in the upper room with Christ at the first famous breaking of bread, so the Lord came and gave Him a special Revelation concerning this sacred feast, so that, whenever he spoke or wrote to any of the Churches about the Lord's Supper, he could say, "I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you."

23, 24. *That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.*

The Lord's Supper is a simple service of remembrance. Nothing is said about an altar, or a priest, or a sacrifice! Our Lord took bread, gave thanks for it, broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat: this is My body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me." Mark that, "*this do*"—it will not be right to do something else instead of this—and we must not do this for any other purpose than the one He mentions, "This do in remembrance of Me." This command raises a previous question, "Do we know Him?" We cannot *remember* Christ if we do not *know* Him.

25, 26. *After the same manner, also, He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do you, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till He comes—*

***"By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored,
We keep the memory adored,
And show the death of our dear Lord,
Until He comes!
And thus that dark betrayal night,
With the last advent we unite,
By one blest chain of loving rite
Until He comes!"***

27. *Therefore, whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.* If such a man has treated "this bread" and "this cup" with contempt, He has treated "the body and blood of the Lord" with contempt! It shall be so reckoned to him. Many have been troubled by this verse. They have said, "We are unworthy." You are, this is quite true, but the text does not say anything about your being *unworthy*. Paul uses an adverb, not an *adjective*! His words are, "Whoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily"—that is, in an unfit way—to gain something by it, as men used to take what they called, "the sacrament," to get into certain offices, or as some come to the communion table for the sake of the charitable gifts that are for the poor of the Church. This is to eat and drink "unworthily." To come carelessly, to come contemptuously, to say, "I do not care whether I am a Christian or not, but I shall come to the communion"—this is to eat and drink "unworthily." Notice the *LY*—we are *all* unworthy of this sacred feast—and if unworthiness could shut us out, who would dare to be here?

28. *But let a man examine himself.* Let a man look himself up and down, as a lawyer cross-questions a witness, as a man examines money to see whether it has the true ring of gold about it or not—"Let a man examine himself."

28. *And so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.* Let him come as a true Believer, as sincere, if not perfect, yet true! If not all he ought to be, yet in Christ! If not all he wants to be, yet still on the way to it, by being in Christ, who is "the way, the truth and the life."

29. *For he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.* He does not see the meaning of the emblem of Christ's death. He degrades the symbol by making it take

the place of the thing signified. He sees the bread, but not the body—and he damns himself, condemns himself, by such eating. He is a loser rather than a gainer by eating and drinking unworthily.

30. *For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.* Persons coming to the Lord's Table in an improper spirit are very apt to come under God's discipline. Some will be taken ill and some will die. This discipline is being carried on in every true Church of God. God's Providence will work in this way if many treat the Table of the Lord as the Corinthians did—acting as if it were a common place for eating and drinking! Many of them were weak and sickly, and many died.

31. *For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.* If we are God's people, we shall be judged by Him here for our wrongdoing. We shall not be like the world that is left to the Day of Judgment, but we shall be judged *now*. God will visit with temporal judgments those of His children who sin against Him.

32. *But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.* You know that a man will see a great deal that is wrong in children in the street and say nothing about it. But if it is his own who is up to mischief, he will give him a sweet taste of the rod. So, if you belong to God, you cannot sin deeply without having a present judgment, a present discipline—but you ought to be thankful for it, painful though it may seem to be for the time, for—“when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”

33. *Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.* How gently Paul talks to these Corinthians! They deserve to be scolded, but he is very tender with them. He says, “If you must come together in this way, at least have the good manners to wait for one another. And if you do come to the communion of the Lord, treat it with that respect and reverence which it deserves.

34. *And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that you come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come.* May we, tonight, keep this feast in due order under the power of the Holy Spirit! And may we find a blessing in it to God's praise! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—938, 947.

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

TOO LITTLE FOR THE LAMB

NO. 2937

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 25, 1905.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 8, 1875.

“They shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their father, 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.”
Exodus 12:3, 4.

THE paschal lamb was not killed in order to be looked at only, but to be eaten. And our Lord Jesus Christ has not been slain merely that we may hear about Him and talk about Him, and think about Him, but that we may feed upon Him. Everything that has to do with Christ's work is of real, practical, vital consequence to Believers. He is to be the food for our souls. Faith is to receive Him. Love is to embrace Him. Hope is to rejoice in Him!

The lamb of the Passover was not to be eaten in part, some of it to be left and some of it to be divided at the feast—the whole lamb was to be eaten. And, in like manner, the whole of Christ is to be spiritually received by us, whether He is made of God unto us wisdom, or righteous, or sanctification, or redemption. All that He is and all that He does should be received by us with an open and grateful heart. There must not be any picking and choosing among the good things of Christ but all must be accepted alike. We are all sinners and we all need a Savior—and we need the whole of that Savior.

So, too, as the whole of the paschal lamb was to be eaten, I think I may say that all the power to save which is in Christ is meant to be exercised. He is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him—and that uttermost power of His was not intended to lie idle. He is able to save those who are at the very ends of the earth—and that power to save the outcasts and the offscourings was not intended to be left unused. It is our business to stir up the Divine strength and to pray the Lord to come and save even the vilest of the vile—and great multitudes of them!

Further, the whole of the lamb was meant to be eaten at once. None of it was to be kept till morning. As with the manna, there was to be no laying of it up in store for future use. They were to eat it then and there and it will be well if the members of Christ's Church will always look to the present using of Christ and of all that is in Him. I think we may

lawfully delight ourselves in the anticipation of those happier days of His Millennial Glory which are yet to dawn upon this sin-cursed earth, but, as a matter of fact, we had better concern ourselves principally with the needs of the present age—with the soul-hunger of those among whom we live—the dire necessities of those who are perishing for lack of the knowledge of Christ. Christ is meant for present use. Whatever He may do a thousand years hence, it is of more concern to us to see what He can do today. The principal business of the Christian is to proclaim Christ today—with this as part of the proclamation—“Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Even now He is mighty to save, mighty by His blood to deliver His people *now* from the avenging angel and, by His flesh, to be the continual food of their souls. And we are to see to it that we do not so project ourselves into a future age as to be negligent of the present use of the ever-present Savior who is with us always, even to the end of the age!

The paschal lamb was meant to be eaten, to be all eaten and to be all eaten then and there—and Christ is meant to be used, meant to be altogether used and to be used now. May each Believer here be impressed with these thoughts!

I. Now, coming to our text, it appears to me that IT REMINDS US OF A PRIMARY PRIVILEGE. The third verse speaks of that privilege in so many words—“They shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house.”

The place for all true religion to begin is at home. Wherever charity ought or ought not to begin, certainly true religion must begin at home. *It should be a cause of great joy to us if we have Jesus Christ as our own*, according to the paschal ordinance. “They shall take to them every man a lamb.” Are you, dear Friend, searching your heart to know whether you have to do with Christ, personally, in your own individuality? It will be a fatal delusion if you fancy that you will get into Heaven as people sometimes get into this Tabernacle—by being carried along by the force of the numbers who are pressing to get in! You must come to Christ *personally*, by personal repentance and personal faith, and there must be a personal feeding upon Him if He is to be of any service to you. It is idle to talk about the neighbor who is next to you until, first of all, you have seen to it that you, yourself, are a partaker of the Lord Jesus Christ. I put the question now from the depths of my soul to my own heart, “Preacher, have you the blood sprinkled on the lintel and on the side posts of your house? Have you fed upon Christ?” And when I have answered that question for myself, I would beseech each one of you to answer it, too. I am not asking about your parentage, or about your church membership, or about the pious relations whom you have in your house, but about yourself! How is it with you, Brothers and Sisters? Even old professors have need to ask the question, for an old imposture may long be kept up—I fear it may be preserved throughout life—and perhaps nothing will pull the mask off some men’s eyes until the skeleton hand of death reveals the terrible truth to them! It is an

unspeakable mercy that the Lamb of God is provided for our Passover and that for the very worst of us—for those of us who are most conscious that we deserve to perish—there is still the precious Gospel message, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” May it be a fact, known to us beyond all question by the witness of the Holy Spirit within us that Jesus Christ has been slain for us and fed upon by us!

Then, the next part of this primary privilege is that *we should have Christ for our whole family*. There was to be a paschal lamb for all the members of the Israelite family—“a lamb for an house.” They were all to share in the blessings which that lamb brought. Oh, privileged beyond compare is that man who has a partner in life who, with himself, rejoices in Christ and who sees all his children following in his steps, equally rejoicing in the Lord Jesus Christ! And happier still is he if all his servants are in the same blessed condition. How is it with you, Brothers and Sisters? Have you this blessing? I know that some of you have. Your house ought to be a little Heaven, for you have a church in your house! Keep the bells always ringing, “Holiness unto the Lord,” and let your hearts be so many harps from which there shall constantly pour forth floods of music to the praise of Him who has so highly favored you!

Perhaps your children are as yet only little ones and you are looking forward with the hope that the Lamb of God may yet be available for your whole household. In what way can you promote this? There are rules given you in Scripture. *You cannot convert your children—to regenerate them is altogether beyond your power. It is a Divine work and must be done by the Holy Spirit. But you have that ancient exhortation, “Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”* For the most part, the training of children does affect their manhood and womanhood. There are some who seem as if we could not train them—they are like wild vines that will not be trained and their later life reveals the force of the willfulness which resisted the training which parents would gladly have given them. Unhappy are we if we have such children and how sincerely we ought to sympathize with any who are in such a sad case. But how happy ought we to be if our children take kindly to the training which, by the Grace of God, we seek to give them, so that they are like vines fastened up upon the walls of our houses and do not to tear themselves away from the fastenings which are for their support and safety. May they bring forth fruit to God’s Glory and to our own comfort in years to come!

We must, however, add something to our training to make it effectual. There must be constant prayer where training appears to fail, for we can pray even for those of our children who are past the age in which we can exercise the influence of training upon them. I do not think that we shall long plead for our sons and daughters without seeing a prayer-hearing God stretching out His hand to save them. Or if we do, we must look upon the delay as a further trial of our faith and we must intensify our prayer until it becomes an agony—and in that agony we lay hold upon

the Covenant Angel and cry, "I will not let You go unless You bless me and my seed also." So choice a gift as this may be reserved for something more earnest than the prayer to which we have yet attained. And when the Lord shall have flung us upon our faces—shall have brought us to despair—shall have made us see, in the rebellious character of our children, a picture of our own rebelliousness—and made us see, in our own agony, a reflection of the agony of the heart of Jesus over our wanderings, then, perhaps He will speedily listen to us, and our children shall, with us, be sheltered beneath the blood of the Lamb!

With both the training and the prayer we should take care that we mingle much gracious teaching. Our children should not be left ignorant concerning the things that make for their peace. I have been surprised to find how many young people appear to know little or nothing about Holy Scripture—yet most, if not all of them, had been to a Sunday school. It is singular how quickly children will forget what they learn! And that which is merely learned by rote and has not been taught affectionately is very readily brushed off from the memory. I think that a boy very seldom forgets the teaching which has been moistened with a mother's tears. There is, somehow, a wonderful power about a mother's voice when she talks to her children about Jesus and His love which stamps itself upon the heart—and the heart is a far better place for the custody of the Truth of God than ever the brain can become! We may forget what we only learn with the head, but we shall not forget what we learn with the heart. Therefore, Christian parents, teach your children thus—let them, from their youth, know the Holy Scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation—let them be early acquainted with the precious things of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

But, above all things, my Brothers and Sisters, if we would have our household feeding upon Christ we must set them a godly example. I have known families—I think I know some now—where the training is certainly severe enough, perhaps too much so, and where the teaching is as clear as it is cold—but where the example set before the children is not good. Now, if you pray in one way with your lips and in another way with your lives, your lives will win the day and your children will rather be like what you are than what you ask them to be. It is a great pity when men who seem good at the Prayer Meeting are really bad at home—when those who show much kindness to their Christian friends seem to have given away all their honey to comparative strangers outside the walls of their own house—and have no sweetness left for their own children! Let us, dear Friends, endeavor always to set such an example as it will be safe for our sons and daughters to follow. And then I think there will very rarely be found any instance where training, teaching, prayer and a good example have gone together, where the blessing of God has failed to come! God grant to you, Brothers and Sisters, at any rate, the Grace to attend carefully to all these matters. And then if, perhaps, you should prove to be the father of an Ishmael, or the mother of an Ishmael, you will not have to say, "I kept the vineyards of others, but my

own vineyard have I not kept.” And then you will feel that you did use such means as were within your reach, even though the blessing of God did not come to your children. I pray, Beloved, that it may be the privilege of every one of you to have the Lamb of God for your whole household and that each member of your family, from the youngest to the oldest, may joyfully partake of all the benefits of the common Sacrifice which is provided for all the chosen.

That will suffice for our first point which is that the text reminds us of a primary privilege.

II. Now, secondly, THE TEXT IS SILENT ABOUT A CERTAIN CONTINGENCY WHICH WOULD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

You observe that it speaks about what was to be done when the household was not large enough to eat the lamb, but *it says nothing about what was to occur if the lamb was not sufficiently large to feed the household*. We can often learn much from the silence of Scripture. We know that it is so in the case of Melchizedek. Since his parentage is not mentioned, the silence is significant. And so here, the silence concerning such a contingency as the *insufficiency* of the paschal lamb for the household is, I think, meant to teach us an important lesson. It is probable that the lamb was, literally speaking, never too little for the household for this reason—the Jews say that the Passover was not intended to be eaten with a view to feasting, but that frequently only a small portion was eaten. There were, doubtless, large families, but there was enough for each one to have a small portion of the lamb—just as we do not come to the Lord’s Supper merely to eat and drink, but we come there for a religious observance—and a single portion of bread and a sip of wine suffice us. There may have been as many as 20 persons in one house who would partake of the lamb and, in our Lord’s case, we know that at the Last Supper, He sat down to the Passover with the twelve, making 13 with Himself. But the contingency is not supposed that there should be an insufficient provision in the lamb for the proper observance of the feast.

And now, using the type *spiritually*, let us rest assured that *it never can happen that there should not be enough of Jesus Christ to feed all our families*. “Well,” says one father, “we are a very numerous household. Our children need a very large table and when they all sit down together they make a tribe equal to that of good old Jacob.” Yes, and no doubt some of those Jewish families were as large as that, yet they all fed upon the paschal lamb. And there is enough in Christ for all your family—and there would be enough even if it consisted of 25 persons—of even twenty-five thousand! If any of them perished, it would not be because Christ was not sufficient for them, but because they had not received Him, had not believed on Him. Do not let the number in your household restrain your praying or working for them—and rest not until, by God’s good Grace, the whole of them shall know and trust in Jesus!

“But,” says another, “our family is more peculiar than that, for we are a family of sinners.” It happens, sometimes, that a man who in former times, was a very great offender, is converted, but he is like a speckled bird to all the rest of his family. His brother is a drunk, his sister is godless, his father and mother despise religion and as he looks round upon them, he can only wonder how it was that Sovereign Grace should ever have selected one out of such a family as his. He does not remember any of his relations who ever made a profession of religion. They have been “the devil’s own” as far back as he can trace. Well, beloved Friends, if it is so with any of your families, do not hesitate for a single moment in your prayers or in your efforts for them under such a wicked, dishonoring notion as, perhaps, your family is too bad for Christ to save, their sins too many for His blood to wash away and their necessities too great for Him to relieve! That cannot be! You have an All-Sufficient Savior to talk of, to rely upon and to bring before them! Go to Him in prayer for all your family, beseeching that all the members of your ungodly family may yet participate in the blessings procured by the Lamb of God! I do not know anything in the Bible that ought to check our prayers for our whole households. The Doctrine of Election may suggest to some ignorant persons the idea that they cannot pray for all, but let us always remember that the Doctrine of Election which is a most blessed Truth of God—is never used in Scripture as a damper to our prayers!

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men,” meaning all ranks and conditions of men and all sorts of men! We are not told concerning anybody that we may not pray for them—with the one exception that if we knew a man to have committed the unpardonable sin—which we do not and cannot know—it is written, “I do not say that he shall pray for it.” But, in any other case we may pray hopefully and I know of nothing in the Scriptures that should hinder earnest effort for the salvation of our whole households. Never ought we to look any child of ours in the face and feel, “Well, I never will speak to that child about Christ, it would be useless—he cannot be saved.” It would be antagonistic to the whole current of Sacred Scripture for us to imbibe any such notion as that, so may we never imbibe it! Neither do I know of anything in Scripture that should lead us to give up hope concerning any who belong to a household in which some have already been saved. If Christ has saved me, I gather from that fact, this inference, that He can save anybody! I have never doubted the possibility of the salvation of anybody since Jesus Christ saved me, for I feel that He went about as far as He could go then, and all other sinners must come within the reach of His merciful power!

So plead on, work on, train on, teach on and do not relax your efforts, or allow your hopes to be dampened till the whole household shall have been brought to feed upon Jesus Christ, for, rest assured that at the King’s banquet of mercy there was never a failure of food yet! Behold how the tables groan with the weight of the oxen and the fatlings for the great

Gospel Supper—and the wine and milk are poured out with unstinted hand! There shall be enough to satisfy the hunger and thirst of all who shall ever come to that Table as long as time shall last! And if, as indeed it shall yet be, thousands and tens of thousands and millions should come flocking to the house of bread, there will always be found enough and to spare for all who come!

III. But now, thirdly, I come to the very heart of the text where it mentions, in so many words, A PROBABILITY FOR WHICH IT PROVIDES—“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.”

Brethren, that which was a possibility in Egypt is not only common but universal with us. My household and my father’s household—we can rejoice to know that they feed upon the Lamb of God, *but our households alone are much too little for the Lamb*. If I know that I and my sons are saved, I cannot feel that we alone would be sufficient to reward our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for the travail of His soul. You, my Friend, said that you had a large family, but you could not call your sons and daughters together and say, “My dear children, now that I see you saved, I feel that Christ is quite sufficiently rewarded for all that He has done.” Oh, no! It is a very great proof of His Grace and mercy that He has saved your children, yet you look upon it almost as a little thing in comparison with what His Infinite Sacrifice must have bought and His work and death must deserve as their crown!

Our household is also *too little to sing the praises of Jesus, the Lamb of God*. Suppose that in us and in our children all the attributes of Jesus Christ should be revealed in a very remarkable degree. That will be something for which to praise Him throughout eternity, but, dear Friends, merely to have those attributes revealed in father, mother and five or six children or grandchildren will not suffice—we want Christ to be revealed in thousands, and tens of thousands, and unnumbered millions of saved souls! Our household is, indeed, too little to sing the praises of this blessed Lamb and we do well often to cry—

**“Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise!”**

We long to hear ten thousand times ten thousand tongues singing—

“Worthy the Lamb.”

Our household is also *too little to do all the work that is to be done for Jesus in proclaiming Him as the Lamb of God*. It would be a great mercy if God gave us the privilege of having many sons who all preached the Gospel and many daughters who were all eminent in the Church as teachers, deaconesses, missionaries and the like. It would be a great privilege to have a whole family all diligently employed in the service of the Savior. But if a man had 20 sons and they were all preachers, would he say, “There are now quite enough to do Christ’s work”? Oh, dear no! Our household is too little for the Lamb in all the senses that I have

mentioned—we need more to feed upon Jesus, more to praise Jesus and more to proclaim Jesus!

There are some Brothers and Sisters who meet in a little building in an out-of-the-way street who seem to feel that their household is quite big enough. The new Jerusalem, according to them, was intended to comprise some little miserable hamlet, bounded on the North and East by a ditch of strict communion and on the South and West by a rampart of Hyper-Calvinistic Doctrine. But I like to think of Jesus Christ's Kingdom as very widely extended, His Throne as high and lifted up and the loyal subjects over whom He reigns as an enormous multitude whom no man can number, who shall be given to Him as the reward of the travail of His soul! This Tabernacle Church, numbering five thousand souls, is much too little for the Lamb! If we could have the Agricultural Hall crowded and all there should say that they were converted—and if they all were *really* converted—it would still be too little for the Lamb! And if we had the Agricultural Hall multiplied 20 times over and all of them full of saved souls, it would still be too little for the Lamb! And if all in England, Scotland, America and France—and in every country where Christ is preached, were converted—it would still be too little for the Lamb! And if we were to have all the inhabitants of Europe and Asia brought to Jesus, I would still say that it was too little for the Lamb—and if we could add all in Africa and Australasia, as long as there was an island of the sea in which the people were not converted to Christ, our hearts would still cry, “The household is too little for the Lamb!”—

***“Ah, reign wherever man is found,
Our Spouse, Beloved and Divine!
Then are we rich, and we abound,
When every human heart is Thine!”***

But not till then—till over the whole earth the knowledge of the Lord shall be spread as the waters cover the sea! Until then, we shall still feel that the household is too little for the Lamb.

What was the Israelite to do to meet the contingency of the household being too little for the lamb? The provision was, “Let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls.” And the Christian whose household is certainly too little for the Lamb of God is to call in his neighbor to share the blessing with him! Brother, if you and all your household are saved, call your neighbor to the great Gospel feast! I do not mean merely the person who lives next door to you, for, in London it often happens that there is nobody further off than the person who lives next door to us. But your neighbor may be the person sitting next to you in the pew, or the man who works at the next bench to yours in the shop, or someone with whom you meet in trade or in the order of God's Providence. Any one of those people may be the neighbor to join with you in feeding upon the lamb! God has put him in your way for some reason or other and, certainly, not that you may be an injury to him! It must be, at least, that you may endeavor to be of service to him. We are all more or less dependent upon one another. One

of the obligations of near neighborhood should be that we should seek our neighbor's good, even as the Commandment says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." And although that relates to all mankind, it must refer in a very eminent and emphatic sense to the man who is literally our neighbor.

Look, then, after the man who is near to you. And if you do this, you will not have so far to go as if you looked after anybody else. God is a God of economy, so He did not say to the Israelite, "You are to bring into your house, to make up your company at the Passover, the man who lives at the furthest end of Goshen." He saved His people as much trouble as possible by saying that the man "and his neighbor next unto his house" were to unite in the celebration. You who live in the South of London are not commanded to go and tramp six or seven miles in order to find someone in the North of London to whom you may be useful. You are first to look after those who live in the street in which you live, or with whom you come into contact in your daily life. There is a very good regulation concerning the clearance of snow—that each householder shall clear the pavement in front of his own house—if that rule could always be carried out, London would be cleaner than it is now after a fall of snow! Let us all try to act like that with regard to the moral and spiritual snow that lies on the pavement opposite to us. All who live in London will soon be evangelized if each Christian seeks to win for Christ, "his neighbor next unto his house." And then if that neighbor seeks to win his next door neighbor, and that one his neighbor and so on. It will not only be a saving of effort, but it will be an orderly regulation by which it will be guaranteed that the Truth of God shall be brought to the notice of all who need it.

Besides, your neighbor is the person who is most likely to be influenced by you. A total stranger would need more time to introduce himself, but your neighbor already knows something of you. And if he sees that you are a consistent Christian, that will materially assist you in delivering your message to him. If you are living as you ought to live, your neighbor knows something about the effect which the Gospel has had upon your life. For you to speak to him, therefore, will be most fitting, for you are the man who can give the living example as well as the spoken Word!

Above all, he is the person whom you are especially bid to seek. We are to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature—but there is a special obligation upon us to preach that Gospel to the one who is nearest to us. Dear Brothers and Sisters, do you always attend to this matter? Do you talk of Jesus Christ to those who live near you, or with whom you are brought into contact? Some Sundays ago, at the East London Tabernacle, Mr. Archibald Brown spoke to his people about this duty and then he stopped and said, "Now we will put into practice what I have been urging upon you—will every Christian in the Tabernacle speak to the person who is next to him?" And everybody in the building was

spoken to, then and there, about Christ! It was a good plan and it resulted in the conversion of a great number of persons, while there were many others who were brought under conviction of sin and who will, it is hoped, be led to the Savior through that striking personal appeal.

I will not stop my sermon and ask you to do that, but I will ask you to do it every time you come together into this place and as often as you have a proper opportunity of doing it in your daily calling. Be wise and prudent as to the time when you make your appeal. Religion is not to be rammed down people's throats, but watch for a suitable opportunity of speaking for Christ and that opportunity will come to you sooner or later. You may do harm if you do not take care to speak at the right time. The wise man tells us that "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the Heaven," so watch for the occasion of bearing testimony to Christ and then, feeling that your household is too little for the Lamb of God, try to introduce Him to others.

I fancy I hear somebody say, "Ah, but they only brought in Israelites to feed on the paschal lamb. They did not call in the Egyptians." Quite so, nor will you, so you need not be frightened about that matter. None but God's elect ones will spiritually feed upon Christ. Some people seem to be afraid lest we should be the means of saving some of the non-elect—but that is a fear which never troubles either my head or my heart, for I know that with all the effort and preaching in the world, we shall never bring more to Christ than Christ has had given to Him by His Father! You will never fall into that trouble. Our Savior has bid us preach the Gospel to every creature. He has not said, "Preach it only to the elect." And though that might seem to be the most logical thing for us to do, yet, since He has not been pleased to stamp the elect on their foreheads, or to put any distinctive mark upon them, it would be an impossible task for us to perform! Therefore when we preach the Gospel to every creature, the Gospel makes its own division and Christ's sheep hear His voice and follow Him. It is unnecessary to stop the ears of other sheep, or to try to prevent your voice from travelling where other sheep are found—only the true sheep of Christ will recognize His voice in the Gospel message, or be obedient to it. Therefore, let not your zeal be repressed by any doctrinal views, however sound, for, depend upon it, sound Doctrine is never inconsistent with obedience to the command to preach the Gospel to every creature. Sound precept and sound Doctrine must agree!

IV. The last thing upon which I have to speak is not in my text, yet **THE WHOLE SUBJECT SUGGESTS THOUGHTS UPON NEIGHBORLY FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL.**

Here is a man whose household is too little for the lamb and he has called in his next door neighbor to share the feast with him. "Come in, Friend," he says, "I have a wife and two children, and our household is too little for the lamb. You have a wife and one child—come in and we will keep the Passover together."

I know what the result of that invitation would be. First, *there would be sweet fellowship.* They would feed upon the same lamb and, in doing

so, they would come to know each other as they had never done before. They would talk together most gratefully concerning the Divine plan of sacrifice by which they were being saved while Egypt was being destroyed. They would talk to each other about that remarkable day when there was darkness over all the land of Egypt except in the houses of the Israelites, for they had light in their dwellings. They would talk about those flies and frogs that came up in swarms over the land and how the mighty arm of Jehovah had been outstretched on their behalf. I think that the members of both families would be all the happier after meeting under one roof and feeding together upon the paschal lamb. It would be a pleasant time for all of them and I can assure you that if you are the means of bringing any souls to Jesus Christ, you will find that those whom you bring to Him, by the power of the Holy Spirit, are the very best companions you have ever had! You will talk together very sweetly of all that the Lord has done for you and you will thus warm each other's hearts. Like two firebrands that might only have smoldered alone, you will burn and blaze when you are put together!

Then, after the feast was over, *there would be pleasant relations established between those two families*. Surely after they had been together that night, sheltering under the same sprinkled blood, feasting on the same paschal lamb, partaking of the same bitter herbs and each one standing with his loins girt and with his staff in his hand, the members of those families would never be at enmity against one another. They must always have felt that they were very near akin to one another and it is a still more blessed kinship that is established and cemented at the Cross of Christ! Where we love each other for Christ's sake and love Christ as we see Him revealed in one another, such love as that will outlast our earthly life and will reach on into eternity—and be sweet even in Heaven!

I should say, dear Friends, that both those families would have very pleasant memories of that Passover and out of those memories would grow future communion. The master of one household, when he met the other, years afterwards in the wilderness, would say to him, "Do you remember, Jacob, coming to my house on the Passover night?" "Yes, Ephraim," the other would reply, "I remember it well. Your family was too little for the lamb, so we joined together for the feast." One would ask, "Will you ever forget that night?" "No," the other would say, "it was very solemn, but it was very sweet and I think I liked it all the better because it was in your house." And the first one would say, "And I am sure that I enjoyed it all the more because I had you to come in and share it with me."

So those memories, you see, would beget new communion and *they would be ready to help each other and to cheer each other in the future*. They would often make interchanges of experience—and interchange of experience is like profitable bracing—it enriches all concerned. They that fear the Lord, when they speak often, one to another concerning Him, are

sure to be mutually helpful to one another! And I think that this bringing in of others to increase the family for the observance of the Passover would be certain to lay the foundation of much mutual communion and much mutual benefit in the future. And, surely, Brothers and Sisters, in proportion as, by the Grace of God, we labor successfully to bring others to Christ and so Christ's family is increased, we shall be anticipating the joy of Heaven! It will never be said in Heaven that the household is too little for the Lamb. When Christ comes in all His Glory and all His redeemed ones come with Him—when He gathers all who have been redeemed with His precious blood about Him at the marriage supper of the Lamb—and He Himself drinks the new wine in the Kingdom of His Father, it will not be said, then, that the household is too little for the Lamb, for the whole spiritual household of Israel shall then be gathered together! The complete company redeemed by blood shall muster at that one “general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in Heaven,” and Christ shall then “see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.” Until that glorious gathering shall take place, Brothers and Sisters, keep on inviting others to the Lamb of God!

And as for you who have never yet trusted in the blood of Jesus, or tasted of His Grace, may the Lord, in His Infinite Mercy, bring you to Him this very hour! And then this shall be the beginning of months for you—you will reckon your true life as dating from this hour! The Lord grant it, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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

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

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 mistake has 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 from the Egyptians and by His strong and mighty hand takes 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.] 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 more noble preacher to sinners 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, directly. "*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 exceeding 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 house-top, 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 multitudes 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 so 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 St. 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 may all,"***

and none of us are safe and secure! Therefore, we do not give way to that. But 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 woman, sick. 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, 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 might and 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 all that God's people ever had 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 not 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 four hundred and thirty years—and they were not in bondage one day more. As soon as God's bond became due, though it had been drawn four hundred and thirty 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. He 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 twelve o'clock precisely. Well, we admire a man's honesty if he pays him exactly at that minute. But God is never behind hand in fulfilling His promises, not by the ticking of a clock. Though His promise seems to tarry, wait for it. 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. 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, themselves—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 and 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 smitten on 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! How many there are 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 rotteness! 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 a deliverance by stifling his conscience. "Ah," says one of these mixed multitude, "here am I in the 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 comes! But he had better remain in Egypt than get out like that! There are some, again, 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, himself, 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!

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

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

A HOLY CELEBRATION

NO. 1092

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

***“It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord.”
Exodus 12:42.***

OF course you will understand that our text relates to the Passover. This is its first meaning. The Israelites were enjoined never to forget that they were once slaves in Egypt and that God, with a strong hand, brought them forth. To help their memories an ordinance was instituted which was to be celebrated every year by every person in the nation. The young children were to be taught the meaning of that ordinance so that *never* in time should it be forgotten that God passed over His own people when He smote His enemies in the land of Egypt.

To this day the Israelites continue to hold this epoch in their national history among their most cherished traditions—and although the rites with which they observe the Passover are so distorted that we might well say they cannot sing the Lord’s song in a strange land—yet the Passover is still Israel’s celebration. And so long as there exists a Jew, there will not lack a man to tell how his fathers came out of Egypt in that night which is to be much observed.

But, dear Friends, the Passover was a type of our Lord’s passion. He is the Lamb of God’s Passover. It is by His blood that we are preserved. It is by virtue of His Sacrifice that God passes over us who, through faith, have received the sprinkling of that blood. Never let us forget that night which is to be much remembered—that night when the Lord was taken from prison and from judgment—when there was none to declare His generation. Let us not forget that night when, for the transgression of His people, He was smitten.

It was a dark night when He arose from the table where He had supped for the last time with His disciples, and went to Gethsemane, there to begin to suffer and in the very beginning to be sorrowful, even unto death. Then to be taken off to Pilate and to Herod, and to Caiaphas—to be condemned to die—to be lifted high upon the Cross, to bleed, to suffer physical pain, mental anguish and spiritual grief unknown—never to be estimated by us. It was a night to be remembered in all our generations. Let it never be forgotten. Whatever we do not know, my Brothers and Sisters, let us know the Cross. Whatever subject may have a second place in our estimation, always let the ransom paid on Calvary be first and foremost.

I would have you study much the four records of the Evangelists. Dwell upon them. Christians ought to be familiar with every little incident of

their Savior's death. There is teaching in every nail. The sponge, the vinegar and the hyssop all have a meaning in them—and the spear that pierced His side is full of instruction. We ought to study them—study them again and again, and again. Here is the very essence of our confidence! This is the pillar upon which our souls lean! If there is any hope for sinners; if there is any consolation for sufferers; if there is any cleansing for the guilty; if there is any life for the dead, it is here. In Your words Emmanuel—it is here and only here. O, dwell at the Cross, then! Whatever your minds may forget to consider, let them never lose the savor of this, or leave the meditation of Christ Crucified!

Keep to this. Remember, that to help our frail memories, God has given us an ordinance. Even as He gave to Jews the Passover, He has given to us the Lord's Supper. "This do you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." It is important beyond everything that you should remember a bleeding Savior! Therefore He gives you the wine cup to symbolize His blood and that blood separated from the flesh—and, therefore, He gives you the bread as the emblem of flesh without the life-blood in it—that the two together might be the symbols to you of a violent death suffered by your Lord on your behalf!

Instructive are the symbols—do not miss the main intention of them, namely, to draw you with cords of love and bands of a man, to the Person of your vicarious Sacrifice—Jesus Christ bleeding for you! And while you harbor this much in your own thoughts, speak much of it to others. Let your testimony be full and frequent. If you are ministers, preach much about the "Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." If you are teachers of others in the Sunday school, or anywhere else, make this the main head and front of your teaching—Christ in the sinner's place; Christ bearing the sinner's sin; Christ smitten with the sinner's stripes—and by His stripes healing sinners and putting away their sin.

Insist upon this again and again, and again. Make it plain to all, so that if they reject it they may reject that which was evidently set forth before them. Unveil the mystery, the sacred mystery of the Incarnate God bleeding in the sinner's place. Yes, should men upbraid you as foolish because you have nothing else to teach but this—keep on, and be thus foolish, still! Let them say that you have nothing but a monotony to repeat concerning the blood! Let them have that monotony again sounded in their ears! To that, to that, to that bend all your strength—to that direct all their attention, for, surely, the night of the passion—or call it day if you will, for though it was day, naturally, it was more nearly night in many senses—surely, that "is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations."

This, however, is not exactly the subject to which we propose to direct your meditation this evening. It is the night of our regeneration. It is the night of our conversion—(night or day, it matters not which)—the time in

which we actually received salvation and were made partakers of this Passover that we would just now admonish you to remember. At that particular time important events transpired for us. The most important events, to us, that ever occurred in our history happened on that occasion! There was a point in our life up to which we were dead—then we were made alive! There was a point up to which we were condemned—then, in an instant, we were acquitted! There was a moment up to which we were enemies to God by wicked works—and at once, by an act of God’s Grace—we were reconciled and were made to be God’s children and were God’s enemies no more!

I want to look back upon that. Our first birth would have been a hurt to us if it had not been for this second birth. Our being in this world would be a calamity—it had been better for us that we had never been—if it had not been for this second creation, which gives us our well-being! O, it was a night to be observed before the Lord, in which we came out of Egypt, passed from death unto life and were saved! Now, what events transpired on that occasion? Well, the first was it pleased God, then, to show us the blood of Jesus and to apply it to our souls. Do you remember it? I remember well when this came to my heart. You had *heard* the doctrine of the Cross before, but you *felt* it, then. You knew that the blood could save, but at that moment you had faith in that blood and it did save you!

It was applied to you by the hyssop of faith, which sprinkled it upon the lintel and doorposts of your house and you were saved! Do you remember the place—the spot of ground? Some of us remember and never can forget it. O, happy day that brought us to the Savior’s feet, took all our guilt away and banished all our fears—removed the enmity and made us friends—prostrated, conquered and subdued us—then cheered, comforted, and blessed us! No man has anything in the incidents or the records of his life that can compare in importance with that moment in which the blood was applied to his guilty conscience!

“Well,” says one, “I think nothing of it.” No, because you never felt it. If you had ever felt it, you would. He that has ever felt the weight of the Law’s great whip upon his conscience—has ever had those lashes laid about him till he hated his very life and longed to die—he will know what it is to have that whip taken away, to have oil and wine poured into those wounds, to have them healed in a moment and to find himself ready to leap for very joy because of the wondrous things which God has done for him! They that know it not, ought not to say anything about it. They are strangers to it. I know some who are constantly prone to speak lightly of conversion. Why should they? If they do not know anything about it, let them hold their tongues until they do.

But those that have been converted—those that have been regenerated and know it—if they are honest men and I believe they are accepted as such in other matters—let them be believed here, also, when they declare that there is nothing like it under the sun for joy to a man’s soul! This ap-

plication of the blood of sprinkling is the thing above all others to be remembered! Whatever else happened that night, let us remember this, that the old leaven was purged out of our hearts. At once, as soon as ever we believed in Jesus, we found ourselves hating the things we loved before. We did not hear the Law which said, “You shall not do this, and you shall do that”—but we felt our heart changed, so that we did not want to do the evil and we longed to do the right.

And now, though since then we have found another Law in our members warring against the law of our mind and causing a frequent conflict—yet the true man, the I, the real I—longs after holiness! And it is no sorrow, now, to be obedient. It is bliss to obey! And it is no joy now to be sinful, but it brings a thorn into the eyes, a palpitation to the heart and a trembling into the soul to stain the hands or defile the conscience with sin. That is a thing to be remembered! Where such a thing as that has happened, it never can be forgotten. And, thank God, this has not occurred merely to those who were amiable before and honest before, but it has occurred to some of the very worst of mankind. O, we could tell stories, tonight, which have come under our own observation, of some of the most abandoned transgressors who have become some of the purest characters, full of “sweetness and light,” from the very moment of their conversion!

The more they were formerly known to delight in sin, the more they have subsequently humbled themselves before God. And the more they had lent themselves to do iniquity, the more they have addicted themselves to works of righteousness, seeking to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. O Beloved, it is a night to be observed of the Lord in which the leaven is put away and we are made to keep the feast in godly sincerity! That night, too, or that day, whichever it may have been, we do remember that we enjoyed a feast upon our Savior. The blood was sprinkled and so we were saved, and then we sat down at the table and began at once to feast upon the precious things stored up in the Person of Christ.

I remembered one thing that troubled me. It was that it did seem too good to be true. That I was absolved forever from all my sins, I did believe, for God said it. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” But this used to stagger me, “Am I really, now, in the condition of a child of God—as much a child of God as I am a child of my own father? And has He loved such an insignificant worm as I am? And will He surely bring me into the promised rest and give me a place and a name among His beloved, at His right hand?” O, how I revolted in such thoughts as that, when faith was strong, when first I knew the Lord!

Do you remember it, dear Brothers and Sisters? I want you to let your souls fly back to those early mornings with Christ, when the dew was upon your soul, when the birds began to sing in your hearts and their notes had not yet grown stale to you. O, the delicacies of the first days with Christ! O, the sweetness of the love of our espousals! Do you not re-

member how you fed upon Christ to the very full and did rejoice in Him? Well, look back and say it is a time to be observed before the Lord. And then it was that for the first time in your life, dear Friends, you felt that you were free! Israel in Egypt was free from that night. They were slaves and brick makers, but the moment that blood was over the door and God had sent forth the angel to smite the Egyptians, the Israelites were free.

They were even pressed to go away! O, do you remember how free you felt? You could sing with John Kent—

***“Now freed from sin, I walk at large,
The Savior’s blood’s my full discharge,
At His dear feet my soul I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay.”***

You remember how you rejoiced in the liberty in which Christ had made you free? You wanted to tell other people about it. You could not hold your tongue. You could have sung as we have been singing tonight—

***“Now, oh joy, my sins are pardoned,
Now I can, and do believe.”***

You were free! But finding yourself so, you also discovered, for the first time, that you were a pilgrim, for the Israelites, as they ate that paschal supper, had to do so with their loins girt and staves in their hands—like men that were to leave that country. You found that now you were a stranger. If you had an unconverted parent, you could not talk to him or her about your soul. If you had old companions, you felt you must bid them farewell, for they would not understand you. If you did not know you were a pilgrim before, you found it out the very next day when you began to talk with them.

Your speech betrayed you and they began at once to scoff and jeer at you, as a Presbyterian or a Methodist, or by some other name they called you—thus you soon found that because you were not of the world, therefore the world would hate you. Perhaps you were surprised at it, but you plucked up courage and you took up Christ’s Cross, and you have carried it till now. At length you begin to love it, to esteem it an honor and to count it to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt which you left behind you.

O, it is a time to be remembered and I want you to remember it now—those blessed days when we began to live! I think we might date our existence from that time. When we count up our birthdays, we ought always to reckon that among them. To leave that out seems to be leaving out the one that makes all the others worth having! I remember a man’s tombstone on which was inscribed—“Here lies one who died a child three years old at the age of eighty.” You are only as old as the number of years you have lived unto God! All the rest you might wish to be wiped out—yes, and the blood of Christ has wiped them out and you are alive from the dead, new-born souls. O, let the time of your second birth be a season to be remembered before the Lord!

Important results will flow to you from the preservation of this memorial. It will humble you and foster the Grace of humility. Have you become an old experienced Christian, my Brother? Go back to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. While I stand here, tonight, preaching to a great many of you, I feel brought down to my proper bearings when I remember how I sat, at about the age of 16, a poor trembling sinner under the galleries of a Primitive Methodist meeting house and heard Christ preached, and came to Him. O, that ever I should live to preach the Gospel to you! I feel humbled at the very thought of it. Get back, you great professors—get back to the Cross again! There is nothing about which to vaunt yourselves after all. Look to the hole of the pit from which you were dug—remember what you were when God met with you—and remember what you would have been if He had *not* met with you!

Israel would have died like the Egyptians if it had not been for the blood—and you might have been dead and damned at this hour, instead of sitting here to praise God—if it had not been for special Grace. It was no goodness of yours that made you God’s child. You know it, for when the Lord cast an eye of love on you, He could not see anything in you to love. You were all unholy and unclean. You were according to Isaiah’s description—“From the sole of the foot to the crown of your head you were all wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores”—and yet He looked upon you! Remember that, and be humbled within you.

Remember your conversion, also, and let your faith be refreshed. It does us good to remember—especially some of you, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that are now a long way on the road—it does you good to remember what peaceful hours you had at first. O, what lively joy you had then! Well, I daresay you have purer joy now, deeper peace, more unruffled calm. There was a good deal of flesh about you then. But still, for all that, as a man never will forget the honeymoon, so can we never forget that honeymoon with Christ. There was a certain exquisite sweetness in it that lingers on our souls still. We have the flavor of that honeycomb in our mouths up to this moment and we shall never get it out. Well, it will revive our faith to remember it and it will bring back our love, too.

We shall begin chiding ourselves and saying, “Why haven’t we done more for His dear name?” O, what we thought we should do when we first began to serve Jesus! We have not been true to those vows and promises, but yet what a mercy that, if *we* have not been true, He has! He has never failed us, but has kept every promise and never left us in any emergency. We have been held up till now and who could have held us up but our Lord? We have sometimes been in a very perilous condition—temptation has almost overcome us, but—

**“We know the arm on which we lean,
The name in which we trust,”**

and we will bless that name! I am sure if we were to live in recollection of our conversion, we should have our zeal kindled for the conversion of others. Ah, you get altogether away from your first standing-point, some of

you! You used to be willing to run anywhere to talk of Jesus and if you had half a hope of impressing anyone, you had no fear about speaking of Him.

Now, perhaps, you have become so familiar with the Gospel that, though it ought to have more charms, through the hardness of your heart it has fewer charms with you than it had. Oh, be ashamed and be confounded about it! And get back, get back, to your first love and you will feel the first zeal come again! I sometimes wonder what old churches would do if it were not for new converts. The new converts put fresh blood into the veins of the Church. The Church would die of sheer imbecility were it not that great sinners come in with their great love! They do what Simon would not do—they not only wash the Savior's feet and perform the common acts of piety—but they begin to anoint His head with an extraordinary zeal. And they set the Church an example of doing great things—and in this way keep us somewhat alive.

But I would like to be a young convert always! I would like to be green in old age with young love to Jesus and would not you, too, Brothers and Sisters? Well, if you would have it so, go back to the night to be observed and remember it this evening with tears of gratitude. Cannot some of you picture that young man—(yes, you have got boys as old as you were then)—cannot you remember the young man that dropped into Park Street and heard the Word of God there? Don't you remember your experience at that time, young woman? You do not call yourself a young woman now, but do you remember when you sat and wept and your heart broke—and when the very thing happened that we have been singing of in our hymn—that first look and that second look from Him that hung upon the Cross?

You have not forgotten that. Many days have passed over some of you and you are getting near to the end of life, but will you not remember and lift now a new song for the old mercies and magnify God whom you have tried and proved this score of years, and so tried Him that you can speak well of His name? Maybe there is a question which will naturally arise in some minds. Do not I hear someone say, "I trust I am a Christian. I believe I have experienced a great change of heart, but I do not remember the time"? Beloved Friend, there is an old legal maxim that, "possession is nine points of the Law," and as long as you have Christ, I am not going to raise many questions about when you got Him.

Surely, if the hold you have is equivalent to nine points of the Law, it represents all the points of the Gospel! If you have Christ He will never be taken away from you. If you are resting upon His blood and righteousness, it is well enough. And, if you are producing the fruits of the Spirit and your life is what it should be, by your fruits you are to be known. We shall ask you no more questions. "But I should like to know exactly when I was converted," says one. Well, I do not wonder that you should. But suppose you do not know and cannot ascertain, what then? Suppose

there is a person here who does not exactly know his age and he wants to find the register of his birth? And suppose he has tried and cannot find it?

Now, what is the inference that he draws from his not being able to tell the day of his birth? Well, I do not know what the inference may be, but I will tell you one inference he does *not* draw. He does not say, therefore, "I am not alive." If he did he would be an idiot, for if the man is alive he is alive, whether he knows his birthday or not. And if the man really trusts in Jesus and is alive from the dead, he is a saved soul whether he knows exactly when and where he was saved or not. At the same time, do not let me be misunderstood. "You must be born-again." There is, and must be, in every man that will enter Heaven, a time—a point and a place, too—in which he did pass out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

I believe that in many cases it is not easy to tell the precise point, for with them it is like the rising of the sun. Sometimes the sun is up before you know whether he has risen or not because a long morning twilight precedes his actual appearance above the horizon. So it may be that spiritual life begins by slow degrees before we quite perceive it there. But there is a time when it begins. There is a point—there is a place in which the unsaved become saved and the unregenerate become regenerate—and there is a broad line between the two characters. A great gulf, indeed, is fixed between them, which only the supernatural Grace of God can enable any one to cross. Do not doubt *that!* Do not imagine that I call it in question, for I would not deceive you.

I believe there are many people who *think* they have been converted, who are not—who have experienced a change, but not *the* change—who have made a change of life and a very good change, too, but still it is not being born-again. A man may change from a drunkard to a sober man and that is a noble thing—but that will not save him. He may change from being a thief to being honest and that is a grand thing—but that will not save him. He may change from being a habitual violator of the Sabbath to being a constant attendant upon the means of Grace—and that is a good thing—but that will not save him. It is not the washing of the stain—it is the washing of the *soul* that is effected in regeneration. The man's love must be different. The man's whole affections must run in another channel—in the direct opposite channel from that which they pursued before. In a word, "Except a man is born-again from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

There must be a time of your new birth, or else, as the Lord lives, you shall never see His face with joy. You must pass under the hand of the Holy Spirit and nothing short of that will enable you to enter Heaven. "It troubles me," says one. Does it? I am glad of that. It is a great mercy when there is enough life to be troubled—a real blessing when that trouble leads to Christ, for if you have ever been to Christ, you have found the Savior and if you are now looking to Christ you are saved. Do you say, "But how

about that great change?" I reply that every Believer must have experienced that change, for the greatest of all worlds is faith. What does Christ say?—"This is the work of God (or the God-like work), that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent." To believe in Jesus is the climax of virtue and the surest evidence of a new heart that can possibly be given.

Have you that evidence? If you have not, be troubled. The Lord trouble you more and more lest you be troubled in the world to come with a grievous trouble from which there is no relief! To full many here present the personal enquiries we suggest are momentous and urgent. You say that our preaching is inquisitorial. Be it so, but you, yourselves, are the sole inquisitors—each one of you into his own estate and his own pedigree. Murmur not, therefore, if I press you to be strict and rigid. Whatever verdict you pass, it will be referred to a higher court, there to be affirmed or annulled. I felt, before I came into this pulpit, that I might never speak to you again, or that at any rate, some of the hearers now present, would, before my return, be sure to be in another world.

We do not speak to a "perhaps," because, from long familiarity with this great congregation, we note how regularly some die each week. Of our membership we lose so many in the year as to make a weekly item of names to be removed from the roll because they have joined the Church triumphant above, and, in the congregation, we know that it is a rare thing that ever there should pass a week without someone, who has been our hearer, being transferred to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Now, if I never speak to you again, or you shall never hear this voice again, I would like to put it to you, my dear Friend—might not this night become to you a night to be observed unto the Lord for bringing you out of the land of Egypt? Might not this be a night much to be observed with you as long as ever you should live?

"Oh," says one, "I do not know. I am hopeless about ever being saved." Where does the hopelessness lie? It does not lie in your *character*, for have we not told you a thousand times over, that, "though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as wool," if you will but believe in Jesus? I know that you are not tied up with the notion that you have got to do some works to save yourself. If so, I must have spoken very strangely, or you must have listened to me very oddly, for have we not every Sunday told you that it is, "not by works, lest any man should boast," but by the Grace of God and the free favor of God towards the most undeserving of men?

God saves no man for his goodness! However bad you are, God is willing to forgive and to accept you and receive you as His child. "No," you say, "it is not that, but still I despair of ever being saved. I cannot come up to the point." Then whose fault is that, I want to know? Whose fault is that? I will ask you. You say, "I have tried to be saved and I am not." Did you ever go to God in the silence of your chamber, alone, and confess to Him that you were guilty? Did you ever lie at the foot of His throne, and

say, “O God, I deserve Your wrath. I have broken Your Law. I justly deserve Your anger”? Have you done that?

Now, He has said, “he that confesses his sin shall find mercy.” If you have not confessed your sins, whose fault is it that you have not got the mercy? Well, then, have you ever believed in Jesus?—that is, have you trusted in Him who, being God, became Man that He might suffer instead of you what was due from God on account of your sins? “Ah, that is the point. I break down there,” says one. “I cannot believe.” In what can you not believe? Cannot you believe what God tells you? Do you believe the Bible to be God’s Word? “Yes!” Then, I ask, how dare you say, “I cannot believe it”? In believing that Book to be true, you believe what it contains to be true! And God’s own testimony concerning His Son is this—that, “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him,” and that whoever trusts in Him is saved, and his sins are forgiven him at once.

“Oh, but I do not feel that I am forgiven.” Who says you are to *feel* yourself forgiven? God says you are sinful and admonishes you to confess your sins—to renounce your sins, to supplicate pardon for your sins—to believe in the remission of your sins by the Atonement offered once. It is enough for you that the witness of God is what you are to believe. It is not your *feeling* that is to furnish the rule of your faith. You shall feel happy by-and-by. You shall feel a change of heart by-and-by. But the first thing is to believe God’s witness concerning His Son. “But oh, somehow or other I cannot attain to faith.” Say, have you ever tried? “Well, I have sat down and tried to believe.”

Now, be a reasonable man. Were I to tell you a something that had occurred to your immediate advantage, you would sit down and try to believe it, looking at the possibilities of its being true with many a wishful thought. Or suppose you were compelled to doubt it and thought that I was mistaken, yet if you had an interest, you would go and look at the papers—you would go and inquire at offices where there are telegrams of fresh news. You would ask persons who were likely to judge whether such an event was at all possible. And in that way you would never rest till you could satisfy yourself about the truth of the statement.

Did you ever search God’s Word in that way? Have you read the story of the four Evangelists, to see whether it is so? Have you gone to hear sermons with this in your mind—“I desire to hear in order that I may believe”? Have you been really anxious to try and believe it? I speak to you as a believer in the Bible—and to me it seems monstrous that I should believe what is in the Bible, and yet not trust in Jesus Christ! But have you ever sought to trust Him? “Well, I don’t know.” No, but I *do* know. You are not in earnest! That is the point. You are earnest sometimes, if you are stirred up. But you go to sleep again. The fact is, there is some private sin you don’t like to give up, or else there is some old companion that you like to keep on with—and you know you cannot go with him and enjoy his conversation—and yet be a Christian.

Ah, there is something that keeps you back, for when the Lord makes a man resolute to be saved, all the devils in Hell cannot daunt His resolution. When once the soul says, "I must be reconciled to God. I must have peace. I must have the Savior. I must be cleansed by the precious blood"—who is there to stop him? Will God stop him? He delights in mercy! Will Jesus stop him? His flowing wounds invite him! Will the Holy Spirit stop him? It were blasphemy to suppose it! Who is to stop him, then? "Why, Satan." But is Satan by force or fraud to be a match for Christ? "Well, his own heart will stop him." Yes, but God is greater than his heart and is able to withstand his temptations and to help his infirmities. I charge you, Soul, if you would be saved, get to your chamber and tell God so! Go and speak to Him in the simplest language—"My God, I have offended You. Have mercy upon me. I have followed my own will, but now I desire to be obedient to You. Change my heart. Give me Your Holy Spirit. I have no merits of my own, but You have given Jesus to die for sinners. Lord, I am a sinner. I put my child-like trust in You. Save me, Lord."

Do you think you will ever be cast away? Why, you will be the first sinner that ever was, who sincerely came to Jesus that way. It cannot be! Do not be afraid, Soul. If you cast yourself on Christ, you can no more be sent to Hell than Christ can! If you have cast in your lot with Christ and have linked yourself to Him by faith, because He lives you shall live, also. Perhaps you know how Mr. Ryland put it? When his wife was dying and she was deeply desponding, though she had been for years a Christian, he said to her—"Well, where are you going, Betsy?" She had been saying to the nurse that she felt she was going to Hell and she said to her husband, "Oh, my Dear, I am going down to Hell."

"Betsy," he said, "what do you mean to do when you get there?" "Oh, John, don't talk so," she said. "But do you think you will pray, Betsy, when you get there?" "Pray? Yes," she said, "I will never leave off praying." "And do you think you will praise God when you get there?" "Ah, yes, I will never, never leave off praising God, whatever He does to me." "Why," he said, "they would say, 'Here is praying Betty Ryland and she is beginning to praise God. Turn her out—we can't bear to have her here.'" Of course, if any soul were sent there that really believed in Jesus, it would make a revolution in Heaven *and* Hell. It cannot be! God must change before He will let a sinner perish who trusts in Christ!

O, it is wonderful what power faith has! I remember standing at the Mansion House one day waiting to cross over to the other side when the omnibuses were coming from all the corners of the compass and I was looking for an opportunity to run in and out between them. A blind man came up and said, "I am sure you will lead me across. I am sure you will lead me across." I am sure I did not want the job, but I was quite sure that, if the blind man was sure I would do it, I could not decline to do it—and I did it accordingly. I did not like to have a blind man's confidence thrown away. It seemed as if his confidence was my compulsion. And, oh,

blind Sinner, lay hold upon the garment of Christ tonight and say, “Jesus, I believe You will lead me into Heaven. At any rate, I mean to trust You to do it. I have done with saving myself and I mean to rely on You, and You only.”

I tell you, your faith will compel Him—your trust shall hold Him fast. He will do anything for faith! Was He not overcome at the brook Jabbok by Jacob’s faith? Did not faith in the woman that touched the hem of His garment win a cure? And when He spoke to the Syro-Phoenician woman and called her a dog—did she not win healing for her daughter by the brave stand she made by her faith? The Lord waits to be gracious! Trust Him, Sinner! The Lord help you to do so and He shall have the glory, forever and ever!

And let me just add, here, that it is a night to be much observed among saints in their fellowship one with another. It does us good to listen as well as to talk when the mighty arm and the gracious hand of God, stretched forth on our behalf, furnishes the theme of conversation. There seems to me somehow or other to be a bias given to the whole life by the first call a man receives, as though it tinted the character with a purer hue than most of the subsequent incidents that belong to individual experience. Besides, dear Friends, in recalling the circumstances there will spring up a tender sympathy as well a devout gratitude, like that to which Paul bears witness—“and they glorified God in me.” What love feasts those are in which we commemorate the dawn of spiritual life! How free from conflicting opinions and turbulent passions!

As Cowper sings—

***“Hearts may be found that harbor, at this hour,
The love of Christ in all its quickening power
And lips unstained by folly or by strife,
Whose wisdom, drawn from the deep well of life
Tastes of its healthful origin, and flows
A Jordan for the ablution of our woes.
O days of Heaven, and nights of equal praise,
Serene and peaceful as those heavenly days
When souls drawn upward in communion sweet,
Enjoy the stillness of some close retreat;
Discourse, as if released and safe at home,
Of dangers past and wonders yet to come,
And spread the sacred treasures of the breast
Upon the lap of covenanted rest.”***

Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 12.

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BITTER HERBS

NO. 2727

**A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 19, 1901.**

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 25, 1880.**

***“With bitter herbs they shall eat it.”
Exodus 12:8.***

PERHAPS, before I come to the consideration of this sentence, it may be profitable, especially to the younger folk among us, if we think of the many points in which the Passover was a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells us that “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us” and, therefore, he informs us, by Inspiration—and therefore it is not a matter of conjecture or fancy—that the Passover was instituted to be a type of Jesus Christ who is the Lamb of God, the one appointed Sacrifice for the sins of all His people.

In our reading, we have already noticed that great care was to be taken in the selection of the paschal lamb. It was to be without blemish, even as Jesus Christ, our Savior, had no sin in Him. The prince of this world watched Him narrowly, but he found nothing of evil in Him. All His enemies, as well as His friends, agreed that He was without fault. The paschal lamb was to be in the fullness of its strength, “a male of the first year,” even as our Lord Jesus Christ was offered as a Sacrifice in the fullness of His manhood. He was perfect both as God and Man and, hence, was fit to become the Sacrifice for the sins of men. Admire and adore your perfect Savior, who, though He had no sin of His own, took upon Himself your sin, that you might be made the righteousness of God in Him!

The most important parts of the Passover celebration were the killing of the lamb and the sprinkling of the side posts of the door and the lintel with its blood. That was the ordained method by which the safety of those who dwelt within the house was secured. God looked with angry eyes on Egypt and bade His destroying angel avenge Him of His adversaries. “At midnight the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon.” There was no exception—every house was filled with lamentation except where the blood-mark was over and beside the door. The angel passed over that house, smiting none there, and we are expressly told that it was God’s sight of the sprinkled blood by which the first-born in Israel were preserved from destruction. This is the main type of Christ’s Atonement. Christ Jesus died as the

Substitute for all who believe in Him and, because He bore the punishment of sin for them, God righteously withholds it from them. How could He twice demand payment of sin's debt, first at the bleeding Surety's hand, and then again at the hand of those for whom He stood as Surety? Christ is the Substitute for all His elect. His elect are all those who believe in Him and by this sign you may know them—they are sheltering beneath His sprinkled blood—and when God sees the blood, He passes over them. So, let each one of us ask himself, "Am I hiding behind the blood of Jesus? Is my confidence entirely fixed in the great reconciliation and propitiation which Christ has made? If so, I shall live—no destroyer can ever smite me—God Himself must pass over me in the Day of Judgment and I shall be 'accepted in the Beloved.'"

There was in Egypt, that night, a saved Israel—saved because of the blood sprinkled outside their houses—and I hope we have here many members of a saved nation—saved not because of anything they are or ever will be in themselves, but because Jesus has suffered in their place and His blood interposes between God and them.

After this followed the feeding upon the lamb. The lamb, which had been slain, was to be roasted and eaten. And you who are saved by Christ's death must continue to live upon Christ, as He said to the Jews, "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you." This is, of course, a figure, meaning that Christ must be food to your minds and nutriment to your hearts. You must love Him, trust Him and endeavor to know more and more concerning Him. Your hearts must stay themselves upon Him as your Brother, having taken your nature, and as your Savior, having put away your sin.

This feeding upon the lamb was to be upon a roasted lamb—not raw, nor boiled, "but roasted with fire." Christ is food for our hearts as having suffered for us—as having passed through the fire of God's wrath against sin. I rejoice in Christ as He is now exalted at the right hand of the Father, but, first of all, I must know Him as despised and rejected of men. Christ's Second Advent is proper and lawful ground for joy, but not until you understand His First Advent and see Him in His humiliation on Calvary. Christ on the Cross is to be the one object of your faith—you must look to Him there even as the Israelite was to look upon and feed upon the lamb roasted in the fire. Think what Christ has endured for you, Beloved. I tried, this morning, [Sermon #1550, Volume 26, THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT—read/download the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>] to speak about His grief, but I know that I failed to set them adequately forth at all. Oh, what a fire was that through which our Lord Jesus Christ passed that He might become food for our souls!

Notice, next, that the Israelites were to eat the whole lamb and you who want to have Christ must have the whole of Him or none of Him! There are some who are willing to take His example, but not His doctrine—they cannot have Him. Others wish to take His doctrine, but not His precepts—they cannot have Him. Nothing of Him must be left, for there is no more in Christ than sinners absolutely need. You cannot satisfy your soul's craving with half a Christ—neither will God allow you to

insinuate that there is anything superfluous about His Son. The Jews had to eat all the lamb and he who would have Christ must have the whole of Christ—not only Christ as your Substitute, but Christ as your King! Not merely Christ to trust, but Christ to obey! He must be to you all that God sets Him forth to be, or else He will be nothing at all. Dear Hearer, are you willing thus to accept Christ as the Lamb of God? Are you willing to have Him altogether, to leave nothing of Him and to set aside nothing that appertains to Him? Then you may freely take Him as your own!

The paschal lamb was to be eaten that very night, nothing of it was to remain till the morning. The whole lamb was to be eaten at once, or to be consumed by fire. Now, dear Friends, I put the question to you—Are you willing to have Christ tonight? If there is anyone who wants to have Him tomorrow, I cannot promise that he shall have Him. But he who wants Christ tonight, is welcome to have Him. If you can truly say, “I am willing, at this moment, to take the whole of Christ to be mine, and to accept Him just as God gives Him,” you already have Him! Therefore be of good cheer, for God denies this Lamb to none who are unreservedly willing to receive Him. If you will have Him, that will of yours is given you by His Grace, so take Him freely!

As when one comes to a river and asks no leave to drink, but quenches his thirst at once, so come to Christ and freely take what God has provided on purpose for every willing soul. If you will have the whole of Christ to save you from living in sin as well as from dying in sin, then you may have Him and have Him now! Only delay not to take Him, lest you should even die while hearing about Him! Remember that solemn injunction which we united in singing only a few minutes ago—

***“Hasten, sinner, to be blest,
Stay not for the morrow’s sun
Lest perdition you arrest
Ere the morrow is begun.”***

Another instruction which was given to the Israelites concerning this paschal feast was that they were to eat it with unleavened bread. Leaven, you know, is usually regarded in Scripture as the type of hypocrisy and other evils, so, in accordance with this symbol, Christ is to be received sincerely. He who wishes to know the value of Christ must not play at receiving Him—he must not say that he has Him when he has Him not. No, dear Friend, your whole heart must be yielded to Christ and you must take a whole Christ to yourself, or else He can never be yours. I seem to think that there must be some here who are saying, “Yes, the Lord is drawing us to Himself and we are willing enough to be drawn to Him.” Come along, then, look not back, but yield to the gentle pressure of His sacred love, and do it thoroughly. Be out and out in your surrender to Christ—have no leavened cake of hypocrisy to mar the paschal feast—do not try to be other than you honestly mean to be. I beseech you, trifle not with my Lord and Master! If you must play the fool, do it with something else, but not with religion! If you will gamble, play with halfpence, as bad boys do—your immortal soul is too precious to be thrown away in a game of pitch and toss! Be in earnest in dealing with the Lord Jesus Christ!

Put away all leaven out of your house and out of your heart—and let it be with the unleavened bread of real sincerity of heart that you partake of the Lamb of God.

I have thus hurriedly gone over these instructions concerning the Passover in order to lead up to this one, which is to be the special theme of my discourse—“With bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

I. My first remark with regard to this command is, that JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE LAMB OF GOD, IS ALWAYS RECEIVED IN THIS FASHION AT THE FIRST.

Those bitter herbs were a kind of salad or condiment to be eaten with the lamb and are generally thought to have been lettuce, endive, chicory and such-like greens, as we call them—not nauseously bitter, but having a sufficient degree of bitterness to add a relish to the lamb. Now, when souls come to Christ, they carry out spiritually what is here set forth in metaphor—“with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

That is to say, whenever anyone really believes in Jesus Christ, there is always mingled with the joyful belief, *a measure of sorrowful repentance*. “Yes,” says the truthful heart, “Jesus Christ died for me, but how grieved I am that I should ever have lived such a life as to need that He should die for me! I read about His terrible agonies and I perceive that I was the cause of them. It was all for love of me that He came from Heaven to earth because He knew how guilty I would be, therefore was He nailed up to the Cross and put to death.” So the penitent soul does not know whether to rejoice or to sorrow. There is a mixture of emotions—there is a bitter sweet and a sweet bitter. I rejoice that Christ has put away my sin, but I sorrow that He should ever have had to do it—

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

I do not believe in that faith which has not a tear in its eye when it looks to Jesus. Dry-eyed faith seems to me to be bastard faith, not born of the Spirit of God. With our joy over pardoned guilt, we must mourn that we pierced the Lord. We think of our past sins—perhaps some of them were very black ones—and as they come up before our recollection, we wish that they could be blotted out of all remembrance. We mourn over the many times in which we resisted the Spirit of God and rejected the Savior and, while we know that all these sins are now forgiven, we cannot help being grieved because of them. And we sorrowfully sing—

**“I know they are forgiven,
But still their pain to me
Is all the grief and anguish
They laid, my Lord, on Thee.”**

There is another set of bitter herbs that we eat at the time of our conversion, when *there comes a distaste for the things in which we once took pleasure*. As soon as a man knows that he is saved by the shedding of Christ’s blood, he begins to dislike the things he once enjoyed. Pleasures and amusements of a polluting character, no, even those of a doubtful sort, at once lose all their former charm. Of course, worldlings say, “The

man is a fool! He has turned Puritan. He has gone mad.” These are some of the bitter herbs which you will have to eat—things that once seemed quite sweet will appear utterly loathsome and you will turn away from them with disgust. Your tastes will completely change. Your desires will alter. You will not always be able to understand yourself and, oftentimes, your mouth will be filled with bitter herbs on this account.

It may be that *some of you will have to eat more bitter herbs than others have*. For instance, a man who has been a thief, one who has secretly plundered his employer, must make restitution when he is converted—and that is often a very bitter herb. I have known some who did not like eating it, but there was no rest to their conscience until that was done. Friend, if you have anything which belongs to another, restore it, and restore it speedily—how can you expect God’s blessing to rest upon you while you retain that which you have stolen? Let him that stole, steal no more, and let him, as far as he can, make amends for the wrong that he has done. If you have been engaged in an evil trade while unconverted, as soon as you find Christ, you must clear out of that bad business. And if you have gained your livelihood in questionable ways, you must end all that sort of thing and come right straight out from it, if you would be a follower of Christ.

I have known a man who felt that he must go to one with whom he had been at enmity, and say to him, “I am a Christian, now, so let us be friends.” I have known some go and humble themselves very much and eat a lot of their own words—they had a proud spirit, so they would never have acted as they have done if Christ had not changed them by His Grace—but when He has met with them, they are ready to do anything that He wishes if they might but glorify His holy name! They found that in eating the Lamb, they had also to eat the bitter herbs, yet, surely, none of us need be unwilling to eat the bitter herbs if he may but have the privilege of eating the Lamb! If I may but feed on Jesus, I will seek to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and so let Him see that I do not follow Him in name, only, but in deed and in truth.

There are other bitter herbs, too, which we eat when we first come to Christ. They may be called *the herbs of holy anxiety*. When first you find the Lord, you are half afraid to put one foot before the other, lest you should tread where you ought not. I know that, in my early Christian life, I used to be afraid to speak lest I should say anything amiss. And I was continually on the watch lest I should grieve my blessed Master. I wish we all had this holy tenderness—it is a very proper thing to keep up all your life long. But we always begin with it if we begin aright—at first we are very tender and sensitive in spirit. Perhaps, afterwards, we learn to mix more confidence in God with our proper doubtfulness of ourselves, but, at the beginning of our Christian career, not having as much confidence as we ought to have in the promises of God, our anxieties are very real, so that while we eat the Lamb, we take a mouthful of bitter herbs at the same time.

If any of you are feeling sad just now, and are afraid that you may not come to Christ because you are so sad, let me tell you that is the very

reason why you may come to Him! You have the bitter herbs—now come and eat the Lamb. Your heart is sorrowful, so come and have it made glad. Come with your burden of sin, come with your brokenness of heart, come with your despair, come just as you are and partake of the rich provision which God has prepared for you in Christ—and then go on your way rejoicing!

Thus I hope I have made it clear to you that Jesus is received at the first as the paschal lamb had to be eaten, that is, with bitter herbs.

II. Now, secondly, IT IS THE SAME WHENEVER WE FEED UPON HIM AFTERWARDS.

At least I find it to be so in my own case. I confess that *my Lord Jesus is never so sweet to me as when I am thoroughly bowed down under a sense of my own unworthiness*. I often feel far more unworthy than any of you can feel, for the Lord's Grace and mercy towards me make me tremble and feel ashamed that I am not more earnest about your souls, and not more anxious to bring sinners to Christ. Yet I say again that He is a precious Christ to me and He is never so precious as when I am most vile in my own sight. Is it not so with you also, Beloved? When you are very great in your own esteem, Christ appears little to you. But when you are very little, then Christ becomes all the greater to you—is it not so? When you feel that you are poor, guilty sinners, Christ is regarded by you as a glorious Savior, but if any of you have begun to spread out the fine peacock feathers of perfectionism, Christ must seem very insignificant to you. It is a bad sign whenever you feel that you do not need to confess sin, or to look to Christ as you did at the first when you said—

***"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,
But Jesus Christ is my All-in-All."***

Even after you have known Christ for 30 years or more, there is no feeding upon Him like feeding upon Him with the bitter herbs—with a sense of continued unworthiness pressing upon you—and then does Christ become exceedingly sweet unto your taste.

And I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that it is a blessed thing to feed upon Christ *with a soft suddenness of spirit*. Full Assurance is a grand thing, but I think I have known a kind of full Assurance that I would never covet, though it speaks very glibly as though its warfare were accomplished and its victory were perfectly secure. It is a good thing to be able to read your title clear "to mansions in the skies" and happy is the man who can always do it. But it is a safe thing to feel the tears of repentance in your eyes through a deep sense of your unfitness for the skies at present, and to have your heart burdened because you do not feel Heaven within you and you are, therefore, afraid lest you should not be fit to be within Heaven. Cowper wisely wrote—

***"He has no hope who never had a fear
And he that never doubted of his state,
He may perhaps—perhaps he may—too late."***

I would sooner shiver in dread anxiety with the poorest sincere soul who ever trembled before God than I would stand in an unwarrantable confidence as to my own security and boast and brag of my wonderful attainments. God deliver us from that sort of spirit! A quiet, peaceful frame

of mind—a gentle, humble, tender walk with God, seems to me to be the thing that is especially to be desired. When you fear and tremble for all the goodness that God makes to pass before you—not because you doubt, but because you believe—you become anxious after a holy and gracious fashion. You think I am talking paradoxes, but I know what I mean, even if I cannot make you understand it. You know that you are a child of God and you realize that you are favored of the Most High—and therefore you are afraid to do anything that would be derogatory to His Divine dignity. I believe that there is no way of acceptably eating the Lamb and that there is no possibility of enjoying Christ to the fullest without such bitter herbs as these. I know that I never yet had a single mouthful of this paschal supper which my heart did really digest and assimilate without having, at the same time, a bowed and broken spirit to be as a bitter herb to help the digestion of the heavenly meat.

III. Now, thirdly, dear Friends, as our text is true in relation to Christ, who is the blessed gift of God, “His unspeakable gift,” I think you will not at all wonder if I say that THIS RULE RUNS THROUGH ALL OUR SPIRITUAL GIFTS—YES, AND OUR TEMPORAL ONES, TOO.

God may give us many temporal blessings, but if we are His children, this principle will hold good, that *bitter herbs will be mingled with all the sweets of life*. If any of you are favored with great success, you will find that our text is true in your case. God sends bountiful harvests, but not without the oppressive heat that makes the laborer sweat and faint as he gathers in the golden grain. God up lifts men in His gracious Providence, as He did David, but David had to eat any quantity of bitter herbs before he reached the throne, and even after he became king, with bitter herbs did he eat his royal dainties. And his son Solomon, who had fewer trials, found so many bitter herbs that he cried out, “Vanity of vanities; all is vanity!” God never intends that there shall be any sweet in this world without something sour to go with it. The rose must have its thorn and among the wheat, the poppies must still continue to grow.

You children of God, especially, will find it so, for *what if your Heavenly Father gave you all sweet and no bitter?* You would soon grow sick—eating nothing but honey would cause you many a qualm and pain. God does not mean us to build our nests here, so He sends a high wind that makes the trees rock to and fro, that we may look for a more secure place of abode. If we had all that we needed here, we would never wish to be up and away to that better world which is the goal of all our desires! If the bread was always plentiful upon the table and the fruits were always abundant in the garden, and the sky was always blue, and the fleece was always ready for the garment, and the brain was always clear, and the feet were always nimble, would we not, then, forget our God? I am afraid that we would and, therefore, He sends us these bitter herbs that nothing on earth may content us and that we may cry with the Psalmist, “Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside You.”

Go on, young man, get your degree and call your friends together to a festival! But “with bitter herbs shall they eat it.” And you, young woman,

your marriage feast draws near, but with bitter herbs shall you eat it. Push on, good Sir, with that business of yours—you shall enjoy prosperity, but with bitter herbs shall you eat it. Whatever there is here below that is the object of lawful desire, you may seek—but always know that if you gain it, there will come some salutary medicine with it! Otherwise, if it is not so, you may question whether you are really a child of God. If there is no stone in your road, and no cloud in your sky, and if there has never been such a thing, but you have had unbroken prosperity, I tremble for you and I say, with David, “I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree. Yet he passed away and, lo, he was not: yes, I sought him, but he could not be found.”

IV. I will not now dwell upon many other points which I might mention, but will just briefly show you that our text also applies to us **IN LIVING A GODLY LIFE.**

It may be fulfilled to us *through persecution from the world.* You who have fed upon Christ and now wish to serve the Lord with your whole heart, must not reckon that you will be able to do it without paying a heavy price for the privilege. You will have many bitter herbs to eat, whoever may be allowed to go without them. A man who tries to be honest will find many people who will give him bitter herbs to eat. If you speak the Truth of God wherever you are, you will often have bitter herbs handed to you. Try to do that which is right, either among working men or among merchant princes. Try to lead a really gracious, separated life, and see whether the seed of the serpent does not hiss at you and try to bite and sting you. There is no need for you to try to grow your own bitter herbs—your enemies will supply them to you for nothing—and you shall have them often when you would rather be without them. If you tack about and shift your course with every wind, perhaps you may curry favor with your foes and they may allow you to eat your lamb without any bitter herbs. But if you are straight as a pikestaff, and clear as the light, you shall soon have bitter herbs to eat, depend upon it!

If nobody should give you any, *you will find some growing in your own garden,* for, even beside that sweet flower called heartsease, there will grow in our breast many herbs that are anything but sweet. For instance, if a man wishes to be downright true, he will sometimes detect himself in being false—his very love of truth will make him see that fault, and it will be a bitter herb for him to eat. One who wishes never to exaggerate in speaking, may himself discover that he has done so—he must eat that herb, bitter as it is. One who wishes to be scrupulously correct in all his business transactions may find that he has made a mistake across the counter—he may easily be entrapped into a dishonest action and then he will have many bitter herbs to eat. We cannot gain a victory over the natural tendencies of our corrupt nature, even through Divine Grace, without having some bitter herbs to eat! Then eat them like men—they will help to cleanse you, they will be a blessing to you and they will make the struggle after righteousness, honor and virtue for God’s sake, and for Christ’s sake, to be all the easier to you. May the Lord graciously

enable you, in that struggle, to come off more than conquerors through Him who has loved you!

V. The next point is THAT EVEN IN TRYING TO WIN SOULS FOR CHRIST, you will have to eat some bitter herbs.

I am very thankful that I am addressing so large a company of dear Christian friends who help to bring others to Christ. I wish that I could say that of all of you who are members of the Church, but I can truly say it of most of you. You are our glory and our crown of rejoicing, because you live to bless others. Now, I believe that you will join with me in confessing that *this holy work has been accompanied by much soul-humbling*. If ever you have brought a soul to Christ, there have been bitter herbs in your feast of joy over it. I mean that you have never brought anyone to Christ without a great deal of trouble. Does anybody think that our sermons and our Sunday school teaching cost us nothing? “Oh,” says one, “I can preach off-hand.” Yes, I daresay you can, but I never heard of an off-hand farm that brought forth an off-hand crop. “Oh, I have nothing to do but to sit down and when the Bible is opened, just explain it to the boys and girls gathered around me—and I keep good order among them.” Yes, perhaps you do, but the best order that could be given to you would be an order to go home! If you go to your class with no agony of spirit, no anguish of heart, what good can come of your teaching?

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I am certain that if God has ever honored you by making you the means of the conversion of any of your fellow sinners, you have rejoiced greatly, but you have known that it was, under God, the result of much previous agony of spirit on their behalf. Yes, and, often, at the very time when God has blessed you, you have had a bitter disappointment! You thought that dear girl really was brought to Christ, yet she turns out, before long, to be a giddy chit. And there is that bright boy—you believed that he was saved. So he is, perhaps, yet you see grave faults in him and you are very much grieved about him. Yes, that will always be the case with our work, here, and it is only another illustration of our text—“with bitter herbs shall they eat it.”

Possibly, *if God gives you very great success, He will take away from you, to a large extent, the power to rejoice in it*. I know one who seldom lives through a day without hearing of many who have been brought to Christ by him, but who, nevertheless, has long been incapable of taking any delight in anything he does and who is obliged to live out of himself entirely, and on God alone. And I think, Brothers and Sisters, that in proportion as you know the truth about this matter, you will agree with me that it is so with you as well and that, somehow or other, if God means to bless you, He takes care to break the neck of your pride, lest you should be lifted up with conceit and fall into the snare of the devil. It is a high honor to be used by God as His instrument in blessing the poorest chimney-sweep, or the humblest child— but you may depend upon it that if He honors you in public, He will whip you behind the door and He will make you feel that you are nothing when He gets you by yourself.

VI. I expect that the rule of our text will hold good with us to the last and that it will be applied IN MAKING US MEET FOR HEAVEN.

Some of us will, within a very short time, eat our Passover supper in another sense, for we shall pass over Jordan and enter the heavenly Canaan. We shall go to the top of Pisgah, not to view the landscape, and go down again, but to fall asleep there and so spiritually to pass over the Jordan of death, into the land of the blessed, where God will reveal Himself fully to us. You will stand before long, dear Brother or Sister, with your staff in your hand, just as the Israelites did, and with your loins girt—and those who see you will say to you, “Where are you going? Where are you going?” And you will answer, “We are going to our own country—to the Promised Land above.” It may be that you will have bitter herbs to eat at that time. Do not, however, think any more of them than you do of those which you eat at your own table. Nobody ever turns away from the lamb because the sauce that goes with it seems sharp. You say, “No, it gives a relish to the meat.” So, when you and I come to die, it may be painful to bid farewell to dear ones here below, but that will be like eating bitter herbs. They will only give the greater zest to that last supper on earth which will melt into a blessed breaking of the fast in Heaven!

You have often seen the sun go down, have you not? What a fine sight it is! He often seems to look far larger in the setting than he ever did before—and if the clouds come round about him, are they not often the very glory of the sunset? And have you not seen his departing rays brighten them all up? No painter could ever have put together such charming colors. The mighty Artist of Heaven has Himself displayed His skill, but how did He make all that splendor? It was out of clouds—they were the canvas which was spattered with the hues of Heaven by the sublime Artist. So shall it be with you, dear Friend, at last. Your old age, your pains, your groans shall only be a part of the splendor which God gives to His people when they set at the last like the sun.

Be of good courage, then, and fear not! Nobody stays away from a feast because of the salad that is served with the food, so let nobody stay away from Christ, or away from Heaven because of the little griefs he may have to bear, the light afflictions which are but for a moment, which work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! God bless you, Beloved, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EXODUS 12:1-20.**

Verses 1, 2. *And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you.* God thinks a great deal of the redemption of His people. When He redeemed them out of their Egyptian bondage, He took care that the mighty deed should be worthily commemorated. Thenceforth, the Jewish year was to begin with the celebration of the national deliverance and now, when any of us are converted to God, and so are set free from the slavery of sin, we should reckon that

then we really begin to live! All the previous part of our life has been wasted, but when we are brought truly to know God, through faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, then have we realized, indeed, what life is. The month of our conversion should be to us the beginning of months, the first month of the year to us.

3, 4. *Speak you unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, 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 worship of God must be rendered in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and preparation. This paschal supper was not to be celebrated in any fashion that the people might choose, but they were to take time to have the lamb properly examined, that it might be found perfect in every respect, and that everything might be set in order so that the feast should be observed with due reverence and solemnity. Let us take care that we act thus in all our devotions. Let us never rush to prayer or hasten to praise, but let us pause awhile, and think what we are about to do, lest we offer the sacrifice of fools, and so cause the Lord to bid us take back that which we have brought to put upon His altar without due thoughtfulness.

5. *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: you shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goat.* It was to be a type of Christ and, therefore, it must be the best that they had. It must be in the prime of its strength, otherwise it would not be a fit emblem of the "strong Son of God" whose mighty love moved Him to give Himself to death for us.

6-10. *And you shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the entrails thereof. And you shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remains of it until the morning you shall burn with fire.* Everything was to be done exactly according to God's order. The alteration of the slightest detail would have spoiled it all. I wish that all Christians would remember this rule with regard to the ordinances of God's House. They are not for us to make, or for us to alter, but for us to keep!

11. *And thus shall you eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S Passover.* They were thus to exercise an act of faith. Why were they to eat in haste, but that they expected soon to be gone? They were to stand like travelers who are starting upon a journey, believing that God was about to set them free. Oh, that we would always exercise faith in all our devotions, for without faith it must always be impossible to please God.

12, 13. *For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you.* What a grand Gospel statement that is! When the sinner sees the blood, it is for his comfort—but it is God’s sight of the blood that is, after all, the grand thing—and when is it that He does not see it?

13-20. *And the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever. Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; even the first day you shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel. And in the first day there shall be an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you; no manner of work shall be done in them, save that which every man must eat, that only may be done of you. And you shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall you observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever. In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at even, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days shall there be no leaven found in your houses: for whoever eats that which is leavened, even that soul shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a stranger, or born in the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall you eat unleavened bread.* Thus we see God instituting a commemoration of the deliverance of His people out of Egypt. How much more ought you and I, with joyful gladness, to remember the deliverance of our soul from the slavery of sin and Satan! Let us never forget it. I should like to refresh the memories of bygone times with you who know the Lord. the Lord help you, now, with deepest gratitude, to remember the day when first you saw your Savior and the yoke was taken from your neck, and the burden from your shoulder. Glory be to the delivering Lord!

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—728, 561, 520.

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

REDEEMING THE UNCLEAN

NO. 3458

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 13, 1915.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 9, 1868.

*“And every first-born of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb;
and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck.”*
Exodus 13:13.

WE read to you in the former part of the service the origination of the Law of God by which the first-born, both of man and beast, belonged to the Most High. That Law seemed to be a very admirable memorial of what the Lord did, and also a very just requirement on the part of God that the first-born, whom He had so miraculously delivered, should be His through all time.

But the difficulty arose as to how some beasts, which were counted unclean by the Law, could be offered to God at all. There were many animals necessary to man, useful for draught, and so forth, but not coming under the list of clean animals, such as divided the hoof and chewed the cud. Among the rest, the donkey, useful everywhere, but most of all in oriental countries, was counted unclean. How, then, could it be dedicated to God? How could the first-born of the donkey be given to Him? Our text solves the difficulty. An exchange was made. A lamb was offered instead, and then the donkey, of course, was redeemed. But if the owner did not sufficiently value it to give a lamb, instead, then the neck was broken and the animal destroyed.

The teaching of the text is just as follows. It is fourfold and I think we shall have to bring out each fold. Of course, it is typical of something to do with ourselves and Christ, and our standing before God. And the first observation is this, that—

I. AS THE DONKEY, BEING UNCLEAN, WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO GOD, EVEN SO, UNRENEWED MAN, BEING UNCLEAN, IS ALSO UNACCEPTABLE BEFORE THE MOST HIGH.

Did it ever strike you that man, according to the Jewish ceremonial Law, is an unclean creature? Nothing was clean, according to the Law of Moses, but that which divided the hoof and chewed the cud. Now man fails in one of these, and by the Law he is put down as a sinner, as being on a level with the unclean beasts. What a wonder the Gospel does for us when, being redeemed with a price, we are said to be the sheep of God, the lambs of Christ's flock, so that therein we bear the same name as the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, and we are raised from the condition of the

brute, into which sin brought us, and are made to sit far above principalities and powers, in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus! Lost by sin through the Law and placed in the very depths, man, by Grace through Jesus Christ, is lifted up to the very heights!

But we return to what we started with, namely, that man has become, through sin, like the donkey—a creature incapable of rendering acceptable service to God. For, in the first place, *every man has already broken the Law of God* and, as God accepts no service but that which is, like Himself, perfect, no unrenewed man is capable of rendering perfect legal obedience such as God can accept. His Law is like a superb crystal vase. If it is whole, it is whole. But if it is chipped or cracked in the smallest degree, the Law is broken. It is like a great golden chain which is precious and useful while whole, but the snapping of one link breaks the chain. So, unless a man could keep God's Law without any defect or transgression, it would not be possible that he could be accepted by the Most High. Now there is not one of us but has certainly broken some command. I fear we have, all of us, broken all the commands! If not in act, yet in word or in thought, so that before God's bar we ought to plead guilty to every count in the indictment and should not hope to be accepted by our works. What a condemning text is that in Isaiah—"We are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"! He does not say that all our *wickednesses* are so—no, these are worse and baser, still, but all our *righteousnesses* are—that is, the best thing which unrenewed nature can possibly produce is nothing better than the rag which is too filthy to be seen, but must be cast away and burned in the fire! Yes, you that seek to be justified by your good works, you may pant, and strive, and wear out your lives in energetic failures, for success is entirely impossible! You cannot thus, while you are what you are, produce a righteousness that God can accept, seeing that you have already sinned.

In addition to this, *man's heart is alienated*. We would not, ourselves, accept a service done us by an enemy, or that is done without any motive of repentance. No, since the very essence of obedience lies in the yielding up of the heart—until a man's heart is made new, till he loves the God whom he has despised, all that he can do is but the false serving of a hypocrite, the dead service of a formalist, or the forced service of a slave—and none of these can God accept! Do you think when the ungodly man repeats a prayer, and his heart is absent, that God accepts the prayer? I tell you that that prayer is, in itself, a sin and a great provocation against the Most High! When the ungodly man stands with God's people and pretends to be one of them, repeats their creeds and declares himself to be a Believer in the things which he does not believe, he does but lie before God and the things he says cannot be received by Him. All outward, external religion, in which the heart does not join, so far from being received by the Most High with approbation, must be viewed by Him with

utter abhorrence. How is it possible, then, for a man who loves not God to be accepted before the King of Kings?

In, addition to this, there is no service which unrenewed man can render *which is not defiled with sin, even in itself*, chiefly with one sin, namely, self-righteousness. If a man works works of righteousness with the idea that he is meriting a reward, thereby, to whom is he a servant? I answer, not to God, but to himself! If I obey, or profess to obey, the Law of God, but my whole motive is that I may save myself, and that I may get happiness unto myself, evidently self is the reigning principle. I am not truly obedient to God as the great delight of my spirit. I do not love Him with heart, and soul, and strength, but I love myself, and cover up this selfishness with the pretence that I love Him. Oh, you that are thus striving to serve yourselves under some spiritual garb or other, you cannot serve the living God, do what you will! Your holiest service will be an offense, a smoke in His nostrils, and He will put away your best things as being offered with strange fire and, therefore, not to be received!

Once more. *By very nature, man is so obnoxious to the wrath of God that it is impossible for God to accept him as His creature.* Kings would not delight to be served by men with foul hands who left defilement everywhere. Yet such are we! We would not like to always have before our eyes, in our servants, some dreadful disease, some disgusting leprosy and yet such is the disease of sin. “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.” I have heard that text quoted, “You cannot look upon it but with abhorrence.” That is true, but it is put still stronger. The Prophet puts it that He cannot look upon it, that He cannot endure it. He is a consuming fire towards sinners and what He will do with the finally impenitent is, so He says, “tear them in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver,” for out of Christ, God cannot tolerate the ungodly! Not for a single hour would He spare this world were it not that the Mediator comes between—otherwise the Immaculate Perfection of the eternal God could not endure sin to be anywhere within His reach. He would sweep the universe clear of every rebel with the broom of destruction! He would, once and for all, ease Himself of His adversaries and shake Himself from His enemies, even as a man shakes the dust from his feet!

Now what a very solemn Truth of God this is! Do not think that it is *my* statement. It is really the teaching of God’s Word, that the unregenerate man is an unclean man and cannot be acceptable to God. “He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed on the Son of God.” The unrenewed man is corrupt! He is dead in trespasses and sins! Now this is meant for some of you. It is meant for some of you who are very excellent and amiable people, and very moral. It is meant not for the vilest of the vile, alone, but for all classes and conditions of men—for the professedly religious people, too. Unless your hearts are right before the Lord and you have believed in Jesus, you cannot, you

never can, strive as you will, be received before the Most High any more than the donkey could be acceptable upon the altar of God! But now we advance to the second Truth of God which is in the text, namely, that—

II. THE SERVICE OF MAN, WHICH GOD CANNOT ACCEPT, IS, NEVERTHELESS, GOD'S DUE.

God could not receive the donkey because it was unclean, but still it belonged to God for all that. God's claim extended over all the first-born, clean or unclean, and that claim must be maintained. Sinner, you cannot serve God—you are too sinful! Your heart too evil—your service too impure! But still, God's claim upon you for a perfectly holy life has not ceased. It has not lost its power, nor bated one jot or tittle of its just and righteous force. It has been laid down by some theologians as being almost a self-evident Truth that God will require no more of a man than he can do—but this, by every thoughtful mind—will be soon discovered to be a self-evident lie instead of being true—for God's Law is not changed by our being changed! Whatever God demanded of man when he was perfect, He demands the same thing of him now that he is imperfect! The Law of God is holy, and just, and good. If it were ever too severe, then God was not righteous in making it. And if He alters it to suit us, what is that but the cutting down of His integrity and the disfiguring of the tables of His own perfectly pure and holy statute Book? It cannot not be! You, in common life, know very well that a man is sometimes bound to do what he cannot do. If a man is in your debt and he tells you he cannot pay you, you do not consider that his not being able to pay exonerates him from the debt. He is still in your debt. If he could have paid when he entered upon the debt, it was a debt—but now that he cannot pay it, it is still a debt! True, there are ways in which he can get cleared of the debt, just as there are ways of salvation by which a man may be delivered from sin, but still, the debt is none the less a debt because the man cannot pay it. Everybody knows that inability to pay does not exonerate the man from the duty to pay. So with God. He did not make you a sinner, Sinner. You were pure and holy when you came from His hands. Your sin is your own. Your weakness, inability, your willfulness, your backwardness to keep the Law—all these are your own, and so far from excusing you, they shall be swift witnesses against you to condemn you!

Take another instance. There are some men who have become such thieves that we say of them, and say truly, that it is impossible for them to be honest. They are no sooner out of prison than their hand is into somebody's pocket—they cannot be easy and at rest till they are up before the magistrate again! But did you ever hear such a man say, "Sir, I cannot be honest! I have such an irresistible tendency to steal that the law ought to be changed on my account because I have lost my principle of honesty—therefore the law ought not to bind me"? "No," you say, "but he ought to be kept in prison always, for this is another offense to make his evil heart an excuse for his evil ways." Remember, Sinner, that your inability to come to Christ is not your misfortune, but your sin! Your in-

ability to keep the Law of God is not your calamity as much as it is your willful wickedness. Inasmuch as you are unclean and evil, the thought that you cannot help it should alarm you, for you ought to help it. You have no business to be in the state of sin you now are. If you could not help it, if there were any physical disability, you might be excused. But inasmuch as the disability is spiritual and moral, and deals with your will, there is no excuse for you! The donkey could not be accepted, but still the donkey belonged to God. You cannot be received as you are, all unconverted, but still God has a claim upon you—and for every idle word that you shall speak, He shall bring you into judgment—and for not serving Him, He will condemn you! For not believing in Christ, you shall be called to account at the last.

But I must pass on. The third thing in the text is this, that the difficulty in hand was met in this way—the donkey must be God's, yet it cannot be, for it is too impure for Him to receive! What then?

III. IT MUST BE REDEEMED BY A SUBSTITUTE.

“Every first-born of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb.” Oh, the glorious Gospel comes out here in much of its effulgence in connection with the redemption of men! The Jew would, perhaps, deliberate awhile. “Well,” he might say, “I fancy I should like to have this donkey grown up, for I need it as a beast of burden. But here is a lamb that must be killed in its place, and he is the more valuable of the two.” I fancy I can hear a consultation held in the family as to what should be done. It may be that in some cases the lamb would be the less precious of the two. However what may be, it is agreed at the last that the lamb shall die and that the donkey shall live.

Now, in our case, there might have been a consultation, indeed, as to which was the more precious—our poor, willful, wicked selves, or the Lamb of God, the Only-Begotten of the Father. All of us put together, and millions upon millions of our human race could never equal in value the precious Lord Jesus! If you were to put in all the angels as well, and all the creatures that God has ever made, they could not equal Him who is the brightness of His Father's Glory and the express Image of His Person! “Yet He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” And this is the Gospel which we have to preach to you every time we stand before you, namely, that Christ Jesus, the Lamb of God, was offered to God as a Substitute for ungodly, unclean, unacceptable man! That we might not die, Christ died! That we might not be cursed, Jesus was cursed and fastened to the tree! That we might be received, He was rejected! That we might be approved, He was despised—and that we might live forever He bowed His head and died in our place!

If any man wants to understand theology, he had better begin here. This is the first and main point. I do not think I should dispute with any of my Brothers in the ministry upon what else they hold if they all hold purely and straightforwardly the Doctrine of Substitution by Jesus Christ

on the behalf of His own elect people. Martin Luther stood out for Justification by Faith, and rightly so, for in his day that seemed to be the center, where all the battle raged. I think that just now Substitution by Christ seems to be the place where the garments are rolled in blood—and where the fight is thickest. That Jesus Christ was punished in the sinner's place—that the wrath which was due to His people was endured by Him, that He drank the cup of bitterness which they ought to have drunk—is the grandest of all the Truths of God and so sublime a Truth that if all the Christians in the world were to be burned in one dreadful holocaust, the price would be but little to maintain this precious Doctrine in its integrity upon the face of the earth!

Now most men know that they are to be saved by Christ, but I am afraid—but I am afraid that it is not always preached plainly, so that men know how it is that Christ saves them. My dear Hearer, I would not have you go away without knowing this! Christ Jesus came into the world to take the sins of His people upon Himself and to be punished for them. Well, if Christ was punished for them, they could not be punished afterwards. Christ's being punished in their place was the full discharge of their debt which they owed to Divine Justice, and they are sure to be saved. They for whom Christ died as a Substitute can no more be damned than Christ, Himself, can be! It is not possible that Hell can enclose them, or else where are the justice and the integrity of God? Does He demand the man, and then take a Substitute and then take the man again? Does He demand the payment of our debt, and receive that payment at the hand of Christ, and then arrest us a second time for the same debt? Then, in the great court of King's Bench in Heaven, where is justice? The honor of God, the faithfulness of God, the integrity of God are certain guarantees to every soul for whom Christ died, that if Christ died for him, he shall not die, but shall be exempt from the curse of the Law!

“How then,” says one, “may I know that Christ died for my soul?” Sir, do you trust Him? Will you trust Him now? If so, that is the mark of His redeemed! This is the King's mark upon His treasure! This is the mark of the great Sheep-Master upon all of those whom He has bought with His blood. If you will take Him to be the only pillar of your salvation. If you will build upon Him as the sole foundation of your everlasting hope, then you are His! And as for your sins, they are laid on Him. As for your righteousness, you have none of your own, but Christ's righteousness is yours! As in the case before us, the lamb was offered—the donkey was spared. The unclean animal lived—the clean creature died! There was a change of places. So does Christ change places with the sinner! Christ puts Himself in the sinner's place and what do we read? “He was numbered with the transgressors,” and, being numbered with the transgressors, what then? Why, He was put to death as a transgressor! They crucified Him between two malefactors. He had to suffer the death of a felon! And though in Him was no sin, yet, “the Lord has made to meet upon

Him the iniquities of us all.” He was, before God, the Representative of all His people, and all the sins of His people covered Him until He had drunk the cup of wrath. And then He threw off the horrible incubus of His people’s sins and cast the stupendous load of the guilt of all His elect down into the sepulcher and there left it buried forever! And in His rising from the dead, He gave to them the pledge and earnest of their acquittal and of their everlasting life! Ah, my Hearers, I wish I had a thousand tongues with which to proclaim this one Truth of God! As I have not, I ask the tongues of all those who know its preciousness to tell it forth. Tell the sick, tell the dying, tell the young, tell the old, tell sinners of every degree and every class, that salvation is not by what *they do*, nor by what *they feel*, but that it all lies in that Man who was once crucified, but who now lives in the power of an endless life before the eternal Throne of God! And if they say, “What do you mean by this?” tell them that this Man is none other than God Over All, blessed forever, and that He condescended to become Man and take upon Himself the sins of His people, and to be punished for their guilt, so that whoever believes on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life! The Just for the unjust, He died to bring us to God! This is the Gospel—the core, the kernel, the marrow of the entire Bible! You may say of all the Book besides, that it is but folds and wrappings—but this is what it wraps up—Substitution by Christ! This is but the box, the case—it is Christ that is the Jewel, the Treasure for which the case was made! Believe this Truth of God! Believe it as a Doctrine, but, better still, cast your souls on it, and say, “If it is so, then I will trust in the power of Him who loved, and lived, and died for sinners that I might go free.” The last Truth of God in the text is a very solemn one, namely, that—

IV. THE UNREDEEMED MAN MUST DIE.

The unredeemed donkey was put to a speedy and very ignominious death. “You shall break its neck.” There was no bringing of it to the altar, but it must be as an obnoxious thing, killed with the axe and left. There is no choice for any man, woman, or child here, except this. If you trust in Christ, you are redeemed, and you shall live. If you do not, there is something worse for you than the breaking of the neck of the poor donkey. When they break its neck, it is done—just a pang and a struggle, and it is over. But it is not over with us when the time comes to execute the righteous sentence of the Law if Christ has not suffered that sentence for us and we are found unbelievers in Him! Then, first of all, the soul is torn from the body—the body left here, the soul to appear before God—and then it immediately receives the foretokens of its last and ultimate doom! It is driven from God’s Presence to abide as a naked spirit in utter wretchedness. When our Lord pictures the death of the rich man, He does not talk about any sleep, but He says, “In Hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.” He was one moment on earth, but the next moment in Hell! There the soul must continue till the Resurrection comes, and

then the soul must come back to the body and, body and soul together must stand in that great gathering where every eye shall see the Pierced One and behold Him in His Glory. Then the great and final sentence shall be pronounced and to the unregenerate it will be this—"Then shall He say to those at His left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

I tremble while I speak thus, but you must hear it, lest you miss it. And we must speak it, lest we be found guilty of your soul's blood. In the name of the living God, I speak to everyone to whom this voice can come. You must have Christ die for you, or you must die forever! It must be either Calvary or Hell—one of the two! His blood must be sprinkled upon your conscience, or else your blood shall be upon your own head! It is with you tonight—turn or burn—believe or perish! For I do assure you, according to the teaching of the Word of God and of His Holy Spirit, that there is not the shadow of a hope anywhere else for you. You may belong to some church and you may hope to be saved by your baptism or by your confirmation, but these are useless apart from Christ! You may attend some meeting house, and you may think to be saved because you are very orthodox, but your orthodoxy will perish with you, and will only be firewood for your burning if you trust to that! Perhaps you think that leaving something in your will at the last to some charity, or giving liberally to the poor, may cover a multitude of sins, and that with such a covering as Achan used when he covered up the wedge of gold that God's eyes might not see the unholy thing. But Achan died, notwithstanding that he had covered up his ill-gotten wealth—and so will you!

Ah, if an angel should come here tonight, and speak, perhaps you would listen to him more intensely than you would to me. But what could he tell you more simple than this, that there is but one hope for you, and that one hope neglected, there is no hope, no hope, no hope forever? God has been pleased to commit this ministry not unto angels, but unto us—poor men like yourselves—that we may tell you with affection, that we may speak to you with sympathy. Why will you die? You know what pain is, do you not? You have suffered enough already. Some of you have to endure the biting pangs of hunger. You are sometimes cold and poverty brings you very low. Will you be everlastingly poor? Will you forever endure the pangs and miseries infinitely worse than any you have known in this world? I am not inventing bugbears to frighten you. God forbid! I am only telling you what I have read in God's Word and what you yourselves may see to be there. "Except you repent," said Christ, "you shall all likewise perish." Why need you perish? Why musts you perish? Jesus Christ is preached to you and we say to you, tonight, in the name of the Most High—Whoever believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved! Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool if you do but trust Him! Though you have gone ever so far into sin, yet simple faith in Christ will bring you out of it! And though your sins should be ingrained in your nature and have become such a habit to you that you

seem no more able to get rid of your abominable habits than the leopard could get rid of his spots, or the Ethiopian of his black skin—yet such is the miraculous power of the blood of Jesus that it can take out the leopard’s spots, and remove the Ethiopian’s hue, and make those white who were once defiled, for it not only takes away the guilt of sin, but the power of sin! If you believe in Christ, you will have a new nature, new desires, new tastes, new enjoyments! You shall hate the things you once loved, and love the things you once hated—

**“Tis but to trust Immanuel’s blood!
‘Tis all! ‘Tis all!”**

“Yes,” I hear you say, “but this is too little! It is too easy!” Well, and what a mercy that is for you, for if it were a difficult thing, how could you do it? You are precisely in the case of Naaman, when the Prophet said to him, “Go and wash in Jordan seven times.” “Oh,” said Naaman, “it is too simple!” Then his servant said, “My Father, if the Prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, then, when he said to you, Wash and be clean?” The poor Hindu will roll himself over and over for five hundred miles to get to the Ganges, because he has been told that he will get rid of his sin if he thus lies prostrate in the dust the whole painful journey. Poor soul, he is but like us! We would all do that if we were quite sure that we would be saved by it. How much rather, then, when Christ simply says, “Trust, trust, trust, trust Christ and live! Depend simply upon Him! Rely upon Him!”

Are you not almost sick of hearing me tell you this? We have to iterate and reiterate on this point. We have to bring the hammer down continually on just the same place on the anvil, and to strike just the same note. Ah, well, if you were all saved, and all believed in Christ, we would gladly go on to something else—but until every soul is saved, we can do nothing but blow the trumpet with the same sound! Believe! Trust in the Substitute! Take Christ to be yours! Look out of self—look to Christ! Have done with your doings! Have done with your trusting in your own powers, and now, whether you sink or swim, give up every other hope and rest in Him, and rely on Him, and upon Him alone!

Perhaps these simple words may bring the Gospel home to some aching heart with comfort. And if it should, I pray you to be sure to follow it up at once. Do not put it off. Do not delay! ‘Tis resting in Jesus, now—that is the thing. I call to recollection just now the morning when first I rested on Him. I never, never, never can forget it. I had been as downcast as anyone could be. I had attended places of worship. I had done all I could, but I could get no peace till at last I heard a simple preacher put it thus—“Look unto Me, and be you saved, all you ends of the earth!” Now there is nothing to do here but to look—a fool can do that! A baby can do that! You don’t need a deal of learning to do that—you only have to look! But you will ask what it is that you are to look to. Well, it is, “Look to Me”—that is, look to Jesus! There He is in the Garden, sweating great drops of blood! Every drop is for you—look to Him! There He is, scourged

by Pilate till His shoulders run with gore, and every drop is for you! Look to Him! Look to Him! There He is, fastened to the tree! His hands are streaming with blood and every drop is for you—look to Him! There He is with His side pierced and with the blood and water running out, and every drop is for you! Look to Him! Look to Him! Do but look to Him! No, it is not to be able to understand it, but to look to Him! No, it is not to be able to write it on paper, but to look to Him! Look to Him! “Well,” he said, when he had gone thus far, “that young man under the gallery there looks very unhappy. I think he is feeling the burden of sin but he will never get rid of his burden unless he looks to Christ.” Then he shouted, “Look! Look! Look! Young man! Look now!”

Blessed be God, I did look—simply looked, just as the dying men in the wilderness looked to the serpent! They did not calculate the value of the brass. They did not make a drawing of the various convolutions of the serpent. They did not consider how it could be. They did not get a physician to talk to them about how the eyes might operate upon the nerves. They just did what they were told to do! They looked, and they lived! Will you look, or not? Will you trust, or not, young man? On the answer which the Holy Spirit shall enable you to give to that question will hang your present peace and your everlasting happiness! If you answer, “No, I will not look,” then, Sirs, on your own heads be your blood if you will not rest in Jesus! So simple, so suitable, so gracious is this way of salvation, that I myself, though I love you in my very soul, must say that you deserve to perish if you will not thus be saved—

***“How they deserve the deepest Hell
That slight abounding love!
What chains of vengeance must they feel,
Who scorn these hands of love!”***

Oh, that, instead thereof, you would simply trust! And, trusting, you shall live! Amen

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EXODUS 29:38-46; ISAIAH 53.**

EXODUS 29:38-46.

Verse 38. *Now this is that which you shall offer upon the altar: two lambs of the first year, day by day, continually.* Remember, as long as there was a Jewish state, the morning and the evening were to open and to close with the sacrifice of a lamb.

39-42. *The one lamb you shall offer in the morning; and the other lamb you shall offer at evening. And with the one lamb a tenth an ephah of flour mingled with the fourth part of a hin of pressed oil; and the fourth part of a hin of wine for a drink offering. And the other lamb you shall offer at evening and shall do thereto according to the meat offering of the morning. And according to the drink offering thereof, for a sweet savor an offering made by fire unto the LORD. This shall be a continual burnt offering throughout*

your generations at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD: where I will meet you, to speak there unto you. See, the Lamb is the place of meeting! God comes to His people as His people come to Him—with the morning and with the evening Lamb.

43. *And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by My glory.* God's glory is in the Lamb—it is there He is pleased to manifest Himself in the glory of His infinite Grace to His people.

44, 45. *And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, And the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to Me in the priest's office. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.* Not without the lamb, you see—that morning and evening sacrifice must be the token and the way of God's dealing with His people.

46. *And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.* Now concerning this same Lamb, we will read in—

ISAIAH 53.

Blessed passage! I hope you all know it by heart—it should be like the alphabet to every child. See how it begins.

Verse 1. *Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?* This is the continual cry of the men of God. The sent ones of God who come to bear testimony of the Lamb of God have no easy time of it. With broken hearts they have to go to their Master, and say, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

2. *For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He has no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him.* Carnal minds never did see beauty in Christ, and never will. Christ as the great Sacrifice is always rejected.

3-5. *He is despised and rejected of men; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.* Blessed be His name! Some of us can say that with great delight—“With His stripes we are healed.”

6, 7. *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.* “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth.” Our blessed Master—there are His

seven cries upon the Cross, but not one word of murmuring, no complaint against His enemies—“He opened not His mouth: He is brought as the lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opens not His mouth.”

8, 9. *He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare His generation? For He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of My people was He stricken. And He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth.*

10. *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: when You shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.* “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” If ever there was a man whom God should have protected from every sorrow, and guarded from every stroke of injustice, it was Jesus! And unless it was for sins not His own, He suffered, unless it was as a Substitute for man, it was the most unjust of all heard of injustices that Christ should die at all!

11, 12. *He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great. And He shall divide the spoil with the strong: because He has poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.* “He shall see of the travail of His soul.” Oh, what a joy is this to us! He did not travail in vain. His pangs were as of a travailing woman, but the birth, the glorious birth that comes of it is the salvation of multitudes—this is His recompense!

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

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

DIRECTION IN DILEMMA

NO. 541

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 22, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.”
Exodus 14:13.***

GOD’S great design in all His works is the manifestation of His Glory. Any aim less than this were unworthy of Himself. He cannot act for the good of His creatures as an ultimate aim, for that were for God to be impelled by a motive less great than His own Nature. Since there can be nothing greater than the Infinite and there can be but one Infinite—if the infinite God is moved by an infinite motive which is the only one worthy of Him, that motive must be found in His own Glory. It is, then, the Lord’s will to manifest His Glory to the sons of men. But how shall the Glory of God be manifested to such fallen creatures as we are?

Man’s eyes are not single, he has ever a side glance towards his own honor and so is not qualified to behold the Glory of his God. Vanity has covered our eyes with scales more dense than those which fell from the eyes of Saul of Tarsus. We are always prone to put a high estimate upon what we are, or may be, or can feel, or do. It is clear, then, that self must stand out of the way that there may be room for God to be exalted. And this is the reason, the true secret, why God brings His people, oftentimes, into straits and difficulties, that, being brought to their wits’ end and made conscious of their own folly and weakness, they may be fitted to behold the majesty of God when He comes forth to work their deliverance.

A man whose life shall be one even and smooth path will see but little of the Glory of God, for he has few occasions of self-emptying, and therefore but little fitness for being filled with the Revelation of God. They who navigate little streams and shallow creeks know but little of the God of tempests. But they who “go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters, these see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.” Among the huge Atlantic waves of bereavement, poverty, temptation and reproach, we learn the power of Jehovah, because we feel the littleness of man. Self-esteem is that speck in the eye which most effectually mars human vision. The Great Surgeon of souls removes this from us chiefly by sanctified afflictions.

At the mouth of the furnace the Great Purifier sits as a Refiner to purify the sons of Levi—and when this work has been achieved and they have become pure in heart, the Divine purpose is accomplished. Then God’s Glory is manifested, for the pure in heart shall see the Lord. Thank God, then, dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have been led by a rough road—it is this which has given you your experience of God’s loving kindness. Your troubles have enriched you with a wealth of knowledge to be gained by no other means. Your trials have been the cleft of the rock in which God has

set you as He did His servant Moses, that you might behold His Glory as it passed by.

Praise your God, O sons of sorrow that you have not been left to the darkness and ignorance which continued prosperity might have involved. Bless Him that you have been capacitated to show forth His Glory by being permitted and honored to endure a great fight of affliction. Our one aim in life is, I trust, to glorify our God, and if so, are not those afflictions precious which enable us to honor Him? We will call them friends if they help us to praise God. We will wear them as jewels and rejoice in them as a bride rejoices in her ornaments if they aid us in glorifying our blessed Lord. In this spirit we may almost envy the children of Israel as we see them entangled in the wilderness and overtaken by their foes, for now shall they see the mighty arm of God made bare!

Our text exhibits the posture in which a man should be found while exercised with trial. Methinks, also, it shows the position in which a sinner should be found when he is under trouble on account of sin. We will employ it in both ways.

I. Take our text first as A PICTURE OF THE BELIEVER WHEN HE IS REDUCED TO GREAT STRAITS. Then God's command to him is, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord." In this brief sentence there are two things very conspicuous—first, *what is to be done*, "Stand still." And secondly, *what is to be seen*, "See the salvation of the Lord."

1. *What is to be done?* The man is brought, we will suppose, into very extraordinary difficulties. He cannot retreat—that is sure destruction. He cannot go forward—that appears to be an impossibility. On the right hand he is shut up by Providential hindrances—on the left an adversary prevents him. Here, then, is the counterpart of Israel's position—Egyptians behind, the Red Sea in front, the craggy steeps of Pi Hahiroth on the right and the fortresses of Migdol and Baal Zephon frowning on the left. What is the Believer to do? The Master's word is the same to him as to Israel, "Stand still."

Brethren, let me warn you of other advisers. *Despair* whispers, "Cast yourself down, lie down and die. Complain against God. Give it all up. You have been buffeting for years with circumstances and you have made no headway. Give up the unfair contest. Float with the stream, even though you go over the waterfall. Let the worst come to the worst, for there is no hope of any success in life for you. If the Lord will always give you evil and not good, then curse God and die. No longer attempt to provide things honest in the sight of all men, just let things go as they will. Drift into poverty, or die in a ditch. God has given you up—evidently you have been the butt for all His arrows, the target for all His shots. Now, despair, let there be an end of the thing."

Not so, says the God of our salvation. He loves us too well to bid us yield to despondency. He would have us put a cheerful courage on and even in our worst times rejoice in His love and faithfulness. Faith hears the bidding of her faithful God and is not willing to be shut up in the iron cage of despair. No, she defies the old giant to put so much as a finger upon her. Lie down and die? That she never will, while her God bids her

stand. See, Beloved, the word *stand*. What does it mean? Keep the posture of an upright man, ready for action, expecting further orders, cheerfully and patiently awaiting the directing voice. This is a noble posture, but to despair is mean and beggarly.

Up, Brothers and Sisters, play the man, be strong! While Jehovah lives there is no room for fear. A happy future awaits you—yes, the present itself is bright with mercy—for the Lord’s love is still the same—

**“Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.”**

“Ah,” says *Cowardice*, “Retreat.” *Cowardice* whispered to the children of Israel that it was better to go back into Egypt. They are willing to go with ropes on their necks and their hands bound behind them and give themselves up to Pharaoh. To have their lives spared, they will relinquish their liberty. Hear them—they are basely talking about their graves while they are yet alive!

So *Cowardice*, sometimes, when the Christian comes into a great strait, whispers, “Retreat to the worldling’s way of action! You cannot play the Christian’s part, it is too difficult. Evidently there are some men who can have faith in God and can live in this world, but you cannot. If you must be in business, it is vain to attempt to be a Christian,” says *Cowardice*. “Do as others do—follow the hollow maxims and tricky customs that once ruled you. Let the shop be opened again on Sunday. Adulterate the goods once more. Tell lies as you once did. Be as other men are—go back and be Satan’s slave. It is evident that religion will not keep a coat on your back and bread on your table. Give it up now. Go back! Relinquish the ways of God and be once more a bond slave to your own corruptions and to the world’s evil habits.”

Ah, *Trembler*, however much Satan may urge this course upon you, you cannot follow it if you are a child of God. *Cowardice* may bid you do it, friends may advise it, and the devil may drive you to it—but if God has quickened you by His Divine Spirit, there is a something in you which is bound to go forward, which you yourself may struggle against, by virtue of the power of the old man, but which will get the mastery over you and lead you in a Divine captivity. So that even when evil is most rampant, the force of Divine Grace within will impel you towards the right, constraining you to stand in the ways of God.

Where God impels forward, Hell cannot drive back. O Sun, you turn not back because of the clouds which veil your splendors. Predestinated of the Lord to persevere in your perpetual path, you climb, still, the steep of Heaven and soon you descend to the western deeps. You pause not for tempest, hurricane, or storm. As a strong man runs a race, so do you speed onward towards your far-off goal, for the Almighty bade you move and in His might you travel onward evermore. So is it with you, Christian, God has said, “Forward.” His Divine fiat has bid you go from strength to strength, and so you shall, and neither death nor Hell shall turn you from your course.

What if for a while you are called to stand still? This is but to renew your strength for some greater advance in due time. Dream not, I pray you, of so much as *looking back*! Take courage and in believing silence

possess your soul while your Captain bids you, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

Rashness, another evil counselor, cries, "Do *something!* Something or other *must* be done! Do not despair! Do not turn back, but stir yourself and leave no stone unturned. To stand still and wait is sheer idleness. There is no time to be lost. You *must* do something, be it right or wrong." Yes, but it is well to remember that in some cases, the more haste, the worse speed. When a Christian is in very sharp trouble, one of his strongest temptations is to be in an unbelieving, fretful state of agitation which leads him to premature and unwise action. How sadly some who are weak in faith are doing and nudging themselves by indiscreet haste! If they could but be quiet in faith, and stand still in patience until the Master led the way, they would be led aright. But they run before the cloud and fall into the net.

So in a hurry are they to escape from Pharaoh's clutches that they run into them! I am sure that much of the sin which we commit when we are in trouble is produced by our being in a flurried state of heart. For then our soul is like a silly dove without heart—which has forgotten the dovecot and therefore flies here and there, round and round—at imminent peril of its life from the hawk. We *must* be doing something at once—we must do it, so we think—instead of looking to *God*, who will not only do *something* but who will do *everything*. Many of us, when in a strait, are hardly reasonable in our hasty endeavors. Fear blindfolds the judgment and makes fools of us. Why is there any need of such speedy leaping—why not stand still and look?

Are all means gone forever if not snatched at in an instant? Will the Lord's arm grow short if I wait *His* time? Such questions we forget to ask. And therefore on we go, but our rash advance sinks us deeper in the mire. Very soon we try something else and only plunge into greater trials. We fly to this friend and take his advice, and then to that, and get the reverse. Then we go by our own judgment and are, perhaps, greater fools, still. O that we could learn to trust in the Lord with all our hearts and lean not to our own understanding! What the Christian does with cool deliberation, when he has waited upon God, when, like David, he has said, "Bring here the ephod," he does with a *purpose*, and God is with him.

But what he does when he is excited or depressed, with an aching head and a fluttered heart, he will usually find cause to mourn over and possibly he will be involved in more trouble through what he has done himself, than through the affliction which God sent him. But faith, I say, listens neither to Despair, nor to Cowardice, nor to Rashness—it hears God say, "Stand still," and, immoveable as a rock, it stands.

Another hiss of the old serpent, is the suggestion of *presumption*. "On, on," says Presumption, "neck or nothing, make or break. If the sea is before you, march into it and expect a miracle. It is true you have no Divine command, but never mind, your own daring will work wonders. You know you are ordained to inherit Canaan, and therefore go on towards it, sea or no sea. God has not commanded you and He has not as yet divided the sea, but still go on."

Dear Brothers and Sisters there is much hellish craft in this temptation. It is peculiarly adapted to beguile those advanced Christians who know what it is to walk by faith. I am afraid it is very easy for us to mistake presumption for faith, although there is a wide difference between the two. There is so much of dash and dare about an incitement to presumption that brave, Christ-loving spirits must be on their guard against it. Presumption will never work the wonders of faith. If Christ bids me come on the water to Him, faith shall tread the billow. But if I spring upon the water myself, to walk to Christ, I must expect to sink far sooner than Peter did!

When our illustrious Commander puts a man upon an extraordinary work, He will give him extraordinary strength. But if a soldier runs without the captain's order and defies a giant adversary, he may not expect assistance and will be sure to return with defeat. What a needful prayer is that, "Show me what I am to do." In dilemmas between one duty and another it is so sweet to be humble as a child and wait with simplicity of soul upon the Lord. It is sure to be well with us when we feel and know our own folly and are heartily willing to be guided by the will of God. Such standing still has more true valor in it than the mad charges and dashes of an arrogant presuming. My Soul, seek earnestly the Divine Grace to stand still in obedience to your Lord's behest.

But in what way are we to *stand still*, dear Friends? Surely it means among other things, that we are to *wait awhile*. Time is precious, but there are occasions when the best use we can make of it is to let it run on. If time flies, that is no reason why I am always to fly. Every experienced man knows that by being wrongly busy for one hour he may make mischief which a lifetime would hardly rectify. I may cut my fingers if I am too fast in reaching down for my sword. And if I run without waiting to enquire the way, I may run upon my ruin. Many who have been very busy in helping themselves had been better off if they had been waiting upon their Lord.

Prayer is never a waste of time. A man who would ride posthaste had better wait till he is perfectly mounted or he may slip from the saddle. He who glorifies God by standing still is better employed than he who diligently serves his own self-will. Wait awhile, then. *Wait in prayer*, however. Call upon God and spread the case before Him. Tell Him your difficulty and plead His promise of aid. Express your unstaggering confidence in Him—*wait in faith*—for unfaithful, untrusting waiting is but an insult to the Lord. Believe that if He shall keep you tarrying even till midnight, yet He will come at the right time. The vision shall come and shall not tarry.

Wait in quiet *patience*, not murmuring because you are under affliction, but blessing God for it—never murmuring against the second cause, as the children of Israel did against Moses. Never wish you could go back to the world again, but accept the case as it stands. Put it, as it stands, simply and with your whole heart, without any self-will, into the hands of your Covenant God, saying, "Now, Lord, not my will, but Yours be done. I know not what to do. I am brought to extremities, but I will wait until You shall split the floods, or else drive back my foes. I will wait if You keep me

many a day, for my heart is fixed upon You alone, O God, and my spirit waits for You in the full conviction that You will yet be my joy and my salvation, my refuge and my strong tower.”

Well, Brothers and Sisters, this is what is to be done. I dare say you will think it a very easy thing to *stand still*, but it is one of the postures which a Christian soldier learns not without years of teaching. I find that marching and quick marching are much easier to God’s warriors than standing still. It is, perhaps, the first thing we learn in the drill of human armies, but it is one of the most difficult to learn under the Captain of our salvation. The Apostle seems to hint at this difficulty when he says, “Stand fast and having done all, still stand.” To stand at ease in the midst of tribulation shows a veteran spirit, long experience, and much Divine Grace.

2. But now, secondly, *what is to be seen?* You are to see, O Believer, the salvation of God in your present temporal trials. You are to see God’s power and love manifested. Now I think I hear you say, “Well, one thing I know, *I cannot deliver myself* out of the dilemma in which I am now placed. I had some dependence once upon my own judgment and upon my own ability, but that dependence is entirely gone.” I thank God for that. It is a good thing for you, sometimes, Christian, to be wholly weaned from yourself. When you are made sick of self-dependence it is not long before your spirit shall be in a healthy state of trustfulness in your God.

“Well, but,” you say, “*I cannot conceive how* God can deliver me. I have tried to think by what means He will interpose, but I cannot see a door open, nor a way of escape.” This is well, too, for now this shows that human wisdom is dead. God has nonplussed your wit. He has made a fool of your judgment. He laughs to scorn all that keen intellect of yours which once was your confidence. Now you shall see Divine Wisdom. When self goes, God comes in. And when human wisdom goes, then God’s Wisdom appears.

“Well, but,” says one, “whatever God may do for me, I can clearly perceive it must be His own doing, for *I am powerless*, paralyzed. I am so utterly broken by the strength of this tremendous current that if it is stemmed, it must be Divine energy that stems it. I cannot do it.” And this is well, too, for now your *power* is dead. It is now that all the Glory will be to God. While you had some power to help yourself, you would have shared the crown. But now, since all might is centered in the Eternal Arms, the whole of the crown shall be put on the Eternal Head. I am glad that your flesh is thus brought to a state of utter death.

“Ah, but,” you say, “Sir, *I cannot believe* it possible that I should be delivered. I find my faith, this morning, reduced to the lowest ebb. It has run dry. I cannot believe the promise. Ah, now,” you say, “even my faith fails me.” Everything that is of the creature has now gone. You are like the poor lost one in the desert, your tongue fails for thirst. And now the Lord will save you, for the God of Israel will not forsake you. Evidently you are reduced to the extremity of an extremity, when hope and faith, alike, are drowned. But now it is that the Lord will manifest His mighty strength. But you are saying, “What shall I see?” Well, I know not precisely what

you shall see, except I am sure of this—you shall see *the salvation of God*—and in that salvation you shall see two or three things, just as the children of Israel saw them.

You shall see, if needs be, *all nature and all Providence subservient to God's love*. They saw the waters stand upright, contrary to nature. The east wind was made at once to obey God's behests and blow all that night. Thus they saw how there was nothing upon earth which could stand against the Divine will. And you shall see the same. If it is needful for your deliverance, fire shall not burn you, neither shall the floods drown you. If you cannot be helped in the common order of Providence, God will give some extraordinary proofs of His power. It may be that as you look back upon the method of your deliverance, you will be so surprised at it that you will say, "If anybody had told me this beforehand, I would have laughed at them. But now I admire and wonder at the love of God."

You shall be led to see that all things, even the most deadly, work together for good to them that love God. The waters cannot drown *them*, but they shall drown their foes. You will see, again, if you will but stand still and see it, that *the Lord reigns*. You shall have such a picture of Jehovah sitting upon His Throne, controlling and overruling all things, that you shall extol Him with your whole heart as your God and King forever! You shall see most distinctly, if you will but wait and look for it, how He can make you a wonder. *You shall be a wonder to yourself*, and marvel how it is that God supports you. You shall be a wonder to your enemies. You shall do what they cannot do. You shall walk through the depths of the sea, which the Egyptians, wishing to do, were drowned.

You shall see *your enemies utterly destroyed*, if you will but *wait*. God's bow shall be made quite naked. He shall make bare His arm. Death and Hell shall lie at your feet. Your spiritual and your temporal trials, too, shall be subdued under you. You shall tread them as straw is trod for the dunghill. And as for you, if you will but stand and see it, you shall go forth like Miriam with your timbrel of mirth and with your dance of joy! You cannot think it possible, shivering as you now are with the sight of your troubles, alarmed and afraid, that ever you should be singing, "O let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously." But you shall, in this life you shall praise Him. And if not, in the life which is to come. On that glorious shore you shall look back on all these perplexities and tribulations and you shall say, "Let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The horse and his rider has He cast into the sea." Only learn to "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord."

I have had this text burnt into my own consciousness. I desire to be found in that posture with regard to my own position in Christ's Church and the work that the Master would have me perform. There are hours of perplexity when the most willing spirit, anxiously desirous to serve the Lord, knows not what part to take. Then what shall it do? Vex itself by despair? Fly back in cowardice, turn to the right hand in fear, or rush forward in presumption? No, but just say, "Lord, You know what I know not. Make a plain path for my feet. Because of my enemies, be my Guide.

Guide me with Your counsel while on earth and afterward receive me to Glory.”

Depend upon it, Beloved, if, by God’s Grace, we can get and keep in that frame of mind, it will not be long before God shall say to us, as distinctly as ever Moses said to the people, “Go forward.” And we shall go forward to our joy rejoicing, praising and magnifying His dear name!

II. I intend to take the text in reference to THE SINNER BROUGHT INTO THE SAME CONDITION IN A MORAL SENSE. I will trust that I have in this House of Prayer this morning some who have been led by God’s Spirit out of the Egypt of their sins, where they did eat the leeks and garlic and onions of their own sinful pleasures, but where they were made to smart as bond slaves under the Law. You have begun to feel some Divine awakenings. The Spirit of God has somewhat delivered you from the corruption of your former estate, but you are, as yet, under conviction.

You have as yet found no peace, no solid peace. Your sins are around you. You can hear their hoarse voices as they threaten to drag you back or to destroy you. Before you flows the tempestuous and deep sea of Divine Wrath—you know how richly you deserve it. And your spirit sinks within you as you think how soon it may swallow you up. On the right hand and on the left you see no method of escape. You had hoped to deliver yourself by your own righteousness, but the Law, like Pi Hahiroth, rises up with craggy battlements and blocks the way. On the right hand you seek to escape by ceremonies, but some dreadful threat of God against the depravity of your nature at once shuts out all hope in that direction.

You are come, this day, to a dead stand. Well, now, *what are you to do?* What is the Master’s word to you? O Sinner, thus convicted of sin, my message from the Lord to you, is “*Stand still.*” Understand what I mean, however, by it. I do not mean stand still in indifference, as though it were a little matter whether you are damned or not. I do not mean stand still in inaction, without prayer, without repentance, without faith. What I mean is this—“Stand still”—first in the renunciation of all your own righteousness and of all attempts to seek a righteousness by your own doings.

Man, you have been hunting the whole world round to get something that may commend you to God—cease your hunting and stand still. You have toiled and trod many a weary league of performances, and prayers, and thoughts, and willings, and doings—and you are not an inch the better for it. You have tried to make yourself feel this, and to compel yourself to do the other, but you are still as much in darkness as you were at the first. O, leave, leave, I pray you, all these attempts to work out a salvation for yourself and with regard to them all, “Stand still.” For, trembling Soul, how can you hope to save yourself by your own doings?

Can you keep the Law? Remember it is exceedingly broad—it takes in all your actions, private as well as public. Your words, even your idle words—no, it touches your *thoughts*—the imagination and the thoughts of your heart. Can you keep a Law so spiritual as this? Do you believe that you can live without sinful thoughts? Now, mark you, if you had no acts of transgression, yet your thoughts, themselves, were enough to send you

to the lowest Hell. Why, when first of all a Christian gets a true view of the spirituality and extent of the Divine command, when he hears the Master's Words and understands them, "Whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart." When he knows that this is true of every other command—that the *thought* of evil is sin—then he throws down the trowel with which he hoped to build himself a Babel tower of righteousness and he says: "I cannot do it, it is impossible. The Law is too great. I cannot attain unto it."

Besides, remember your own weakness, Sinner. Have you tried to keep the Law? Have you not come down from your chamber in the morning full of good resolves as ever were in a man's heart and yet before the first meal was over, have you not committed yourself by some wrong expression? Some angry temper? Did you ever pass a day without sin? Could you do it? Your many failures all tell you that there is no strength in your hand sufficient to open the gates of Heaven, no power in your feet that shall be strong enough to make you tread the weary pathway that would lead to salvation by the works of the Law. Stand still, Sinner! Why attempt a task for which you are incapable?

Do, I pray you, remember that if you *could* perform it in the *future*, yet your past sins—what about them? Why, man, remember your youth of folly? Did you always honor your father and your mother? Did your young tongue always speak the truth? Is it not true of you as the Apostle said, "They go astray from the womb, speaking lies"? Is it not one of the earliest things a child does—to lie? And do not all these things stand in the Book of God against you? There are your youthful sins. Who among us can look back upon our youth, with all its hot blood, without regret? "O God, lay not the sins of my youth at my door!" may be the prayer of even the most righteous man.

And, what about the crimes of your age? O Soul, if you will but look back through the glass of the Revelation of God, remembering that your thoughts and your words come into the account, you will surely see it to be a long, black, dismal list of reasons for condemnation! You cannot find in your whole life any cause why mercy should be extended—but you can see twenty thousand reasons why justice should have its way with you! Why, then, do you seek, being already over head and ears in debt, to work out your own salvation by the Law? You have already broken it, why try to keep it? That alabaster vase of God's command—if you could have kept it spotless and whole, would have been a passport of entrance for you at the gates of Heaven. But you have broken it—broken it to shivers and your black and foul fingers have taken away all whiteness from it. O, be not so foolish as to seek to do what your past sins have rendered impossible!

Moreover, Soul, I do beseech you to remember that you cannot satisfy Divine Justice. What if you should put your poor body through a thousand mortifications—starve it in a prison, or stretch it upon a rack, or broil it upon the fire, or drown it in the sea? None of these things could take away the anger of God against you for your sins. No, when you shall lie in Hell, though the flames are hot, yet there is no power in the torments of Hell to make expiation for sin. The sinner is still as much an ob-

ject of God's righteous detestation, after millions of years of agony, as when first the Law's great whip began to fall.

Why then, do you go about hoping to do what the Justice of God may well assure you no creature of the race of Adam can do? And will you remember, too, that if—if you could atone for the past—and if you could prevent one sin for the future, yet you, yourself, are vile. Your nature is as evil as your actions. The marrow of your bones is impregnated with your lusts, and in your blood there rolls a black stream of sin. You are yourself loathsome. Not only does evil come from you, but there is a fountain of evil *within* you. The leprosy lies deep within.

You are yourself an enemy to God and your carnal mind cannot be reconciled to God. No power can reconcile it. God can give you a new mind and a new heart and a right spirit, but the old nature in you is so bad that it cannot be mended. It must be dead and buried, crucified and slain with Christ. For while it lives there is no perfection for you. It cannot help you. It can only mar God's work till God strikes the nail through its head, even as Jael slew Sisera of old.

Sinner, why will you be trying your prayers, your Church attendance, your sacraments, your Chapel attendance, your Baptisms and the like? All these are a lie and a vanity, if you trust in *them*. Even God's own ordained ordinances become a farce and a delusion when once you make them the *foundation* of your hope—

***“None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good.”***

SINNER, STAND STILL NOW!

But now, in the second and last place upon this point, the sinner says, “Suppose then, I give up all hope and do no more by way of trusting to myself, *what shall I see?*” Why, you shall see the salvation of God! Do remark, dear Friends, that all the sinner can do is to see this salvation. He is not to *work* it out—he is not to *help* it on—he is to *see* it. Yet, mark you, that the sinner cannot even find out that salvation of itself. For if you notice, the next sentence to our text is, “which He will show you today.” God must show it to us, or else we cannot see it. “No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him.” There must be a manifestation of Christ to us before we shall ever be able to perceive Him.

O that the Lord would now, while I talk for a few more minutes, reveal His great salvation to some sinner who is standing still! Now, Soul, you are thoroughly prepared to give up your self-righteousness. You are willing to *be* nothing and to *do* nothing in order to save yourself. Then let me tell you, God has worked out and brought in a glorious and complete salvation—far more resplendent than that which He meritoriously worked for Israel in the Red Sea. I will tell you of it. First, *it was ordained* of old, like that deliverance of the Red Sea. God had planned that. Before Pharaoh lived, it was written in the eternal Decree, “For this purpose have I raised you up, that I might show forth My power in you.”

From old eternity God had chosen Israel to be the objects of His love, and to cast away Egypt that it might show His honor in His terrible justice. The salvation of God's people was ordained of old. Before yonder mountains lifted their heads, He ordained to save His people. And long be-

fore the ancient deeps began to roar in their channels, He had chosen them. God did not choose the Israelites because of any goodness in them. They were a stiff-necked generation. They had no hand in their own choice. He called their father, Abraham, as a Syrian ready to perish, and made him His chosen. And He made a covenant with Abraham's seed after him. And so God has prepared a salvation for His elect, chosen by Him not because of any goodness in them, but because He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.

Is not this a salvation that will suit you, O poor Sinner? If God had chosen them out of any merit, or if that choice depended on anything which men did or could do, you were a damned soul, for you have no goodness and you can do nothing. If God's election comes to those who are without merit, without hope, without strength—*here is hope for you!* In the next place, the salvation which God shows is one *worked by a Mediator*. Moses was the mediator of that time. He stretched his rod over the sea. Jesus is the great Mediator, of whom Moses was the feeble type. Sinner, Jesus Christ has divided the Red Sea of God's wrath, lifting up Himself upon the Cross, a far mightier weapon than Moses' rod.

He made the floods of God's wrath retire that all His chosen might march through. If you believe in Him. If standing still, today you will but see the salvation of God, you may discern a path to Heaven over which no waters of Divine wrath can ever dash. Christ Himself has substituted His own Person for yours—He took your guilt and stood as a sinner in the sight of God. He was punished instead of your being punished, and it is impossible, according to equity, that God can punish two for the one offense. If Christ has paid the debt, the debt is paid.

Since Jesus was the Substitute, wrath is gone. If Christ drank all the Hell-draught, then there is not a drop left for any of those for whom He died to drink. And if you can see this morning (it is all you have to do), if you can see that Christ has done this, rest assured that God who showed it to you, has not showed you a lie. Well do I remember when first my eyes saw the complete salvation of Christ Jesus. I had been gadding about after this and that and the other, but when I heard the Gospel message, "Look! Look unto Me and be you saved, all you ends of the earth," I did nothing. I only trusted Christ to save me.

I turned away from deadly *doings* and from soul-destroying *feelings* to the wounded body of the Savior and believed that He had saved me. I trusted to the merit of His life and to the prevalence of His death and to the mighty power of His plea. And then the Spirit of God bore witness with my spirit that I was born of God and sin was put away. Sinner, if you are standing still—I pray God you have been brought to that—then *LOOK!* Can you not see it? Was ever anything more plain? Jehovah's darling Son becomes a Man! Oh, mystery of mysteries! God was manifest in the flesh as a Man! He stands as the representative Head of all His elect.

Being such, when Justice cried, "Bring here the sinner," Christ came forward bound like a captive and a malefactor. "Strip that sinner," said Justice. And they stripped Him naked to His shame. "Bring forth the

whip,” said Justice. “Ply it hard.” “He gave His back to the smiters and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” “Drag Him to execution,” said Justice, “a sinner must die.” They pierced His hands and His feet. They lifted Him up upon the tree. They gave Him vinegar to drink in the midst of His bitterest grief. They mocked Him in His extreme sorrows. He cried to God, but God could not help a sinner and Christ stood as such, though in Him was no sin. That shriek of, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,*” was the gathering up of all human misery!

Hell did not know a more dolorous cry, than “My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?” Let the thunderbolts be launched. Let the lightning scathe Him. Let every demon of the pit come up against Him. Let every friend forsake Him. Let His heart break, let His tongue cleave to His mouth. Let His mouth become a furnace. Let His heart be melted like wax. Let the joints of His bones be loosed. Let Him come into the jaws of death—the Law requires it all. It is done! Justice, have you any more to demand? She answers, “No.” The mighty Substitute exclaims, “It is finished.” And finished it is. The Red Sea of Justice is effectually and perpetually divided.

“But,” says one, “is this for the elect?” It is, and for them *only*. “But how do I know whether I am one of them?” The elect are known by this—“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.” The true mark of election is *trust*. If you will stand still and trust Christ you are as certainly one of His elect as the Apostles that are before His Throne. *Trust* is the infallible mark of election. It is by this we make our calling and election sure. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! Stand still, then, and see salvation in Jesus.

“Well,” says one, “but you really do not mean to say that I am now, just as I am, to trust Christ to save me and it is all done?” I do. Sinner, you have not misunderstood me. It is just that. Sinner, do *nothing*, either great or small. Jesus did it all, long, long ago. To add anything to Him were to insult His perfect work. To hope to complete His matchless righteousness were impertinence. To imagine that you could make better that which He has finished were an idle, soul-destroying dream. Take a finished Savior just as He is and you are saved *now*, even though you have no good thing of your own. Away with those rusty farthings of your own merit, those proposals and vows of your own doings! Take Jesus as He is and that act of accepting Christ through His merit saves your soul!

After you have done this, then will come the command—“Go forward.” For the present, all we have to say to you, poor Trembler, is, “Stand still and see the salvation of God.” May the Lord bless these last words to the sinner, and my first words to the saint. And, by His Grace, we will together stand still and see what the Lord has worked. We will together sing unto Him, for He will triumph gloriously and all our enemies shall be cast into the midst of the sea! The Lord bless you for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0 . Ages Software, 1.800.297.4308

UNSEASONABLE PRAYER

NO. 2851

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1903.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, OCTOBER 14, 1877.

“Why do you cry unto Me?”
Exodus 14:15.

AT first sight we might suppose that crying unto God was so good a thing that it would never be necessary for the Lord to ask the question, “Why do you cry unto Me?” But the question we are now to consider shows that there may be a time when, even to a man like Moses, it is necessary for God to ask, “Why do you cry unto Me?” Think of the circumstances in which the Israelites were then—the Red Sea was before them and the Egyptians were behind—so that when the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry unto Me?” Moses might very properly have replied, “What else can I do? There are great multitudes of blood-thirsty foes behind us and nothing but the roaring sea in front of us—what can we do except cry unto You?” But the fact was that the time for praying about the matter was past and the time for acting had come. So the Lord said to Moses, in effect, “Speak not to Me, but ‘Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward’—forward through the sea that now rolls in front of them. That sea will divide as they march into it, so you need not pray any more about that difficulty. I will prepare a pathway for the people as they advance and they shall go safely through the very midst of the sea.”

There is a time for praying, but there is also a time for holy activity. Prayer is adapted for almost every season, yet not prayer alone, for there comes, every now and then, a time when even prayer must take a secondary place and *faith* must come in and lead us not to cry unto God but to act as He bids us, even as the Lord said to Moses, “Why do you cry unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward; but lift you up your rod and stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea.”

It is perfectly clear, then, that there may come a time when crying unto God becomes unseasonable. Our Lord's command to His disciples is, “Ask.” But what follows that command? Why, the promise, “you shall receive.” Then there must be a time for *receiving* as well as season for asking! But if, instead of stretching out my hands gratefully to receive what God is waiting to give, I continue to ask and forget or neglect to receive, I put prayer out of its proper place! Our Savior also said, “Seek, and you

shall find.” Well, if I have sought and, at last, have found the treasure I have been seeking—but if, instead of perceiving that it is there and taking possession of it, and blessing God that I have found it—if I still go on seeking for it, then I have forgotten that while there is a time to seek, there is also a time to find, and my seeking then becomes unseasonable!

It is the same with the command and promise, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Suppose that I have knocked and that the door has been opened to me, but that I still stand knocking at it? It is manifest that I am acting foolishly and wrongly—that I am casting reflections upon the owner of the house and also upon the sincerity of my own knocking, for it is doubtful whether I really did knock with the honest purpose of getting the door opened if, when that opening has taken place, I do not avail myself of the opportunity to enter, but continue still to knock. I do not say that we may not pray for something else, but I do say, in respect to the one thing which we have asked of God, that there comes a time for receiving rather than asking. With regard to the thing which we have sought at the Lord’s hands, there comes a time for finding. And concerning the door at which we have knocked, there comes a time for opening. And, in each of these cases, the Lord’s question to Moses comes with appropriateness to each one of us, “Why do you cry unto Me?”

When do you think, dear Friends, that prayer about anything becomes out of date? I answer, When we ought to believe that we have the answer to our supplication. I do believe that many a time some of you go on asking for a certain blessing after you have received it though you are not conscious that you have it. I am glad that you still ask for it as you think that you have not received it, but it would be a better evidence of your spiritual growth if you perceived that when God has given you a certain thing in answer to your petitions, you certainly do not need to continue asking for it. You have it, so rejoice over it and bless the Lord for giving it to you! I think there are some Christians who have received many blessings of which they are quite unaware. They have what they asked for, yet they still continue to pray for them. For instance, in some cases the prayer for assurance is offered long after assurance has been granted. Someone says that he believes the promise of God, but he needs to be more fully assured concerning it. My dear Brother, what do you mean? To be more assured that God made the promise? Because if so, you will have to go into the question of the authenticity of that particular passage and of the Bible in general!

“No,” you say, “I do not mean that, for I am quite sure that God gave that promise.” Then, do you mean that you doubt whether God will fulfill the promise that He has given? Because if so, I must say with all solemnity, that you ought to be assured that God cannot lie. This is not a thing for you to pray about, but for you to believe! It is the Lord’s due that you should not allow anything like a question to arise over this matter. “Has He said, and shall He not do it? Or has He spoken, and shall He not make it good?” There is His definite promise and yet I go and ask Him to give me an assurance concerning it? If I were to give a promise to any of you and you were, afterwards, to come to me and say, “Give me further

assurance,” I would feel that you did not believe that I could or would do what I had promised! If such treatment as that were meted out to me by any of you, I would not feel that you had done me any honor by finding it difficult to believe my word—yet why should I expect you to honor me? But I do expect that a son should honor his own father! And I do expect that a child of God should so fully believe his Heavenly Father that he should not talk about needing assurance of the truthfulness and reliability of His promises of Grace! Instead of continuing to pray for God to keep His word, it would be far better for you to believe that He has done so and that He always will do so!

“But it may be presumption,” says someone. No, it can never be presumption to believe God! It is presumption to ever *doubt* Him. However great His promise may be, it must be true—and it is presumptuous for anyone to ask, “Can this be true?” or, “How can it be accomplished?” It would be enough for me that God has said it—how He will fulfill His promise is His business, not mine. I rest upon His word with a simple, childlike faith—and I am sorry if any of you are not doing the same. I feel that, sometimes, in the matter of assurance, God might say to us, “‘Why do you cry unto Me?’ Believe My word and rest assured that I shall certainly fulfill all that I have promised.”

It is the same, also, in plain matters of Christian duty. It is a very shocking thing, but I have known the case of a man, I hope a Christian, knowing such-and-such a thing to be right, yet not attending to it, but saying that he was praying about it. He is quite certain about that particular thing—it could not possibly be plainer than it is, yet he is praying about it! Such-and-such a Truth of God is revealed plainly enough in the Scriptures—the man could see it there and did not doubt its authenticity—but he wanted it to be “brought home” to his conscience, so he said. Well, all I can say about such conduct as that is that it is a kind of rebellion against God, a shameful piece of hypocrisy—pretending to honor God in one duty while you know that you are neglecting another!

My dear Brothers and Sisters, if you are a Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you know that it is the will of Christ that all Believers should be baptized even as He was, do not go home and pray about it—but be baptized! If you are not a member of a Christian Church and you know that it was the practice of the early Christians to first give themselves to the Lord and afterwards to give themselves to His Church, do not tell me that you have been praying about that matter for months—cease praying about it and go and do it! It is idle to talk of praying about things which are clearly according to the will of God. Cease praying about them—practice them!

You feel that you ought to have family prayer, yet you say that you have been praying about it! Praying about it? That is not what you have been doing—you have only been trying to see whether you could not find a loophole by which you could escape from an uncongenial but recognized duty! Go and do it, dear Friend—do not, any longer, act the hypocrite’s part by pretending to pray about it! Yet this is the way in which some, who say that they love the Lord, try to play fast and loose with known precepts and duties. Do not let any of us fall into this sin—if we

do, the Lord may well say to us, as he did to Moses—only He may say it to us with more anger—“Why do you cry unto Me’ about such a thing as that? Do what you know to be right.”

I. Now, leaving that part of our theme altogether, I come to a more general subject, which is this, IT IS GOOD FOR A MAN OFTEN TO ASK HIMSELF THE QUESTION, “WHY DO I PRAY? WHY DO I CRY UNTO GOD?”

In some cases, I fear that the answer will be exceedingly unsatisfactory. One replies, “*I pray because I was always trained to do so.* My dear mother, now in Heaven, taught me a form of prayer and that is why I continue to repeat it.” If your mother had taught you the Muslim form of prayer, I suppose you would have kept on repeating it. Or if she had taught you to worship a block of wood or stone, would you have done so? I do not wish to speak with contempt concerning the influence of a mother’s teaching, but I must say that this, alone, is a very unsatisfactory reason for presenting a prayer to God. Let me ask, Did your mother, when she taught you that form of prayer, merely mean that you should repeat those words without any particular thought as to what they meant? If she did, your mother knew but little of vital godliness and, probably, you know even less! You must pray to God from your inmost heart. Your soul must have real fellowship with Him, or else the prayer your mother taught you may be of no more use for you than if you repeated the alphabet backwards or forwards. I have heard of a man of 70 who said that he always prayed night and morning. When he was asked what he said in his prayer, it turned out that he only repeated the form which he had been taught to say as a little child. Now, if you had taught a parrot to say a prayer like that, the parrot would not have been saved, nor will you, if that is all you have to depend upon. There must be something, as a reason for prayer, vastly superior to that, or else your prayer may be nothing but a mockery of supplication, a sepulcher of devotion with no life in it, an external form which cannot please God.

Another says, “*I pray because prayer is a part of my religion.*” Yes, and it is a part of every true Christian’s religion to pray. It must be an essential part of his religion. But what sort of prayer is this of yours which seeks to justify itself upon the ground of being a part of your religion? And what is the religion of which it is a part? Is it a religion which knows God and draws near to Him? Is it a religion which leads you to seek the Lord in spirit and in Truth? If so, God bless your religion and the prayer that is a part of it! But if your religion consists merely in attendance at church, or at the meeting house so many times on the Lord’s-Day and in the repetition of certain words which you have been taught, God deliver you from it! If your religion is to be worth anything, it must have a heart—there must be heart-work—the work of the Holy Spirit upon your heart and the drawing near of your soul unto God. Otherwise, all your outward performances, however excellent they may appear to be, will land you short of Heaven.

Another friend replies, “I pray because it is a right thing to do.” There is something hopeful about that answer, but the question is, What sort of prayer do you pray? I make that enquiry because, although it is right to

pray, it is not right to pray some sorts of prayer. It is the right thing for a clerk in the telegraph office to work the telegraphic apparatus, but suppose that he should merely move a handle backwards and forwards for a whole day, yet never send a message or receive one? I would not think it was right for him to keep on moving that handle to no purpose. Evidently a wire is broken, or something is out of order—there is no connection with the electric current, for the machinery does not work. And in like manner, a prayer that never reaches the heart of God as it should and never brings an answer to your suppliant soul—a prayer in which you have no fellowship with the invisible Jehovah—is not a right kind of prayer to pray. And I cannot say of such prayer that it has any good reason why it should be presented. If you do not mean the petitions that you present, you mock God when you utter them, for they are only words and nothing but words.

There are some who would not like to say, just in so many words, exactly what they think, but *they really pray because they regard prayer as being more or less meritorious*. They do not consider it so meritorious that they expect to be saved by it, but they have some kind of notion that it helps with a great many other things, among the rest, faith in Jesus Christ to procure salvation for the soul. All these things go into the scale and, at last, they make up the weight required—that seems to be their idea. In fact, according to some, our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, is only a make-weight—our prayers, tears, alms and good works count for a great deal. These people do not quite advocate salvation by works. They do not go the full length of the road that the Romanist takes, but they go a very long way in the same direction through their belief that there is some kind of merit about various things appertaining to themselves, and, especially, that their prayers are meritorious.

I will speak about this error very strongly, lest I should not be understood by all and I state my final conviction that if any man thinks that his prayers have any merit in them, of themselves, every prayer that he presents is an insult to the Lord Jesus Christ, for He is set forth as the *only* Propitiation for sin! If you think that your prayers help in any degree to put away sin, you make an antichrist of your prayers! Christ's blood and righteousness form the *only* ground of your acceptance before God. If you reckon your prayers as a ground, or medium, or even a *help* to your acceptance with God, you push the Cross of Christ far into the background and put your prayers into the place of the only Substitute for sinners—and the more you pile them up, the more you multiply your sin!

Possibly I have quoted the answers which would be given if I were to ask many of you why you cry unto the Lord in prayer. I would like to listen to the prayer of every man here present—without his knowing that I was doing so—I would like to put my ear to the keyhole of his room and hear the style of his praying, but, as I cannot do that, I would like to ask whether you would wish anybody to hear them? How do your prayers appear to the eyes of God? Has it been humble, earnest, sincere, trustful, relying upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, and upon the effectual working of the Holy Spirit? If so, it is well, but if not, it is only vanity of vani-

ties. All is vanity! How would it be with some of us if we were put into the condition of the Highland soldier of whom I have read? In our war with our American colonists, before they gained their freedom from this country, a certain Highland regiment was engaged. Every evening one of the men was observed to go away from the camp into an adjacent woods—and it was suspected that he had gone to give information to the enemy. He was, therefore, arrested and brought before the colonel of the regiment.

The other officers said to him, “Now tell us what you have been doing while you have been absent from the camp.” “Well,” he said, “I have been accustomed, whenever I can, to retire for an hour or two of private prayer.” The colonel happened to be a Scotchman and a Presbyterian, so he said to the soldier, “Well, you never had such reason to pray before as you have tonight. If you do go for an hour together to pray, you can pray—so let us hear you now.” The man knelt down and poured out his soul before God, seeking deliverance at the Lord’s hands and resigning his spirit into the keeping of his Heavenly Father. He prayed with such an earnest, simple power that when he had finished, the colonel said to the other officers, “A man who can come on parade like that must have been drilled a good many times. I think we may confidently accept what he has said as being true. There is no doubt about his having been alone in prayer to God, now that he can pray like that before us.”

Happy is the man whose prayer would bear to be listened to by his fellow men in such a critical season as that, so that they should be compelled to say of him, “That man has often prayed before tonight—he has the very brogue of one who communes with Heaven.” But he who gives such answers as I have been quoting would certainly not be able to pray before others as that soldier did!

II. But now, secondly, THERE ARE SOME ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTION WHICH BETRAY A GREAT DEAL OF IGNORANCE.

“Why do you cry unto Me?” There are times, dear Brothers and Sisters, when *a sinner’s crying to God in prayer hinders him from immediate repentance*. The Gospel comes to each man and says, “Repent, and be converted.” The man says, “I will pray.” So he gets away alone and he prays—but such prayer as that cannot be acceptable to God. There is a favorite sin, of which he has long been guilty. He does not give it up, but he says that he will pray about it. God says to such a man, “‘Why do you cry unto Me?’ Give up your sin! This is not a matter for you to pray about, but to repent of.” The man says, “I was asking for repentance.” Ask, if you will, for repentance, but *exercise* it as well. Christ does not bid us pray to have our right hand cut off, or our right eye plucked out, but He says, “If your right eye offends you, pluck it out, and cast it from you...And if your right hand offends you, cut it off, and cast it from you.” It will never do for any man to hope to be saved by putting prayer into the place of genuine repentance and immediate forsaking of sin!

The same is true *of those who put prayer into the place of believing in Christ*. “I mean to pray about the salvation of my soul,” says someone. My dear Friend, the Gospel says to you, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “I have been praying for salvation, Sir, and I

hope to get it if I keep on praying.” No, you will not—on the contrary, you will be lost forever if you pray instead of believing in Christ! As surely as you live, if you will not accept God’s way of salvation, which is to believe in Jesus Christ, whether you pray or do not pray, you are a lost man. “There,” says the Lord, “on yonder Cross is your only hope. Trust My Son, and you shall be saved.” “Lord,” you reply, “I will pray about the matter.” Again the Lord says to you, “You see My well-beloved Son hanging upon that tree? There is life for a look at Him.” “Lord, I will pray about the matter.” The Lord says, “I have said to you, ‘Hear, and your soul shall live.’ ‘Look unto Me, and be you saved.’” “Lord, I will pray.” To put the matter very strongly, might not the man almost as well say, “Lord, I will swear”? Is there not just as much of the spirit of rebellion in the one answer as in the other? He has chosen his own way instead of accepting God’s way! God’s way is, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” And to this, the man replies, “Lord, I will pray.” And if that is all he does, he sets his seal to his own condemnation! In such a case, the Lord asks the question in my text, “Why do you cry unto Me?” Why are you crying? For another atonement beside that of the Lord Jesus Christ? Crying for God to save you in some other way than by believing in Jesus? Crying for somebody else to believe for you? Crying to the Holy Spirit to repent for you? Is that what you want? He will not do it! Why should He repent for you? You must repent for yourself and believe for yourself, for the Holy Spirit cannot repent for you, or believe for you. If a man, instead of believing the Truth of God which is so plain and which is evidently able to save him—if, instead of simply resting upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, he says, “I will pray about the matter,” he betrays the fatal ignorance of his heart in supposing that God will make a new way of salvation for him instead of the one which He has plainly revealed in His Word!

Perhaps another one says, “*I am in hopes that, by praying, I shall be made more fit for believing in Christ.*” Fit for believing in Christ? You also are upon the wrong tack, like these others of whom I have been speaking. Your ignorance is misleading you. Fit for believing in Christ? A man is never so “fit for believing” as when, in himself, he is most unfit! It is *unfitness*, not fitness, that is required! What is fitness for being washed? Filth—and filth alone! What is fitness for receiving alms? Poverty, abject need. What is fitness for receiving pardon? Guilt—and only guilt. It comes not as an act of Grace, but as an act of Justice if there is no guilt—for the display of God’s pardoning Grace, guilt is needed. If you are guilty, if you are black, if you are foul you have all the fitness that is required! So, come and find in Jesus Christ all that meets your greatest and most urgent need!

Does someone ask, “But must I not have a sense of my need?” Not as a fitness for coming to Christ, for the man who says, “I am quite fit to be saved, for I feel my need,” does not really feel his need as he should and is the farthest off from Christ. O you who are most empty, most guilty, most lost, most ruined, you are the most “fit” for the great Savior to save! May the Holy Spirit enable you to realize this and drive out of you the foolish notion that your praying is to help Christ to save you and to take

you part of the way on the road to Heaven! Your prayer will not help the Divine surgery which alone can cure you! So, just as you are in all your wretchedness and sin, trust Christ to save you, for He is able to save you, from first to last, without any help of yours!

III. Now I am going to close by mentioning OTHER ANSWERS WHICH MAY BE GIVEN TO THIS QUESTION—"Why do you cry unto Me?"

I will tell you my own answer to this question. *I cry to God, principally, because I cannot help doing so.* I cry to God for the same reason that I eat when I feel hungry and for the same reason that I groan when I am in pain—it is the outward expression of the condition of my inward life. I cannot help praying. I think if anyone were to say to me, "You must not kneel down to pray," it would not make any difference to my praying. If I were not allowed to utter a word all day long, that would not affect my praying. If I could not have five minutes that I might spend in prayer by myself, I would pray all the same. Minute by minute, moment by moment, somehow or other, my heart must commune with my God. Prayer has become as essential to me as the heaving of my lungs and the beating of my pulse. I do ask God to give me power in prayer and I chide myself if I am lax in prayer. Still, almost unconsciously, one gets praying in the streets, praying while preaching to you—yes, sometimes, one almost prays in his sleep! One gets so into the spirit of prayer that, without always knowing it, there is a prayer leaping from the heart and the very glance of the eye becomes a means of communion with God. So, that is my answer to the Lord's question, "Why do you cry unto Me?" I pray because I cannot help doing so.

It is an equally good answer when anyone can say, *"I pray because I delight in it.* There is no holy exercise which is so sweet, so blessed, so delightful, so inspiring, so care-removing, as praying to my loving Heavenly Father. Nothing brings me as near to Heaven, or opens its gate so wide to me, or gives me such a foretaste of its Glory, as prayer mingled with praise."

It would also be a good answer if you should say, *"I pray because I have such great needs that I cannot help praying.* I have such a little faith that I must pray for more. I have so many troubles that I must pray to be delivered out of them. I feel that I have so many sins that I must pray to be cleansed from them. I have so many desires after better things that I must pray for those things to be given to me. I feel that not merely my happiness, but my sorrow also drives me to my knees." I do not mind how you get to the Mercy Seat as long as you get there in spirit and in Truth and do really pray. But, dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I do hope that these reasons for prayer are those that you would yourselves give if the Lord were to say to each one of you, "Why do you cry unto Me?"

I think I hear another say, *"I pray because what little repentance and faith I have can express themselves best in prayer.* I tell the Lord how I hate my sin and I ask Him to help me to hate it still more. I go to Him when I fall and ask Him to hold me up for the future. I tell Him all my faults and follies and I ask Him to teach me, and sanctify me. I find that my little faith is most at home and at ease when I go to God in prayer. I

tell the Lord that I do trust Him and I ask Him to increase my faith. I tell Him that if He should refuse to listen to me, I will still cling to the hem of His garment and if I perish, I will perish at the foot of His Cross." Well, that is the right way to pray—when prayer is the expression of penitence and faith.

"Yes," says another, "but *I pray because I get more repentance and more faith by praying.*" Just so. They grow while they are exercising themselves. He that weeps for sin will weep more as he prays, and he that believes in Christ will believe more strongly while he expresses that believing in prayer for yet greater faith.

All these are good reasons for praying without ceasing.

Perhaps one of the best is this. "*I pray because I am nothing, and I want to get to the great 'I AM.'*" I pray because I have nothing and I know that all I can have must come from Him. I pray because my poverty would gladly draw upon His infinite wealth, because my weakness would drink in His eternal strength, because my sin would be a partaker of His perfect holiness, because my nothingness would find itself lost in the all-sufficiency of God." These are blessed reasons for praying and if these are your reasons, pray on, Brothers and Sisters. Pray on, if you can thus answer the Lord's question, "Why do you cry unto Me?"

I suppose that there may have come into this place someone who never prays. If so, I do not know where you are, Friend. I am glad I do not. I would look upon you with the greatest pity if I knew you. The very thought of such a sad case as yours makes me feel heavy of heart. A man who never speaks to his Maker! A man? Can he be a man? Let me look him up and down. A man, "fearfully and wonderfully made" by God, yet he never speaks to his Creator! O God, to what a terrible depth a man can sink if he can live without prayer! What a strange creature he is! A little chicken drinks and lifts its head each time it sips. "The ox knows his owner, and the ass"—you know how stupid the ass is, yet he knows "his master's crib." But here is a man, whom God has made, and kept in being all these years. He gave him a household and made him well-to-do among his fellow men, and kept him out of the asylum, and out of the workhouse, and out of the jail, and out of Hell, and yet he never prays? O knees that never bend before the Lord! O hearts that never yield yourselves to God, are you not accursed?

Ah, Sirs, assuredly a curse rests upon the man who never prays! He who prays not, believes not, and what says the Word of God concerning the man who does not believe? "He that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." From my inmost soul, I pity even guilty men who are condemned to die because they have broken the laws of their country and have taken the lives of their fellow creatures. Yet, O you unbelievers, their condition only differs in degree from yours, for you, also, are "condemned already" because you have not believed on the only-begotten Son of God! Oh, I beseech you, turn unto Him before it is too late and you are cast into Hell, where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched forever and ever! If you believe that what I have said is false, you will take no notice of it, but if you believe that this Book is, indeed, the Word of God, and most, if not

all of you, know that it is—then, escape for your lives—look not behind you, but lay hold on eternal life and may God the Holy Spirit enable you to do so this very moment!

It is not to prayer that I exhort you, but I urge you to obey that great Gospel command, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” And more than that, in the name of God, I command you to believe in Him whom He has sent as the only Savior of sinners. Believe on Him! Trust in Him and go your way forgiven! God grant it, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
LUKE 18:1-27.**

Verse 1. *And He spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Especially not to faint in prayer, not to become disheartened, or weary, even if their prayers should, for a long time, remain unanswered.

2, 3. *Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary.* He would not have interested himself in her case simply because she was a poor widow. He had no heart of compassion for her, nor would it have concerned him at all that her adversary had wronged her. He did not trouble to discharge the duties appertaining to his office. No fear of God and no respect for public opinion affected him at all.

4. *And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man.* He even boasted of the very thing of which he ought to have been ashamed—“I fear not God, nor regard man.’ I care for nobody and defy everyone.”

5. *Yet because this widow troubles me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.* He cared for nobody but himself. He was concerned about his own peace of mind. The poor woman could win through his *selfishness*, what she could not get from his sense of justice, since that had no weight with him. Her importunity won for her what nothing else could procure.

6-8. *And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge said, and shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?* God will hear the earnest, united, persistent cries of His people. His Church, today, is like a widow left forlorn. Her cries go up to God, pleading that He will vindicate her cause—and He will do so. He may wait a while, but the prayers of His people are not lost. By-and-by, He will avenge His own elect. So is it with regard to all true prayer. Though, for wise reasons, God may delay to reply, yet He files our petitions—they are registered in Heaven. Their power is accumulating, it is all adding to the great pile of supplication which is the real strength of the Church of Christ. What a question that is, “When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?” He can find it if anybody can, for He knows what faith is, where

faith is—but will He find any? Well, He will find so little, even among the best of His people, that the question may well be put—and among a great many who profess to have faith, He will find none at all! Brothers and Sisters, we pray so feebly, we expect so little, we ask with such diffidence, we have such slight courage in prayer that if the Son of Man, Himself, came among us to search us, how little faith He would discover!

9-12. *And He spoke this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank You that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.* He could not even magnify his own excellencies without sneering at the poor publican who had said nothing against him, or about him. That is a poor kind of religion which has to look down upon all others before it can look up to itself. What, O Pharisee, if others are not, apparently, so good as you are in some things? Yet, in other things, they probably excel you and if you think yourself worthy of praise, you have never really seen yourself as you are in God's sight! A correct knowledge of your own heart would have led you to a very different conclusion. It is a good thing that the Pharisee appeared to be thankful for something, but, probably, that was merely a complimentary speech which meant very little. He did not thank God half as much as he praised himself!

13. *And the publican, standing afar off.*—Away in some distant corner.

13. *Would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.* He makes no reflection upon others, but confesses his own sin and appeals to the great Propitiation, for the word he used means, "God be propitious to me, a sinner."

14, 15. *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted. And they also brought unto Him infants, that He would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them.* Were not these children too little and too unimportant for Christ to notice? Their understanding was not sufficiently developed to know anything that He might say—what was the use of bringing them for His blessing?

16. *But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God.* The Kingdom of God consists of child-like spirits, persons like these children! Instead of needing to grow bigger in order to be fit to be Christians, we need to grow smaller! It is not the supposed wisdom of manhood, but the simplicity of childhood that will fit us for the reception of Divine Truth. Alas, we are often too much like men—if we were more like children, we would receive the Kingdom of God far more readily.

17-19. *Verily I say unto you, Whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein. And a certain ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why do you call Me good? None is good, save One, that is, God.* Yet the ruler was right. He knew not that he was

speaking to One who is, assuredly, God and, in the highest sense, good. But, since he had asked, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Christ answered his enquiry.

20, 21. *You know the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, honor your father and your mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.* All which appears to be simple enough if you only look on the surface. But when you come to recollect that there is an inward, spiritual meaning to all this, that a licentious look breaks the command about adultery, that a covetous desire is stealing, that the utterance of a slander is bearing false witness and so on, who is he that shall enter into life upon such terms as these? Yet they cannot be lowered, for they are, spiritually, just and right.

22. *Now when Jesus heard these things, He said unto him, Yet you lack one thing.* Christ gives him a test. If he is what he thinks he is, he will be ready to obey whatever command God lays upon him. Christ is about to lay one upon him—let us see whether he will obey or not.

22. *Sell all that you have and distribute unto the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven: and come, follow Me.* Now, which will he love the more—the Son of God—or his wealth?

23-27. *And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.* Yet some men spend all their lives in the earnest endeavor to make it hard for them to be saved! They are trying, as much as they can, to block up the road to eternal life, hoarding up that which will be a grievous burden to them, even if God shall lead them in the way to Heaven. How much better is it to live wholly unto God and then, be we rich or be we poor, consecrate all to Him and live to His praise and glory!

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

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

FORWARD! FORWARD! FORWARD! NO. 548

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 18, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And the Lord said unto Moses, Why cry you unto Me? Speak unto
the children of Israel, that they go forward.”
Exodus 14:15.***

SPIRITUAL men, in their distresses, turn at once to prayer even as the stag when hunted takes to flight. Prayer is a never-failing resort. It is sure to bring a blessing with it. Even apart from the answer of our supplications, the very exercise of prayer is healthy to the man engaged in it. Far be it from me ever to say a word in disparagement of the holy, happy, heavenly exercise of prayer. But, Beloved, there are times when prayer is not enough—when prayer itself is out of season. You will think that a hard saying and say, “Who can bear it?” But my text is to the point. Moses prayed that God would deliver His people. But the Lord said to him, “Why cry you unto Me?” As much as to say this is not the time for prayer, it is the time for *action*. “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” When we have prayed over a matter to a certain degree, it then becomes sinful to tarry any longer. Our plain duty is to carry our desires into action, and having asked God’s guidance and having received Divine power from on high, to go at once to our duty without any longer deliberation or delay.

Brethren, a vigorous faith will often shut its eyes to difficulties. When faith looks upon a difficulty as being exceedingly great, then she turns to prayer. But, on the other hand, after having sought God’s help and having received it, she frequently laughs at the impossibility and cries, “It shall be done.” and then, instead of betaking herself any longer to her knees, she boldly marches on, believing that the difficulty will vanish before her, that the crooked will be made straight and the rough places plain. We are not to be always praying over a difficulty. When we have fairly committed it to God, we are to act upon the assurance that He has heard us.

Nor will such an action be the fruit of rashness for it is a solid and substantial fact that prayer does avail with God. Beloved, it strikes me that the advice which the Lord gave to Moses was such as He has given to the preacher tonight—and that the message which Moses delivered to the children of Israel is a very fit one for me to deliver to you. Short, prompt, soldier-like, here is the whole of it—“Forward! Forward!” If you have been

sitting down or tempted to go back—"Forward!" We have long been praying, let us tonight, "go forward." The one subject we shall take up and try to deliver to different classes of characters, is, "Thus says the Lord, you children of Israel, Forward!"

I. First, we will contemplate THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AS A FLOCK OF FUGITIVES. And in this light they give encouragement to trembling sinners flying from the curse of the Law and from the power of their sins. I think I see those poor Israelites crowding together, all alarmed and afraid, whispering to one another some such trembling words as these—"I saw them. I saw my old master on horseback riding after me. I looked and I saw regiment upon regiment of warriors marching in long red lines." "I heard," says another, "the sound of their war music. I heard the clash of their spears. We cannot stand against them! We are only defenseless multitudes and they are the well-trained sons of Mizraim. Their swords will be drunk with our blood."

They huddled together as a company of doves seeking to escape the hawk. Alas! What can they do? They are crying to God and to Moses, thinking of this plan and devising another. And Moses himself, in some sort of alarm, is crying out to God for them—"Lord, help this people! They are in great straits. They are in frightful difficulties. The enemy says, 'I will pursue them. I will overtake them. I will divide the spoil. My lust shall be satisfied upon them.' Lord, what am I to do with this company?" Here comes the Divine answer, full of wisdom and love—"Speak unto them and bid them go forward."

Now such is my message to the company of fugitives who are here tonight. You have been awakened. Your conscience has been alarmed. You have begun to feel the terrors of the Law. You have heard the crack of the whip and felt it on your back. You are trying to escape from your sins. You are not as you used to be, a contented bondsman, but you pant to be delivered altogether from sin and its power and its guilt. You have been flying as best you could from sin. But the whole of your sins are after you and your conscience, with its quick ear, can hear the sound of threatening judgment. "Alas," your heart is saying, "unless God helps me, I shall be in Hell!" "Alas," says your judgment, "unless God is merciful, I shall soon perish!" Every power of your manhood is now upon the alarm. The different parts of your heart are talking to one another and they are all foreboding desperate mischief.

Now what shall I do for you? Shall I pray for you? Yes, that I will. Shall I bid you pray? Yes, that I may. And we may blend our prayers together—"God be merciful to us sinners! Lord save us, or we perish!" But I think while I am praying for you, I hear my Master saying, "Why cry you unto Me? Tell them to go forward! Preach Christ to them instead of praying any longer or bidding them pray. Deliver to them the message of the Gospel—"Forward, Sinner, forward to the Cross! Forward to the five wounds! For-

ward to the bloody sweat and to the crown of thorns! Go forward to the agonies of Gethsemane and to the death struggles of Golgotha. Forward! Forward to the place—

***‘Where the full Atonement’s made,
Where the utmost ransom’s paid.’ ”***

I know what you say. “Right before me rolls the great sea of God’s wrath. I am surrounded with a dark, dark night and I see no light but the sheen of these terrible waves of fire. If I go forward, God’s eternal wrath is in the way.” Forward, Sinner, whatever may obstruct the way! Let not Hell itself block up the road! Do you not know that when Jesus is your Leader, He will at once divide the Red sea of Jehovah’s wrath? He did divide it! He went through it Himself when He suffered the wrath of God instead of you!

As you go forward, you shall find Almighty Justice standing up as a protecting wall on either hand and no longer rolling as a devouring flood. Forward in the way of faith in the Savior’s name! And when you have passed through the dry bed of a sea once deep and stormy, you shall look back and see the deep sea swallowing up your sins and shall sing, “The depths have covered them, there is not one of them left.” Forward, Sinner, forward! “Well,” says one, “I will pray about it.” Beware of substituting prayer for *faith*—faith is your present duty—Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. “I will think about it a little longer.” Do no such thing! Thinking is a very poor substitute for *believing*. Forward! Forward at once and on the spot! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.

“But I am not fit to believe!” Forward, in God’s name—forward! What have you to do with *fitness*? God *commands* you to believe in His Son Jesus Christ. Forward is my message—I come not here to tamper with you—to deal with your “ifs” and “buts,” and excuses and perhapses. Hell is behind you—you are shut up on the right hand and on the left by God’s Providence, your own fears, and Divine Justice. There is but one way of safety and that is the way of *faith*. Forward, Sinner! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved!

Why, some of you have been frittering away your time—weeks and months and years! You have been *thinking* about it, *praying* about it, *reading* about it, *hoping* about it, *fearing* about it—but never coming to Jesus just as you are. It is wrong—it is all wrong! God’s command is neither work, nor feel, nor fear—it is simple and plain—BELIEVE! Forward! Trust a Savior’s wounds. And in trusting there is life. In a *look* at Him you are saved! O, I wish I could get behind some of you and whisper a word in your ear, for I know what Satan says. He says, “Tarry, tarry, tarry!” Ah, he loves to have you in the place of breaking forth as children, that he may vex and torment you.

“Go back,” he says, “go back!” Ah, I know he would like to have you at your cups again and in your old sins, but you cannot go back if God has

once brought you out of Egypt! I know what he whispers. He says, "It is of no use going forward. If you believe in Jesus," says he, "you will perish after all." Back, you old Liar, back! God never did permit a man yet to walk in a path in which He commanded him to go and not to walk safely. Forward, Sinner, FORWARD! Christ is before you and Heaven in Him is before you. If you stay where you are, you shall die. If you go forward, you can but die. And, therefore, take the captain's word tonight, for it is the word of the captain's King—"Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."

II. Secondly, we may view the great company who came out of Egypt as AN ARMY UNDER COMMAND. Therefore they *must* obey. The command given to them is, "Forward! Forward! Forward!" Might the wise men have said in the host of Israel, "How can we go forward? That narrow beach leads down to the foaming billow. Forward? What do you mean? We are altogether as dead men if we go forward! Would you have us swim? Do you know where you are? There are miles and miles of deep water and who knows the bottom of the sea? Forward? Absurd!—We shall lose the camels and the sheep and the baggage and our wealth and our children and our little ones—yes, and our own lives also."

But thus says the Lord, "Forward!" You came out of Egypt under Moses' command, will you play the rebel's part? If the Lord is your Captain, you must do absolutely what He bids you at any loss and at any cost. If He says, "Forward," and it is into the Red Sea or into a gulf of fire, forward you must go. Now, Beloved, this presents us a picture of those who are savingly converted, who, on a sudden, meet with difficulties in following Christ and run to their minister or to their friend, and say, "What are we to do?"

The Lord's message by me tonight to your anxious inquiry is this—"Forward!" It is a simple one—"Forward!" "Sir, I have just begun to be a Christian, but if I continue in it, I shall lose my business. My calling is such that I cannot be honest in it and serve my God faithfully without sinking all my capital and bringing myself and family to beggary. What ought I to do? Ought I not to give up my religion?" Forward! Forward! No matter what is before you. Forward! You are not fit to be a soldier of Christ unless you can count all costs and still hold fast to the Cross of Christ.

"Ah," says one, "but what is to become of my children, my family, my household?" Friend, I cannot tell you, but God can. It is yours to trust them with Him, for the only command I have for you is, Forward! Forward! "But my husband says I shall never come into the house again! My father tells me he will turn me out of doors." Be it so, no one pities you more than I do. But I dare not alter my message to your soul. I am to bid you, Go forward! "Well," says one, "these are hard commands."

Yes, but the martyrs had harder still. Theirs was the stake, the gibbet, the rack. They must rot in prison. They must be dragged at the heels of the wild horse. But what is the command? “Forward.!” On went the goodly host through floods, through fires, through seas of blood. They never paused. And if you would be worthy followers of them, you must do the same. The Master’s message to you is, “Forward!” At the famous charge of Balaclava, when the order was given to charge the batteries, what could that troop do but ride into the valley of death? There they go! On, on, up to the very cannons’ mouths! The word of command must not be questioned but obeyed—

***“Theirs not to make reply.
Theirs not to reason why.
Theirs but to do and die—
Into the valley of death
Rode the six hundred.”***

And you, if you are fit to be God’s soldiers—if you are really His and filled with His Holy Spirit—you must do the same. What would you think of our soldiers if, when they were bid to charge, they should say, “There is a ditch in the way.” Jump in it! “But there are soldiers in the way.” Cut them to pieces! “But they have very sharp fixed bayonets.” Fix yours, too! Push them at the bayonet’s point and drive them back. England expects every man to do his duty. What God commands must surely have a higher claim on men than what England commands them to do! Comrades in arms, all my message to you is, “Forward! Forward!” If God has called you to honor and glory and immortality and eternal life—if loss of business, comfort, honor, fame, friends. If relatives should threaten you, you must not be daunted—for He who loves any of these more than Christ is not worthy of Him.

There are cowards of another sort with whom I must have a word. They do not like going forward. They would not lose by it if they did, but they feel a quivering sensation of nervousness come over them. And though they know their Master’s commands, yet they say, “Well, I must think the matter over.” Now suppose one instance—and I take only one of the sort—suppose you know it (as it certainly is, whether you know it or not), to be your duty to be baptized? How often I have heard people say, “Well, yes, the Lord is my gracious Master and I am His servant and I believe it is the duty of Believers to be baptized. But if the Lord ever reveals it to me, then I will do it”?

There is a soldier for you! He is not content to get the same orders as his fellow soldiers! No, he cries, “When the regiment is on the march, if the captain will come round to my tent and talk to me by myself, I will not mind going.” Why, he deserves to be flogged as a deserter! I will not wish anything hard to my Christian Brothers and Sisters, but I do venture to prophesy that they will be beaten with many stripes if they talk in that way. “Ah,” says one, “but the Lord must apply it to me.” What for? The

thing is clear enough without its being *applied*. If there is anything in the Bible which is plain at all, it is that he who believes in Christ should be buried with Him in Baptism. Then, if it is your clear duty, you ought to do it at once.

“Well, I will pray about it.” And do you believe God will hear such a wicked prayer as that? If I tell my child that there is something for him to do and he tells me, “Well, I will think about it.” I shall let him know that I am not to be thus impudently trifled with. If I say to him, Now, my child, do so-and-so. “Father, I will pray about it.” Believe me, I shall not put up with such hypocritical rebellion! It will not do in one’s own house, much less in the House of God. Are you to be permitted to trifle with positive precepts and then to lay your sin upon God’s back? I do not think so.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you have been sitting down timidly and saying, “Well, one of these days I will come out and own my Lord,” instead of that, I am bid to command you on this point and on every other, if it is a plain duty, whether it is pleasant to the flesh or not, “Forward! Forward! Forward!” What are your marching orders? Does your Lord tell you to do it? Do it! Do the Scriptures bid you? Do it! It is not yours to reason why any more than it is the soldier’s. But as the seed of Israel marched right on, even though the sea was in their way, so must you—though death itself should be the result. “Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

III. We will change the topic once again and we will take a third view of it. Let us view these people as ON THE MARCH TOWARDS CANAAN. Many of you are on your way towards Heaven and the Lord’s command to you is, “Forward! Forward!”

I would that I could sound that one word in the ears of many whom I believe to be the Lord’s people but who have for a long time settled upon their lees. There are some persons who cannot be persuaded to make an advance in the Divine life. The moment you urge them to anything practical they call you legal. They seem to consider themselves as inanimate clay ordained to lie passively in the hands of the Holy Spirit. But they forget that the Holy Spirit works in us, not to be idle and powerless, but to will and to *do* of God’s good pleasure. They neither will, nor do, but talk about the Spirit as though He were to will and to do everything *for* them.

To such who have been converted but have made no progress let me, in my Master’s name, give clear utterance to that word, “Forward.” Brothers and Sisters, you and I ought to go forward in knowledge. If I know no more of Scripture than I did ten years ago, what have I done with my time? If I am no better instructed myself as a scribe in my Master’s kingdom, of what use shall I be to others? If you have been in this world these years and yet doctrine has not become more clear, nor experience more plain it is time you should look about you and follow on to know the Lord. We do not keep boys at school year after year if they make no progress.

And yet how many there are of professing Christians who seem to have been stunted in their early profession so that they positively have not advanced in knowledge one iota beyond where they were ten or twenty years ago? In this point, however, they are not so much to blame as in others.

“Forward,” should be the motto as to our faith. You were doubting and fearing twenty years ago. If I recollect, when I was but a lad ten years ago, I heard you lament—

***“It is a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought.”***

Have you not a better time than that now? Can you not sing—

***“A debtor to mercy alone,
Of Covenant mercy I sing;
Nor fear with Your righteousness on,
My person and offerings to bring—
The terrors of Law and of God,
With me can have nothing to do;
My Savior’s obedience and blood
Hide all my transgressions from view.***

I do not suppose you will altogether be rid of fears, but I do think your motto should be—“Forward!”—that your faith should become more constant and your doubts less frequent. Surely the venerable saint who has proved his Master a hundred times ought to find his faith more strong than those of us who are but babes in the family! Ought we to be always limping, always hoping and trusting, doubting and fearing? Is it not time for us to use the strong muscles of the fully developed man—and, leaving all nursery carts—ought we not to stand upright with Abraham with a faith which staggers not because of unbelief? Forward, Christian, forward as to your faith!

May I not use the same word in reference to our fellowship with Christ? I am afraid most of us make no progress as to nearness to Christ. Some of us, I am afraid, go backwards. We said, years ago, “Nearer, my God, to You, nearer to You.” Are we nearer? Have we come closer to the wounds of Jesus? Do we more frequently recline upon His bosom and sit at His feet? If not, I am commanded with Moses, “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

Above all, have we made any progress as to work *for* our Master? Some, as they grow old, give up their work. I do not understand it! I must confess an inability of comprehending how any man who once preached the Gospel can ever leave his ministry while his strength lasts. If the Master has once allotted you a field of labor, unless it is sheer inability, I cannot understand how you can ever cease to till the ground, or reap the sheaves. No, you will, if God has called you, want to do more and more and more for Jesus!

You will feel a growing thirst after precious souls—at least you ought to. You will be moved with greater yearnings of your heart towards your fellow immortals and a higher zeal for the spread of your Master’s king-

dom. Christian men, when I think of some of you who have tasted that He is gracious, and are content with the *taste*. You who have been into the river of Jesus' love until you are up to the ankles, but are loath to wade into the deeper parts of the heavenly stream. When I think of some of you who are worshipping in the outer courts and have no ambition to enter into that which is within the veil. When I remember how some of you seem never to comprehend the resurrection life, nor what it is to be raised up together to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus—I do marvel at you that you thus stand back and in the name of God, whose servant I am, I give you this motto—"Forward! Forward!"

Press onward in the Divine life! Forget the road already trod and onward urge your way. Cry for the Spirit of God! Ask for more unction, more power, more consciousness of the Divine indwelling and then take for the motto on your banner—"Forward! Forward! Forward!"

IV. In the fourth place, but with very great brevity, TO CHRISTIANS IN TROUBLE our text is applicable. The children of Israel were in great straits. They were in a trial into which God had brought them. And it is an absolute certainty that if God brings you in, He will bring you out. He never did take a saint where he must of necessity perish. The rocks of daily life rise on the right and on the left. The raging enemy is behind. The equally raging sea is before. What is to be done now? God's word is—"Forward!"

God shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace. In this vast assembly there may be several Christians who said to themselves last Saturday night, "I will go up to the House of God and enquire at the hand of the man of God what the Lord will do for me." This is the answer to your enquiry. You cannot help *yourself*—that is clear. Your trouble is none of your own finding—that you know. And your escape will not be of your own working—that you know, also. You have nothing now to do but to cast yourselves upon your God and go forward!

Beloved, it is a blessed thing to be absolutely stripped of creature comforts that you may be wholly clothed upon with the Creator. It is not pleasing to flesh and blood to be brought down to abject nothingness. But faith never is more happy than when the strength of the mortal is altogether dead—because then the immortal God comes in and clothes our weakness with His Omnipotence. If I might have any choice between having abundant wealth, or being brought to absolute dependence upon daily supplies. If in the latter case I could have greater power to exhibit and to exert faith in Christ, I must confess that I should prefer the mode of living which would give me most room to enjoy the luxury of depending upon my God.

I believe it is more happy and more Divine a life to live from hand to mouth, dependent upon the Providence of God and having the confidence to trust Him, than it is to have all the abundance of this world but to have

nothing about which faith may exercise itself. Often when our joys are thick about us and we have ten thousand creature comforts, we are then naked and poor and miserable in spirituals. But when the creature comforts fall as the leaves are falling from the trees in autumn, then it is that we have frequently the most joy and the most peace in God. "Give me back my sickbed," said a saint when he remembered what joy he had had upon it!

Theodoret, the martyr, said that his persecutors had done him an injury when they took him off the rack. "For," said he, "while I was on the rack, God sent His angels to comfort me. And now you have taken me off, I am afraid I shall lose their heavenly presence." Experimentally I have learned, dear Friends, that at the Red Sea of affliction we see most of the right arm of God. I am glad there was a Red Sea! I bless God that it had deep and foaming billows! I praise His name that there were fierce and cruel Egyptians—for if there had never been that Red Sea, never would the song of Moses and the shout of Miriam have been heard—"Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea."

Your tribulations will yet yield you music. All you have to do now is to honor God by going forward! Hold your peace and God shall fight for you! "Be still and know that I am God." When the worst has come to the worst, that God—

***"Who moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform,
Will plant His footsteps in the sea,
And ride upon the storm.
Forward! Christian, forward!"***

V. Let me not weary you, but I must, again, use my text in another manner—for the exhortation of all of you who are followers of my Lord and Master. THE ISRAELITES WERE UPON A DIVINE MISSION. They were going up to slay the Canaanites, Hivites, Jebusites and Hittites. They must all be slain with the sharp sword of Israel. But a difficulty rolls between them and their prey! The message, however, of God's captain, is still, "Forward! Forward!"

My Brothers and Sisters, let me specially address you who are associated in Church fellowship here. Some of you will remember when I came up from the country. I remember better than you do, for I have hidden these things in my heart. A child, almost a babe, I came into your place of worship which was half empty, no, not one-sixth full. You may, some of you, remember that sermon when the youth preached of the faithfulness of God and tried to magnify Divine Immutability. I believe the note of the charge that morning, was, "Forward!"

Hope was kindled in the breasts of many. The few there who were faithful to the cause hoped and believed that God had better days for them and we took heart. You will remember, some of you, when the people began to

through the aisles. Within three or four Sundays, when the place was full, our cry was “Forward!” We had more Prayer Meetings, more earnestness every day! I recollect it was thought a strange thing to see such zeal! Then we wanted to enlarge the Chapel. And one Sunday evening, preaching from that text—“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down”—when certain ones had objected to any alteration because it was a mere spasm, a mere excitement—the young lad from the country would soon be forgotten—I said concerning that wall at the back, “By faith this wall will fall down,” for our motto was “Forward!”

We held a little meeting, raised the money at once—down went the wall—the place was enlarged. The enlargement was of no use, our motto was, “Forward!” God opened the doors of Exeter Hall to us. We went there. The place was crowded, multitudes of souls were converted. The Church increased—did we stop? Our motto was “Forward!” The Surrey Hall was proposed to us, a larger structure. We went about it and we said, “This is too immense a place, too bold a venture.”

I thought in my own mind, “The place will never be filled.” You remember we still dared it, for our motto was “Forward!” Then came a crushing blow, a terrible disaster which seemed to shatter us all and, most of all, the man who was called to take the brunt of the battle. He was laid upon the ground all broken-hearted and wretched by the catastrophe, but God suffered him not to lose heart! He rose from the dust of despondency. The Spirit of the Lord was upon him. His cry was “Forward!” And once again he stood among you and again the thousands gathered and on, on, on, from that time, “Forward!” has been the cry.

“We will build a tabernacle,” said we. Thirty thousand pounds! We stood back. Where would it come from? “The silver and the gold are Mine,” was the promise of God. Some bold hearts went on, for our motto was “Forward!” And we prayed and worked and believed and lo—we entered this spacious house without a debt and we worship in it, remembering that of our own we gave unto God and that this goodly structure is a proof of the power of faith. Our motto was still “Forward!”

The pastor took one or two young men to educate. He soon had a dozen. He asked your help, you helped him. He had a score. Some said it was too many. He had forty—before long fifty—now seventy. And still the cry is, “Forward! Forward!” What I want to do tonight is just to stir your souls with a little of the old enthusiasm, to scatter among you some coals of that holy fire which once set you in a blaze. “Forward! Forward!” is what we want! Brethren, we want to be doing more for Christ!

Compared with our congregation I believe we are doing much, but still not what we might do—not what we ought to do. Here is this great city teeming with its multitudes and the proportion of evangelistic work which we take is far too small. “Forward! Forward!” At this time we have men ready to preach the Word. But we do not know where to find the room for

them. There are rich men in this congregation and men in middling circumstances who might take a little room and pay the rent and let some young man come and preach in it and try to raise a Church in a destitute neighborhood. Some of you might cry, "Forward!" and do that.

Others of you in the Providence of God live in poor neighborhoods and you may have a room which holds twenty, perhaps. Could you not let some one preach in it? Preaching is the great weapon of God for pulling down strongholds. It will pull down the largest blocks of stone the enemy can pile together. Preach the Gospel, the gates of Hell shake! Preach the Gospel, prodigals return! Preach the Gospel to every creature—it is the Master's mandate and it is the Master's power—"the power of God unto salvation unto everyone that believes."

I would I could make every member of this Church feel in earnest about doing good. Do you not long to win souls? Do you not desire to spend and to be spent for your Master? I will venture to say that if you do not, you are not worthy of membership with such a Church as this! If no Divine zeal stirs you. If no heavenly fire has fallen on your soul, you might find a more congenial place of rest among some dull and sluggish people who care not for God. As for my own soul, God knows how I yearn over souls—I work and if there is any man living who can work more for God than I do, I envy him his strength and endurance!

It is not twelve, nor thirteen, nor fourteen, or fifteen hours a day which will satisfy me in the service of my Master. I wish I could be cut in pieces to preach His Gospel and that every drop of blood might tell it to my perishing fellow men. As I cannot do that, I do love to see my young men preaching the Word of God. They are so many new mouths for me, so many tongues for some of you who have no power of speech for your Master. They speak for you, if you have a share in their maintenance. But, oh, what I can do seems to be nothing but contributing a drop, but taking out a cupful from the great sea of the world's sorrow and the world's sin!

Do help me! Do help me, I pray you! Brethren, pray for us! If you can do nothing else, pray that the Spirit of God may rest upon us in our preaching and in our efforts to extend His Kingdom—and may every one of you take a hand in this good work. I would sooner have half of you and have you all alive and earnest, than have the whole of you and have some of you a drag upon the wheels. If this Church does not serve God—mark these words, I speak, I think, prophetically—God will make this House a hissing and write "Ichabod" upon these walls!

Never was a Church more favored than you have been! For more than two hundred years God has given you a succession of faithful pastors. We have, each of us in our lot strived to do our work. We have stood upon the walls of Zion and those who have gone before, at least, have not been found unfaithful. And as God helps me, neither will I be unfaithful either to God's Truth or to the souls of men.

But if with such appliances—with such preaching of the Gospel and helped so marvelously—and so many of you great sinners saved from great sins, having had much forgiven. If you do not love much and serve much, O my God, let me not live to see the curse fall upon this Church! But at least in my day let the blessing continue! Yes, and when this head sleeps among the clods of the valley, find them better men than we are to preach the Word and let this Church still be a star in Your right hand to shine amidst the thick darkness of the world!

Dear Friends, if you are not in earnest about this, I am. Oh, we must not let this opportunity pass! There is much which you can do. I want you to help the heathen world, but I want you to begin with caring for this great heathen world of London. And if you can do nothing else, at least give us your prayers.

VI. I have done when I shall say that soon you and I will stand on the brink of Jordan's river. The deep sea of death will roll before us. Trusting in Jesus, washed in His blood, hoping in His mercy we shall not fear the last solemn hour. We shall hear the angel say, "Forward!" We shall touch the chilly stream with our feet, the flood shall fly, and we shall go through the stream dry-shod. If the flood gathers and the Jordan overflows its banks, still the Divine watchword, "Forward!" shall speed us on and we will enter Heaven's gates among the blood-washed throng and sing unto Him who has enabled us to triumph gloriously in obedience to that command, "Forward! Forward!" God help you to go forward and unto Him be praise forever and ever. Amen.

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THE GLORY IN THE REAR

NO. 1793

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 3, 1884,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“And the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them, and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel, and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.”
Exodus 14:19, 20.

“The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.”
Isaiah 58:8.

“For the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.”
Isaiah 52:12.

WHEN the Israelites left the place of their bondage and came to the edge of the wilderness, a visible token of the Lord's Presence and leadership was granted to them. They saw high in the air a pillar, which, by day, might be compared to rising smoke, but at night became a flame of fire. Such displays on a small scale were usual in the march of armies, but this was of supernatural origin. Where it moved, the people were to follow—it was to be their companion, that they might not be alone—their conductor, that they might not go astray. We have become familiar, by accounts of our own soldiers in Egypt, with the extreme danger of the oriental sun when men are marching over the fiery sand. This cloud would act as a vast umbrella, covering the whole of the great congregation, so that they could march without being faint with the heat. By night their canvas city was lighted up by this grand illumination.

They could march as well by night as by day, for we are told at the close of the previous chapter that by night the Lord went before them, “in a pillar of fire, to give them light; *to go by day and night.*” Might not they have said, “The Lord God is a sun and shield”? Did they not realize the fulfillment of the promise not yet spoken in God's Words, “The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night”? This sacred symbol of the Divine Presence must have been a very great solace to them in those early days, when their pilgrim life was novel to them, and their newly-found liberty was darkened by a terrible fear of recapture.

The particular sign which the Lord promised them was very practical—it was not only *glorious*, but *useful*—it served them both for shade and

light and was both their guide and guard. It was exceedingly *conspicuous*, so that they could all see it. Any man of the millions who came out of Egypt could stand at his tent door and see this flaming signal high in Heaven, floating over all as the banner and symbol of the Great King. It appears to have been *continual*—an abiding token—not an intermittent brightness. Even thus has Moses written—“He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”

Beloved Friends, God is *always* with those who are with Him! If we trust Him, He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” There is a special and familiar Presence of God with those who walk uprightly, both in the night of their sorrow and in the day of their joy. Yet we do not always, in the same way, perceive that Presence so as to enjoy it. God never leaves us, but we sometimes think He has done so. The sun shines on, but we do not always bask in his beams. We sometimes mourn an absent God—it is the bitterest of all our mourning. As He is the sum total of our joy, so His departure is the essence of our misery! If God does not smile upon us, who can cheer us? If He is not with us, then the strong helpers fail and the mighty men are put to rout.

It is concerning the Presence of God that I am going to speak this morning. You and I know how joyous it is. May we never be made to know its infinite value experimentally by the loss of it! If we see no cloud or flame, yet may we know that God is with us and His power is around us. In that sense we will pray—

**“Cover us with Your cloudy shrine,
And in Your fiery column shine.”**

Or in more familiar words we will sing—

**“Let the fiery cloudy pillar
Lead me all my journey through.”**

I. In considering the subject of the Lord’s abiding with His people, I shall first call attention to THE DIVINE PRESENCE MYSTERIOUSLY REMOVED. According to our text, “The Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed.” The chosen of the Lord may lose the manifested Presence of God and, indeed, they may often miss it in the particular form in which they have been accustomed to enjoy it. The symbol of God’s Presence removed *from where it had usually been*. From the day when they entered the desert, they had seen the fiery, cloudy pillar well to the front. But now, suddenly, it wheeled about and left the front comparatively dim because the Glory had departed. Those who looked *forward*, saw it no more!

So has it been with us at times—we have walked day after day in the Light of God’s Countenance. We have enjoyed sweet fellowship with Jesus Christ, our Lord, and all of a sudden we have missed His glorious manifestation! Like the spouse, we cried, “I sought Him, but I found Him not!” Before, everything had seemed bright and we expected to go from strength to strength, from victory to victory, till we came unto the mount of God—to dwell forever in His rest—but now before us, all of a sudden things look dark. We do not feel so sure of Heaven as we did, nor so certain of perpetual growth and progress. The prospect is darkened, the clouds return af-

ter the rain and our soul cries out of the darkness, “Oh that I knew where I might find Him!”

Moreover, they missed the light *from where they hoped it would always be*. They had been given to understand, I do not doubt, that the Lord would always be with them. And yet now, as they looked forward, the bright light was gone from its place of leadership. They looked for it as their guide and, behold, that guidance was gone! The pillar might be behind them, but it was not before them—they could see nothing ahead to lead them into the land flowing with milk and honey which the Lord had promised them!

Sometimes you, also, may imagine that God’s promise is failing you—even the Word of God which you had laid hold upon may appear to you to be contradicted by your circumstances. Then your heart sinks to the depths, for, “if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” If ever the Word of God becomes a subject of doubt, where can any certainty remain? Where can there be any hope for the unsure? We have said, “This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death”—but what if He refuses to guide us? Then we are in an evil case! Can it be so? “Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore?”

The pillar of fire also removed *from where it seemed more than ever to be needed*. Now they were in a dire predicament—how could they possibly escape? Pharaoh was behind them, with all the horsemen of Egypt! They could hear the noise of the chariots and the neighing of the horses—and the shouts of the armies eager for the prey! Before them rolled the Red Sea in its might. How could there be a way through the mighty waters? Now, if ever in their lives, they must have looked anxiously for the symbol of the Divine Presence! What could they do if Jehovah did not lead them? Yet the token of His Presence was not there.

Even thus is it with you, dear Friend, who once walked in the Light of God’s Countenance—you, perhaps, have fallen into temporal trouble and, at the same moment, the heavenly Light of God has departed from your soul. Now, it is bad to be in the dark on the king’s highway, but it is worse to be in the dark when you are out on the open road and do not know the road! It is well to have a guide when the road is easy, but you *must* have one when you are coming upon precipitous and dangerous places! Is it so with any child of God here, that he sees no light to shine before him, no star to guide him on his road? On the contrary, does his future become more and more clouded? Is the track quite gone? Does the sea seem shut in with an ironbound coast without a harbor? Does he—

**“See every day new straits attend,
And wonder where the scene will end”?**

Then let him *trust*—but he will need all the faith of which he can muster! Oh, my Lord, if ever You leave me, forsake me not in the day of trouble! Yet what have I said? It is a day of trouble when You are gone, whatever my condition may be! Yet, Brothers and Sisters, our Lord said, “Pray you that your flight be not in the winter.” Pray that if you must, for a while,

bewail the Lord's absence from you, it may not be in a time of dire and dark necessity!

Thus it did seem a mysterious thing that the Covenant Angel should no longer direct the marches of the host of God and, I dare say, that some of them began to account for it *by a reason which their fears would suggest*. Naturally, there was only one way of accounting for this removal of the guide and that way was a wrong one, but one to which the Lord's people often refer their trials. I should not wonder that if they had been asked why the blazing pillar was no longer in the front, they would have replied, "Because of our murmurings against the Lord and His servant, Moses. God will not go before us because of our sins."

Now, it is true, and does happen, that the Lord often hides His face behind the clouds of dust that His own children make by their sins—but this is not always the case. When the consolations of God are small with you, you may generally conclude that there is some secret sin with you—and then it is your duty to cry, "Show me why You contend with me!" But in this case, God was not punishing them for their sins, as He did on later occasions. He seems to have been very patient with their early murmurings because they were such feeble folk, so unused to pilgrimage, and so unfit for anything heroic. Every trial was severe to the raw, undisciplined spirits of the tribes and, therefore, the Lord winked at their follies. There was not a touch of the rod about this withdrawing of His Presence from the front—not even a *trace* of anger—it was all done in loving kindness and tender mercy, and no sort of chastisement was intended by it.

So, dear child of God, you must not always conclude that trouble is sent because of wrath, and that the loss of conscious joy is necessarily a chastisement for sin. Such thoughts will be a case of knives cutting your heart in pieces. Do not make for yourself a needless pain. All trouble is *not* chastisement—it may be a way of love for your enriching and ennobling! Upon the black horse of trouble, the Lord sends His messengers of love! It is a good thing for us to be afflicted, for thus we learn patience and attain to assurance. Shall the champion who is bid to go to the front of the battle think that he is being punished? No, verily, my Brothers and Sisters—whom the Lord loves, He sets in the heat of the conflict—that they may earn the rarest honors. Great suffering and heavy labor are often rewards of faithfulness. Know you not how the poet puts it—

***"If I find Him, if I follow,
What is His reward here?
'Many a labor, many a sorrow,
Many a tear'?"***

Darkness of soul is not always the fruit of Divine anger, though it is often so. Sometimes there is no trace of wrath in it—it is sent for a test of faith, for the excitement of desire—and for the increase of our sympathy with others who walk in darkness. When the cloud of the Divine Glory is no longer seen in front, it has gone behind because it is more needed there! And it is no loss, after all, as we shall have to show. When the Lord hides His face for a moment, it is to make us value His face the more, to quicken our diligence in following after Him, to try our faith and to test our graces. There are a thousand precious uses in this adversity. Yet it is

a mysterious thing when the light of the future fades and we seem to be without a guide.

II. Now, secondly, all this while THE DIVINE PRESENCE WAS GRACIOUSLY NEAR. The Angel of the Lord had left, but it is added, He “removed and *went behind them*,” and He was just as close to them when He was in the rear as when He led the front! He might not seem to be their guide, but He had all the more evidently become their *guard*. He might not, for the moment, be their Sun before, but then He had become their Shield behind. “The glory of the Lord was their rear guard.” The Lord may be very close to you, dear child, when you cannot see Him—perhaps closer than He ever was when you *could* see Him!

The Presence of God is not to be measured by your realization of it. When you cannot tell that He is with you at all, and you are singing and crying after Him, those very sighs and cries after Him are the holy fruit of His secret Presence! It may be the day shall come when you shall think that He was more near you when yours eyes were filled with weeping after Him, than when you took yours ease and spoke confidently. Much of the creature, much of human excitement will mix with our most spiritual joy. Our groans and our sorrows, when we are pining after the Lord, are often more *purely spiritual* than our own delights and, therefore, they are all the surer proofs of the work of the Lord in our souls. Oh, Soul, the Lord may be very near you and yet He may be behind you, so that your outlook for the future may not be filled with the vision of His Glory!

Note in the text that it is said the pillar went, and “*stood behind them*.” I like that, for it is a settled, permanent matter. The Lord had left, but He was not gone. He would stay as long as was necessary where He then was. That glorious Angel, shrouded in the clouds, stood with His drawn sword in the rear of Israel, saying to Pharaoh, “You dare not come further, you can not break in upon My chosen.” He lifted up His vast shield of darkness and held it up before the tyrant king so that he could not strike—no—could not *see*! All that night his horses champed their bits, but could not pursue the flying host! “They were as still as a stone till Your people passed over, O Lord, till Your people passed over whom You had purchased.” It is glorious to think that the Lord stood there and the furious enemy was compelled to halt!

Even thus, the Lord remains with the dear child of God! You cannot see anything before you to make you glad, but the living God stands behind you to ward off the adversary! He cannot forsake you. He says to you out of the pillar of cloud, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will *I* not forget *you*.” He stands fast as your rock, steadfast as your safeguard, sleepless as your watcher, valiant as your champion—

**“God is near you, therefore cheer you,
Sad mind! He’ll defend you,
All around you, and behind.”**

What is more, these people had God so near that *they could see Him if they did but look back*. Earnestly I desire you to think of this. If you cannot see the Lord bright before you and you are very dull and heavy, then, I

pray you, look *back* and see how the Lord has helped you *up to now*! Sit not down with your eyes shut, but look back! Steadily observe the past! What do you see there? Loving kindness and tender mercy, and nothing else! As I look back upon my own past life—and I think I am not one by myself—I cannot discover, even with the quick eye of selfishness, anything of which I can complain of my God. “Truly God is good to Israel.” “His mercy endures forever.” Not one good thing has failed! He has never left me, nor forsaken me. I have received blessings through my joys and even *greater* blessings through my sorrows! The Lord’s way has been all goodness—undiluted goodness all the while. I look back and see the Light of His Presence shining like the sun at noon! It is as a morning without clouds! I am overwhelmed with the boundless bounty of my God! I am unable to conceive of anything more kind than the heart of God towards His unworthy child! Well, then, God is not far away—if we look backward He is there!

He has been mindful of us. He will bless us. He gave us mercies yesterday and He is the same today and forever. The blessings of last night we have not forgotten. The blessings of this morning, are they not still with us? The fountain will not fail—it has flowed too long for us to raise the question. If there is no light breaking in the east, behold, it is lighting up the western sky! The Lord is evidently still behind us and it is enough, for we can sing, “The Lord lives; and blessed be my Rock; and let the God of my salvation be exalted.” “He is my Rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.”

A thoughtful person would conclude the Lord to be *all the more evidently near because of the change of His position*. When a symbol of mercy comes to be usual and fixed, we may be tempted to think that it remains as a matter of routine. If the rainbow were always visible, it might not so assuringly be a token of the Covenant. Hence the Lord often changes His hand and blesses His people in another way to let them see that He is thinking of them! If He always did the same by us, every day and every night, we should get to attribute His dealings to some fixed law operating apart from God, just as our modern philosophers dethrone the Lord to set up the calves of Nature.

But now, when our God is sometimes before us and sometimes behind us—and makes those apparent changes because of deep and urgent reasons—we are compelled to feel that we are the objects of His constant solicitude. “I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks of me.” He deals with us in all wisdom and prudence. His modes change, but the changes are all from the same motive and with the same reason—all to make us sick of *self* and fond of Him! Blessed be His name—the change of His operations makes us feel the unchangeableness of His design! And the different ways in which He visits us only makes us value each visit the more!

III. Thirdly, let us see THE DIVINE PRESENCE WISELY REVEALED. That the symbol of God’s Presence should be withdrawn from the front and become visible behind was a wise thing.

Observe, there was no fiery pillar of cloud before them and that was wise, for *the going down into the Red Sea was intended to be an act of lofty*

faith. The more of the visible, the less is *faith* visible. The more you have of conscious enjoyment, the less room there is for simple trust. *Faith* performs her greatest feats in the darkest places! These Israelites were to do what, after all, was a grandly glorious thing for them to do—to march right down into the heart of the sea! What people ever did this before? Modern haters of miracles may say that they passed over the sands at an unusual tide and that an extraordinarily strong wind drove back the water and left a passage, but that is not the notion of the Holy Spirit. He says, by His servant Moses, “The floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.”

It is also written, “But the children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea, and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.” The tribes went down into the dread valley which remained when the waters dried up and they crossed over between two frowning walls of water! You and I would have needed great *faith* to have gone down into such an abyss as that—but they descended without fear! Moses lifted up his rod and the waters parted to make them a passage-way! And, with no fiery cloudy pillar in front of them, they calmly marched into the heart of the sea! That was a grand act of *faith*! This would not have been so clearly of *faith* had the way been made easier by miracle and token.

I know some of you who are Christian people need to be always coddled and cuddled like weak babies. You pine for love-visits and delights and promises sealed home to your heart. You would live on sweetmeats and be wheeled in a spiritual baby carriage all the way to Heaven! But your heavenly Father is not going to do anything of the sort. He will be with you, but He will try your manhood and so develop it. I have seen children pampered into the grave by their fond mother. And I suppose that a great many more will follow in the same way, but God never spoils His children! He educates them for nobler ends. He takes visible guides away from them that they may exercise *faith* in Him. Why, Job would have been nobody if He had not lost everything! Who would have heard of the Patriarch of Uz? What glory would he have brought to God with his camels and his oxen and his children? These were all taken away and *then* Job became famous! Look how he sits on the dunghill and is much more noteworthy, there, than Solomon in all his glory! Where the word of King Solomon was, there was power—but nothing to equal the power of Job’s words when he blessed the God who takes away! Solomon spoke many proverbs and wrote many songs—but none of them attained unto the glory of that saying—“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Here was a triumph of *faith*! Beloved, you and I lose the enjoyments of religion and the comforts of hope in order that we may walk by *faith* and not by sight—and may the more greatly glorify God!

Moreover, let us mark that the cloudy pillar was taken away from the front because *the Lord meant them simply to accept His Word as their best guidance*. The Lord said to Moses, “Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.” That Word of God was a sufficient guide. Suppose they had said, “Lord, we will go forward if the fiery pillar leads us forward, but

not otherwise.” What then? Why, they would have been rebels! We are to obey God’s Word as God’s Word. I heard a Brother say, some time ago, that he would be baptized when it was laid home to him. I thought of what a father would say to his boy if he said, “Father, I will obey you if it is laid home to me.” In all probability the child would have it laid home to him more feelingly than he desired! There are some disobedient children in the Lord’s family who, if they do not look out, will have Scriptures laid home to them in a way they do not quite reckon upon! What have you and I to guide us but the Word of the Lord?

“Well,” says one, “I guide myself by outward providences.” Do you? You will get into a terrible maze, one of these days. Jonah wanted to flee from the Presence of the Lord and, therefore, he went down to the seaside, and lo, he found a ship going to Tarshish! Might he not have said, “I must be in the right way of duty in going to Tarshish, for no sooner did I go down to the wharf than I found a ship starting immediately and a cabin vacant for a passenger! I paid my fare and walked on board at once. I had not to go off to the shipping agent’s and wait for the next liner, but all was prepared for me. Was not that a providence!” Yes, but if you get to following providence and turning aside from the Word, you may soon find yourself in the sea and no whale prepared for you! Our way is clearly set before us in the Word of God and that most sure Word of testimony should be followed.

I have known a Brother wanting to go abroad to preach the Gospel to the heathen, but a great many difficulties have been thrown in his way and, therefore, he has said, “I can see that I am not called to go.” Why not? Is no man called unless his way is *easy*? I should think myself all the more called to a service if I found obstacles in my way! The course of true service never runs smooth. I would say, “The devil is trying to hinder me, but I will do it in spite of all the devils in Hell.” Will you always be needing to have your bread buttered for you on both sides? Must your road be graveled and smoothed with a garden roller? Are you a carpet knight, for whom there is to be no fighting? You are not worthy to be a soldier of Jesus Christ at all if you look for ease! Go home! I dare say, after all, it is the best thing you can do. True Believers *expect* difficulties. It is ours to do what we are bid to do—not to act according to fancied indications of providence. When the Lord said “Forward!” Israel must go forward, without a fiery cloudy pillar to cheer the way. Has not the Lord spoken? Who shall ask for plainer guidance?

Moreover, God was teaching them another lesson, namely, that *He may be near His people when He does not give them the usual tokens of His Presence*. Who shall say that God was not in the front of Israel when they went down into the sea? They could not see the symbol of His Presence, but He could see their obedience to His bidding! How else did the sea, in fright, draw back? Was it not because the Lord rebuked the sea? The strong east wind did not, of itself, divide the sea, for a wind naturally strong enough for that would have blown all the people into the air! The wind was used of God to move the waters, but its chief objective was to dry up the dampness from the floor of the sea and to make marching the

more easy for the vast host of Israel. Truly the Lord was there, gloriously triumphing! No cloudy pillar was seen across the waters as Israel looked forward to the shore, but yet the Lord was there majestically—and you may have but little comfort of the Lord's Presence at this time, yet God may be with you wondrously.

Do not so much set your heart upon *comfort*, but rejoice in the fact which gladdened Hagar in the wilderness—"You, God, see me." It does not matter to the fire whether the logs are cast upon it from the front, or the oil poured upon it secretly from behind the wall, so long as it finds its fuel. To you the daily supply of *Grace* is more important than the supply of *comfort*—and this shall never fail you so long as you live. Let me whisper to you one more word. After all, *the host of Israel did not require any guide in front when they came to the sea*. "How is that?" you ask. Why, Beloved, there were no two ways to choose from—they could not miss the way, for they must necessarily march through the sea! No room for wandering remained—their road was walled up and they could not miss it.

So when men come into deep trouble and cannot get out of it, they scarcely need a guide, for their own plain path is submission and patience. Tried child of God, you have to bear your trouble and when that is quite clear, your way is no longer doubtful! Cast all your care on Him who cares for you and, in patience, possess your soul. "Oh, but I thought I was going to find a way of escape made for me. Listen! "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, *that you may be able to bear it*." You have to bear it, you see. Your great need for the present is faith in God, who has said—"I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring My people again from the depths of the sea."

Thus, you see, the light for guidance was not needed just then. What they needed was the pillar of cloud *behind* them and that is where they had it. Why was that cloud behind them? Well, it was there for several reasons—the first was to shut out the sight of their enemies from them. We read that Israel lifted up their eyes and saw the Egyptians and then they began to tremble, and cry out—and so God drew the blinds down, that His poor children could not see their frightful taskmasters! It is a great mercy when God does not let us see everything. What the eyes do not see, perhaps the heart will not sorrow. May I ask you just to try and use your eyes a little, now? There are your sins—will you look back on them for a minute? Look steadily. They are quite as dreadful as the Egyptian horsemen and chariots. I have looked intently and I cannot see a sin remaining.

"What, have you lived such a life that you have never sinned?" Ah, no, Beloved, I have to mourn over *many* offenses, but I cannot see one of them, *now*, for my sins are covered. I believe this text, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin." If I am cleansed, why should I see spots, or speak as if I did? The Lord stands between His people and their sins. Jesus, who veiled His Glory in the cloud of our humanity, interposes between us and our transgressions. Is it not written, "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for and there shall be none; and the sins of

Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve”? If God declares that our sins cannot be found, then I am sure we need not look for them! And if He says that Christ has made an end of sin, then there is an end of it! The Egyptians shall not come near us all the night of this life—and when the morning breaks, we shall see them dead upon the shore. Then shall we sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously, and our transgressions and iniquities has He cast into the depths of the sea!

“Ah,” says one, “I know that my sins are forgiven, but I am troubled about my circumstances.” Will you now look back? How about the circumstances you have passed through? Do you see anything wrong about them, now? Oh, no, you say, they were all right. As you look back you can only see the Glory of God—the Lord has led you by a right way. Very well—learn to look at your circumstances through the light God has set between Israel and the Egyptians. Who is he that can harm us? What is there to distress us? See your circumstances through the medium of the love of Jesus and you perceive all things working for your good! Up to now the Lord has been our shield and our exceedingly great reward! We see now no current evil; He has turned for us the curse into a blessing. The Lord has caused us to be far from fear and has put terror far away.

The cloudy pillar went behind for another reason, namely, *that the Egyptians might not see them*. Their enemies were made to stumble and were compelled to come to a dead stop. “The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them.” Why does he stop? Why does the lion pause when about to spring? He is blindfolded! He shivers in the dense blackness, thinking of that former day when all the land of Mizraim quailed beneath a darkness that might be felt! Be calm, O child of God, for the Covenant Angel is dealing with your adversaries, and their time is generally the night. You will hear, by-and-by, of what He has done. Meanwhile, remember what He did to Pharaoh and Sennacherib. The Lord may not be before you, shedding delight upon your face, but He is behind you, holding back the foe! He looks forth from the cloud and discomferts your foes. “No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn.” Why, stand still, and see the salvation of God!

IV. Now, Beloved, I must draw towards a conclusion by observing, that THE DIVINE PRESENCE WILL, ONE DAY, BE MORE GLORIOUSLY REVEALED. I have been speaking about the Lord being the rear guard of His people and so explaining my second text—but I must now refer you to my last text, in the 52nd of Isaiah—“The Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.” This is the condition into which the Lord brings His people when they depart from Babylon and are no more conformed to this present evil world. I trust He has brought many of us into this all-surrounding light at this good hour. The Lord is behind us, we know—our sins and iniquities are covered, our past mistakes are all erased—we are accepted in the Beloved. But we have not to look forward and say, “The angel of God has left us.”

Oh, no! We can still see the bright light before us. Our ways are ordered of the Lord and none of our steps shall slide. We glory in tribulations, also, believing that we shall glorify God in them. We look forward to the time of old age, believing that to gray hairs He is the same, and that in our days of decline He will carry us. We look forward to the coming of our Lord with delight or, if that may not be in our day, we look to falling asleep upon the bosom of our Savior! Before us we see the Resurrection morning and all its splendor—we anticipate the risen body—that glorified fabric in which our pure and perfect spirit shall dwell forever! We hear the voice of harpers harping with their harps, saluting the reign of Christ and the glorification of His people with Him!

Below there is nothing before us now but that which is inexpressibly delightful! The day has long dawned with us, whose morning clouds have passed away—a day which grows warmer and brighter—and is nearing to the perfect day. A few more months, a few more years, and we shall be in the land of the unclouded sky. What joy will it be to be there! What ecstasy will it be to be there forever!—

***“Far from a world of grief and sin,
With God eternally shut in.”***

How willingly would I fly away and be at rest. I feel my wings, but they are not strong enough, as yet, to bear my soul away—but they will be! God is making His children ready to depart and He will only have to beckon them and they will cry, “Here am I,” and then they shall be with Him forever!

Yes, the Glory of the Lord is above us and beneath us, on the right hand and on the left, outside us and within us. We depart not from it, though it is behind us! We are always going into the glorious Light of God, for it is before us, too. The Lord shall be a wall of fire around us, and the Glory in the midst. If you have come there, dear Brothers, stay there. If you have entered there, dear Sisters, never quit that charmed circle, but abide in full communion with the Lord your God.

V. But now I have a sorrowful word to say and with that I have done. THIS DIVINE PRESENCE HAS A TWOFOLD ASPECT—that same Glory which lit up the canvas city and made it bright as the day, darkened all the camps of Egypt. They could see *nothing*, for the dark side of *God* was turned to them. I am afraid it is so with some of you. Oh, dear Friends, is it not a dreadful thing that to some men the most terrible thing in the world would be God? If you could get away from God, how happy, how merry, how jolly you would be! You want to depart from Him—you *are* departing from Him. One of these days Jesus will tell you to depart. “Keep on as you were,” He says, “you were always departing from God; keep on departing! Depart from Me, you cursed!” That will be the consummation of your life. To some of us the thought of God is joy, but to the ungodly nothing would be such good news as to hear that there was no God! Indeed, they find a dreadful comfort in endeavoring to be skeptical and unbelieving. God has a dark side to sinners—His justice and His righteousness—which are the comfort of His people—are the despair of the wicked!

The Word of God has a dark side to sinners. I will tell you what they say. They say, “We do not understand this Book, it is so full of mystery.

We find it full of dark sayings, hard things and things difficult to be believed. It is all knots and snarls." Just so—you are an Egyptian—it is dark to you. Let me call up the smallest babe in Grace and say, "Dear child, is that what the Bible is to you?" "Oh, no," he says, "it is my joy and my delight. I may not understand it all, but I love it all and I feed on it all." Oh, it is a good thing when you cannot understand a revealed Truth of God. to feed on it! And when you find it to be good for your soul, you will not complain of its mystery. The Bible is dark to the Egyptians, but it is light to Israel.

Now look at the *Gospel* itself. Why, there are many that sit and hear the Gospel and they say, "I do not understand this believing, this atonement, and so on." No, I know you do not. You are an Egyptian, it is dark to you. It is a savor of death unto death to you! I am afraid you will go on quarrelling with it until God ends the quarrel in your destruction. But if you are one of His, you will quarrel no longer! You will say, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. The blessed way of salvation by atoning blood I eagerly accept and rejoice in it." That will prove you to be an Israelite—it will be a savor of life unto life to you! Why, even the blessed *Lord Jesus Christ* has a dark side for sinners. If He were to come here, this morning, oh, how gladly would I stand back to let Him come forward and show His surpassing beauty! Why, some of you would think it Heaven if you could but see Him here and look into His pierced hands and side—and mark that blessed, marred, unutterably lovely visage!

Yes, but it could not bring any joy to you who do not love Him! You do not trust Him and if the news were given out, "Christ has come!" why, you would swoon with fear in your pews, for you would say, "He has come to judgment, and I am unprepared! He that is not my Savior will be my Judge and sentence me to everlasting woe." There is a dark side in the Mediator to the Egyptians while there is a bright side to Israel. Oh that you would believe in Jesus Christ! Oh that you would "kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little," for, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

You can come and be numbered with Israel, for the door into Israel is Christ, Himself! If you come to Christ you have come to His people, you have come to safety and, therefore, "the Lord will go before you; and the God of Israel will be your rear guard." Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Exodus 13:20-22; 14:1-20; Isaiah 52.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—145 (PART II), 212, 230.

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

ENTANGLED IN THE LAND

NO. 2188

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1891
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 21, 1890.**

*“For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They are entangled
in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”
Exodus 14:3.*

ISRAEL was clean escaped from Egypt. Not a hoof of their cattle was left behind, nor foot of child or aged man remained in the house of bondage. But though they were gone, they were not forgotten by the tyrant who had enslaved them. They had been a very useful body of workers, for they had built treasure cities and storehouses for Pharaoh. Compelled to work without wages, they cost the tyrant nothing but the expenditure of the lash. His exactions of forced labor had grown intolerable to the people, but the buildings erected had been a joy to the lord of Egypt. When they were quite gone, Pharaoh woke up to a sense of his loss and his attendants felt the same. So they cried, “Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?” Then they resolved to drive them back, again, and they thought it easy to do so, for they said, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.” They knew that the Israelites had no spirit for war and they felt sure that they had only to overtake them and hurry them back like a drove of cattle. They had found them such submissive servants that they expected to fit their fetters on them, again, and rivet them forever. Perhaps their God had shot His last arrow and Egypt might capture His people, again, without fear of plagues. Thus men thought—but the Lord thought otherwise.

Do not I speak to some at this hour who, during the last few months, have, by the power of the Lord's gracious hand, escaped out of the bondage of sin? You have got clean away from your old master. With a high hand and an outstretched arm has God brought you forth into liberty! You remember the sprinkling of the blood and the eating of the Paschal Lamb—and you are now on your way to Canaan. But your former master and his friends have not forgotten you. You were once a valuable servant to Satan and he will not willingly lose you. Some of you whom God has saved by Grace could drink for Satan, lie for him, swear for him, lead others into evil ways and you could do other things, cheerfully, which I need not mention, which he always desires to have done in his kingdom. You were a trained servant and knew your master's way so as to answer his purpose better than most. Servants of Satan usually serve him greedily

and you were very eager. Nothing is too hot or too heavy for men who are thoroughly enthusiastic for evil. Sins that should be thought degrading are followed by men under the notion of pleasure and gaiety. "A short life and a merry one," is too often the cry of persons who are preferring death to life.

The devil has the knack of making his bondsmen boast of their freedom and they follow with eagerness that which is to their own loss and ruin. Poor slaves! Their slavery has blinded their minds. Thanks be unto God, certain of you have lately fled from your former bondage! But the point I am to speak of is this—*the great tyrant has not forgotten you* and he designs in his heart your capture and re-enslavement. He and his are continually looking for opportunities by which they may bring you back into the thralldom of evil, fasten the manacles of habit upon your hands and fit the fetters of despair upon your feet. By the Grace of God I hope that the Prince of Evil and his helpers will be disappointed, but they will leave no stone unturned to effect their purposes. One of their hopes of driving you back is the belief that you are entangled by your circumstances and surroundings. They conceive that you have got into serious difficulty through your conversion and that you cannot find your way out of your perplexity. Now the enemy says, "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil." The Pharaoh of the infernal regions thinks to drive the fugitives back, again, like a flock of sheep and, notwithstanding all that God has done for them, he hopes, again, to bring them under his yoke. If Jehovah has brought you out, His work will never be undone, but the enemy's hope lies in his belief that you are hopelessly entangled by your present environment.

I speak, just now, mainly to new converts, and I trust I may encourage them. Satan has less hope of getting back those who have escaped from his tyranny for many years. If he can trip them up or worry them, even now, he will take a delight in doing it, but he begins to see that the older pilgrims are really the Lord's and cannot fall into his hands. Of those who have only lately escaped from his power, he has greater hope, for they have not yet proven, by the test of experience, that the work within them is Divine. He hopes that possibly theirs is only temporary reformation and, if so, he can soon make them slip back into the mire of sin from which he hopes they have only half escaped. I am going to speak to the raw recruits, "from Egypt lately come," hoping that, by the blessing of the Holy Spirit, they may be cheered in pressing forward and may feel that they can never go back to their old sins.

The early period of Christian faith, like the infancy of life, is crowded with dangers. Literally, new-born life is so precarious that it is a wonder that any infant survives! Infant spiritual life is so full of weaknesses and diseases that none would survive were it not for Almighty Grace. Hence the need of the special precept, "Feed my lambs." It is our bounden duty to look well after beginners in the ways of God. The moral mortality in our Churches is mainly among the new converts. If they survive the first years

of temptation, as a rule they continue with us. Our Church Roll shows that the leakage is through the unseasoned timbers—

***“When they have conquered early fears,
And vanquished youthful wrong,
Grace will preserve their following years,
And make their virtues strong.”***

If we leave them without help and comfort in their beginnings, we cannot tell how much they will sin and suffer. With the view of helping them, I shall speak, first, upon *one of our early dangers* and, secondly, upon *our security against that danger*.

I. ONE OF OUR EARLY DANGERS is this—we may become entangled in the land—the wilderness may shut us in. That entanglement takes a great many shapes. I will only hint at a few of them.

Dealing with old friends is a frequent one. The man is a new creature in Christ Jesus and since his friends find that he is so, they trouble him. His foes are they of his own household! How is the youth to make an open confession of Christ before his infidel father? Possibly the convert is a wife. How is she to be a Christian if she is married to an ungodly husband? Our earthly loves have great power over us and it is right that they should—but herein comes a hindrance to spiritual life. Satan says to himself, “Ah, he cannot break away from my kingdom, for his brother, his wife, or his betrothed will keep him in my service!” It may not only be *one* member of the family, but several may combine to draw back the half-escaped one. It may be that parents, brothers, sisters, friends of all sorts will unite in their efforts to jeer the young Christian out of his faith and lead him off from the road of uprightness. We hear much of the Salvation Army, but, alas, there is an Army of Damnation, too! Very zealous and crafty are these followers of the Evil One. Cruel mockings, accusations of hypocrisy, slanders and unkindnesses are not spared, to turn the young Christian from the right way. Because of household opposition, Satan says, “He is entangled in the land.” The adversary thinks that you have not the courage to stand up against your relatives and you will not dare to confess your Lord before your wife, or your father. We shall now see whether the Lord has brought you out, or whether you are running off on a mere whim of your own—the devil will not be slow to apply the test!

In some cases the entanglement is not so much that of the family as of society. I have personally known one or two friends moving in high circles who have said to me, “As soon as I am known to be a Christian, my friends will cut my acquaintance. I do not know what I shall do when I have to visit at certain houses. Assuredly I shall have to run the gauntlet.” It has been a quiet pleasure to me when I have found that they have been banished from such “society” altogether, for it could never have been of any spiritual advantage to them and it might have proved a snare. Their loss was a real gain. But, oh, how many are afraid of Sir John and of Lady Mary, or of some wealthy neighbor! These fine folks may be nothing very great, after all, but, still, weak hearts are all too apt to dread the loss of

their patronage and are ready enough to make a great cross of being frowned out of their society.

In other circles the same difficulties occur. The workshop has its trials as well as the drawing room. "Ah," says Satan, "the man came out and confessed himself a Christian the other night, but I know where he works and there is not a man in the place who will sympathize with him! He will be entangled in the land." It happens that one begins in the morning with a joke. A second comes on with an oath. A third follows suit with a sharp and bitter observation. All day long they give the new convert such handfuls of mud as they can find—and the hope of the Evil One is that thus he will be forced back into his old ways. The same thing happens on the farm, or on board ship, or in the barracks—old companions want to have our society and are not pleased with the silent rebuke which is implied in our separating from them. You know more about this than I do, but I wonder not at Satan saying, "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in." Why, some of you can scarcely descend the steps of this Tabernacle, convinced of sin and awakened to seek eternal salvation, before an old friend meets you and, by his careless salutation, he makes you forget the emotion which just before was so manifest! Or if you get over the first attack, you are so warmly assailed indoors that you are greatly inclined to give in. Alas for the many who are speedily entangled in the nets of human associates and never gain the liberty of Christ! The demands of business, of position, of self-interest, of custom—these all hold men as birds are caught with bird-lime, or as the needle is held by a powerful magnet—and so they are prepared to listen to evil entreaties and return to the country from which they came out.

To some, the entanglements come from *having to deal with new matters*. All things have become new and among the rest, even their ordinary business wears a different aspect. It used to be conducted in such and such a way, but now, on examination, the man says, "I am a Christian. I cannot do as I have done and yet, how can I alter it?" It is a very simple matter to fall into those ways of trade which are questionable—but it is not quite so easy to quit them and to gain a livelihood. When you alter one custom of trade, another matter hangs upon it, and needs a change. And it is not easy to bring partners, clerks and workpeople out of old ways into new. They are very apt to be sticklers for former methods. Moreover, there are people in the trade who think you more nice than wise and will even refuse to do business with you if you are so particular. It is no small thing for the convert to set himself right with the world in his changed mode of dealing, yet this has *got to be done* and done with decision, too, or there is no escaping from evil! At such a time the struggler feels—"I am entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut me in"—and the enemy of souls is of the same opinion. Now is his opportunity, but if you escape him, now, he will never again have such an advantage over you.

At the same time, our young Brother may be alarmed about the other side of his new associations—namely, joining the Church. It seems an ordeal to young beginners to come to see the pastor about uniting with the

Lord's people. I am sure they need not be at all terrified of *me*, for no one will more heartily welcome any sincere seeker after Jesus! All that I shall ask is a simple confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—and if that is given, even with fear and trembling—I shall be well content. Yet, to the timid beginner, it seems very solemn to be spoken to by the Elders of the Church. Mr. Bunyan puts lions in front of the Palace Beautiful, by which palace he means the Church. I have been told by a facetious person that Mr. Bunyan meant by these lions the Deacons and Elders! Well, I can only say that I find them brave as lions, but even if they were terrible as those monarchs of the forests, there is no just cause for fearing them, for Mr. Bunyan adds, "The lions are chained." If any of you are afraid of our Deacons and Elders, you are so without reason, for the lions are chained by the intense love they bear both to their Lord and to all pilgrims to Zion.

A guard is set before the door of the Church for a necessary purpose, for we would have none enter who are self-deceived—but none of the Brothers in office among us will harm anyone who desires to serve the Lord and dwell with His people. If you have been troubled about your admission to the Church, I hope that fear will come to an end by your pushing forward and being enrolled in our ranks. Get right in your position, both towards the world and the Church, and let not the Evil One say with regard to either of these matters, "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in."

We have known others *bewildered with doctrinal difficulties*. When a man's soul is renewed, he begins to *think*, and he desires to understand many things which, before, were indifferent to him. He meets with that most plain and precious Truth of God that, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," and he is well satisfied with *that* declaration. Still, as he grows, he seeks more knowledge and longs to understand the deep things of God. Possibly, as a young beginner he goes beyond his depth. He perceives the Doctrine of Election in the Bible and he asks, "What is this?" It may be he is greatly puzzled with this doctrine, for though it is rich with comfort for those who, by reason of years, have had their senses exercised, yet it is a hard nut for babes in Grace. It is simple enough when seen from one side of it, but from another it is a bottomless mystery. We have seen minds quite bewildered where, to us, all things have seemed plain.

I have known people stumble over hard texts. "What does *this* text mean? What does *that* passage mean? What does this other Scripture mean?" You would be astonished if you knew how many people are disturbed in mind, lie awake at nights and are likely to lose their faith in Christ over Scriptures which are as cheering as can be when once they are understood! These people need that some man should guide them, for, like the Ethiopian nobleman, they will not otherwise understand what they read. In former periods, many lost themselves in meditations upon free will, predestination, Irresistible Grace and so forth. It was a pity that they dwelt so much upon the decrees of the Father and so little upon the work of the Lord Jesus! They got their heads muddled by things too high

for them. People are more frivolous now, as a rule, and this evil is rare. Still, there are to be found, here and there, thoughtful persons not yet fully instructed in the faith who are puzzled and confused as the Infinite Glory of revealed Truth opens up before their astonished gaze!

They will know, hereafter, but for the present they are sorely troubled and perplexed—and their cruel enemy rejoices that, “They are entangled in the land.” Nothing contributes more to this than the divisions in the Christian Church. One preacher cries up one thing and another quite the contrary, till young converts cry, “Who are we to believe?” And they stand as if they had come to crossroads and do not know which way to take. I am sorry it should be so, but there is a promise to the family of faith, “All your children shall be taught of the Lord.” You shall not lose your way if you will accept the Word of God as a little child. Be of good courage, for it is written—“He shall guide you continually.”

Far worse is the case of those who are *entangled through strange discoveries*. They came in among professed Believers and they supposed that all Christians were perfect, (which, by the way, is a mere supposition), and now they have met with a certain loud professor who has acted very dishonorably and unkindly towards them! And they cry out with astonishment, “How is this?” We who know by experience and observation that Judas may be looked for among common disciples—since he appeared among the chosen 12—are not so staggered when we see a hypocrite! We expect to see black sheep even in the choicest flock—but the new convert is sorely grieved and stumbled when he finds out the melancholy fact that all men are not what they seem. Great mischief is worked among young Christians by hypocritical or inconsistent professors. God grant that none of us may be of that kind, for the blood of souls will lie at the door of such persons!

It may be that, in his earliest days, the young convert finds out with surprise that his own heart is brimming over with sin. He thought that he was so changed that no sin remained in him and no temptation from without could move him. He hoped that he was so sure of the Truth of God that he would never doubt. But now he has to cry, “Lord, help my unbelief,” for he can hardly decide whether he believes or not! He has discovered another law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity. He finds that when he would do good, evil is present with him—and this inward conflict between the flesh and the spirit comes upon him as a terrible surprise. “Why am I like this?” he cries. “Can I be a child of God and have such dreadful thoughts? Could I feel so wretched if I were, indeed, a possessor of Grace?” When young beginners get into this rough road, they are taken by surprise and know not what to do. Then is it that the adversary of their souls hopes that, “They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in.”

Akin to this are their *amazements at painful experiences*. It may be the Lord withholds the light of His Countenance from them and then they walk in darkness and see no light. If they were always to enjoy calm and comfort, they would, with self-complacency, boast, “My mountain stands

firm! I shall never be moved!" But the Lord hides Himself from them to slay their pride. If they were always at ease, they would fall into living by *feeling*, instead of walking by *faith*. Therefore the Lord tries them, leads them by a desert path, clouds their sky and burdens their backs. Then they enquire, "How is this?" Some of us know that when God shuts us up in the dark, He loves us as dearly as when He pours sunlight upon us, but beginners in the Divine Life do not know this—and they are terribly put to it since they judge God's heart by His hands. "Can I be a child of God, and yet be so afflicted? And why is my light so dim?" These frames and feelings, which come of our being frail, foolish and feeble-minded, are a great perplexity—and when we cannot make them out, the adversary cries, "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in."

What if, at the back of all this, we should be *assailed with special trials*? Suppose it should be true that ever since you have been a Christian, you have not prospered in worldly concerns as you did before? It will seem strange. When you were a man of the world and were an *enemy* of God, you had plenty of money and a host of friends—but now that you have become a Christian, your means and your friends are gradually melting away. It may be the case. I have known such an instance. Yet it is not hard to explain this in several ways. The Lord would not have us follow Him for the sake of what we get from Him. He would have us men, against whom even Satan could not say, "Have You not set a hedge about him and all that he has?" Our Lord desires followers who will cling to Him at all risks, for no other reason but their value of Himself and His Truth. He would have servants who, having counted the cost, would lose estate and repute, yes, and *life*, itself, sooner than turn aside from the way of their Lord! Perhaps you are being educated to this point of faithfulness. Do not, therefore, doubt because of your exercises and tribulations. but take these things joyfully! The path to Heaven lies by the dens of the leopards and the haunts of the young lions. Dream not that God has forsaken you! Leave it to the devil to say, "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in."

Possibly, once more, some may be much beset on the road to Heaven by *mental difficulties*. I do not often say much about these things because there are plenty of preachers who, by mentioning difficulties, are really spreading them. Certain clever gentlemen of the cloth may think it their duty to sow doubts among their hearers, but I have no such ambition. They may imagine that they are answering the questions which they suggest, but it seems to me that they are merely advertising them to many of those who were previously unaware of them. This is an age when men assail the Inspiration of the Bible, the atoning Sacrifice and the Election of Grace. I need not enlarge. *Everything* is now attacked. There is no part of the Bible which some critic would not take away from us. It may be, young Friend, that you cannot answer all the objections which you hear. Do not wonder if you cannot! You would be wiser than Solomon if you could reply to all objections that quibblers may invent!

A friend came to me with a great difficulty, supposing that I could answer it off-hand; but I replied, "He who fashioned this piece of criticism took time in the making of it and you must allow me the same time to demolish it. I will do my best with it, but remember, if you find a thousand difficulties which I cannot meet, that fact will *not* prove that they cannot be met, for I do not profess to be Omniscient, nor do I assert that faith is a Grace which has no difficulties to surmount." If there were a thousand more objections which could not, at this present time, be answered, they might confuse our feeble minds, but they would not shake the eternal Truth of God, itself! God's Word is sure, be the difficulties what they may! Know what you know and believe what you believe—and get a firm grip of undoubted Truths of God—and though, when you are worried with the doubts and hypotheses of philosophers and the like, Satan will say, "They are entangled in the land," let him see that your worry is soon ended by a childlike faith in the living God! Real faith will find a way out of perplexity, or will make one! True faith will sooner set aside the conclusions of human reason than the declarations of God. In fact, faith teaches reason to be reasonable by setting before it the highest of all reasons, namely, the Testimony of God! God send us such a childlike faith and then we shall not be "entangled in the land"!

II. I have thus shown you what our danger is. Now, secondly, let us think of OUR SECURITY UNDER THIS TRIAL.

My text is, "*Pharaoh will say* of the children of Israel, They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in." Upon this I make the first observation, *that this is not true*. It is only what Pharaoh said. And so when Satan says, "They are entangled in the land," it is not true! It is only one of the sayings of the Father of Lies. "They say"—says one. Well, what do they say? Let them say it—their saying it will not make it true. A troubled one comes to me and complains of a certain charge which has been made. And he adds, as the sharp edge of it all, "Sir, it is not true." Well, then, do not fret about it! One cries out, "They are taking away my character and I feel it keenly because what they say is cruelly false." Friend, do not feel it at all! You ought to feel it only if what they say is true.

Now, what Pharaoh said was *not* true and his speech did not cause the children of Israel to be really entangled in the land. Pharaoh's tongue speaks his *wish*—but his wish will not be realized. Our adversaries say that our cause is defeated. Is it? "Ah," they say, "we have shut him up. The man cannot answer us! We have crushed his faith and argued his confidence to death." Have you? By the grace of God we stand fast in the once-delivered faith, after all your sophistries and boasts! You say that we are entangled, but we are not. "Show us," they say, "the way in which you will get out of the wilderness." No, that we cannot do, but, if you will wait a while, the *Lord* will show you—by leading us graciously through the divided sea—and, it may be, by also drowning you therein, as He did the Egyptians when the waters overwhelmed them! Israel could not guess her way, but Israel could wait till God revealed it. Newly-emancipated one, you are shut in with doubts and difficulties suggested by carnal reason, but, I

pray you, believe your God! By the blood of the Cross, I entreat you, believe the Lord Jesus! By the eternal judgment and the Great White Throne, believe your God. "Let God be true but every man a liar." Wait till He shall clear your way, through the very heart of the sea if need be—a way which will conduct you in safety to the other shore, where, with timbrel and with song, you shall proclaim His victory!

My next observation is this—though Pharaoh said, "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut them in," *yet they had a Guide*. Look at the surroundings of my text and you will see that they were guided by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so that they had no need to be in any perplexity as to their road. We, too, have a Guide. In Providence we are not left without a Leader and in spiritual things we are not left without the Spirit of God who shall lead us into all Truth. Young traveler, you are not turned out alone into a wild wilderness to find a path—the Good Shepherd goes before you! Follow Him as the sheep follow their shepherd. He never led His flock in the wrong direction yet! Do what He bids you and you are safe. Do as He did when He was here below—His example is your safe direction. Believe Him and obey Him. Keep to the narrow path. Hold fast your integrity and never let go of your faith. You have a heavenly Guide. You are not left alone and, therefore, you cannot be entangled in the land—the wilderness has *not* shut you in!

Remember, next, that *the Lord had appointed a way for these people*. There was not only a Guide, but a way. But where was that way? Mountains blocked them on either side. They could not turn back, for Pharaoh shut up that route. Where should they go? The reedy Red Sea rolled across their front. Listen! Their way is across the *bottom* of that sea and up from its depths to the other shore! A strange path! "It is no way at all," cries unbelief. Have you never read, concerning God, "Your way is in the sea, and Your path in the great waters, and Your footsteps are not known"? Tried Believer, the Lord will make a way for you where no foot has ever been! That which, like a sea, threatens to drown you, shall be a highway for your escape!

I once had a friend, an upright gracious man, a gentleman whom God had prospered. He had, when engaged in a bank, acted uprightly in a matter in which his superiors judged him to be foolishly scrupulous and, therefore, dismissed him. He could not do wrong and so he was left with a wife and family, without a job and, as everybody told him, irretrievably ruined because of his "foolish conscientiousness." He was for years the head of that very bank. In a singular way, the Lord made his discharge the means of his advancement so that he rose, step by step, to be the master where he had been the rejected servant! And this, humanly speaking, would not have come about had it not been for the incident mentioned. Have faith that God can turn the evil into good and that which threatens to annihilate you will be the means of your enlargement! Look well to your integrity and the Lord will look to your prosperity! The way of faith is not a common turnpike road which every careless traveler may traverse without care or study. It is a mysterious way which no fowl knows and the lion's

whelp has not trodden. Those who inherit the special glories of Heaven must encounter the special perils of the deep and of the desert—and in their amazing journey they shall behold the glorious arm of the Lord working wonders for them!

Note well that the Lord would not only find them a way, *but, at the same time, overthrow their enemies*. You have come up out of Egypt, O young Believer, but the taskmasters are at your heels! There may come a decisive moment, after which they shall never pursue you again. These who seek your soul are to be destroyed, so that there shall not be one of them left. I believe that many a young convert hates sin and hates all evil habits, but these evils keep dogging his footsteps and seem as if they would master him—and then there comes a time of great struggle and tremendous battling without and within—on that one desperate field he fights the matter out. His adversaries are drowned in that Red Sea! His old sins and his old habits lose forever their former power. The Red Sea rolled between Israel and Egypt and whatever else might trouble the pilgrim host, they were never, throughout the whole 40 years, molested by Pharaoh, or any of the Egyptians.

It is a grand thing when a man gets clean away from the world and is reckoned as dead to it. He has burnt his boats and has landed on the shore from which he never can go back, again, but must fight out the battle against sin even to the end. When a man is sworn into the army of Christ for eternity and the world has cast him out, there is nothing for him but to go right ahead. Everything that he has is now staked on the Cross of Christ. Happy man to have come to such a pass—to be once and for all crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him! The Egyptians of sin which had so fiercely pursued him are drowned and the rest of the Egyptians of evil have given him up—and he may go on his way to the promised land in peace so far as his old taskmasters are concerned.

Remember, also, dear Friends, that when these people were thought to be hopelessly entangled, *they were about to see the Lord perform for them a work which would be most helpful to their ultimate conquest of Canaan*, for when Pharaoh and his chariots were drowned in the sea, Palestine heard of it and all the natives there began to tremble. Thus sang Moses in his famous song, “Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm they shall be as still as a stone. The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold of the inhabitants of Palestine.” That day in which a convert has to fight out the battle, once and for all with himself, shall give him strength for all future conflict and smooth his pathway into the land that flows with milk and honey!

You must not think, young Christian, because you are saved from guilt, that everything is done and the warfare ended! There is a life-long conflict for you before you obtain possession of your inheritance and, it may be that, if now, when you are in special trouble, you are found faithful, all the rest of the road will be cleared from similar troubles. Now shall the Egyptians be drowned in the sea! Some of us can remember the time when we had to stand still and seriously ask, “Can I now be true to the

Lord and His Law? I am advised the other way by a very prudent friend. Can I reject this advice? I can see the worldly advantage that I should gain through acting in a crooked course. Can I forego that advantage? I can see that I shall have to suffer if I am conscientious. Can I take up my cross?" When, after hours of anguish and prayer, you have come out of every entanglement pure and free, from that time forth the Lord may lift up the light of His Countenance upon you, and your victory over all other adversaries will be easy. Will not this comfort some of you who have just come to the Red Sea? The place of test and trial shall be the place of the ending of the foe!

Why had the Lord led the people so far if He would not still help them? Do I hear someone say, "I fear that I shall never get out of my difficulties?" Yet you believe that the Lord has brought you out from the dominion of Satan? Tell me, has God brought you so far to let you perish? He has broken off the yoke of sin. He has given you a hope in Christ and you are a changed man. Do you think that He would do all this for you and then *leave you*? Come, my Brother, has the Lord brought you out of Egypt, by the precious blood of the Lamb, that you should die in the wilderness? Do you believe that Jesus has redeemed you to let you be lost, after all? I would speak personally to any elderly Christians here who begin to think that they shall one day fall by the hand of the enemy. How old are you? "Sixty." Sixty? How long do you expect to live? Answer: ten years. Then if God has taken care of you for 60 years, can you not trust Him for the odd ten? "Well," says one, "I am eighty." Eighty? How long do you reckon to remain on earth Are you going to doubt for the few years that are yet to come? Have you trusted your God for 80 long years? Do not doubt Him now, I pray you! Do not please the devil by distrusting your faithful God! As surely as Jehovah begins, He will finish! It shall never be said of any work of God, "He began to build and was not able to finish." If He has set you on the way to the eternal inheritance, He will surely bring you into it! God is never defeated or turned aside. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." Comfort one another, therefore, with such words as these.

Lastly, *the Lord must bring Israel out of all entanglement, for how else could He be glorified?* Suppose that the Israelites had been left to perish when Pharaoh said they were shut in? What then? What would the Lord have done for His great name? Would not the Egyptians have exulted over Israel's God? A Scotch minister tells the story of an aged saint who, on her dying bed, said that her Savior would never leave her to perish. "But suppose that He did not keep His promise and you were to be lost?" She answered, "He would be a greater loser than I." When asked what she meant, she answered, "It is true that I would lose my soul, but God would lose His honor and His Glory if He were not true."

Brothers and Sisters, if we have trusted in God, and have come out of the Egypt of the world through His Grace, and have left all its sins behind us—if we were left to die in the wilderness—the Lord Jesus Christ would lose His Glory as a Savior, the Divine Father would lose His name for immutable faithfulness and the Holy Spirit would lose His honor for perse-

verance in completing every work which He undertakes! The Lord God of Israel will never stain His Glory—therefore be confident that He who brought you out of Egypt will bring you into Canaan! How I delight in that verse which we sang just now—

***“My name from the palms of His hands eternity will not erase;
Impressed on His heart it remains in marks of indelible Grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in Heaven.”***

“Ah” murmurs one, “I don’t believe *that!*” Then I am sorry for you, for, “according to your faith be it unto you.” “I believe,” says one, “that men may fall away and perish.” It will be an evil thing for you if it should be to you according to your faith! If you have Grace enough to grasp the whole range of blessing which the Covenant of God offers you, then the whole shall be yours by a covenant of salt. He that thinks he can be off and on with God—saved today and lost tomorrow, and then saved again—has a comfortless creed to defend and a world of absurdities to meet! You are born again! Suppose that you could lose the new life which comes by the new birth? What then? I have heard of people being born again, but could they be born again, and again, and again? According to the notion of some, certain persons are born again, and again, and again, and again, and again I do not know how many times! There is nothing in Scripture to warrant such a strange idea.

If you, my Friend, will come and cast yourself on Christ and take Him to be your Savior, once and for all, He will save you *right now* with an everlasting salvation! He says, “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” Jesus, Himself, has said it, “I give unto My sheep, eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” Believe for this with heroic faith! Believe for eternal salvation in Jesus Christ, who is able to work in you a livelong escape from sin! According to your faith, so shall it be.

Oh, no! The devil may say that we are entangled in the land, the wilderness has shut us in! But we shall get out of the labyrinth right enough. Is it not written, “Sin shall not have dominion over you: for you are not under the law, but under Grace”? We shall yet sing unto the Lord who has triumphed gloriously. He has thrown our sins and our fears into the sea. So be it! Hallelujah! Amen.

***PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Exodus 13:21, 22; 14.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—739, 689, 738.***

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

JUBILATE

NO. 1867

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 25, 1885,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord,
and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the Lord,
for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider
has He thrown into the sea. The Lord
is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation:
He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation,
my father's God, and I will exalt Him.”
Exodus 15:1, 2.*

THIS is the first song unto the Lord which is recorded in Holy Scripture. In Jacob's blessing of his children there are verses which may be regarded as songs, but they are mere fragments and can scarcely be said to be sung unto the Lord. There are other couplets in the Book of Genesis, but this is the first connected song upon record. I should think that Abraham often sang unto the Lord, but we have no record of it. We can hardly doubt but that Isaac had his quiet Psalm, as Enoch had—and Noah and others who called upon the name of the Lord. But none of these hymns are left to us. This is the very first of those sacred songs preserved in Scripture and, in some respects, it is first in merit as well as in time. At any rate, its august occasion lifts it into the highest place among patriotic hymns.

The Song of Moses appears to have been chanted by an exceedingly great multitude. Miriam, the Prophetess, took her timbrel and led the strain—all the daughters of Israel going forth with her with their timbrels and dances—and the whole multitude of the people taking up the strain. Never had the shores of the Red Sea, or any other sea, heard such a song! There were at least 600,000 men, beside women and children. What an assembly! Millions made up that choir! Though their voices were little tuned to music, yet as they lifted them up, each one throwing his whole strength into the strain, it must have sounded like the noise of many waters, especially when they repeated the refrain, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.”

We saw just now, in our reading in the 15th Chapter of Revelation, that the Song of Moses, the servant of God and of the Lamb, will be sung toward the close of this dispensation when those who have gotten the victory over the beast and his image shall stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God. Before the seven last plagues shall be poured out upon the earth and God shall overthrow the hosts of Antichrist once and for all,

then shall this song be heard, sung, not by the Israelite nation, but by that higher Israel who have escaped by the Grace of God from the power of the spiritual Pharaoh and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! How sweetly will they together take up the song, "Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously! Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty."

It is obvious, then, from the plentiful allusions to this song in Holy Scripture, that it is full of deep spiritual significance. It teaches us not only to praise God concerning the literal overthrow of Egypt, but to praise Him concerning the overthrow of *all* the powers of evil and the final deliverance of all the chosen. It is God's intent that from the day of Moses, downward, even to the hour when flames of fire shall lick up the works of men and the heavens, themselves, shall be dissolved with fervent heat, that this shall be the song of the chosen people everywhere, "Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously."

The first verse of this song was quoted by David. I think you will find it in almost the same words three times in the Psalms, but especially in the 118th Psalm you have the exact words, "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation." As if the Holy Spirit, when He furnished Isaiah with his noblest minstrelsy, could not excel the earlier strains of Moses. Isaiah himself, in Chapter 12, has the same words—"Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation." It is evident that this patriotic song was interwoven with the life of Israel and that when good and gracious men would express themselves in praise at their very best, they fell back upon this Song of Moses and they sang unto the Lord who had triumphed gloriously! So full of significance, then, as this song is, there is something for us to learn from it this morning. May God the Holy Spirit, who dictated this song to Moses, now write it afresh upon His people's hearts! Breathe on us, Holy Spirit, that we, also, may be filled with the praises of Jehovah!

First, I shall want you to notice *the time for singing this song*. The text begins, "*Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song.*" Secondly, I shall want you to observe *the tone of this song*—it is worthy to be sung in Heaven itself—it is, indeed, high and lofty! And thirdly, we will consider *the first clauses of the song itself*—"The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him."

I. It will be instructive to notice THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF THIS SONG. To everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under Heaven—there is a time of the singing of birds and there is a time for the singing of saints. "*Then sang Moses.*"

It was, first of all, at *the moment of realized salvation*. "The Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore; and Israel saw that great work which the Lord did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord, and His servant Moses. *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.*" There was no singing in Egypt. Sighing, crying, groaning lamentation abounded there, till the Lord said, "I have

surely heard the cry of My people.” There was no singing that I know of even at the celebration of the paschal supper on that dreadful night when they ate the lamb in haste with their loins girded and their staves in their hands. Its first observance was upon a night almost too solemn for song. I do not read that they sang when they came to Succoth, or reached their first encampment.

I doubt not that they sang snatches of songs when they found themselves free from their daily tasks and from the Egyptian rod. No doubt there were individual songs, but the masses did not unite in concerted music—they were too hurried and too much in fear of pursuit. No poet, as yet, had arisen to write a lyric in which all would join. The hour of their complete deliverance had not yet fully come. They marched on steadily, but they had hardly reached the time for timbrels. When they had crossed the sea and the waters thereof rolled between them and the house of their bondage, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.” Their previous lives had been one long-drawn sigh, or one discord of anguish and fear and woe. But when their slavery was altogether a thing of the past, *then* sang Moses. The depths have covered the Egyptian host—there is not one of them left—“*Then* sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.”

You will have noticed, perhaps, in reading the previous chapter, that Moses had said to the people (14:14), “The Lord shall fight for you and you shall hold your peace.” But now that God *had* fought for them, they are not commanded to hold their peace any longer! The battle is fought, the victory is won and, “*Then* sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.” How could they help it? Surely, “if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.”

What does that teach us, Brothers and Sisters, but that we cannot sing in the land of bondage while under the dominion of sin and Satan? How shall we sing the Lord’s song in that strange land? We do not even sing in the first moments of our spiritual life, when our question is how to escape destruction through the sprinkling of the blood! Nor do we, perhaps, sing in those first hurried steps when we fly from the power of sin and Satan, endeavoring to escape out of bondage. But, oh, when we see that Christ has saved us! When we understand that he that believes in Him has everlasting life—then we sing! When we learn that, “He that believes is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the Law of Moses,” and hear the Word of the Lord declaring, “To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name,” *then* we sing unto the Lord! Who could stop us? It would be unnatural for us to be silent after sin is put away! When we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, the dumb devil is cast out of us. “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.”

Our early days, when we first saw how complete was the redemption of Christ, were days of constant praise, and I think, today, if we see afresh how perfect is the righteousness of Christ, how fully accepted is the great Atonement, how secure is our standing by virtue of our union with the Son of God, we shall return to our music and make this house resound

with grateful Psalms! When we doubt our salvation, we suspend our singing, but when we realize it—when we get a grip of it, when we see clearly the great work that God has done for us—then we sing unto the Lord who has for us, also, triumphed gloriously! I say again, how can we help but sing? How can our joy of heart any longer be pent up? It must pour itself forth in floods of harmony, in tunes of realized salvation!

So is it, also, *in times of distinct consecration*. You may not see this at first, but I would remind you that the Apostle assures us that all Israel were “baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” When Pharaoh and his hosts had been destroyed, Israel stood, for the first time, as a nation separated from Egypt. The Red Sea was a most effectual division. Israel became a distinct people, a race redeemed from among men—they would never again feel the yoke of Mizraim—they would not return to Egypt, nor would Pharaoh, again, pursue them. They were now a distinct people consecrated unto Jehovah. To them God would reveal Himself and among them He would dwell. That passage through the Red Sea was the type of their death, their burial and their resurrection to a new life. It was their national baptism unto God and, therefore, they sang, as it were, a new song.

Do you wonder that they did so? It is the happiest thing that can ever happen to a mortal man, to be dedicated to God! It is the grandest posture in which a creature can stand, to be fully consecrated to his Creator! It is the sweetest and happiest condition in which a heart can be, when it feels that it is redeemed of the Lord and, therefore, is not its own, but bought with a price. No song among sweet pastorals can exceed in sweetness that heavenly Canticle, “I am my beloved’s, and my beloved is mine.” There is no greater joy than to know that the Lord has chosen us unto Himself to be His peculiar heritage! Conscious of redemption by blood and separation unto Jehovah, their God, “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.”

Oh you that hope that you are Christians but have never yet taken the distinct step to declare yourselves to be wholly the Lord’s! Oh you that have never come clean away from Egypt and made the waters to roll between you and a guilty world—you have delayed a joy which, I trust, you may not longer miss, lest that dreadful text is fulfilled in you, “Whoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him, also, shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He comes in the Glory of His Father with the holy angels.” “*Then*”—in the day of realized salvation. “*Then*”—in the day of distinct consecration they sang this song unto the Lord!

Brethren, it was also *a day of the manifest display of God’s power*. Our hearts are heavy. At least mine is so, when God seems to put His right hand into His bosom and not to vindicate His own cause. I am most sad because I see error prevalent everywhere! Falsehood reigns and Jannes and Jambres withstand Moses—and the Prince of this world disdainfully demands, “Who is Jehovah?” Many plagues are upon us—the earth swarms with errors as if the dust were turned into lice throughout all the land. Heresies, like frogs, are croaking everywhere! They have come up

into the King's chambers. The Lord has sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness that may be felt. The people loathe to drink of the waters of our sanctuaries, for a curse is upon them in many a place. Our heart feels bowed down and we go mourning and say, "Why have You made us to drink the wine of astonishment?"

But when we hear of conversions! When we see God blessing the work of the Sunday school! When we hear of sinners turning to Christ and seeking mercy! When we notice the children of God diligent in service! When we see the work of the Lord worked with vigor—*then* is our heart exceedingly glad, and *then*, like Moses and the children of Israel—we sing unto the Lord! How can we be silent when God's arm is made bare? A revival is our joyous holiday! If we had our choice of all the benedictions that God can give us on earth, it would be to see the Church revive, His truth prevail and His Kingdom come! It is not, with some of us, a matter of indifference whether the Truth of God is preached or error is proclaimed! No, it is our *life* to see the Gospel conquer! We live if you stand fast in the faith, but our spirit distinctly sickens in proportion as the Church of God decays. When the Church is strong and God is with her, then is our heart revived and our song bursts forth, "The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation."

But this song may be sung at all times throughout the life of faith.

I want to put it to the people of God here whether it is good to save up our songs for special occasions of great joy, or for times when we have something visible to sing about. Should not the Believer sing by faith as well as *live* by faith? Do you not think that the Song of Moses and the children of Israel at the Red Sea was, after all, a poor affair as far as *faith* is concerned? The bulk of the Israelites had very little faith, indeed, and loud as was the song, there was more noise than faith in it—for within a day or two they began to murmur against God! Sing in fine weather! Any bird can do that. Praising God when all goes well is commonplace work. Everybody marks the nightingale above all other birds because she sings when the other minstrels of the woods are silent and asleep—and thus does faith praise God under the cloud. Songs in the day are from man, but God Himself gives songs in the night!

O come, let us sing unto the Lord under the clouds! Let us pour forth His praises in the fires! Let us praise Him under depressions—let us magnify Him when our heart is heavy. Faith believes in God when there is nothing to support her but the bare promise. That man was highly commended who did not despair of the Roman Republic—let us never despair of the Redeemer's Kingdom! That is the true Christian who can say when everything grieves him, "Nevertheless, with joy will I draw water out of the wells of salvation; for I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live." "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth is removed, and though the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea." I ask, today, from every heavy heart and every downcast spirit, from every man that contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and trembles for the Ark of the Lord, that in the midst of his trembling and grief, he should burst into song! Rob not God of His Glory, but let it be said, this day, "Then sang Moses

and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.”

Thus we have spoken upon the time for singing. I think that time is NOW. Let your hearts begin to ring all their bells and let not their sweet chimes cease forevermore!

II. Notice, secondly, THE TONE OF THIS SONG. “Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord.”

Note, first, that the tone is *enthusiastic*. There is not a dull line, there is not a dreary sentence all through! It is full of force, life, power—it is Luther’s Old Hundredth Psalm and more! It rises to a height of intense enthusiasm which cannot be excelled. The words are, “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously,” and the singers endeavor to sing gloriously, too!

The tone is also *congregational*, being intended for every Israelite to join in. Though Moses began by saying, “I will sing unto the Lord,” yet Miriam concluded with, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” This is a hymn for every child of God—for all that have come out of Egypt. Should not there be praise from every one of you? You in the back settlements, you that bear the mark of Egypt’s lash and smart from wounds still unhealed. You that remember well the taskmaster and the iron furnace, yet sing you unto the Lord! From Egypt lately come, sing you unto the Lord! There should be sent up unto God by His Church a perfectly unanimous harmony of praise! “Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!” Let all the redeemed of the Lord say so! “O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.” Let the song be enthusiastic and unanimous!

Yet please notice how very *distinctly personal* it is. It is strikingly so. “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously. The Lord is *my* strength and song, and He is become *my* salvation; He is *my* God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; *my* father’s God, and I will exalt Him.” Do not lose yourself in the throng. It is not egotism to resolve that if nobody else will sing, you will say with David, “I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live.” The fact is that unanimity cannot become fact if *each* mind is not active in praise. We cannot have a perfect accord unless *each* child of God feels that he must make his own distinct music melodious in the ears of the Most High. I tell you, Brothers and Sisters, if you will not praise the Lord this day, I will! Do you not say the same? Does not each Brother and Sister here say, “If no others feel bound to gratitude, yet I have such reason for thanksgiving that I will praise the Lord while I have any being”? In my case the Lord has “triumphed gloriously” and if others will not take Him to be their God, yet this God is my God forever and ever! He shall be my Guide even unto death! I like the personality of this song and would urge you to follow it.

Some of you cannot sing unto God because you have no personal enjoyment of Grace from Him and do not know God for yourselves. Oh, if this is your case, do not let the sun go down until you know this God and so can offer your own peculiar song to Him!

Note, again, the tone of this song is *exceedingly confident*. There is not a shadow of doubt in it—it is all the way through most positive in its ascriptions of praise. The lips do not quiver, the mind does not waver. It begins, “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” It declares a fact about which there can be no doubt—“The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea”—and it goes on to make statements which are not qualified with hopes, desires and “ifs,” or, “buts,” but are bold assertions which cannot be challenged! “The Lord *is* my strength and my song, and He *is* become my salvation.” That is the kind of singing! I do not mind, occasionally, singing with Cowper when he is down in the dumps, for some of his dreary hymns admirably express the experience of the weaker members of the family. But I would not always keep to the minor key. Oh no! Let us sing songs of joy and victory! Doubts and fears ill become the children of God. The full assurance of understanding is our privilege and our duty—why should we not have it? When we come before God, why should we bring Him such broken-legged worship? No, let us bring Him perfect praises, the firstlings of our bullocks, even as David says, “Then shall they offer bullocks upon Your altar.” God should be worshipped with the best we have! His mercy is so sure, so true, that He ought to have our fullest faith. Where is room for doubt? Let us sing with confidence unto the Lord!

And this song is *exceedingly comprehensive*. It sings of what God *has* done and then of what God *will* do in bringing His people into the Promised Land. Nor does it finish till it rises to that loftiest strain of all—“The Lord shall reign forever and ever.” I think I hear them repeating that verse again and again—“The Lord shall reign forever and ever. Hallelujah.” Sing to the Lord, not only of the past, but of the present and the future! Sing of the Second Coming! Sing of the Glory to be revealed! Sing of high Heaven and the City that needs no candle, neither light of the sun! Sing of the victories of Christ when the armies of Heaven shall ride forth on their white horses and He shall lead them whose name is written on His vesture and on His thigh—King of kings, and Lord of lords. There is matter enough for eternal music if our hearts are right with God!

Note, too, all through, that this song is *immeasurably joyous*. The Israelites were slaves enjoying new liberty—children let out to play! How merrily did they disport themselves! They did not know how to be glad enough! Let us give to God our unlimited joy. David said, “God is my exceeding joy.” I know of no greater word than that word, “exceeding,” because, however far you go, if your joy is, “exceeding,” it is above the highest—and however brave the description, if your joy is, “exceeding,” it surpasses all language! Believers ought to be unutterably happy. Men redeemed with the precious blood of Christ ought always to be almost too happy to live! Men that are children of God and heirs of the Covenant—and are soon to be where Jesus is in the ineffable splendor of Jehovah’s light—ought to feel their soul overflowing with delight! The pulse of the Believer should beat hallelujahs, every heaving of the lungs should raise a Te Deum! Oh, if our minds could but rise into the heavenlies, where we

ought to be, we should not only be happy as the days are long, but we should enjoy the days of Heaven upon the earth!

Yet I must say, however enthusiastic that song was and however full of joy it was, *it was only such a song as was due unto the Lord*. If those people on that day had sung to the Lord some dull, heavy tune, I think if I had been there I would have said, “Change that note! Awaken yourselves to ardor! Awake, awake, put on strength!” The new tunes of the present age are constructed upon the principle of, “Let us sing and rattle through the words as hard as we can go.” I like weightier music moving swiftly, but yet grandly. Such was the Song of Moses, full of solemnity, but full of heart—a tune into which everyone could throw the full volume of his voice without fear of spoiling the delicacy of tone. But, Brothers and Sisters, the tribes of Israel did not even, then, praise the Lord half as He should be praised. If all the angels in Heaven had left their seats and descended to the Red Sea shore—and if cherubim and seraphim had joined the lofty song—it had not been more than meet for the occasion!

So today, if we could awaken all on earth and all in Heaven, as well as all that is within us, to bless and magnify the Lord, the song would not be equal to the majesty of the Divine goodness! It would be but a faint expression of what God deserves from each one of us. Therefore, let us sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously!—

***“Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed, His people are free!
Sing—for the pride of the tyrant is broken,
His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave,
How vain was their boasting. The Lord has but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave!”***

III. We are to dwell for a few minutes upon THE FIRST CLAUSES OF THIS SONG. “The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him.”

Notice the song is all of God. There is not a word about Moses. Read this song through and neither Moses, nor Aaron, nor Miriam are in it—God is All in All—“I will sing unto Jehovah.” That is blessed praise when self lies with the Egyptians at the bottom of the sea—when everything that is in us that is commendable is traced to the Grace of God and the Lord is magnified for it! All for the glorification of Jesus and none but Jesus! Brothers and Sisters, we spoil our music by diverting our thoughts to man. Let us forget men, forget earth, forget time, forget self, forget this mortal life and only think of our God! The song shall be all for You, O Lord, for You are All in All and if we have one note that is determined to go astray, we will this day bind it with cords, even with cords to the horns of Your Altar, O Jehovah!

Observe, the song dwells upon what God has done—“The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” There is nothing concerning the deeds of Moses and Aaron, or the pride of Pharaoh, or the craft of Jannes and Jambres. No, the whole is consecrated to the doings of the Lord. Let us trace all the mercies we get to our God, for He has worked all our works in us. He has chosen us, He has redeemed us, He has called us, He has

quicken us, He has preserved us, He has sanctified us and He will perfect us in Christ Jesus! The Glory is all the Lord's. Let us sing of what the Lord has done. When you read human history, read it to see the finger of God in it—trace all along through human story the silver line of Covenant working—observe how the Lord casts the horse and his rider into the sea when they come out against Him or His people.

The song also declares what the Lord will yet do. It is not about what evil men are doing, or what we are afraid will happen through their malice, but of what the Lord, alone, will do. He says, "You will surely bring them in." He pictures the whole affair finished and Israel settled in the Promised Land—and this is His song. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us sing the music of the future, the music of what God will do! Do you believe that the Lord will be defeated in the long run? Do you fear that at the end, Jehovah's everlasting purpose will fail—that Christ will have died in vain? Do you think the eternal Truths of God promulgated in this Bible will be driven out of the earth by modern thought? Or that our old Christianity, for which our fathers bled, will become extinct? By no means! We shall yet conquer in the great name of Jehovah! Therefore let us take heart of hope to ourselves and sing of what the Lord has done so often, for, again and again, "The horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea."

Take up the first note—"The Lord is my *strength*." What a noble utterance! Poor Israel had no strength! She had cried out by reason of her sore bondage, making bricks without straw. Poor Israel was weakness itself! but Jehovah drew near in power. The Lord is my strength when I have no strength of my own! By the strength of the Lord, Israel came forth with a high hand and an outstretched arm. Egypt was glad when they departed and the Egyptians gave them jewels of silver and jewels of gold that they might wish them well in departing—for God had given them honor in the sight of the people. Thus the Lord is our strength when we are at the extremity of weakness.

The Lord was also Israel's strength against strength. Pharaoh was exceedingly mighty. The kings of the earth trembled at the neighing of his warhorses! The rattling of his chariots made the very heavens to resound! But God was more than a match for him. When strength comes out against God's people, God meets it with His Omnipotence! What is Pharaoh's strength when matched against Jehovah's might? A paper pellet thrown against a wall of brass! The enemy said, "I will pursue; I will overtake; I will divide the spoil" and so on—but Jehovah had only to blow with His wind and the sea covered them! Thus will the Lord be our strength when the mighty are against us.

It is well to say, "The Lord is my strength" when we are weak and the enemy is strong, but we must mind that we say the same when we are strong and our enemies are routed. Suppose Israel had stood on the shore and cried, "The Egyptian power is broken by the sons of Jacob. Israel has cut Rahab and wounded the dragon." Suppose the nation had boasted itself—it would have been guilty of a treasonable attempt upon God's Glory! Lo, Israel is strong enough to make the dukes of Edom tremble and the mighty men of Moab to be afraid—but she must not sing unto her own

honor! "Give unto the Lord, O you mighty, give unto the Lord, Glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the Glory due unto His name." Let this, then, be our song when we are weak and our song when we are strong—"The Lord is my strength."

Note, the word is not, "The Lord gives me strength," but, "The Lord is my strength"! How strong is a Believer? I say it with reverence, he is as strong as God—"The Lord is my strength." God, the infinite Jehovah, in the infinity of His Nature, is our strength.

The next is, "The Lord is my *song*," that is to say, the Lord is the giver of our songs. He breathes the music into the hearts of His people. He is the Creator of their joy! The Lord is also the Subject of their songs—they sing of Him and of all that He does on their behalf. The Lord is, moreover, the Object of their song—they sing unto the Lord. Their praise is meant for Him alone. They do not make melody for human ears, but unto the Lord. "The Lord is my song." Then I ought always to sing! And if I sing my loudest, I can never reach the height of this great argument, nor come to the end of it. This song never changes. If I live by faith, my song is always the same, for "the Lord is my song." Our song unto God is God Himself! He alone can express our most intense joy. O God, You are my exceeding joy! Father, Son and Holy Spirit, You are my hymn of everlasting delight!

"The Lord is my strength and song, and *He is become my salvation.*" The Father, in His eternal purpose, is my salvation. The Son, in His complete redemption, is my salvation. No, not in His redemption, only, but in His *life*, His *death*, His *Resurrection*, His *intercession*, His *Second Coming* He has become my salvation. And the Holy Spirit indwelling in me, quickening me, instructing me, illuminating me, perfecting me, keeping me—He is become my salvation! Triune God, it is not alone that You save me, but You are my salvation. I look for nothing but what is in You and if You give Yourself to me, You have given me a perfect salvation—salvation from bondage, salvation from worldliness, salvation from death and Hell, salvation into light, liberty, love and joy—salvation that shall culminate in eternal Glory! A full salvation is God to His people.

Next "He is *my God*." Perhaps this is the most joyous note of all. "He is become my salvation"—this is very sweet. "He is my God"—this is the sweetest of all! "He is my God," I choose Him to be my God, but I choose Him of necessity. I can do no other. Who else can be my God? In the Revised Version it is, "This is my God," and a very proper translation, too—as if Israel saw what God did at the Red Sea and then exclaimed, "This is my God." This God of justice, this God of vengeance and power is my God. Beloved, choose Jehovah to be your God—whom else can you choose? Let your hearts cling to Him!

But then comes the added word, "*He is my Father's God*," that is to say, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—a God by Covenant, the God who has given Himself to us by His own purpose and promise and, therefore, is our God—not by any right or merit on our behalf, but solely by the gift of His free, rich, Covenant Grace! Let us praise the Triune God of Free Grace, for He belongs to each one of us! There is nothing in God that is not mine; there is no high and lofty attribute that is not mine; there is no

deep and dark decree that is not mine. You have neither Cross nor crown, O Jesus, which is not mine. He has given Himself over to us to be our God forever and ever. Come, let us exult in His name! Have you lost your goods? You have not lost your God! Have you nothing on earth? Yet you can say, "Whom have I in Heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire but You." This is a holy portion, a happy portion, a heavenly portion, a sure portion, an endless portion, a portion which makes us feel rich to all the intents of bliss! This God is our God forever and ever. Let us praise and bless His name!

Note, once more, that as Moses said, "He is my strength, my song, my salvation, my God," now He adds, "*He is my praise.*" The text in the Old Version is, "I will prepare Him as an habitation." This jars a little on my ear—it rather sinks the majesty of the majesty for Israel to think so soon of Jehovah as One for whom she could prepare a habitation. Building a habitation was rather the idea of David in his hour of decline, than of Israel in the day of her astonishment and victory. The Revised Version of the Old Testament, which is infinitely superior to the Revised Version of the New Testament, renders it—"This is my God: I will praise Him." The fact is, there are two words so nearly alike that it is hard to tell which is correct—"habitation," or "praise." Some of the oldest versions of all have it, "He is my praise." I never like meddling with the Old Version, however, so we will take them both and make sure that we do not miss the meaning.

Does not the Lord inhabit the praises of Israel? We will prepare Him a habitation of praise. As soon as Israel had got clear of the Red Sea, clear of Egypt, clear of Pharaoh by the power of Jehovah, then she said, "I will praise Him." O God, it shall be the business of Your people from now on to praise You! We have no bricks to make, but we will praise You! we have no whips to fear, but we will praise You freely! We are not slaves, now, but we are bound to You forever and we will praise You! Then the people seem to say, "We will praise the Lord by regular and abiding worship." Inasmuch as in order to worship, a place is needed, the thought comes up, "We will prepare Him an habitation." We will habitually praise our God for this great deliverance. Let us build our God a house of praises! Let us lay the deep foundations in love, set up the pillars with gratitude and roof in the whole with joyous hallelujahs!

The thought of care comes before me in the Authorized Version—"I will prepare Him an habitation," as if Israel said, "I will take pains to praise God. I will do it intelligently and with my best powers. He shall have the best I can give Him. My best is poor compared with His deserts, but the preparation of my heart shall be His. I will lay myself out that everything shall be done decently and in order for the praise of this most High God. I will prepare Him an habitation of praise. Does it not look as if Israel said, "The Lord has come here to this Red Sea to fight my enemies and I pray that He may abide with me. I will prepare an habitation that He may remain. Lord, be not as a wayfaring man that tarries but for a night—let Your Presence be always with me and I will praise You always." To have abiding fellowship with God is the natural desire of every redeemed soul.

O Brothers and Sisters, let us import our own desires into Israel's words. Let us say—

***“Come, dearest Lord, descend and dwell
By faith and love in every breast!
Then shall we know, and taste, and feel
The joys that cannot be expressed.”***

Never leave us, nor even hide Your face from us, O Lord, our God! Dwell in us that we may dwell in You! Reside in these bodies and make them your Temples. Abide with us! Manifest Yourself to us as You do not to the world!

The verse closes with, “He is my father's God, *and I will exalt Him.*” How can we exalt Him who is already high above all thought? We cannot really make God any greater, but we can make Him greater in the estimation of our fellow men. Let it be the business of our lives to magnify Him. Let us tell our friends that which will make the Lord appear more glorious in their estimation. Let us lay ourselves out, by pen, tongue and life, to make our Lord Jesus Christ more honorable among those who surround us. Say, “I must and will exalt Him. Perhaps I have groaned too much over my trials. Perhaps I have been too depressed and heavy in spirit. But from this day on I will exalt my Lord and sound forth His praises! If He will permit me, I will make the Glory of the Lord the one objective of my being.”

Come, you young men and maidens, you old men and fathers, let us praise the Lord on the high-sounding cymbals, and spend the rest of our days in crying, “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously.” Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Exodus 15:1-21; Revelation 15.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—175, 46 (PART II), 136 (PART II).

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MARAH BETTER THAN ELIM

NO. 2301

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MARCH 26, 1893.
 DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
 ON THURSDAY EVENING, APRIL 4, 1889.

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, and said, If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that heals you.”
Exodus 15:22-26.

AFTER I had fallen down at Mentone, and was grievously ill, a Brother in Christ called to me and said, “My dear Friend, you have now come to Marah.” I replied, “Yes, and the waters are bitter.” He then said, “But Marah is better than Elim, for in Elim the Israelites only drank of the water and ate of the fruit of the palm trees, and that was soon over. But at Marah we read that God, ‘made for them a statute and an ordinance,’ and that was never over. That statute and ordinance stood fast and will stand fast for Israel as long as they are a nation. There is much more benefit to be reaped from Marah than from Elim.” I thanked my friend for that good word. I had found it true before. I have found it true since then and you and I, if we are, indeed, the people of God, will find it true to the end, that Marah, though it is bitter, is also better. And albeit that we do not like it, yet in the end there shall be no bitterness in it, but an unutterable sweetness which shall be ours through time and eternity!

We have a long record about Marah, have we not? I have read you four verses concerning Marah. How many verses have we about Elim? Only one. Does Marah deserve to be talked about four times as much as Elim? Perhaps it does. Perhaps there is four times as much fruit to be obtained from the bitter waters of Marah than from the 12 springs of water, and 70 palm trees at Elim. Who knows? This I know, however, that we are very apt to talk more about our bitters than about our sweets—and that is a

serious fault. It were well if we had fewer murmuring words for our sorrows and more songs of thanksgiving for our blessings. Yet Holy Writ seems, here, to speak after the manner of men, and to let us have the four verses for the trial, and the one verse for the delight! Still, as it speaks, also, after the manner of God, I gather that Marah is, after all, more noteworthy than Elim and, truly, there does come to God's people something better out of their troubles than out of their joys.

Certainly one thing is clear, Israel had no miracle at Elim. Wells and palm trees they had, but they had no miracle, there, no miraculous change of the bitter into the sweet. And they had no statute, and no ordinance, and no promise, and no new Revelation of God, and no new name for Jehovah, there. All *that* belonged to Marah, "for there He made them a statute and an ordinance." And there He promised, if they were faithful and obedient, that He would put none of the diseases of Egypt upon them. And there He revealed Himself as Jehovah Rophi, "the Lord that heals you." Oh, yes, there are many virtues and many blessings in the bitter waters of Marah! Often have we found it true that, "Sweet are the uses of adversity."

I hope that nobody here thinks that these Israelites experienced a *small* trial. We are not accustomed to traveling in the desert, but those who are, tell us that thirst in the wilderness is something awful to endure. For all that great host to go three days without water must have been a very trying experience. You would not like to try that even in this country, but what must it be to go three days in the wilderness, beneath a burning sky, without a drop of water to drink? Then came the bitter disappointment at Marah. Probably the people knew that there were water springs ahead, so they hurried up to the place to drink, but when they stooped to taste the waters, they found that they were bitter. They could not drink of them and there they stood, in their desperation, with the long thirst parching their throats, and bitter disappointment adding to their agony! And they murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" I say not this to excuse them, but lest you should think that they had only a small trial to bear.

Remember, also, that this was a new form of trial. They never lacked for water in Egypt—there were plenty of rivers and canals there—and they could drink as much as they chose. This was an experience to which they were quite unaccustomed and I should not wonder if they were greatly surprised at it, for they knew that they were the people of God. They had just seen the Lord divide the Red Sea and drown their enemies—and now He has brought them out of Egypt to let them perish of thirst in the wilderness? They fancied that they were going to have one long triumphant march right into the Promised Land, or to be always dandled upon the lap of Providence, and indulged in every way, like spoiled children. They must have stood aghast at finding that, when the earth yielded water to slake their thirst, it was such water as they could not drink!

Well, now, this kind of surprise happens to many who have set out on the way to Heaven. God has been very gracious to them—their sins are washed away and they think that the great joy which they have lately experienced will never be taken away from them and will never be even diminished. They reckon upon a long day without a cloud. God has favored

them so much that they cannot *imagine* that they shall have any trial or any bitterness. It is not so, Beloved! A Christian is seldom long at ease! No sooner does he start out on pilgrimage to Heaven than he meets with difficulty and, as he goes on, he finds out that the way to Heaven is not a rolled pathway—it is up hill and down dale—through the mire and through the slough, over mountain and through the sea! It is by their trials and afflictions that the people of God are proved to be His children! They cannot escape the rod, whoever may—yet this experience does, at first, come as a very great surprise to them, so I want to talk, tonight, to some who have been lately brought to rejoice in the Lord's pardoning mercy, but are now staggered because they have come to an encampment in the wilderness where their thirsty mouths are filled with bitterness.

I begin my discourse by saying that this experience was a great gain to Israel. Marah, with all its trials, was no loss to them. They made a decided advance in three things through having to endure this trial. They were gainers, first, by *examination*. Next, by *experience*. And, thirdly, by *education*.

I. First, Israel's trial at Marah was a gain to them by EXAMINATION. It was to that end that they were brought there, that they might be examined by the Lord—"There he proved them."

Speaking of Israel at Marah, let me say, first, that *they were in a new position*. They were no longer slaves, they were not in Egyptian territory. The Red Sea rolled between them and their former lives and their former masters. But it is evident from their conduct that they were not altogether a new people. They had brought a great deal of evil out of Egypt with them. When you heard them sing, you said, "It is strange that those poor slaves can sing such a jubilant song. Those women, so accustomed to carry heavy burdens of earth, how merrily they dance! How joyfully they strike the timbrels! Israel has certainly become a new race. What a grand choir they make! What singing is theirs! Who would have dreamt that those who cried by reason of their taskmasters would ever sing like that?" Yes, but when they were tried and tested, it was found that the old stuff was still in them—they murmured just as they had often done before when, in the land of Egypt, they had blamed Moses because their burdens were increased.

We, too, have entered quite a new state. Some of you, perhaps, have lately become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Between you and your old sins there rolls a deep, impassable sea—you will never go back to them again. Ah, but do not begin to flatter yourselves that you have left behind you all your old selves! There remains, still, even in the regenerate, the old lusts of the flesh! They have had their heads broken, but they still live! They have been crucified, their hands and feet are fastened to the wood, crucified with Christ—but they live for all that! And they struggle on the Cross and you must not marvel, if, when you are tried and proved, you find that you are like these Israelites at Marah.

Notice, next, that the trial to which Israel was subjected *was the Lord's own test, which is searching and accurate*—"He proved them." We sit down and practice self-examination, which is a very proper thing. Beware, I pray you, of a faith that will not stand self-examination! If you dare not look into your own heart, it must be because there is something rotten there.

The tradesman who is afraid to inspect his books, or examine his stock, is going to the bad, rest assured of that. We are bound to examine ourselves very carefully, but, after all, our examinations are very superficial, very partial, and we are very apt to make a mistake. In the case of Israel, the Lord proved them by that thirst in the wilderness and that great agony on finding that the water they looked for was undrinkable. "He proved them." The Lord may be bringing some of you into deep waters and great trials because He is proving you. When the fan is in His hand, then does He thoroughly purge His floor. When He sits as a Refiner of silver, believe me, it is no child's play to be in the crucible! The Lord took Israel to those waters on purpose to prove them. Have you never prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts"? The Lord may answer you in a way of which you little dream—He may conduct you to some waters of Marah that He may test you and prove you.

Well, now, under the test, see what happened to Israel. *Their faith in God evaporated.* That question, "What shall we drink?" has not a trace of faith in it! I hear it shouted, in different tones, by men, women and children—and it all comes to the same thing, "We hoped to quench our thirst here, but we cannot drink this water, and now, what shall we drink?" As if God could not, having dried up the sea, turn the earth into a fountain of water! He that made them a path through the midst of the deep waters could make a path for waters to come to them! There was no trace of faith in the murmurers at Marah. They seemed full of faith at the Red Sea, did they not? Many dancers, but no doubters! Many singers, but no unbelievers! Yet the whole company had not more than a pennyworth of faith among them. Moses was the only one who truly believed God—but as for the faith of the rest of them, it was mere gilt—vener of faith covering a solid mass of unbelief!

Not only did their faith fail, but *their love to God was very feeble.* Did you not hear them three days ago? Why, you can almost hear the strain of their jubilant song, "He is my God and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him." Oh, how they love Jehovah, do they not? They were in the love of their espousals! They went after Him into the wilderness. But now the cry is, "What shall we drink?" And they murmured against Moses. Theirs was a cupboard love, like yours and mine often is. They loved God very much for what they got out of Him and if He would not give them water to drink, what cared they for Him? If He would divide the Red Sea for them, then He would be their God and they would prepare Him a habitation. But if He let them suffer the pangs of thirst, there should be no blessings for Him on their lips! Ah, me, how like ourselves were these people! When we test ourselves, we say, "Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You." And I hope that that is correct. But when the Lord proves us, and we are very sharply tested, we are apt to say, "Nobody was ever tried as we are! Nobody ever had the peculiar difficulties that surround us!" And then we begin murmuring. When we are thinking of how much we love God, it might be more profitable to consider how very little we *really* love Him, after all.

And see, Brothers and Sisters, these people *were ready to break away from their God.* They murmured against Moses because Moses was visible in their midst—but the real murmuring was against God, Himself! They

might ask, as long as they liked, “What shall we drink?” but they could not get a drop of water by repeating that question a thousand times. Would they go back to Egypt? How would they cross the sea? What would Pharaoh and the Egyptians think of them if they did go back? Could they force their way forward through that terrible wilderness? There they stood, entirely dependent upon God, and yet with scarcely a particle of faith in Him! And their love all shriveled up—and all that within *three days*! O Israel, it is early days to be falling out with your new Husband! They had just been married to the Lord by a new Covenant and baptized in the cloud and in the sea—yet within three days they are ready to fling it all up and to say, as they did in their hearts—“Would to God that we had remained in the land of Egypt!” Oh, what poor, faithless, treacherous, deceitful creatures we are! It is only Divine Grace that makes us anything worth having. It is a wonder of mercy that the Lord puts up with us.

This, then, was Israel’s examination. “Well,” you say, “did they gain much by that?” Oh, yes! It is always a gain to a man to know the truth about himself. A captain must find his longitude and latitude, that he may know whereabouts his vessel is upon the sea. And this, I believe, is one of the things God would have His people do. The Lord does not wish His children to live in a fool’s paradise and to fancy that they are rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, when they are naked, and poor, and blind, and miserable! He sends us our Marahs, just to blow away our shams and get rid of our pretences, that we may build our house on the Rock, that what is built may be founded on real granite and may endure even to the end.

So much for the examination of the children of Israel at Marah.

II. But now, beloved Friends, these people gained much by EXPERIENCE. Experience cannot be the property of the beginner—he must *acquire* it. Now what did the children of Israel experience?

First, they learned that the wilderness was the same to them as it was to other people. It is well that young converts should know that this world is an evil world even to the man who is saved by Divine Grace. You are new, but the world is not. You love holiness, but the world neither loves *you*, nor loves holiness. You are in a wilderness—you are in the enemy’s country—you have not yet come into your rest. If you have not learned this fact, yet, you will have to learn it.

They were to learn, next, that they were *wholly dependent upon God*. When they stood at the brink of the Red Sea, they saw that they were so, and that only God could lead them through the sea. But after that, they were just as dependent. They could not live longer without water, they must perish of thirst unless God supplied them. It is a blessed lesson for us to learn that we are entirely dependent upon God for *all* things, but especially for *spiritual* things. You will not pray unless He gives you the Spirit of supplication. You will have no tenderness of heart unless He works repentance in you. You will have no more faith unless faith is constantly bestowed by God. We are just like these gaslights—a candle may depend upon its own resources, but this light cannot. Only cut the connection between it and the reservoir of gas and, straightway, out it must go. We depend upon God every instant as much as we did at first and all our old experience, all that we have learned, and known, and taught, will

stand us in no stead whatever unless we continue perpetually to receive from God. That was the lesson Israel had to learn.

They also learned that *God and God, alone, would provide*. They might have to go very short of supplies at times and they might have a long thirst, but the Lord would not let one of them die of thirst. There is no record that even the tiniest babe in the camp, or even a sheep or goat in that mighty throng, perished for lack of water! God did provide. He does not promise that there shall always be a dinner ready when the dinner bell rings. You have not such an appetite as you would afterwards have if you waited another hour and, sometimes, the Lord may keep you waiting for His supplies that you may enjoy them all the better when they do come. He never is before His time, but He never is behind His time, though He may be behind *your* time. God will provide. That day Israel began to understand that word of their father Abraham when He said to Isaac, as you remember, "My son, God will provide." Now it began to come home to the children of the tribes that God would surely provide—and He did provide for them this great necessary gift of water when they were in the wilderness. That is something to learn. Some of you people of God, here, have learned that lesson, for you have been in great straits and you have been fed by the constant provision of God.

The Israelites were also to learn, in the next place, that *God could make their bitters into sweets*, and He could do that in a very simple way. But He could do it—and He could bring good out of evil, and satisfy them by that which formerly nauseated them. Have you learned that lesson? Some of you people of God, when you get bitter waters, want to throw them away. Do not throw a drop of it away, for that is the water you have yet to drink. Accept your afflictions! They are a part of your education. Accept your afflictions. When Job could say, "The Lord gave," it was easy to add, "and blessed be the name of the Lord." But he also added, "and the Lord has taken away." That was the bitter water, but he drank it, and it was sweet to his taste, and he blessed the name of the Lord for the taking as well as for the giving! God means to bless some of you by the enemy's curse. Though you do not know it, you are to be lifted up by those who are trying to pull you down. I noticed some of the papers writing unkindly of our dear friend, John McNeill, and saying all manner of hard things of him—and I rejoiced in my heart! I hoped that they would go ahead at that work. I remember how they did it to me—all the bitterness they could invent, in years gone by. Every form and fashion of abuse was heaped upon me—and what a wonderful advertisement it was! What a kindness they were doing me without intending it! Let them alone and, depend upon it, God will make the wrath of man to praise Him and the remainder of that wrath He will restrain.

Next, notice, that *God works by His own means*. The Lord showed Moses a tree and when he cast that tree into the waters, they became sweet. I think, if I had been there, I should have suggested that Moses should use that rod of his. Did he not divide the Red Sea with it? Why not just put his rod into the water and stir it up, and make it sweet? Oh, yes, you know, we are always for running to old methods! But God is a Sovereign and He will work as He pleases. There was a tree growing there, perhaps the wood of it was bitter, certainly it had no efficacy for making bit-

ter water sweet, but God bade Moses cast that tree into the waters—and as soon as it was done the waters were made sweet!

Now, you have just to believe that God will help you. You do not know how He will do it and, perhaps, He will not help you in the old way. Do not despair because Moses does not bring out his rod, for the Lord can relieve you without that! That dear friend who has helped you so many years is gone. Well, but God is not gone and He is not dependent upon that one person, nor upon any other! Therefore leave God as a King to do as He pleases, for His pleasure is the wisest—and let His pleasure be your pleasure.

Israel also learned by experience that *God Himself was to be looked to, and nobody else*. If there were waters beneath their feet, they were of no value until God spoke sweetness into them. If Moses, himself, stood there, he could do nothing but pray to the Lord. God, Himself, must come and, by a miracle, must make the water fit to drink. Brothers and Sisters, it is always a gain to us in our experience when we get farther and farther away from every dependence but the Lord! You may have friends forsaking you and they who used to praise you may now be speaking evil of you. And you may come, at last, to feel that you have nothing but God to depend upon—then is the time that faith really comes into exercise! I could not help laughing when I read the story of a good Christian lady who spoke of our friend, Mr. Hudson Taylor—“Why,” she said, “there is no Society to take care of him! Poor man, he has nobody but God to depend upon!” You may well smile. “*Nobody but God to depend upon*”—but that is everybody to depend upon! Oh, if we could only be brought to that experience, Marah’s waters would, indeed, be a heavenly tonic to us! The child of God who has learned this Truth of God, experimentally, can say, “My soul is weaned from all the nether springs, but she drinks from the upper spring that flows from beneath the Throne of God, and she finds every drop to have a heavenly sweetness in it.”

Thus Israel gained by experience as well as by examination.

III. Now comes the third point—Israel gained by EDUCATION. The Lord was not going to lead a mob of slaves into Canaan to go and behave like slaves there! They had to be tutored. The wilderness was the Oxford and Cambridge for God’s students. There they went to the University and He taught and trained them, and they took their degree before they entered into the promised land. There is no University for a Christian like that of sorrow and trial.

Now the Israelites were educated by Marah, first, in *self-distrust*. How could they ever trust themselves, again, when, three days after singing that jubilant song, they caught themselves murmuring against Moses? If they had been intelligent, as they were not, they would, each one, have said to his fellow, “Behold the boastfulness of our evil hearts.” What a terrible drop it is from “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and His rider has He thrown into the sea,” to, “What shall we drink?” That is just how you and I come down when we are left to ourselves. Thus Israel learned self-distrust.

Next, they learned, as I have told you before, *daily dependence*. They learned that they must depend upon God even for a drop of water. That is the dependence of a Christian. He has nothing and he can do nothing

without his God. We have no bread, no water, no anything except as God shall give it to us. A blessed lesson was this for Israel. They were educated well at Marah.

Next, they learned *the power of prayer*. Will you kindly fix your eyes upon those two verses, 24 and twenty-five? “And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord.” Moses did not answer them. He did not upbraid them. He did not, even, begin to argue with them. But he cried unto the Lord and, thus, the people learned the power of prayer. They might have gone on murmuring until now if they could have lived so long—and the waters of Marah would have been as bitter as ever. But Moses cried unto the Lord and that prayer did what all the murmuring could not do! Were half the breath we vainly spend in going round to our neighbors, asking their sympathy, spent in going directly to God in prayer, we should sooner get out of our troubles! “Straightforward makes the best runner,” and he that runs straight to God in every time of adversity shall soon find relief.

Again, at Marah the Israelites began to learn *their separateness from Egypt*. The Egyptians never drank these bitter waters but the Egyptians had foul diseases and terrible plagues. Now, the Lord tell His people that He will not put upon them any of the diseases of Egypt. God turned the rivers of Egypt into blood, but here He turns the bitter waters into fresh streams. His miracles were *for* Israel and *against* Egypt—and they began to clearly perceive that they had nothing to do with the Egyptians. They were a separated people. It is a valuable piece of education for a young Christian to find out that he does not belong to the world. The tendency is to think that, though you are in the Church, you can be in the world, too, and that you belong, in a measure, to both. That will never do! The Lord means to fetch His people right out of the world—and He will have them out! And if any of you try to be like the mouse behind the wainscot and only come out and feed in the dark—I mean that you come to Christ for a little food when nobody sees you and then go and hide away with the world—there will be a black cat after you before long! Some trouble or other will happen to you. That game will never please God and never profit you. Therefore drop it, I pray you, or else some bitter Marah will teach you that you are not of the world.

Israel had next to learn *the position of obedience*. Will you kindly notice this? God did not say, “Do this and I will bring you out of Egypt.” No, but after He brought them out, He said, “Hearken to My commandments, and keep My statutes.” Salvation comes first and *then* obedience! Saved first, brought through the Red Sea with the high hand of God’s gracious power and, after that, become His obedient people! Obedience follows after redemption and deliverance. First the blood of sprinkling on the doorposts and after that you shall give ear unto the voice of the Lord your God, and diligently hearken to Him.

Israel also learned the *nature of obedience*. Obedience does not merely do what it knows it should do, but it finds out what it *ought* to do. Oh, you Christian people, do you make a practice of reading God’s Word to see what He would have you do? I am afraid that there are some who make a point of *not* seeing some of the duties which are not pleasing to them. There are some who half shun portions of Scripture because they would

trouble their consciences. Let it not be so with any of us, but let us listen diligently to the voice of the Lord our God. If you are saved, the kind of obedience that you are bound to render is that of a willing heart, which cries like Saul, “Lord, what will You have me to do?”

Then, Israel learned the *promise made to obedience*—“If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians.” For you there shall be no plagues. God may try you, yet it will be not in anger, but in His dear Covenant love. Everything shall be changed for you. If sickness comes, it shall be overruled for your *spiritual* health. When death comes, it shall only introduce you to *eternal life*. The Lord will be very gracious to you. He that forgives our sins also heals all our diseases. His name is Jehovah Rophi! What an education it is for us when we feel that the God that healed the waters, heals us, and heals everything that has to do with us! It changes the aspect of all things about us, takes the sting out of the wasp and turns it into a bee. It takes away the venom from the serpent and gives us its wisdom, that we may be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves! Oh, the wonderful cure-alls of God, the heavenly catholicon of the Cross, the universal remedy of a dying Savior! May our experience educate us in the knowledge of that gracious healing!

The hour has struck and I must, therefore, cease. Only I must say that this is the one lesson of tonight—dear people of God, trust your God. Trust your God not only when your mouth is full of honey, but when it is full of gall. “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him,” for He in whom you trust will bless you. But if you are not trusting Him, then shall plagues, like those of Egypt, come upon you. Darkness and all manner of evils shall waylay you, till, at last, there shall be heard in your house a bitter cry, for the Destroying Angel will overtake you, and plunge his avenging sword into your guilty hearts. God save you from that terrible doom, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON.
EXODUS 15; JEREMIAH 7:21-26.**

Exodus 15:1. *Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spoke, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.* Note, that they were singing, singing a very loud and triumphant song, and you would have thought that they would have kept on singing for the next 40 years! It was such a triumph, such a deliverance, God’s arm was made so bare before their eyes that you would have thought that their jubilation would have lasted throughout a lifetime, at the least. On the contrary, it lasted a very little while. Yet what a song it was that they sang! “I will sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea.” What a song of triumph that is which is sung by souls saved from sin, death and Hell by the great atoning Sacrifice of Christ! Oh, when we first realize that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, we do, indeed, “feel like singing all the time,” for our

sins are washed away and we have a notion that we shall always keep on singing till we join in the song of the glorified in Heaven! So it ought to be, but, alas, from sad experience we know that it is not so! However, the song of Moses and the children of Israel goes on.

2. *The LORD is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him.* The heart is prompted by gratitude to think of doing something for God. It thinks of preparing Him a habitation, but what habitation shall we prepare for Him whom the Heaven of heavens cannot contain? All that we can possibly do is too little for the greatness of His Grace and His Glory. "You did well that it was in your heart," said the Lord to David, though He might not prepare God a habitation. It is well that it is in our heart, today, to do some little thing for the Glory of God. As an old Puritan says we give for love-tokens a cracked sixpence, or a flower that soon fades. It is accepted as a love-token, not for its intrinsic value, but as an emblem of what our heart feels and would do if it could. Even so it is with the Lord and the service His people seek to render to Him. He takes our trifles and makes much of them.

3-5. *The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and His host has He cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.* And this is what has happened to all the powers that were against us. Our sins, where are they? Has not the Lord cast them into the depths of the sea? Yes, blessed be His name forever! We, like Israel on the other side of the Red Sea, praise the Lord that we have escaped out of the hand of the oppressor and that Pharaoh holds us as servants no longer. To the Lord, alone, is due the glory of our deliverance.

6-8. *Your right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of Your excellence, You have overthrown them that rose up against You: You sent forth Your wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of Your nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.* What cannot God do? The liquid becomes solid! Nature, itself, changes when the God of Nature puts forth His power. Trust in God and He will do wonders for you, also, as He did for His ancient people Israel.

9. *The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.* How the powers of darkness rage and rave! What a flurry they are in! What big words they speak! What cruel designs they harbor against God's people. See how still and calm is the Lord amid all their raging!

10. *You did blow with Your wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters.* God has only to use His breath to blow upon them and away they go, and all their boastings, too! One word from the mouth of God can destroy all our doubts and fears. The breath of His Spirit can sink all our enemies and make us sing for joy of heart at our great deliverance.

11-13. *Who is like unto You, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? You stretched out*

Your right hand, the earth swallowed them. You in Your mercy have led forth the people which You have redeemed: You have guided them in Your strength unto Your holy habitation. The song becomes prophetic. All joy gets to be prophetic—at least, the joy of earth when once it is touched with the live coal from off the heavenly altar. We begin to praise God, “for all the Grace we have not tasted yet,” as Israel here does. They praise the Lord for leading His people through the wilderness and bringing them unto His holy habitation, even while they are only at the beginning of their journey.

14. *The people*—That is, the Canaanites—

14, 15. *Shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away.* When they hear of the great things that Jehovah has done for His people, they shall feel that the day of their doom is come. Who can stand against so mighty a God? Yet there are some, in our day, whose hearts are stouter and harder than the hearts of the dukes of Edom and the mighty men of Moab. They hear of God’s judgments upon the wicked and of the terrible doom of the ungodly, and yet they dare to defy the Lord and to continue in their evil ways!

16-18. *Fear and dread shall fall upon them; by the greatness of Your arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Your people pass over, O LORD, till the people pass over, which You have purchased. You shall bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance, in the place, O LORD, which You have made for You to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands have established. The LORD shall reign forever and ever.* How grandly that last note must have pealed forth from the hundreds of thousands of male voices! The women must also have sung it with the utmost conceivable joy as they struck their timbrels and danced before the Lord.

19-22. *For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. And Miriam the Prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing you to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea. So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.*

At first, they were afraid of too much water, from the waves of the sea. Now they are afraid of too little. Will their songs be over in three days? Ah, yes! At the end of the third day they came to some springs of water, but they were brackish or bitter.

23, 24. *And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured—Ah, these singers had sadly changed their notes! Where are the timbrels now? “The people murmured”*

24-27. *Against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there He made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there He proved them, and said, If you will diligently*

hearken to the voice of the LORD your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that heals you. And they came to Elim. They did not stay long at Marah, probably only a few hours.

27. *Where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees and they encamped there by the waters.* That Elim must have been prepared on purpose for Israel. Twelve springs of water—that was the number of the tribes. Threescore and ten palm trees—that was the number of the elders. I do not wonder that Moses noted these numbers. It must have seemed remarkable that, long before they came there, there were the wells and there were the palm trees all ready for their encampment! It was most significant that these things should have been prepared according to the number of the children of Israel, but everything else is arranged by the same rule. When the Lord divided the people, He set the bounds of the nations according to the number of the children of Israel. It is by this line that He still builds His Church. It is according to His thoughts of His own people that He rules everything in His Providence.

There are a few verses in the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah, at the seventh chapter, which we will read concerning this subject.

Jeremiah 7:21, 22. *Thus says the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. For I spoke not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. You have heard what God said to them when they came out of Egypt.*

23-26. *But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people: and walk you in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all My servants the Prophets, daily rising up early and sending them: yet they hearkened not unto Me, nor inclined their ear, but hardened their neck: they did worse than their fathers. God grant that these words may never be a truthful description of us! Oh, may we keep the Covenant of our God and walk before Him with a holy, reverent fear, and serve Him all our days! Amen.*

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

MARAH, OR THE BITTER WATERS SWEETENED NO. 987

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 23, 1871,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink? And he cried unto the Lord, and the Lord showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet.”
Exodus 15:23, 24, 25.

WHAT a sudden change from the sound of the timbrel to the voice of murmuring! You saw the maidens dancing three days ago, and you little dreamed that they would make part of yonder clamorous throng who surround the servant of God, and cry, “What shall we drink?” Such are the changes of our outward conditions and of our inward feelings, so fickle and so mutable is man. What is there that can be rested upon in this mortal life? We say today, “My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved.” Tomorrow *terra firma*, there is none—and we are tossed upon a stormy sea. Our life is like an April day—the sunshine alternates with the shower. Or like each day of all the year, the morning and the evening are necessary to complete it.

Quick on the heels of light treads the darkness, followed with equal haste by light again. The sun's rule, at this golden hour, is but temporary. He must abdicate in favor of the usurping stars, but they, in their turn, must give way before his lordly presence yet again. This world, which is our inn, owns to the sign of the “checkers”—the blacks and whites are everywhere. We can be sure of nothing between here and Heaven of the things which are seen.

But of this we may be certain, that underneath all the outward change there is the immutable love of God towards His people, and that, after all, the change lies only in the seeming things, not in the things which truly are. For the things which are not seen are eternal and changes come not there. It is but in the things which are *seen* that the change occurs. Let us set the less store by earth, because its fashion abides not. Let us prize Heaven more because it cannot fade.

I. The text directs your attention, first of all, to THE EVILS OF THE WILDERNESS. We need not spend much time in thinking of these evils because they throw themselves in our way often enough. And the tendency of our mind is unduly to exaggerate them. Notice that the perils and trials of the wilderness occur *very early in the pilgrim life*. It is a notion, I have no doubt, of very young Christians who still have the shell upon their heads and are scarcely hatched, that their trials are over now that they have become winged with faith.

They had far better have reckoned that their trials have begun with tenfold force, now that they are numbered with the servants of the Most High. Whatever else comes *not* to you, O servant of God, this will surely be fulfilled, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” “What son is he whom the Father chastens not?” Some privileges are not common to all the adopted, but the privilege of chastisement is universal to all true sons. It is the token of illegitimacy if the rod is escaped—but scourging is the sure pledge of paternal love.

I say, however, that these trials come very soon. Israel was no sooner across the Red Sea than they went three days into the wilderness of Shur and found no water. And at the end of the third day, when they arrived at a fountain, they found worse than no water—for it was so brackish, so altogether unfit for drinking—that though they thought they would have drunk anything, they could not possibly drink this!

What? In just three days must they, that sang unto the Lord because He triumphed gloriously, nauseate the water for which their thirst makes them pant? In three days shall they be reduced to such straits that they must drink or die, and yet feel that they should die if they were to drink of such nauseous streams? Ah yes, with some of us our delight at conversion was very great—our exhilaration at finding the Savior was something never to be forgotten!

And yet only a day or so after we were stumbled with great temptation—amazed at the discovery of the evil of our hearts, or tried by the coldness of our fellow Christians, or the cruelty of the outside world—so that we found we had come to Marah. And this was all the severer trial because some of us had found a degree of pleasure in the ways of sin, and now it stumbled us to find sorrow in the ways of God.

When Israel was in Egypt they drank of the river Nile. No ordinary water that. To this day the dwellers on the banks of the Nile assert that the water has a peculiar taste not to be discovered in any other stream, and they prefer the waters of the Nile to all the waters in the world besides. What a change from the sweetness of the Nile to the bitterness of Marah! Did not the suggestion rise in their hearts, “It was better with us in the bondage of Egypt, with water in abundance, than it is now in the liberty of the wilderness with the bitterness of Marah”?

The devil tempted some of us at the very first by saying—“See what you have got by being a Christian? While you were as others are, your mind had mirth. Now that you have come out and followed the Crucified, you have lost the liveliness of your spirits, the brightness of your wit—that which made life worth having is taken away from you.” Young Christian, is that your case today? Be not stumbled, neither believe the enemy!

Man, it were better to die at Marah free, than live a slave by the sweet Nile! Even men that know not the Spirit of God have felt it were better to die free than live as slaves. And truly to be a slave to Satan is so degrading a thing that if this mouth were forever filled with Marah’s bitterness, yet were it better to be so than to be enchanted with the pleasures of sin. Yet these early trials are very severe, and need much Divine Grace lest they cause us great mischief.

Secondly, these evils *assume varied shapes*. You noticed that for the first three days in the wilderness they found no water. That is one trial.

But the next day, or at the end of the third day, they found water. Now they thought their trial was over—alas, it had only changed its shape. They found water, but it was too bitter to drink. Do not be in a hurry to change your trials, dear Friends. We have heard of some who have repined that they had no children, and, like Rachel, their cry was, “Give me children, or else I die.”

Before long they have had children who proved to be far worse than none. Better no son than an Absalom. We have known those who were in good health but discontented because they had no wealth. They have gained wealth at last, but with an injured constitution they have had no power to enjoy it. If we could choose our trials, we might well remember the wisdom of the old philosopher who told the people oppressed by a tyrant to be content with his tyranny, “for,” said he, “it is with oppressors as with mosquitoes—let those suck which are now upon you, for if you drive those off, the fresh ones which will succeed them will be hungrier than those that are there now—better be content with the tyranny you have, than seek a new one.”

It is much the same with the trials we now feel—you will get used to them by degrees—they will spend their force. Desire for a change of trials may only be a wish for a worse affliction, for which was the worse—to have no water—or to have the water and to find it so bitter that you could not drink it? Yet when God changes the trial be well satisfied that it should be changed. You may anticipate, Christian, that you will have your trial changed—indeed, you must reckon that it is so. I mean that if today it is smooth sailing with you, though yesterday waves rolled as high as the mountains, it is only a change of trial.

You are now tried by *prosperity*, which may prove to be a more severe test for you than adversity. Is the wind balmy? Does it blow from the south? It is but another trial for you, be sure of that, for they who have withstood the northern blast and grown the ruddier and stronger for its influence have often grown faint and weary under softer airs. Watch in all things—your trials are with you constantly—the crucible is changed, the fire still burns.

Note again that as the trials of the wilderness came soon, and assumed various shapes, so often do the trials of the Christian *touch very vital* matters. They found no water, or finding it, it was bitter. It is not said they found no wine—a small trial, indeed. It is not said they found no milk, yet might the infant children have been sorely troubled by such a want. But they found no drinkable *water*. Here was a denial of an essential of life. They must have water, it was no luxury, it was a necessity.

With the hot burning sand beneath them reflecting the fierce heat of a cruel sun, not to have water in the wilderness is to feel an urgent necessity producing a terrible pain. God may touch us, and probably has done so or will, in points most vital. To be tried in the loss of some of your superfluities, my Brethren, is but little. But to lose even the little that you had to live upon. To be brought to straitness of *bread*—this is real tribulation. To have the hand put forth to touch your bone and your flesh—this is affliction. Believe me, our virtues and Graces look very fine, and we think much of them until they undergo that ordeal!

But that test often takes from them their gloss and beauty. We find how great our weakness is when the very marrow of our bones seems to be a den in which pains, like robbers, hide themselves. God may touch you in the most beloved object of your heart. It is not one child that is taken out of many, but the only one. It is not a friend, or distant relative, but the partner of your bosom is laid low. Do not wonder if the trial affects you greatly, and comes home to your soul and heart. It is one of God's determinations that trials shall not be mock trials with His servants, and the Grace given shall not be imaginary, but true.

God never plays at chastening His children. No trial for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous. By the blueness of the wound the heart is made better. If it does not bruise, it does not benefit. Very much in proportion to the bitterness felt will be the benefit that will come of it. They found no water. O my God, to what straits do you reduce Your own people? Your own people who carry with them the title-deeds of a land that flows with milk and honey! Jordan and Kishon are theirs, and yet they find only Marah to drink while they are here!

Your own people for whom You have appointed that they shall dwell in a land of brooks and rivers of water! Where they shall sit, every man, under his vine and fig tree. These, Your darlings, whom You have brought out with a high hand and an outstretched arm, are brought to the extreme of poverty! And the little that they have has often a bitter taste infused into it.

Notice, once again, there is *a reason why the earthly mercies which supply our necessities must be more or less bitter*. When Israel received water out of the rock it was not bitter, but this water came out of the sand. To this day in the desert water is found in different places, but where it oozes up from a sandy bed it is almost, without exception, so brackish and bitter, by reason of the sand, that it is not fit for human drinking. And even the camels, unless they are sore pressed, turn away from it with great aversion. The sand has tainted it, the flavor of earth has got into the blessing.

So it is with most of our blessings—by reason of our sin and infirmity too much of the flavor of earth enters into the gifts of Heaven. Our common mercies, when we receive them directly from Heaven as God gives them, are mercies, indeed—cool, flowing streams that gush from the rock of His favor. But we are apt to trace them to the *creature*, so ready to look upon them as derived from earth instead of coming from Heaven. And just in that proportion may we expect to find bitterness in them.

What can you hope for in a wilderness, but productions congruous to it? Canaan! Who looks for bitterness there? Is it not the land that flows with milk and honey? Sweet land, when shall we reach you? Your sweetness is but congruous to yourself—but here, in this wilderness, where we have no continuing city—who looks for the streams of Lebanon? Who hopes to find Canaan's fruits in the wilderness of Sin? As well seek to gather from the briny sea the sweet fruits of the palm or the luscious clusters of the vine as hope to find, amidst these changing scenes, comforts that shall be all comfortable and joys that shall be all joyous.

No, there will be comforts, but they will be often embittered. They will be somewhat joyous, but the earthy flavor in them will make us remember

that this is not our rest. I know not that I ought to detain you longer with these evils of the wilderness. I do not feel it is wrong to speak of them, for we do not mention them with any view of discouraging those who have set out on pilgrimage. We are not like those who hold up their hands and say, "The lions, the giants, the dragons! Young Pilgrim, you will never reach the land of promise."

But yet we would imitate the Savior, who said to the follower who thought he could follow Him wherever He might go, "Sit down, and count the cost." There are trials for you, you followers of Christ, if there are none for others. Peculiar trials for you—peculiar joys ten thousand times outweighing them—but yet peculiar griefs, new griefs of a new life of which it will be a blessed thing to have been a participant. But there they are, and we will not deceive you. For you there will be Marahs that others may not know.

And for you there will be long thirsts where others drink to the full. Nevertheless, we will take Christ and His reproach, Christ and His Marah, rather than the world with its sweetness—for with every drawback that is supposable to Christ Jesus, He is better than the world with all the additions that can be invented by the sons of mirth.

II. Thus much on the first point, the evils of the wilderness. Now, secondly, THE TENDENCY OF HUMAN NATURE. The people murmured against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Do not say "human nature," says one—say, "the tendency of Jewish nature." Ah, but if anything, I would prefer the people in the wilderness to any other—rest assured that they were no worse than we are. They are an example to us of what our heart is. And whatever we see in them we have but to watch a little, and we shall see it all in ourselves.

It was not Jewish nature that God proved in the wilderness so much as *human* nature at its very best estate. Assuredly, the tendency of human nature is to murmur. They murmured, complained, found fault. A very easy thing, for the very word "murmur," how simple it is, made up of two infantile sounds—*mur mur*. No sense in it, no wit in it, no thought in it—it is the cry rather of a brute than of a man—*murmur*—just a double groan. Easy is it for us to kick against the dispensations of God, to give utterance to our griefs—and what is worse—to the inference we draw from them that God has forgotten to be gracious.

To murmur is our tendency. But, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, do we mean to let the tendencies of the old nature *rule* us? Will we murmur? O that we might have Grace rather to say with Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him!" Shall a living man complain? Have we not received so much good from the hands of the Lord that we may well receive evil without rebellion? Will we not disappoint Satan, and overrule the tendency of the flesh by saying in the might of God's Spirit, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord"?

I know we are apt to say, "Well, that is human nature," and when we have said it is human nature, we suppose we have given a very excellent excuse for doing it. But is human nature to rule the Divine Nature? You, Believer, profess to be a partaker of the Divine Nature. Let the superior force govern. Let that which comes from above be uppermost, and put the

lower nature down. Let us eschew murmurings and complaining—and magnify and adore the God who lays our comforts low.

Observe—and this is worthy of note—that the murmuring was not ostensibly against God. They murmured against Moses. And have you ever noticed how the most of us, when we are in a murmuring vein, are not honest enough to murmur distinctly against God. No—the child is dead, and we form a conjecture that there was some wrong treatment on the part of a nurse, or the surgeon, or ourselves. We lay our hold on that for which there may not be a shadow of proof, and the murmuring is upon that point.

Or we have lost money, and have been brought down from opulence to almost poverty. Then some one person was dishonest—a certain party betrayed us in a transaction by failing to fulfill his part. All the murmuring is heaped on that person. We deny, perhaps indignantly, that we murmur against God—and to prove it we *double* the zeal with which we murmur against Moses!

To complain of the second cause is about as sensible as the conduct of the dog, which bites the stick with which it is beaten. It owes no anger to the stick, but to the person who uses it. Is there evil in the city and the Lord has not done it? Whoever is the instrument, the Lord overrules. In our heart of hearts our rebellion is against the Lord Himself. We have not quite honesty enough to rail against God openly and avowedly, and so we hypocritically cover up our repining against Him by murmuring against some person, occasion, or event.

“If I had not happened to go out on such an occasion I might not have had that cold and been laid aside.” Thus we blame an accidental circumstance as if it were not part of the Divine arrangement. Is this complaining of the second cause better than railing against God? I think not, for, in very deed, it is railing against God, and it is, in addition, an injustice to the second cause so made a butt of. When Pharaoh bade the Israelites make bricks, and gave them no straw, there was injustice.

But when the Israelites gathered around Moses and virtually told him that he ought to supply them with water, it was much the same thing. Why should this man have water to give them to drink? How could he sweeten Marah? They knew right well that it was not possible for him to open a well for them in the wilderness. They complained, I say, in their hearts, really, against God—but they added to this the hypocrisy and the injustice of veiling their murmuring against the Most High by an unjust and clamorous complaint against His servant Moses.

Stop your tongue, my Brother—cease your caviling against this and that, against him or her. For be sure that you are doing injustice to your fellow man as well as a wrong to your God. Once more, while we speak of this tendency in human nature, I want you to observe how they betrayed an utter unbelief of God. They said unto Moses, “What shall we drink?” They meant by it, “By what means can God supply our want of water?” What a question!

They were at the Red Sea, and God cleft the intervening gulf in two—and through the depths they marched dry shod. There is Marah’s water—shall it be more difficult for God to purify than to divide? To sweeten a fountain—is that more difficult than to cleanse a sea? Is anything too

hard for the Lord? A great miracle had been worked. Had they but considered it, and exercised even the lowest degree of faith, they must have seen that he who could work such a miracle as they had seen could work yet another.

And they might joyously have stood at Marah's brink, and have sung, "He who cast Pharaoh and his chosen captains into the Red Sea, and delivered His people, can give His chosen drink. Therefore we sing, Spring up, O well, and let your waters be sweet and clean." O that they had faith in God but as a grain of mustard seed and they would have seen great things and glorified His name! Do you blame them? Do so—blame them much, but include yourselves in the censure. How often has it been so with us? We have said, "I will never distrust my God after this memorable deliverance, this singular display of His power has slain my unbelief."

Yet a new trial has occurred, and our faith—where is it? Had the Son of Man Himself been on the earth with those quick eyes to discern the faith which He Himself creates, could He find faith in us in the hour of tribulation? Be humbled as you see yourselves in this mirror. Behold your instability, which is as water. How like to reeds shaken with the wind are we! Or like meteors, which flash across the brow of night to leave the darkness denser than before. How soon is the glory of our confidence spent, and the excellence of our faith withered! Hold You our feet in life, great God, or we shall soon be silent in darkness!

III. Now, thirdly—and may Divine help, the help of the Holy Spirit be given me—I will speak upon THE REMEDY OF GRACE. I have shown you the evils of the wilderness and the tendency of nature—it is delightful to behold the remedy of Grace. First, if you would have Marah's bitterness healed, *take the case in prayer to God*. God begins by making *us* begin. The people complained to Moses. Moses took the complaint to his Master. In all trials, the surest way to a remedy is prayer.

In heavenly pharmacy, prayer is a *catholicon*. It heals all things. Prayer, which overcomes Heaven, will certainly never be overmatched on earth. Neither men nor devils can stand against prayer—it smites them hip and thigh like another Samson. The bow of prayer returns not empty. It is swifter than an eagle, it is stronger than a lion. Take your case to God, O Heir of trouble—unroll Rabshakeh's letter before the Host High—and the Lord will silence his reviling. Half the work is done when it is brought before God in supplication.

Note, next, that *as soon as we have a prayer God has a remedy*. The remedy is near at hand. But we do not perceive it till it is shown us. "The Lord showed him a tree." The tree had been growing for years on purpose to be used. God has a remedy for all our troubles before they happen. A delightful employment it is to notice how God forestalls Himself—how long before we reach the encampment, if there is the bitter well—there is also the healing tree. All is ready between here and Heaven. He that has gone to prepare a place for us by His Presence, has prepared the way to that place for us by His Providence.

But, Brethren, though for every trouble in this mortal life there is a remedy, you and I do not always discern it. "The Lord showed him a tree." I am persuaded that for every lock in Doubting Castle there is a key. But the promises are often in great confusion to our minds so that we are

perplexed. If a blacksmith should bring you his great bundle of picklocks, you would have to turn them over, and over, and over. And try half of them, perhaps two-thirds—before you would find the right one—yes, and perhaps the right one would be left to the last. It is always a blessing to remember that for every affliction there is a promise in the Word of God. A promise which meets the case, and was made on purpose for it.

But you may not be always able to find it—no, you may go fumbling over the Scriptures long before you get the true word. But when the Lord shows it to you, when it comes with power to the soul, when the heart can grasp it, and cry, “Yes, that is the word, my Master! Indeed, and of a truth that is the precious Truth of God which can sweeten my sad discomforts,” oh, what a bliss it is! All glory be unto the Holy Spirit who to this day is ready to show unto His praying servants the sweetening tree when they come to the bitter streams.

Now that remedy for the healing of Marah’s water was *a very strange one*. Why should a tree sweeten the waters? I do not suppose there was any natural efficacy in the tree, although that would not be altogether impossible, since there are trees, so travelers tell us, which have been used in the sweetening of waters. There is in South Africa a certain river which water cannot be drunk until branches of a certain tree are placed in it. And only then the bitterness which is in the stream is deposited at the bottom, and the water becomes drinkable.

The thing is not unnatural nor altogether necessarily supernatural, though I think in this case it was supernatural, for there are no trees found now in the wilderness of Shur that would have the effect of sweetening brackish waters. This was no doubt a miraculous incident, and it was also meant to teach us something. The fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was eaten by our first parents and embittered all. There is a Tree of Life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations.

Blessed is he that eats of this Tree of Life. It shall take away from him the bitterness which the first forbidden fruit brought into the world. A tree is a living thing—may we not learn that there are living principles in true religion which will sweeten our adversities? Mere doctrines may not, but living principles will. These cast into our troubles will lessen our grief. Best of all, may not this tree cut down be an emblem of the Savior? A glorious Tree, indeed, was He, with spreading branches and top reaching to Heaven—but He must suffer the axe for our sakes.

And now, today, contemplating His atoning sacrifice, and by faith resting in Him, the troubles of life and the troubles of death are sweetened by His dear Cross, which, though it is a bitter tree in itself, is the antidote for all the bitterness that comes upon us here and hereafter. That remedy was most effective. When they cut down the tree, and put it into the water, it turned the water sweet—they could drink it!

And let me assure you that in the case of our trouble the Cross is a most effective sweetener. Shall I put the tree into the water for a minute, and then ask you to drink? Have you been suffering pain, or any other form of tribulation? I will let the Cross soak in it for a minute, and your first reflection will be—“In all this that I am called to suffer there is not even a single particle of punishment for my sin! God has punished Christ.

Consequently He cannot punish me—to punish two for one offense would be unjust—therefore there is nothing penal in all that I am suffering.”

I do not know of any reflection more consoling than this, that my sorrow is not laid on me by a judge, nor inflicted on me as the result of Divine anger. There is not a drop of wrath in a river full of a Believer’s grief. Does not that take the bitterness out of affliction and make it sweet? And then the reflection goes further. Since Christ has died for me, I am God’s dear child. And now if I suffer, all my suffering comes from my Father’s hand—no, more—from my Father’s heart!

He loves me, and therefore makes me suffer—not because He does not love—but because He does love does He thus afflict me. In every stripe I see another token of paternal love. This it is to sweeten Marah’s waters, indeed! Then will come the next reflection—that a Father’s love is joined with infinite wisdom, and that, therefore, every ingredient in the bitter cup is measured out drop by drop, and grain by grain, and there is not one pang too many ever suffered by an heir of Heaven.

The Cross is not only weighed to the pound but to the ounce—yes, to the lowest conceivable grain. You shall not have one half a drop of grief more than is absolutely necessary for your good and God’s Glory. And does not this also sweeten the Cross, that it is laid on us by infinite wisdom, and by a Father’s hand? Ravishing, indeed, is the reflection in the midst of all our grief and suffering, that Jesus Christ suffers with us! In all your affliction, O member of the body, the Head is still a sharer. Deep are the sympathies of the Redeemer—acute, certain, quick, infallible. He never forgets His saints.

All the while the Lord lays His chastening hand upon His servants they may be cheered by this reflection—that in this He is making them *conformable* unto Christ. What should they know of Gethsemane if they had no sweat of pain? What should they know of the passion if they never had to cry, “I thirst,” or, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?” They were poor scholars in the school of Christ’s sufferings if they endured no sufferings themselves. And it is a blessed thing, a sweet thing to drink of His cup, and to be baptized with His Baptism.

Moreover, when the child of God is in his right state, it is always enough for him that his condition is the result of his Father’s will. Is it God’s will? Is it Christ’s will? Then it is *my* will. How could I dare to wish anything to be otherwise than Divine love appoints? I do not know but what it will become sometimes to the Christian a subject of joy that Marah is bitter. For suppose Marah had been sweet, then Moses had not prayed to God, and then the tree had not been cut down and they had never known the power of God to sweeten bitter waters!

It must be an awful thing to live an unafflicted life on earth. You say it must be a very delightful thing? I have no doubt it may be from some aspects. But a person who has had no sickness, how can he have a sympathetic heart? What service can he render in cheering the people of God? If you never had any trials I should suppose, unless something very extraordinary happened, that you would become harsh, and untender. I am afraid some would grow brutal, coarse, hard of heart. Who wishes, where others have to suffer, to claim an immunity from a blessing which brings rich consolations with it—and works *eternal* benefits?

Beloved, this is ever one thing that sweetens Marah—that it afterwards brings forth the comfortable fruits of righteousness. Our trials are not sent to us alone and by themselves—there is Grace sent with them—by which they are made available as means to *sanctify* us, and make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. I will not keep you much longer upon this point. But I must notice that while I have shown you that the remedy is very efficacious, it is something more than efficacious—it is transcendent.

The water was bitter, but it became absolutely sweet. The same water that was bitter became sweet, and the Grace of God, by leading us into contemplations that spring out of the Cross of Christ can make our trials, themselves, to become pleasant to us. It is a triumph of Grace in the heart when we not only acquiesce in trouble, but even rejoice in it. “We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation works patience.” It is a grand thing when we can truly say that as to the rod of the Covenant we would not escape it if we might. It becomes in the judgment of wisdom so good a thing to be tried that though we would not seek it, yet we accept it with something more than readiness, and the bitter thing becomes sweet to us.

Let me say, and have done with this part of the subject, that the remedy which is suggested to us by a spiritualizing of text is efficacious for all trials, and will be found especially so for the bitter waters of death at the last. With all that can be said about death it is not a pleasant subject for contemplation—and must to be viewed in connection with Covenant consolations. Certain Brethren buoy themselves up with the hope of escaping death by the second Advent. I am not certain that they are wiser than David who did not hope to omit the valley of the shadow of death, but trusted that he should fear no evil there because the rod and staff would be his stay.

The death of Christ robs death of its terrors. The prospect of the Resurrection and the certainty of immortality make us say, “Surely the bitterness of death is past!” Be it remembered that if the Cross avails to sweeten all the bitterness of our mortal life, and even the last bitterness of death, it is assuredly available this morning to sweeten the bitterness of our present sorrow. Did you drink the quassia-cup this morning before you came here? Do you feel desponding at this moment, my Brother, my Sister?

Go to your Savior at once! View Him suffering on your behalf. Behold the completion of your reconciliation to God. Mark the security of your soul through the finished work of your glorious Surety. Take down your harps from the willows, put away your ashes—ask the Lord to anoint you with the oil of joy instead of mourning—and even at the waters of Marah lift up your song again, and let the timbrel still be heard. “Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously: Marah’s bitterness has He turned to sweetness. He has cut down the mighty Tree which He gave for us, and which yielded itself to the axe for us. And into the bitter stream the Tree is cast, and now from now on, O Marah, you are sweet, indeed.”

Did you come here this morning as Naomi when she returned to her city and said, “Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me”? Ah, when she dandled on her knee and held in her fond bosom the child of Ruth and Boaz, the joy of her old age, she

was glad to think the neighbors had not changed her name, and she was willing enough to be called Naomi still! Call not yourself Marah, but remember the new name which the Lord has named upon you. The bitter pool itself—call it not Marah. Be not so ready to affix names of sad memorials. Your griefs are apt enough to gall your memory—do not aid them to sting you. Call the well by another name! Forget Marah, and remember Jehovah Rophi, the Lord that heals both you and the waters. Record the *mercy* rather than the sorrow, and give thanks unto the Most High!

Now, in closing, somebody will say, “This is a very curious missionary sermon.” Yes, but you see I did not appoint the missionary sermon for today—my Brethren did that, and certainly I did not arrange my own sickness, so as to make it fall on this day. How can I dance to the sound of the timbrel when I am feeble and sad?

If I had the choosing of my own state of health and mind, I would have the choosing of my own texts, and make them always suitable to the occasions as they arise. But I am obliged to preach what I can preach, and as I know pretty well the flavor of Marah, and a little about the sweetness which the healing Tree can give it, I can only tell you what I know by experience. But it is a good missionary sermon for all that. Let us show you how.

Here is A SUGGESTION OF COMPASSION. Brethren, all the world over the heathen have trials, bitterness, woes. I said that Christians have peculiar woes, but the dark places of the earth have direr sorrows. Some nations are devastated with war. Others are tormented with diabolical customs and rites—their actions even towards themselves through their superstition are brutal. I may well liken the world that lies in darkness to a thirsty caravan gathered around Marah’s well where the water is too bitter to drink.

Oh, the woes, the woes of mankind! High are the Andes, lofty the Himalayas, but the woes of the sons of Adam are higher! The Ganges and the Indus and other mighty streams pour their floods into the ocean. But what mighty deep could contain the torrents of human grief? A very deluge is the sorrow as well as the sin of man. And, my Brethren, the heathen know nothing of the healing Tree, the Tree cut down of old which still has power to sweeten mortal misery.

You know it. You have your trials and you surmount them by the appeals you make to your Lord, and by the power of His consolations. But alas, these sons of darkness have your same griefs, and more, but they have not your Comforter. For them the deluge, but not the Ark. For them the tempest, but not the Refuge. And you are so sure that you have that which would cheer them—no doubt passes across your mind as to the Gospel.

These are wavering times in which some professors, and even some teachers, almost believe that the Gospel is but one theory of many and will have to stand its test. And, they believe, in all probability will fail as many human systems of thought have done. You think not so. You believe that God’s Gospel is a verity, a Revelation of Jehovah. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not His Word, His Christ, His Decrees, His Covenant.

You know that you have a Tree that can heal the bitter fountains. No doubt comes across your mind as to that—what then?

By common humanity, much more by the tender movements of the Grace of God upon your souls, I conjure you present this remedy to those who need it, and who need it so much. Will anything suffice as a substitute for it? Is there anywhere on earth another healing Tree beside that which fell beneath the axe at Calvary? Are there other leaves for the healing of the nations? On the seven-hilled city of Rome—grows there a tree that can heal man's diseases? No. It is a deadly upas. Cut it down, and burn the very roots of it!

Among the fancies of idolatry are there any inventions of man that can cool his fevered brow and sooth his griefs? Does Mohammedanism offer hopes for eternity that can light up the grave to an awakened sinner? Are there thoughts of bliss in idolatry calculated to cheer the sepulcher? All religions answer, "Comforts are not in us." It is only at the Cross! It is only by Jesus crucified that the world can be healed! Up to now little has been accomplished compared with our desires. And in contrast to our ambitions, next to nothing. But Faith, darting beyond the things that are seen, flying into the Presence God, can behold Him writing with the eternal pen, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." And she is sure that the Tree will sweeten the waters yet.

Come, Brethren, let your faith prove itself by your works. Help today—today, by your gifts! Help tomorrow—tomorrow, by your prayers. Help, some of you, by consecrating yourselves to mission labor. There is a prayer I mean to continue to offer until it is answered—that God would pour out on this Church a missionary spirit. I want to see our young men devoting themselves to the work—some that will not be afraid to venture and preach Jesus Christ in the regions beyond. I have not much faith in missionary societies. It gets less, I must admit, each year.

Yet we must never put aside one instrumentality until we have a better one ready. If the Lord would send the Living Fire through the Churches of England. If He would send from on high a Divine impulse, we should see starting up here and there men who would say—"Here are we—send us!" The Spirit of God will say, "Separate me Paul and Barnabas for the work," and when this is done I look to see far happier days.

We have sweetened the waters a little—no more the living sacrifices burn. The African is free. The slave ship crosses no more the deep. In some regions exterminating wars have ceased. The white dove of peace flies where the raven of war was seen. Glory be to God! A few leaves cast into the waters have done this. Let us bear a whole Christ and a whole Gospel among the nations, and lay the tree in this Marah until at last the whole world shall drink of the sweet waters of Divine Love, and God shall be All in All. God bless you, Beloved, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 15.

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“JEHOVAH-ROPHI”

NO. 1664

**DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 11, 1882,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“I am the Lord who heals you.”
Exodus 15:26.*

WE shall consider this passage in its context, for I have no doubt that the miracle at Marah was intended to be a very instructive illustration of the glorious title which is here claimed by the Covenant God of Israel— “I am Jehovah-Rophi, the Lord that heals you.” The illustration introduces the sermon of which this verse is the text. The healing of the bitter waters is the parable of which the line before us is the lesson. How different is the Lord to His foes and to His friends! His Presence is light to Israel and darkness to Egypt. Egypt only knew Jehovah as the Lord that plagues and destroys those who refuse to obey Him. Is not this the Lord’s memorial in Egypt, that He cut Rahab and wounded the dragon? He overthrew their armies at the Red Sea and drowned their hosts beneath the waves! But to His own people, in themselves but very little superior to the Egyptians, God is not the terrible Avenger consuming His adversaries, but, “Jehovah that heals you.”

Their mental and moral diseases were almost as great as those of the Egyptians whom the Lord cut off from before Him, but He spared His chosen for His Covenant’s sake. He bared the sword of Justice against rebellious Pharaoh and then He turned His tender, healing hand out to His own people, to exercise towards them the heavenly surgery of His Grace. Israel knew Him as the Lord that heals and Egypt knew Him as the Lord that smites! Let us adore the Grace which makes so wide a difference—the Sovereign Grace which brings salvation unto Israel—and let us confess our own personal obligations to the mercy which has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities!

Again, how differently does God deal with His own people from what we should have expected. He is a God of surprises! He does things which we looked not for. God deals with us not according to our conception of His ways, but according to His own wisdom and prudence, for as the heavens are high above the earth, so high are His thoughts above our thoughts. You would not have supposed that a people for whom God had given Egypt as a ransom would have been led into the wilderness of Shur—neither would you have guessed that a people so near to Him that He cleft the sea and made them walk between two glassy walls dry shod—would have been left for three days without water!

You naturally expect to see the chosen tribes brought right speedily into a condition of comfort, or, if there must be a journey before they reach the land that flows with milk and honey, you look at once for the smitten rock and the flowing stream, the manna and the quails and all

the other things which they can desire. How singular it seems that after having done such a great marvel for them, the Lord should cause them to thirst beneath a burning sky and, that, too, when they were quite unprepared for it, being quite new to desert privations, having lived so long by the river of Egypt where they drank of sweet water without stint.

We read at other times, "You, Lord, did send a plenteous rain, whereby You did refresh Your inheritance when it was weary." But here we meet with no showers! No brooks gushed forth below and no rain dropped from above. Three days without water is a severe trial when the burning sand is below and the blazing sky is above! Yet the Lord's people, in some way or other, are sure to be tried—theirs is no holiday parade—but a stern march by a way which flesh and blood would never have chosen. The Egyptians found enough water and even too much of it, for they were drowned in the sea, but the well-beloved Israelites had no water at all! So is it with the wicked man—he often has enough of wealth and too much of it—till he is drowned in sensual delights and perishes in floods of prosperity. He has his portion in *this* life and in that portion he is lost, like Pharaoh, in the proud waters.

Full often the Lord's people are made to know the pinch of poverty. Their lives are made wretched by sore bondage and they faint for a morsel of bread—they drink from a bitter fountain which fills their inward parts with gall and wormwood. They are afflicted many times, almost to the breaking of their hearts. One of them said, "All the day long have I been plagued and chastened every morning." They lie at the rich man's gate full of sores, while the ungodly man is clothed in scarlet and fares sumptuously every day. This is God's strange way of dealing with His own people. He Himself has said, "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." "He scourges every son whom He receives." Thus He made His people know that the wilderness was not their rest, nor their home—for they could not even find such a common necessity as water with which to quench their thirst!

He made them understand that the promised brooks that flowed with milk and honey were not in the wilderness, but must be found on the other side of Jordan, in the land which God had given to their fathers—and they must journey there with weary feet. "This is not your rest," was the lesson of their parched lips in the three-day march. You know what teaching there is in all this, for your experience answers to it. Do not marvel, Beloved, if with all your joy over your vanquished sin, which shall be seen by you no more, you yet have to lament your present grievous needs. The children of Israel cried, "What shall we drink?" This was a wretched sequel to, "Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously." Have you never made the same descent? If you are in poverty you are, no doubt, tempted to put that trinity of questions, "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? And with what shall we be clothed?"

You are not the first to whom this temptation has happened. Do not marvel at all if up from the triumph of the Red Sea, with a song in your mouth and a timbrel in your hand, you ascend into the great and terrible wilderness and enter upon the land of drought! This way lies Canaan and

this way you must go. Through much tribulation we must enter the Kingdom of God and, therefore, let us set our minds to it. By this grievous test the Lord was proving His people and causing them to see what was in their hearts. They would have known no wilderness outside if there had not been a wilderness within—neither had there been a drought of water for their mouths if the Lord had not seen a drought of Grace in their souls. We are fine birds till our feathers are ruffled—and then what a poor figure we cut! We are a mass of diseases and a bundle of disorders and, unless Grace prevents, we are the sure prey of death. O Lord, we pray to be proven, but we little know what it means!

Let this suffice for an introduction and then let our text come in with comfort to our hearts, “I am the Lord that heals you.” It was to illustrate this great name of God that the tribes were brought into so painful a condition! And, indeed, all the experience of a Believer is meant to glorify God, that the Believer, himself, may see more of God and that the world outside may also behold the Glory of the Lord. Therefore the Lord leads His people up and down in the wilderness and, therefore, He makes them cry out because there is no water—all to make them behold His power, His goodness and His wisdom. Our lives are the canvas upon which the Lord paints His own Character.

We shall try, this morning, to set forth before you, by the help of the Divine Spirit, this grand Character of God, that He is the God that heals us. First, we shall notice the healing of our circumstances, dwelling upon that in order the better to set forth the greater fact, “I am the Lord that heals you.” Secondly, we shall remember the healing of our bodies which is here promised to obedient Israel and we shall set forth that Truth of God, in order to bring out our third point, which is the healing of our souls. “I am the Lord that heals you”—not your circumstances, only, nor your bodily diseases, only, but yourself, your *soul*, your truest self—for *there* is the worst bitterness, there is the sorest disease and there shall the grandest power of God be shown to you and to all who know you.

I. THE GLORIOUS JEHOVAH SHOWS HIS HEALING POWER UPON OUR CIRCUMSTANCES. The fainting Israelites thought that when they came to Marah they should slake their thirst. Often enough the mirage had mocked them as it does all thirsty travelers—they thought that they saw before them flowing rivers and palm trees—but as they rushed forward, they found nothing but sand, for the mirage was deluding them. At last, however, the waters of Marah were fairly within sight and they were not a delusion! Here was real water and they were sure of it. No doubt they rushed forward, helter-skelter, each man eager to drink—and what must have been their disappointment when they found that they could not endure it!

A thirsty man will drink almost anything, but this water was so bitter that it was impossible for them to receive it. I do not read that they had murmured all the three days of their thirsty march, but this disappointment was too much for them. The relief which seemed so near was snatched away! The cup was dashed from their lips and they began to murmur against Moses and so, in truth, against God. Here was the proof

of their imperfection—they were impatient and unbelieving. Have we not, too often, fallen into the same sin? Brethren, let your conscience answer! When you have felt a sharp affliction and it has continued a long time and you have been wearied out with it, you have, at last, seen a prospect of escape, but that prospect has completely failed you. What woe is this!

When the friend you so surely relied upon tells you that he can do nothing. When the physician upon whom you put such reliance informs you that his medicine has not touched the malady. When the last expedient that you could adopt to save yourself from bankruptcy—the last arrow in your quiver has missed the mark—how your spirit has sunk within you in dire despair! Then your heart has begun to wound itself, like the scorpion, with its own sting. You have felt as if you were utterly spent and ready for the grave. The last trial was too much for you! You could bear up no longer. Happy have you been if under such conditions you have not been left to give way to murmuring against God.

These poor Israelites were in a very pitiable condition. There was the water before them, but its horrible flavor made them shrink from a second taste. Have you not experienced the same? You have obtained that which you thought would deliver you, but it has not helped you. You looked for light and beheld darkness; for refreshment and beheld an aggravated grief. The springs of earth are brackish until Jehovah heals them—they increase the thirst of the man who too eagerly drinks of them. “Cursed is he that trusts in man and makes flesh his arm.” Now, dear Friends, in answer to prayer, God has often healed your bitter waters and made them sweet. I am about to appeal to your personal experience, you that are truly pilgrims under the guidance of your heavenly Lord.

Has it not been so with you? I should have no difficulty in refreshing your memories about Marah, for very likely its bitterness is in your mouth, even now, and you cannot forget your sorrow. But just now I wish to refresh your memories about what came of that sorrow. Did not God deliver you? Did He not, when you cried to Him, come to your rescue? I appeal to *facts* which may be stubborn things, but they are also rich encouragements. Has not the Lord oftentimes made our bitter waters sweet by changing our circumstances altogether? When the poor in heart have been oppressed, God has taken away the oppressor, or else taken the heart away from the oppression. When you have been in great straits and could not see which way to steer, has not the Lord Jesus seemed to open before you a wider channel, or Himself to steer your vessel through all the intricacies of the narrow river and bring you where you would come?

Have you not noticed in your lives that most remarkable changes have taken place at times when anguish took hold upon you? I can bear my witness, if you cannot, that the Lord has great healing power in the matter of our trials and griefs. He has changed my circumstances in Providence and in many ways altered the whole aspect of affairs. On other occasions the Lord has not removed the circumstances and yet He has turned sorrow into joy, for He has put into them a new ingredient which has acted as an antidote to the acrid flavor of your affliction. You were not allowed to leave the shop, but there came a fresh manager who shielded you from

persecution! You were not permitted to quit your business, but there came a wonderful improvement in your trade and this reconciled you to the long hours! You were not made to be perfectly healthy, but you were helped to a medicine which much lessened the sharpness of the pain—thus has your Marah been sweetened. Have you not found it so?

The weight of your affliction was exceedingly great, but the Lord found a counterbalance and, by placing a weight of holy joy in the other scale, He lifted up your load and its weight was virtually taken away! You have been at Marah, but even there you have been able to drink, for a something has been put into the waters of afflictive Providence which has made them endurable. And where this has not been done, the Lord has, by a heavenly art, made your bitter waters sweet by giving you more satisfaction with the Divine will, more submission, more acquiescence in what the Lord has ordained. After all, this is the most effectual remedy. If I cannot bring my circumstances to my mind, yet if God helps me to bring my mind to my circumstances, the matter is made right.

There is a degree of sweetness about pain, poverty and shame when once you feel, "The loving Lord ordained all this for me—my tribulation is of His appointing." Then the soul, feeling that the affliction comes from a Father's hand, accepts it and kicks against the pricks no longer. Surely, then, the bitterness of life or of death will be past when the mind is subdued to the Eternal will! These people said, "What shall we drink?" and they would have concluded that Moses was mocking them if he had answered, "You shall drink the bitter water." They would have said, "We cannot bear it! We remember the sweet water of the Nile and we cannot endure this nauseous stuff." But Moses would have said, "Yes, you will drink this and nothing else but this and it will become to you all that you need." Even so, Beloved, you may have quarreled with your circumstances and said, "I must have a change! I can no longer bear this trial."

Has not the Lord of His Grace changed your mind and so influenced your will that you have really found comfort in that which was uncomfortable and content in that which made you discontented? Have you never said, when under tribulation, "I could not have believed it. I am perfectly happy under my trial and yet when I looked ahead to it, I dreaded it beyond measure. I said it would be the death of me, but now I find that by these things men live and in all this is the life of my spirit." We exclaim with Jacob, "All these things are against me," but the Lord gives us more Grace and we see that all things work together for good—and we bless the Lord for His afflicting hand! So you see the Lord Jehovah heals our bitter waters and makes our circumstances endurable to our sanctified minds.

Brothers and Sisters, all this which you have experienced should be to you a proof of God's power to make everything that is bitter, sweet. The depravity of your nature will yet yield to the operations of His Grace! The corruptions that are within you will yet be subdued and you shall enter into the fullest communion with God in Christ Jesus! I know you shall, because the Lord is unchangeable in power and what He has done in one direction He can and will do in another. Your circumstances were so terrible and yet God helped you—and now your sins, your inbred sins, which

are so dreadful—He will help you against *them* and give you power over them. You shall overcome the power of evil! By His Grace you shall be sanctified and you shall manifest the sweetness of holiness instead of the bitterness of self! Can you believe it? Does not God's power exhibited in Providence around you prove that He has power enough to do great things within you by His Grace?

Moreover, should not this healing of your circumstances be to you a pledge that God will heal you as to your inner spirit? He that brought you through the sea and drowned your enemies will, also, drown your sins, till you shall sing, "The depths have covered them! There is not one of them left." He that turned your Marah into sweetness will yet turn all your sense of sin into a sense of pardon! All the bitterness of your regret and the sharpness of your repentance shall yet be turned into the joy of faith and you shall be full of delight in the perfect reconciliation which comes by the precious blood of Christ! Sustaining Providences are to the saints sure pledges of Divine Grace! The sweetened water is a picture of a sweetened nature—I almost said it is a type of it! God binds Himself by the gracious deliverances of His Providence to give you equal deliverances of Grace. It is joyous to say, "He is the Lord that healed my circumstances," but how much better to sing of His name as "The Lord that heals you"?

Do not be contented till you reach to that! But do be confident that He who healed Marah will heal you—He that has helped you to rejoice in Him in all your times of trouble will sustain you in all your struggles with sin till you shall more sweetly and more loudly praise His blessed name!

II. Let us now proceed a step further. As we have spoken of God's healing our circumstances, so now we have to think of THE LORD'S HEALING OUR BODIES. Why are diseases and pains left in the bodies of God's people? Our bodies are redeemed, for Christ has redeemed our entire manhood, but if Christ is in us, the body is still dead because of sin, even though the spirit is alive because of righteousness. It is not till the Resurrection that we shall enjoy the full result of the redemption of the body. Resurrection will accomplish for our bodies what regeneration has done for our souls. We were born again. Yes, but that Divine work was exercised only upon our *spiritual* nature—our bodies were not born again—therefore they still abide under the liability of disease, decay and death, though even these evils have been turned into blessings.

This frail, sensitive and earthly frame, which Paul calls, "this vile body," grows weary and worn and, by-and-by, it will fade away and die unless the Lord shall come. And even if He should come, this feeble fabric must be totally changed, for flesh and blood, as they now are, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Neither can corruption dwell with incorruption. Even to this day the body is under death because of sin and is left so on purpose to remind us of the effects of sin—that we may feel within ourselves what sin has done—and may the better guess at what sin *would* have done if we had remained under it, for the pains of Hell would have been ours forever. These griefs of body are meant, I say, to make us remember what we owe to the redemption of our Lord Jesus, and so to keep us humble and grateful.

Aches and pains are also sent to keep us on the wing for Heaven, even as thorns in the nest drive the bird from its sloth. They make us long for the land where the inhabitant shall no more say, "I am sick." Yet the Lord does heal our bodies. First He heals them by preventing sickness. A *prevention* is better than cure. The text says, "If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord, your God, and will do that which is right in His sight, and will give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon you, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that heals you."

It is concerning this same healing Lord that we read, "You shall not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flies by day; nor for the pestilence that walks in darkness; nor for the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you. Only with your eyes shall you behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, your habitation; there shall no evil befall you, neither shall any plague come near your dwelling." Do we sufficiently praise God for guarding us from disease? I am afraid that His preserving care is often forgotten.

Men will go 30 or 40 years, almost, without an illness, and forget the Lord, in consequence. That which should secure gratitude creates indifference! When we have been ill, we come up to the House of the Lord and desire to return thanks because of our recovery. Ought we not to give thanks when we are *not* ill and do not need to be recovered? Should it not be to you healthy folks a daily cause of gratitude to God that He keeps away those pains which would keep you awake all night and wards off those sicknesses which would cause your beauty to consume away like the moth? But we see this healing hand of the Lord more conspicuously when, like Hezekiah, we have been sick and have been restored.

Sometimes we lie helpless and hopeless like dust ready to return to its fellow dust. We are incapable of exertion and ready to be dissolved. Then if the Lord renews our youth and takes away our sickness, we praise His name—and so we ought! It is not the doctor; it is not the medicine—these are but the outward means—it is the Lord who is the true Physician and unto Jehovah-Rophi be the praise! "I am the Lord that heals you." Let those of us that have been laid aside and have been again allowed to walk abroad, lift up our hearts and our voices in thanksgiving to the Lord who forgives all our iniquities, who heals all our diseases!

According to the analogy of the healing of Marah, the Lord does this by *means*, for He cast a tree into the water. Those who will use no medicine, whatever, certainly have no Scriptural warrant for their conduct. Even where cures are given to faith, yet the Apostle says, "Is any sick? Let him send for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." The anointing with oil was the proper medicine of the day and, possibly, a great deal better medicine than some of the drugs which are used nowadays. To the use of this anointing the promise is given, "and the prayer of faith shall raise the

sick." Hezekiah was miraculously healed, but the Lord said, "Take a lump of figs and lay it upon the sore."

God could have spoken a word and turned Marah sweet, but He did not choose to do so! He would exercise the faith and obedience of His people by bidding them cast a tree into the waters. The use of means is not to *hinder* faith, but to try it. Still, it is the Lord who works the cure and this is the point which is so often forgotten. Oh, come, let us sing unto Jehovah who has said—"I am the Lord that heals you"! Do not attribute to secondary means that which ought to be ascribed to God! His fresh air, warm sun, or bracing wind and refreshing showers do more for our healing than we dream of, or if medicine is used, it is He who gives virtue to the drugs and so, by His own Almighty hands, works out our cure. As one who has felt His restoring hand, I will personally sing unto Him who is the health of my countenance and my God.

Note this, that in every healing of which we are the subjects, we have a pledge of the Resurrection. Every time a man who is near the gates of death rises up, again, he enjoys a kind of rehearsal of that grand rising when from beds of dust and silent clay the perfect saints shall rise at the sound of the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God! We ought to gather from our restorations from serious and perilous sickness a proof that the God who brings us back from the gates of the grave can also bring us back from the grave, itself, whenever it shall be His time to do so! This should also be a further proof to us that if He can heal our bodies, the Lord can heal our souls! If this poor worm's meat, which so readily decays, can be revived, so can the soul which is united to Christ and quickened with His life! And if the Almighty Lord can cast out evils from this poor dust and ashes which must ultimately be dissolved, much more can He cast out all manner of evils from that immaterial spirit which is yet to shine in the brightness of the Glory of God!

Therefore, both from His healing your souls and from His healing your bodies, gather power to believe in the fact that He will heal your mental, moral and spiritual diseases! Lift up your hearts with joy as you sing of Jehovah-Rophi, "The Lord that heals YOU."—

***"Sinners of old, You did receive,
With comfortable words and kind,
Their sorrows cheer, their needs relieve,
Heal the diseased and cure the blind.
And are You not the Savior still,
In every place and age the same?
Have You forgot Your gracious skill,
Or lost the virtue of Your name?
Faith in Your changeless name I have;
The good, the kind Physician, You
Are able now our souls to save,
Are willing to restore them now.
Though eighteen hundred years are past
Since You did in the flesh appear,
Your tender mercies ever last;
And still Your healing power is here!
Would You the body's health restore,
And not regard the sin-sick soul?"***

***The sin-sick soul You love much more,
And surely You shall make it whole."***

The healing of Marah and the healing of the body are placed before the text and they shed a light upon it. They place this name of the Lord in a golden frame and cause us to look upon it with the greater interest.

III. Now we come to THE HEALING OF OUR SOULS. The Lord our God will heal our spirits and He will do it in somewhat the same manner as that in which He healed Marah. How was that? First, He made the people know how bitter Marah was. There was no healing for that water till they had tasted it and discovered that it was too brackish to be endured! But after they *knew* its bitterness, then the Lord made it sweet for them. So is it with your sin, my Brothers and Sisters! It must become more and more bitter to you. You will have to cry out, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" You will have to feel that you cannot live upon anything that is within yourself. The creature must be made distasteful to you and all trusts that come of it, for God's way is first to kill and then to make alive—first to wound and then to heal. He begins by making Marah to be Marah and afterwards He makes it sweet!

What next? The next thing that there was prayer offered. I do not know whether any of the people possessed faith in God, but if so, they had a prayerless faith, and God does not work in answer to prayerless faith. "Oh," says one, "I am perfectly sanctified." How do you know? "Because I believe I am." That will never do! Is a man rich because he believes he is? Will sickness vanish if I believe myself to be well? Some even think it useless to pray because they feel sure of having the blessing. That putting aside of prayer is a dangerous piece of business! If there is not the cry to God for the blessing, yes—and the *daily* cry for keeping and for sanctification—the mercy will not come. Again, I say, healing comes not to a prayerless faith. You may believe what you like, but God will only hear you when you pray. Faith must pour itself out in prayer before the blessing will be poured into the soul. Moses cried and he obtained the blessing—the people did not cry and they would have been in an evil case had it not been for Moses. We must come to crying and praying before we shall receive sanctification, which is the making whole of our spirits.

Marah became sweet through the introduction of something outside of itself—a tree. I know not of what kind. The rabbis say that it was a bitter tree and *naturally* would tend to make the water more bitter, still. However that may be, I cannot imagine any tree in all the world, bitter or sweet, which could have power to sweeten such a quantity of water as must have been at Marah! The transaction was miraculous and the tree was used merely as the instrument and no further. But I do know a tree which, if put into the soul, will sweeten all its thoughts and desires—Jesus knew that tree, that tree whereon He died and shed His blood as a victim for our sin!

If the merit of the Cross is imputed to us and the spirit of the Cross is introduced into our nature. If we trust the Lord Jesus and rest upon Him. Yes, if we become Cross-bearers and our soul is crucified to the world—then we shall find a marvelous change of our entire nature! Whereas we

were full of vice, the Crucified One will make us full of virtue! And whereas we were bitter towards God, we shall be sweet to Him and even Christ will be refreshed as He drinks of our love; as He drinks of our trust; as He drinks of our joy in Him! Where all was acrid, sharp and poisonous, everything shall become pure, delicious and refreshing! But we must first experience a sense of bitterness—then cry out to the Lord in prayer and then yield an obedient faith which puts the unlikely tree into the stream—then the Divine power shall be put forth upon us by Him who says, “I am the Lord that heals you.” The inner healing is set forth as in a picture in the sweetening of the bitter pools of Marah. I know I am right in saying so, because we are told of Moses, “There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them.”

Again, the task of turning Marah sweet was a very difficult one. No human power could have achieved it and, even so, the task of changing our nature is not only difficult, but impossible to us. We must be born again, not of the will of man, nor of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. There was no turning Marah sweet by any means within the reach of Moses or the myriads that came up with him out of Egypt. This wonder must come from Jehovah’s hands. So is the change of our nature a thing beyond all human might. Who can make his own heart clean? God must work this marvel! We must be born again from above, or else we shall remain in the gall of bitterness even unto the end.

But yet the work was very easy for God. How simple a thing it was just to take a tree and cast it into the bitter water and find it sweet at once! Even so it is an easy thing for God to make us a new heart and a right spirit and so to incline us to everything that is right and good. What a blessing is this! If I had to make *myself* holy, I must despair! And if I had to make myself perfect, and keep myself so, it would never be done! But the Lord Jehovah can do it and has already begun to do it! Things which I once hated I now love—all things have become new. Simple faith in Jesus Christ and the putting of the Cross into the stream does it all, and does it at once, too! And does it so effectually that there is no return of the bitterness, but the heart remains sweet and pure before the living God.

The task was completely accomplished. The people came and drank of Marah just as freely as they afterwards drank of Elim or of the water that leaped from the smitten rock. So God can and will complete in us the change of our nature. Paul says, “I am persuaded that He that has begun a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ.” The Lord has not begun to sweeten us a little with the intent of leaving us in a half-healed condition, but He will continue the process till we are without trace of defilement and made pure and right in His sight. This work is one which greatly glorifies God. If the change of Marah’s water made the people praise God, much more will the change of nature make us adore Him forever and ever! We are going to be exalted, Brethren, by-and-by, to the highest place in the universe—next to God! Man, poor, sinful man, is to be so changed as to be able to stand side by side with Christ, who has, for that very purpose, taken upon Himself human nature. We are to be above

the angels! The highest seraphim shall be less privileged than the heirs of salvation!

Now, the tendency to pride would be very strong upon us, only that we shall always remember what we used to be and what power it was that has made us what we are. This will make it safe for God to glorify His people. There will be no fear of our sullyng God's honor, or setting ourselves up in opposition to Him, as did Lucifer of old. It shall never be said of any spirit washed in the precious blood of Jesus, "How are you fallen from Heaven, O son of the morning!" for the process through which we shall pass in turning our bitterness to sweetness will fill us with perpetual adoration and with constant reverence of the unspeakably mighty Grace of God! Will it not be so, Brethren? Do not your impulses even now lead you to feel that, when you gain your promised crowns, the first thing you will joyfully do will be to cast them at the feet of Jesus, and say, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be Glory forever and ever"?

That sweetened Marah was all of God—our renewed nature shall be all of God. We shall not be able to take the slightest particle of credit to ourselves, nor shall we wish to do so. Brothers and Sisters, the Lord will do it! He will be sure to do it because it will glorify His name. Let us draw comfort from this fact—there will be no interfering with the Lord by a rival claimant to honor! There will be no idolatry in us taking away part of His praises! Therefore He will do it and change our bitterness into perfect sweetness. Blessed be His name, He *can* do it—nothing will baffle the skill of "the Lord that heals you."

Whenever I am cast down under a sense of corruption, I always like to get a hold of this Divine name, "The Lord that heals you." "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Faithful is He that has called you, who also will do it," says the Apostle. He has not undertaken what He will fail to perform. Jehovah, who made Heaven and earth, has undertaken to make us perfect and to effectually heal us—therefore let us be confident that it will assuredly be accomplished and we shall be presented without spot before God! He who heals us is a God so glorious that He will certainly perform the work. There is none like unto the Omnipotent One! He is able to subdue all things unto Himself. His wisdom, power and Grace can so work upon us that where sin abounded Grace shall much more abound—

***"You can overcome this heart of mine!
You will victorious prove,
For everlasting strength is Yours
And everlasting love.
Your powerful Spirit shall subdue
Unconquerable sin;
Cleave this foul heart, and make it new,
And write Your Law within."***

He is a God who loves us so and makes us so precious in His sight that He gave Egypt for our ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for us! A God so loving will surely perfect that which concerns us.

Moreover, a God so fond of purity, a God who hates sin so intensely and who loves righteousness so fervently will surely cleanse the blood of

His own children! He must and will make His own family pure! “This people have I formed for Myself: they shall show forth My praise.” The devil cannot hinder that decree. “They shall,” says God, and they shall, too—no matter what shall stand in their way! They must and they shall show forth God’s praise.

Now, as you have believed in God for your justification and found it in Christ, so believe in God for your sanctification, that He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure! Believe that He will exterminate in you the very roots of sin—that He will make you like Himself, without taint or speck, and that, as surely as you are trusting in Christ, you shall be whiter than snow, pure as the infinite Jehovah—and you shall stand with His First-Born, accepted in the Beloved! My soul seems to grasp this and to hold it all the more firmly because the Lord has turned my bitter circumstances into sweetness and has healed the sickness of my body.

Because of these former mercies, I know that He will heal the sickness of my spirit, and I shall be whole, that is to say, *holy*, without spot or trace of sin and so shall I be forever with the Lord. “Therefore comfort one another with these words.” Brothers and Sisters, if the Lord has taken you into His hospital and healed you, do not forget other sick folk! Freely you have received, freely give! Give today to the hospitals in which so many of the poor are cared for and relieved. Do it for Jesus’ sake and may the Lord accept your offerings!

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LESSONS FROM THE MANNA

NO. 2332

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, OCTOBER 29, 1893.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 12, 1889.

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My Law, or no.”
Exodus 16:4.

IT seems to us that it must have been a very difficult thing to supply food for the hundreds of thousands, I shall not be incorrect if I say the *millions* who were in the wilderness. But, difficult as that was, the commissariat was not so difficult as the education. To train that mob of slaves into a nation under discipline—to lift up those who had been in bondage and make them fit to enjoy national privileges—this was the Herculean task that Moses had to perform. And their God, who loved the children of Israel and chose them—and determined to make them a peculiar people unto Himself, undertook to teach them—and He used their *food* as part of the means of their education. Animals are often taught through their food. When they cannot be reached in any other way, they have been instructed by their hunger, by their thirst and by their feeding. And the Lord, who knew of what a coarse nature Israel was composed, and how the people had degenerated from the old stock during their long bondage, took care to teach them by every means, not only by the higher and the more spiritual, by the typical and symbolical, but He also taught them by their hunger and by their thirst, by the supply of water from the Rock and by the manna which He rained from Heaven.

We will try to see, tonight, what the Lord taught them, but we will do more than that—we will try to learn what *they* learned and somewhat more. May the Holy Spirit, Himself, be our Teacher and as He has often taught us the most Divine lessons by the bread and wine, preaching to our very hearts by what seemed the lowly ministry of food and drink, so may He, tonight, teach us by that angels' bread which with Israel was fed in the wilderness long years ago!

First, I invite you to consider *how the Lord taught these people by His gift*. And next, *how He taught them by making this gift a test to them*. Thirdly, I shall have to show *how He teaches its lessons as to temporal things*. And lastly, *how He instructs us as to our spiritual food*.

I. First, then, dear Friends, let us Consider HOW THE LORD TAUGHT THESE PEOPLE BY HIS GIFT.

He wanted them to know Him. His great desire was that they should know Jehovah, their God. If they knew God, they would know all else, for, after all, “the proper study of mankind” is God. And when man knows his

God, he knows himself. But if he thinks that he knows himself while he knows not his God, he is greatly mistaken.

God desired, then, to teach them, Himself, by the gift of the manna. And He taught them, first, *His care over them*, that He was their God, and that they were His people and that He would lay Himself out to provide for them. Think of the care that God had over them, over each one of them, for each man had his own omer of manna. No woman, no child was forgotten. Every morning there was sufficient quantity for every man, according to his needs for that day. There was no more and there was never any less, so carefully did God watch over each individual. The individuality of the Divine Love is a great part of the sweetness of it. God thinks of every separate child of His as much as if He had only that one. The multiplicity of His elect does not divide the loaf of His affection. He has an infinite affection for each one and He will take care of the details of each chosen life. He will see your omer filled, precisely, to the ounce! He will give you all you can possibly need, but He will give you nothing that you can lay by to minister to your pride.

And this care was shown every day. The Lord taught them the continuity of His remembrance by its coming every day. If He had sent one great rain of liberalities to refresh His inheritance and had told them gather up the vast store and carry it with them in all their journeying, they could not so well have learned His care as when He sent it fresh every morning. Besides, they would have had the burden of carrying it and they were free from that, for the heavenly supplies were always close at hand, exactly at the spot where they pitched their tents and tarried. Every morning, there was the manna precisely where they needed it, and that without any man's shoulder being made raw by carrying his food in his kneading-trough. The Lord teaches you and me in the same way, that He not only cares for each one, but cares for each one each day and each moment, tracking our footsteps and meting out the full supply of the hour according as the peculiar necessity arises. "He is always thoughtful, always thoughtful of me," you may say of your Lord—"always thoughtful of all the brotherhood, of the whole company of the redeemed, but none the less thoughtful of each one because there are so many myriads to be cared for every moment of every day." Was not that a sweet lesson for the children of Israel to learn as they gathered their daily bread?

But Jehovah taught them, next, *His greatness*. He had taught them that in Egypt by His mighty plagues and, at the Red Sea, when He branded the breast of the waters with His mighty rod. But now He gently taught them His greatness, His exceeding greatness, first, by the quantity of the manna. There was enough for them all. How much it required, I leave arithmeticians to calculate—I cannot go into that question tonight. And remember, that quantity fell every morning for 40 years! What a great God is He who could feed the canvas city of His chosen people for 40 years at a stretch and yet without His stores being ever drained! His greatness was also seen by the mode in which He fed these myriads. Usually our bread springs up from the soil, but these people were in a waste land—a howling wilderness! Wonder of wonders, their bread came down from the sky! Shall men live on air? Will you sustain a population on mist, cloud

and dew? Yet out of a seeming vacuum came a constant plenty! Every morning the earth was covered with the heaped-up food of all that multitude and they had nothing to do but to go out and gather it. What a God is this whose marching through the wilderness were so marvelous! Jehovah, Your paths drop fatness! Wherever You place your feet, the wilderness and the solitary place are glad! If You lead Your people through a desert, it is no desert to them! The heavens supply what the earth denies. Behold, the greatness of your God, you who are fed by His care!

And, next, they learned *His liberality combined with His greatness*, for everyday they were fed, but not fed as Joseph supplied the people in Egypt, when he took from them all their stores to buy the corn and, at last, took themselves to be bondsmen unto Pharaoh—and their lands to be Pharaoh's freehold that they might live. No, there was never a pretense of paying for that daily bread. The richest man had his omer filled, but he paid not a penny for it. And the poorest man had his omer just as full at the same price! There was "nothing to pay"—no manna-tax was ever exacted of the Israelite's hand. Oh, the liberality of God! His cry is, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come to the waters, and he that has no money; come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk." Do you notice how Jehovah's invitation grows? He says at first, "Come to the waters," but He corrects Himself before He gets through with it, and says, "Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The Lord is infinitely good, essentially. He is growingly good, experimentally. The more we trust Him, the more we discover of His liberality! He "gives liberally and upbraids not." He scarcely upbraided Israel despite their frequent murmuring and the manna fell continually—and the abundance of it must always have struck the people. God's liberality never stinted them. Oh, yes, I have no doubt that it is quite right to weigh out the bread and to weigh out the meat—so much bone and so much fat to be allowed to every prisoner in the jail—and possibly to every pauper in the poor house! But that is not God's way of going to work. Though we deserve to be in prison and though we are, all of us, pensioners on His bounty, yet He gives each one his omer full. If a man has a large appetite, he may eat as much as he likes and the manna seems to grow while he is eating. And if he has a small appetite, though he may have gathered much, yet he will still have nothing left over. God supplied the manna bountifully, yet *exactly* according to the capacity of the receiver.

This brings me to say that the children of Israel also learned *God's Immutability*, for they had been fed with manna all through the wilderness. Some old man may have said, "I remember going out the first time to gather my omerful. I was astonished at it! And my neighbors kept calling out, 'Man-hu? Man-hu? Man-hu?' They were all wonderstruck! They did not know what to call it, so they asked, 'What is it?' They called it, 'Manhu?' And now," he said, "I have been out all these years. Thank God, I have never had a swollen foot so that I could not go out to gather it! It has always been just as white and just as round and just as plentiful and just as near my tent as at the first! I used to live over on the left side of the camp and I moved to the right, but I always found that the manna was equally plentiful in every direction wherever I went. And it is so now,"

the old man would say, “it is so now and it is just as sweet, and just as plentiful, and just as freely to be had for nothing by every man who chooses to go out and gather it. Blessed be God, He changes not and, therefore, we sons of Jacob are not consumed! If He had changed, the manna would have failed us and we would have been consumed with hunger.”

Jehovah still lives, O child of God! You have just buried one very dear to you, but the Lord still lives—He never fails. It may be that your income is getting shorter—the Brook Cherith is drying up and the ravens have not been with the bread and meat lately. Jehovah still lives—and there is a widow over at Zarephath who will have her commission to take care of the Lord’s servant. Jehovah lives! His eyes are not dim, His ears are not heavy, His arms are not short! Therefore trust in the unchanging God and be not afraid! The manna shall fall from Heaven till you shall eat the old corn in Canaan!

Do you not think, Beloved, that from this gift the children of Israel also learned *God’s wisdom*? If they were not sensible enough to know it, He had given them the best food that He could give them. In that hot climate, if they had eaten meat continually, they would often have been ill. When the Lord did allow them quail in answer to their cravings, while the meat was yet in their mouths they were taken with deadly sickness. It was unwholesome for them to have meat—this manna from on high was the best thing for people living in tents, journeying from place to place, over a burning sand, beneath a scorching sky. The Lord had adapted the food to the people, yet they said, “Our soul loathes this light bread.” The very name they gave to it showed that it was just the right sort of food for them, easy of digestion. God had adapted their food to their position in the wilderness—no doctor could have drawn up a dietary table that was equal in wisdom to the one prepared by God for His people while they were in that condition!

And He showed His wisdom, too, in the quantity provided—it was always the right measure. “He that gathered much had nothing over.” The manna seemed to shrink to the right quantity. “He that gathered little had no lack.” The manna seemed to swell and increase so that there was exactly enough to an ounce for all those multitudes. Oh, the infinite wisdom of God! How I have often admired His promptness to a moment, His exactness to a drachma, for with Him there are no more small mistakes than great ones! He never errs in *any* sense or way, but He hits the mark precisely in all that He does!

And then, once more, the Israelites must have learned *His goodness* because He had not supplied them with tasteless food. According to the Apocrypha, which is not to be received as Scripture, but still is often valuable in some respects, each man tasted the manna according to his own liking. There was something about it that enabled the mouth to give its own flavor to it. And their marching through the wilderness, their weariness, would often add a sauce to it that made it exceedingly sweet to them. It was like wafers made with honey, not at all unpalatable. It was, as I have already told you, like fresh oil, by no means disagreeable to an Eastern. God did not give them beggar’s food, spare scraps and broken

victuals. He had said, "I will rain bread from Heaven for you," and He kept His Word. The least bit of Heaven's bread must be delicious to the taste. "Man did eat angels' food," said the Psalmist, and that cannot be bad food which falls from the table of cherubim and seraphim, such food as spirits might partake of if they might partake of any—light, and pure, and ethereal, and spiritual—as far removed from the grosser forms of materialism as food well could be! It was a godlike food for a godlike race if they had but been worthy of their destiny and had been willing to learn what God was so ready to teach them.

II. Notice, dear Friends, in the second place, HOW THE LORD TAUGHT THESE PEOPLE BY MAKING THIS MANNA A TEST TO THEM.

Their position was, in many respects, a very pleasant one. They had not to work for daily bread—they had only to go out and gather it. There it was, but here is the point for us to observe. *It was given every day*—they never had any store. A man who gathered manna for 20 years might say, in language that I have often heard, "I ain't a bit forwarder. I am just where I was 20 years ago," as if it were not getting forwarder to be 20 years older and to have had 20 years of mercy! Yet there was no store of manna—all up and down the wilderness there was not a single bank in which people could put their money! There was no such thing as a dividend to be received by anybody and nobody could be laying up anything. Each Israelite had what he needed for the day—he kept on having just so much and no more—and this was a test. Could he endure that test?

And then, again, as there was no store for the whole of them, and they did not get any richer, so there was no opportunity for greed, for *it was given to every man*. He who thrust out his two hands to rake up the manna, when he returned to his tent, had an omerful for himself, his wife and his eight children, but he had not any more. He thought the next day, perhaps, that he would sweep away by the half-hour together if he could, as long as the dew was remaining, and get an extra quantity—but when he examined it, he had exactly as much as he and his family could eat and no more! The rest was all gone, evaporated, and nothing was left over and above what he needed. And his poor palsied neighbor, who could only get a little together in his basin with his one good hand, found that, somehow, he had enough, for God made it to grow in the basin! And when he looked at it, there was just enough for the day's supply.

"Oh," says one, "I would like that." Well, I agree with you. I would like that, too. But how long would you like it? I dare say about as long as these Israelites did and you would begin grumbling, just as they did. Here was God's test of them—every day and no store—every man and no greed! It is so with Grace—God gives us as much Grace as we need, but there is nobody here who has any Grace laid up. Oh, yes, I heard one person say that she had so much Divine Grace that she had not sinned for months. Ugh! I thought I smelt something! I did not say anything, but I remembered what manna does when it is kept and there I left the subject. I hope none of you think that you have more Grace than you need, because you have not! You may, possibly, have as much Grace as will last you through today, but you will need as much as that tomorrow morning, if not more. Oh, yes, I know that you have an iron safe and you go and rattle your

keys and you say, "Look here! I have Grace enough locked up for the next six weeks."

Go again and you will be glad to run away from the stench, for you will find that you have locked up so much *pride*, and nothing else! We do not need dying Grace till we come to die! Be satisfied to have living Grace while you live! You do not need Grace to preach, tonight, dear Friends—you need Grace to sit and listen. That may, perhaps, require as much Grace as I need for preaching, but do not ask for *my* Grace, as I will not ask for yours. Eat your own manna! Eat it—do not lay it up—it is not meant to be stored up, it must be *eaten*. This gift of the manna, everyday for every man, was a test by which the Lord taught the children of Israel.

So was *that Friday storing*, when they said to themselves, "We get into the habit of gathering our food every morning, but here comes this Friday, when we have to gather twice as much." I do like consistency, always doing the same thing, but here is a command to do twice as much, once a week—here is a law that shifts a bit. I like systematic theology, but here is a sliding seat. Here is a double supply for Friday and I have to store half of it up. So one man did not store it up when he was told to do so and another man tried to store it up when he was told *not* to do so. Thus the Lord tested and tried them. It is a wonderful thing, that testing to which God puts us! Sometimes, when we think that we have such a surplus of faith in Him, He just tests us and we find that we have not any! The most grand life is a life of dependence upon God, for that is true independence! If you wholly depend upon God, then you have risen to independence. He who has nothing but what God gives him, day by day, has a competence. He is the man who has saved most who has least, for he is saved from the worry of taking care of it! If he is still dependent upon God's Providence and faith can keep her hold, he is the best off man after all!

You said that you envied the Israelites. Ah, well, you may, but you need faith, or else what might be a theme of envy becomes a subject of discontent. So I leave that point.

III. My time has pretty well gone, so I will only hint at what I would have said had there been time. Observe, HOW THE LORD TEACHES US BY THIS MANNA AS TO TEMPORAL THINGS.

First, He teaches us that *our supplies depend upon Him*. Where did all the manna come from? It all came from God. Child of God, all your supplies must come from God! Learn that. Whatever the second causes, whatever the intermediary sources, all you are to have will come when all you have had *has* come, namely, from God.

Learn, next, that *our supplies are sure to faith*. If the manna did not fail for 40 years, neither will the Lord fail to supply your needs. Your God will give you your livery if you are His servant. He will give you your daily rations, also, if you serve Him. "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." He who carves for himself will cut his fingers and get an empty plate. But he who waits for the great Host of all the chosen family to carve for him shall have enough and that of the best. "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory by Christ Jesus."

But learn from the children of Israel that *our supplies will have to be gathered and prepared by ourselves*. God sent the manna from Heaven, but the people had to go out every morning and get it—and when they had gathered it—we read that they used to beat it in mortars, or grind it in mills, bake it in pans and make it into cakes. God is not the patron of idleness. He will have His people work and His rule is, “If any man will not work, neither shall he eat,” a rule He often carries out with those who are idlers. But, Beloved, we thank God for opportunities for diligence. Though labor came at first as a curse, God has turned it into a blessing.

And, once more, *our supplies ought to content us*, for the children of Israel had enough for all their needs. They had no superfluities, but they had all-sufficiency. They had no luxuries, but yet, if they chose to think so, their daily mercies became luxuries to them. Oh, that God might teach us to trust Him as to temporals!

IV. Now for my last point and I beg your patience for a few minutes only. HOW THE LORD TEACHES US BY THIS MANNA AS TO OUR SPIRITUAL FOOD. Here, also, I will only give you hints.

Every day you and I ought to go forth and find food for our spiritual life. Ah, but have you all received spiritual life? Some of you, it may be, are dead while you live—without God and without Christ. May the Lord quicken you by His life-giving Spirit!

But if you have spiritual life, you must feed it, and *God will give you manna from Heaven*, that is, Christ, Himself, with which to feed your soul! He is that Bread of Life which came down from Heaven and you must feed on Him. Take care that you go diligently to work to get this spiritual food. The Israelites were up to gather the manna which fell morning by morning. Be not idlers with the Word of God—search it. Got up early in the morning to read your Bible if you cannot do it at other times. Steal from your sleep a happy hour to read the Scriptures. Diligently and earnestly seek the Lord, for He has said, “They that seek Me early shall find Me.”

Then, as I hinted in the reading, *the manna was always encased in dew*. They took care to gather this, for then it became sweet dew to them. May the Word of the Lord always have a dew upon it to you! The critic takes God’s Word and he treats it as the sun did the manna—he pours a dry heat upon it—and it evaporates, and it is gone. Oh, those critics! What a mass of manna they have altogether evaporated! But the child of God takes care that he loses nothing of what God has revealed. Every Word is precious to him, yes, every jot and tittle and, under the bedewing influences of the Holy Spirit, he constantly gathers Christ fresh, always new, and he finds His flesh to be meat, indeed, and His blood to be drink, indeed!

Again, *the manna was to be continually sought*. So must your spiritual food. Do not try to live on last year’s manna. Stale experiences are poor food. I know no dish that is worse than cold experience—you need to have a daily realization of the things of God. Hourly feed on Christ, for the food of years past will be of small account to you. Continually go about the meadows and feed, sheep of the Lord! Go again and again to the still waters, drink and be satisfied.

In the case of this manna, *the gatherers were pleased with little*. It was a small, round thing, like coriander seed, or like the hoarfrost. So be very thankful to get a little bit out of God's Word. If you only find one new thought, one fresh idea, pick it up and put it in the omer. A great many of these precious little things will make rare food for a hungry spirit. Get the food for your soul, little by little. You can imagine how they probably had to gather it. I suppose that they went down on their knees to get it, for it was always down low, just on the hoarfrost that lay on the desert sand. Look at them all stooping down to gather it up! And the bulk of them, I think, were on their knees gathering it. That is the way to get the heavenly food—gather it on your knees! Stoop low with humility! Bond to the very ground in prayerfulness and so gather up the coriander seed—no, I mean the heavenly manna—and go your way rejoicing!

And *it was always for immediate consumption*. Whenever you get a Divine promise, go and pray over it and use it at once. Whenever you see a duty, do it. Do not leave one single part of God's Word to lie void. If anything in the Word of God is impressed upon your mind, let it get into your very soul and let it be carried out in your practice. Eat the manna as soon as you get it and use, to God's glory, the strength derived from it.

Lastly, like the Israelites, *sometimes you will get double supplies*. There is a difference between us and the children of Israel, for we generally get a double supply *on* the Sabbath. Oh, how we ought to thank God for our Sabbaths, when the Lord is with us, or when He makes the manna to lie on the dew and we come up to His House, and go away with our omers full! Happy Sabbaths! They become the marked days of the week and we go from Sunday to Monday, and Monday to Thursday, and Thursday to Sunday, again, thanking God that the heavenly bread still comes down to meet our rising prayers and thanksgivings!

God bless you, dear Friends! May He make His Word sweeter to us every day we live! May we have good appetites to feed on it! As for you who have never known the flavor of the heavenly food, I say again, as I said a few minutes ago, may the Lord quicken you by His own life-giving Spirit, for Jesus' sake! Amen!

**EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EXODUS 16:1-5, 11-36; NUMBERS 11:1-10.**

Exodus 16:1, 2. *And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. They have been only about six weeks in the wilderness and already they are up in arms against their leaders. Remember that we have the same kind of people to deal with as Moses and Aaron had. The children of Israel were no better than any other nation and I do not think they were any worse. We may take them as a fair average of human nature, which is a discontented, rebellious thing in the best of circumstances.*

3. *And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hands of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for you have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger. They forgot all about the brick-making, the whips and the iron bondage. They remembered nothing but the fleshpots of Egypt. Ah, me, how soon, when we escape from a great trial, we forget it! The present much smaller one seems far heavier than that which is past.*

4. *Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from Heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in My Law, or no. See God's answer to man's murmuring? They send up their complaint and He promises to rain bread down from above! It is a blessed story on God's part all along—a rain of mercy for a smoke of complaining.*

5. *And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day they shall prepare that which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily. Now let us read at the 11th verse.*

11, 12. *And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying, I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. "I have heard them." God always hears. Oh, His wonderful patience! If He took no notice of the murmurers, or punished them for their wickedness, we would have no cause for wonder, but He is long-suffering, even to those who do not deserve His pity.*

12. *Speak unto them, saying, At even you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God. "There shall be no mistake about who I am. I will work this miracle in such a Godlike style and on such a Divine scale, that you shall know that I am Jehovah your God."*

13-16. *And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoarfrost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said, one to another, It is manna: for they knew not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. This is the thing which the LORD has commanded, gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man. About two pints and a half, I think. But according to some calculations, two quarts, or thereabouts. There would be more sustenance in it than in a half-quartern loaf of bread per diem—"An omer for every man."*

16-18. *According to the number of your persons; take you every man for them which are in his tents. And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did measure it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. God meant it to be so. Not every man according to his avarice, that he might save any of it, but "every man according to his eating." God took care that neither should feebleness be stinted, nor should greed have any excess.*

19-22. *And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until*

the morning and it bred worms and stank: and Moses was angry with them. And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted. And it came to pass, that on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one man: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. He had told them that it would be so, but they evidently did not accept the message that he had delivered to them as the very Word of Jehovah, their God, so that, when it was fulfilled, it struck them with wonder—and they “came and told Moses.”

23. *And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD has said.* How often could that answer be made to us! God hears our prayer and we run and say, “What a wonderful thing! God has heard my prayer!” “This is that which the Lord has said.” Is it a strange thing that what Jehovah has said is proved to be true? And is it a subject for surprise that He should keep His promise? You dishonor God when you talk after this fashion!

23. *Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the LORD.* And yet the Sabbath had not been instituted according to the Law of God, which proves that its foundation lay deeper and earlier than the promulgation of the Ten Commandments! It is bound up with the essential arrangement of time since the creation—“This is that which the Lord has said, Tomorrow is the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord.”

23-27. *Bake that which you will bake today, and churn that you will churn, and that which remains over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses said and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein. And Moses said, Eat that today for today is a Sabbath unto the LORD: today you shall not find it in the field. Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, in it there shall be none. And it came to pass, that there went out, some of the people, on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none. They might have expected it to be so, but they would not believe, and as they would not believe, they must put the Word of God to the test. But it endures the trial—it is always true! Oh, that men would, in a believing spirit, test the Word of God, instead of doing it after this skeptical fashion!*

28-31. *And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse you to keep My Commandments and My Laws? See, for that the LORD has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide you every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day. And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna. Or, “What is it?” It was something too amazing to be understood and they kept the expression of their wonderment as the name of their Bread from Heaven. When they first saw it, they exclaimed, “Man-hu?” “Manhu?” “What is it?” “What is it?” Thus it received its Hebrew name, Manna, but God called it, “Bread from Heaven.”*

31-33. *And it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey. And Moses said, This is the thing which the LORD commands, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread where with I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt. And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD,*

to be kept for your generations. This production, which would not keep a single day under ordinary circumstances, would keep for two days to supply the needs of the Sabbath—and it would keep for *generations* as a memorial of God's goodness to His chosen people during their 40 years' wanderings through the wilderness. We may be quite sure that Aaron would not have kept a stinking thing laid up before the Lord.

34-36. *As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.* Now I want you to read in the Book of Numbers. Further on in the history of the children of Israel, when the people had long been in the wilderness—the same kind of thing happened again.

Numbers 11:1. *And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD.* Interpreters cannot make out what they had to complain of. The curse of labor had been removed. They did not earn their bread with the sweat of their face, for it fell from Heaven every day. They were at no expense for clothing and though they journeyed, their feet did not swell. I suppose that they complained of the weather. It was too cold. It was too hot. It was too wet. It was too dry. They complained when they stood still—they were much too long in a place. They complained when they marched—they moved too often. In fact, they were very like ourselves! They often complained most when they had least to complain of. Discontent is chronic to our humanity and I do not believe that the poorest are the most discontented. It is often the very reverse. When a man is put in a place where he has nothing to complain of, especially if he is an Englishman, he feels quite out of place. He must have something to grumble at, something or other to be a grievance or else he is not happy. "When the people complained, it displeased the Lord."

1. *And the LORD heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp.* He could hear their first murmuring, as they were new to the wilderness—they were hungry, they were thirsty—and the Lord pitied them. But now, when there was no reason for their complaining, His fire in terrible judgment visited His people on account of their rebellion and murmuring against the goodness of God.

2-4. *And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them. And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting.* All evil seems to begin there, among "the mixed multitude," as it does among those church members who are unconverted, and among those people who try to hold with the hare and run with the hounds—those who want to be Christians and worldlings, too!

4. *And the children of Israel also wept, again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?* Even the true people of God caught the infection of the scum that was mixed with them and they fell a-weeping and said—

5. *We remember the fish which we did freely eat in Egypt; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.* Fine

stuff to remember! “Why,” you say, “you have read something before very much like that.” I am reading another record, but there is no originality in grumbling—it is always the same old thing over again. You might well suppose that I was reading in the Book of Exodus, but I am not—there are many years in between. He who sits down with a discontented hand to paint a picture will paint the same picture that he painted before. There is no originality in the murmuring, although they put in a few new touches. Before, it was the flesh pots that they remembered—now, in addition to the flesh, there are these savory vegetables—“the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic.”

6. *But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes.* Here they pour contempt upon the bread of angels, upon the Food of Heaven, upon the benison of God! Oh, what will men not complain of?

7. *And the manna was as coriander seed, and the color thereof as the color of bdellium.* A fine white color, like a pearl.

8. *And the people went about and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.* At first they thought it was like wafers made with honey. Getting more used to it, they, perhaps, described it quite as accurately, but not quite so sweetly—they said it was like fresh oil, and there is no better taste than that. Oil, by the time it comes to us, has usually a rank and rancid taste, but in the oil countries it is delicious, and he who has bread and a drop or two of oil will find himself not ill supplied with a dinner—

“The taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil.”

9. *And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.* God took care to preserve His precious gift, encasing each single particle of it within a drop of dew, which gave it freshness. And when the Grace of God comes to us encased in the dew of the Spirit, how sweet is its taste! May it be so to us whenever we feed on Christ!

10. *Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moses also was displeased.* And no wonder! Meek man as he was, they vexed his gracious spirit by their perpetual murmuring. As we read this sad story, let us, as in a glass, see ourselves—and let us deeply repent of our murmuring and complaining, and henceforth sing—

**“I will praise You every day!
Now Your anger’s turned away.”**

Perhaps our next hymn (Number 697) will help us that way.

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

WAR WITH AMALEK

NO. 712

**DELIVERED SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 23, 1866,
BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.”
Exodus 17:8.***

THERE were two great trials which the children of Israel had to endure in passing onward to the promised rest—their needs and their enemies. But I must add a third, which sprang out of these two by reason of the unbelief of their hearts. That third evil, far worse than the other two, was their sins. Probably, my Brothers and Sisters, you have found out by now that you could contentedly endure your needs, and could courageously contend with your foes if you were not weakened and hampered by your sins. A man's worst foes are those of his own household.

As for Israel's needs, I think Israel may be congratulated in having known them. For suppose they could have brought with them enough provision from Goshen, or could have been supplied by trading purveyors? They would never have been honored to feed upon the manna which dropped from Heaven! And suppose a canal had been dug for them to flow at the edge of the whole road of their march? Or that they could have found a succession of wells hard by the spots where they pitched their tents? Then they never would have drank of that marvelous Rock whose flints gushed with water, of which the Apostle tells us that it was Christ, or an eminent type of Christ.

They were gentlemen-commoners upon the bounty of Heaven—courtiers fed from the table of the King of kings! They were lifted up to eat angels' food—they were satisfied with royal dainties. In this light, they are to be congratulated for their needs, for, if they had not known hunger, nor thirst, neither had they eaten manna, nor had they drank the water from the Rock. And you, Beloved, are much in the same case. The day will come when in clearer light than this you will thank God for your needs, and be of the same mind as the Apostle, who said, “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” And again, “For when I am weak, then am I strong.”

You will thank God that your needs were the platform for His Providence to display its care upon. That the very wilderness was a gift to you because He prepared a table for you in the midst of it, and might have left you to prepare one for yourself if it had not been a desert place. As for the enemies which beset the children of Israel, I was about to say they might almost be congratulated on account of them—for, fierce as they were—they could never have had victories if they had not known battles! The enemies of Israel were but so many sheaves for Israel's victorious

sword to reap—as the wild beasts of the wood yield food to the hunter—so were the haters of Israel as a prey unto their valiant men.

Over every enemy of His people the right hand of the Lord was gloriously exalted. You, too, Brethren, you, too, will have reason to thank God for all your enemies! If your life were one of perpetual peace it is clear there could be no triumphs. If there were not campaigns of warfare, there would be no shouts of them that triumph, no trophies to hang up in the halls of memory. Oh, if we can be kept from sins! If we can be preserved from their power we may be thankful for needs and even thankful for foes when we look at them in the light of the fiery pillar of God's promised Presence. But our sins! Our sins! Our sins! What shall we do with them? If it were not for the victorious blood by which we conquer, we might lie down in despair—for who among us is, alone and unaided, a match for his sins?

This morning we thought of considering the war with Amalek as a typical representation of the experience of God's people. Our prayer is that we may speak so that those who are greatly troubled and afflicted may derive some comfort from the Truth of God advanced—and that lagging saints may be stimulated to fight the battles of their Master, lest the curse go out against them—"because they came not up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

We shall use the text three ways. First, as a picture of the experience of each individual Christian. Secondly, as a representation of the history of each separate Church. And thirdly, as a very excellent description of the history of the entire Church of the living God, from its first day even till its close.

I. First, then, we have here THE EXPERIENCE OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN. Observe the children of Israel were emancipated from bondage, and had left Egypt behind even as you and I have been rescued from our natural estate and are no longer the servants of sin. They had been redeemed by blood sprinkled upon the door posts and upon the lintel, and we, too, have had redemption applied to our souls, and have seen that God has looked upon the blood and has passed over us.

They had feasted upon the paschal lamb as we have done, for Jesus has become to us our meat and our drink, and our soul is satisfied with Him. They had been pursued by their enemies, even as we were pursued by our old sins, and they had seen these furious foes all drowned in the Red Sea, which they had passed through dry-shod. And we, too, have seen our past sins forever buried in the Red Sea of atoning blood. Our iniquities, which threatened to drive us back into the Egypt of despair, are gone forever! They sank like lead in the mighty waters, the depths have covered them—there is not one of them left.

Israel sung a new song upon the other side of the sea, and we, too, have rejoiced in God. Like Miriam we have sounded the loud timbrel of exultation and have danced with holy joy while our lips have chanted the hymn of victory—"Sing unto the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously." Many of us are now free from the yoke of sin and Satan, and as the Lord's freemen we glorify His name. Oh that all of us were in such a happy state!

The children of Israel were probably anticipating ease, forgetting that the promised land was yet many days' journey beyond them. Inexperience and childishness made them expect a continuance of uninterrupted song and feasting, and there was a time when we indulged the same foolish hopes.

We said to ourselves, "Let us be at peace, for the warfare is over. Now may we take our ease. Pharaoh is drowned, the horses and the chariots have sunk like lead in the mighty waters. No whips of the taskmaster, now, no bricks to make without straw. No more shall we be trod down by a cruel people and worn out with the labors of the brick kiln. With a high hand and a mighty arm have we been brought forth! Let us rejoice and be merry. Let us be glad all our days, and dance the desert through." That was the voice of our inexperience and folly. How soon were our budding hopes nipped by an unexpected frost! For, like Israel, we soon experienced tribulations.

Suddenly there came upon us the thirst and the hunger which only Heaven's love could supply! And when we least dreamed of it, the fierce Amalek of temptation came down like a wolf on the fold. Young Christian, do not dream that as soon as you are converted your struggle is over, but conclude that your conflict has but just begun! Some persons look upon regeneration as being the change of the old nature into a new. Experience teaches us that this is a very false description of the new birth. Conversion and regeneration do not change the old nature—that remains still the same—but we have at our new birth infused into us a *new* nature, a *new* principle.

And this new principle at once begins a contest with the old principle—therefore the Apostle tells us of the old man *and* of the new man—he speaks of the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit striving against the flesh. I do not care what the doctrinal statement of any man may be upon the subject—I am sure that the experience of the most of us will prove to a demonstration that there *are* two natures within us—that only a complex description can describe us at all. We find a company of two armies within us, and the fight goes on, and, if anything, waxes hotter every day. We do trust that the right principle grows stronger, and we hope that through Divine Grace the evil principle is weakened and mortified. But, at present, it is with most of us a very sharp contest, and were it not for Divine strength we might throw down our weapons in hopelessness.

Young Christian, you have begun a life of warfare, rest assured of that! You would never be told to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ if it were not so. You must not put that sword up into its scabbard, but rather grind it sharp and hold it always ready in your hand. Watch constantly, and pray without ceasing, for, till you get your foot upon the golden pavement of the New Jerusalem, you must wear a warrior's harness and bear a warrior's toils. Indeed, dear Friends, there was that in the camp of the children of Israel which ought to have taught them to expect trouble, for was there not a voice heard among the murmuring host, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

That croaking voice of unbelief foreboded ill. How could they expect to know peace when they doubted the God of peace? "There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked." And in proportion as the righteous are at all like the wicked, in that proportion they lose peace. The cry of unbelief in your beam and mine, when it says, "Is the Lord among us or not?" ought to warn us that we are not yet in the land of rest, but shall have to fight with many an enemy before the banner may be furled. Besides, Israel ought to have remembered that there was an ancient feud between the children of Esau and the children of Jacob, for had not Esau been supplanted by his brother?

Amalek, Duke Amalek as he was called, was a descendant of Esau and treasured up all his father's hatred and enmity towards the house of Israel. Did Israel expect to journey near to Edom and not be attacked? And do you expect, Christian, that sin shall be round about you and not assault you?—

***"Is this vain world a friend to Divine Grace,
To help you on to God?"***

If you look for friendship from a sinful world you are grievously mistaken! There is a deadly hereditary feud between the Christian and the powers of darkness. It sprang up in the Garden, in the day when God said, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her Seed," and it continues still. You must fight if you would win the crown, and your pathway to the other side of Jordan must be the pathway of an armed crusader who has to contend for every inch of the way if he is to win it.

In proceeding with the narrative we notice that they found opposition from an unexpected quarter. Ignorance may have made them reckon upon the friendliness of Amalek, for they evidently journeyed at their ease without proper precaution, presuming upon the relationship and peaceableness of the dwellers in the land. It is just where we *feel* most safe that we should be most cautious. "A man's foes are they of his own household." I do not think the Christian has so much to fear from open and avowed enemies as from those deceitful foes who claim to be his friends. Sin is never so much a Jezebel as when it paints its face with daubs of respectability and patches of innocence.

Things dubious are more dangerous than things distinctly evil. The border land between right and wrong is thronged with thieves and robbers. Beware of cutthroats, you who journey there! Even right things may easily become wrong when they carry away our hearts, and therefore we must guard against their attractions. Many people need not be much afraid of being led into drunkenness and blasphemy, for we are not likely to give way to these grosser evils—but we have far more reason to watch against *worldliness* and *pride*—for these are enemies which select the godly as their special object of attack. Take heed to your virtues, Christian, for these, when exaggerated, become your vices! Take care of the good things in which you boast, for they may furnish heat for the hatching of the vipers' eggs of pride and self-satisfaction.

Israel was assailed in a quarter which was unguarded because unlikely to be attacked. In the Book of Deuteronomy, the fifteenth chapter and the seventeenth and eighteenth verses, we find that Amalek fell upon the rear of the host. The hindmost must have seemed, to themselves, to be the most secure, for Pharaoh's host had been destroyed, and what further was there to fear? The weak and feeble came slowly on, at perfect ease, never so much as suspecting the existence of a foe. The van, I have no doubt, was kept well protected, for they knew not what hands might interrupt their onward march. But the rear, they thought, might be left exposed—and there it was the foe attacked them.

Christian, wherever you diminish your caution there will the foe be upon you! When you say to yourself, "My mountain stands firm, I shall never be moved," concerning such-and-such a thing, it is *there* that you are most likely to fall. We are strongest usually when we fancy ourselves weakest because we take the matter to God—and weakest where we dream that we are strongest because we refrain from prayer. It will be observed, I think, in most Christians' experience, that God has left them to see their weakness where they themselves reckoned that no weakness could have been perceptible. Let us, then, set a watch all around and ask the Lord to be a wall of fire around us, and a glory in the midst.

This attack of Amalek was rendered the more dangerous because it was all of a sudden. It seems that Amalek caught them in ambush and fell upon them without notice. There was no regular proclamation of war, no pitching of the battle, no sending out of skirmishers and scouts. The enemy fell upon them all of a sudden like a gang of bandits. Just so will sin do with you and me. If the devil would send me a notice when he means to tempt me, I might readily contend with him and defeat him—but this he will never do. He will not tell you whether or not tomorrow he will tempt you in your business—this is not his way of hunting for his game: "Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird."

He will, if possible, take you unawares, and before you can put on your armor his arrows will sorely wound you. We are not ignorant of his devices. Well did the Master say, "What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch!" And oh, with what vigilance, what holy diligence must you and I watch against the winding and twisting of the old serpent, who will, if possible, bite our heels or insinuate his venom into our hearts! I think I must not omit to say that this attack of Amalek, though designed for the greatest mischief, did not occur without Divine arrangement and overruling. We may be thankful that though Satan selected the most suitable season for himself, yet the Lord made his devices of no effect.

Amalek fell upon them when they were faint and weary, but the manna and the flowing Rock soon changed the face of affairs, and the novelty of this gracious supply inspired the host with unusual courage. Fresh from the feast, they had good stomach for the fray and found congenial occupation for their renewed vigor in hewing down their assailants! Satan may beset us at our weakest point—but God has a way of making us all of a sudden strong—so that in the end the attack comes at a time when we are most fitted to repel it.

Have you not observed this? If your present trial had come at another time you could not have borne it. If your present temptation had presented itself but a day before, you would have fallen a victim to it. But it came just after you had enjoyed such communion with Christ that sin had no influence over you—the charms of Jesus made you blind to all other beauties. You had had your mouth so filled with manna that you were made strong in the strength of God to put to rout the host of your foes! Brothers and Sisters, be cautious always, but be confident in God! Watch against the foe, but be thankful that there is another Watcher who foresees all the devices of the devil and who will not deliver you into his hands nor suffer you to perish.

When the assault was made, the people were commanded to exert themselves. The message was given, “Go, choose out men, and fight with Amalek.” Israel never fought with Egypt. God fought *for* them, and they held their peace. When we are in our natural state under the bondage of sin, it is of very little use for us to fight against it—the only way of escape from the reigning power of sin is through the precious blood and the working of Divine Grace. But this was a different case. The children of Israel were not under the power of Amalek—they were free men—and so are *we* no longer under the power of sin! The yoke of sin has been broken, by God’s Grace, from off our necks, and now we have to fight, not as slaves against a master, but as free men against a foe.

Moses never said to the children of Israel while they were in Egypt, “Go, fight with Pharaoh.” Not at all—it is God’s work to bring us out of Egypt and make us His people. But when we are delivered from bondage, although it is God’s work to help us, we must be active in our cause. Now that we are alive from the dead we must wrestle with principalities and powers and spiritual wickedness if we are to overcome. “Go fight,” is the command. Do not many Christians act as if the sin would be driven out of them through their *sleeping* soundly? Let them be sure that a slumbering spirit is the best friend that sin can find!

If your lusts are to be destroyed, they must be cut up root and branch by sheer force of personal exertion through Divine Grace—they are not to be blown away by languid wishes and sleepy desires. God will not relieve us of our sins as sometimes persons have diseased limbs removed while under the influence of chloroform. We shall see our sins die while our minds are thoroughly active against them and resolutely bent upon their destruction. “Go, fight with Amalek.” Greatly to be deplored is the way in which some Christians say, “Ah, well, it is my besetting sin,” or, “It is my natural temperament,” or, “It is my constitution.” Shame on you, Christian! What if it is so? Do you mean to say to your Father’s face that you have so great a love for the sin which He hates that you will harbor it and invent hiding places for it?

Why, when a sin does so easily beset you, you must muster your whole force and cry to Heaven for strength that the dangerous foe may be overcome! One sin harbored in the soul will ruin you! One sin really loved and indulged will become damning evidence against you and prove that you really do not love the Savior—for if you did you would hate every false

way. We must fight if we would overcome our sins! Spiritual fighting must be conducted on most earnest and prudent principles.

They were to choose out men. So we must choose out our ways of contending with sin. The best part of a man should be engaged in warfare with his sins. Certain sins can only be fought by the understanding. We ought, then, to sit down and deliberately look at the evil, and learn its wickedness by deliberately judging and considering its motives and its consequences. Perhaps when we clearly see what the sin is, Mr. Understanding, as Bunyan calls it, may be able to knock the brains out of it! One peculiar order of sins is only to be overcome by a speedy flight like that of the chaste Joseph. Sins of the flesh are never to be reasoned or parleyed with. There is no more reasoning with them than with the winds—understanding is nonplussed—for lust, like a hurricane of sand, blinds the eyes. We must flee! It is true valor in such a case to turn the back. “Resist the devil,” says Paul. But he does not say resist lust! He puts it thus—“Flee youthful lusts.”

When warring with the legions of unrighteousness we shall need all the best powers of our renewed nature for the conflict will be stern. Oh, Believer, you will need to bring your veterans, your pick and choice thoughts into the fight with Amalek! The faith which has endured the storm must face the foe! The love which endures all things must march to the war! It is no child’s-play to fight with sin! It needed all a Savior’s strength to tread it in the winepress when He was here on earth, and it will need all your might and more to overcome it—you will only overcome it, indeed, through the blood of the Lamb.

This makes me notice that though the men of Israel were to fight, and the chosen men were to be selected, yet they were to fight under the command of Joshua, that is, Jesus, the Savior. There is no fighting sin except under the leadership of Christ. We must fight sin with His weapons. We must see its sinfulness by the light of His sufferings—see its mischief in the sorrows of His death—see its destruction in the triumphs of His Resurrection. We must flee to the strong for strength, and seek help where God has laid it, namely, on Him that is mighty! When Jesus leads we need not be afraid. Promptly to follow Jesus is to secure a victory! His very name puts His enemies to rout! Who can withstand the terrors of His arm?

The narrative points out to us that effort, alone, is not enough. Three men are seen wending their way up the steep sides of the hill, solemnly walking along as if they had most weighty business on hand. They are seeking a point of advantage from which to gall the foe with the artillery of prayer. So mighty was the prayer of Moses that all depended upon it! The petitions of Moses defeated the enemy more than the fighting of Joshua. The edge of Moses’ prayer was more powerful than the edge of Joshua’s sword. It matters not how loudly Joshua shouts to his men unless Moses fervently cries to his God! The young soldier would as soon have left the field if the old commander had left the closet. Force and fervor, decision and devotion, valor and vehemence must join their forces—and all will be well.

You must wrestle with your sin, but the major part of the wrestling must be done *alone* in *private* with God. Prayer, like Moses, holds up the token of the Covenant before the Lord. The rod was the emblem of God's working with Moses, the symbol of God's government in Israel. Learn, O pleading Saint, to hold up the promise and the oath of God before Him! He cannot deny His own declarations. Hold up the rod of promise, and have what you will. Moses grew weary, and then his friends assisted him. When at any time your prayer flags, let faith support one hand, and let holy hope uplift the other. And prayer, seating itself upon the stone of Israel, the Rock of our salvation, will continue and prevail!

Beware of faintness in devotion! If Moses felt it who can escape? It is far easier to fight with sin in public than to pray against it in private. It is remarked that Joshua never grew weary in the *fighting*, but Moses did grow weary in the *praying*. The more spiritual an exercise, the more difficult it is for flesh and blood to maintain it. Let us cry, then, for special strength, and may the Spirit of God who helps our infirmities, as He allowed help to Moses, enable us like he to continue with our hands steady till the going down of the sun.

It is not praying today nor yet tomorrow that will win life's battle—it is praying till the going down of the sun! It is not pleading for a month, and then ceasing supplication, Christian—it is, "till the going down of the sun," till the evening of *life* is over! Until you shall come to the rising of a better sun, or to the land where they need no sun, you *must* continue to pray—

***"Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray they live."***

Let us learn, then, that there is to be action, but there must be *supplication*. We cannot expect to conquer Amalek without a combination of the two.

I will not detain you much longer over this point, only remark that where holy activity is joined with earnest supplication, the result as to our sins is absolutely sure—the enemy must be defeated. We shall put our feet upon the necks of all our sins. There is no fear of their overcoming us if we do but lay hold on Divine strength. And, if ever we overcome sin once, it should be the signal for proclaiming a general war against *all* sin. The fight and victory over Amalek brought from God's mouth the solemn declaration that there should be war with Amalek forever and ever. So must it be with you. Have you mastered one sin? Slay the next, and the next, and the next! Can you curb your temper now? Now smite your pride! Is your pride humbled? Now drive an arrow through the very liver of your sloth! And is your sloth overcome? Now seek, by Divine Grace, to strike through the neck of the next temptation.

Onward to the total destruction of every Amalekite must the child of Israel go! But notice that in the whole business the glory was given to God. No pillar was erected on that field of Israel's warfare in commemoration of *Joshua*, but an altar as a memorial to *Jehovah*. That day Israel did not lift on high the banner of Joshua, and sing of him as of the victorious Maccabaeus—

**“See, the conquering hero comes!
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums!”**

but that day it was said, “Jehovah Nissi,” the Lord is our banner, for they ascribed the glory and honor unto Him whose right hand alone had gotten to *Him* the victory! So must we do in all our successes, for if we overcome a sin and then boast of ourselves, we are overcome by sin. If looking back upon the past we say with congratulation, “God, I thank You that I am not as other men are. I thank You for this and that,” but all the while are thinking that we have much more reason to thank *ourselves*, we show that we are still with the fetters upon our wrists dragged in captivity.

I leave the point hoping that some young Christian may have received a lesson in experience. And yet I fear that we must all learn experience for ourselves, and that what is told us by others is but an idle tale. I pray that you who are beginning a new generation may not be as your father’s were, a stiff-necked people, but that you may walk before the Lord with greater holiness and smite Amalek with sterner determination than your fathers have done, that so the victory may be unto God through you.

II. In the second place, the whole narrative may be interpreted AS THE HISTORY OF ANY ONE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. I draw a distinction between the general Church and any one particular Church. In the olden times the Churches of our Lord Jesus Christ, though acknowledging one another and recognizing their unity, were distinct organizations managing their own affairs.

And here I will digress so far as to say that the only Christian unity which you and I may ever expect to see and to seek after is not the amalgamation of all Churches into one colossal scheme of government, but the *spiritual* union of all the Churches in working for the Lord—each Church exercising its discipline within its own bounds, and carrying out Christ’s commands within its own walls—but at the same time recognizing all other truly Christian Churches as being parts of the one body of Christ.

Instead of attempting to destroy all these separate Churches in order to create unity, we should build up the walls of each house so that the whole city may be compact together. Even the names which describe the varieties of our conscientious convictions are useful, and are only caviled at by a party who under the cloak of being unsectarian are more sectarian than the worst of us could even slanderously be said to be. Suppose that all the livery companies in London should give up their distinctive names, so that there should be no Goldsmiths’ Company, nor Cloth Workers, nor Merchant Tailors, nor Fishmongers, but that all should be called *citizens*? It would be a wonderful piece of policy and would singularly unite the citizens of London, would it not?

We believe that the *reverse* would be the case! The existence of the separate corporations, each with its peculiar interests to maintain, but all bound up with the prosperity of the city, help to create unity. And so the unity of the Savior’s body is preserved rather than destroyed by each Believer carrying out his convictions of the Lord’s will, and not refusing to identify himself with those who think with him, nor refusing to wear the

name which describes them. Certain sectaries cry out, "We are called Christians." "Yes, I say, and are *we* not?" Are they Brethren? So are we. Are they Christians? So are we. Do they seek to be followers of Christ? So do we.

There is the less need for some to parade the name of Christians when they know that they *are* Christians. Let us try to *live out* our Christianity rather than blazon it upon our doorposts! I am not making an unscriptural distinction when I say, first of all, I am going to regard the narrative as a picture of *a* Church, and then afterwards as a picture of the *whole* Church. In any one Church there will be—there must be, if it is a Church of God—earnest contention for the Truth of God and against error. We, as a Church have, I trust, been brought up out of Egypt and are bound together by a common deliverance. We have to fight with Amalek.

For the defense of those doctrines which we have learned and which we believe to be the Truth as it is in Jesus, we are called to fight. We are not merely to hold them as the unfaithful servant wrapped his talent in a napkin, but we are to publish what we believe to be true, and, if any contravene, we are to hold our own, or rather, hold the Master's Truth with a firm hand, and not be afraid to contend for it at all hazards! Our chief war must always be with sin—with sin in ourselves, with sin in others—with sin everywhere! This is the great point in the Christian's contention, and from this war the Believer must never cease. Attack sin in every place, and for this reason, if for no other, sin and error will always attack us!

In this particular Church I know there are many errors that are always falling upon us, and smiting some of the hindmost, the weakest and the feeblest. One opens one's eyes with astonishment, sometimes, to see what strange errors people are falling into who should know better. But when you come to remember how hindmost they were, and how much the weakest they were, it is not quite so great a marvel that they should be struck by the foe. The fact is that in such an age as this if we do not attack error, error will eat us up! And it comes to this—we must either fight sin, or sin as a fretting moth and a devouring canker will utterly devour us!

If there is not an earnest contention for the Truth of God amidst all the Church members, there will soon be defalcations on this side and defalcations on the other side. Each Church should teach its own distinctive principles with a vigorous, earnest, Scriptural dogmatism. If we do, indeed, hold the very Truth as it is in Jesus, we must fight for it valiantly, for if we do not fight Amalek, Amalek will certainly fight us and the hindmost will always be suffering and the weakest go to the wall. It is on behalf of the weaker Brethren, who are easily perverted, that we must watch and fight *perpetually*. To all Christian effort in every Church must be added unceasing *intercession*. The Christian pastor is, in some respects, comparable to Moses, for he is set apart as a leader in the band of Brethren—and as such, his business is not only to *teach* the people but to *plead* for them with God.

I wish that some of our pastors were sustained as they should be by their Aarons and their Hurs. Alas, I know many a fainting Brother whose hands are hanging down, who finds an Aaron to pull them lower still, and a Hur to depress his spirits yet more! I would take up a mourning, a lamentation, for my Brothers who toil in honorable but obscure spheres where cold neglect and chill indifference are their portion. Alas for others, in the midst of Churches torn apart with schism and polluted with heresy, whose life is one perpetual burden unto them! I would God it were far otherwise with them! I have to thank God, and under God to thank you, that so many of you act the part of Aaron and of Hur, and are willing to hold up the pastor's hands and the hands of all my other fellow laborers—the workers for Christ Jesus.

But some of you do not do it. Some of you neglect prayer in the closet for the Church's work. I hope you are not neglecting prayer on your own account—but you do not pray as you should for the Lord to advance the interests of Truth in the world. You neglect Prayer Meetings, and absent yourselves from the week-day means of Divine Grace! Brothers and Sisters, these things ought not to be! If you cannot be Moses you may be Aaron. If you cannot fight and assist Joshua, you may climb the hill and succor Moses. If you can neither teach in the classes or in the Sunday school, nor preach in the streets and so fight, you can at least be much in the *closet* and much in *prayer*!

Oh the untold benefits that come to a Christian Church from the quiet prayerful members—least known on earth but best known in Heaven! Let us have both at work. May the Lord Jesus help us to advance from strength to strength in earnest effort of every kind, and may He at the same time be our strength upon the mountain while we draw near to God's Throne in prayer.

III. But lastly, THE HISTORY OF THE WHOLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IS HERE BEFORE US AS IN A PICTURE. The sacramental host of God's elect is warring, still, on earth—Jesus Christ being the Captain of their salvation. He has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Though this is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, yet is it not incorrect to say that the Lord Jesus Christ is still at the head of His people? Hark to the shouts of war! Onward come the bands of priest-craft, hooded monks, and shaven priests with an allied host of England's silly clergy arrayed in gaudy vestments and tricked out with childish ornaments!

A fierce effort is making to restore the Romish Antichrist to his ancient seat. Now let the people of God stand fast in their ranks and let no man's heart fail him. It is true that just now in England the battle is turned against us, and unless the Lord Jesus and the eternal Joshua shall lift His sword, I know not what may become of the Church of God in this land. But let us be of good courage, and play the man!

There never was a day when Protestantism seemed to tremble more in the scales than now. The way to Rome and so the way to Hell, is paved (I suppose with good intentions) by those Anglican clergy whose vocation it seems to be to show the long-suffering patience of a Protestant country.

Here we have a national Church which has become the jackal for the lion of Rome, and we greatly need a bold voice and a strong hand to preach and publish the Old Gospel for which martyrs bled and confessors died. The Savior is, by His Spirit, still on earth! Let this cheer us! He is ever in the midst of the fight, and therefore the battle is not doubtful.

Meanwhile, what a sweet satisfaction it is to see our Lord Jesus, like a greater Moses upon the hill yonder, prevalently pleading for His people! He is better than Moses, for His hands never grow feeble. And if the prophetic hand of Jesus should grow weak, there is His priestly office, like Aaron, to bear up one hand, and His princely office, like Hur, a Prince, to bear up the other! And so the three together, Prophet, Priest, and King! He bears aloft the wonder-working rod—Israel wins the day, and Amalek is struck. O anxious Gazer! Look not at the battle so much *below*, for there you shall be enshrouded in smoke and amazed with garments rolled in blood. But lift your eyes up yonder where your Savior lives and pleads—for while He intercedes the cause of God is safe.

Let us fight as if it all depended upon *us*, but let us look up and know that all depends upon *Him*. Now by the lilies of Christian purity and by the roses of the Savior's Atonement—by the roes and by the hinds of the field—we charge you who are lovers of Jesus to do valiantly in the Holy War! For truth and righteousness, for the kingdom and crown jewels of your Master—against the harlot of Rome and the many-headed beast on which she rides—charge with dauntless courage! Those who gave your fathers to the flames and cast your grandfathers to rot in prisons—let them know that the spirit of your grandfathers still lives in you!

Let them see that there is a seed still upon earth in whose breast the Truth of God still finds a tabernacle—men who can suffer for the Truth of God—and can boldly declare it in the midst of foes! Never become cowardly and mean! Never despair! How can you? Christ at your head like Joshua, and Christ in Heaven like Moses—Christ here with the holy Gospel in His hand like a two-edged sword—and Christ there with His atoning merits like a wonder-working rod! Be strong and very courageous, and by His help, Who does valiantly, you shall yet send up the shout Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns. The Lord bless you all for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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

BOTH SIDES OF THE SHIELD

NO. 2233

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,
DECEMBER 6, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 14, 1891.**

***“Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.”
Exodus 17:8, 9.***

IN trying to understand the Truth of God we are in great danger of being one-sided. One man catches at part of a Truth of God and says, “That is it and that is the whole of it.” Another man lays hold of another side of the Truth of God and he says, “This is the whole of it” and, straightaway, there arises a contention between them. They are like the men who quarreled as to the material of which a certain shield was made. One of them said that it was a golden shield. The other was equally sure that it was a silver one, whereas it so happened that it was gold on one side and silver on the other. So they fiercely wrangled when they might very well have been agreed if they had known a little more. Most Truths of God have two sides and it is well to try to see both of them. Nearly every doctrine in the Word of God is balanced by some other doctrine and many of the differences among the people of God have arisen from the undue stress which has been laid on one aspect of the Truth while the other side has been altogether neglected. This danger very frequently besets us.

For instance, some see the Sovereignty of God and are so carried away with that sublime Truth, that they deny the responsibility of man! They thus both wrest the doctrine they do know and fight against the doctrine they do not know. Others can see the universality of the Gospel invitation and, with large hearts can urge all men to turn unto God and live—but they have never seen the specialty of this redemptive work of Christ and so fail to understand the eternal purpose of God to save His chosen people. Running away with half a Truth, they are like men that go through the wilderness wearing only one shoe—they become lame in one foot—and that makes them limp all over. It does not matter which foot it is that is lame—the man is a *cripple* if either foot is thus afflicted.

It is essential for us to hold our minds ready to receive whatever the Holy Spirit teaches—and frequently to accept Truths of God which we cannot harmonize. I have long ago given up all attempts to reconcile what

God has revealed in one part of the Bible with what He has made known in another part. If I find, in God's Word, doctrines which appear to me to be at variance with the teaching in other passages, I say to myself, "God knows where these things harmonize and if He had wanted *me* to know it, He would have told me. As He has not told me, why should I worry myself about the matter? I am not going to speculate and theorize as to where these Truths meet. Nor will I cast a bridge of gossamer across the deep gulf which I fancy I see and then trust myself to a thread that cannot bear my weight! "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are *revealed*, belong unto us and to our children forever."

One said to me, the other day, concerning two great doctrines, "How do you make these two agree?" I answered by first asking another question, "How do I make two things agree that never fell out? There is no need for me to attempt anything of the kind. These two Truths are perfectly reconcilable and as they come from God's mouth, it would be as difficult for you to show that they do not agree as it is for me to show that they do agree." God does not say, "Yes," and "No." The Lord does not blow hot and cold. If He reveals two doctrines which apparently contradict each other, yet are they both true, since both are spoken by the God who cannot lie! And if I cannot see how they can both be true, it comforts me to think that I am not asked to see it—I am expected to *believe* it—and God's Grace gives me the faith to do even that. In fact, I rather like a difficulty, for then there is an opportunity for the exercise of faith. It is glorious, when one is sailing, to come right up under the lee of a great rock and to be compelled to say, "Well, I cannot proceed any further this way." What then? Why, just let your anchor down and make a harbor of the rock, and lie there at rest while stormy winds blow.

That is what you should do with difficult doctrines—make a quiet haven of the mysterious Truth of God and let it shelter you in time of doubt or despondency! When the storm is passed, you will find that there are other ways for you to go where it is perfectly plain sailing. Seeing that the Revelation is *Divine*, there must be mysteries which *mortals* cannot understand at present. Let us comfort ourselves with our Savior's words, "What you know not now, you shall know hereafter." Some day the way will be made plain before us, but meanwhile our attitude should be that of trustful children who believe implicitly whatever their loving father tells them, whether they comprehend it or not.

In the present discourse I am going to take up two sets of Truths which are rather varied and yet are very practical. My range of thought will be extensive, but I will not wander from the incident before us. There are four things which have been suggested to my mind while meditating upon this text and its surroundings, each of which may be viewed from two standpoints. First, in this assault of Amalek on the people of God, we see *persecution in its double aspect*. Secondly, in the rod of Moses we behold *instrumentality in its double relation*. Thirdly, in the battle we observe *prudence in its double activity*. And lastly, in the leaders of the people we are

reminded of *Christ in His double capacity* as He pleads for us yonder and fights for us here.

I. First, let us look at PERSECUTION IN ITS DOUBLE ASPECT. On the one hand, notice that this attack upon Israel was Amalek's great sin, on account of which the nation was doomed to be extirpated. Because of this, God said, "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven." But, on the other hand, this assault was the result of Israel's sin, for it is significantly put after the strife of Massah and Meribah, "*Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim.*" The point is this—persecution may come to you from evil men, distinctly from them—and it may be their wicked free will which makes them assail you. But, at the same time, it may be your sin which lies at the bottom of it, and because you have erred, they have been permitted and even *appointed*, to bring trouble upon you. Let us think of these two things.

Notice well that *assaults upon us may arise from the sins of others*. It is right that we should recognize this, lest in the dark day we should become unduly discouraged. Persecution often arises because we come into conflict with wicked men, but God will judge our adversaries—He will remember His Covenant with His people and deliver us from the hand of all our enemies.

These Amalekites attacked Israel and greatly sinned in so doing, for they were the first that made war against God's people. He who had so graciously chosen and kept them, who, with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm had brought them through the Red Sea, had espoused their cause, and His Word, "Touch not My anointed, and do My Prophets no harm," had been a kind of shield to Israel in her earliest days. Though Abraham and others had, at times, gone forth to battle, nobody had fought with Israel since she had become a nation and, by mighty signs and wonders, had been delivered from the hand of Pharaoh and the bondage of Egypt. But Amalek was the first among the nations which dared to assail the chosen people of God and, therefore, a stern doom was decreed against him. He had heard what great things God had done for His people and yet he presumed to fight against them! And in so doing, he impiously lifted up his hand against Jehovah, Himself! He became the leader in this particular form of evil and thus assumed a fearful responsibility—and assured to himself a terrible judgment.

But the impiety was still worse, for Amalek went out of his way to attack Israel. The people had not come into his territory—they were a good way from it and were passing quietly by—but we read, "*Then came Amalek.*" His envy was stirred up so much that he came away from his own region to fight with Israel without any provocation. Amalek was a descendant of Esau and the hate of Esau towards Jacob so burned in the breast of Amalek towards Israel that he came a long journey in order that he might at once, without proclaiming war, fall suddenly upon the hosts of Israel. Because the attack was thus wanton, he had to suffer the stern judgment of God. Let not wicked men imagine that because God is in Heaven and they are upon the earth they can, with impunity, oppose His

people. "He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision." Woe be to the man who wantonly attacks the saints of the Most High God! Be not disquieted, O child of God, if this is your case! "Fret not yourself because of evildoers, neither be you envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb."

Moreover, Amalek in this act went forth to fight against God, Himself. It was not with Israel, alone, that he warred—he also battled with Jehovah, the God of Israel. In the words of the 16th verse, as some translate them, Amalek had laid his hands upon the Throne of God and, therefore, God laid His own hand upon the Throne and swore by His Throne that He would uproot Amalek from among the nations. It was because the opposition to the Israelites was distinctly on account of God, Himself, that, therefore, Amalek had to be cut off. Dear Brothers and Sisters, you and I may be assailed by wicked men and we may distinctly trace the whole of it to their malice and to their enmity against God, Himself, but though that may be all true, yet we must not, therefore, be, ourselves, malicious towards them. Neither must we be proud, as though we were innocent and they, alone, were guilty.

Wicked men nailed our Savior to the Cross, but His prayer for them was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Dearly Beloved, if the ungodly hate you and persecute you, avenge not yourselves, but rather give way to wrath, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, says the Lord." When you are persecuted for righteousness' sake, the Lord takes notice of it. "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute *Me*?" was the word which came from the excellent Glory to him who journeyed to Damascus, "breathing out threats and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord." When he persecuted them, he was really persecuting their Master! Be not, then, troubled if men revile you, persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for Christ's sake, but rather, "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you." Leave the issue with the Lord—the battle is His and He will, in His own time and way, overthrow all His and your adversaries.

Let us now turn our thoughts to the other aspect of this subject. The guilt of ungodly men in persecuting God's people is not inconsistent with my next statement, that *assaults upon us may also arise from our own sins*. We may have brought the evil upon ourselves and we had better look to it that there is not a sin of our own that lies at the root of what we suffer, for it was so with these people. When they had chided with Moses and murmured against God, "*Then came Amalek.*"

Israel had been quarrelling with God. Do you wonder, then, that other people quarreled with *them*? You may often read your sin in its punishment and, if you had prophetic eye enough, you might see your chastening in your offense. Many a time our severity to others is the reason for God's apparent severity with us. If we have withheld from the poor, we need not wonder if God withholds from us. And if we have been slow to

forgive, we need not marvel if we do not soon get a sense of forgiveness for ourselves. We often urge people to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us. Let me reverently say another thing—do unto *God* as you would that God should do unto you, for, “with the froward God will show Himself froward.” That ink with which we wrote the ill word, God will use in the writing down of our sentence. It was so in this case—Israel quarreled with God—and now Amalek quarrels with Israel.

They put a question about God, “Is the Lord among us, or not?”—a horrible question, since it involved a doubt as to the veracity of Moses and as to the reality of all the great wonders which were worked in Egypt and in the wilderness! And, because they questioned God, God makes it a serious question between them and Amalek—a question which, for a while, seemed to be answered favorably, for Israel prevailed. But soon it was answered unfavorably, for Amalek prevailed. The conflicting hosts sway to and fro on the battlefield—first victors, then vanquished—again conquering, then once more conquered! How will the terrible struggle end? No wonder that God puts the issue in question, when they had put Him in question! If you question God, He will soon leave you to question yourselves. I do not wonder that men say, “Have I any faith?” when they begin to doubt the very Inspiration of Scripture! What is the good of having any faith when there is nothing left for you to believe? You may well fear to build upon that Scripture whose very foundations you have undermined! If we question God, God will make our safety a question—and we shall have a stern fight for it.

Moreover, we find that Israel had uttered threats against Moses, so that he said, “They are almost ready to stone me.” Now, if they would stone the man of God, is it at all amazing that the men of the world were ready to kill them? If you go against Moses, God will send Amalek against you, for remember that God chastens His people! Though He forgives, He chastens. And He chastens all the more because He forgives. He condemns us in our consciences, that He may not condemn us at the Judgement Seat. He afflicts us *here*, that we may not be destroyed with the world at the end! Now is the day of the Believer’s *chastisement* for his benefit. By-and-by will be the time of the unbeliever’s *punishment* which shall bring him no benefit, but shall be the just reward of his evil deeds. Child of God, do you wish to receive chastisement? You have only to go into sin and you may rest assured that you will not escape the rod! If you are a bastard, you may, perhaps, sin and prosper, but if you are a true-born child of God, you cannot sin without smarting for it—

***“Did I meet no trials here,
No chastisement by the way,
Might I not, with reason, fear
I should prove a castaway?
Bastards may escape the rod,
Sunk in earthly vain delight;
But the true-born child of God
Must not, would not if he might.”***

So there is our first point. We may sometimes justly charge our afflictions upon the evil intent of ungodly men and yet, at the same time, we may have to also charge them upon ourselves. It may be equally true that we have procured them by our own slips and stumbling in the ways of the Lord, as that evil men have wickedly raised their hands against us. So, when attacks are made upon us, let us be more careful to search our own hearts and examine our own lives, than to condemn the faults of other men. To their God they will have to render their own account.

II. In the second place, let us think of INSTRUMENTALITY IN ITS DOUBLE RELATION. Here, again, another contrast is to be found in the text and its connection. If you will notice, in the fifth verse, God says to Moses, "Take with you of the elders of Israel; and *your rod*, with which you smote the river." But when Moses talks about the rod, in the ninth verse, which forms our text, he says, "Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with *the rod of God* in my hand." In both verses it is the same rod which is spoken of. God calls it the rod of Moses. Moses calls it the rod of God and both these expressions are true. I want you to remember that. The first is true—it is the rod of Moses—that is the *human* side. And in this connection it is sometimes called the rod of Moses and sometimes the rod of *Aaron*. But the *Divine* side is just as noticeable and then it is called the rod of God. With reference to the instrumentality which God is pleased to use, we must thus remember its twofold nature and look on both sides of the shield.

One side is that God *calls it the rod of Moses and so honors Moses*. Wherever there is an opportunity of doing honor to the faith of His own servants, God is never slow to use it! He is a King who delights to give glory to His warriors when they behave themselves bravely in the heat of battle. It gives Him pleasure to knight them on the field and let them know that they have done well. At the end He will say to those who have been valiant for His cause, "Well done, good and faithful servants." Even here He gives His chosen a foretaste of that full approval which will make their Heaven complete. God is not afraid of spoiling His people by saying a good word about them. You remember the story of the man who had a good wife and one said to him, "Why, she is worth her weight in gold." "Yes," he said, "she is worth a Gibraltar rock in gold, but I never tell her that. You know that it is necessary to maintain discipline and if I were to tell her how much I really value her, she would not know herself."

Well, now, that is wrong! It does people good to be told how highly we value them. There is many a Christian man and woman who would do better if, now and then, someone would speak a kindly word to them and let them know that they had done well. God Himself gives us an example of this, for He, here, puts honor on His servant, by saying to Moses, "*Your rod, with which you smote the river, take in your hand, and go.*" Moses was the instrument whom God used against Pharaoh and though his rod was, in itself, only a common stick, yet it was Moses who used the rod and it was really that rod with which he smote the river. God actually did use him and it is not God's way to use a man and then say nothing about

it. God ascribes to Moses what Moses really did! We must never despise the instrumentality which God uses. The tendency of our nature is to run to the other extreme and to rest in instrumentality. We often need to remember that word, “Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.” But in trying to avoid that rock, we must not run on the other and slight all instrumentality. God will have His servants esteemed and, if He puts honor upon them, we cannot be wrong if He also honors them.

Moreover, it really was the rod of Moses and would not so well have fitted any other hand. God does not put into a position of influence a man unfit for the post. Even Moses did not work wonders with the rod until he had renounced the riches of Egypt and borne the burden of life in the wilderness. There was a fitness in the fact of the rod being in the hand of such a man. He had no rod when, in his fleshly energy, he slew the Egyptian whom he found oppressing the Hebrew slave. Had it then been in his hand, what sad havoc he might have made! But now he used it as God directed. In fact, the rod was the symbol of his authority and that authority was not bestowed upon him until he was qualified to exercise it! Thus, in a very real sense, it was the rod of Moses. In addition to this, it was the *faith* of Moses which gave power to his rod—he, himself, was the conductor of the Divine energy. Had the rod been wielded by another man, self-appointed and lacking the confidence which Moses had come to possess in God, it would have been simply a powerless stick. But because of his authority and because of his faith, it was right to call it, “the rod of Moses.” When a man is evidently used of God, let us be quick to recognize the special qualities which render him worthy to be used, and let us esteem him very highly in love for his work’s sake. Thus we see that God calls the almond branch, which did such wonders in Egypt and at the Red Sea, the rod of Moses.

On the other hand, *Moses calls it the rod of God and so honors God.* He whom God uses, gives God the praise, for God is *always* the source of our strength. And if any work is done that is worth doing, unto Him must be ascribed all the glory! It was not in his own might that Moses turned the waters of the Nile into blood and caused the fish to die. It was not by any power inherent in himself that he made the dust of Egypt to live and become a terrible plague to the people. It was not by any human magic that Moses divided the Red Sea and made a way for the ransomed nation to march through its depths. No one knew better than he that the instrument that branded the breast of the Red Sea and left a dry mark where it fell, was the rod of God, not man’s! It is He, alone, that does great wonders, and unto His name be all the praise! “*Non nobis, Domine,*” must always be our Psalm of adoration unto Jehovah—“Not unto us, O Lord; not unto us, but unto Your name, give glory.”

Let us learn, from these words of Moses, that instrumentality is not to be decried or despised, for God uses it. But the *instrument* must never be allowed to usurp the place of God, for it must be always remembered that it is *God* who uses it. The axe must not exalt itself against him that cuts

with it, but, when there are trees to be felled, it would be folly to throw the axe away! The net must not be made a god that we may sacrifice to it, but it would be idle to go fishing without a net! Use your agencies and your instrumentalities to the very fullest extent, but understand that it is *God* that works *in* you, and God that works *by* you, if anything is accomplished that is worthy of record.

Thus I have given you two sets of things in which it is easy enough to blunder if you shut one of your eyes, or if you only look at them in one light—first, the persecution of God’s people and, secondly, the instrumentality used in God’s service.

III. And now, for a third thing. Behold, in this incident, PRUDENCE IN ITS DOUBLE ACTIVITY. You have that in the text. Moses said unto Joshua, “Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek.” To which Joshua might have replied, “Yes, I will gladly do that, and you will go, too, Moses, and fight, will you not?” No, no, he will not! “Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” You see, as Oliver Cromwell would have put it, prudence trusts in God and keeps its powder dry. Prudence prays with Moses while it fights with Joshua. In like manner, in the activities of our holy faith, we must learn to balance work and worship, prayer for victory and conflict with the enemy. In the case before us, we see that *the means are not neglected*. Moses did not call all the people to pray when it was time for fighting! He prayed, but at the same time he set the battle in array. This is true wisdom, for, “faith without works is dead.” We cannot expect to have souls saved if we pray and never preach! We cannot expect to have our children saved if we only pray for them night and morning, and never speak to them about eternal matters, and do not instruct them in the things of God. The *means* must not be neglected!

Observe how Moses prepared to fight the Amalekites. He said to Joshua, “*Choose us out men.*” He did not lose sight of the necessity of having the most fit warriors because his trust was in God. If someone, seeing only one side of the question, had come to him, and said, “The battle is the Lord’s, why do you want to pick out men? Will not one man do as well as another?” Moses would probably have replied, “These Amalekites are mighty warriors. Take *chosen* men—men that are able-bodied—men that are expert in war, the choicest men you can find, and go to war with Amalek. We shall need our best men to overcome such a foe. Choose us out men.”

This is a rule without exception when you go to work for Christ—bring forth the best of everything that you have—your best thought, your best knowledge, your best ability! Let the Church always see to it that she tries to get the best men she can to fight the battles of the Lord. It is a mistake to suppose that just anybody will do for Christian work. Christ may use whom He wills, even the weakest things and the things that are despised—but as for us, we must always look to that which is most adapted to the work, most suitable for it, always hearkening to the words of Moses to Joshua, “Choose us out men.”

The leader was also chosen—"Moses said unto *Joshua*." He did not pick up the first youth that he met and say to him, "Go and fight these Amalekites," but he took the man whom God had fitted for the post of leader in the war, even Joshua, and said to him, "Go out and fight with Amalek." It is well for us, in carrying on the work and warfare for God, to rally round those whom God has qualified to be leaders. Means are not to be neglected, nor may God's work be done in a slovenly style. Choose you out men and let the leader of them be a choice man, the man of God's choice.

The time for the battle was also chosen. "*Tomorrow* I will stand on the top of the hill." Why not tonight, Moses? These Amalekites have just been falling upon you. Why not fight them at once? Well, because the people were not ready. It would take a little time to get the fighting men in order. Tomorrow was quite soon enough. Besides, Moses felt by instinct that he would fight these children of the wilderness best when he could see them—not by night, when they knew the way better than he did—but by daylight. To those of you who earnestly desire to serve God, I would say—Do not be in too great a hurry, lest your indiscreet zeal should bring disaster upon you. "He that believes shall not make haste." Choose the best time! Serve God wisely. Go about the work as if all depended upon you—and then trust in God, knowing that all depends upon Him! Use the same foresight, the same judgment, the same care that you would use if it were solely your own work. And then, when you have done that, fall back upon God, feeling that all your care and all your foresight will be in vain unless He stretches forth His hand to help and to ensure success!

Note, again, that the battle was most real. Moses did not say, "Choose you out men and go and drive Amalek away like a flock of sheep." No, but, "Go out and *fight with Amalek*." Believe me, Brothers and Sisters, we make a great mistake if we think that this world is to be conquered for Christ without mighty efforts. Some talk as if the expenditure of a few pounds and the going forth of a few men will end the whole war. It will do nothing of the sort! If nations are to be subdued to Christ, His Church must exert all her power. All her power without Him is *nothing*, but if He chooses to use her power, He will have the whole of it brought into use before He gives the blessing! "Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek." When the battle began, it was no child's play! It was a hand-to-hand conflict, a struggle for life or death, and the end of it was that, "Joshua vanquished Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword." Not merely by *praying*, but, "with the edge of the sword." Moses on the hilltop is doing his part by holding up the rod—but you must have Joshua down below with the sharp edge of the sword, or else Amalek will laugh at the prayers of Moses! I should like to have this rule written on every man's mind, that if he is to serve God, and get a blessing from God, he must have both the prayer of Moses and the sword of Joshua!

But, on the other hand, in this battle, *reliance on God is not neglected*. Moses ascends the hill holding up his banner—and that banner is the rod of God. The staff on which God's servant had been accustomed to lean, God had blessed, and made it to be a scepter, the sign of His royal Pres-

ence and a wonder-working thing in the land! Moses holds this up. The banner is the rod of God and the banner-bearer is the chosen servant of God. Everything on Israel's side is of *God*—Moses and Joshua are ordained of God and the rod chosen of Moses is, at the same time, the rod of God! This is held up where all the people can see it and every warrior, as he turns his eyes, can behold that rod of God which had worked such wonders before, still held aloft above the conflicting armies! When Moses' hands are heavy, the symbol of God's Presence need not be lowered, for Aaron and Hur are at hand to hold up his arms. Israel is continually reminded of the interest of God in the battle against Amalek. The rod in the hand of Moses seems to say, "God is fighting for you! God's servant is holding up the appointed standard!" Undoubtedly that assurance must have largely aided them to go through the battle with a brave heart. The meaning of it would be clear—"Fight, but trust. War with Amalek with the edge of the sword, but prevail over Amalek by prevailing with God in prayer."

Unfortunately, in our work for God, we generally fall into one of two blunders. Either we get a lot of machinery and think that we shall accomplish everything by that, or else we are like some whom I have known, who have confided so much in prayer that they have done nothing but pray! Prayer is a downright mockery if it does not lead us into the practical use of means likely to promote the ends for which we pray. I have known friends take medicine when they have been ill and never pray about their sickness. There are some others who pray about their sickness, but never take the proper medicine. They are *both* wrong! You must have Joshua and you must have Moses, too, in the time of trial! Go before God with your sickness, but if there is an appointed means that has been made useful to others, use it, for God will bless you by the use of means.

Try to see two sides of a thing. Do not trust exclusively to either one or the other. It is a very heinous fault to trust the means without God, but, though it is a much smaller fault to trust in God and not use the means, yet still it *is* a fault. Practical prudence will lead you to do both. It gives to Joshua his sword, that he may make it red with the blood of the enemy and it gives to Moses his rod, that he may go with it up to the top of the hill and hold it up there in the sight of the people—that all may know that the battle is the Lord's—and that He *will* deliver the enemy into their hands. God make you wise in these things and enable you to use both the rod of God and the sword of man!

IV. I have to speak of one other Truth and then I am done. Behold here, in a wondrous type, CHRIST IN HIS TWOFOLD CAPACITY. Christ is represented to us here as Moses on the hill, pleading, and as Joshua in the valley, fighting!

Learn, first, that *Christ is pleading for us*. He is not here. He is risen and He has ascended to the right hand of God, even the Father, and there He is making intercession for His people. It is because He intercedes for us that we win the victory! Cannot your faith's eyes see Him now, on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in His hand, with all power given to

Him in Heaven and in earth, pleading with authority before the great Throne of Jehovah? Here is the secret of our strength! He never fails. He never needs to sit down upon a stone, nor does He need any to hold up His hands because they grow weary. No, blessed be His name, He pleads and prevails from generation to generation—and will continue to do so until He shall descend from Heaven a second time to complete the victory of His people! In His mediation is our confidence.

But, then, do not forget that *He is also warring for us*. He is here, though I have just said that He is not here. In one sense He is gone and in another sense He remains. On the very eve of His departure, He said, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” And His promise is forever true, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.” So, though He has gone into Glory, He is yet here in a *spiritual* sense by the Holy Spirit—He is His Lieutenant, who takes the Kingdom and presides over it, and works in it on behalf of King Jesus. He is that “other Comforter” whom the Lord Jesus promised to send to His disciples. And so, though Christ has ascended, that blessed Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, has taken His place and, by the Holy Spirit, Christ is still here! We need not pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out. He never will be poured out, again, since He was once poured out at Pentecost and is still here! You may very properly ask to be baptized into the Holy Spirit if you desire to know His power to the fullest and you may go down into His influences till you are immersed therein, but how can we ask that the Spirit should again be poured out, when He has not gone back to Heaven? He came down once and here He stays. “He shall abide with you forever.” This is the dispensation of the Holy Spirit and, in Him, Christ is always with us, our greater Joshua, fighting for the people whom He will one day lead into the Promised Land, the heavenly Canaan!

I think that I see our Joshua now, sword in hand, chasing our adversaries. And I turn my eyes upward and see our Moses, rod in hand, pleading for His people. Let us see Him in both capacities and thank God that Christ is All—not one type of the Law, but all the types—not one of the ceremonials, but all the ceremonials, and all the shadows melting into one great substance! Glory be to His name! Believe in Christ in Heaven and trust Him with your prayers! Believe in Christ on earth—range yourself on His side and rest assured that no foe will be able to stand against Him! He is on the battlefield, today, and in the thickest of the fray! When His own people are driven back and His adversaries begin to rejoice, friends and foes, alike, shall yet prove the power of His almighty arm! “Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O most Mighty, with Your glory and Your majesty; and in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall teach You terrible things.”—

***“Fight for Yourself, O Jesus, fight,
The travail of Your soul regain.”***

So, you see that though two things may look contradictory, they are often both really true, and are both different sides of one shield. Try, then, to always see both sides of every Truth of God revealed in the Scriptures.

Divine Truths often resemble tramcars which travel upon two lines of iron, and yet the two lines make but one tramway. The lines are parallel and do not touch each other. How could the car travel if they did? This is the Truth of God—it is but one Truth—but it has two sides which run parallel to each other. Do not try to join them, nor take them up and make them cross each other, but travel along them till you come to the great terminus above.

God bless you, if you are His people! If not, all is wrong. Oh, may you now trust the living Christ! He is here, ready to hear your cry for mercy! He is there in Glory, ready to plead your cause. He waits to be gracious to sinners here below. He waits in Heaven till His enemies shall be made His footstool. May you bow before the silver scepter of His mercy, that you may not be broken in pieces by the iron rod of His justice—and may the Lord be with you all! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Exodus 17.*
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—686, 665, 664.**

TO THE READERS OF MY SERMONS:

DEAR FRIENDS—I had much enjoyment in preaching the sermon of this week and I trust the same will be the case with its readers. The lessons are rather wide in their range, but they serve as illustrations of the great fact that there are two sides to most questions, and that progress in the Truth of God is along two fixed lines which cannot be made to meet according to human judgment, but are, nevertheless, each of them laid down by Revelation upon the same basis. We believe in the Sovereignty of God *and* in the responsibility of man—and while we conceive that everything is fixed by Divine decree, we perceive that man is a free and self-contained moral agent! We no longer ask, “How can these things be?”—we make inscrutable mysteries into footstools for faith to kneel upon!

The hour of your friend’s death is appointed and the length of his illness—and yet you will pray for the prolonging of his life and the restoration of his health—and your prayer will be answered!

May the Lord deal graciously with all my readers! So prays
Your hearty friend,

C. H. Spurgeon,

Mentone, November 28, 1891.

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THE WAR OF TRUTH

NO. 112

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JANUARY 11, 1857,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

“And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hands.”
Exodus 17:9.

THE children of Israel were led out of Egypt with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. They were conducted into the vast howling wilderness where there were few, if any, permanent abodes of men. For some time they pursued their march in solitude, discovering wells and other traces of a nomadic population but not meeting with any to disturb their loneliness. But it appears that then, as now, there were wandering tribes who, like the Bedouin Arabs, wandered to and fro through that very country which the people of Israel were now treading with their feet. These people, excited by the hope of spoil, fell suddenly upon the rear of the children of Israel, smote the hindmost of them in a most cowardly manner, took their spoil and then swiftly retreated. Gathering strength and courage from this successful foray, they then dared to attack the whole host of Israel which at that time must have amounted to two or three millions souls who had been brought out of Egypt and fed by miracle in the wilderness. This time Israel was not to be surprised, for Moses had said unto Joshua—“Choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” Moses proposed leading with God in order that every blow struck with the sword might be made doubly powerful by the mighty assistance of God. We are told that a great victory was achieved. The Amalekites were put to the rout and because of their unprovoked attack upon the children of Israel, they were condemned to extermination, for we find it written thus—“Write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under Heaven. And Moses built an altar and called the name of it Jehovah Nissi. For he said, Because the Lord has sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

Now, Beloved, this scene of warfare is not recorded in Scripture as an interesting circumstance to amuse the lover of history—it is written for

our edification. For we remember the text which says—“Whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our profit.” There is some profit to be derived from this—and we believe a peculiar profit, too, since God was pleased to make this the first writing commanded by Divine authority as a record for generations to come. We think that the journeys of the children of Israel furnish us with many emblems of the journey of God’s Church through the world. And we believe that this fight with Amalek is a metaphor and an emblem of that constant and daily fight which all God’s people must carry on with sins without and sins within. This morning I shall more particularly confine myself to *sin without*. I shall speak of the great battle which at the present moment is being waged for God and for His Truth against the enemies of the Cross of Christ. I shall endeavor, first, to make a few remarks upon *the war itself*. Then to review *the authorized method of warfare*, which is twofold—hard blows and hard prayers. And then I shall finish by *stirring up God’s Church* to great and earnest diligence in the warfare for God and for His Truth.

I. First, then, we shall make some remarks upon THE GREAT WARFARE which we think is typified by the contest between the children of Israel and Amalek.

First of all, note that this crusade, this sacred, holy war of which I speak, is not with men but with Satan and with error. “We wrestle not with flesh and blood.” Christians are not at war with any man that walks the earth. We are at war with infidelity, but the persons of infidels we love and pray for. We are at warfare with any heresy, but we have no enmity against heretics. We are opposed to and cry war to the knife with everything that opposes God and His Truth—but towards every man we would still endeavor to carry out the holy maxim, “Love your enemies, do good to them who hate you.” The Christian soldier has no gun and no sword, for he fights not with men. It is with “spiritual wickedness in high places” that he fights and with other principalities and powers than with those that sit on thrones and hold scepters in their hands. I have marked, however, that some Christians—and it is a feeling to which all of us are prone—are very apt to make Christ’s war a war of flesh and blood instead of a war with wrong and spiritual wickedness. Have you ever noticed in religious controversies how men will become bitter with each other? Have you noticed that they make personal remarks and abuse each other? What is that but forgetting what Christ’s war is? We are not fighting against men! We are fighting *for* men rather than *against* them. We are fighting for God and His Truth against error and against sin—but not against men. Woe, woe, to the Christian who forgets this sacred canon of warfare! Touch not the persons of men but smite their sin with a

stout heart and with strong arm. Slay both the little ones and the great! Let nothing be spared that is against God and His Truth—but we have no war with the persons of poor mistaken men! We hate Rome even as we abhor Hell, yet for her votaries we always pray! Idolatry and infidelity we fiercely denounce, but the men who debase themselves by either of them are the objects not of wrath, but pity! We fight not against the men, but against the things which we consider in God's sight to be wrong! Let us always make that distinction, otherwise the conflict with Christ's Church will be degraded into a mere battle of brute force and garments rolled in blood. And so the world will again be an Aceldama—a field of blood. It is this mistake which has nailed martyrs to the stake and cast confessors into prison—because their opponents could not distinguish between the imaginary error and the man, while they spoke stoutly against the seeming error. In their ignorant bigotry, they felt that they must also persecute the man, which they need not and ought not to have done. I will never be afraid to speak my mind with all the Saxon words I can get together—I am not afraid of saying hard things against the devil and against what the devil teaches. But with every man in the wide world I am friends—nor is there one living with whom I am at enmity for a moment any more than with the babe that has just been brought into the world! We must hate error. We must abhor falsehood. But we must not hate men, for God's warfare is against SIN. May God help us to always make that distinction!

But now let us observe that the warfare which the Christian carries on, may be said for his encouragement, to be a most *righteous* warfare. In every other conflict in which men have engaged, there have been two opinions. Some have said the war was right and some have said it was wrong. But in regard to the sacred war in which all Believers have been engaged, there has been only one opinion among right-minded men. When the ancient priest stirred up the Crusaders to the fight, he made them shout *Deus vult—God wills it*. And we may far more truly say the same. A war against falsehood, a war against sin is God's war! It is a war which commends itself to every Christian, seeing he is quite certain that he has the seal of God's approval when he goes to wage war against God's enemies. Beloved, we have no doubt whatever, when we lift up our voices like a trumpet against sin, that our warfare is justified by the eternal laws of God's Justice. Would to God that every war had so just and true an excuse as the war which God wages with Amalek—with sin in the world!

Let us remember, again, that it is a war of the *greatest importance*. In other wars it is sometimes said—"Britons! Fight for your hearths and

your homes, for your wives and for your children—fight and repel the foe!” But in this war it is not merely for our hearths and for our homes, for our wives and for our children—it is for something more than this! It is not against them that kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But it is a fight for souls, for eternity—against those who would plunge man into eternal Hell! It is a fight for God, for the deliverance of men’s souls from wrath to come. It is a war which ought, indeed, to be commenced—to be followed up and carried out in spirit by the whole army of God’s elect—seeing that no war can be more important! The instrumental salvation of men is above all things—the highest objective to which we can attain! And the routing of the foes of the Truth of God is a victory beyond all things to be desired! Religion must be the foundation of every blessing which society can hope to enjoy. Little as men think it, religion has much to do with our liberty, our happiness and our comfort. England would not have been what it now is if it had not been for her religion. And in that hour when she shall forsake her God, her glory shall have fallen and “Ichabod” shall be written upon her banners!

In that day when the Gospel shall be silenced, when our ministers shall cease to preach, when the Bible shall be chained. In that day—God forbid it should ever come to pass—in that day England may write herself among the dead, for she will have fallen since God will have forsaken her! In that day she will have cast off her allegiance to Him. Christians, in this fight for right you are fighting for your nation, for your liberties, your happiness and your peace! For unless religion—the religion of Heaven—is maintained, these will most certainly be destroyed!

Let us reflect, in the next place, that we are fighting with insidious and very *powerful* foes in this great warfare for God and Christ. Let me again make the remark that while speaking of certain characters I am not speaking of the *men* but of their *errors*. At this time we have peculiar difficulties in the great contest for Truth—peculiar because very few appreciate them. We have enemies of all classes and all of them far wider awake than we are. The infidel has his eyes wide open—he is spreading his doctrines everywhere. And while we think—good easy men, that surely our greatness is ripening—frost is nipping many of our fair shoots. Unless we awaken, God help us! In almost every place infidelity seems to have a great sway. Not the bold bragging infidelity of Tom Payne, but a more polite and moderate infidelity. Not that which slays religion with a bludgeon, but that which seeks to poison it with a small dose and goes its way and says it has not hurt public morals. Everywhere this is increasing. I fear that the great mass of our population are imbued with an

infidel spirit. Then we have more to fear than some of us suppose, from Rome. Not from Rome openly, from that we have little to fear. God has given to the people of England such a bold Protestant spirit that any open innovation from the Pope of Rome would be instantly repelled! But I mean the Romanism that has crept into the Church of England under the name of Puseyism. That has increased everywhere! They are beginning to light candles on the altar, which is only a prelude to those greater lights with which they would consume our Protestantism. Oh, that there were men who would unmask them! We have much to fear from them.

But I would not care one whit for that if it were not for something which is even worse. We have to deal with a spirit—I know not what to call it—unless I call it a spirit of moderatism in the pulpits of Protestant Churches! Men have begun to rub off the rough edges of the Truth of God, to give up the Doctrines of Luther and Zwingli and Calvin and to endeavor to accommodate them to polished tastes. You might go into a Roman Catholic Chapel, nowadays, and hear as good a sermon from a Popish priest as you hear in many cases from a Protestant minister—because he does not touch disputed points, or bring out the angular parts of our Protestant religion! Mark, too—in the great majority of our books, what a dislike there is to sound Doctrine! The writers seem to fancy that the Truth of God is of no more value than error—that as for the Doctrines we preach, it cannot matter what they are. They still hold that—

“He can’t be wrong whose life is in the right.”

There is creeping into the pulpits of Baptists and every other denomination a lethargy and coldness and with that a sort of nullification of all the Truth of God! While they, for the most part, preach but little notable error, *the Truth* itself is uttered in so minute a form, that no one detects it and in so ambiguous a style, that no one is struck with it. So far as man can do it, God’s arrows are blunted and the edge of His sword is turned in the day of battle! Men do not hear the Truth as they used to. The velvet mouth is succeeding to the velvet cushion and the organ is the only thing in the building which gives forth a certain sound. From all such things, “good Lord deliver us!” May Heaven put an end to all this moderatism. We want and need out-and-out Truth in these perilous days! We want and need a man to speak as God tells him and care for nobody’s opinions. Oh, if we had some of the old Scotch preachers! Those Scotch preachers made kings tremble. They were no men’s servants. They were very lords, wherever they went, because each of them said, “God has given me a message. My brow is like adamant against men. I will speak what God bids me.” Like Micah, they said, “As the Lord my God lives,

whatever my God says unto me, that will I speak.” Heroes of the Truth! Soldiers of Christ, awake! Even now there are enemies. Think not that the fight is over. The great warfare of Truth waxes more hot and fierce than ever. Oh, soldiers of Christ! Take your swords from your scabbards! Stand up for God and for His Truth lest a Free Grace Gospel should be forgotten!

Let me just say, once more, concerning this war, that it is one that is to be of *perpetual duration*. Let us remember, my Beloved, that this war between right and wrong must be continued and never must cease until Truth has the victory. If you suppose that our forefathers did enough for Truth and for God and that you may be idle, you have made a great mistake! Until that day when the might with the right and the right with the might shall be, we must never sheathe our swords! Until that happy hour when Christ shall reign, when He shall be Master of all lands, when “swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks” and men shall not learn war any more—until that day the conflict is to be kept up! Let no man think we are in such a position that we have no need for watchfulness—terrible as the war has been before, it is as terrible now, though in another manner. We have not now to resist unto blood striving against sin, but we have need of as stern a power of resistance as ever was possessed by martyrs and confessors in days gone by. Brothers and Sisters, we must awake! The army must be alerted. The soldiers of the Lord must be quickened to a consciousness of their position. Now! Now, we blow the trumpet! Rush to the fight, you slumbering soldiers! Up, up, up! Let your banners wave and let your swords be taken from your scabbards. It is a day of fight—a day of war and contention!

I cannot, however, conclude this section of my discourse without remarking that it is not merely error in religion with which we have to fight, but error in *practice*. Oh Beloved, this world is still a wicked world. London is still an abominable city! We have a fine gloss everywhere—a fair exterior but, alas, within the hidden parts, sin is still dominant! This is the great city of pretense, the gaudy house of sham, the foul home of pollution! Our streets are lined with fair houses. But what have we behind them? What have we there, in the very vitals of our city? This city is a colossal culprit! It is a behemoth sinner and everywhere there are those who live in the vilest of vices and yet go unchecked and unreprieved. We live in a time when it is unfashionable to tell men of their sins and there are few who have the spirit to speak out plainly of men’s sins. When we consider the mass of female profligacy which number its votaries by tens of thousands, are we not driven to conclude that the same sin must be rife enough with *men*? And ah, that there should be need to utter it! Are

not the men who ensnare and seduce the poor unfortunates, allowed to enter society as respectable and moral? What is this but abominable hypocrisy? We are greater sinners in London than many suppose! Everything is painted over. But do you think that you can deceive God in this way? Sin is stalking through the land at a horrid pace. Iniquity still runs down our streets—covered up, it is true—not open sin, but still offensive alike to God and to good men. Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, the world is not yet good! It is filmed over, but all the while the loathsome disease lurks within! Up, again, I say, soldiers of Christ! The war against sin is not finished—it is scarcely begun!

II. But now, secondly, we have to notice, briefly, the APPOINTED MEANS OF WARFARE. When Amalek came out against Israel, God appointed two means of combating them. If He had chosen, He could have sent a wind and driven them away, or have cut off their hosts by the blast of the pestilence. But it did not so please Him, for He would put honor upon human effort and, therefore, He said to Joshua, “Choose out your men and go fight with Amalek.” It is true Joshua might, by God’s strength, have overcome the foe. But says God, “While I honor human effort, I will still make men see that God does all. Moses! Go up to yonder hill. Stand there in prayer. Hold up your rod and while the soldiers of Joshua rush into the fight, you shall plead and you shall be unitedly successful. Your prayer, O Moses, without the sword of Joshua, shall not prosper. And the sword of Joshua, without the rod of Moses, shall not be effectual.” The two ways of fighting sin are these—hard blows and hard prayers!

First, the Church must employ hard blows and hard fighting against sin. It is of no use for you to shut yourselves up in your houses and pray to God to stop sin unless you go and do something yourselves. If you pray till you are dumb, you shall never have a blessing unless you exert yourselves. Let the farmer pray for a harvest—will he ever have it unless he plows the field and then sows his seed? Let the warrior pray for victory and let his soldiers stand peacefully to be shot at—will he gain a triumph? No, there must be an active exercise of the power *given by God* or else prayer without it will be of no avail! Let us, then, Brothers and Sisters, each in our spheres, deal hard blows at the enemy! This is a fight in which all can do something who are the Lord’s people. Those who halt upon their crutches can use them for weapons of war as well as the mighty men can wield their swords! We have each an allotted work to do if we are the Lord’s Elect. Let us take care that we do it. You are a tract distributor—go on with your work—do it earnestly. You are a Sunday school teacher—go on, do not stop that blessed work—do it as unto God

and not as unto man! You are a preacher—preach as God gives you ability, remembering that He requires of no man more than He has given to him—therefore be not discouraged if you have little success—still go on! Are you like Zebulon, one that can handle the pen? Handle it wisely and you shall smite through the loins of kings! And if you can do but little, at least furnish the shot for others that you may help them in their works of faith and their labors of love.

But let us all do something for Christ. I will never believe there is a Christian in the world who cannot do something. There is not a spider hanging on the king's wall but has its errand. There is not a nettle that grows in the corner of the churchyard but has its purpose. There is not a single insect fluttering in the breeze but accomplishes some Divine decree! And I will never have it that God created any man or woman, especially any Christian, to be a blank and to be a nothing! He made you for an end. Find out what that end is—find out your niche and fill it! If it is ever so little, if it is only to be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, do something in this great battle for God and His Truth! Joshua must go out and take his men. I think I see him. He appears to have been a man of war from his youth. But what a motley host he had to choose from! Why, they were a set of *slaves*—they had never seen a sword in their lives, except in the hands of the Egyptians! They were poor, miserable creatures. They were cowards when they saw their old enemies at the Red Sea! And now their weapons were those which were washed up from the Red Sea and their regimentals were of all descriptions upon earth! Joshua, however, chooses out the strongest of them and says, “Come with me.” It was, indeed, as one called it, a “ragged regiment” with which he went to fight—and yet the ragged regiment was the victorious one! Joshua won the day against the Amalekites who had been trained to a predatory life. So, you children of God, you may know little of the tactics of warfare—your enemies may overthrow you in arguments and annihilate you in logic—but, if you are God's children, they that are with you are more than a match for your foes—you shall live to see them yet dead upon the field—only fight on with faith in God and you shall be victorious!

But this is not all. Joshua might have fought. But he would have been routed, had it not been for Moses on the brow of the hill. They were *both* necessary! Do you not see the battle? It is not on a very large scale, but it is still worthy of your earnest attention. There is Amalek, rushing to the war with discordant cries—look!—Israel is repulsing them and Amalek flees! But what is it that I notice? Now Israel turns back and flees. Now again they rally and Amalek is put to the flight! Lo, they are cut to pieces by the sword of Joshua—mighty Amalek wavers like the corn beneath the

mower's scythe. The many of Amalek are disappearing! But again! Again the battle wavers—Joshua flees—but once again he rallies his troops! And have you not observed the wondrous phenomenon? There, on the brow of the hill stands Moses. You will notice that when his hands were outstretched, Israel routed Amalek. But the moment when, from weariness, he dropped his Hands—then Amalek had a temporary victory! And when again he held up his rod, Israel routed the foe! Each time the hand of prayer fell down, victory wavered between the combatants. Do you see the venerable Intercessor? Moses, being an aged man, becomes weary from standing so many hours. They seat him upon a stone—still, arms are not iron and the hands are drooping. But look! His eyes are flashing fire and his hands are lifted up to Heaven—tears are beginning to flow down his cheeks and his short prayers are going to Heaven like so many darts which shall find their target in the ears of God! Do you see him? He is the hinge of victory—as he falters, Amalek prevails—and as he is strong, the chosen people gain the victory. Look! Aaron is holding Moses' hand for a moment—and Hur is also supporting them. And the good old man changes his hands, for the battle lasts all day long and in the hot sun it is wearisome work to hold them in one position. But see how courageously he holds them! Stiff, as though they were cut out of stone. Weary and worn, still his hands are outstretched, as if he were a statue and his friends assist his zeal. And see now, the ranks of Amalek are broken like thin clouds before a Biscay gale. They flee! They flee! Still Moses' hands are motionless. Still they fight. Still the Amalekites flee. Still Joshua prevails until, at last, all the foes lie dead on the plain and Joshua and his men return with shouts of joy!

Now this teaches that there must be prayer as well as effort. Minister! Preach on. But you shall have no success unless you pray! If you do not know how to wrestle with God on your knees you will find it hard work to wrestle with men on your feet in the pulpit. You may make efforts to do so, but you shall not be successful unless you back up your efforts with prayer! You are not so likely to fail in your efforts as in your prayers. We never read that Joshua's hand was weary with wielding the sword, but Moses' hand was weary with holding the rod. The more spiritual the duty, the more apt we are to tire of it. We could stand and preach all day, but we could not pray all day. We could go forth to see the sick all day, but we could not be in our closets all day one-half so easily! To spend a night with God in prayer would be far more difficult than to spend a night with man in preaching. Oh, take care, take care, Church of Christ, that you do not cease your prayers! Above all, I speak to my own much-loved Church, my own people. You have loved me and I have loved you—

and God has given us great success and blessed us. But mark it well—I trace all of it to *your prayers*. You have assembled together in multitudes, perfectly unparalleled, to pray for me on each Monday evening and I know I am mentioned at your family altars as one who is very dear to your hearts. But I am afraid lest you should cease your prayers. Let the world say, “Down with him.” I will stand against them all if you will pray for me! But if you cease your prayers, it is all up with me and all over with you—your prayers make us mighty. The praying legion is the thundering legion! If I might compare myself to a military commander, I would say that when I see my men rise to pray in such large numbers, I feel like Napoleon when he sent out his old guards. The battle had wavered. “There,” he said, “they go. Now the victory is sure.” Or, like our own guards, the black caps, who, wherever they went carried victory with them. The praying legion is a thundering legion everywhere! Men can stand against anything but prayer! We would pray the very gates of Hell off their hinges if we could pray as some men have done. Oh, that we had might in prayer! Do not, I beseech you, I ENTREAT YOU, do not cease to pray! Cease what you please, but do not give up that! Down on your knees—wrestle with God and verily the Lord our God will bless us! “And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.”

III. And now I am to close up with just a few remarks, in the third place, TO STIR YOU UP TO THE WARFARE. Remember, O children of God, that there are many things that should make you valiant for God and for His Truth. The first thing I will bring to your remembrance is the fact that this warfare in which you are engaged is an *hereditary* warfare. It is not one which you began, but it is one which has been handed to you from the moment when the blood of Abel cried aloud for vengeance! Each martyr who has died has passed the blood-red flag to the next and he in turn has passed it on to another. Every confessor who has been nailed to the stake to burn has lit his candle and handed it to another and said, “Take care of that!” And now here is the old “sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Remember what hands have handled the hilt. Remember what arms have wielded it! Remember how often it has “pierced to the dividing asunder of the joints and marrow.” Will you disgrace it? *Will you disgrace it?* There is the great banner—it has waved in many a breeze. Long before the flag of this, our land, was made, this flag of Christ was borne aloft. Will you stain it? *Will you stain it?* Will you not hand it to your children, still unsullied and say, “Go on, go on. We leave you the heritage of war. Go on, go on and conquer! What your fathers did, do again. Keep up the war, till time shall end”? I love my Bible because it is a Bible baptized with blood. I love it all the better because it has the

blood of Tyndal on it. I love it because it has on it the blood of John Bradford and Rowland Taylor and Hooper. I love it because it is stained with blood! I sometimes think I like the baptismal pool because that has been stained with blood and is now upon the continent, forbidden by law. I love it because I see in it the blood of men and of women who had been martyred because they loved the Truth of God. Will you not, then, stand by the banner of Truth, after such an illustrious pedigree of warriors have held it in their hands?

I would that I could have addressed you as I desired, but my voice fails me. I cannot, therefore, urge you, except by one consideration and that is the prospect of ultimate victory. It is certain that before long we shall triumph. Therefore let us not give up the fight! I have been much gratified of late to hear that there is a revival in the ranks of Christ's Church. Here and there I hear of great Evangelists who are starting up. Some have said to me, when they have mentioned their names, "What say you to them?" My answer is, "Would God that all the Lord's servants were Prophets!" Oh, that God might send thousands and thousands of men who would gather multitudes together to hear His Word! I would that the day were come when every Church and every Chapel in England were as full of souls as this and as large as this! I think the Churches are reviving. But if they are not, still victory is certain—God will still get the victory! Jehovah will triumph. Satan may dream he will, but he will not! Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, on to victory! Let the crown that is before you nerve you to the fight! To victory! To victory! And on, on, on! For God is with you! Remember the great Intercessor—Christ is on the hill and while you are in the valley He pleads and must prevail! Therefore go on and conquer for Christ's sake!

I can no longer address you, but must finish up by repeating the words with which I always like to conclude my sermons—"He that believes on the Lord Jesus and is baptized shall be saved and he that believes not shall be damned!" Oh that you would believe in Christ! Oh that God would give you faith to put your trust in Him! This is the only way of salvation. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved."

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

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

THE MEDIATOR—THE INTERPRETER

NO. 2097

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 28, 1889,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And all the people witnessed the thunder and the lightning and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking. And when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak you with us and we will hear. But let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you and that His fear may be before your faces, that you sin not.”
Exodus 20:18-20.

THE GIVING of the Law was glorious with pomp of power. The blaze of splendor was intended to impress the people with its sense of the authority of the Law, by letting them see the greatness of the Lawgiver. It was meet that with great solemnity the Law of the Most High should be proclaimed, that Israel might have a holy reverence for its commands. This terrible grandeur may also have been intended to suggest to the people the condemning force of the Law.

Not with sweet sound of harps, nor with the songs of angels was the Law given, but with an awful voice from amid a terrible burning. Not in itself is the Law condemnatory. For if there could have been life by any Law, it would have been by this Law—but by reason of man's sinfulness, the Law works wrath. And to indicate this, it was made public with accompaniments of fear and death—the battalions of Omnipotence marshaled upon the scene. The dread artillery of God, with awful salvos, adding emphasis to every syllable.

The tremendous scene at Sinai was also in some respects a prophecy, if not a rehearsal, of the Day of Judgment. If the giving of the Law, while it was yet unbroken, was attended with such a display of awe-inspiring power, what will that day be when the Lord shall, with flaming fire, take vengeance on those who have willfully broken His Law?

To us, that day at Horeb is a type of the action of the Law in our nature—thus does the Law deal with our consciences and hearts. If you have ever felt the Law spoken home to you by the Spirit of God, you have heard great thundering within. You have been forced to cry with Habakkuk, “When I heard, my belly trembled; my lips quivered at the voice: rottenness entered into my bones.” And God intended it to be so, that you might look to the flames which Moses saw and abandon forever all hope of acceptance by the works of the Law.

The glorious majesty which surrounded the institution of the Law is not, however, our subject at this time. I shall handle the text in another manner. The Lord God, in this instance, came as near to man as was possible—yes, He came nearer than man could bear. Until a Mediator was

found, the approach of God brought to man nothing but terror. Although under no great apprehension of guilt at the time—for they had only then heard the Law for the first time—yet the people removed and stood afar off and cried out, “If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die.”

God was near them in special condescension. For Moses said, “Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live?” Yet this memorable manifestation caused them alarm. Does it ever happen now that the Lord comes to His people in a way which dismays them? I think so. It is not really so, that God will fight against His people, but, to our apprehension, so it seems at certain times. Of these tempestuous manifestations of the Lord to our hearts I am going to speak at this time. And may the heavenly Comforter use it to the spiritual profit of His tried family!

Our first head is this—the Lord has ways of communing with His people which fill them with fear. But, secondly, this endears the Mediator to them. And thirdly, this Mediator teaches them to interpret wisely the Lord’s darker dealings with them. When we have thought upon these things, we shall close by saying to you that this sacred art of interpretation should be practiced by us now.

I. First, let me remind you that **THE LORD HAS WAYS OF COMMUNING WITH HIS PEOPLE WHICH FILL THEM WITH FEAR.** You must not think that the Lord always appears to His people in robes of light—sometimes He enrobes Himself in clouds and darkness. His paths drop fatness and yet He often has His way in the whirlwind.

True, He manifests Himself to us as He does not unto the world. But in the brightest of those manifestations He may make us fear as we enter into the cloud. It is not every Revelation of God which inspires the saints with joy. For in many cases it is far otherwise, even as with Daniel, who said, “I saw this great vision and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption and I retained no strength.” This experience may not have occurred to some of you. It is, however, known to many of the people of God who have had long dealings with Him. If any of you do not understand this matter, lay the sermon by till you do.

Sometimes the near approach of the Lord fills His people with apprehension and alarm. And this is sure to be the case when His coming includes a close application of the Law to their hearts. We used to talk of “Law-work” in days which are *not* past and are by moderns looked upon with contempt. And, my Brethren, our talk was not without good reason, for there is such a work and it ministers greatly to our good. Certain servants of God, who had experienced this Law-work to a very deep degree, fell into the error of regarding a marked measure of it as absolutely necessary to every child of God.

We will avoid that evil, for it was a grievous cause of uncharitableness. But we will not conceal the fact that many souls, in coming to God and in God’s coming to them, have been made to feel a hewing and burning work

from the Law of God. The Law has rent them in pieces, because they themselves have rent in pieces. The Law has worked in them a sense of bondage, burden and despair. Even after we have fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the Gospel—after we have a full assurance that our iniquities are put away—the Lord sometimes works in us a further work of the Law in which He makes us to see its exactness, its spirituality, strictness and infinite compass.

It is no little thing to see how the Law judges the thoughts, desires and imaginations of the heart. As the plummet of the holy Law is held up, we see how out of the perpendicular we are and we are therefore distressed. Brethren, when I have carefully considered and inwardly perceived the holiness of God's Law, I have felt as though the sharp edge of a saber had been drawn across my heart and I have shivered and trembled. Though the Law did not actually cut or wound, yet its very *presence*, in all the keenness of its two edges, has made me shudder.

So pure, so just, so uncompromising is the Law of God, that when it is really understood, it makes us quail and brings us to our knees. The Law searches to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow and it is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Its excessive light strikes us, like Saul of Tarsus, to the earth and makes us cry for mercy. When you begin to judge yourself and estimate your actions by its infallible rule, you cease from boasting and are filled with self-abhorrence.

I believe it to be one of the best means to growth in humility, to be well instructed in the Law, in the force and power of it. No man knows the brightness of the Gospel till he understands the blackness of those clouds which surround the Law of the Lord. Much of the shallowness of current religion is the result of a failure to apprehend the demands of Divine Justice and a want of clear perception of the heinousness of disobedience. Let but God set up the throne of His Law in your heart and make you feel the power of that Law in any one item of your daily conduct, much more in the whole circle of your life, and you will feel as the Israelites did when they could not abide the Presence of the Most High.

The Lord also may most truly and profitably come to a man and in His coming may unveil to him the depravity of his nature. If any man could see his own heart as it is by *nature*, he would be driven mad—the sight of our disease is not to be borne unless we also see the remedy. When the Lord permits the fountains of the great deep of our depravity to be broken up, then are the tops of the hills of our self-sufficiency drowned in fear. When we see what we are capable of being, apart from Divine restraining Grace, our spirit sinks. When Believers are allowed to see how much there is still about them that is akin to Hell—when sin becomes exceeding sinful and we feel that the taint of it has defiled our whole nature—then it is that we are horrified and appalled.

What an abyss of evil is within our bosoms! Probably some of you know very little about it. I pray that you may never discover it by its painful results. But I desire that you may believe it, so as to take a firmer grip upon the *Doctrines of Grace* and exercise greater watchfulness over your hearts.

Sin which dwells in us is no enemy that we can safely despise. Even in one single member of our fallen nature, namely, the tongue, there dwells a world of iniquity—"It defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature. And it is set on fire by Hell."

What poor creatures we are! The best of men are men at the best. And, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit and the power of Divine Grace, Hell itself does not contain greater monsters of iniquity than you and I might become. Within the magazine of our hearts there is powder enough to destroy us in an instant, if Omnipotent Grace did not prevent. When this is distinctly perceived, we are troubled before the Presence of the thrice holy God. Standing before the Lord, we cry with the Prophet, "Woe is me! For I am undone. Because I am a man of unclean lips." This is a true manifestation of God. But it is by no means a cause of comfort to us.

The Lord may also come to us and lead us, by His light, to a discovery of actual sin in our life. We may sit here and think ourselves very good. But if so, we are in the dark. If a beam of Divine light is now entering our mind, our apprehension of our own character will be changed. The sins of a single day, if fully known in all their bearings, would drive us to despair, apart from the infinite Grace of God. Apart from the Divine plan of justifying the ungodly in Christ Jesus, any one hour would shut us up in Hell.

Beloved, think a minute of your omissions during the past week, how much you might have done and ought to have done, which you have not done. It is on the side of omission that some of us are most vulnerable. Honestly looking down upon our lives, we may be able to say that we do not know of any overt offense against God and for this we bless the Divine Grace. But when we come to think of what we have left *undone*, we feel like a traveler who, when crossing a glacier, suddenly sees an unfathomable crevasse opening just before him and widening fast as he looks down into its blue depths of frozen death.

Oh the sadness of that confession, "We have left undone the things which we ought to have done!" There is as much of lamentation in it as in the cry which precedes it—"We have done those things which we ought not to have done." When we think of all our omissions, how can we stand before the Lord?

Think again of your failure in what you *have* done. Brethren, you have prayed this week. I only refer to this week. For seven days are more than enough for my purpose. You have prayed—you have kept your regular times for devotion. But *how* have you prayed? With fervency? With careful consideration? With concentrated mind? Brethren, have you prayed with *faith*? With *importunity*? Surely, each of these questions must cut into you like a whip of wire. If you are as I am, you cannot answer to this examination without wincing. Why, even in the one matter of prayer, the sins of our holy things may shrivel us up before the burning eye of the Lord, who searches the heart.

Your Bible also—you have read your Bible—of course you have. But with what attention? With what *intention*? With what devout belief? With what resolve to feel its force and obey its commands? Have we not sinned

against this Book enough to cast us into the lowest Hell in the space of four-and-twenty hours?

When the Lord begins to take a man to pieces by coming near to him, another matter will often trouble him and that is his falseness, even where, in a measure, he is sincere. You prayed in public and expressed most proper emotions and desires. But were they really your own emotions and desires, or did you steal the expressions of another man? You preached about the things of God—did your testimony come from your heart? Do you act in accordance therewith?

You, my Christian friend, expressed yourself strongly but, in your heart of hearts, can you justify the expression? Do we not often go further with our lips than we go with our hearts? Is not this, to some degree, hypocrisy? Must it not be very displeasing to God that we should use words towards Him which we have not weighed and which are not fully true, as we use them? O Brethren, if the Lord sets out secret sins in the light of His countenance, we too, like Israel, shall start and shrink from the presence of the Lord.

If we add to these apprehensions of our own unworthiness a sense of the Divine glory, then we cower down and hide ourselves in the dust. When a peal of thunder rends the heavens and is followed up by a crash, as if the house would fall about your ears—while flames of fire blind you with their excessive brilliance—you feel that the Lord is terrible out of His Holy Places. God's nearness has inspired you with an awe which has been shaded with dread. The one attribute of power suffices to make the strongest Believer feel that Jehovah is to be feared above all gods.

But, my Brethren, if properly apprehended, God's omniscience inspires an equal awe, while His goodness, His love and His holiness are even more overwhelming when fully realized. One might possibly stand with unblanched cheek in the presence of Divine power. But when the Lord reveals His holiness, a man might far sooner gaze into the sun than look into the face of God. Even His love is as the fire of a furnace to our ugliness. At the sight of our God we say with Job, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eyes see You. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." The nearness of God to sinful man is a killing thing and those who have known it will confess that it is so.

What, my Brethren, if, in addition to this, there should come to you a succession of alarming Providences? These Israelites not only knew that God was near but they heard the thunder, they saw the lightning, they looked into the thick darkness, they marked the mountain altogether on a smoke and by all this they were horror-stricken. Has it come to pass that the Lord has laid many blows upon His servant? Has He taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke?

What if there is one, two, three little graves in yonder cemetery? What if love and friends have forsaken you? What if your business fails you and if your health fails you also? What if your spirits sink? Oh, then, indeed, I marvel not that you are scared with forebodings of still worse calamities

and are ready to give up the ghost! You are *now* afraid because of the nearness of the great God, who is trying you.

If to this is added an apprehension of speedy death, as in the case of the Israelites, who cried, “This great fire will consume us,” then, indeed, it is difficult to remain calm and hopeful. It will be no trifle to stand before the face of the Eternal. Since Heaven and earth shall flee from Your face and rocks shall melt and stars shall fall and the moon shall be turned black as sackcloth of hair, who shall stand before You, You great and glorious One?

Thus have I spoken to you upon the fact that our God does sometimes commune with His people in a way that fills them with overwhelming dread. Let us advance to our net theme.

II. Secondly, ALL THIS ENDEARS TO US THE MEDIATOR. The Israelites turned at once to Moses. They had already murmured against him—they afterwards said, “As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.” Once they took up stones to stone him. But now they are of another mind. Terrified by the Presence of God, they cry to Moses, “Go you near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak you unto us all that the Lord Our God shall speak unto you.”

The Mediator is everything to them now. They had found out by experience the necessity for an interposer. And they had not made a mistake either, for God Himself said they had well spoken what they had said. There is in God’s esteem an urgent need for a Mediator. When we sang just now—

***“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind,”***

we did not give utterance to morbid or ungrounded fear. It is so in truth. And the next verse is accurate also—

***“But if Immanuel’s face appears,
My hope, my joy begins;
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His Grace removes my sins.”***

It is a matter of fact that we need a Mediator. And these people were driven to see it. Brethren, be sensible of your sin and you will no more attempt to approach an absolute Deity than you would walk into a volcano’s mouth. You will feel that you need a sacrifice, a propitiation, a Savior, a Mediator. Perceive the infinite difference between your nothingness and the Divine infinity and you will feel that there is no drawing near to the Eternal but by Jesus Christ.

How can we, of ourselves, draw near unto God? It is wisdom to say unto the Well-Beloved, “We pray You, stand between the Lord and us.” When your trembling is upon you, when your heart faints with awe—then you perceive how much you need an Advocate. Bless God that He has appointed one to be High Priest for you who can safely go into the thick

darkness and stand in the Presence of the Thrice Holy Majesty and represent you without fail.

Moses was well fitted to be the type of the true Mediator of the Gospel Covenant. He was himself in great favor with God, so that the Lord hearkened to his voice. Behold his dauntless courage in the Presence of God and, at the same time, his intense tenderness towards the people. Mark his faithfulness Godward as a servant over all his Master's house, and then note his self-sacrifice for Israel, so that he once said, "Blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written." He offered himself to be a sacrifice for them.

But, O Beloved, consider Jesus Christ, our Mediator. Where is the like of Him? He is man, like ourselves. In all respects a sufferer, poor, needy, knowing even the pangs of death. And therefore He can lay His hand upon us with a warm, brotherly love. But then He is also, "God over all, blessed forever," equal with the Most High, the Well-Beloved of the Father. And thus He can give His hand to the eternal God and so link our humanity with God. I feel most safe in trusting all my concerns with that dear Advocate, that Interpreter, one of a thousand. O Jesus, who can rival You?—

***"God and yet man, You are,
True God, true man, are You;
Of man and of man's earth a part,
One with us You are now."***

Into the thick darkness our Mediator went. Forth from it He came. He interprets to us the language of the Eternal and He takes our petitions up to Heaven and translates them into the tongue of the Holy One, so that God hears us and accepts us in the Well-Beloved.

I know that some of you imagine that you would believe the Gospel if God were to speak to you out of the skies. Do not wish for it. The terror of His voice would overwhelm you, but it would not convert you. The Israelites were happy with a Mediator and so will you be. If you hear not Jesus, neither would you hear, though God should thunder. A Mediator is provided. Could you, with all your wit, suggest a better Mediator than Christ? I entreat you, accept the Gospel in Christ and come to God through Him. As there is no other way, so assuredly there could be no better way.

If you had all wisdom and all power in your hands with which to make a way of acceptance with God, could you devise one more pleasant, more simple, more perfect, more adequate, more exactly what you need? Come, then, dear Heart, come at once to God in Christ. And remember, Jesus says, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." "No man comes unto the Father but by Me."

III. Now I come to my third point, upon which I would lay stress—THE MEDIATOR TEACHES US TO INTERPRET WISELY THE LORD'S DEALINGS.

Moses became an interpreter of the Lord's terrible appearance to the trembling people and he put a cheering construction upon it. You, to whom God has been speaking in a way of terror—and I know there are such here, for I have had to comfort them—you have a Mediator to explain

to you the ways of the Lord. Be ready to learn the lesson which He teaches you. It is this—"Fear not, for God is come to prove you and that His fear may be before your faces, that you sin not."

These rough dealings of God with your conscience, with your body, with your family and with your estate are not for your destruction but for your instruction—not for your killing but for your healing. As He came in tempest and thunder to teach the children of Israel, so has He come to you. If God is teaching you, He cannot mean to destroy you—the Law does not provide a schoolmaster for a convict who is to be hanged tomorrow. The discipline in God's House, however severe it may be, is a sure proof of love. We educate sons and not enemies. The Lord is teaching you what you are and what He is.

If He had meant to destroy you, He would not have showed you such things as these. If a criminal must die, we do not put him through a rehearsal of the pains of death. No, no, there would be no use in such a course—it would be sheer cruelty, and depend upon it, the Lord will not show you His own greatness merely to make you miserable, nor reveal to you your own ruin merely to drive you to despair. He does not afflict willingly. Infinite love dictates the apparent severity with which He afflicts your conscience. You are being judged here, that you may not be judged hereafter with the ungodly. You are now made to abhor yourself, that the Lord may not abhor you in the day of the judgment of the wicked.

The Mediator here explains to trembling Israel that God had come to test them. We all need testing, do we not? Would you like to cross a railway bridge if it were reported to you that it had never been tested by a train? When the first Exhibition was built, I remember how they marched troops along the galleries to test them. Do you not desire to have your hope for eternity tested? The Lord draws near to us in ways which inspire our fears because He would test us.

What is the result of the test? Do you not feel your own weakness? Does not this drive you to the strong for strength? You feel your own sinfulness. And you fly to the Lord Jesus for righteousness. Testing has a practically good effect in slaying self-confidence and driving you to put your confidence where God would have it rest.

When God came to these people in clouds and storm, it was to impress them, to put depth into their thought and feeling. We are filled with fear at times on purpose that our religion may not be a flimsy, superficial thing. Our tendency is to slur spiritual work. We easily get to be trifling and careless. Levity in religion is an easily besetting sin with many. But when we are made to see the plague of our heart and the awful majesty of God, that fear of the Lord which endures forever soon drives out the triflers from the temple.

Fear plows deep and then faith sows and love reaps. But godly fear must lead the way. Godly fear makes prayer to be fervent prayer. It makes the hearing of the Word to be quite another thing from listening to the chatter of the world's vanity. Holy awe of God makes preaching to me to be the burden of the Lord. It may be light work to your men of genius and

learning. But to me it is life and death work. Often have I thought that I would rather take a whipping with a cat-o'-nine-tails than preach again. How can I answer for it at the Last Great Day unless I am faithful? "Who is sufficient for these things?"

When I have felt the dread responsibility of souls which may be lost or saved by the word they hear, the fact that God is so near has made my flesh creep and made me wish that I had never ventured on so bold a life-work. How shall I give an honorable account of my commission at last? Beloved, God, by such apprehensions as these, is deepening in us the work of His Grace, making us more alive to our position and better fitting us for it. It is all in love that He allows our awe of Him to darken into dread, our sense of weakness to deepen into faintness of heart.

Above all, it is explained to us that the dealings of the Lord are meant to keep us from sin. What does David say? "Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept Your word." Does not Hezekiah tell us that by these things men live and in all these things is the life of our spirit? We are so worldly that we need our nest to be stirred to keep us on the wing. Six days we are taken up with business, mixing with those who despise heavenly things. And we should come to think lightly of them, too, were it not that God comes to us in His dread majesty and makes us think, consider and fear.

This holy trembling drives off the shams which else would grow over us like mold on decaying matter. Our inward tempests clear the air and keep us from stagnation and the pestilence which breeds in it. God's love will not suffer us to settle down in mere pretenses and so glide into gross sins—He empties us from vessel to vessel and thus discovers our evil sediment and cleanses us from it.

Many people, when they hear a sermon, say, "How did you enjoy it?" If you always *enjoy* sermons, the minister is not a good steward. He is not acting wisely who deals out nothing but sweets. God's people need that the Word should at times be medicine to them and we do not enjoy medicine. The Word is as fire and the iron does not like the fire. Yet it is needful to its melting. It is as a hammer and the rock does not love the hammer. Yet it is needful to its breaking. Experiences which are painful may be therefore all the more profitable. That which makes us hate sin is a thing to be valued.

I pray you, after this manner read the dispensations of God. When He chides He loves. When He chastens He shows fatherly affection. And when He scourges He receives into peculiar familiarity. Do not, therefore, run away from a chastening God. If fear drives you away, let faith draw you near. He means your highest good. Never doubt it. Steadfastly believe that His heart loves even if His face frowns.

IV. I close by asking you to PRACTICE THIS ART OF SACRED INTERPRETATION. When your Lord speaks with you in thunder and writes bitter things against you, by faith read between the lines, and after the example of Moses, the mediator, put a comfortable construction upon rough words.

Faith sees many reasons for refusing to read as fear would suggest—here is one of them. When the Lord spoke to these people with the voice of trumpet and thunder, He did not speak in anger after all, but in love. For His first words set the keynote. Here they are—“I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.” What gracious words! What happy memories they arouse! What loving kindnesses they record!

It is true that your Lord has taken your wife or your child away, or has made you sick, or has tried your soul by the hidings of His face. But it is not an *enemy* who has done this. It is your God who has done it, even the same God that delivered you from the power of sin and made you free in Christ Jesus. The Lord of Love has chastened you and chastened you in love. Learn Job’s philosophy and say from your heart, “The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

Think of His former loving kindness. Consider what He has done for you through the Lord Jesus and His death on your behalf. He brought you out of the bondage of your natural depravity and He set you free from the Pharaoh of your evil passions. He has washed you from your sins and brought you through the Red Sea of your fears by His own right hand. Can you not believe that He means well for you? What if He does speak roughly—may He not do so without being distrusted? He is the same God—He changes not and therefore you are not consumed—can you not rely on His faithful love?

Will you take good from His hand and will you not also take evil? He who humbles us is our Covenant God, bound to us by His promise and His oath. He gave His Son to redeem us—He cannot now do us a displeasure—let Him do as seems Him good. We give Him *carte blanche* to do what He wills, for His love is beyond dispute. He died that I might live, and now it is impossible for Him to mean anything other than good towards me.

I sometimes think that if I never had a gleam of love from His face again, I would live on that one text—“God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” Salvation from sin and death and Hell should make us interpret every trying revelation and every afflicting Providence and every painful experience by the key of His ancient love. And so interpreted, every sorrowful line is sweetened.

Notice next, dear Friends, in your process of interpretation, that God cannot mean to destroy us, since this would be contrary to His Word. He has said, “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” Can “everlasting life” be destroyed or die? How, then, could it be “everlasting life”? Can God declare it everlasting and yet end it? He has given us everlasting life in His dear Son. And, what is more, He has laid up that life in Christ. For “your life is hid with Christ in God.” Can He destroy the life which He has hid in His own immortal Son? Does not Jesus say, “Because I live you shall live also?”

What are you afraid of, then? God cannot destroy you. He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." What if He speaks severely to you? It is that He may deliver you from sinning. Will you not bless Him? He will not curse you, for He has blessed you in His Son and, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Bow yourself and take from your Father's hand whatever He appoints.

Remember, that you are not, after all, in the same condition as Israel at the foot of Horeb. Though I have drawn a sort of parallel this morning, yet there remains a wonderful difference. "You are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest." You are not come to a terrible voice which mortal ears could not endure. "But you are come unto mount Zion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel."

You are come to the land of pardon, peace and promise—you are in the home of life, love and liberty. You have come to the Lord of adoption, acceptance and glory. Wherefore, do not, I pray you, construe the acts and dealings of God with your soul after the mean and slavish manner which unbelief suggests to you. No, believe your God in the teeth of all you hear, or see, or feel. The Lord has come to prove you, to put His fear before your face and to keep you from sin—therefore look for sweet fruit from the bitter tree of your present grief, and flee not from your God.

Again, dear Friend, here is our great comfort—we have a Mediator. When God deals with you by the Law, or by His rod, or by His searching Spirit, you are apt to say, "How can I endure His hand?" Hide behind the Mediator. Let Jesus be your shield, even as He is the Lord's Anointed. Beseech the Lord God not to look on *you* as you are in yourself but to see you in *Christ Jesus*. Say—

***"Him and then the sinner see,
Look through Jesus' wounds on me."***

Take care that *you* look through Jesus' wounds on God. And if you do, you will see in Him infinite love and boundless kindness. The Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is unutterable love. "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him." And when they fear Him most, His pity goes out to them in streams of tenderness. If your God uses the knife on you, it is to cut out a deadly cancer. If your God breaks you and grinds you, it is to get away your bran and make you as the fine flour of the meat-offering. He may seem to slay you but by this He makes you live. Though He slays you, still trust in Him.

Never believe anything which would militate against the truth of His love, or the wisdom or the tenderness of it. Cling to Him when He frowns. The closer you can cling, the less you will feel the blows of His hand when He chastens. A faith which believes when it smarts will soon have done with the rod. If you will have nothing but good to say of God, He will take you out of the fire, for it is evident that you do not need more of it. A full and firm belief in God when He seems to be against us is a grand mark of

sanctification. To be able to spell out “love” when it is written in cruciform characters, shows a high state of spiritual education.

And now, Beloved, if you can take the Lord in this way, from now on and forever believing in His love and never staggering through unbelief, you will glorify your God and get good to yourself in every way. If you believe, then you will be strong. For faith is the backbone of the spiritual man. If you believe, you will love, and love is the very heart of the spiritual man. Believing and loving, you will endure with patience, and your patience shall be a crown to you. Believing, loving and enduring, you shall become equipped for every holy service and in that service you shall acquire more and more of likeness to your Lord, till when you have endured to the full, you shall be in all points a Brother of Him who is the First-born.

Like He, you shall be able to go into the thick darkness and have that communion with God which only they can know who have felt the consuming fire passing through them again and again and burning up that corruption of the flesh which makes God to be a terror to men. Like our Mediator, may we be made to plead with God for men and with men for God. May we go up into the mount and see God and eat and drink. And then come down with faces shining with the heavenly light. God give us thus to have a Mediator, to interpret our God through a Mediator, and then to grow like our Mediator by the work of His own Spirit.

I have said a great deal that must be very terrible to ungodly men, since it even tries the holiest. O my Hearers, if you are unconverted, I do not suppose that the terrors of the Lord, even though they make you fear, will work any lasting good in you. For I remember that those very people who trembled at Sinai were found, in a very few weeks, madly dancing before a golden calf and saying, “These are your gods, O Israel, that brought you up out of Egypt.”

Fear alone will work no saving or sanctifying effect on the heart. It plows but it does not sow. In the child of God, mixed with faith, fear becomes a holy tonic, a salutary medicine. But, as for you who have cause for fear, there is something else for you. Flee to the Mediator, trust in Christ Jesus, who stands between man and God, look unto Him at once, and looking you shall live. To our adorable Mediator be glory forever and ever. Amen and Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—

Exodus 20:18-21; Deuteronomy 5.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—92 (PART 1), 433, 281

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

EARS BORED TO THE DOORPOST

NO. 3337

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 1913.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 16, 1866.

“And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free. Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”
Exodus 21:5, 6.

THE Jewish people had lived in Egypt and had been themselves slaves. They had, doubtless, learned much of art and science in Egypt, but they also learned many sinful manners and customs—and among the rest they learned the habit of slavery. When God found them and led them out into the wilderness to make a nation of them, He did not give them a code of laws such as He would give to us in the light of this dispensation, but He gave them laws as Jesus Christ, Himself, says, “according to the hardness of their heart.” He gave them a law suitable to the state in which they were. Their ceremonial laws, their political and economic laws, were very far from being perfect and were never intended to be regarded as perfect. They were not meant for a nation of men as much as for a nation of children. The nation was then in its infancy and statutes and ordinances were very much in accordance with the infancy of the people. Slavery, for instance, was not forbidden. It was not even forbidden for a Hebrew to hold his brother Hebrew in bondage! But, though it was not forbidden, yet it was so hedged about and limited with many regulations and conditions that it must have become very difficult, if not almost impossible.

In the first place, every Hebrew who held his brother in bondage was compelled to treat him as he treated himself. There was a law that his food and his raiment should be precisely similar to that of his master. Then, again, at the end of six full years, the man must go free, whatever might be the price at which he was purchased for six years. And when he went free, he was not to go out empty, but his master was required to give him something out of his barn, out of the winepress and out of the flock. In fact, it was a sort of apprenticeship of one man to another, with

the condition that the servant should be treated as one of the family and was to be set up in business when he left. So much did the Jews feel that this was not a very profitable kind of thing, that it got to be a proverb that, "A Hebrew who buys a Hebrew servant, does not buy a servant, but he buys a master." So the thing became very seldom practiced at all and this, perhaps, was the best way of dealing with the evil. They would have kicked against a law which forbade slavery altogether, but they submitted to this one which regulated it—and so the thing was kept in such check that it must of necessity fall. That, however, again, was not at all a rule for you or for me. It was like the putting away of a wife with a writing of divorcement, of which the Savior said that "Moses allowed it because of the hardness of their hearts." It was not right in itself, but it was simply endured because of the low moral state of the people when they came as a herd of slaves from Egypt's brick kilns, not having been trained and educated to understand the value of liberty as you and I happily have been in these later times for these many years.

But observe that sometimes the Hebrew servant, although free to go where he liked at the end of six years, would not go. He had married one of his master's female servants. He had children and, besides, was so attached to his master and his family that he preferred to stay with him. Now, as God did not wish the people to love slavery, but would teach them the nobility of liberty, He made this ordinance that a man's wish to remain in servitude should be attested by a somewhat painful rite—and He made it a law that this rite should be administered to him in public before the judges.

Lest a master should say the servant wished to be with him and then bored his ears by force—and so ensured his perpetual service—it was commanded that this boring of the ears should always be done in public before witnesses and the judges. An awl was taken and the man's ears were fastened to the doorpost—and then after he must forever remain, though he might change his mind, since he had once deliberately chosen to serve his master.

Leaving, however, this outline of the meaning of this picturesque ceremony, I now want to use the passage in its spiritual meaning.

First, I shall have to remind you that in Psalm 40 *our Savior speaks of Himself as having had His ears bored*. Did you notice the expression in the 40th Psalm, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire: *My ears have You opened*." The Hebrew says, "*My ears have You dug*." Christ's ears, then, were pierced so that He might from His own voluntary choice be the Servant of God forevermore. When I have spoken a little upon that, I want to speak of *some professed servants of God who have never had their ears bored*. And then, in the third place, *I want to go into this business of boring some of your ears*—and I have no doubt there are many

here who have had their ears bored in days gone by and who will be glad to renew the rite afresh tonight by consecrating themselves again unto their Master. First, we have to speak—

I. OF THE SAVIOR HAVING HAD HIS EARS BORED.

One would not have dared to apply this to Him if He had not instructed His servant David, by the Holy Spirit, to apply it to Himself. “My ears,” says He, “have You opened.” Oh, wonder of wonders! That the King of kings should thus come to be the Servant of servants—that He who is “God over all, blessed forever” and who thinks it not robbery to be equal with God—should take upon Himself the form of a Servant and be made in the likeness of sinful flesh and, being found in fashion as a Man, should become obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross! Our Savior’s first appearance, here, was in the servant’s place! He was the son of a carpenter and He was laid in a manger. When He comes forward to begin His active life at thirty—that life is one continual service. They would have made Him a king, but He preferred to remain the Servant of all. You see this from the first to the last of His earthly life, for even in view of the Cross, He took a towel and girded Himself, and then a basin and, showing He was still a servant, He washed His disciples’ feet. He was still a Servant when He was led as a sheep to the slaughter. And as the last act of obedience that was possible, He bows His head and says, “Not My will, but Yours be done,” and He yielded up the ghost. Our blessed Lord might have broken free from the servitude whenever He pleased. He claims this for Himself, that He was voluntarily a Servant and especially that His obedience and Sacrifice unto death were His absolutely willing offering. He says of His life, “No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself: I have power to lay down My life, and I have power to take it up again.” He could have gone out free if He would. That host that came to seize Him in the Garden would have been no more able to take Him than the Philistines were able to take Samson when he snapped the green withes. He did but speak to them and they fell backwards—and this proved how powerful He was to have delivered Himself. And when He was before Pilate, He might even then have escaped. Did He not say, “You could have had no power against Me if it had not been given you from above”? And even on the Cross when they said, “If He is the Son of God, let Him come down from the Cross,” He might have leaped in one tremendous stride into the midst of His foes and smitten them with lightning flashes from those fearful eyes! He might have shaken the earth and removed Heaven rather than have died, if so it had been His will. But He had given His ears to be bored and He remained His Father’s Servant even unto death! Willingly, without a struggle, this Victim was laid upon the altar. Like the passive lamb, which starts not

even when the knife is thrust into it, the Savior gave Himself as a Sacrifice for the sins of the people—and to the fullest extent was the Servant of His Father!

This is very delightful for us to think upon, especially when we remember that *our Savior still wears the print of the opened ear*. Still is He in Heaven and there—

***“Looks like a Lamb that has been slain
And wears His priesthood still.”***

For your sake He does not hold His peace and for Jerusalem’s sake He does not rest, but still continues to accomplish His Father’s good pleasure, still interceding for His saints and waiting until the time shall come when He shall take His great power and reign and the number of His elect shall be accomplished. Still is He the Servant of God and the Friend of man—His opened hands, His side and feet bearing the marks that like the scars in the ears of the Jewish slave made Him to be recognized as a slave forever!

So is He our Friend and His Father’s Servant eternally. Brothers and Sisters, there is this to be said which ought to endear the Savior to you and to me—that *His only motive for so having His ears bored, or dug, was His love*. What says the servant in the text? “I love my master: I love my wife: I love my children.” This is what our Servant-Savior said. He loved His God—never man loved God as Christ did! As God, He loved infinitely Him who is One with Him, even His Father. And as perfect Man, He loved God with all His heart, soul and strength. He had voluntarily become a Servant and He loved His Master. And He also loved His spouse. Oh, there was little in her to love, but He thought much of her and does think much of her now! The Church is His bride and He sees her—

***“Not as she stood in Adam’s fall,
When sin and ruin covered all,
But as she’ll stand another day—
Fairer than sun’s meridian ray.”***

He saw His Character reflected in her. He saw her as what she is to be when she is perfect through the Spirit and He loved her, oh, with such a perfect, all-constraining love, and said—

***“For her I’ll go
Through all the depths of sin and woe,
And on the Cross will even dare
The dreadful weight of wrath to bear.”***

He found His spouse in the mire. He brought her up out of it. He found her in poverty and He became poor for her sake. He found her in rags and He stripped Himself to clothe her. He found her condemned and He was condemned for her acquittal. He found her on earth—He came from Heaven to bring her up from earth that she might be with Him where He is in Heaven forever. Then I love the last word, “I love my children.” That

may be laid hold of by each one of us, for as He is “The Everlasting Father,” every Believer may regard himself or herself as His child! And He loves each one. He could die, but He could not deny His people! He could leave Heaven, but could never abandon us! He could not be content to be glorified unless His people were, too! He dared not be satisfied to sit upon a throne while they might be cast into Hell, but He could come down and bring them near to Himself by stooping as low as they had become! Let us bless Him! Let us, tonight, extol this blessed Servant of God in our hearts, who though King of kings had His ears opened because He loved His master, He loved His spouse, and He loved His children—and has, therefore, become their Servant forever!

Now I thought, when I was turning over this in my mind, that perhaps some troubled conscience here might get comfort out of it, that perhaps someone might say, “Oh, well, if Jesus Christ has so given Himself up to be the Savior of sinners that He will never give up the work, then perhaps He will save me.” You know what is meant by nailing the flag to the mast. It means that the man means to fight it out. Jesus Christ has, so to speak, nailed the flag of mercy to the masthead and He will fight it out with the devil! Yes, He will save the meanest of His people! He has given Himself up, heart and soul, to be the Savior of sinners! It is His business and He will never give it up. So long as there is an unsaved sinner, Christ will be seeking him! So long as this world has sinners in it, it will be a hunting ground for this glorious Nimrod, this “mighty hunter before the Lord,” who has come to seek out poor wondering souls and bring them to Himself. “He is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for us.” His ears being bored for this work, the work of intercession will be His as long as He lives! We will now pass from that to remark, in the second place—

II. THAT EVERY GENUINE SERVANT OF GOD IS ONE WHO WOULD NOT ACCEPT HIS LIBERTY, OR LEAVE OFF BEING THE SERVANT OF GOD, IF HE COULD.

He has had his ears bored and he means to be, and must be, a servant of God as long as he lives. There are, however, a great many professors of whom we are going to speak to you, and a great many other men in the world, too, who have never had their ears bored to be God’s servants at all. There are some, in the first place, who hate the very thought of being God’s *servant*. “Serve God!” says one, “who is He? Who is Jehovah that I should obey Him?” The mass of men are of Pharaoh’s mind—they are not going to obey God—they think they are their own masters. I do not believe there ever was a man who was his own master, but that every man has a master of some kind or other. How many men whose master is money—and if money orders them to do anything, however

outrageous—they would at once do it to obtain the money. No matter how dirty the trick might be, there are some men who would do it if it promised profit to them and they would not be found out. No matter though they were to half starve themselves and lose comfort in their houses, how many there are who would suffer much if they might but gain gold! Mammon is their master. Some take *pleasure* to be their master—and pleasure is a very hard master, indeed, for the pleasures of sin, though they seem to be cheap, are always dearly bought. A man never gets his penny's worth for his penny when he goes into the lusts of the flesh. There whatever he gets he has to pay back again—in his own flesh and bones shall he have to pay back every drachma of joy that he wins by unhallowed lust! But, oh, how men will bend their necks to many gods and many lords rather than serve Jehovah! As for the God that made them, many never think of Him and many never think of Him but to mention His name in ribald jest or oath, or to despise His authority. Ah, Sinner, God knows how to deal with such as you are, for if you sin with Pharaoh, you shall perish with Pharaoh! If you say, "I will not serve God," God will take care to make you a monument of His Justice, if you will not be a trophy of His Grace. "For this purpose," said He to Pharaoh, "have I raised you up, that I might show My power in you," and if God does not show His love in you, He will show His power by bringing you down one of these days, till you shall loathe the things you once loved and curse the day in which you dared to think yourselves wiser than God! When a creature is out at elbows with its creator, depend upon it, it is also out at elbows with itself. Things can never go along well when the wheel of our hearts does not cog with the wheel of God's heart. We must come down to God's will if we would rise up to happiness and peace!

But there are many who profess to be the servants of God who have not had their ears bored—and this is proved by the fact that some of them go out from us after a time. Oh, it is a thing the most vexatious beneath the skies—it is the plague of the Church and it is the minister's nightmare and specter—that there should be so many hollow professors who, nevertheless, are able to maintain a whitewashed profession for so many years! Truly, it is but a poor test of Christianity to walk uprightly in appearance for 10 or even 20 years, for there are inventions nowadays by which counterfeits may be brought to such perfection that you can scarcely tell them from the pure gold!

Through many a crucible will the false thing go and not betray its falseness until at last there comes a discovering hour—and then woe to the Church of God, but, most of all, woe to the man who duped that Church and misled those who trusted him! I am inclined to say to everyone of you, "Do not be too sure—search yourself." I am inclined, most of all, to say it to myself. I do so like to read a sermon sometimes—for I do

not often *hear* one—that seems to give me a ring down upon the counter. You know I am often afraid of the jingle, whether it will sound like true gold or not, but it is a good thing to get a ring. A preacher with a soft and mealy mouth is but of little service to a Christian, but the man who sets forth plain and unpalatable Truths of God often comforts him because he is able to say, “Well, I can stand this searching Truth,” and then he goes away satisfied that things are right with God. Try yourselves, dear Friends! Try yourselves constantly and ask the Lord to search you, and come afresh to the blood of Jesus lest you should be mistaken! There was an Apostle who turned out to be a Judas—many a minister has been a deceiver! Many a Church member and many a Church officer, too, has been nothing but a whitewashed sepulcher full of bones and rottenness! Take care, dear Hearer, lest your lot should be the same!

Then there are others who make a very fine profession, who are even worse, if possible, than these, for *they are religious and irreligious, too*. I know some of you can carry a hymnbook in your pockets and a songbook, too. You can come here, I daresay, on Sunday evenings and drop in on a weeknight, but there are some other places of very doubtful reputation which know you, too! Oh, yes, I know some who have said, “Well, I must give up my seat there because I cannot give up the other, for the preacher does give it to me so severely.”

Ah, how the preacher wishes he could give it to you still more severely, for of all classes of men that should excite our sorrow and our pity, it is the men who are able to stand the Gospel and yet go on in their sins! Why, I have known professors in the country who would stand up in the singing pew, or sit near, who did not know what time of night they came home on Saturday from market! And we know there are not a few people who can drink the cup of the Lord and deep draughts of the cup of the devil, too, who will sing well when they are here, but will also sing a roaring good song at a public dinner. Jolly fellows! They are not very particular, but they had better be, or else they will find their lot at last particularly severe, for surely none shall so deserve the wrath of God as those who knew better! As I heard a poor soul say the other day, “Ah, Sir, I sinned in the light,” and said it, I hope, with a broken heart, too. I thought, “What a thing to be forced to say!” Some of you, I hope, will be forced to say it. You have sinned knowing that you were sinning—sinned knowing the penalty of sin, sinned knowing something about better things, too! Yet have you gone like a dog to his vomit—vomited on Sunday, but have gone back to it on Monday—and like the sow that was washed on the Sabbath have gone back to wallow in the mire for six days! God have mercy upon some of you! I would that in His mercy He would come and make you keep close to what you profess—and to be no

longer halting between two opinions, but have your ears bored to be the servants of God forever—and not the slaves of sin!

I think I might make out a pretty long list of people of this sort, but I shall only mention one class. There is a great number of young men and a greater number of young women who attend this place and we are delighted to see you, dear Friends. May your numbers never grow less, for we love you and we desire to bless God that so many of you have been converted! But I am always fearful about some of you young people, lest your religion should in any way depend upon any sort of excitement, or your happening to be connected with a really quickened and living Church, or happening to be in such an earnest class, as some of our classes are, or because you attend upon the ministry in this place. I do know some who, when they get away into the country, where perhaps the minister is not much more than half alive, they grow cold and, by-and-by, and especially if they happen to get married, then the zeal which once fired them quite subsides. Now remember that the religion that depends upon any man, whoever he may be, or upon any woman, or that rests at all upon the company you have to keep, is not genuine religion at all! For our religion ought to maintain and will maintain its vitality, at least, if not its constant health, be you cast into whatever circumstances you may be. Some of you young women, perhaps, are going out to service where there are ungodly masters. Now you will know whether your Grace is real or not. Some of you young men are apprenticed, or obliged to go into situations where you are constantly in the midst of those who chaff you and jeer you—now we shall know what stuff you are made of! Now we shall see whether you are only stony-ground hearers, or whether there is real depth of earth in you, for if there is no depth of earth, you will soon wither away! But if your conversion was a genuine one, we defy all the wicked men on earth and all the devils in Hell to destroy it, for what God has done, none can undo! But what comes from man and not from the Spirit of God, depend upon it, will be of no use to you in the Day of Judgment.

Thus there are many servants in God's House who are only there a little while and who go out at the end of their six years. But now I am going to talk to—

III. THOSE WHO HAVE HAD THEIR EARS BORED.

First, *I shall bring out the awls.* Genuine Christians have had their ears bored, that is to say, they are such Christians that they could not be anything else. And when they have their choice—and they do have it every day, for temptation gives them many an opportunity—they will not go out, but are obliged to remain the servants of God. I am now going to tell you some of the awls with which God has bored their ears. Christian, you have had your ears bored. What was one of the things that did it? I

think it was *past mercies*. Forsake the Lord Jesus Christ? How can I? He loved me! He bought me—

***“He saw me ruined in the Fall,
He loved me, notwithstanding all.”***

Some of us were in great distress and Christ gave us peace—we were ready to destroy ourselves and He gave us joy and liberty—and since that day He has led us into green pastures and beside still waters and we have been a happy people! He has supplied us night and day! We cannot leave Him! We cannot leave Him!

He has bored our ears, His Infinite Mercy in the past has fastened us to His doorpost. We dare not leave Him—we would not if we could! Do not many of you feel that the verse of the hymn is the real truth—

***“A very wretch, Lord, I should prove,
Had I no love to You”?***

We owe our gracious Master so much that our ears are bored and we cannot leave Him. Imagine you see Ignatius standing up in the amphitheater when he is told that if he will curse Christ, he shall escape, and he says, “How can I curse Him? He has never done me a displeasure!” So with us! He has never done us ill. We cannot but speak well of His name and cling to Him!

But I think our ears are bored, also, *by a sense of our present helplessness*. You say, “Leave Him? Ah, but where to?” We cannot do without Him! You tell us to do without Christ? As well tell the helpless baby that is hanging on its mother’s breast to leave its mother! And we are more helpless than that infant—there is nothing but death lying before us if we leave Him. Brothers and Sisters, what could you and I do the next hour if we had no Savior to depend upon, none of His Grace to keep us from sin, and none of His love to comfort us in affliction? We would be utterly ruined! Leave Him? Ask the young husband to forsake his spouse! Ask the man who has hunted after gold and won it to throw away his treasure! But as for us, we cannot leave our Spouse, nor forsake our Divine Treasure. Now have we found contentment! Now have we got all that our souls can wish for! Never, Jesus, never can we leave You! What could we do without You?—

***“To whom or where could we go
If we should turn from You?”***

That is the second awl with which to bore our ears.

Then there is a third awl. Leave Him? How can we, *when we think about the future*? We expect between now and getting to Heaven a great many storms—and what could we do without the Captain and Pilot of souls? We know there are many giants to fight and dragons to kill—and what could we do without our soul’s Greatheart to be our champion and protector? There are many arrows flying and what could we do without

our shield? We could not leave our castle and high tower, or, if we did, what might not happen to us? Every ill certainly would, if we forsook Him. The past, the present and the future are all like sharp awls to bore right through our ears and fasten us to Christ!

Leave Him? Why, *the joy He gives us, the satisfaction, the delight*, make it impossible for us to leave Him! Can a bride forget her ornaments? Can it be possible for a nation to put away its gods? Can a mother forget her child? All these things might be, but we cannot forget Him who is All-in-All to us! Once get the flavor of Christ in your mouth and you will never be satisfied with anything short of Him! Drink water from the well of Bethlehem and you will be like David—you will say of it again and again—“Oh, that one would give me a drink of the water of the well.” “My heart is fixed,” said David, “my heart is fixed.” Some people’s hearts are flying about like feathers in the air. Whichever way the wind blows, they blow, but “my heart is fixed.” Christ has driven four nails right through it and fastened it to His Cross! The spear has gone through my inmost soul—I have no other love but He—and I must love Him as long as I live.” Thus can the Christian speak! The joy which Jesus gives him is the awl that has pierced his ears!

And then, dear Friends, is there not another reason, and a very strong one, namely, *our hope forever*? Leave Christ? Why, then we would have to leave Heaven and its happiness! We have great expectations. We sometimes hear of people who have “great expectations.” Yes, Believers have great expectations. We are not watching for dead men’s shoes, but we are looking for the golden sandals that they wear in the land of the living! We are not expecting the legacies of earthly relatives, but we are expecting the blessed legacy which Christ has left to all His people—to be with Him where He is! Yes, the son of poverty is expecting one of the many mansions! The child of tribulation is expecting to have every tear wiped away from his eyes! We are expecting to hear it said, “Well done, good and faithful servant—enter you into the joy of your Lord.” Give up Christ? No, the thought of Heaven bores our ears yet again. We cannot give Him up! We must still cling to Him because “we have respect unto the recompense of the reward.” Now all of these awls are sharp ones, but I do not suppose they have pierced some of you. If, however, any of you have ever felt them piercing your ears, I am sure you felt very happy while the boring was going on—and may you be pierced by them yet again and again!

Thus, then, I have shown you the awls, but I cannot pierce your ears. The text forbids me, for it says, “*the master was to pierce the servant’s ear.*” Yes, there is no man can bind a soul to Christ, but Christ Himself must do it. There is such a struggle in men’s hearts against Christ that only the High Priest who knows how to bind the Sacrifice, can ever cast the cords of love around us and to His altar bind us fast. If, dear Friends,

you are afraid of backsliding. If you are afraid you should grow cold and turn aside from your Master, bore your ears again tonight! Ask Him to open the scars afresh and let you feel it until you can have no doubt that it is there! That sweet sermon by Mr. Lewis some of you have never forgotten—on the text—“I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” May you feel that you have had the Master boring your ears.

Now, just one word upon what is to be bored, namely, *the ears*. The boring of the ears was the emblem of obedience, for it is with the ear that the servant hears. The Christian, then, will be mainly God’s servant through his ears. We hear God’s will and, therefore, do it. Some of you have ears that need a little opening, for you know some things to be your duty and you profess to be God’s servant, but you do not attend to them. Your ears, I hope, are bored, but you seem to have taken cold in them and you cannot hear the Master’s voice! Some of you, for instance, know that as Believers you ought to be baptized but yet you shrink from it. Others of you know you ought to be united with a Christian Church. “They gave themselves first to the Lord, and afterwards to the saints by the Word of God.” “He that has ears to hear, let him hear.” The obedient servant only has to hear his Master’s voice and he runs at once to do His bidding. “Oh,” you say, “but it is not *essential*, Sir.” No, I know it is not. But still, if you have a servant, you do not expect her to say that what you tell her to do is “not essential.” Try your servant Mary tonight. Tell her to do something. She does not do it. You tell her again. She does not do it and she says to you, “But, Sir, remember it is not essential!” You say to her, “I do not keep servants to argue points with me! If they will not do my bidding they must find another master.”

Mind the Lord does not say this to you, for if a thing is His will, all that you have to do is to do it, asking no questions! I never heard of an angel in Heaven asking God why he was ordered to do such-and-such a thing. They serve Him there without questioning—and so may His will be done by us on earth after the same fashion, “as it is done in Heaven.”

May you be like the high priests whose thumbs and toes were touched with blood to show that their active powers were given to the service of God. And may you also be like those whose ears were touched with blood to show that you hear the Master’s will and that your thoughtful faculties are given to the attentive observation of what His mind is, so that the hands and the feet may be guided as to what you should do!

Lastly, I want you to notice that when the ear was bored, it was *bored to the doorpost in the presence of the judges*. It was not done in secret in some back room! It was done in public with witnesses present. If this man is going to devote himself to his master, he must be brought right out to the doorpost. “Now then, your ear, Sir. The awl must be driven

right through it in the presence of spectators.” And I think consecration to Christ is not a thing to be done in secret. You who love the Lord Jesus Christ—acknowledge it! If you are His servants, wear His livery. If you are His servants, come out and profess to be so! Have your ears bored to the very doorpost, publicly, and openly avow yourselves to be on the Lord’s side. He asks it and it is no more than He deserves! “He that confesses Me before men,” He says, “Him also will I confess before My Father who is in Heaven.”

I think this man might say, “My master’s house is to be my dwelling place forever.” I know some of us seem to have had our ears bored even to the posts of this very House of Prayer! Some of you are never absent, whatever service there may be. If it were to rain, I do not know how much, I do not think it would thin this congregation much, for you love to come up to the House of God. Well, the assembling of yourselves together will always, I hope, be a means of profit to you—it is always a manifest indication of your retaining your service under the good Master! May you thus always keep close to the posts of His door and when He comes, may He find you like servants waiting at the door for their lord!

Now, are there any here tonight who would like to have their ears bored with the awls which I have mentioned? If so, I would say to them, “If your heart is right with God and you are trusting in Jesus, only, instead of making a resolution, offer a prayer and let this be the prayer—‘Lord, while I live and till I die, I desire to be Your servant to the utmost of my power. I desire to do Your will or to allow it. I give myself up without reserve or limitation. All that I am, all that I have, I give up to You. Take me from this night forth and let me not offer this prayer as a mere matter of form or hypocrisy, but may I offer it heartily and from my inmost soul. Enable me to say I *am* Your servant. Oh, God! Sanctify me, spirit, soul and body, for Your name’s sake. Amen.’”

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

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

THE EAR BORED WITH AN AWL NO. 1174

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

***“And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife,
and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master
shall bring him unto the judges;
he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost;
and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl;
and he shall serve him forever.”
Exodus 21:5, 6.***

THE slavery which existed among the ancient Jews was a very different thing from that which has disgraced humanity in modern times. And it ought also to be remembered that Moses did not institute slavery in any shape or fashion. The laws concerning it were made on purpose to repress it, to confine it within very narrow bounds and, ultimately, to put an end to it. It was like the law of divorce—Moses authored that law but he knew that the people were so deeply rooted in it that it could not be forbidden. And therefore, as Jesus tells us, Moses, because of the hardness of their hearts, suffered them to put away their wives. And so, I may say, because of the hardness of their hearts he suffered them, still, to retain persons in servitude. But he made the laws very stringent, so as almost to prevent it.

Among other repressive regulations, this was one, that when a slave ran away from his master it was contrary to law for anyone to assist in sending him back again. And with such a law as that, you can clearly see that nobody need remain a slave, since he could run away if he liked. It was nobody's business—no, it was a sin for *anybody*—to force him back again. Now, if a man can go when he likes, his slavery is a very different thing from that which still curses many parts of the earth. But the case stood thus and, sometimes persons who were insolvent, who could not pay, were compelled by the law to give their services to their creditors for a certain number of years, always limited, as you see in this case, to six.

A man who had committed theft, instead of putting the country to the expense of a prison, was sometimes fined for his theft sevenfold. And if he had no money he was placed in servitude till he had bought himself free again—an institution not altogether indefensible, I think—and having a good deal of rough justice about it. Sometimes a person who was extremely poor would sell his services for the six years, which are here prescribed, to some wealthy person who was bound to house him, clothe him and feed him. This is very much like a system which still exists in some parts of our own country, where a person's services are hired for the year, with so much nourishment to be given, and so much of wage.

Well, the law here says that if a man should have sold himself, or by insolvency should have come to be sold to his master, at the end of six

years he might go free. He was quite free to leave his master's house and go where he pleased. But it seems that the servitude was so exceedingly light and, indeed, was so much for the benefit of the person in it, that frequently men would not go free. They preferred to continue as they were, servants to their masters. Now, as it was not desirable that this should often be the case and as, if it *were* permitted oppressive masters might sometimes frighten a servant into such an agreement, the law was made that in such a case the matter must be brought before the judges.

And before them the man must say plainly—note that word—he must say it very distinctly and plainly, so that there was no doubt about it, that it really was his wish not to accept his liberty, but to remain as he was. And then, after he had stated his desire and given as his reason that he loved his master—and loved the children and the wife that he had obtained in his service—his ear was to be pierced against the door of the house. This ceremony was intended to put a little difficulty in the way, that he might hesitate and say, “No, I won't agree to that,” and so might, as was most proper, go free.

But if he agreed to that somewhat painful ceremony, and if he declared before the judges that it was his own act and deed, then he was to remain the servant of his chosen master as long as he lived. We are going to use this as a type—and get some moral out of it, by God's blessing. And the first use is this. Men are by nature the slaves of *sin*. Some are the slaves of drunkenness, some of lasciviousness, some of covetousness, some of sloth—but there are generally times in men's lives when they have an opportunity of breaking loose. There *will* happen Providential changes which take them away from old companions and so give them a little hope of liberty, or there will come times of sickness which take them away from temptation and give them opportunities for thought.

Above all, seasons will occur when conscience is set to work by the faithful preaching of the Word and when the man pulls himself up and questions his spirit thus—“Which shall it be? I have been a servant of the devil, but here is an opportunity of getting free. Shall I give up this sin? Shall I pray God to give me Divine Grace to break right away and become a new man—or shall I not?” Such a time may happen to some sinner here. I pray you, dear Friend, do not slight it, because these times may not often come. And coming but being willfully refused, they may never return to you. If you are resolved to be the slave of your passions, then your passions will, indeed, enslave you. If you are content to be a slave of the cup, you shall find that the cup will hold you by its fascinations as fast as captive in fetters of brass.

If you are willing to be the slave of unbelief and of the pleasures of the flesh, you will find that they will fasten you as with bands of steel and hold you down forever. There are times when men might get free. Their prison door is, for the moment, on the latch. “You almost persuade me to be a Christian,” cries Agrippa. Felix trembles and resolves to hear more of this matter. Many others in the same condition have been all but free—but they have deliberately preferred to remain as they were—and the re-

sult has been that *sin* has bored their ear and from that day forward they have seldom been troubled by conscience.

They have sinned with impunity. The descending scale to Hell has grown more and more rapid and they have glided down it with ever-increasing pace. Have I not seen some such, for whom I hoped better things? The evil spirit went out of them and left them for a while—and oh, if Divine Grace had come and occupied the house, that evil spirit would never have returned! But they beckoned back that evil spirit and he came with seven other devils more wicked than himself—and the last end of these once hopeful persons has become worse than the first! Slave of sin, will you be free? Your six years are up tonight! Will you be free? The Spirit of God will help you to break every chain! The Redeemer will snap your fetters! Are you ready for liberty?

Or does your heart deliberately choose to abide under the bondage of Satan? If so, take heed. That awl of habit may bore your ear and then you will be beyond all hope of reformation—the victim of yourself, the slave of your sins, the idolater of your own belly—the abject menial of your own passions. “He that would be free himself must break the chain,” is the old saying. But I will improve it—he that would be free must cry to Christ to break the chain. But if he would not have it broken and hugs his bonds, then on his own head will be his blood! Christian man, the lesson to you is this—since the servants of Satan love their master so well, how well ought you to love yours? And since they will cling to his service, even when it brings misery into their homes, disease into their bodies, aches into their heads, redness into their eyes and poverty into their purses, oh, can you ever think of leaving your good and blessed Master, whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light? If they follow Satan into Hell, surely you may well say—

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

They are the willing servants of Satan. Be you, with more than equal ardor, the willing servants of Christ!

Our text reads us a second lesson, namely, this. In the 40th Psalm, in the sixth verse, you will find the expression used by our Lord, or by David in prophecy personifying our Lord, “My ear have You opened,” or, “My ear have You dug.” Jesus Christ is here, in all probability, speaking of Himself as being forever, for our sakes, the willing Servant of God. Let us just dwell on that a moment. Ages ago, long before the things which are seen had begun to exist, Jesus had entered into Covenant with His Father that He would become the Servant of servants for our sakes. All through the long ages He never started back from that compact. Though the Savior knew the price of pardon was His *blood*, His pity never withdrew, for His ear had been pierced.

He had become, for our sakes, the lifelong servant of God. He loved His spouse, the Church. He loved His dear sons, His children whom He fore-saw when He looked through the future ages—and He would not go out free. Our insolvency had made us slaves and Christ became a Servant in

our place. When He came to Bethlehem's manger, then it was that His ear was pierced, indeed, for Paul quotes as a parallel expression—"A body have You prepared Me." He was bound to God's service when He was found in fashion as a Man, for then He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." When he came to the waters of Baptism at Jordan and said, "Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness," then did He, as it were, go before the judges and say plainly that He loved the Master, whom He was bound to serve, loved His spouse, the Church, and loved her little ones—and would, for their sakes, be a Servant forever.

When He stood foot to foot with Satan in the wilderness, the arch-fiend offered to Him all the kingdoms of this world—and why did He not accept them? Because He preferred a Cross to a crown, for His ear was bored. Afterwards the people, in the height of His popularity, offered Him a crown, but He hid Himself away from them. And why? Because He came to suffer, not to reign. His ear was bored for redemption's work and He was straitened until He had accomplished it. In the Garden, when the bloody sweat fell from His face and He said, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me," why did He not put away that cup? If it had pleased Him, He might have applied for 12 legions of angels and they would have come to the rescue. Why did He not summon that celestial bodyguard?

Was it not because He had wholly surrendered Himself to the service of our salvation? Before His judges He might have saved Himself. Why didn't He? One word when He was before Pilate would have broken the spell of prophecy, but why, like a sheep before her shearers, was He dumb? Why did He give His back to the smiters and His cheeks to those that plucked off His hair? Why did He condescend to die and actually, upon the Cross, pour out His heart's blood? It was all because He had undertaken for us, and He would go through with it. His ear was bored—He could not and He would not leave His dearly beloved Church—

***"Yes, said His love, for her I'll go
Through all the depths of pain and woe.
And on the Cross will even dare
The bitter pangs of death to bear."***

He would not accept deliverance though He might have done so. "He saved others, Himself He could not save."

Now, hear it, you Believers! If Jesus would not go free from His blessed undertaking, will you ever desire to go free from the service of His love? Since He pushed onwards till He said, "It is finished," will not His love, by God's Holy Spirit, inspire you to push forward till you can say, "I have finished my course, I have kept the faith"? Can you go back when Jesus goes before you? Can you think of retreating? Can desertion or apostasy be regarded by you with any other feelings than those of abhorrence when you see your Master nailed to the gallows of Calvary, to bleed to death and then to lie in the cold grave for your sakes? Will you not say, "Let my ear be bored to His service, just as His ear was dug for me"?

Let these observations stand as the preface for our sermon, for my discourse, though I will try to make it brief, deals with ourselves in an ear-

nest fashion. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I think I speak for all of you who love Jesus, when I say—we are willing to undertake, tonight, perpetual service for Christ. To lead you all to renew your dedication I shall speak upon *our choice of perpetual service and our reasons for making that choice*. And then I shall call you up *and try to pierce your ears* with some one of certain sharp awls, which I have here ready for the purpose.

I. First, let us speak upon our CHOICE OF PERPETUAL SERVICE. The first thing is *we have the power to go free if we will*. This is a very memorable night to me. Pardon my speaking of myself, I cannot help it. It is exactly 24 years this night that I put on the Lord Jesus Christ publicly in Baptism, avowing myself to be His servant. And now, at this present time, I have served Him four times six years and I think He says to me, “You may go free if you will.” In effect He says the same to every one of you, “You may go free if you will. I will not hold you in unwilling servitude.”

There are plenty of places you can go—there is the world, the flesh and the devil. For a master you may have either of these three if you choose. Jesus will not hold you against your will. Do you desire to go free, Brothers and Sisters, free from the yoke of Jesus? I can only speak for myself—and you may say, “amen,” for yourselves if you wish, but nothing more. “Blessed be His name,” I never wish to be free from His dear yoke! Rather would I say—

***“Oh, to Grace how great a debtor,
Daily I’m constrained to be!
Let that Grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my willing heart to Thee.”***

I will speak of Him as I find—I wish to serve Him not another 24 years, but four and twenty million years! Yes, and forever and forever, for His yoke is easy and His burden is light. It is said of the Hebrews, “If they had been mindful of the country from which they came out, they had opportunity to return.” And so have we. But will we return to the land of destruction? Will we go back unto Perdition? Will we renounce our Lord? No, by God’s Grace it cannot be! We are bound for the land of Canaan and to Canaan we will go. Wandering hearts we have, but Divine Grace still holds them fast and our prayer is—

***“Prone to wander, Lord, we feel it,
Prone to leave the God we love.
Here’s our heart, Lord, take and seal it,
Seal it from Your courts above.”***

Well, then, since we might go free if we would, but wish not to do so, we are willing to declare before the judges—that is, before the public here assembled tonight, who shall be our judges—that though quite able to go free, (we say it plainly and without stammering), *we have not the remotest wish to do so*. If the service of Christ has been a fetter, Lord, put on double fetters! If Your service has been a bond, Lord, tie us up, hand and foot, for, to us, bondage to You is the only perfect liberty. Yes, if it must be so, we will say it here—

***“‘Tis done! The great transaction’s done.
I am my Lord’s, and He is mine!***

***He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to obey the voice Divine.”***

And we will add the words—

***“High Heaven that heard the solemn vow,
That voice renewed shall daily hear
Till in life’s last hour we bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear.”***

We are willing to say it publicly and plainly, and *we are willing to take the consequences too*. Are we? That is the question! If we mean to be Christ’s servants forever, we must expect to have special troubles such as the world knows nothing of. The boring of our ear is a special pain, but both ears are ready for the awl. The Lord’s service involves peculiar trials, for He has told us, “Every branch that bears fruit He purges it.”

Are we willing to take the purging? What son is there whom his father chastens not? Are we willing to take the chastening? Yes, we would deliberately say, “Whatever it is, we will bear it, so long as the Lord will keep us and help us to remain faithful.” We dare not run away from His service! Would not, could not—and nothing can drive us to abscond from His house or His work, for, exulting in persevering Grace, we venture to say, “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” We will bear the boring of the ear! Perhaps it will come in the shape of more reproach from men. Some of us have had a very fair share of that and have been tolerably well abused up till now, but none of these things move us.

Will there be more cruel mocking between here and Heaven? No doubt there will! Then let them come and welcome! My solemn personal declaration at this hour is—

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

Do you not say the same, Beloved? Will you not serve Christ without any conditions, at all hazards? Will you not follow Him through the mire and through the slough, and up the bleak side of the hill, and along the crest of the field where the battle rages most fiercely? Yes, that we will, if but Divine Grace is given—if the Holy Spirit will abide in us. Do you not desire to follow the Lamb where ever He goes? Do you shrink from the supreme sacrifice? Do you not long to abide faithful though all should forsake the Truth? Yes, we desire perpetual servitude to Christ and to bear whatever that involves. I speak the heart of every lover of Christ when I say we do not want to serve Christ a *little*—we wish to serve Him much—and the more He will give us to do, the better we shall love Him!

Yes, and the more He will give us to bear for His dear sake, if He will give us corresponding Grace, the more will we rejoice! That is a great life which is greatly useful, or greatly suffering, or greatly laborious for Jesus Christ the Savior. Do you not feel in your inmost souls that instead of wishing to be set free, you wish to plunge deeper into this blessed bondage—to bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus—and to be His

branded slaves forever? Is not this the perfect freedom you desire? So, then, there is the first point—our choice of perpetual service.

II. Now, secondly, OUR REASONS FOR IT. A man ought to have a reason for so weighty a decision as this. We have served our Master, now, for 24 years and do not want to change, but should like to live with Him and die with Him and live forever with Him. We speak boldly on a very weighty business. What reasons can we give for such decided language? Well, first, we can give some reasons connected with Himself. The servant in our text who would not accept his liberty, said, "I love my master." Can we say that? I cannot feel content with merely saying it. It is true, true, true!

But if I were to begin to talk of how I love Him, or how I *ought* to love Him, I should break down altogether tonight. Even now I choke with emotion. I can feel love in my heart, but my heart is too full for expression. Oh, what a blessed Master He is! Not love Him? My whole nature heaves with affection for Him! Who can help but love Him? Look at His wounds and you must love Him if you have been redeemed. Look at the great gash which reached His heart, where flowed the water and the blood to be, for your sin, the double cure! Could you fail to love Him? I mean Him who died for you and bought you, not with silver and gold, but with His own pangs and griefs and bloody sweat and death! Leave Him?

O Savior, let us not be such devils as to leave You, for worse than demons should we be if we could apostatize from such a sweet Master as You are. We love our Master, for He has bought us and saved us from the miseries of Hell. And we love Him because there never was such a Master, so good, so tender, so royal, so inconceivably lovely, so altogether glorious! Our Lord is Perfection, itself, and the whole universe cannot produce His equal. We cannot now praise the stars, for we have seen the sun. We could not take up with the mean things of earth, for the Lord of Heaven has looked upon us and one glance of His eyes has enamored us of Him forever and forever. Want to leave the service of Jesus? By no means! No such wish crosses our soul.

Beloved, I am sure you have no desire to change Masters, have you? Are you not abundantly well-pleased with His treatment of you? When a servant comes up from the country to take a situation in town, if he goes back to the village, his old friends come round him and they say, "Well, John, how did you find the service? Did your master treat you well? Was the work very hard? Were you well-fed and well-clothed?" Now, Christian people, I am not going to talk *for* you, but you shall talk for yourselves to your friends and kinsfolk—answer for yourselves their various questions. If you can find any fault with Jesus, tell them of it. Say whether He has ever treated you badly and, if He has, report it to all the world. Do not allow any to be led into a bad service if you have found it to be such.

As for me, there was never a worse servant, but never servant had a better Master than I have! He has borne with my ill manners and treated me like one of His own family. I have been, at times, a dead weight to His household, but He has never given me a rough word, "My cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Tonight

I must, even though I may be thought egotistical, speak of His loving-kindness towards me. Twenty-four years ago I was a dabbler in jackets and I walked into the open river on a cold May day to be baptized into the name of Jesus as timid and timorous a youth as you well might see.

But when I rose from that water the fear of man was gone from my mind! I hope never to return. For the first time that night I prayed at the Prayer Meeting and this tongue has never since ceased to talk of His dear love—

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

Now see what my Lord has done for me! If anyone had said to me, “Twenty-four years from this time you will preach to a vast crowd and will have spiritual children whose number cannot be told,” I never could have believed it! It would have seemed impossible that such a thing could be! Yet so it is. His right hand has done wonderful things for me and my heart reverently extols Him. Glory be unto His name forever and forevermore! Leave my Master? Grant, O glorious Lord, that no such base and loathsome thought may even alight upon my breast! No, dear Master, I am Yours forever! Let me kiss Your feet again and be forever bound to You by new cords of love. Well, my Brothers and Sisters, the Lord has treated you kindly, has He not? Come, speak for yourselves! You could rise and tell stories, in their own way, equally as remarkable as mine and you could wind up, each one, by saying, “I love my Master. I cannot help but love Him.”

The servant in our text, who would not go free, plainly declared that he loved his wife, so that there are reasons connected not only with his master, but with those in his master’s house, which detain each servant of Jesus in happy bondage. Beloved, some of us could not leave Jesus, not only because of what He is, but because of some that are very dear to us who are in His service. How could I leave my mother’s God? How could I leave my father’s God, my grandfather’s God, my great-grandfather’s God? My Brothers and Sisters, how could I leave *your* God, to be separated from you, whom I have loved so long, so well?

Husband, tender and affectionate, could you leave your wife’s God? Wife, could you forsake the God of those dear babes in Heaven? They are resting there on the breast of Jesus and you hope to see them soon—do you not love Jesus for the sake of those who once nestled in your bosom? Yes, and it is not merely *earthly* relationship that binds us thus, but we love *all* the people of God because of our relationship in Christ! Truly we can say of His Church, “Here my best friends, my kindred dwell.” Some of the dearest associations we have ever formed commenced at the foot of the Cross. Our best friends are those with whom we go up to the House of God in company. Why, most of the friends that some of us have on earth we won through our being one in Jesus Christ! And we mean to stand fast

for the grand old cause and the old Gospel, for the sake not only of Christ but of His people—

***“Now, for my friends and brethren’s sake,
Peace be in you, I’ll say
And for the sake of God our Lord
I’ll seek your good always.”***

“Because I love my wife and my children,” says the man, “I cannot go out free.” And so say we. Besides, let me add, there are some of us who must keep to Christ because we have children in His family whom we could not leave—dear ones who first learned of Christ from us. Many in this place were first led to the Lord by our teaching and by our prayers. We could not run away from them—their loving prayers hold us fast! In them the Lord has hold upon us by new ties. You do not find a woman leaves her husband, as a rule, when there are seven or eight little children at home. No, and no man can leave Christ who has been spiritually fruitful—the seals of his ministry seal anew the indentures which bind him to his Lord. The successful pastor will be kept faithful. He must stand fast by the Church, and by the Church’s Head, when there are children begotten unto him by the power of the Holy Spirit through faith in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There are reasons, also, why we cannot forsake our Lord which arise out of ourselves. And the first is that reason which Peter felt to be so powerful. His Master said, “Will you, also, go away?” Peter answered by another question. He said, “Lord, to whom shall we go?” Ah, Christian, there is no way for you but to go straight on to Heaven, for where would you go? Where else *could* you go? Some of us are so thoroughly identified with Jesus and His Gospel that the world would have nothing to do with us if we were to ask its friendship. We are committed too much to our Master ever to reckon upon receiving love and friendship from His foes. We have given the world too many slaps in the face to be forgiven by it. We have crossed the Rubicon and there remains nothing for us but victory or death.

Where could a poor wretch hide, who has been a well-known minister of the Gospel, should he apostatize? Where could he dwell? Should he journey to the ends of the earth some would remember his name and say, “When did you last apostatize?” In the remotest regions of the globe some would jeeringly say to him, “Have you fallen, have you gone aside?” Where could we go, then? We *must* cleave to Christ! It is of necessity we must. And *why* should we go? Come, Brothers, can you find any reason why we should leave Jesus Christ? Can you imagine *one*? As my imaginative faculty is not strong enough I will not attempt it.

I can see a million reasons for *cleaving* to Him, but not a presence of a reason for leaving Him. And *when* should *any* who love Him leave Him, if we must leave Him? Leave Him while we are young? It is then that we need Him to be the guide of our youth! Leave Him when we are in middle life? Why, then it is we need Him to help us to bear our cross, lest we sink under our daily load! Leave Him in old age? Ah, no! It is then we require Him to cheer our declining hours! Leave Him in life? How could we live

without Him? Leave Him in death? How could we die without Him? No, we must cling to Him—we must follow Him where ever He goes. These are a few of the reasons why we would be His servants forever.

III. In the last place, I want to bore your ear. Do you mean to be bound for life? Christians, do you really mean it? Come, sit down and count the cost and, if you mean it, come and welcome! There is the standard! The blood-red Cross waves at the top of it—will you now, in cool blood, enlist for life? Every man who wishes to desert may go home. Christ wants no press men. Ho, you volunteers! Come here! We want you and none but you! The Lord desires no slaves to dishonor His camp. Cowards, you may go! Double-minded men, you may get to your tents! But what do you say, you true Believers? Will you cleave to Him and His cause? Do you leap forward and say, “Never can we separate from Jesus! We give ourselves to Him for life, for death, for time, and for eternity. We are His altogether and forever”?

Come, then, and have your ears bored. And, first, let them be bored with the sharp awl of *the Savior’s sufferings*. No story wrings a Christian’s heart with such anguish as the griefs and woes of Christ. We preached, the other morning, upon the crown of thorns, [#1168, *THE CROWN OF THORNS*, April 12, 1874] and it was our task to bring before you the different items of our Savior’s griefs. Now, whenever you are hearing about Him, you ought to say within yourself, “Ah, He is piercing my ear. He is fastening me to His Cross. He is marking me for Himself, I cannot forsake my bleeding Lord! His wounds attract me. I fly to Him afresh. When the world would draw me off from Jesus, I find a central force drawing me back to His dear heart. I must be Christ’s. His suffering has won me. The bleeding Lamb enthralles me. I am His, by His Grace, and His forever!”

That is one way of marking the ear. Next, let your ear be fastened by *the Truth of God* so that you are determined to hear only the Gospel. The Gospel ought to monopolize the Believer’s ear. Some professors can hear any stuff in all the world if it is prettily put and so long as the man is a “clever” man (I think that is the word). When they hear a preacher of whom they can say, “He is very clever, very clever!” they appear perfectly satisfied—whether the man’s doctrine is good or bad. Now isn’t this foolishness? What does it matter about a man’s being clever? Satan is clever! And every great thief is clever! There is nothing in cleverness to gain the approval of a *spiritual* mind.

I pray God to give every one of you an ear that will not hear false doctrine! I do not think we ought to blame a man who gets up and goes out of a place of worship when he hears the Truth of God denied. I think we ought, rather, to commend him! There is a great deal of that soft, willow-pattern style of man about nowadays. Let a man talk loudly and prettily, and many hearers will believe anything he says. Dear Brothers and Sisters, we must have discernment, or we shall be found aiding and abetting error! “My sheep,” says Christ, “hear My voice, and a stranger they will not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers.”

Now, if you mean to be Christ's forever, you must not allow that ear of yours to hear bad doctrine! You must take care that, knowing the Truth of God, you hold to it and renounce every false way. Do not make your ear a common sewer into which foul doctrine may be poured, in hope that afterwards Jesus Christ may make it clean again. "Take care what you hear" is one of the precepts of infinite wisdom—let it not fail to impress your souls. Furthermore, if you really give yourself to Christ, you must have your ear opened to hear and obey the whispers of *the Spirit of God* so that you yield to His teaching and to His teaching, only. I am afraid some Christians give their ears to an eminent preacher and follow him whichever way he goes, very much to their own injury.

The right thing is to yield to the Spirit of God. Which way the Scripture goes—that is the way for you to go! And though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach to you any other Gospel than what this sacred Book contains—though I trust we may not be accursed if we do it in ignorance—yet, certainly, you will be accursed if, knowing it to be wrong, you follow us in preference to following the Lord! Let your ear be open to the faintest monitions of the Holy Spirit! There would be an end to all the sects and divisions in the Church if all Christians were willing to do what the Holy Spirit tells them. Alas, there are many people who do not want to know too much of the mind of God. What the Bible says is no great concern of theirs because, perhaps, that may not say quite the same thing as the Prayer Book—and they had rather not be disturbed in their minds.

Perhaps the Bible may not confirm all the doctrines of their sect and, therefore, they leave it unread, for they had rather not be perplexed. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, let names, parties, Prayer Books, catechisms and everything else go to the dogs sooner than one word of Jesus be neglected! Let us give ourselves up to the Spirit of God and to the teaching of His own Word, for as Christ's servants our ears have been pierced. Your ear has thus been bored with three awls and none of them has pained you. Many young women have had their ears pierced—I do not know whether it hurt them or not. I do not suppose that the operation described in the text pained the man much, though there was a little blood lost, perhaps, when the awl went through the lobe of the ear.

I will tell you what some would do with their ears if they were pierced. I would not do it with mine, but an oriental would be sure to do it. What would he do? Why, put a ring in it and hang it with ornaments. When a Christian man has his ears bored to belong to Christ forever and ever, God will be sure to put a jewel in it for him! And what jewels ought to hang in the Christian's ear? Why, the jewel of *obedience*. Practice the doctrine which your ear has heard! Then there would follow the diamond of *joy*—the ear which belongs wholly to Jesus will be sure to be adorned with the jewel of the Spirit, which is joy! If we give our heart up to Christ He will hang in our ear many costly gems of *knowledge*—we shall know the deep things of God when we are willing to learn them.

The ear being pierced, we shall sit like children at Jesus' feet and learn of Him—and rubies and emeralds and pearls such as deep-sea fisheries

never knew, shall belong to us! And our ear will be hung with the priceless gem of “quickness of understanding in the fear of the Lord.” “He wakens me morning by morning. He opened my ear to hear as the learned.” There, too, will hang that precious gem of separation from the world. The distinguishing mark of, “Holiness unto the Lord,” will be in the Christian’s ear like a precious jewel of inestimable price. When they were selling the Duke of Brunswick’s gems the other day, they found that ever so many of them were not what they were supposed to be—he had guarded them with great care and scarcely had enjoyed a happy hour in the great anxiety for his valuables—and yet some of them were not worth the keeping!

If you will give yourself to Christ and if your ear is bored, these precious Graces which I have mentioned will be pearls of exceedingly great price—such as angels might envy your wearing. There, young women, put these jewels in your ears and nobody will blame you for wearing such goodly ornaments. There, good man, you, also, may go with rings in your ears if these are the rings and these are the gems—and you will not be thought foppish and singular. May the Lord give them to you! As you come to the Communion Table, come with this feeling—“I am going there to renew my covenant. I have been a Christian these many years. By His Grace I love my Lord better than ever I did and I will, therefore, dedicate myself to Him again.”

And now, you unconverted people, do you think I have spoken the truth? If my Master had behaved badly to me I would have run away from Him long ago! I would not stand here to tell you that He was a good Master if He were not. But, since He is so good, oh that you would say, “I would like to be in His service.” Have you such a desire? Then, dear Heart, remember His own words, “Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.” If you are willing to be His, He is willing to have you! He is so great a Prince that He can maintain an endless company of servants without embarrassing Himself. There was never a soul that needed Christ but what Christ needed that soul! Depend upon it, if you go to Him, He will enroll you among His household retainers and allot you an honorable portion day by day.

Seeking Sinner, believe in Jesus and live! God grant you Grace for Christ’s sake! Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John 6:37
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—660, 658, 663.**

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THE INIQUITY OF OUR HOLY THINGS

NO. 2153

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 6, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“And you shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And you shall put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the miter; upon the forefront of the miter it shall be. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”
Exodus 28:36-38.

DEAR Friends, I must begin by reminding you that we are not in this place dealing with unconverted men in their sins but with God's people Israel in their holy things. I say this because we must never forget that “without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.” And when we are dealing with certain types it must be understood that the blood has done its essential work. Even a high priest, with all his “glory and beauty,” could not put away sin as before God without reference to the shedding of blood. The atonement is supposed to have been offered—these people have been purified and brought near by the appointed offerings.

But now, here comes the point with which this type concerns itself. They are God's people and therefore they come to Him with their gifts and thank-offerings—these alone can draw near to Him or will even care to do so. But how shall they draw near, for even after being reconciled by the blood they continue to sin? There is iniquity even in their holy things! How shall they come to God without someone to stand between them who shall continually bear for them the iniquity of the “holy things which they shall hallow in all their holy gifts”? There is need of One who is “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

That sacred Person is provided by God in Christ Jesus our Lord and thus the way to present acceptable sacrifice has been made clear for all the blood-washed people of God! Aaron in his glorious attire was the *type* of the living Christ who presented unto God the sacrifices of His people. Their faults in worship and fellowship he is made to bear and so their gifts and prayers are accepted before a holy God. Remember of what we are now speaking—not about the way of bringing the guilty sinner, at first, near to God, for that is by the *blood* alone—but the way of rendering the pardoned one *continually* acceptable to God in his daily service of thanksgiving, prayer, praise, labor and consecrated substance which he gladly brings to the Most High.

Aaron, for this purpose, was set apart beyond all other priests. They wore their plain white raiment of hallowed service, but he wore garments “for glory and for beauty.” As I said in the reading of the chapter, how glorious, how beautiful is the Lord Jesus in the eyes of God! Let me now add how beautiful is He in *our* eyes! The unveiled sight of Him will be our Heaven! Our present view of Him is our salvation, comfort, strength and sanctification. Oh, the glory of Christ! Often have I cried to God in prayer, “I beseech You, look not on me, my God, but look upon the face of Your Anointed! Did You ever see the like of Him? Is He not altogether lovely to You? Even the poor, half-opened eyes of Your servants have seen enough beauty in the Lord Jesus to ravish their hearts and hold every affection in glad captivity. Look You, O God, upon Him, for in Him you are always well-pleased—

**‘Him and then the sinner see:
Look through Jesus’ wounds on me.’”**

Why was the high priest so adorned for glory and beauty? We need such a high priest, but stop! Paul does not so put it. He says, “Such an High Priest *became us*” (Heb. 7:26). It was becoming for us to have this glorious High Priest thus splendidly arrayed! When I thought over that saying of the Apostle, it seemed to me that if the High Priest had been covered with *ashes*—if He had been dressed in *rags*—He might have seemed such a High Priest as would befit us! But God thinks not so—He has said, “Take away the filthy garments from Him. Let them set a fair miter upon His head.” He has covered us with a robe of righteousness and we are comely with His comeliness which He has put upon us. And we are such in God’s sight that it is becoming that we should not be represented by a High Priest in sordid garments, but by One who is dressed in “gold, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen.”

What great things God thinks of His elect! What a high price He puts upon His redeemed! His delight is in His saints. He takes more solace in them that fear Him than in all creation besides. “Unto you that believe Christ is precious”—but you that believe are also precious to Him! Does He not say, “Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable”? Therefore none but an honorable and glorious Person shall represent the chosen. Let us humbly rejoice in the glory and beauty of Him who takes our place before the Infinite Jehovah—

**“Jesus, in You our eyes behold
A thousand glories more
Than the rich gems, and polished gold,
The sons of Aaron wore.”**

I thank God that though the meanest and vilest of all His creatures because of my sin, yet He who represents me to God is neither mean in Person nor vile in apparel but He is altogether perfect in Himself and altogether beautiful in His array. Take comfort from this thought to begin with. You will *need* such consolation for I am going to remind you of very uncomfortable Truths. Let us consider first *a sad subject*—“The iniquity of

the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts.” And then, secondly, we shall dwell upon *a glad subject*—“HOLINESS TO THE LORD shall be upon Aaron’s forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things. It shall always be upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord.”

May God, the Holy Spirit, open up the type before us and also open our hearts to receive its teaching!

I. First, consider A SAD SUBJECT—“The iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel shall hallow.” *They were “holy things.”* Despite the iniquity, their offerings were hallowed and holy! This is a precious *saving* clause. Our prayers, our praises, our service to God—these are holy things—albeit iniquity attaches to them. They are holy as to God’s ordinance, for He has ordained them for His Glory. He has bid us serve Him. He has bid us draw near in prayer. He has also said—“Whoever offers praise glorifies Me.” When we do what God bids us, the act is holy because it is done in obedience to the Divine ordinance.

Such deeds are holy as to the Divine design, for the sacrifices which the Israelites brought were meant to set forth Christ and His glorious work—therefore they were holy. They were meant to be tokens of our gratitude, love, dedication, homage—therefore they are holy. The great Father teaches us much precious Truth by every institution of the tabernacle, the temple and the Gospel Church—and therefore obedience to each ordinance is holy. These deeds were often holy in the intent of the worshipper. When he brought his turtle doves, or his lamb, or his bullock he intended, if he was not altogether outside of spiritual worship, to exercise real reverence, true allegiance and sincere gratitude to God—and this *intent* was holy.

Our God is so gracious as to call His people’s love, His people’s faith, His people’s labor, His people’s patience “holy things” because He sees how truly their hearts desire that they should be! He knows what is holy and what is not holy—and though there is a defilement about our holy things, yet holy things they are if sincerely presented, for the Lord God calls them so! Blessed be His name! But although “holy things,” *there was iniquity upon all of them* and I shall not confine myself to the case of the Israelites, but shall speak of our own case.

Did we ever do anything yet that had not some spot of iniquity upon it? Is not our repentance, after all, but poor stuff compared with what it ought to be? Is not unbelief mixed with our faith? Has not our love a measure of lukewarmness in it? Did you ever sing unto the Lord with pure, reverent praise—and without there being some forgetfulness of the God to whom you sang? I have never prayed a prayer, yet, with which I have felt content. From my first prayer till now I have need of Grace to cover my shortcomings at the Mercy Seat. No act of consecration, no act of self-sacrifice, no rapture of fellowship, no height of spirituality has been without its imperfection! If even the Apostles on the Mount of Transfiguration feared as they entered into the cloud and wandered in their speech,

not knowing what they said, it is no strange thing that we are like they! If we ourselves see much to regret, what must the eye of God behold? Sadly do I say, in the language of the hymn—

**“If I sing, or hear, or pray,
Sin is mixed with all I do.”**

Furthermore, *some of these sins are apparent*—indeed, many of them are painfully before our own eyes. Brothers and Sisters, I need not enlarge upon our omissions—how we omit to pray. How we forget to study the Word with intelligent care. How we are remiss in keeping up daily fellowship with God. How slow we are in serving. How impatient in suffering. How backward in alms-giving. How apt to compromise with the world! If the Lord should mark iniquity, who among us could stand? When you think of what you have *not* done, who among you can talk about perfection? It is not so much sins of commission that trouble some of us—for by God’s Grace we are, for the most part, kept from such transgressions—but sins of *omission* bear terrible witness against us. Who can number them? Who can escape their accusing voice? You have done well—you ought to have done much better. You have done much—you might have done far more. You have given freely, but have you ever given all that you have like the poor woman with her two mites, which were all her living? O Brothers and Sisters, if we have any idea of what the height of the standard of holiness is, we shall be far more inclined to lament our failures before God than to vaunt our holiness before men!

But I will dwell upon the iniquity of those holy things which we *do* attend to. The phrase used in my text troubles me—I felt laid in the dust before God as I thought of it—“The iniquity of the holy things” is a terrible phrase to me. If the Lord sees iniquity in our *holy* things, what iniquities there must be in our *unholy* things! If even that which God calls holy still has iniquity about it—how vile must that be which even Divine condescension could *not* call holy—which even our own conscience could not thus describe! Let us look into this sad matter. Do you never feel great dullness and deadness in holy things? One of my Brothers behind me said to me one Sabbath morning, “We come here from business dull and dead, but you seem always to be full of holy life.”

I dropped a tear when I got away from him, to think that he should have an opinion of me which I could not pretend to deserve. Alas, Beloved, we know what it is to kneel down and feel as if we could not pray though we had then most need to wrestle at the Throne of God! We know what it is to read our Bible, but we might as well have read a newspaper for all the desire of our heart to the Truth of God. Have you ever felt almost unwilling to worship God? I am sure some of you do when you so readily stay away from public worship because of a little rain, or a slight headache, or some other excuse of the kind. Your willing absence is an outward and visible sign of the lack of inward and spiritual Grace.

When we do come to the house of God, do we always find our heart in the Lord’s ways? At the hour of prayer are we eager and earnest? Do not

our spirits need whipping to devotion? Toward the business of the world we can fly like eagles—but in coming to God we creep like snails—

***“Our souls, how heavily they go
To reach eternal joys!”***

This is one of the common sins of our holy things—lack of life, lack of energy, lack of joy in the Lord. When you get over this, have you not full often to confess a lack of reverence? We pray, my Brethren, and we address God as “Holy! Holy! Holy!” but do we veil our faces with awe in His sacred Presence? If we had a true sense of His holiness and Glory, would not our sense of imperfection humble us in the dust? Alas, we draw near to God with our lips, but in our spirit we are flippant, impertinent and comparatively careless!

Are we ever as fully conscious of the divine Majesty as we ought to be? We sing His praises and think rather of the music than of the worship. We use the language of prayer without an adequate sense of what we are saying. Is it not so? The Lord God is in Heaven and we are upon earth—He is perfect and we are full of sin—how lowly should be our behavior! Is it so? We would prize the Savior far more as our Mediator if we had a deeper feeling of reverence for the thrice holy God to whom we approach by Him. Do you not too much fail in this respect in your holy things? When you come to the Lord’s Table tonight, may you come with that holy thoughtfulness by which you may discern the Lord’s body—but you have not always done so—or if you have, you are far in advance of your pastor!

It is true we pay no superstitious reverence to the material substances of bread and wine, but before Him whom they symbolize we bow in lowliest worship and with subdued spirits we eat of this bread and drink of this cup. I fear in this holy thing we may not always have been so spiritual, so concentrated, so withdrawn from the world or so fired with holy affection as we ought to have been. I have to complain—and I suppose you do, also—that wandering thoughts will intrude in my prayers, my study of the Word, my sacred song, my choice meditation—indeed, even in ministering the Word among you I find my mind roaming.

I cannot wonder if you have wandering thoughts in hearing my poor words, for I cannot even hold my own mind to them as I would! Yet, as far as it is my Lord’s Word which I proclaim, it is an unholy thing for us to be making room in our minds for other things while the Truth of God is being spoken. Oh, that we could tie our thoughts to the Cross and never allow them to go further than where they can constantly have Him in view! Sabbath worship, how holy and how precious it is when the soul is at home with her doors shut and none within but God! But when our minds are all over the place, climbing the hills of vanity, or diving into the abysses of care, then it is ill with us! If you bring your children on your back into your pew. Or if you keep on jingling the keys of your cupboards. Or if all your ledgers and your day-books seem spread out before you and all your fields and your spoiling hay are on your minds—surely such common care

will spoil your holy exercises and prevent you from enjoying the repose of the day and the sanctity of the holy assembly!

Too often, I am afraid, the best of God's people play the hypocrite in a measure. Have we not in public prayer spoken beyond our experience? Have we not seemed very earnest, when, in truth we were working ourselves up to fervency rather than speaking because our hearts were on fire? It is an awful thing to be more glib than gracious! Our own Brethren soon discern the imitation of fervency. I can, at the Prayer Meetings, readily tell when the Brother is praying and when he is only *performing*, or playing at prayer! You know how it is with some prayers—they are like an invoice, “as per usual,” or a list of goods with “ditto, ditto” every here and there. Oh, for a living groan! One sigh from the soul has more power in it than half an hour's recitation of pretty pious words! Oh, for a sob from the soul or a tear from the heart—a dewdrop of Heaven's own life! May the Lord help us to get rid of all seeming—this it is which, to a degree, defiles our sacrifices.

I have to complain also—and I fear many here would have to complain even more than I do—of lack of faith in prayer. We plead with God an exceedingly great and precious promise and we think we believe it when we do not more than half trust to it. If God wanted to surprise His people, all He would have to do would be to answer certain of their prayers—for these are offered as a matter of course with no idea of their being heard! I think I have seen this sort of thing in many good Brethren in another form. They say, “Here is a wonderful thing! I prayed for such-and-such a thing and the Lord has given it to me.” Is that wonderful? You are on strange terms with God when it becomes a marvel to you that He keeps His promise! I like better the utterance of the good woman, who, when her friend said, “It is wonderful!” replied, “Yes, in one sense it is wonderful, but not as you mean it. It is not wonderful for God to fulfill His promises—it is just like Him.” It is just like the Lord to hear His people's prayers! O Friends, our lack of faith has done more mischief to us than all the devils in Hell and all the heretics on earth! Some cry out against the Pope and others against agnostics—but it is our own unbelief which is our worst enemy! If we could kill Old Incredulity, we could soon rout all the rest of the devil's army. Oh for more faith that our unbelief might not mar our holy things!

But suppose we do not fail in any of these respects—do you know what often happens? Well, after the private prayer is done, or the public worship is over, or the preaching, or the visiting of the sick has been performed, we sit down and inwardly say, “Yes, I did that uncommonly well, I know I did. I was wonderfully helpful”—which, being interpreted, often means, “I am a fine fellow.” Then we rub our hands and say to ourselves, “And the wonder is I am not at all proud! Thank God I am never tempted in that direction. I have too much common sense. I know what a poor creature I am”—and so on and so on. Thus we do our utmost to coat over our good deeds with the slime of self-conceit. This is to pour filthiness upon our sacrifice and make it an abomination in the sight of the Lord!

Beside this, there generally mingles with the pride a contempt of others. Our endeavors to go up lead us to push others down. We have brought a bullock and we patronizingly say, "I like to see those poor people over yonder bring their pigeons and their doves. I am glad that they do something, though it is so much less than I." This often means, "It makes my bullock look bigger when the turtle doves and pigeons are seen by way of contrast. No doubt those good people are doing their best—but yet, I think if they tried, they might have done better. At any rate, I have far exceeded them." O foolish one! What have you to do with your brother's sacrifice? What right have you to compare yourself with another? What have you that you have not received? And if you have received it, why do you boast as though you had not received it?

But enough of this! These are only a few of the iniquities of our holy things which we can see. Beside these, *there are many imperfections of our service which we do not notice* because we are not spiritual enough to discern them. But God sees them. Bring me a needle. This is a highly polished needle. What an instance of human skill to make so small an implement so bright, so absolutely smooth! Bring me that microscope! I have just now put the wing of a butterfly under it. That is God's work and, as I enlarge it, I discover no imperfection—but more and more of marvelous beauty! That butterfly's wing under the microscope becomes most wonderful and I worship God as I gaze upon His handiwork. Take the butterfly away, now, and put your needle in its place.

What? Why this is a rough bar of iron which has never been smoothed or polished! This is wretched workmanship! It does not seem fit for delicate work. Such is man's manufacture—the best of it. When God puts your prayers and my sermons under His microscopic eye, they are not at all what we thought they were, but quite the reverse! This ought to humble us as we come before the Presence of the All-Seeing One. *These imperfections in our holy things are so grievous that they should prevent any one of our works, or offerings, or prayers being accepted before the thrice-holy God.*

He is so pure that He cannot endure that which is defiled! He is so perfect that He cannot enter into fellowship with that which has a blemish! We must bring that which is *perfect* for it to be accepted in itself—and we have *nothing* of our own that is perfect. And therefore, were it not for the great High Priest, of whom I am about to speak, we should be cut off from every kind of acceptance or communion with God. We have nothing which God can accept—

***"Our best is all defiled with sin:
Our all is worth nothing."***

II. Secondly, we have now to consider a glad subject—Lord help me to speak of it aright! The glad subject is that a high priest was provided through whom the iniquity of Israel's holy things could be purged and the holy things themselves could be pleasant unto God. What was done in *type* has also been done in *reality*. Consider, then, that *God provided the*

high priest. It was ordained that he should be a man perfect in his person. Any defect that could be seen of eye, or hand, or foot disqualified him from being high priest—and secret faults which could not be observed by his fellow men equally disqualified him.

In our Lord Jesus there is no defect, open or secret. The verdict of Pilate was true—"I find no fault in this Man." He was tempted in all points but He never sinned in any point. The piercing eyes of the prince of this world found nothing in Him. He is perfect and so He can be High Priest unto God. The man had to be chosen of God. Aaron was so. God elected him to that high office and even so our Lord is God's elect in whom His soul delights. The Lord says, "I have exalted One chosen out of the people." Christ is ordained of God and by Divine authority He stands as High Priest for us. This man had to be anointed for his work. Aaron was anointed with oil, but our Lord was anointed with the Holy Spirit. We could not have a better High Priest, nor could His anointing be more complete—He was anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows. If we had to choose and we had the wisdom of God granted us to make the choice, we could only say, "Let *Him* stand for us, for there is none like He." Blessed be God, we have precisely the High Priest that we need!

This high priest was altogether given up to his people. Only a word here. He has a heart—his people's names are on the breast-plate which covers it. He has shoulders—his people's names are written on his shoulder-pieces and thus he lends them his power. He has feet—there were no sandals for the priest—he ministered barefooted before God. Why? Because it is the only way in which the Lord can be worshipped according to His repeated command—"Put off your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon you stand is holy ground." Christ has given to us the heart of His love, the shoulders of His strength, the feet of His humiliation. "He loved me and gave Himself for me."

But, you observe that his head is left. Ah, well, he must give us his head. The power to think is supposed to dwell in the temples and the forehead. The golden plate covered Aaron's forehead from temple to temple and it was always conspicuous there. Thus Christ has given up His thought, His judgment, His mind, His every faculty to His people. He is all ours! The high priest reserved nothing of himself—he gave all of himself to all his people. Christ is ours. From head to foot He serves us personally and constantly. The point I want to bring out most prominently is this—the *high priest bore "the iniquity of the holy things."* You and I have been guilty of iniquity in our holy things—we have said enough upon that humbling subject. But here is our joy—that Jesus bears it all!

Putting on His heavenly miter, marked as "HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH," He bears for us the iniquity. "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin." It is a wonderful mystery, the transference of sin and of merit—it staggers human reason—faith alone apprehends it! How can the guilty be accounted righteous? How can the perfectly righteous One be made sin? Mysterious these things are, but

they are true and the Word of God is full of declarations to this effect. In this Truth of God lies the one hope of sinners! All the iniquity of our holy things our Lord Jesus has borne and it is no longer imputed unto us!

As He stood before God, though He bore the iniquity of the people, yet *He exhibited to God no iniquity! And on His forehead was written, "HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH."* Notice that He bore before God a holiness most precious—in token whereof, in type, the engraving was inscribed upon a plate of pure gold. The righteousness of Christ is more precious to God than all the mines of gold in the whole world! His righteousness was absolutely perfect—therefore there was nothing on that plate of gold but "HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH." There was no iniquity in *His* holy things—His holiness was conspicuous and undeniable—it shone on the forefront of His miter. That holiness of His was permanent. It was not painted on that sheet of gold—it was engraved like the engraving of a signet.

Christ's righteousness will neither wash out nor wear out. Engraved in incorruptible gold, His righteousness shines gloriously and never loses its virtue. It retains its permanent perfection before the Lord. And as it was precious, perfect, permanent, so it was peculiar—for it was not merely holiness, but "HOLINESS TO JEHOVAH." Christ was wholly dedicated to Jehovah! It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. His one thought was to glorify the Father. And that holiness of His was prominent—although it was in His secret heart, it was also on His brow where even His enemies were forced to see it and honor it. In everything He thought, said, did, or suffered, He was evermore "*Holiness to Jehovah.*"

One thing more I want you to notice and that is that *the high priest always wore it*—"And it shall always be upon his forehead." He is always "Holiness to God" on our behalf. Our Lord Jesus Christ never shifted His Character, never ceased to be a Servant of the Host High and never ceased to be perfectly obedient to Him whom He came to serve. Dwell upon these things. If that plate were once taken off, the high priest could no longer officiate—and if Christ were once to lay aside His righteousness on your behalf you would not be accepted. Your holiness is not always on your brow, but His holiness is always on the forefront of His miter and therefore you are always accepted in the Beloved! How I delight to speak of this Truth!

There is a flood of infidelity in the Church of God, today, and it often rushes against the doctrine of imputation—in fact, imputed righteousness has been kicked down the aisles of most of our places of worship—it cannot be endured! Yet we believe in it all the more for this! Listen to my text, "It shall always be upon *his* forehead, that *they* may be accepted before the Lord." *We* are accepted because of something in *Him*. It is not what is upon *our* forehead, but what is upon His forehead that makes us and our offerings to be accepted! We are accepted in the Beloved, justified by His righteousness. I cannot preach about this matter as I would, but I beg you to think it over. The Lord Jesus by His holiness secures our personal acceptance and then the acceptance of our holy things. Our prayers are ac-

cepted, our tears are accepted, our zeal is accepted and our patience is accepted—to God there is now sweet music in our praises.

In very deed God accepts our sermons, our Sunday school teaching, our tract distribution, our almsgivings to the poor, our contributions to His cause. Our holy work is now viewed with Divine favor. Will you not offer more and more of these holy things since they are, in very deed, accepted in Christ? Through His glorious righteousness we are favorably regarded of the Lord—there is no question about it. First God accepts *us* and then He accepts our *holy things*. The Lord is pleased with all we do for Him because He is pleased with His Son. When He sees our iniquity He turns His eyes away and looks on that perfect holiness which shines upon the forehead of the Well-Beloved! Our Lord is that Altar which sanctifies both the giver and the gift. God grant us to know the comfort of this Truth!

Now that I have taught you the main doctrine of the *type*, I desire to bring forth one or two lessons. The first is, see here *a lesson of humility*. We always want to be growing in this Divine Grace. Brothers and Sisters, take each of us—we are by nature as proud as Lucifer—and if we do not happen to be flaming with pride just now, there is enough of tinder in the tinderbox of our heart to get up a blaze of pride within five minutes! We do not need the devil or our friends to flatter us—we can do that business better than any of them. We have a very fine opinion of ourselves. But what have we to flatter ourselves about? Nothing!

Bring out here this morning all your holy things and enlarge upon their excellence. Bring out your diaries from the time of your conversion until now and read the record of your good deeds. There is iniquity in them all! I have heard of a good man who lay dying. He thought he would examine his life and sort out his actions—laying his good deeds on his right hand and his sins on his left hand. He went on with the sorting for a little time but very soon he perceived that they were so much alike—the good and the bad—that he felt sick of them all. He then determined to bind them all up in one bundle and throw them overboard—and trust to enter Heaven by Free Grace alone! This was a very sensible decision! O Friends, our good works, if we lay them up in store and value them as jewels, will, like the manna in the wilderness, very soon breed worms and stink! There is enough rottenness in our best performances to make them offensive to an enlightened conscience! Oh, that this fact—that even our holy things are tainted—may be the death warrant of our pride!

In the next place, *learn the awful hazard of going unto God without our High Priest*. Our forehead will be leprous if we dare offer sacrifice without the High Priest who wears the golden plate of holiness to the Lord upon His forehead. I am not going to expound the passage, but I will simply read to you 2 Chronicles 26:15-20. Uzziah was a commendable king and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord—“His name spread far abroad; for he was marvelously helped, till he was strong. But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed

against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the Altar of Incense.

“And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the Lord, that were valiant men: and they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertains not unto you, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for you have trespassed; neither shall it be for your honor from the Lord God. Then Uzziah was angry, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was angry with the priests, the leprosy even rose up on his forehead before the priests in the house of the Lord, from beside the Altar of Incense. And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from there; yes, himself hastened also to go out, because the Lord had smitten him.”

Whenever you get to think that you can stand before God and present your own offering without the Lord Jesus, the leprosy of fatal pride is white upon your forehead! I tremble for some people when I hear them parading their own perfection. One said, “My will is so in accord with God that I do not need to pray.” The leprosy was on his forehead when he thus spoke! This has polluted many who seemed to be among the most excellent servants of God. They have tried to do without the great High Priest and His representative holiness and, like Uzziah, they have been cut off from the house of the Lord and made to dwell alone and bemoan their folly.

But, dear Friends, we may here find another lesson—*learn how you must be dressed as a royal priesthood unto the Lord*. I thought I would copy out what George Herbert says about the dress of the Lord’s Aarons. You will not understand it all as I read it, but if you have George Herbert’s Poems, read the piece entitled, “Aaron,” and chew at it till you have masticated its meaning. He speaks of the clergy, but we will understand him as speaking of all Believers who are as assuredly priests and clergy as any ordained ministers can be. We are made kings and priests unto our God. We want to know how we ought to be dressed. One cries, “Wear a surplice!” Another says, “No, keep to the black gown.” We are not thinking of such trivialities as *garments*, black or white. We belong to a *spiritual* kingdom and our robes are *spiritual*. “Then,” says one, “it is clear that we must be holy.” Granted. But it is not *our* beauty and our glorious dress before the Lord. If you put on *your own* holiness, to be dressed in it, you will only display your iniquity. “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.”

The Lord Jesus Himself is our dress—we put on Christ! Let Herbert speak—

***“Holiness on the head,
Light and perfections on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead,
To lead them unto life and rest.
Thus are true Aarons dressed.*”**

Profaneness in my head,

***Defects and darkness in my breast,
 A noise of passions ringing me for dead
 Unto a place where is no rest.
 Poor priest, thus am I dressed.
 Only another head I have, another heart and breast,
 Another music, making live, not dead,
 Without whom I could have no rest:
 In Him I am well dressed.
 Christ is my only head,
 My alone only heart and breast
 My only music, striking me even dead;
 That to the old man I may rest
 And be in Him new dressed.
 So holy in my head
 Perfect and light in my dear breast,
 My doctrine tuned by Christ (who is not dead,
 But lives in me while I do rest)
 Come, people: Aaron's dressed."***

When you have Christ's head and breast, and doctrine then you are ready for service and may say, "Come, people: Aaron's dressed." This is how I desire to preach to you, putting off self and putting on Christ as all. C.H.S. [Charles Haddon Spurgeon]? Away with him! JESUS! Let *that* dear name be glorified forever! When you go to Sunday school do not go as pious Mary or thoughtful Thomas—you will make a mess of it if you do. But go as the messenger of the Lord, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all! Be clothed with the Lord Jesus! Hide yourself away in His glory and beauty—and then you will be a true Aaron—dressed for your holy work.

Lastly, *let sinners gain a store of comfort here*. If God's own people have iniquity in their holy things and yet they have Christ to bear it for them, how patient must He be who is our High Priest! You, poor Sinner, you need a Savior very much. Lo! He is here, ready to be a go-between for you and put His righteousness in front of your iniquity and Himself in the place of your poor guilty and condemned person! Come, now, and hide away in Christ! Come, now, and trust my Lord with all His beautiful garments. He wears them, still, and wears them for poor ragged sinners. Come and look up to Jesus and He will stand for you and you shall become the righteousness of God in Him because He is made a curse for you! God bless you, Beloved, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

***PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Exodus 28:1-38.
 HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—912, 382, 325.***

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THE CONSECRATION OF PRIESTS

NO. 1203

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 15, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“This is the thing that you shall do unto them to hallow them,
to minister unto Me in the priest’s office.”
Exodus 29:1.*

UNDER the Law, only one family could serve God in the priest’s office, but under the Gospel all the saints are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). In the Christian Church no persons whatever are set apart to the priesthood above the rest of their Brethren, for in us is fulfilled the promise which Israel, by reason of her sin, failed to obtain—“You shall be a kingdom of priests unto Me.” Paul, in addressing all the saints, bids them present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service. It is the grand design of all the works of Divine Grace, both for us and in us, to fit us for the office of the *spiritual* priesthood, and it will be the crown of our perfection when, with all our Brothers and Sisters, we shall sing unto the Lord Jesus the new song, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever.”

All the saints have this honor. According to Peter, in the second chapter of his first Epistle, it belongs even to newborn babes in Grace, for even such are spoken of as forming part of an holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Nor is this confined to men as was the Aaronic priesthood, for in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. My subject, today, is the consecration of priests, but it does not refer exclusively, or even especially, to persons called clergymen, or ministers—but to all of you who believe in Jesus, for you are God’s clergy, His *cleros*, that is, His inheritance, and you should be all ministers, ministering according to the Divine Grace given to you. The family of Aaron was *chosen* unto the priesthood, “for no man takes this honor upon himself, but he that was called thereunto as was Aaron,” and even thus, all the Lord’s people are chosen from before the foundation of the world.

Being chosen, Aaron and his sons were at God’s command *brought near* unto the door of the tabernacle. None ever come to God except they are *brought* to Him. Even the spouse sings, “He brought me into the banqueting house.” Jesus said, “No man can come unto Me except the Father, which has sent Me, draw him.” We are made near by the blood of Jesus and brought near by the drawing of the Holy Spirit. Assuming that you and I have made our calling and election sure, let us further see what is needed to qualify us to serve as priests at the altar of the living God. Follow me carefully as I mention the ceremonies prescribed in the chapter before us, for they teach us necessary things—the *outward* ceremonies are abolished—but their *inner meaning* remains.

I. First, THE PRIESTS WERE WASHED. We read in the 4th verse, "Aaron and his sons you shall bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall wash them with water." The pure and holy God cannot be served by men of unclean hands and impure hearts. He would not endure it under the Law, nor will He tolerate it under the Gospel. "Be you clean that bear the vessels of the Lord," and, "Be you holy for I am holy," are standing precepts of our priesthood. It was well said by the Psalmist, "I will wash my hands in innocence, so will I compass Your altar, O Lord."

This washing is afforded us in two ways, answering to our double need. First, it is given to us in *regeneration*, in which we are born of water and of the Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are made new creatures in Christ Jesus and in us is fulfilled the type set forth in Naaman, who washed in the Jordan, and his flesh came, again, unto him, even as a little child. Not in the waters of Baptism, but in the living water of the *Holy Spirit* are we cleansed from Nature's original defilement. He it is who causes old things to pass away and makes all things new. Through His sanctifying operations we are cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit—and made vessels fit for the Master's use. This washing is essential in every case.

You may say, "I desire to serve God," but you cannot do it till you are born again. Your whole nature must be cleansed, or you will never be qualified to stand as a priest before the thrice holy God! I marvel how some who know nothing about regeneration can dare call themselves priests. They are strangers to the renewing influences of the Spirit and yet they style themselves God's ministers! Has God set blind men to be guides and dead men to quicken souls? Onto such as these, God says, "What have you to do to declare My statutes?" The need of another form of washing was indicated by the double stream which flowed from the pierced breast of Christ, for, "forthwith came there out blood and water."

We must be washed by *remission of sin*, of which David sang, "Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." In the first moment of our faith in Jesus there is given to us a washing which makes us, once and for all, clean in the sight of God. It is *that* washing to which the Lord Jesus referred when He said, "He that is washed needs not save to wash his feet, for he is clean." The priests were washed once, from head to foot, to make them ceremonially clean—after that they needed only to wash their feet when they came into the holy place. Even thus our Lord told His disciples, when He washed their feet, that they had no need of another complete bathing, for they were clean every whit.

Believers should not pray to their heavenly Father as if their sins still rested upon them and had never been forgiven, for the Lord has put away their sin—and as far as the east is from the west so far has He removed their transgressions from them. Yet as they continually accumulate some evil and stain by being in this body and in this world, they have need to come each day with, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." Our first washing has removed all sin as before God the *Judge*. Our daily washing cleanses us from offenses towards God as

our *Father*. Even when we walk in the light as God is in the light, and have fellowship with one another, we yet need daily cleansing from all sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. And, blessed be God, we have it!

Now, my dear Hearers, have you thus been cleansed from all sin? Do you know, today, the power of that word, "Being made free from sin, you became the servants of righteousness"? Have you the blessedness of that man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity and in whose spirit there is no guile? Do not try to stand as a priest before God till you have received this double washing! Remember the great aim of the Gospel is to make us priests unto God—but the consecrating process must begin by our being cleansed as sinners from the guilt of sin and the defilement of our nature. He who would serve the Lord must first confess his iniquities and obtain remission, or he can no more approach the living God than a leper could enter into the Holy Place!

II. After being washed, **THE PRIESTS WERE CLOTHED**. They might not wear one of the garments which belonged to themselves or to their former calling. Undergarments were provided for them and outer garments, too—within and without their raiment was new and appropriate. They put on what was given them, nothing more and nothing less. No man can serve God acceptably in his own righteousness, it is but filthy rags. We must have the fine linen of an inward sanctification and the outer garment, for glory and for beauty, of the Imputed Righteousness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We must, in a word, sing with the hymn—

***“Jesus, Your blood and Righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress.”***

We cannot worship God unless it is so, or He will drive us from His Presence.

Note that *these garments were provided for them*. They were at no expense in buying them, nor labor in weaving them, nor skill in making them. They had simply to put them on. And you, dear child of God, are to put on the garments which Jesus Christ has provided for you, at His own cost, and freely bestows upon you out of boundless love. *These garments formed a complete apparel*. They had no shoes upon their feet, it is true, but they would have been superfluous, for the place where they stood was holy ground. They were sandaled with reverence. The child of God, when he is bedecked in the Righteousness of Christ, still feels a solemn awe of the Lord and comes into the Presence of the Most High with adoration, for he remembers that he is but a creature at his best.

These garments were very comely to look upon. Though the common priests did not wear the breastplate of jewels, nor the bells and pomegranates, nor the girdle of blue and fine twisted linen, yet, in their ordinary dress of pure white, they must have been very comely to look upon. Fine white linen is the emblem of the righteousness of the saints and truly, in God's eyes, with the exception of His dear Son, there are no lovelier objects in the world than His own people when they are dressed in the garments of salvation. *The dress provided was absolutely necessary to be worn*. No priest might offer sacrifice without the appointed garments, for we read in the 43rd verse of the 28th chapter, "They shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congre-

gation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the Holy Place; that they bear not iniquity, and die.”

They would have died had they attempted to sacrifice without being clothed according to the Law of God! A man pretending to serve God without the Divine Righteousness upon him, puts himself in a most perilous position. He is where the flaming wrath of God burns terribly. Better for him to keep his own place, in the distance, than to draw near unto the service of God, unless he is adorned with the glorious array which Christ has woven in the loom of His life and dyed in His own blood. Dear Brothers and Sisters, if you desire to worship God aright in holy labor, or prayer, or praise, you must go to your engagements dressed in the Righteousness of Jesus, for in that way, only, can you be “accepted in the Beloved.”

III. Then, thirdly, THESE PRIESTS WERE ANOINTED. It does not appear that they were each one *personally* anointed so early in the ceremony, but they saw the fragrant oil poured upon Aaron on their behalf. So you find it written in the 7th verse, “Then shall you take the anointing oil and pour it upon his head, and anoint him.” So that in order to serve God aright, it is necessary for us to see the anointing which has been given without measure to our Covenant Head.

But you say to me, “Of what benefit can that be to us? We require the unction of the Holy Spirit upon ourselves.” True, but the oil which was poured upon Aaron’s head went down his beard and its copious flow descended even to the skirts of his garments. And what you need to know, if you are to be a true priest to God, is that the Holy Spirit comes to you *through* Christ and *from* Christ—and it is because your Head is anointed that you have an unction from the Holy One. You could not have been Christians if He had not, first, been the Christ. Be of good cheer concerning this, for though you may be one of the lowest members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, you have an anointing from the Holy One because Jesus has that anointing—and in the power of that anointing you may minister before the Lord.

Further on in the discourse we shall have to show you the personal anointing which you must individually receive, but it is highly important for every worker to see where his fragrance before God must lie—never in *himself*—but always in his Covenant Head. Be filled with the Spirit, but do not *dream* that the Spirit of God comes to you apart from your Lord! You are the branch, and the sap can only come to you through the stem. You are a member, but your life dwells in your Head. Divided from Jesus you are dead! Never forget this, for any attempt at independence will be fatal. A man in Christ is fragrant with a holy perfume before the Lord, but out of Christ he is an unclean thing and cannot approach the altar.

IV. Fourthly, having been washed, clothed and representatively anointed, they had, next, TO SHARE IN THE SIN OFFERING. They were sinful men. How could they approach a thrice holy God? You and I are sinful, as we know by bitter experience. How can *we* hope to stand before the Mercy Seat and present acceptable sacrifices unto such an One as God is? There is no way of approaching Him while our sin is seen. It must be covered—covered by a sin offering. We are told that the sin offering se-

lected was a bullock without blemish, of the first year, strong and vigorous—a perfect being as far as it could be.

Lift your eyes to Jesus, in whom is no spot of sin, being undefiled in Nature and immaculate in life. He it is who stands for you, even He who knew no sin, and yet was made sin for you that you might be made the Righteousness of God in Him. He, in the fullness of His strength, and in the perfection of His Manhood, gave Himself as a ransom and a substitute for you. View Him with wondering gratitude! The bullock of the sin offering being brought to the altar, Aaron and his sons were to lay their hands upon it. Read the 10th verse—They “shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock.” The Hebrew word means more than lightly placing the hands—it gives the idea of pressing hard upon the bullock’s head.

They came, each one, and leaned upon the victim, loading him with their burden, signifying their acceptance of its substitution and their joy that the Lord would accept that victim in their place. When they put their hands on the bullock, they made a confession of sin, and the Rabbis have preserved for us the form in which that confession was made, but time forbids our reading it to you. The act was evidently understood by all concerned as a typical transfer of guilt—and the placing of the bullock as the sin offering in the place of the sinner. Come, Brothers and Sisters, though washed, though clothed, though anointed—come as *penitents* and rejoice in the vicarious Sacrifice of Jesus!

Draw near unto the Lord with sincere hearts and acknowledge your transgressions! Come and again accept your Savior as your Sin Bearer, for a sin bearer who is not accepted by you can be of no service to you. The hands of faith must be laid upon the Sacrifice—for my part, I like to lay them there every day, no, I desire to keep them there *always*—believing without ceasing that my sin is imputed no more to me, but by a sacred act of God was laid upon Jesus, according to that sentence, “He has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

The bullock was killed as a token that just as the poor beast was slain, so they deserved to die for their sins. And that done, the blood was caught in bowls and taken to the altar where it was poured out, at the bottom of the altar, round about. Read the 17th verse. There must have been a pool of blood all round the altar, or, at any rate, a crimsoned line. What did it signify? Did it not show that our only access to God is by the blood? Oh, my Brothers and Sisters, there is no way for you to God as His priest except through the precious blood! We cannot draw near to God, or serve Him aright, if we forget the blood of Atonement. Our standing is upon and within the blood of sprinkling! We must bring our prayers, praises, preaching, almsgiving and all other offerings to the altar around which the blood is poured! In vain are all good works which are not so presented! See you well to this, my Brethren. It is essential beyond all else.

This done, the choicer and more vital parts of the bullock were taken and burned upon the altar, to show that even when our Lord Jesus is viewed as a Sin Offering, He is still a sweet savor unto God. And however He might hide His face from His Son because of our sin, yet He was always, in Himself, well-pleasing unto the Father. Hence the inwards of the bullock were burned on the altar, where nothing could be presented but

that which was a sweet savor to God. O You Lamb of God, under whatever aspect we behold You, You are still precious to Your Father! You were beloved by Him even when You had to cry, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

But because the bullock was a sin offering, and therefore obnoxious to God, its flesh, skin and all that remained were carried outside the camp and burned with a quick, consuming fire—as a thing worthy to be destroyed—for sin was upon it and it must be burned up. Believer, have you seen Jesus as the great Offering for sin, made a curse for us? You will never serve God in the priestly office aright unless you see that sin is a hateful thing to God—so hateful that even when it only lay upon His dear Son by imputation, He could not look upon Him—but bruised and smote Him until He cried in anguish, “Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani.” “Jesus, also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the camp,” to show that not without His being treated as a transgressor could we be treated as righteous and, also, that sin is, in itself, a deadly pest which must not be endured in the camp of the chosen.

Never let your joy concerning the Atonement lessen your horror of transgression—

***“With your joy for pardoned guilt,
Mourn that you pierced the Lord.”***

I am persuaded that no one will ever serve the Lord humbly and devotedly unless he obtains a clear view of the Lord Jesus as his Sin Offering and Substitute. Some preachers either do not know that Truth of God or else they think too little of it to make it prominent in their sermons, hence their ministry does not save souls. The great saving Truth of God is the doctrine of Atonement by Substitution. Without it, ministers will keep souls in bondage year after year because they do not proclaim the finished redemption, nor let men know that sin was laid on Jesus that it might be forever removed from the Believer. “He was made sin for us that we might be made the Righteousness of God in Him.”

Brothers and Sisters, get that Truth clearly into your heads—and intensely into your *hearts*—and you will become devoted to the Lord! Do not only believe that grand Truth, but to the spirit of it serve the Lord without weariness, seeing you have been redeemed with a price far more precious than silver and gold!

V. After the sin offering, the consecrated ones went on to TAKE THEIR SHARE IN THE BURNT OFFERING. The burnt offering differed widely from the sin offering. The sin offering indicated Christ as bearing our sin, but the burnt offering sets Him forth as presenting an acceptable offering unto the Lord. God required of us perfect obedience. He demanded from us a pure and holy life—and the requirement was a just one—but among us all there is none righteous, no, not one. How, then, could we stand before the thrice Holy Lord?

Beloved, Jesus stands in the gap! Before God, His Righteousness was perfect, acceptable and delightful. And for us it is presented. He is made of God unto us Righteousness. The burnt offering does not bring to light the remembrance of sin except so far as it reminds us that we were in need of a perfect Righteousness. It brings before us only the thought of Jesus offering Himself as a sweet savor unto God and making us accepted

in the Beloved. The priests were to bring a ram without blemish. And when killed, before it was laid on the altar, its innards were to be washed, for otherwise the natural foulness of its body would prevent its being a fit type of that Savior who is pure within—in whom there is no taint of original sin.

When this ram was brought, the priests were to lay their hands upon it, as much as to say, “We accept this ram, that it may represent us as acceptable before God.” Oh, Beloved, lay your hands on Jesus, now, by faith, and say, “Jesus, I accept You as my Righteousness before the Lord, and believe that as God sees in You all that is delightful, and smells a sweet savor of rest, so He will be well-pleased with me for Your sake.” This offering, when placed upon the altar, was wholly burnt. Not a *fragment* of it was put outside the camp, not a morsel of it was eaten by man—the whole ram was utterly consumed with fire, for it was a burnt offering unto the Lord.

And thus, dear Friends, it is very delightful for us to see that God received Jesus, the whole of Jesus—there was nothing in Him to reject—and nothing that could be done without. He satisfied the Lord. He asked no more, He would have no less. Jesus has rendered to the Father all that He could desire from men and the Lord is well-pleased for His Righteousness’ sake. A sense of acceptance is a very necessary thing to those who would worship God aright, for if you do not enjoy it, the legal spirit will begin to work to win acceptance by *merit*, and that will spoil it all. If men dream that they are to pray or preach their way to Heaven, or to do this and to do that, to be acceptable with God, they will offer strange fire on the Lord’s altar and bring sacrifices with which He can never be pleased.

He will call them vain oblations and frown on the offerer. How delightful it is to serve God with a sense that we are pleasant in the sight of God, for this fills us with gratitude, inspires us with zeal, creates boldness and fosters every Grace! With what joy will you stand to minister daily whatever your calling may be—whether it is as a mother in the family, a servant in the house, a minister in the pulpit—or a teacher in the class! You will not need driving like a slave to his toil, but like a dearly beloved child you will rejoice to please your Father in all things. Work in the prison of the Law under the lash of conscience is a very different thing from holy work in the sunlight of the Lord’s Countenance and the liberty of full acceptance where one knows that he is not to be judged and condemned by the Law, but stands forever justified because of what Christ has done for him and serves his God with a holy alacrity unknown to others!

VI. After the priests had seen for themselves the sin offering and the burnt offering, it was necessary that they should partake of a third sacrifice, which was a PEACE OFFERING. Another ram was brought as unblemished and vigorous as the former, for Jesus is never to be typified by *anything* but the best of its kind. We are told in the 19th verse that Aaron and his sons were to put their hands upon it, for, whatever view of the great sacrifice they might gaze upon, it was imperatively necessary that they should have a *personal* interest in it. Mere theory will never do—we must have *personal* acquaintance with the Lord—and we must have Him to be our own.

So long as we have no part or lot in Jesus we are as much excluded from the service of the Lord as were the uncircumcised and the unclean. No man can run the heavenly race unless he is looking unto Jesus! He cannot be a soldier of the Lord unless he has Christ for his Captain. He cannot feed others until he has, himself, fed on Jesus. He cannot bring others to Jesus till he has come himself. "The husbandman that labors must first be partaker of the fruits." This is one of the laws of spiritual husbandry and cannot be set aside. Lay your hands upon the head of the Substitute before you venture to lay it upon the work of the Lord.

When this was done, the peace offering was slain. A sin offering was a thing obnoxious to God and represented expiation made for sin. A burnt offering was a sweet savor unto God and it was all burned on the altar, all being for the Lord alone—thus representing the Lord Jesus as rendering to the Lord a complete obedience which magnified the Law and made it honorable. But the peace offering was shared between the Lord and the priest or offerer. The Lord's part was consumed with fire upon the altar and another portion was eaten by man in the holy place. The peace offering was thus an open declaration of the communion which had been established between God and man, so that they ate together, rejoicing in the same offering.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, when you have felt the sweets of seeing the Lord as a Sin Offering and then have tasted the high joys of acceptance as you have gazed upon Him as the Burnt Offering, satisfying Jehovah's heart, it is surpassingly delightful to behold the Lamb of God as our Peace Offering, making glad the heart of God *and* man—and bringing both, in bonds of friendship, to a common meeting place! The Eternal Father says, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." And we cry, "This is our beloved Lord, in which our inmost soul rejoices!" In the peace offering the communion between the priests and the Lord commenced outwardly by their being consecrated by the blood of the peace offering. Moses dipped his finger in the blood and smeared, first, the priest's right ear, then his thumb, and then his toe.

As Matthew Henry says, as if they marked the boundaries and extremities of man's being to show that all that was enclosed within the crimson lines was consecrated unto the Lord. We go not too far when we add that it signified the dedication of each faculty. The ear was henceforth to hear God's commands, to listen to Divine teaching and to drink in Divine promises—no more to regard falsehood, sin and vice. The hand was henceforth to be engaged in the Divine service with diligence and intelligence, for the right hand was thus marked, and the thumb, the most useful part of it—for holy work the hand must be reserved.

The feet were to be equally holy. The priest, wherever he stood, or walked, or ran, was to be, "holiness unto the Lord." He had no right to go anywhere if that blood-marked foot would be out of place. The whole man was thus consecrated by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant—a solemn seal, indeed! Our personal share of the blood of Jesus has already done this for us! It has constrained us to yield unto God our whole manhood, spirit, soul and body. My Brother, you can never serve God as His priest unless you are wholly given up to God through the blood of Jesus! You

must have this verse in your very soul and must masticate it, digest it, assimilate it into your nature—"You are not your own, you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your bodies and your spirits, which are His." This surrender of yourself unto the Lord commences your communion with the Lord—the peace offering has begun.

The next thing was to sprinkle the priests all over with a mixture of oil and blood. This is that anointing which I said we should see by-and-by. "You shall take of the blood that is upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon the garments of his sons with him: and he shall be hallowed, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garments with him." Yes, Brethren, we need to know that *double* anointing—the blood of Jesus which *cleanses*—and the oil of the Holy Spirit which *perfumes* us. It is well to see how these two blend in one, Jesus and His Atonement, the Spirit and His sanctification—the world for us and the work in us.

Read the third of John, and there you find, "You must be born again." But side by side with it you get, "Whoever believes in Him is not condemned." It is not so easy for the preacher to always give these two doctrines with equal clearness and distinctness. He is very apt, when he is preaching up simple faith and saying, "Only believe," to forget that equally important statement, "You must be born again." It is a terrible blunder to set the blood and the oil in opposition—they must always go together! Yet there are some who have even spoken depreciatingly of repentance, which is an essential part of the work of the Spirit of God. Their zeal for holding up the Righteousness of Christ by faith has driven them beyond the bounds of the Truth of God!

Brothers, do not err in this matter, but abide in equal loyalty to these equally sure and important verities! If you would serve the Lord aright, you must have the blood and the oil sprinkled upon you, that is to say, you must know personally the influence of them both. What a strange sight these men in white garments must have presented, bespattered all over with blood and oil! Did that stain their garments? No, it adorned and perfumed them. Remember that saying, "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." No purity is comparable to that which comes by the Spirit and by the atoning blood—in God's sight these priests thus stained were more beautiful, by far, than they had been before!

Oh, my Soul, prize Jesus and His blood! Don't forget that you need the gifts and Graces of the Holy Spirit! Bless God for justification, but seek after sanctification! Praise Him for perfection in Christ Jesus and go on to obtain the perfect work of the Holy Spirit! We have a cleansing and we also have an unction from the Holy One. As our experience is, so let our teaching be, for the priests' garments taught the people. We are to go forth as priests and declare the virtue of the atoning Sacrifice—but we must also manifest the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives.

The next part of the ceremony was very singular. The priests had their hands filled. Certain parts of the ram were taken and "one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of unleavened bread, which is before the Lord," and all these were put into the

hands of Aaron and his sons, so that they stood with their hands full before the Lord. See the beauty of this and pray for a complete realization of it, yourself! The Lord intends to make you a priest, but your hands are full of sin. What have you to do? You must lay those guilty hands on the Sin Offering and make confession, and exercise faith—then the sin is gone, being transferred to Another, and your hands are empty.

What next? Will the Lord leave you empty-handed? No, He gives you something to offer. He allows you a part of the Peace Offering to fill your hands with—and this you present before Him as a Wave Offering. It is a blessed thing to stand before God with your hands full of Christ! The service which consists in holding forth Jesus is most blessed. I love preaching when I have to preach only Jesus! Then I come before you, not empty-handed, but loaded with meat and bread for you. How idle it is for us to stand before God with nothing to offer! And if we have not Jesus we have nothing, or worse than nothing!

We may also interpret the full hands of the priests as representing our being enriched with the Truth of God. I believe it used to be a ceremony in the English Church that, when the bishop ordained a minister, he always placed the Bible in his hands to set forth what he was expected to deal out to the people. When the Lord ordains His people to be priests unto Him, He puts the Bible into their hands and fills their heads and hearts with the Truths of God. When you have the Inspired Word in your hands, you have both meat for strong men and bread for children. You have all sorts of spiritual food for all sorts of persons—and you need not fear that they will turn away dissatisfied—they cannot need more to feed upon than the bread of God's altar and the flesh of God's Peace Offering.

When their hands were full and they stood at the altar, it indicated the way in which they brought to the Lord all that they had. We cannot act as priests before God with empty hands. "None of you shall appear before Me empty," is His command. Has He given us wealth? Let us give without grudging, devising liberal things. Never neglect weekly storing and weekly offering—these are fit parts of Sunday worship. Have we time, talent, influence? Let us consecrate them all and come with those possessions which Jesus has lent us—and present them with the flesh of the Peace Offering and the sacred oil! Holding this in their hands, the priests had to wave their pleasant burden to and fro.

I scarcely know why, except that you, who are God's priests, have not had your hands filled that you may stand still, but that you may move them to and fro in the earth—that east, west, north and south may know the benefit thereof—and that your Brethren on either hand may commune with you in your ministering. Every now and then the priests stopped the horizontal motion and heaved or lifted up their offering, as if to say, "It is all for You, O Jehovah. We lift it up into the Presence of Your august Majesty, for it is Yours and we are about to lay it on Your altar." Believers, if you have had your hands filled by God, you must not be idle! Your fullness is meant for distribution to God's Glory.

If the clouds are full of rain they empty themselves upon the earth. If the rivers are full of water, they run into the sea, and if God gives you a fullness, it is that you may communicate it to others and devote it to Him—

self. Jesus Christ breaks the bread, multiplies it and gives it to the disciples to divide among the multitude. Nary a man becomes empty-handed because he does not know the art of distribution. He has his hands full and cries out, "Where shall I bestow my goods? My hands are full and I would not keep it for myself and my family." My Brother, wave it among your neighbors! Lift it up to God in solemn consecration and then let it be laid upon God's altar, since for this purpose you were called to be a priest unto the Most High.

Last of all there followed a very pleasant part of the matter—they sat down and feasted. God had received His part in the burning of the victim on the altar—and now Aaron and his sons were to "eat those things with which the atonement was made." You cannot serve God without strength. You cannot have strength except you eat, but you must be careful what you take into your soul, for according to what your food is will your strength be. The Lord would have His people fed daily upon Christ, and fed in the holy place where they serve. Christ is delightful to God and is delightful to you, so you must feed on Him in communion with God, in the place of holy fellowship. There is no sustenance for our inner nature anywhere but in Jesus, but, blessed be His name, no other sustenance can be desired, for He fills us to the full and gives us a strength which is equal to our day.

I know some good people who are very busy, indeed, in the services of God. And I am very delighted that they should be, but I would caution them against working and never eating. They give up attending the means of Grace as *hearers* because they have so much to do as *workers*. That is very well—and some strong men may be able to do it safely—but I do not think many of us can afford to do without the regular hearing of the Word of God. Whatever may be our zeal to work like Martha, we must also sit at Jesus' feet like Mary, or we shall become "numbered with much serving." The priest is to offer sacrifice, but he must have time, also, to feed on the portion allotted to him.

How sweet it is to enjoy the food of God, the flesh of Jesus, the bread of Heaven! Aaron and his sons had the breast and the shoulder for their part—the love of Christ's heart and the power of Christ's arm. I am thankful, as one of God's priests, to have the shoulder and breast, for power and love are necessary for my comfort and support. Eli's vile sons were apt to drive a three-pronged hook into the cauldron and bring up what they thought the choicer portions—but my soul is more than content with what the rules of the house allot me—in fact, these are the best parts of the sacrifice!

In closing, I would call the attention of Believers, for a moment, to the fact that Aaron and his sons received this consecration for *life*. You will find in the 9th verse, the words, "The priests' office shall be theirs for a perpetual statute." "Once a priest, always a priest," is the rule in the priesthood to which we belong! We abide in Christ and we also have an anointing which abides in us, for we have been sealed with "that Holy Spirit of promise." Do not act, at any time, as if you were not priests. If you profess to be the Lord's, do not lie about it, let it be truly so—and that every day, and all the day, and in all things—for He has made us kings

and priests unto God *forever*. Do not, I beseech you, dishonor your sacred character.

I shall ask two questions in closing. Do you and I offer sacrifice continually? Unto this we are called, according to the Apostle, that we should offer the sacrifice of prayer and praise continually. To Him the cherubim continually cry "Holy, holy, holy." Do we, every day, feel that our whole being is "Holiness unto the Lord"? In the workshop, in the home, at the fire-side, in the field as well as in the Prayer Meeting the vows of God are upon us. We are a separated people and belong unto God alone. O see you to this! What have you, now, to offer? Have you brought an offering? What will you render unto God for all His benefits towards you? Is there nothing to be done for Christ this afternoon? No sick one to be visited, no poor child to be instructed, no backslider to be reclaimed? Shall a single hour go by without a sacrifice?

I charge you, Brothers and Sisters, continually bring of your substance, continually bring of your talent, continually bring of your influence! If God is God, and if you are His priests, serve Him! If you are not His ordained ones, then you live unto yourselves and it will be well to know it! Anything is better than to be hypocrites! But if you are true men and women, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, present your bodies, your souls, your spirits unto God, which is but a reasonable service. When you have once and for all made the consecration, may God grant you Divine Grace continually to stand to it, and He shall have the Glory, forever and ever. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—*Exodus 29:1-37*.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—411, 663, 878.**

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

EATING THE SACRIFICE

NO. 2528

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 1, 1897.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 30, 1884.

“And they shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them: but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy.”
Exodus 29:33.

On the last two Sabbath mornings I have spoken concerning the sacrifices under the Law. Our first sermon was, “*Putting the Hand upon the Head of the Sacrifice*,” and the next was, “*Slaying the Sacrifice*” (Nos. 1771 and 1772—Volume 30—read/download the entire sermon for free at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>). Now we are to make an advance and to speak about the eating of the sacrifice, for in certain cases the offerer ate a portion of that which had been presented to God.

It has been said by some people who are very particular in drawing nice distinctions, that there was no eating of a sacrifice in which there was any connection with sin. I beg to differ from that opinion and I have showed you that every sacrifice had something to do with sin, since no sacrifice would have been needed if the man bringing it had not been a sinner. And here, in this case, I might have selected many texts to teach the Truth of God I want to bring out just now, but I have especially chosen this one because it says, “They shall eat those things wherewith the atonement was made.” You all know that a covering is only needed for those who are naked, or who have something that requires to be hidden. So, the atonement, or the covering, is evidently intended for the guilty—and has something to do with sin—yet of the things wherewith the atonement was made, Aaron’s sons were to eat, so that there is to be an eating, a joyous reception into ourselves even of those things which have a connection with the putting away of sin!

The first thing that an offerer did with his victim when he brought it was to appropriate it to himself by laying his hands upon it. So, when a sinner comes to Christ, his first act is to lay his hands upon Christ, that Christ may be shown to belong to the sinner and that the sinner’s guilt may be transferred to Christ and borne by Him as the sinner’s Substitute. In later life we are continually to look to Christ and, by faith, to lay our hands upon Him. But we are to advance to a yet more lively and more intensely spiritual way of appropriating Him to ourselves. This is indicated in the text by *eating*—

“There is life for a look at the Crucified One,”

but, after you have begun to live, the substance of that life comes through *feeding* upon the Sacrifice! The first appropriation—the laying on of the hands—is an outward act. But the later appropriation—feeding

upon the Sacrifice, taking it into yourself—is altogether an inward matter. You who are not yet saved have not, at present, anything to do with this eating of the Sacrifice. Your first business is to look to Jesus—not so much spiritually to enjoy Him as, by faith, to look to Him as outside of you, to be regarded by the eye of faith while you, a poor guilty sinner, simply look to Him and find salvation in Him. It is afterwards, when you shall have made some advance in the Divine Life, when you shall have clearly seen the Victim sacrificed and His blood making an Atonement for your sins, that you shall come and feed upon Jesus Christ.

At the time of the Passover, the Jew must first take the lamb, kill it and sprinkle the blood on the lintel and the two side posts of his house. And after that he must go inside and, when the door is shut, feed upon that lamb whose blood is sprinkled outside. He must eat the Passover supper that he may be refreshed before starting on his journey through the wilderness. Let not this distinction be forgotten—the eating of the sacrifice is not intended to *give life*, for no dead man can eat—but to *sustain the life* which is there already. A believing look at Christ makes you live, but *spiritual life* must be fed and sustained—and the feeding of that life is explained by our Savior in the words I read to you just now—“Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed”—*spiritual* meat and *spiritual* drink to support the spiritual life which God has given. Hence it was ordained, even under the Law, that after the atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify the priests, they were to come and sit down and “eat those things wherewith the atonement was made.”

I. The first thing about which I have to speak to you at this time is, THE PARTICIPATION—the eating of the sacrifice.

So, first, I will describe it. We are to “eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made,” to participate in Christ, to take Him into ourselves. The act of eating is a very common but a very expressive method of setting forth participation, for it is entirely personal. Nobody can eat for you, or drink for you. It is personally for yourself that you partake of bread, and the bread goes into yourself, to build up yourself, to be assimilated by yourself into yourself so as to become part of yourself. And, dear Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ must thus be received into your heart and soul by yourself, for yourself and must remain within yourself, you exercising upon Him continually a blessed act of faith by which you have communion and fellowship with Him. This can’t be done by any sponsor, or proxy, or through any means—it must be done personally, directly and distinctly by yourself. God help you to receive Christ into yourself! That point, surely, is plain enough. As a man himself receives food into himself, to become part of himself, so must you and I receive the Lord Jesus *into* ourselves, *for* ourselves, to be interwoven *with* ourselves, so that we two shall be one!

This participation is not only personal, but it is distinctly *inward*. There is no receiving Christ by any exercise of the flesh, by anything that we can do externally. It is within that we are to receive Christ, with our heart, with our spirit. We are not to regard Him only as yonder on the

Cross, but as formed in us the hope of glory, as coming into us to sit as King upon His Throne and to reign within us—for it is into our innermost nature that we are to receive the blessed Truth of God concerning Christ and His Atonement.

And it is an active reception, too. A man can receive some things into himself passively. Oil may penetrate into his flesh. Certain drugs may be injected beneath the skin and so may permeate the blood, but eating is an active exercise, a thing done by a man, not in his sleep, but with the full intent that he may receive into himself that which he eats. So must you receive the Lord Jesus Christ, feeding upon Him willingly, actively taking Him into yourself with the full consent and power of your whole being. You know, also, that eating arises from a sense of need and it leads to a sense of satisfaction. The most of people eat because they are hungry, though I suppose there are some who eat simply because the time has come, whether they need food or not. I have heard that the best time for a poor man to have his dinner is when he can get it, and that the best time for a rich man to have his dinner is when he wants it. And I think there is something in the saying. In this *spiritual* feeding, if you will feed on Christ when you can get Him, you may begin at once. What is needed in most cases is an appetite, but when a man has an appetite for Christ, when he says, “I must have pardon, for I am a sinner. I must have a renewed heart, for I have an evil one. I must have spiritual life, for I am in a state of spiritual death,” then he has the appetite which only Christ can satisfy! Then, when he receives Christ into his heart, there follows a sense of satisfaction as you have sometimes seen in the case of a person who has enjoyed a good meal. He needs no more. He lies down and is perfectly content.

Oh, but what a satisfaction Christ brings to the soul that feeds upon Him! When you have fed on Him, dear Friends, how full you have become—not to repletion, for the more you receive of Him the more He will enlarge your capacity—but you have received Him to the fullness of satisfaction! Do you recall that Psalm where David says, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips”? Oh, yes, and it is so with us when we receive Christ into our hearts! Then are we filled to the full and this is the kind of participation which is meant in our text—we are to “eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made”—we are to receive Christ personally, inwardly, actively, because of our soul’s hunger and that our feeding upon Him may lead to an intense satisfaction with Him! Do you want another Savior, you who have received Christ Jesus into your souls? I know that you do not! Is there something, after all, that you desire to add to the blessed Lord and His Divine work? I know that there is not, for, “you are complete in Him”—perfectly satisfied with Christ Jesus, filled up to the brim with all spiritual blessings!

Thus I have tried to describe this participation. Now I want you to *practice it*. Notice that the text says, “They shall eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made.” Among, “those things,” there was flesh, there was bread in the basket and so forth. And they were to eat of all those things. I gather from this injunction that you and I must endeavor to feed upon all that makes up the Atonement and all that is connected

with the Atonement. For instance, let us feed upon the Father's love that gave the Lord Jesus Christ to bleed and die. Then let us feed on the fact of the Divine Person of the Lord Jesus. Oh, what a blessed loaf that is! What is the use of a Savior to me if He is not Divine? I am sure that nothing short of Deity can ever save such a soul as mine from the sin in which it is found! But Christ is "very God of very God," so I feed upon that glorious Truth of God! Will not you do the same, dear Friends? Then feed upon the fact of His perfect Humanity, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, born of a human mother, as certainly Man as we are. Oh, there is many a satisfying meal in the blessed Doctrine of the true and indisputable Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Then, when you have fed upon Christ's Deity and Humanity, feed upon the willingness with which He came to save us. Long before He was born into this world, His delights were with the sons of men and He looked forward with joy to the time of His appearing. "Lo I come," He said, "in the volume of the Book it is written of Me, I delight to do Your will, O My God." In the fullness of time He came, leaping over the mountains, skipping over the hills, that He might save His people! It is no unwilling Savior who has come to save you and me, Beloved. Feed on that sweet Truth of God. Think of the love that did lie at the back of it all, the love He had to His Church and people, which moved Him to lay aside all His Glory and take upon Himself all our shame—to surrender the ineffable splendor of His Throne—to be nailed up to the shameful Cross! O Brothers and Sisters, there is a great feast for the soul in the love of Christ! This is "butter in a lordly dish." There was never such wine, even at a king's marriage, as that which Christ Himself made, and we can truly say to Him, "You have kept the best wine until now."

Yes, but I believe that there is food for us at every stage of the Redeemer's passion. There are sweet fruits to be gathered even in dark Gethsemane. There are precious clusters of the vine to be found at Gabbatha, the pavement where the cruel scourges made the sacred drops roll. What food there is for our souls upon Calvary! Every item of our Lord's death is sacred! We would not omit any of the details of His suffering, for some strike one mind and some strike another, but could we go through the whole history of our Savior, from the agony in Gethsemane till He said, "It is finished," we should find all the way full of food for our souls! Where are there such pastures as those that grow on Calvary? Sharon, you are altogether outdone! O plains that fed the flocks of old, you are barren compared with this little hill whereon the Savior poured out His soul unto death! Try, dear Christian Friends, to feed on all these things! I cannot keep you to do it, now, but at such times as you can get an hour, or even a few minutes, say to yourself, "This is all spiritual food for me. I am to feed on 'those things wherewith the Atonement was made.'"

Before I pass to the second division, I want to tell you one more thing about this participation which, I think, enables it, and lifts it altogether out of the commonplace, namely, that this feeding of the priests—or, if you turn to the peace-offering, the feeding of the offerer, himself—upon the sacrifice was in fellowship with God. When the sacrifice was offered, a part of it was burnt on the altar. That was God's portion. The altar rep-

resented God and the Lord received the portion that was consumed by the fire. In the text before us, we see that the priest was also to take his share. It was a part of the same sacrifice, so both God and the priest fed upon it! You and I, Beloved, are to feed *with* God on Christ! That is a blessed sentence in the parable of the prodigal son where the father said, "Let us eat and be merry." The father eats, and the family eats with him—"Let us eat, and be merry." Oh, it is indeed joyful for us to remember that the Father finds satisfaction in the work and merit, the life and death of the Only-Begotten! God is well pleased with Jesus, for He has magnified the Law and made it honorable. And that which satisfies the heart of God is passed on to satisfy you and me. Oh, to think of our being entertained in such a fashion as this!

You remember that it is said of the elders who went up with Moses and Aaron into the mountain, that, "they saw God, and did eat and drink." And surely we are as favored as they were, for now in Christ Jesus we behold the reconciled God and we eat and drink with Him. And while the Father smiles because the work of Atonement is finished, we sit down and we rejoice, too. Even we poor weeping sinners wipe our tears away and sing—

***"Blessed be the Father, and His love,
To whose celestial source we owe
Rivers of endless joy above,
And rills of comfort here below."***

If God is content, so are we! If the Judge of all the earth says, "It is enough," we also say, "It is enough." Our conscience echoes to the verdict of the Eternal. Christ has finished the transgression and made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness and, therefore, we enjoy the sweetest imaginable rest in Him! The Father's delight is in Him and so is ours. Oh, who among us who knows the Lord Jesus, will stand back for a moment from this blessed eating with God? "They shall eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made, to consecrate and to sanctify them."

II. This brings me to my second point which is an advance upon the former one, namely, THE OFFICIAL CHARACTER OF THIS PARTICIPATION. In this particular form, the participation was for the priests only.

Now, mark this. The child of God, when he is first converted, does not know much about being a priest. He does not know much about doing anything for Christ. I heard of a good Scottish woman whose style of speech I cannot imitate, but I like the sense of it. Someone said to her, "How long have you been a servant of the Lord?" She said, "No, nay, but He has been a servant to me, for does He not say, 'I am among you as He that serves'?" "Ah," replied the other, "that is true. But, still, you have served the Lord." "Yes," she answered, "but it is such poor work I have ever done that I do not like to think of having done anything at all for Him. And I would rather talk of how long He has been doing something for me, than how long I have been doing anything for Him." That is quite true! Yet, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus Christ died for us, we reckon that we all died and that He died for us that we, henceforth, should live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him and, by His Grace, so we do. If the Lord

has really blessed us with His love, we have begun to be priests, and we have begun to serve Him.

Now the priest, because he is a priest, is the man who must take care that he feeds upon the Sacrifice. But how are we priests? I am *not*, now, talking about *ministers*, I am talking about all of you who love the Lord. Christ has made all of us who believe in Him to be kings and priests unto God—there is no priesthood in the world that is of God save the High Priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ and, next to that, the priesthood which is common to all Believers. And the idea of there being any priesthood on earth above and beyond the priesthood of all Believers is a false one, and there is no Scripture, whatever, to vindicate it, to justify it, or even to apologize for it—it is one of the lies of the Roman Catholic church! All Believers are priests, but they do not all fully recognize that great Truth of God. It is a pity they do not realize that glorious fact and so join in the Apostle John's doxology, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

Being priests, they are, first of all, to *offer themselves*. What says the Apostle? "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Now, you will never do this unless you feed upon Christ! I shall never be a sacrifice to God unless my soul is nourished upon the true and living Sacrifice, Christ Jesus, my Lord! To attempt sanctification apart from justification is to attempt an impossibility! And to endeavor to lead a holy life apart from the work of Christ is an idle dream! You priests who offer yourselves unto God must take care that it is all done through Christ who is in you.

Next, as priests, we are to *intercede for others*. A priest was chosen to offer prayer for others and every Christian ought to pray for those who are round about him. But you will never be men of prayer unless you feed on Christ, I am sure of that. If Christ is not in your heart, intercessory prayer will not be in your mouths. You will never be true pleaders with God for men unless you are, yourselves, true feeders upon the atoning Sacrifice of Christ.

A true priest is, next, to *be a teacher*. The Prophet Micah said, "The priest's lips should keep knowledge," and so should it be with all Christians. They are to teach others. But you cannot teach others what you do not know yourselves! And unless you are, first, partakers of the fruits, you will never be able to sow the seed. You must feed upon Christ in your inmost soul or else you will never speak of Him with any power to others.

Priests, again, were chosen from among men to *have compassion on the ignorant* and on such as were out of the way. That is your duty, too, as Christians—to look after the weak ones and the wandering ones—and to have compassion upon them. But, unless you live by faith upon the compassionate Savior, you will never keep up the life of compassion in your own soul! If Christ is not in you, neither will you be in the spirit of Christ, full of love to such as need your help. But, coming fresh from communion with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, your words

of consolation will sweetly drop into afflicted hearts and will comfort them. You will have the tongue of an instructed one and be able to speak seasonable and sweet words to such as are weary. Take care, then, that you feed upon Christ.

I believe, also, that a Christian man is to act as a priest for a dumb world, and to *express the worship of creation*. It is he who is to chant creation's hymn. It is his voice that must lift up the hallelujahs of the universe. The world lacks a tongue. Yon sea, with all its rolling billows, yet speaks not a word articulately. And yonder stars, with all their brilliance, cannot tell out the glory of God in human language, or, indeed, in any language at all! "There is no speech, nor language; their voice is not heard." Nor can the sweet flowers, nor even the birds, in actual language tell of Him who made them and express their gratitude to Him. But you and I have a tongue, which is the glory of our frame, and with that tongue we are to open our mouths for the dumb and speak the praises of God for all creation! Take care that you do it! Before you lies the world, like a great organ, all ready to sound forth the sweetest music, but it cannot play itself. Those little hands of yours, if they are instinct with heavenly life, are to be laid among the keys and you are to fetch forth strains of mighty hallelujahs unto Him who has made all things and sustains all things by the power of His hands! Feed on Christ and you will be able to do this, for He speaks to reveal God and He becomes the tongue of men unto the Father! Live on Him and you shall learn the art of speaking for creation unto the Creator.

III. Now I have done when I have very solemnly noticed, in the third place, THE ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION. "They shall eat those things wherewith the Atonement was made. . . but"—"but a stranger shall not eat thereof, because they are holy."

Who was "a stranger" in such a case as this? Everybody was a stranger, in the matter of the priests, but such as belonged to the priests. And strangers might not partake of the sacrifices with the priests. The prohibition is clearly given in the 22nd Chapter of Leviticus, at the 10th verse—"There shall no stranger eat of the holy thing: a sojourner of the priest"—that is, a mere guest—"or an hired servant, shall not eat of the holy thing." Listen. You who only come into the House of God just to look on, you who do not belong to the family, but are only sojourners—welcome as sojourners—but you may not eat of the Holy Thing! You cannot enjoy Christ, you cannot feed upon the precious Truth connected with Him, for you are only a sojourner. I am very sorry, on the first Sabbath night in the month, and I think that some of you must feel very sorry and sad, too. There is to be the Communion, the Lord's Supper. You have been hearing the sermon, but you have to go away from the table, or else to take your place among the spectators. You are only sojourners—you do not belong to the family and dare not profess that you do! You are only a sojourner, or a stranger.

And it was the same in the case of a hired servant. He might not eat of the holy thing, and he who only follows Christ for what he can get out of Him—he who works for Christ with the idea of *meriting* salvation, hoping that he may earn enough to save himself by his works—is only like a priest's hired servant. He says, "I do my best and I believe that I shall go

to Heaven.” Yes, just so. You are a hired servant, even though Heaven seems to be the wage you are expecting, but you may not eat of the Holy Thing.

Now notice what is written in Leviticus 22:11. “But if the priest buys any soul with his money, he shall eat of it.” Is not that a blessing? *If the Lord Jesus Christ has bought you with His precious blood*, and you by faith recognize yourself as not your own, but bought with a price—then you may eat of the Sacrifice. “If the priest buys any soul with his money”—it may be a very strange person, somebody for whom you and I would not give two pence—but if the Great High Priest has bought any soul with His money, “he shall eat of it.”

“And he that is born in his house, shall eat of his meat.” There is the Doctrine of Regeneration, as the former part of the verse spoke of Redemption. If you have been born again, and are no more in the house of Satan, but in the house of the Great High Priest, you may come and eat of this spiritual meat! If you have the blood-mark, having been bought by Christ, and if you have the life-mark, having been quickened by the Spirit, and born into the family of Christ, then come along with you! Though least and weakest of them all, come and welcome!

Listen to this next verse—“If the priest’s daughter also is married to a stranger, she may not eat of an offering of the holy things.” She is the priest’s daughter, mark you. Nobody denies that—and shall not the child partake with the father? No, not if she is married to a stranger. She now bears her husband’s characteristics. She has given herself up to him. She is no longer her father’s, she belongs to her husband. Oh, is there anybody here who once made a profession of religion, but who has gone aside? Have you got married to the world? Have you got married to amusements and Sabbath-breaking? Have you got married right away from the Priest, your Father—right away from the Church of Christ—right away from the people of God? Then you cannot eat of the Holy Thing!

Yet listen to one other verse. “But if the priest’s daughter is a widow, or divorced, and has no child, and is returned unto her father’s house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father’s meat; but there shall no stranger eat thereof.” Perhaps there is someone here who says, “I am a widow.” I do not mean that your natural husband is dead, but that the *world* has become dead to you! You went and married into the world for wealth and you have lost it. You are poor now, riches are dead to you. You used to be such a fine woman, but now your face has lost its comeliness, your beauty is dead. Everybody used to admire your talents, but you have not any talent, now, and they all give you the cold shoulder. Ah, well, I am not sorry that the world has cast you out and cast you off! Perhaps the men of the world have said concerning you, “We will have no more to do with him.” You are divorced, you see.

Long ago, I was divorced from the world. I got a bill of divorcement pretty quickly when I began to preach the Gospel in London! If it were worth while, I could publish some of the cruel and false things that men said. According to them, I was the biggest charlatan and the greatest hypocrite and deceiver who ever lived. That was my bill of divorcement—the world said, “We have done with you”—and I replied, “I have done with

you.” And so we parted. There were not many words on my part, but there were a great many on theirs. Well, if it is so with you. If you feel that the world has done with you and you have done with the world, and you are willing to come back to your Father’s house, just as in the days of your youth, come along with you! Come in and eat of His dainties, feed upon Christ on earth by faith, and then go up and feed on Him even to the fullest in Glory everlasting!

But you must get away from your stranger husband, for if you cleave to him, you will have to be counted with that which your heart lusts after. What you love shall label you. Where your delight is, where your treasure is, there your heart is—and there your portion is! But if the Lord will help you to escape right away from the clutches of error and sin, then it shall be with you as it was with the priest’s daughter—“If she is returned unto her father’s house, as in her youth, she shall eat of her father’s meat.”

“But there shall no stranger eat thereof.” If you will not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you are a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel—and there is no way of your being made near but by the blood of the Cross. If you believe in Him, you are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.” But if you are not bought with His money, or born in His house, then you must remain strangers—and there is no blessing for you, no comfort for you!

The other day, one who had been attending a religious service and mocking and jesting at everything sacred, said, when he was talked to about it, “Oh, but I am a Christian! Jesus died for me.” It was a lie! He had neither part nor lot in the matter, or else he could not have acted profanely as he did! And there are others who talk as he did, but I tell you, Sirs, whatever you say, this is what God says, “A stranger shall not eat thereof.” If you have not been born again, you cannot feed upon Christ! But, oh, if you will look to Him who died for the sinner, then you shall feed upon Him who lives for the saint! God Bless you in both these respects, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN 6:41-71.

Verse 41. *The Jews then murmured at Him*—That is, at our blessed Lord. “The Jews then murmured at Him.”

41, 42. *Because He said, I am the bread which came down from Heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it, then, that He says, I came down from Heaven?* There are always some who complain that the Gospel is “too commonplace, too well-known.” They already know all that is to be known about it, just as these people knew the mother and father of our Lord Jesus. How could He, who was the son of the carpenter, have come down from Heaven? But this ought to have commended Him to them that though He was Divine, He became so truly Human and so perfectly took upon Himself our Nature as to be the son of Joseph—one whose father and mother they knew! And ought we not to be glad of a Gospel plain enough for a child to grasp, simple enough for the most ignorant to be

saved by it? Let us not seek after signs and mysteries, but graciously accept the Gospel which the Lord Himself gives us.

43, 44. *Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draws him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* This was high ground for Christ to take. It was as much as to say, “You need not murmur. I did not expect that you would believe in Me. I know that human nature is such that, without a Divine work upon the heart, man cannot come to Me, and will not believe in Me. I am not disappointed, or deceived, when you murmur among yourselves, ‘No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draws him.’”

45. *It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto Me.* Nobody else will come to Christ. There is no real Christian in the world but is of God’s making. A Christian is a sacred thing, the Holy Spirit has made him so. It takes as much of God’s Omnipotence to make a Believer as to make a world. And only He that created the heavens and the earth can create even as much as a grain of true faith in the heart of man!

46. *Not that any man has seen the Father, save He which is of God, He has seen the Father.* The Divine Son has seen the Father. You and I are to believe—we cannot see as yet.

47. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believes on Me has everlasting life.* He has it even now in possession—a life that can never die out is in the breast of every man who believes in Christ! Oh, what a joy is this!

48. *I am that bread of life.* Jesus is that bread which feeds the spiritual life and sustains the everlasting life.

49, 50. *Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from Heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die.* The bread that feeds the undying life is Christ Jesus, Himself, whom we do spiritually feed upon, and who is the nourishment of our souls.

51. *I am the living bread which came down from Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.* Christ—God Incarnate—is the nourishment of faith, the spiritual food of the everlasting life! The new life which God puts into us is not natural, so as to be fed upon natural food, like bread and meat. But it is *spiritual* and it must live upon spiritual food. That food is nothing less than Christ Jesus, Himself.

52-56. *The Jews therefore said among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, has eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat, indeed, and My blood is drink, indeed. He that eats My flesh, and drinks My blood, dwells in Me, and I in him.* These Jews would not understand Christ when He spoke very plainly. He did not, therefore, retract a single word that He had said, but as the first light had dazzled them—and willingly were they dazzled by it—He turned the lantern full upon their faces and made them blind, for the excessive light of the explana-

tion was too much for them. It was not Christ's intent to save them—He was making the Light of God, itself, to be blindness to them because they had already refused Him. And now the time was come when the heart of these people must be made yet more gross, that they should not see with their eyes, or hear with their ears! May the Lord never give us up to such a fate as that! It is a dreadful thing when the Light of the Gospel becomes the instrument of blinding men, and it still does so. After a certain degree of willful rejection of it, that which would have been a savor of life unto life can be turned into a savor of death unto death by men's closing their hearts against it!

Yet I wonder and am astonished at our Lord and Master's course of proceeding, that here, when the men do not and will not see, He does but speak the Truth of God the more boldly! Let no man think that Jesus was here alluding to the eating of the bread and drinking of the wine in the Lord's Supper! That ordinance was not instituted at that time and there could be no allusion to what did not then exist! It is quite in another sense, in a high spiritual sense, that our mind feeds upon the flesh and blood of Christ. That is to say, the fact that God was made flesh—the fact that Christ died for sin—*these* are the food of our souls, and thereon our faith grows, and our spirit is strengthened.

57, 58. *As the living Father has sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that bread which came down from Heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eats of this bread shall live forever.* This is spiritual feeding upon spiritual Truth.

59-62. *These things said He in the synagogue, as He taught in Capernaum. Many, therefore, of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can bear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Does this offend you? What and if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?* Let our Master teach us what He pleases, nothing ought to offend a disciple of Christ! It is ours to sit at His feet and receive all His words without quibbling. But if we do not believe what He tells us upon some elementary points, what should we do if He were to reveal something more to us—and lead us into the higher and deeper doctrines of His Word?

63. *It is the Spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing.* That is to say, it is the *meaning* of Christ's words that gives life, not the words, themselves. And if we stumble at the letter, and begin to ask, "How can we eat the flesh of Christ?" taking that expression *literally*, it will kill us! We need to get into the spirit of what He says, the true spiritual meaning of it, for that is where the life lies.

63, 64. *The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not.* Could that be truly said of any here? "There are some of you that believe not." If so, you know what becomes of unbelievers—you certainly cannot attain the blessings promised to faith. May God grant that, before this day is quite over, there may not be left one among you that believes not!

64-66. *For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore said I unto you,*

that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father. From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. So it seems that a man may be recognized as a disciple of Christ and yet he may go back and walk no more with Him. Oh, that we may be real disciples—disciples indeed! Oh, that we may be part and parcel of Christ, true branches of the true Vine, living members of the living body of Christ!

67. *Then said Jesus unto the twelve. The choice and pick of all His followers. “Then said Jesus unto the twelve.”*

67, 68. *Will you, also, go away? Then Simon Peter. Who was the ready tongue of the Apostles. “Then Simon Peter.”*

68. *Answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life. That was a very conclusive way of answering one question by another—“Will you also go away?” “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life.” Brother, Sister, if we wandered from Christ, where could we go? And how can we leave Him when He has the Words of eternal life?*

69-71. *And we believe and are sure that You are that Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve.*

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—296, 786, 313.

SPECIAL NOTICE

The August number of *The Sword and the Trowel* contains a full report of the services in connection with the stone-laying at Beulah Baptist Chapel, Bexhill-on-Sea, together with an article by Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon upon the same subject, and reproductions of two photographs taken during the proceedings. There are also the usual items of interest—The Question Oak. The Pastor’s Page. Our Own Men and their Work, Indian Incidents and Illustrations. The By-Ways and By-Gones of Life, etc. etc. Dr. McCaig’s Conference Paper and an illustrated letter from Pastor J. G. Potter on Famine Relief in India. Extra copies should be ordered at once, price 8d., post free 4d., of Messrs. Passmore and Alabaster, or through any bookseller. [Check with Pilgrim Publications for availability and price of reprints: <http://www.pilgrimpublications.com>]

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**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JANUARY 30, 1881,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying, When you take the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when you number them; that there be no plague among them, when you number them. This they shall give, everyone that passes among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary: (a shekel is twenty gerahs): an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Everyone that passes among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for their souls. And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the Tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for their souls.”
Exodus 30:11-16.

“A bekah for every man, that is, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred and three thousand and five hundred and fifty men. And of the hundred talents of silver were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the veil; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket.”
Exodus 38:26-27.

WILL you kindly open your Bibles to Exodus 30, for I must commence my discourse by expounding that passage. When the account was taken of the number of the children of Israel, the Lord commanded that every male over 20 years of age should pay half a shekel as Redemption money, confessing that he deserved to die, acknowledging that he was in debt to God and bringing the sum demanded as a type of a great Redemption which would, by-and-by, be paid for the souls of the sons of men. The truth was thus taught that God's people are a *redeemed* people—they are elsewhere called, “the redeemed of the Lord.” If men reject the Redemption which He ordains, then they are not His people, for of all His chosen it

may be said—“The Lord has redeemed Jacob and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he.”

Whenever we attempt to number the people of God, it is absolutely necessary that we count only those who at least *profess* to have brought the Redemption price in their hands and so have taken part in the Atonement of Christ Jesus. David, when he numbered the people, did not gather from them the Redemption money and, therefore, a plague broke out among them. He had failed in obedience to the Lord’s ordinance and counted his subjects, not as redeemed people, but merely as so many heads. Let us always beware of estimating the number of Christians by the number of the population of the countries called Christian, for the only true Christians in the world are those who are redeemed from iniquity by the blood of the Lamb and have personally accepted the ransom which the Lord has provided—personally brought their Redemption money in their hands by taking Christ to be theirs and presenting Him, by an act of faith, to the great Father.

God has upon earth as many people as believe in Jesus Christ and we dare not count any others to be His but those who can say, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” We must not count heads which know *about* Christ, but hands which have *received* the Redemption money and are presenting it to God. We must not count persons who are called Christians by courtesy, but souls that are Christly in very fact because they have accepted the atoning Sacrifice and live before God as “redeemed from among men.” Observe that this Redemption, without which no man might rightly be numbered among the children of Israel, lest a plague should break out among them, must be personal and individual. There was not a lump sum to be paid for the nation, or 12 amounts for the 12 tribes—each man must bring his own half shekel for himself.

So there is no Redemption that will be of any use to any of you unless it is *personally* accepted and brought before God by faith. You must, each one, be able to say for yourself concerning the Lord Jesus, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” The doctrine of *general* redemption, which teaches men to say, “Oh, yes, we are all sinners, you know. Christ died for us, for He died for us all,” lays a very poor foundation for comfort. We need not so much a general as a *personal* redemption—a Redemption which actually redeems and redeems us as individuals! The great Sacrifice for the sin of man must become to us a personal Atonement, for only so can we realize its efficacy. You must, each one, bring *Christ* to the Father, taking Him into your hands by simple faith. No other price must be there and that price must be brought by every individual, or else there is no acceptable coming to God.

It was absolutely essential that each one should bring the half shekel of Redemption money, for Redemption is the only way in which you and I can be accepted of God. If birth could have done it, they had the privilege beyond all doubt, for they had Abraham as their father! They were lineally descended from the three great Patriarchs and they might have said, “We are Abraham’s seed and were never in bondage to any man.” No, but salvation is not of blood, nor of birth, nor of the will of the flesh—salvation is

by Redemption—and even the true child of Abraham must bring his Redemption money. So must you, you child of godly parents, find salvation by the Redemption which is in Christ Jesus, or be lost forever!

Do not believe the falsehood of certain modern divines that you children of godly parents do not need to be converted because you are born so nobly and brought up so tenderly by your parents! You are, by nature, heirs of wrath even as others. “You must be born again” and you must be *personally* redeemed as well as heathen children, or else you will perish, though the blood of ministers, martyrs and Apostles should be running in your veins! Redemption is the only ground of acceptance before God—not godly birth or pious education. There were many, no doubt, in the camp if Israel who were men of station and substance, but they must bring the ransom money or die amid their wealth! Others were wise-hearted and skillful in the arts, yet they must be redeemed or die. Rank could not save the princes, nor office spare the elders—*every* man of Israel must be redeemed and no man could pass the muster-roll without his half shekel, whatever he might say, or do, or be.

God was their God because He had redeemed them out of the house of bondage and they were His people because He had “put a redemption between His people and the Egyptians.” Well did David ask, “What one nation in the earth is like Your people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself?” Note well that every Israelite man must be, alike, redeemed and redeemed with the like—with the same Redemption. “The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel.” Every man requires Redemption, the one as well as the other. Kings on their thrones must be redeemed as well as prisoners in their dungeons. The philosopher must be redeemed as well as the peasant. The preacher as much as the profligate and the moralist as certainly as the prostitute or the thief. The Redemption money for every person must be the same, for all have sinned and are in the same condemnation!

And it must be a Redemption that meets the Divine demand because, you see, the Lord not only says that they must each bring half a shekel, no more, no less, but it must be, “the shekel of the sanctuary”—not the shekel of commerce, which might be debased in quality or diminished by wear and tear, but the coin must be according to the standard shekel laid up in the Holy Place. To make sure of it, Moses defines exactly how much a shekel was worth and what its weight was—“A shekel is twenty gerahs.” So you must bring to God the Redemption which *He* has appointed—the *blood and righteousness of Christ*—nothing more, nothing less! The ransom of Christ is perfection and from it there must be no varying. The price must satisfy the Divine demand and that to the fullest.

Note that the price appointed did effectually redeem so far as the type could go. Some rejoice in a redemption which does not redeem, for the general redemption by which all men are supposed to be redeemed leaves multitudes in bondage and they go to Hell in spite of their kind of redemption! Therefore do we preach a *particular* and special Redemption of God’s own chosen and believing people—these are effectually and really ransomed—and the precious price once paid for them has set them free! Neither shall any plague of vengeance smite them, for the Redemption money

has procured them eternal deliverance! This type is full of instruction. The more it is studied, the richer will it appear. Every man that is numbered among the children of Israel and permitted to serve God by going out to war, or to take upon the duties of citizenship, must, as he is numbered, be redeemed.

So must every one of us, if we are truly God's people and God's servants, find our right to be so in the fact of our Redemption by Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the joy and glory of each one of us—"You have redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth."

Now we turn to the second of our texts, and there we learn a very remarkable fact. In the 38th chapter, verse 25, we find that this mass of silver which was paid, whereby 603,050 men were redeemed, each one paying his half shekel, came to a great weight of silver. It must have weighed something over four tons and this was dedicated to the use of the Tabernacle—the special application of the precious metal was to make sockets into which the boards which made the walls of the Tabernacle should be placed. The mass of silver made up 100 sockets and these held up the 50 boards of the holy place. They were in a wilderness, constantly moving and continually shifting the Tabernacle. Now, they might have dug out a foundation in the sand, or, on coming to a piece of rock where they could not dig, they might have cut out foundations with great toil. But the Lord appointed that they should *carry* the foundation of the Tabernacle with them!

A talent of silver, weighing, I suppose, close upon 100 pounds, was either formed into the shape of a wedge, so as to be driven into the soil, or else made into a solid square plate to lie upon it. In the wedge or plate were made mortises into which the tenons of the boards could be readily fitted. These plates of silver fitted, the one into the other, tenon and mortise wise, and thus they made a compact parallelogram, strengthened at the corners with double plates and formed one foundation, moveable when taken to pieces, yet very secure as a whole. This foundation was made of the Redemption money. See the instructive emblem!

The foundation of the worship of Israel was Redemption! The dwelling place of the Lord their God was founded on Atonement! All the boards of incorruptible wood and precious gold stood upon the Redemption price! The curtains of fine linen, the veil of matchless workmanship and the whole structure rested on nothing else but the solid mass of silver which had been paid as the Redemption money of the people! There was only one exception and that was at the door where was the entrance to the Holy Place. There the pillars were set upon sockets of brass, perhaps because as there was much going in out of the priests, it was not meet that they should tread upon the token of Redemption. The blood of the Paschal Lamb, when Israel came out of Egypt, was sprinkled on the lintel and the two side posts—and out of reverence to that blood it was not to be sprinkled on the threshold.

Everything was done to show that Atonement is to be the precious foundation of all holy things and everything done to prevent a slighting or disregard of it. Woe unto that man of whom it shall ever be said, "He has trodden under foot the Son of God and has counted the blood of the

Covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing.” I do not, for a moment, bring before you the type of the text as a proof of doctrine! I intend to use it simply as an illustration. It seems to me to be a very striking, full and suggestive emblem, setting forth most clearly certain precious Truths of God. I feel I am quite safe in using this illustration because it is one among a group of acknowledged types and could not have been given without a reason. I do not see why they could not have made the foundation sockets of iron, or why they could not have been content with tent pins and cords as in other cases of tent building. I see no reason, in the necessity of the case, why they must be sockets of silver—there must have been another reason. Why was that particular silver prescribed? Why must the Redemption money be used and nothing else? Truly there is teaching here if we will but see it!

Moreover, this does not stand alone, for when the Tabernacle was succeeded by the Temple, Redemption was still conspicuous in the foundation. What was the foundation of the Temple? It was the rock of Mount Moriah. And what was the hill of Moriah but the place where, in many lights, *Redemption* and *Atonement* had been set forth? It was there that Abraham drew the knife to slay Isaac—a fair picture of the Father offering up His Son. It was there the ram was caught in the thicket and was killed instead of Isaac—fit emblem of the Substitute accepted instead of man! Later still, it was on Mount Moriah that the angel, when David attempted to number the people without Redemption money, stood with his sword drawn. There David offered sacrifices and burnt offerings. The offerings were accepted and the angel sheathed his sword—another picture of that power of Redemption by which mercy rejoices against judgment!

And there the Lord uttered the memorable sentence. “It is enough, stay now your hand.” This, “enough,” is the crown of Redemption! Even as the Great Sacrifice, Himself, said, “It is finished,” so does the Great Acceptor of the Sacrifice say, “enough.” What a place of Redemption was the hill of Zion! Now, if the Temple was built on a mountain which must have been especially selected because there the types of Redemption were most plentiful, I feel that without an apology I may boldly take this first fact that the building of the Tabernacle in the wilderness was based and grounded upon Redemption money and use it for our instruction.

With this much of preface we will now fall to and feed upon the spiritual meal which is set before us. O for Divine Grace to feast upon the heavenly Bread that we may grow thereby! Spirit of the living God, be pleased to help us in this matter.

I. First, I want you to view this illustration as teaching us something about GOD IN RELATION TO MAN. The tent in the wilderness was typical of God’s coming down to man to hold communion with him—the fiery cloudy pillar visible outside and the bright light of the Shekinah, visible to him who was called to enter once a year into the innermost sanctuary, shining over the Mercy Seat—these were the tokens of the special Presence of the Deity in the center of the camp of Israel. The Lord seems to teach us, in relation to His dealing with men, that He will meet man in the way of Grace only on the footing of Redemption. He treats man concerning

love and Grace within His holy shrine, but the basis of that shrine must be the Atonement!

Rest assured, dear Friends, that there is no meeting with God on our part except through Jesus Christ our Redeemer! I am of Luther's mind when he said, "I will have nothing to do with an absolute God." God out of Christ is a terror to us! Even in Christ, remember, He is a consuming fire, for even, "our God is a consuming fire." But what He must be *out* of Christ may none of us ever know—

***"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind!
But if Immanuel's face appears,
My hope, my joy begins!
His name forbids my slavish fear,
His Grace removes my sins."***

You must not attempt to have audience with God, at first, upon the footing of election. It were presumptuous to attempt to come to the electing Father except through the atoning Son. "No man," says Christ, "comes to the Father but by Me." Never attempt to speak with God on the footing of your own sanctification, for very soon you will come to bringing your legal righteousness before Him and that will provoke Him.

Always enter the Holy Place with the thought, "I know that my Redeemer lives." "Not without blood." Remember that! Into the Holy Place went the high priest once every year, "not without blood." There can be no coming of God to man on terms of peace except through the one great Sacrifice—that must be the foundation of it all. No, and not only God's coming to us, but God's *abiding with us* is upon the same foundation, for the Tabernacle was, so to speak, the House of God—the place where God especially dwelt among His people, as He said, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." But He never dwelt among them in anything but in a tent that was set upon the silver of the Redemption money and you, dear Friend, if you have ever walked with God, can only maintain your fellowship by resting where you did at first—as a poor sinner redeemed by your Savior.

They have asked me to rise, sometimes, to a higher platform and come to God as a sanctified person. Yes, but a rock, though it may be lower than the little wooden stage which some erect upon it, is safer to stand upon! And I believe that those who walk with God according to their attainments and imaginary perfections, have climbed up to a rotten stage which will fall under them before long. I know no mode of standing before God today but that which I had at first. I am still unworthy in myself, but accepted in the Beloved! Guilty in myself and lost and ruined—but still received, blessed and loved because of the Person and work of Christ. The Lord cannot dwell with you, my dear Friend—you will soon have broken fellowship and be in the dark if you attempt to walk with Him because you feel sanctified, or because you have been active in His service, or because you know much, or because you are an experienced Believer.

No! No! No! The Lord will only abide with us in that Tabernacle whose every board is resting upon the silver foundation of Redemption by His own dear Son! There can, Beloved, be no sort of communion between God

and us except through the Atonement. Do you need to pray? You cannot speak with God except through Jesus Christ! Do you wish to praise? You cannot bring the censer full of smoking incense except through Christ! It is only within that foundation of silver that you can speak to God, or hear Him speak comfortably with you. Would you hear a voice out of the excellent Glory? Do you pray that the great Father would speak with you as with His dear children? *Expect* it through Jesus Christ, for, “through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Even unto the Father, though we are children, we have no access except through Jesus! The tabernacle of communion even to him that lives nearest to God must be built upon the Redemption price. Free Grace and dying love must be the golden bells which ring upon our garments when we go into the Holy Place to speak with the Most High!

The Tabernacle was the place of holy service where the priests all day long offered sacrifices of one kind and another unto the Most High. And you and I serve God as priests, for He has made us a royal priesthood. But how and where can we exercise our priesthood? Everywhere as to this world. But before God, the foundation of the temple wherein we stand and the ground of the acceptance of our priesthood is Redemption! The priests offered their sacrifice not in groves of man’s planting, or on high hills which were the natural strength of the land, but within the space marked out by the silver slabs of atonement money—and so must we worship and serve within Redemption lines. If we come to the idea of legal merit and suppose that there is a natural goodness in our prayers, or in our praises, in our observances of Christian ceremonies, or in almsgiving, or in zealous testimony, we make a great mistake and we shall never be accepted.

We must bring our offerings unto that court which is fenced about by the Foundation most precious which God has laid of old, even the merit of His dear Son! We are accepted in the Beloved and in no other manner! We are shut in within the Foundation which Christ has laid of old, not with corruptible things as with silver and gold, but with His own most precious blood! Thus much, dear Brothers and Sisters, upon one view of this subject. May you learn much of God in His relation to man while you meditate thereon at your leisure and are taught of the Holy Spirit.

II. I think we may, in the second place, apply this illustration TO CHRIST IN HIS DIVINE PERSON. The Tabernacle was the type of our Lord Jesus Christ, for God dwells among men in Christ. “He tabernacled among us and we beheld His Glory,” says the Apostle. God dwells not in temples made with hands, that is to say, of this building, but the Temple of God is Christ Jesus, “in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Our Lord is thus the Tabernacle which the Lord has pitched and not man—and our first and fundamental idea of Him must be in His character as Redeemer. Our Lord comes to us in other characters and in them all, He is right glorious, but unless we receive Him as Redeemer we have missed the essence of His Character, the foundation idea of Him.

As the tent in the wilderness was founded upon the Redemption money, so our idea and conception of Christ must be first of all that, “He is the propitiation for our sins” and I say this, though it may seem unnecessary to say it, because Satan is very crafty and he leads many from the

plain Truth of God by subtle means. I remember a Sister who had been a member of a certain denomination who was converted to God in this place, though she had been a professed Christian for years. She said to me “I have always believed only in Christ crucified—I worshipped Him as about to come in the Second Advent to reign with His people, but I never had a sense of guilt. Neither did I go to Him as putting away my sin and, therefore, I was not saved.”

When she began to see herself as a *sinner*, she found her *need* of a *Redeemer*. Atonement must enter into our first and chief idea of the Lord Jesus. “We preach Christ crucified”—we preach Him glorified and delight to do so—but still, the main point upon which the eye of a sinner must rest, if he would have peace with God, must be Christ crucified for *sin*. “God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Do, then, my dear Hearer, let the very foundation of your faith in Christ be your view of Him as ransoming you from the power of sin and Satan! Some say they admire Christ as an *example* and well they may! They can never find a better! But Jesus Christ will never be truly known and followed if He is viewed only as an example, for He is *infinitely* more than that! Neither can any man carry out the project of being like Christ unless he first knows Him as making atonement for sin and as giving power to overcome sin through His blood.

Some writers have looked upon Christ from one point of view and some from another—and there is no book that is more likely to sell than a Life of Christ—but the most essential view of Him is to be had from the foot of the Cross. No complete life of Christ has been written yet. All the lives of Christ that have yet been written amount to about one drop of broth, while the four Evangelists are as a whole bullock. The pen of Inspiration has accomplished what all the quills in the world will never be able to do again and there is no need they should. However much we dwell upon the holiness of our Lord, we cannot complete His picture unless we describe Him as the *sinner’s* ransom. He is white, but He is ruddy, too. Rutherford said, “O then, come and see if He is not a red man. In His suffering for us He was wet with His own blood. Is He not well worthy of your love?”

When He comes forth in the vesture dipped in blood many shun Him—they cannot bear the atoning sacrifice—but He is never in our eyes so matchlessly lovely as when we see Him bearing our sins in His own body on the Cross and putting away transgression by making Himself the Substitute for His people! Let this, then, be your basic idea of Christ—“He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law.” Indeed, in reference to Christ, we must regard His Redemption as the basis of His triumphs and His Glory—“the sufferings of Christ and the glory that shall follow.” We cannot understand any work that He has performed unless we understand His vicarious Sacrifice. Christ is a lock without a key; He is a labyrinth without a clue *until* you know Him as the Redeemer! You have spilt the letters on the floor and you cannot make out the Character of The Wonderful till first you have learned to spell the words—ATONEMENT BY BLOOD.

This is the deepest joy of earth and the grandest song in Heaven. “For You were slain and have redeemed us unto God by Your blood.” I beg you to observe, in connection with our text, that as the foundation of the Tab-

ernacle was very valuable, so our Lord Jesus, as our Redeemer is exceedingly precious to us. His Redemption is made with His precious blood. The Redemption money was of pure and precious metal, a metal that does not lose weight in the fire. “The Redemption of the soul is precious.” What a Redemption price has Christ given for us! Yes, what a Redemption price He *is*! Well did Peter say, “Unto you that believe, He is precious”—silver and gold are not to be mentioned in comparison with Him.

To me it is very instructive that the Israelites should have been redeemed with silver in the form of half-shekels because there are many who say, “These old-fashioned divines believe in the *mercantile* idea of the Atonement.” Exactly so! We *always* did and always shall use a metaphor which is so expressive as to be abhorred by the enemies of the Truth of God! The mercantile idea of the Atonement is the Biblical idea of the Atonement. These people were redeemed, not with lumps of uncoined silver, but with *money* used in commerce. Paul says “You are not your own: you are *bought*”—listen—“with a price,” to give us the mercantile idea beyond all question! “Bought with a price” is *doubly* mercantile. What do you say to this, you wise refiners who would refine the meaning *out* of the Word of the Lord? Such persons merely use this expression about the “mercantile idea” as a cheap piece of mockery because in their hearts they hate the Atonement altogether—and the idea of Substitution and expiation by vicarious Sacrifice is abhorrent to them.

Therefore has the Lord made it so plain, so manifest, that they may stumble at this stumbling stone, “whereunto also,” I think, as Peter says, “they were appointed.” To us, at any rate, the Redemption price which is the foundation of all is exceedingly precious. But there is one other thing to remember in reference to Christ, namely, that we must each one view Him as our own, for out of all the grownup males that were in the camp of Israel, when they set up the Tabernacle, there was not one but had a share in its foundation. We read in Exodus 35:25 and 26, “And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen. And all the women whose heart stirred them up in wisdom spun goats’ hair.”

The men could not spin, perhaps they did not understand that art, but every man had his half a shekel in the foundation. I want you to think of that. Each Believer has a share in Christ as his Redemption—no, I dare not say a *share* in Him, for He is *all* mine and He is all yours. Brothers and Sisters, have you, by faith, laid hold upon a whole Christ and said, “He has paid the price for *me*”? Then you have an interest in the very fundamental idea of Christ! Perhaps you are not learned enough to have enjoyed your portion in certain other aspects of our Lord, but if you are a Believer, however weak you are—though you are like the poor among the people of Israel—you have your half shekel in the foundation! I delight to think of that! I have my treasure in Christ—“my Beloved is mine.”

Can you say He is *yours*? I do not deny it. So He is, but, “He is *mine*.” If you deny *that* fact we will quarrel at once, for I do assert that, “my Beloved is mine.” Moreover, by His purchase, “I am His.” “So am I,” you say. Quite right! I am glad you are, but I know that, “I am His.” There is nothing like

getting a firm, *personal* hold and grip of Christ—my half shekel is in the basis of the tabernacle—my Redemption money is in the divinely glorious building of Grace! My Redemption is in the death of Christ which is the Foundation of all!

III. Time fails me and yet I have, now, a third thought to lay before you very briefly. The tabernacle was a type Of THE CHURCH OF GOD as the place of Divine indwelling. What and where is the Church of God? The true Church is founded upon Redemption. Every board of shittim wood was shaped and mortised into the sockets of silver made of the Redemption money and every man that is in the Church of God is united to Christ, rests upon Christ and cannot be separated from Him. If that is not true of you, my dear Hearer, you are not in the Church of God! You may be in the Church of England or of Rome—you may be in this church or some other—but unless you are joined to Christ and He is the sole Foundation upon which you rest, you are not in the Church of God.

You may be in no visible church whatever, and yet, if you are resting upon Christ, you are a part of the true house of God on earth. Christ is a sure Foundation for the Church of God, for the Tabernacle was never blown down. It had no foundation but the talents of silver and yet it braved every desert storm. The wilderness is a place of rough winds—it is called a howling wilderness—but the sockets of silver held the boards upright and the holy tent defied the rages of the elements! To be united to Christ by faith is to be built on a sure Foundation! His Church will never be overthrown, let the devil send what hurricanes he may! And it was an invariable foundation, for the Tabernacle always had the same basis wherever it was placed. One day it was pitched on the sand; another on a good piece of arable ground; a third time on a grass plot and tomorrow on a bare rock—but it always had the same foundation. The bearers of the holy furniture never left the silver sockets behind. Those four tons of silver were carried in their wagons and put out first as the one and only foundation of the holy place!

Now, the learned tell us that the 19th Century requires “advanced thought.” I wish the 19th Century was over. I have heard it bragged about so much that I am sick of the 19th Century! We are told that this is too sensible a century to need or accept the same Gospel as the first, second and third centuries. Yet these were the centuries of martyrs; the centuries of heroes; the centuries that conquered all the gods of Greece and Rome; the centuries of holy glory—and all this because they were the centuries of the Gospel! But now we are so enlightened that our ears ache for something fresh—and under the influence of another gospel, which is not another—our beliefs are dwindling down from alps to anthills and we, ourselves, from giants to pigmies! You will soon need a microscope to see Christian faith in the land—it is getting to be so small and scarce!

By God’s Grace some of us abide by the Ark of the Covenant and mean to preach the same Gospel which the saints received at the first! We shall imitate those who, having had a silver foundation at the first, had a silver foundation for the Tabernacle, even till they came to the promised land! It is a foundation that we dare not change. It must be the same, world without end, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

IV. Fourthly and lastly, I think this Tabernacle in the wilderness may be viewed as a type OF THE GOSPEL, for the Gospel is the Revelation of God to man. The tent in the wilderness was the Gospel according to Moses. Now, as that old Gospel in the wilderness was, such must ours be, and I want to say just two or three things very plainly and have done. Redemption, Atonement in the mercantile idea—must be the foundation of our theology—doctrinal, practical and experimental. As to doctrine, they say a fish stinks first at the head and men first go astray in their brains. When once there is anything wrong in your belief as to Redemption, you are wrong all through. I believe in the old rhyme—

***“What think you of Christ? is the test
To try both your state and your scheme,
You cannot be right in the rest
Unless you think rightly of HIM.”***

If you get wrong on the Atonement, you have turned a switch which will run the whole train of your thoughts upon the wrong line. You must know Christ as the Redeemer of His people and their Substitute, or your teaching will give an uncertain sound. As Redemption must be the foundation of doctrinal divinity, so it must of *practical* divinity. “You are not your own: you are bought with a price,” must be the source of holiness and the reason for consecration. The man that does not feel himself to be specially “redeemed from among men,” will see no reason for being different from other men! “Christ loved His Church and gave Himself for it.” He who sees no special giving of Christ for His Church will see no special reason why the Church should give herself to Christ!

Certainly Redemption must be the foundation of experimental theology, for what is an experience worth that does not make us, every day, prize more and more the redeeming blood? Oh, my dear Friends, I never knew, though I had some idea of it, what a fool I was till of lately! I tell you that those dreadful pains which may even make you long for death will empty you right out and not only empty you, but make you judge yourself to be a hollow sham and cause you to loathe yourself—and then it is that you cling to Christ! Nothing but the atoning Sacrifice will satisfy me! I have read plenty of books on modern theology but none of them can heal so much as a pin’s prick in the conscience! When a man gets sick in body and heavy in spirit, he needs the old-fashioned Puritan theology—the Gospel of Calvin, the Gospel of Augustine, the Gospel of Paul, the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! Our theology as a matter of experience must be based upon Redemption!

Ah, Brothers and Sisters, and not only our theology but our personal hope. The only Gospel that I have to preach is that which I rest upon myself—“Who His own self bore our sins in His own body on the tree.” “For the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and with His stripes we are healed.” “He bore the sin of many and made intercession for the transgressors.” Oh, dear Hearers, build on that and you will never fail! But if you do not take Christ’s Redemption as the foundation of your hope—I do not care who you are—you may be very learned but you know nothing at all! The Lord grant you Grace to know that you know *nothing* and then you will know something! And when you have learned as much as that, may He teach you the Redemption of His Son and reveal Christ in you!

This, Beloved, is, therefore, the burden of our service and the glory of our life.

Those silver sockets were very precious, but very weighty. I dare say the men who had to move them sometimes thought so! Four tons and more of silver make up a great load. O blessed, blissful draft, to have to put the shoulder to the collar to draw the burden of the Lord—the glorious weight of Redemption! My Soul, blessed are you to be made a laboring ox for Christ, always to be bearing among this people the divinely precious load of the Foundation which Christ has laid for His people! You, young Brothers that preach, mind you, always carry your four tons of silver—preach a full and rich Redemption, all of you! You who teach in the Sunday school, do not let the children have a place to live that has no foundation—the first wind will blow it over and where will they be—left naked under the ruins of that in which they had hoped!

Lay Christ for a foundation. You cannot do better, for God Himself has said, “Behold, I lay in Sion a chief Cornerstone, elect, precious.” Lay this silver foundation wherever you are! Yes, but though the ingots were heavy to carry, every Israelite felt proud to think that that Tabernacle had a foundation of silver. You Amalekites out there cannot see the silver footing of it all! You Moabites cannot perceive it! All you can see is the badger skins outside—the rough exterior of the tent. You say, “That tent is a poor place to be a temple—that Gospel is a very simple affair.” No doubt it is to you, but you never saw the silver sockets! You never saw the golden boards! You never saw the glory of the inside of the place lit up by the seven-branched candlesticks and glorious with the Presence of God. Brethren, Redemption is our honor and delight—

***“In the Cross of Christ I glory
Towering o’er the wrecks of time:
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.”***

This the First and this the Last—the bleeding Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world and yet living and reigning when earth’s foundations shall dissolve! That blessed Lamb of God is in the midst of the Throne of God and His people shall all be with Him, forever triumphant! He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Foundation and the Headstone. O Savior of sinners, glory be to Your name! Amen and amen.

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INCENSE AND LIGHT

NO. 1710

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 11, 1883,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning:
when he dresses the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.
And when Aaron lights the lamps at twilight, he shall
burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the
Lord throughout your generations.”
Exodus 30:7, 8.***

CERTAIN ceremonies under the Law were only of annual celebration, while other matters were of daily observation. And by the daily repetition they were intended to be set forth as eminently constant and perpetual. These daily ordinances were to be regarded by the children of Israel as of standing obligation, abiding types of constant necessity, never to be removed so long as the dispensation should last. When the priest went into the tabernacle, he could not enter it without being warned of sin and of sacrifice, for at the entrance of the holy place stood an altar of brass upon which there was offered, every morning, a lamb and every evening a lamb.

This taught that access to God was not possible except by expiation—expiation by bloody sacrifice, expiation by the death of a substituted victim—expiation which must continue as long as sin remained. You could not even enter into the first court without the sight of an altar, blood and fire—thus showing us that there is no coming to God, even on the ordinary level of Christian experience, apart from the Atonement made by our Lord Jesus, who is “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.” You cannot be heard in penitent prayer, or receive pardon, or commence the life of faith, or be even a babe in Grace unless you know the great Truth of God, that the Lord “has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Without the shedding of blood, remission of sin and access to God are out of the question! Paul ascribes our drawing near unto the Lord to our Savior’s perfect Sacrifice, for he says, “You who sometimes were far off are made near by the blood of Christ.”

Before the innermost sanctuary there hung a substantial veil and the entrance into the Holy of Holies was only permitted once in the year. If that veil had been lifted up so that we could enter, we would have found, at the door, a golden altar, to represent, again, our Lord Jesus Christ under another aspect—for on that golden altar there was offered a sweet perfume of precious spices, denoting His perpetual intercession on the behalf of His people and His enduring merits which are continually being presented by Himself before the Throne of the Most High. To go within the veil you must pass by the Altar of Incense. Learn, therefore, that to the door of the inner chamber of communion with God we must approach by the perfect merit of our redeeming Lord! We come not in our own merit, but we are “accepted in the Beloved.”

If we have ever been favored with high and holy communion with God, such as He reserves for favored saints. If we have been enabled to come boldly to the Throne of heavenly Grace and have looked into the tempered brightness of that Light of God which shines above the Mercy Seat, we have come only by virtue of the infinite merit of our Lord Jesus. The lowest form of communion in the outer court must be by the sacrifice of Jesus. And the highest form of communion, even that which is most intense and most delightful, is *still* by Christ. The incense sets forth His merit and that is not without blood, for once in the year the horns of the altar were smeared with the blood which had been carried within the veil. There was no coming within the veil without passing by the incense altar, even as there is no access to God but by the all-powerful mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ! Let us never forget this. Simple as the Truth of God is, we are apt to pass it by as of no force.

I am afraid we are apt to put the most important Truths into the background because they seem to be so elementary. But we ought to remember that they are elementary only because they are essential from first to last. Never try to draw near to God in prayer, or praise, or meditation, or Scripture reading, or holy service *apart from Jesus Christ*, or your attempt will be a failure. Through the wall of fire which surrounds the Throne of God, you can only pass by way of the one Door, namely, the body and blood of our great Mediator, Sacrifice and Substitute! Is not that Door sufficient? Why should we climb up some other way? If I am very heavy of heart, do not let me try to raise my spirits and so come in the power of human courage—let me but come just as I am, made bold through Him whose comforts delight my soul! If I feel that I have been sinning, do not let me try to get rid of my sin by some other process and *then* draw near to God. Let me come, sinner as I am, in the name of the sinner's Savior, and so draw near to God, having washed my robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Jesus says, "I am the way"—why should we seek another? Have nothing to do with an absolute God—only deal with Him through a Mediator—and keep to that way, for no man comes unto the Father but by the Lord Jesus! Oh, you most experienced and privileged ones, take good note of the golden altar! And whenever you approach the Mercy Seat, let the cloud of its incense cover you and perfume your prayers! Hard by the golden altar, which was nearest to the Holy of Holies, stood the golden candlestick with its seven branches—these two instructive types were set near each other for a purpose which I would open up today. This candlestick was a matter of daily ordinance as much as the bronze Altar of Sacrifice, or the golden Altar of Incense—it was for continual use and was, therefore, dressed twice each day. We have a continual need of the precious Atonement of Christ, of the intercession of Christ and of the light of God's Holy Spirit. These are not things for once in a year—these are matters for every day and all day—and, therefore, they were attended to both at morning and at evening as if to shut in all the hours of the day within two golden doors.

Every morning had its lamb, its burning incense and its lighted lamp. And the same pertained to every evening all the year round. Thus all days

were fringed and bordered with this three-fold type—even as, at this time, all our days are sanctified by faith in the effectual *expiation*, joy in the prevailing *intercession* and delight in the clear *shining* of the Spirit which makes glad all who are in the house! This morning I desire to call your attention to the conjunction which was established by the Divine Law between the burning of the incense and the lighting of the lamps—these two things, being both of daily observance—were attended to at the same moment for reasons worthy of our study.

I. And first I call your attention to THE WONDERFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST FOR US AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US. See how, on the grandest scale, the incense of intercession and the lamp of spiritual illumination are set side by side. He whose *merit* brings us life is in Divine alliance with Him who *brings* us light! Indeed, there is such unity between them that Jesus, Himself, is said to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the Glory of His people Israel. The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ brings with it the communion of the Holy Spirit, for the Father has joined them together!

Note that we have these both revealed in their fullness at the same time. When our Lord ascended on high to plead before the Throne of God, the Spirit descended to abide in the Church! After the Lord was taken up, the disciples received the promise of the Father and were illuminated by the Holy Spirit! Jesus, our great High Priest, presented the sweet savor of His own Person and work before the eternal Throne of God and then came the Spirit of God as tongues of fire lighting up the sons of men and making them to be as candles of the Lord! Well said the Apostle at Pentecost—“This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being exalted by the right hand of God and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has shed forth this, which you now see and hear.” I say the two come historically together and we must forever connect in our meditations the ascended Savior’s intercession and the illumination of the saints by the descended Spirit.

Now, as they were connected historically, so are they continually connected as a matter of fact. At this day it is as it was at Pentecost—our Lord has not ceased to intercede and the Spirit has not ceased to illuminate! Herein lies our hope for our own eternal salvation, in the ceaseless plea and the quenchless light! For the working out of that which God is working in us, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure, we have these two guarantees and helps—the Savior praying and the Spirit shining! Jesus is pleading and, therefore, our faith fails not when Satan sifts us as wheat. The Spirit is working and, therefore, the light of our faith is sustained by a secret mystic oil which prevents the enemy from putting it out. This is also our two-fold confidence when we go forth into the world to preach the Gospel! Unto the Lord Jesus, all power is given in Heaven and in earth, and He is “able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.”

The Church of God must succeed in her mission because her errand is the object of the continual prayers of her living Lord. But she has her second help, namely the Comforter, who abides with us and goes forth with the Word that we preach, making it potent for the conversion of the sons

of men. We have the incense of Christ's merit pleading with God and the light of God's Spirit pleading with men—we have Christ as an Advocate with God and the Holy Spirit as an Advocate with men! What more is needed? What joy and confidence we ought to feel in the work of the Lord since Jesus is pleading and the Spirit is striving at the same time—the incense rising, filling earth and Heaven with its sweetness—and the Spirit brightly shining to the comfort and delight of those who go forth into the darkness with the name of Jesus on their lips! Joy to those who sit in darkness and in the valley of the shadow of death, for even for *them* is this seven-fold Light shining! And to their dank, pestilential abodes there comes the healing breath of sweet perfume from the Redeemer's merits.

Furthermore, this conjunction, as it is a matter of history, and as it is continuous, will always be seen by us, personally, when our prayer is the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man that avails much. It needs the Trinity to make a Christian; it needs the Trinity to make a Christian prayer! The Father must hear us, else of what use are our cries? But the ordained Mediator must also stand between us and the Father, presenting His merit like the smoke of sweet incense, or else our prayer can never be accepted of God. And to come down closer to ourselves, the Spirit of God must also help our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, so that, whenever we pray, we must have these two in happy conjunction—intercession and enlightenment—incense and light!

My prayer as my own prayer is a poor, vain, defiled thing unless Jesus perfumes it! And it is a poor, dark, blind thing unless the Spirit of God has enlightened it! The Holy Spirit teaches us what to pray for and how to order our words aright. In His light we see light. We are in the dark till He shines like the golden candlestick and enables us to see our own need and the fullness of God's Grace. It is His light that makes our heart to see the Lord in prayer, so that we seek the Lord by the light of His own Spirit. When prayer is the work of the Spirit in the heart, we are absolutely certain that it must succeed because the Spirit makes intercession in the saints according to the will of God. The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and He is most truly God, so that whatever He prompts us to pray for is the same thing which the Father has already decreed and eternally determined to bestow!

Our wishes and desires might never succeed with God if they were that and no more, for our thoughts are not His thoughts, neither are our ways His ways. But the thoughts and purposes of God, when these are photographed upon our spirit by the Holy Spirit, are the pictures of that which is assuredly to be, the prophecy of the determinate purpose and foreknowledge of God! What is written in yon sealed Book, upon which no human eye can gaze, is transcribed and written by the Spirit of God upon our hearts—and thus we pray for that very thing which God designs to give. There is an assured certainty of success to the prayer that is made in the power of the Spirit of God! While praying in the Holy Spirit we have the petition which we have asked of the Lord.

But then there is our second comfort, that Jesus stands ready to take every prayer of ours, however imperfect in knowledge, however feeble in expression, however marred with sorrow—and He presents the purified

and perfected prayer with His own merit—and it is sure to speed. The sins of our holy things are seldom absent and, therefore, the constant need is that we have an Advocate. Blessed be God for that inspired Word, “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” True prayer is the offering to God of the merit of the Lord Jesus and, therefore, it must be accepted. What can be refused to merit such as His? True prayer is presented always by the Lord Jesus and, therefore, again, its certainty of efficacy—how can the Father deny anything to the Well-Beloved? It is written in the book of the Revelation—“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.”

Can we doubt the success of prayers presented by the Angel of the Covenant? Assuredly not! There is such excess of perfection in Christ that it covers all our imperfection. There is such delicious sweetness in Christ to the Father that it effectually destroys the ill savor of anything that comes from us! And by its power, we, ourselves, become unto God a sweet savor—and so, also, are our prayers when they are presented by Jesus Christ! I like to think of the incense and of the lamp and, best of all, of the two together, for these two enable me to come boldly to the Throne of the heavenly Grace to obtain mercy and find Grace! Acceptance through sweet savor and light through Divine teaching are both mine as my soul waits upon God, with her expectation turned towards Him. Nor ought I to pass away from this first head without noting that in God’s drawing near to man there is the same conjunction of incense and light.

If the Glory of God were to come forth from between the cherubim. If it should come past the veil to be revealed throughout the world, that Glory would pass by these two, the golden Altar of Incense and the golden lamp of light! I mean this—God can have no dealing with men at all except through the merit of Christ and the light of the Spirit. As for the work of our Lord Jesus, you and I believe in the special Substitution of Christ for His elect—what we call, “Particular Redemption,” is held most firmly by us, for we believe that He redeemed us from among men and that He laid down His life for the sheep. Yet there are many passages of Scripture which speak of the work of Christ as having a *universal* scope. He is, “the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours, only, but for the sins of the whole world.” We are told that, by the Grace of God, “He tasted death for every man.”

Now, the Atonement of Christ is many-sided and may be viewed in very different lights. And while I trust we shall never be shaky about the question of His literal and effectual Substitution for His own chosen, whereby He offered for them a most sure, effectual and perfect satisfaction, so that no sin may ever be laid to their charge, yet there is, on the other hand, a general and universal view of His atoning work. God could not have dealt with the world at all in the way of mercy apart from the Sacrifice of Christ. The only thing which could have been done with the race of man was to have crushed it out forever if Christ had not stood for them as an Inter-

poser. God was, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. For the sake of the Man, Christ Jesus, God was able to look upon the fallen race in justice and yet prepare mercy for the guilty. Men owe their lives to the Sacrifice of Christ! Men owe the various alleviations of their sorrows by God's gracious tenderness in Providence to the Sacrifice of Christ!

Above all, that free and honest proclamation of salvation to every man that will believe in Christ Jesus is rendered possible by the wondrous, perfect, unlimited, illimitable merit which resided in the Person and work of such an One as Jesus our Lord! The picture before you is a very beautiful one. Here are spices of the most precious kind, made up into a compound such as never was compounded for any other purpose. This Divinely-appointed mixture of sweet odors is placed in the censer upon the golden altar—that is to say, eternal *acceptance* is found in the Person of Christ. The incense is kindled with fire from on high. What follows? The spices begin to burn and up ascends a pillar of smoke. See how it rises high into the clear air! And as it rises it expands like a cloud, covers the sky, is wafted all around and perfumes the whole air with its own exceeding fragrance.

It rises and rises till it enters Heaven—yes, and the Heaven of heavens! Its sacred odor is recognized in every golden street! It fills every chamber of the glorious “house of God not made with hands!” It ascends to the Throne of His excellent Majesty and the Lord is well pleased with it—and again is fulfilled the words which are written concerning the burnt-offering of Noah—“The Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in His heart, I will not again smite everything living as I have done.” Such is the merit of Christ, that through its sweet savor God looks down upon the world and treats it with long-suffering, tenderness and mercy. Is it not a blessed picture? As a just and holy God, He could not deal with a guilty race except through a mediatorial Sacrifice which should wrap mankind in its cloud of merit and reconcile the world unto Himself!

And now, you and I may follow in the tracks of God and go out and preach the Gospel to every creature without the slightest fear because the whole air is perfumed with the incense of a Savior's mediatorial work! Although not perceptible by carnal sense, yet the inward spirit in the soul of the Believer perceives the grateful odor of the finished work of the ever-living Savior sweetening all things, so that now we call nothing common or unclean, but are prepared to deliver our message to the vilest of the vile! God, in Christ, is kind, even, to the unthankful and the evil, and wills that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men—and to every creature the Gospel should be preached. We shall not, however, proceed to any practical purpose unless we remember, next, that when God comes to deal with men, it is with the light of the Spirit as well as with the merit of Christ.

The golden candlestick is as necessary as the golden censer—for God's work among men is always by His Spirit. He is seeking out His people as the woman sought for her lost piece of money and it is significant that it is written, “She did light a candle and sweep the house.” God, in His work of salvation, comes to men with the candle of His Word lighted through the Holy Spirit—and through the teaching of His Word from day to day, that

Spirit shines as from a lantern among the sons of men! If you and I would follow in the tracks of God, as His dear children, imitating Him, we must take with us the light of the Gospel or the Glory of God and, by the power and light of His Spirit we must make known to men the unsearchable riches of Christ. To us Jehovah is our light and our salvation—and when we go in His name we must not go without the Light of God. Thus you see we come to God by the incense and the light—and even so does God come down to man to bless Him.

II. Secondly, our text seems to me to teach THE CONNECTION BETWEEN PRAYER AND KNOWLEDGE. The golden altar represents intercession offered by Christ and, also, the prayers of all the saints which are accepted through His intercession. And, as the candlestick stood side by side with it, and represented the light of the Spirit of Truth, so must true prayer and true knowledge never be separated. So I gather, first, that prayer should be attended with knowledge. It is evil when men worship, they know not what. God is Light and He will not have His people worship Him in the dark. When they burn the incense, they must also light the lamp.

In the Romish Church the mass of the people repeat prayers in an unknown tongue, having no idea of what their meaning may be—this is both a grievous wrong to the people and a mockery of God! What can be the good of such prayers in the sight of Him who seeks those to worship Him who worship Him in spirit and in truth? Mere sounds without meaning are not prayer! Understanding, desire and heart must go with every word, or else the prayers are vain repetitions such as the heathen employ. Supplicants must know what they are asking, or they are not really asking. And you, dear people of God, please notice that the more Divine knowledge you get, all things being equal, the more complete will your prayers become.

“Grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”—light the lamp at the same time that you kindle the incense. For instance, when you pray, what prayer can there be without knowing God, our Father? How can you pray aright to an unknown god? The more knowledge of God, the more correct does prayer become! He that comes to God must believe that He is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. What prayer can there be apart from the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ? If we know nothing of Him by whom we pray, how full of sins of ignorance will our prayers be! It is well, also, to have a deep, sensible knowledge of *sin*. Penitential prayers are impossible without this—and how can prayers be accepted if penitence is not mixed with our petitions?

We need, at the same time, that we have the knowledge of sin to have a knowledge of our own weaknesses. The man who is consciously weak, prays for strength, but he who dreams that he is strong, will not do so. You need to study yourselves before you pray, so as to ask for those things in which you are most deficient and for protection against those constitutional tendencies or besetting sins to which you are most subject. The prayer of ignorance is like an arrow shot by a blind man, which is not likely to hit the mark. In proportion as petitions arise from a heart fully

instructed in its own necessities will they be likely to ask for the right blessings—and to be prepared aright before the Lord. David wished his prayers to be accepted and, therefore, he cried, “Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense.”

A supremely excellent piece of knowledge is to know the promises which we are to plead. Here you have the very sinews of prayer. When a man knows the promise suitable to his case and lays it before God, saying, “Do as You have said,” he presents the best form of supplication. Remember how Jacob pleaded with the Lord the sacred word of promise, saying, “You said, I will surely do you good”? When we have looked at all the bearings of the petition so as to make quite certain that it is a petition, the fulfillment of which will glorify God—when we see that it must be consistent with the Divine will because of the various statements which God has made in His Word and because of promises which He has given concerning the matter—then, with the lamp shining clearly upon us, we shall kindle the incense the more discreetly and boldly, and both our prayers and our meditations will be the more accepted of the Lord!

Do try, especially, dear Brothers and Sisters, you that pray in public, to light the lamps when you kindle the incense! It will be for the good of us all if petitions are thoughtful, suitable, Scriptural and withal fresh and hearty. Let us never degenerate into repeating the same expressions till they grow to be cant. Let us never drop into the use of hackneyed prayers for everything in general and for nothing in particular! But as instructed men, having thought of what we are going to say; having adapted our prayer to our circumstances and needs, let us order our case before the Lord and fill our mouth with arguments! Burn the incense of prayer in the light of the Spirit of Revelation, praying in the Holy Spirit!

But now turn the thought round the other way—knowledge should always be accompanied by prayer. Whenever we are taught of God, His teaching almost always comes in connection with prayer—but lest we should solely try to learn and forget to pray—let me remind you of a few particulars. Dear Brothers and Sisters, as a Christian you are a disciple, or student—be also a suppliant. When you are impressed with the greatness, or the goodness, or the immutability, or the faithfulness of God, straightway turn your impressions into supplications! Pray the great God to be gracious to you. Ask the unchangeable God to be the same to you—be the faithful God to keep His promises to you! Implore the mighty God to uphold you. As you learn more and more of God, place the light near the incense by using your knowledge in your pleadings. To employ all your knowledge as fuel for prayer will be the best way of utilizing your acquirements—it will stamp the Truth of God firmly on your memory and it will sanctify your heart.

When you know more of the Savior, pray your way to Him by it, as ships move into port by their sails. If you have seen His Manhood, go and plead His sympathy with you in your weakness! If you have thought more of His Deity, go and worship Him more reverently and pray that His Glory may be seen among the sons of men. Whatever point in the unutterable Glory of His perfection breaks most upon your mind, pray most that way—opening your window towards the sunrise. So will the Lord teach

you more and so shall you have profited by that which you have learned. If, from day to day, my Brothers and Sisters, you learn more of your sinfulness, then you have more errands with which to come to the Mercy Seat. And if you make a new discovery by experience of your corruption and indwelling sin, fly at once to the Throne of Grace with your discovery lest it weigh you down and drive you to despondency.

Make a ladder of your needs with which to climb nearer to Heaven. The more your necessities, the more urgent let your importunity be! Cry mightily to God because of the greatness of your poverty. I do not think there is anything in the Scriptures which we cannot pray over. If we learn the devices of the devil, let us pray against them! If we learn the depravity of mankind, let us pray God's Holy Spirit to create men's hearts anew! Everything from the first of Genesis to the end of Revelation, when we truly know it, furnishes us with fresh arguments for drawing near to God. Revealed Truths of God are as a Church bell summoning us to come into the Presence of the Lord and bow the knee before Him.

As you hear a sermon, turn it into prayer! Even if you find that there is nothing in the sermon, it may benefit you if you pray God to feed His poor famished people. If you will pray all through his discourse, every preacher will minister to your edification directly or indirectly. If you are set upon praying by the lighting of the tiniest candle that ever glimmered, there will at least be sweetness in the incense even if there is no brilliance in the lamp.

III. I desire, in the third place, to show SOME SPECIAL PRACTICAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE INCENSE AND THE LAMP. Let us read the text again—"And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresses the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it." So, then, there should be prayer, especially at the dressing of the lamps, that is to say, when preparing our minds for that ministry by which we enlighten the people among whom we dwell we should be specially earnest in prayer. Preparation for preaching and teaching is most important! God's work is not to be done carelessly as boys shoot arrows at random in their play. We must prepare both by reading and pleading—we must, like the Apostles, give ourselves to the Word of God and prayer.

We are told by ancient Rabbis that when the priest who was appointed for that office went into the Holy Place, he took with him the golden snuffers, the golden snuff dishes and a vessel full of pure olive oil and, by the help of these, he attended to the trimming of the golden lamp. There were seven lamps on the candelabra—some of these might have gone quite out during the night—he would have to take away whatever of snuff remained, wipe out the lamp, place a new wick, fill it up with fresh oil, and then kindle the flame anew. In another lamp it may be the light was still burning but feebly—he might have simply to snuff it, take away the "the superfluity of naughtiness" in the golden snuff dish and make all things clean and right. Sometimes the light might be burning well and nothing was needed but to replenish it with oil. Thus all was set in order for another day. The same was done in the evening.

In the process of trimming lamps there is a measure of offense—snuffs do not give forth a very dainty perfume—and the smear and smelt of oil

are not altogether of sweet savor. Therefore, before he trimmed the lamps, the priest kindled the incense. No snuff would then be offensive, for the overpowering fragrance of the incense killed it all and prevented the prevalence of any odor unfit for the House of God. When we go into our studies to try and trim our lamps, let us remember that our first business is to pray. Alas, we have much of smoking wick about us! We have much negligence, much ignorance, many mistakes and errors and, thereby, we shall grieve the Lord if Jesus is not called in to cover all. When we are preparing, in secret, to serve the Lord in public, we shall make poor work of it if we do not, beforehand, draw near to God in prayer!

We need that our garments should be made to smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia by being covered with the merit of Jesus, or else we shall offend, even while engaged in the holy act of preparing to spread abroad the light of Divine Truth! You have to trim your lamps, Brothers and Sisters, when you go into the Sunday school—at least, I hope you do. I hope you do not run into your class with anything which first comes to hand! If you do not snuff your candles and feed your lamps with fresh oil, your children will sit in darkness before a lamp which does not shine! No, there ought to be careful preparation, according as your time and ability will allow and, above all, the pouring in of the holy oil of the Holy Spirit by fresh fellowship with Jesus. In that process one of the chief elements is prayer.

Dr. Adam Clarke used to say to young ministers, “Study yourselves dead and then pray yourselves alive, again,” and that is an excellent rule. Work in your study as if it all depended upon *you* and then go forth and speak, trusting in God because all depends upon Him! Remember that the chief part of all study of God’s Word must be prayer. This is the boring rod and the powder by which we burst open the great rocks of the Truths of God. “To have prayed well is to have studied well,” said Martin Luther, and so, most certainly, it is. Therefore let none of us, when we dress the lamp, forget the incense.

What a double privilege comes of this! This priest, you see, had thus two things to do for the Lord. If he was called only to light the lamp, that would have been one happy, blessed service—but if he must burn the incense, too, he has a double portion of honor in thus doubly serving the Lord, his God! So when you are preparing to light up the people, or preparing to enlighten your children in class, what a happy necessity it is which calls upon you, at the same time, to pray! It is one of the greatest privileges of preachers and teachers, that they are driven to pray more than other people, for they have greater necessities—they have necessities that come upon them because of their office and these drive them to more frequent supplication—and so their labors become a means of Grace to their own souls! Let us thank our Lord Jesus that He has made us kings and priests unto our God and that He permits us, both to let our lights shine before men and our prayers ascend before God.

One thing more, this burning of the incense was not only at the dressing of the lamps, but also at the kindling of the lamps, when they began to shine. I want to plead, dear Friends, very heartily with you that when it is my privilege to come here this week and at all other times to light the lamps, you, who are my beloved helpers, will take care to burn the in-

cense at the same time! We need the incense of prayer more than ever in these latter days. Did you ever notice in Ezekiel 41:22 that an altar of incense is spoken of, but its dimensions are twice as great as those of the golden altar in the Tabernacle? It was as if, say some, to teach us that in these Gospel times prayer would become more abundant and would be offered up more frequently than ever.

The Gentiles have an altar which presents more incense to the Lord than that which was served by Aaron! And, inasmuch as it is more purely spiritual, it is all the more acceptable with God. The altar mentioned by Ezekiel was of wood, as if to show that our worship is to become more simple and to be more divested of everything that is pompous and showy—indeed, the altar *disappears*, and we read—“This is the table that is before the Lord.” You will guess the meaning. Malachi has a glorious prophecy. “For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto My name, and a pure offering: for My name shall be great among the heathen, says the Lord of Hosts.”

Are you not charmed by the Divine prophecy? Will you not, yourselves, help to fulfill it? We know that this Altar of Incense meant prayer because the Jews, themselves, so interpreted it. In the first chapter of Luke we read of Zacharias, that it was his turn, in the order of his course, to go into the Holy Place to offer incense, and it says, “And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the time of incense.” Just so, the offering of incense clearly means prayer and, therefore, I plead with you that while we are lighting the lamps by preaching the Gospel, you will burn the incense by being constantly in prayer! Brothers and Sisters, pray for us! Paul spoke thus. How much more may I plead that you dismiss me or intercede for me!

Joshua could not prevail except as Moses held up his hands. Our lamp-lighting will not succeed unless you burn the incense. Peter’s sermon at Pentecost did not derive its force from Peter’s zeal, or from its own eloquence, but from another Source. Of course, all the power came from the Spirit of God, but why did the Spirit of God work so mightily on that day? Surely it was because the entire Church was earnestly praying while Peter was preaching. “They were all with one accord in one place”—nobody was away, they were all there and when the one man stood up to preach, he might well light 3,000 lamps, for all the fervent company of the faithful were causing the incense of prayer to ascend to Heaven!

I need your prayers for tonight’s sermon. You will not be here, for strangers are invited to occupy your seats and, therefore, I beg you, in your houses, to cry unto the Lord for me that the Word may have free course and that my hearers may feel its power! It might be the most profitable expenditure of time that ever happened to you if you would spend the whole evening in prayer. Beseech the Lord to bring the people to this house and to bring the right sort of people, rich and poor, Believers and infidels, moral people and the depraved! We do not know who will come. Some of them do not know whether they will come, themselves, or not! But the Lord may influence, in various ways, those individuals to come

whom He designs to bless. Pray that the fish may come in shoals round the boat!

When the congregation is gathered, pray that the speaker may be guided of the Holy Spirit to a right theme. The preacher has no manuscript, so that there is room for the Spirit's guidance, and he may be led to say what he never thought of saying—the right word may thus be spoken in the right way so as to reach the heart! Then pray that there may be given the willing ear, the receptive mind, the retentive memory—that impressions may be made, tonight, and at all other times, such as even Satan cannot remove. And, oh, pray that tonight many who have been halting between two opinions may decide for God! Pray that many who have not, before, found the Savior's face will be converted! Pray that many who have been, up to now, of a sorrowful spirit, will be led into the joy of the Lord!

I shall feel it a joyous work to be the lamplighter, tonight, for my Master, if I know that I have you at home pleading earnestly on my behalf! Give me this aid this morning, too. Pray God to bless each word that has been spoken. Pray that some poor sinner's soul may be perfumed by the merits of Jesus and illuminated with the Divine Light! Pray for this and it shall be done, for the Lord hears His people! We need, more and more, to be a praying Church—and then we shall be a growing Church! Up to now we have had a great blessing, but the windows of Heaven are wide enough for a greater one to come down through them! The more we plead with God and the more we set forth the light of the Gospel, the more will God be with us and build up, in this place, a temple for His praise! May His love be with you. Amen.

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MEDIATION OF MOSES

NO. 2398

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1895.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, 1887.**

***“And the LORD repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.”
Exodus 32:14.***

I SUPPOSE that I need not say that this verse speaks after the manner of men. I do not know after what other manner we can speak. To speak of God after the manner of God is reserved for God, Himself, and mortal men could not comprehend such speech. In this sense, the Lord often speaks, not according to literal fact, but according to the appearance of *things to us*, in order that we may understand so far as the human can comprehend the Divine. The Lord's purposes never really change. His eternal will must forever be the same, for He cannot alter, since He would either have to alter for the better or for the worse. He cannot change for the better, for He is infinitely good—it were blasphemous to suppose that He could change for the worse. He who sees all things at once and perceives at one glance the beginning and the end of all things, has no need to repent. “God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent,” but, in the course of His action, there appears to us to be, sometimes, a great change, and as we say of the sun that it rises and sets, though it does not actually do so, and we do not deceive when we speak after that fashion, so we say concerning God, in the language of the text, “The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.” It appears to us to be so and it is so in the act of God, yet this statement casts no doubt upon the great and glorious Doctrine of the Immutability of God.

Speaking after the manner of men, the mediation of Moses worked this change in the mind of God. God *in* Moses seemed to overcome God *out of* Moses. God in the Mediator, the Man Christ Jesus, appears to be stronger for mercy than God apart from the Mediator. This saying of our text is very amazing and it deserves our most earnest and careful consideration.

Just think, for a minute, of Moses up there in the serene solitude with God. He had left the tents of Israel down below and he had passed within the mystic circle of fire where none may come but he who is specially invited. And there, alone with God, Moses had a glorious season of fellowship with the Most High. He lent his listening ear to the instructions of the Almighty concerning the priesthood, the tabernacle and the altar. And he was enjoying a profound peace of mind, when, all of a sudden, he was startled. The whole tone of the speech of the Lord seemed changed, and He said to Moses, “Go, get you down; for your people, which you

brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.” I can hardly imagine what thoughts passed through the great leader’s mind! How Moses must have trembled in the Presence of God! All the joy that he had experienced seemed suddenly to vanish, leaving behind, however, somewhat of the strength which always comes out of fellowship with God. This Moses now needed, if ever he needed it in all his life, for this was the crucial period in the history of Moses! This was his severest trial, when, alone with God on the mountain’s brow, he was called to come out of the happy serenity of his spirit and to hear the voice of an angry God, saying, “Let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them.”

The language of God was very stern, and well it might be after all that He had done for that people! When the song of Miriam had scarcely ceased. When you might almost hear the echoes of that jubilant note, “Sing you to the Lord, for He has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider has He thrown into the sea,” you might quickly have heard a very different cry, “Up, make us gods!” And, in the presence of the calf that Aaron made, the same people blasphemously exclaimed, “These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.” Such a prostitution of their tongues to horrid blasphemies against Jehovah! Such a turning aside from the Truth of God to the most gross of falsehoods, might well provoke the anger of a righteously jealous God!

It is noteworthy that Moses did not lose himself in this moment of trial. We read at once, “And Moses besought Jehovah, his God.” He was undoubtedly a man of prayer, but he must have been continually in the spirit of prayer, or else I could conceive of him, at that moment, falling on his face and lying there in silent horror! I could imagine him flying down the mountain in a passionate haste to see what the people had done—but it is delightful to find that he did neither of these two things—rather he began to pray! Oh, Friends, if we *habitually* pray, we shall know how to pray when praying times become more pressing than usual! The man who is to wrestle with the angel must have been familiar with angels beforehand! You cannot go into your chamber, shut the door and begin a mighty intercessory prayer if you have never been to the Mercy Seat before! No, Moses is “the man of God.” You remember that he left us a prayer, in the 90th Psalm, bearing this title, “A prayer of Moses, the man of God.” There is no man of God if there is no prayer, for prayer makes the man into “the man of God.” So, instinctively, though startled and saddened to the last degree, Moses is on his knees, beseeching the Lord, his God.

I. This, then, is the scene I have to bring before you, and my first observation shall be that **NOTHING CAN HINDER A TRULY LOVING SPIRIT FROM PLEADING FOR THE OBJECTS OF ITS LOVE.**

There were many things that might have hindered Moses from making intercessory prayer and the first was, *the startling greatness of the people’s sin*. God Himself put it to Moses in strong language. He said, “The people have corrupted themselves: they have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These

are your gods, O Israel, which have brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

This terrible accusation from the mouth of God, spoken as God would speak it, must have impressed Moses greatly with the awful character of Israel's sin, for, farther on, we find Moses saying to God, “Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.” It has happened to you, I suppose, as it has to me, that in the sight of a great sin one has almost hesitated to pray about it. The person sinned so wantonly, under circumstances so peculiarly grievous, transgressed so willfully and so altogether without excuse that you felt thrust back from the Mercy Seat and from pleading for such a sinner! But it was not so with Moses. Idolatry is a horrible sin, yet Moses is not kept back from pleading for its forgiveness. It astounds him—his own wrath waxes hot against it—but still, there he is, pleading for the transgressors!

What else can he do but pray? And he does it after the best possible fashion. Oh, let us never say, when we see great sin, “I am appalled by it! I cannot pray about it. I am sickened by it, I loathe it.” Sometime ago we had revelations of the most infamous criminality in this great city which we cannot, even now, quite forget, and I must confess that I sometimes felt as if I could not pray for some of the wretches who sinned so foully. But we must shake off that kind of feeling and, even in the presence of the most atrocious iniquity, we must still say, “I will even pray for these Jerusalem sinners, that God may deliver them from the bondage of their sin.”

A second thing that might have hindered Moses was not only the sin, but *the manifest obstinacy of those who had committed the sin*. Moses had it upon the evidence of the heart-searching God that these people were exceedingly perverse. The Lord said, “I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people.” Poor Moses had to learn, in later years, how true that saying was, for though he poured out his very soul for them and was tender towards them as a nurse with a child, yet they often vexed and wearied his spirit so that he cried to the Lord, “Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that You should say unto me, Carry them in your bosom, as a nursing father bears the sucking child, unto the land which You swore unto their fathers?” He was crushed beneath the burden of Israel's perversity, yet, though God, Himself, had told him that they were a stiff-necked people, Moses besought the Lord concerning these obstinate sinners!

Then, thirdly, the prayer of Moses might have been hindered by *the greatness of God's wrath*, yet he said, “Lord, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people?” Shall I pray for the man with whom God is angry? Shall I dare to be an intercessor with God who is righteously wrathful? Why, some of us scarcely pray to the merciful God in this Gospel dispensation in which He is so full of goodness and long-suffering! There are some who profess to be God's people who make but very little intercession for the ungodly. I am afraid that if they had seen God angry, they would have said, “It is of no use to pray for those idolaters! God is not unjustly angry. He knows what He does and I must leave the matter there.” But mighty love dares to cast itself upon its face before even an

angry God! It dares to plead with Him and to ask Him, “Why does Your wrath wax hot?” although it knows the reason and lays no blame upon the Justice of God! Yes, love and faith together bring such a holy daring into the hearts of men of God that they can go into the Presence of the King of kings, and cast themselves down before Him even when He is in His wrath, and say, “O God, spare Your people; have mercy upon those with whom You are justly angry!”

Perhaps it is an even more remarkable thing that Moses was not hindered from praying to God though, to a large degree at the time, and much more afterwards, *he sympathized with God in His wrath*. We have read how Moses’ anger waxed hot when he saw the calf and the dancing—do you not see the holy man dashing the precious tablets upon the earth, regarding them as too sacred for the unholy eyes of idolaters to gaze upon? He saves them, as it were, from the desecration of contact with such a guilty people by breaking them to shivers upon the ground! Can you not see how his eyes flash fire as he tears down their idol, burns it in the fire, grinds it to powder, strews it upon the water and makes them drink it? He is determined that it shall go into their very bowels—they shall be made to know what kind of a thing it was that they called a god!

He was exceedingly angry with Aaron, and when he bade the sons of Levi draw the sword of vengeance and slay the audacious rebels, his wrath was fiercely hot, and rightly so! Yet he prays for the guilty people. Oh, never let your indignation against sin prevent your prayers for sinners! If the tempest comes on and your eyes flash lightning, and your lips speak thunderbolts, yet let the silver drops of pitying tears fall down your cheeks—and pray the Lord that the blessed shower may be acceptable to Himself—especially when you plead for Jesus’ sake! Nothing can stop the true lover of men’s souls from pleading for them! No, not even our burning indignation against infamous iniquity! We see it and our blood boils at the sight, yet we betake ourselves to our knees and cry, “God be merciful to these great sinners, and pardon them, for Jesus’ sake!”

A still greater hindrance to the prayer of Moses than those I have mentioned was *God’s request for the pleading to cease*. The Lord, Himself, said to the intercessor, “Let Me alone.” Oh, Friends, I fear that you and I would have thought that it was time to leave off praying when the Lord, with whom we were pleading, said, “Let Me alone: let Me alone.” But I believe that Moses prayed the more earnestly because of that apparent rebuff. Under the cover of that expression, if you look closely into it, you will see that Moses’ prayer was really prevailing with God. Even before he had uttered it, while it was only being formed in his soul, Jehovah felt the force of it, otherwise He would not have said, “Let Me alone.”

And Moses appeared to gain courage from that which might have checked a less earnest suppliant—he seemed to say to himself, “Evidently God feels the force of my strong desires and I will, therefore, wrestle with Him until I prevail” It was a real rebuff and was, doubtless, intended by the Lord to be the test of the patience, the perseverance, the confidence, the self-denying love of Moses. Jehovah says, “Let Me alone,

that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them." But Moses will not let Him alone! O, you who love the Lord, give Him no rest until He saves men! And though He should seem to say to you, "Let Me alone," do not let Him alone, for He wishes you to be importunate with Him, like that widow was with the unjust judge! The wicked man granted the poor woman's request because of her continual coming—and God is testing and trying you to see whether you really mean your prayers. He will keep you waiting a while, and even seem to repulse you, that you may, with an undaunted courage, say, "I will approach You! I will break through all obstacles to get to You. Even if it is not according to the law, I will go in unto the King of kings and if I perish, I perish! I will pray for sinners even if I perish in the act."

And, dear Friends, there is one thing more that might have hindered the prayer of Moses. I want to bring this all out, that you may see how tender-hearted love will pray in spite of every difficulty. *Moses prayed against his own personal interests*, for Jehovah said to him, "Let Me alone, that I may consume them." And then, looking with a glance of wondrous satisfaction upon His faithful servant, He said, "I will make of *you* a great nation." What an opportunity for an ambitious man! Moses may become the founder of a great nation if he wills! You know how men and women, in those old days, panted to be the progenitors of innumerable peoples and looked upon it as the highest honor of mortal men that their seed should fill the earth. Here is the opportunity for Moses to become the father of a nation that God will bless! All the benedictions of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are to be met in Moses and his seed! But no, he will not have it so. He turns to God and cries to Him to bless the sinful people! It seems as if he passed over the offer that God made, *sub silentio*, as we say. Leaving it in utter silence, he cries, "Spare Your people and bless Your heritage."

II. Now I introduce to you a second thought, which is that NOTHING CAN DEPRIVE A LOVING SPIRIT OF ITS ARGUMENTS IN PRAYER FOR OTHERS.

It is one thing to be willing to besiege the Throne of Grace, but it is quite another thing to get the ammunition of prayer. Sometimes you cannot pray, for prayer means the pleading of arguments, and there are times when arguments fail you—when you cannot think of any reason why you should pray. Now there was no argument in these people, nothing that Moses could see in them that he could plead with God for them—so he turned his eyes another way—he looked to God and *pleaded what he saw in Him!*

His first argument was, that the *Lord had made them His people*. He said, "Lord, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people?" The Lord had said to Moses, "Get you down, for your people have corrupted themselves." "No," says Moses, "they are not *my* people—they are Your people." It was a noble, "retort courteous," as it were, upon the Ever-Blessed One. "In Your wrath You call them *my* people, but You know that they are none of mine—they are Yours—You did choose their fathers and You did enter into Covenant with them. And I remind You that they are Your chosen ones, the objects of Your love and mercy and, therefore, O Lord,

because they are Yours, will You not bless them?" Oh, use that argument in *your* supplications! If you cannot say of a sinner that he is God's chosen, at least you can say that he is God's *creature* and, therefore, use that plea, "O God, suffer not Your creature to perish!"

Next, Moses pleads that *the Lord had done great things for them*, for he says, "Why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people, which You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?" "I never brought Israel out of Egypt," says Moses, "how could I have done it? I did not divide the Red Sea! I did not smite Pharaoh! You have done it, O Lord! You, alone, have done it and if You have done all this, will You not finish what You have begun?" This was grand pleading on the part of Moses and I do not wonder that it prevailed! Now, if you see any sign of Grace, any token of God's work in the heart, plead it with the Lord. Say, "You have done so much, O Lord. Be pleased to do the rest and let these people be saved with Your everlasting salvation!"

Then Moses goes on to mention, in the next place, that *the Lord's name would be compromised if Israel should be destroyed*. He says, "Why should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth"? If God's people are not saved, if Christ does not see of the travail of His soul, the majesty of God and the honor of the Redeemer will be compromised. Shall Christ die to no purpose? Shall the Gospel be preached in vain? Shall the Holy Spirit be poured out without avail? Let us plead thus with God and we shall not be short of arguments that we may urge with Him.

Moses goes on to mention that *God was in Covenant with these people*. See how he puts it in the 13th verse—"Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own Self, and said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever." There is no pleading with God like reminding Him of His Covenant! Get a hold of a promise of God, and you may pray with great boldness, for the Lord will not run back from His own Word—but get a hold of the Covenant and you may plead with the greatest possible confidence! If I may compare a single promise to one great gun in the heavenly siege-train, then the Covenant may be likened to a whole park of artillery—with that you may besiege Heaven and come off a conqueror! Moses pleads thus with the Lord—"How can You destroy these people, even though You are angry with them, and they deserve Your wrath? You have promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that their seed shall inherit the land, and if they are destroyed, how can they enter into Canaan and possess it?" This is grand pleading! But what bravery it was when Moses dared to say to God, "Remember Your Covenant and turn from Your fierce anger, and repent of Your thoughts of evil against Your people"! O Lord, teach us, also, how to plead like this!

Nor was Moses without another argument, the most wonderful of all! If you read in the next chapter, at the 16th verse, you will notice how Moses says to God, in effect, "*I cannot be parted from these people! With them I will live. With them I will die. If you blot their name out of Your Book,*

blot out my name, also. If Your Presence goes not with me, carry us not up from here. For how will it be known, here, that I and Your people have found Grace in Your sight? Is it not in that You go with us?" See how he puts it—"I and Your people...You go with us." "No," says Moses, "I will not be favored—I will sink or swim with these people." And I think that this is how the Lord Jesus Christ pleads for His Church when He is interceding with God. "My Father," He says, "I must have My people. My Church is My bride, and I, the Bridegroom, cannot lose My spouse. I will die for her and if I live, she must also live. And if I rise to Glory, she must be brought to Glory with Me."

You see, it is, "I and Your people." This is the glorious conjunction of Christ with us as it was of Moses with the children of Israel! And, Brothers and Sisters, we never prevail in prayer so much as when we seem to link ourselves with the people for whom we pray. You cannot stand up above them, as though you were their superior, and then pray for them with any success—you must get down by the side of the sinner and say, "Let us plead with God." Sometimes, when you are preaching to people, or when you are praying for them, you must feel as if you could *die* for them, if they might be saved, and if they were lost it would seem as if you, too, had lost everything! Rutherford said that he would have two heavens if but one soul from Anwoth met him at God's right hand, and, doubtless, we shall have the same, and we have sometimes felt as if we had a Hell at the thought of any of our Hearers being cast into Hell! When you can pray like that, when you put yourself side by side with the soul for which you are pleading, you will succeed! You will be like Elisha, when he stretched himself upon the Shunammite's son and put his mouth upon the child's mouth, his eyes upon the child's eyes, his hands upon the child's hands and seemed to identify himself with the dead child. Then was he made the means of quickening to the lad! God help us to plead thus in our prayers for sinners!

There is one other thing which I think has hardly ever been noticed, and that is the way in which Moses finished his prayer by pleading *the Sovereign Mercy of the Lord*. When you are pleading with a man, it is sometimes a very wise thing to stop your own pleading and let the man, himself, speak, and then out of his own mouth get your argument. When Moses pleaded with God for the people, he had, at first, only half an answer. And he turned round to the Lord and said, "You have favored me, and promised me great things. Now I ask something more of You. 'I beseech You, show me Your Glory.'" I do not think that was idle curiosity on the part of Moses, but that he meant to use it as the great master-plea in prayer. When the Lord said to him, "I will make all My goodness pass before you," I think I see the tears in the eyes of Moses and I seem to hear him say, "He cannot smite the people. He cannot destroy them! He is going to make all His goodness pass before me and I know what that is—Infinite Love, Infinite Mercy—mercy that endures forever."

And then, when the Lord said, "I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," how the heart of Moses must have leaped within him as he said, "There it is! That glorious Truth of Divine

Sovereignty! The Lord will show mercy on whom He will show mercy. Why, then, He can have mercy on these wicked wretches who have been making a god out of a calf and bowing before it!" I do delight, sometimes, to fall back upon the Sovereignty of God and say, "Lord, here is a wicked wretch. I cannot see any reason why you should save him! I can see many reasons why you should damn him, but then You do as You will. Oh, magnify Your Sovereign Grace by saving this great sinner! Let men see what a mighty King You are and how royally You handle the silver scepter of Your pardoning mercy."

That is a grand argument, for it gives God all the Glory! It puts Him upon the Throne, it acknowledges that He is an absolute Sovereign who is not to be dictated to, or held in with bonds and cords. Shall He not do as He wills with His own? We need to often listen to the sublime Truth that thunders out from the Throne of God, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So, then, it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." Out of this Truth of God comes the best plea that ever trembles on a pleader's lips. "Great King, Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, have mercy upon us! Divine Sovereign, exercise Your gracious dispensing power and let the guilty rebels live!"

III. Now, in the third place, let me say that NOTHING CAN HINDER A PLEADING SPIRIT OF SUCCESS. The text says, "The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people."

If you and I know how to plead for sinners, there is no reason why we should not succeed, for, first, there is no reason *in the Character of God*. Try, if you can, to get some idea of what God is, and though you tremble before His Sovereignty and adore His Holiness and magnify His Justice, remember that He is still, first and foremost, Love. "God is love," and that love shines in all the Divine attributes! It is undiminished in its glory by any one of them. All the attributes of God are harmonious with each other and Love seems to be the very center of the circle. Let us never be afraid of pleading with God! He will never take it ill on our part that we pray for sinners, for it is so much after His own mind. "As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way, and live." The Character of God is infinitely gracious, even in its Sovereignty. It is Grace that reigns, therefore let us never be afraid of pleading with the Lord! We shall surely succeed, for there is nothing in God's Character to hinder us.

And, next, there is nothing *in God's thoughts to hinder the pleader's success*. Look at the text—"The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people." I will, therefore, never be hindered in my pleading by any idea of the Divine purpose, whatever that purpose may be! There are some who have dreaded what they call, "the horrible Decrees of God." No Divine Decree is horrible to me! And it shall never hinder me in pleading with the Lord for the salvation of men. He is God and, therefore, let Him do what seems good to Him—absolute authority is safe enough in His hands. But even if He had thought to do evil to His people, there is no reason why we should cease from praying! We may yet suc-

ceed, for so the text has it, “Jehovah repented of the evil, which He thought to do unto His people.”

I will go yet farther, and say that there is nothing, even, *in God’s act* to hinder us from pleading with success. If God has begun to smite the sinner, as long as that sinner is in this world, I will still pray for him. Remember, how, when the fiery rain was falling upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and the vile cities of the plain were being covered with its bituminous sleet, Zoar was preserved in answer to the prayers of Lot? Look at David—he was a great sinner, and he had brought upon his people a terrible plague, and the destroying angel stood with his drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem—but when David saw the angel, he said to the Lord, “Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done?” So the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel. Why, if I saw you between the very jaws of Hell, so long as they had not actually engulfed you, I would pray for you! God forbid that we should sin against any guilty ones by ceasing to pray for them, however desperate their case! My text seems to me to put this matter with astonishing force and power—the evil which God had thought to do was prevented by the intercession of His servant, Moses.

IV. I had many more things to say to you, but I must leave them unsaid and conclude by reminding you, in only a sentence or two, that **NOTHING IN THE MEDIATION OF MOSES CAN MATCH OUR GREATER INTERCESSOR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

Remember, Brothers and Sisters, that He not only prayed and willingly offered Himself to die for us, but *He actually died for us*. His name was blotted from the book of the living—He died that we might live. He went not to God saying, “Perhaps I may make Atonement for the guilty,” but *He made the Atonement and His pleading for sinners is perpetually prevalent*. God is hearing Christ at this moment as He makes intercession for the transgressors! And He is giving Him to see of the travail of His soul. This being the case, nothing ought to prevent any sinner from pleading for himself through Jesus Christ! If you think that God means to destroy you, yet go and pray to Him, for “The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people.” Thus may He deal in mercy with you, for His dear Son’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: EXODUS 32.

Verse 1. *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.* What a terrible speech to be made by the people whom God had chosen to be His own! “Make us gods. Make our creator.” How could that be?

2. *And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.* Poor Aaron! He never had the backbone of his brother,

Moses. He was a better speaker, but oh, the poverty of his heart! He yields to the will of these idolatrous people and bows to their wicked behests at once!

3. *And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.* Idolaters spare no expense—there is many a worshipper of a god of wood or mud who gives more to that idol than professing Christians give to the cause of the one living and true God! It is sad that it should be so.

4. *And he received them at their hands and fashioned it with an engraving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.* This was an Egyptian idolatry, the worship of God under the fashion of an ox, the emblem of strength. But God is not to be worshipped under emblems at all! What a poor representation of God any emblem must be!

5. *And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.* They were going to worship Jehovah under the emblem of an ox! This is what you will hear idolaters say—they *do not worship the image*, they say, but the true God under that image! Yet that is expressly forbidden under the Second Commandment!

6. *And they rose up early on the morrow and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.* Lascivious games were sure to accompany idolatrous worship, for idolatry always leads to filthiness in some form or other, as if it were inevitable!

7. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get you down; for your people, which you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.* How startled Moses must have been when Jehovah said this to him!

8, 9. *They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These are your gods, O Israel, which have brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people.* Moses, perhaps, begins to lift his voice in prayer, and God says—

10. *Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of you a great nation. "I will keep My promise to Abraham by destroying these rebels, and taking you, his true descendant, and fulfilling the Covenant in you."*

11-13. *And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people, which You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own Self, and said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and you shall inherit it forever.* What a brave prayer this was! Here is a wrestling Moses—true son of wrestling Israel—and he

brings his arguments to bear upon Jehovah when He is angry! And, by God's Grace, he succeeds in turning aside the Lord's wrath!

14, 15. *And the LORD repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount. An unhappy, broken-hearted man, going from the closest communion with God, down into the midst of a wicked people!*

15-17. *And the two tablets of the Testimony were in his hand: the tablets were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tablets were the Work of God, and the writing was the Writing of God, engraved upon the tablets. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. Joshua had probably waited lower down and he met Moses in his descent. He heard with the quick ears of a soldier and his thoughts went that way.*

18, 19. *And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount. This is he who had been praying to God and saying, "Why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people?" Now he is in deep sympathy with God and he is, himself, angry with the idolaters. He cannot help it when he begins to see their sin. Before, he had only thought of the people, but now he looks at their sin. When you see sin, if you are a man of God, your wrath waxes hot and you get into sympathy with that Holy God who cannot be otherwise than indignant at iniquity wherever it may be.*

20. *And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. See the power of this one man who has God at his back and God in him! While the people are dancing around their idol, he tears it down, grinds it to powder and says, "You shall drink it, every one of you." Why, there are millions to one—but what cares he about their millions? God is with him and he is God's servant and, therefore, they all tremble before him!*

21-24. *And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto you, that you have brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: you know the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whoever has any gold, let them break it off so they gave it me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf. That was a lie, for he had made the calf and shaped it himself. Aaron had not any backbone, nor any principle—he could not be stout-hearted for God! What a poor little man he seems by the side of his great brother! How he shrivels up under the rebuke of Moses!*

25. *And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies). Moses does not*

spare Aaron. He lays at his door the guilt of the great sin he had committed—“Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies.”

26, 27. *Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the LORD’S side? Let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. And he said unto them, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man, his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. This is the man who pleaded for them on the top of the mount! See how he acts in the sight of their sin, by Divine Authority! He smites them right and left. Possibly, those who were slain were the men who refused to drink the water on which the powder had been sprinkled, or those who continued in rebellion against the Lord.*

28-30. *And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day. And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, You have sinned a great sin; and now I will go up unto the LORD; perhaps I shall make an atonement for your sin. I will be bound to say that this was said after a sleepless night. The people’s sin is now so vividly before him that he begins to feel that God will be just if He punishes them and does not grant them any forgiveness. So he goes, once more, up that steep climb to the top of Sinai with a trembling heart—and with only a, “perhaps,” on his lip.*

31, 32. *And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if You will forgive their sin— There he broke down, he could not finish that sentence!*

32. *And if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your Book which You have written. “Let me die in their place!” But God could not accept one man in the place of another! There is a great Substitute, ordained of old, but He is more than man and, therefore, He can stand in the sinner’s place.*

33-36. *And the LORD said unto Moses, Whoever has sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My Book. Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto you: behold, My Angel shall go before you: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them. And the LORD plagued the people, because they made the calf, which Aaron made. Moses had only half success in pleading for the people. They were not to die as yet, but God declared that He would visit their sin upon them.*

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

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

ON WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU? NO. 1531

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, APRIL 4, 1880,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me.”
Exodus 32:26.*

DURING the last few days in which the stir of a general election has moved the most quiet of our streets, every one of you must have been asked, many times, on which side you are. Some are enthusiastic on this side and some are quite as warm on the other and the interest of all ranks and classes is awakened. Now that the Lord’s Day has come I hope you will forget all about politics and listen to me while I ask a far more important question, namely, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” May God grant us Grace to give an honest answer and may that answer be, “Yes, Lord, You know all things, You know that I love You.”

May thousands of you say to the Lord what Amaziah and his band said to David, “Yours are we, David, and on your side, son of Jesse.” Before I enlarge upon this exceedingly personal and practical question, I must ask you to remember the man who asked it. It was Moses who put this question, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” and he put it to Israel when sin was rampant in the camp. It is well to remember that he stood there as a lone man, the solitary champion of Jehovah and challenged the whole *nation* to decide for God! His own brother had practically deserted him and become the means of making the golden calf. The 70 elders who ought to have been by his side were, none of them, present with him except his lieutenant Joshua.

He stood alone in the midst of the multitude just when they were intoxicated with their lustful pleasures and their fanatical worship. He was equal to the emergency! Thoughtless altogether of his own safety, dauntless, brave and bold, he dashes down their idol and commands it to be ground small and cast into the water of which the nation would drink. He upbraids them to their faces and strides among them, as much superior to them all as a shepherd is superior to the flock he tends. You have to admire his courage! You wonder at his supreme power and you inquire for the secret of such sovereign strength. Moses must have worn about him a dignity most commanding, a royalty far superior to that which comes of birth or office!

Don’t you know where he derived that majesty? He had been, for 40 days, alone with God! Heavenly communion makes a man strong. He had been in the secret place of the Most High. He had spoken with God, face to face, as a man speaks with his friend, and it was not likely that he should fear the face of man after having seen the face of God! He had been familiar with the sublime and when he came down to the infinite littleness of men who had dared to liken the Glory of God to the image of an ox that

eats grass, he wore about him a natural superiority before which they all trembled and slunk away in fear!

Moses was also a man of prayer. He had stopped the hand of the Almighty on the mountain's brow till even God, Himself, had said, "Let Me alone"—wondrous though it may seem, the man, Moses, by his holy faith had even put a restraint on God Himself! Be you sure of this, that the man who has power with God will have power with men. If we have power with God *for* men, we shall have power *with* men for God! He that can overcome Heaven by prayer—what is there that he cannot conquer? There stood Moses, like a lone rock in the midst of the tempestuous sea! The tumult of the people raged around him, but he was firm and unmoved. He became, indeed, the one fixed point upon which the very existence of true religion depended. All the partisans of godliness remaining in the camp, hidden and concealed, rallied to his call and the one man saved the cause.

So has it been in history, not once nor twice, but many a time! A single determined man, full of God's Spirit, has confronted the whole mass of the people—has breasted the rushing torrent of popular prejudice and has not only stemmed the current, but turned it in the opposite direction even as Moses did! Being girt with the power of God and having learned to dwell on high, the one Believer has become the heroic leader of a band of earnest hearts. Brothers and Sisters, we need, in these days, men and women of fixed principles! We need individuals of enlightened mind and determined will! We need those who know what is right and will not deviate from it even though they should risk their lives! We need to have, not one or two, but *multitudes* of steadfast men and women, who, when they put their foot down, mean to abide there and cannot be pushed from off their standing-place.

If any of you aspire to lead your own families and to influence your own connections in the right way, you must possess personal strength of mind of the right sort and you must get it where Moses gained his power. You must be much alone with God and mighty on your knees. Come forth to face the wicked world with your faces radiant with the light of God! Communion with Heaven must win for you Divine help, that you may not be overcome by evil, but may overcome evil with good. Thus much concerning Moses. God make us to be like he.

Let us now consider Moses' question and command—"Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me." I think I see here three very important points. The first is *decision*—a man must be on the Lord's side. Secondly, here is *acknowledgment*, "Let him come unto me"—if he is on the Lord's side, do not let him skulk away in his tent, but let him confront the adversary. And, thirdly, here is *consecration*, for those on the Lord's side were to come to Moses that they might do the Lord's bidding and fight the Lord's battles at all costs.

I. First then, here is DECISION, or being on the Lord's side. It is a decision upon the most sublime and important theme which can ever come under a man's notice. Here are the two camps, God and Satan, truth and falsehood, holiness and sin. On which side are we? When I see a man pausing, as it were, between the two hosts and saying to himself, "Which shall have my heart? Which shall command my service?" I feel that he tar-

ries in a position at once hazardous and sublime, for whichever that choice shall be, it means *eternity*—it means Heaven and all its glories—or it means Hell with all its terrors.

Whether the man shall be for God or for God's enemies will mean, for that man, kinship with angels, or league with devils! It shall mean for him the white robe and the everlasting song of adoring praise, or it shall mean the blackness of darkness and the perpetual wailing of unending misery. Hence a man is placed in a most solemn position when this question is put to him, "Are you on God's side, or are you His enemy?" About all other matters, you should go to work with such a measure of consideration as they deserve. But to *this* business you must bring your weightiest thought. You must concentrate all your wit and wisdom and judge and decide upon this matter with all calmness and deliberation—but with all solemnity of resolution and sternness of determination, so that, having once made your choice by the directing Grace of God—you may stand to that choice world without end.

Are there any here who have not decided upon this point? As the question goes round, "Who is on the Lord's side?" are some of you obliged to say, "I have not made up my mind yet"? It is time you did, for it is a dreadful thing for a man to be standing there, as I said, midway between God and the devil, between Christ and Belial, between Heaven and Hell, for, whether he knows it or not, that midway place which he thinks he occupies is really on the wrong side! So our Lord Jesus judges it—"He that is not with Me is against Me and he that gathers not with Me scatters abroad." This decision, dear Friends, so important and weighty, should be made as early as possible. It is not a matter which we can afford to leave in the balances, hanging in suspense.

Oh that young people would think of this and not waste the best part of their lives in stammering between two opinions! When Aerials came to the borders of Macedon, he sent the terse message—"As friends or as enemies?" The answer was, "We must stop awhile and take advice." His reply was, "While you advise, we march." Happy is that young man who can say to others, "While you are considering, I have decided! While you are hesitating, I have pushed on and given my heart to God! While you are temporizing, I have already entered into conflict with sin and death and Hell! While you are counting the cost, I have already reckoned the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt!"

Happy is he who first crosses the Rubicon of decision, drawing his sword against sin and throwing away the scabbard, that he may never make a truce or treaty with the foe. It is a decision that should be made at once, O man, for death is near you and eternity begins to dawn! Wait not, young man! Wait not, young woman! Every hour renders it more likely that you will make a foolish choice. Delay is dangerous, for it is breeding in you the disease of trifling. Take heed lest you grow into a procrastinator and halt and halt and halt till you become such a cripple that you will halt through life and never march with the armies of the Lord! Oh that Divine Grace would lead each one to decide upon the spot! This is a decision of the greatest importance, for it will influence every subsequent decision throughout life.

If God's Grace shall lead me to say, "Yes, write my name down in the roll of champions on the Lord's side," then from that day forth every other question will be read in the light of that decision. You will henceforth give your love to the Truth of God in rags and not to falsehood in silk apparel. You will henceforth favor Righteousness when she walks in the mire and abhor Injustice when he rides in the high places of the earth. If you are on God's side, whatever things are pure, honest and of good report will find a friend in you. You will never be on the side of drunkenness, nor on the side of oppression, injustice, or war—for in being on the side of God you are the advocate of sobriety, justice and peace.

The side of God is, in the highest and best sense, the side of mankind. We best promote the interests of nations when we advance the cause of God. I pray that our piety may be of such a practical kind that we may carry it with us into everything that we do. I like not that religion which lives in churches and is glorious on a Sunday, like the parish official in his fine coat, but falls back into its ordinary shabby wear when the service is done. Give me that godliness which finds itself at home at the fireside and is in its right place in the counting house and the work room. True religion is meant for field and street, for polling booth and the market. True religion gives a tincture to everything with which the man comes in contact and, find him where you will, you see that he is on the Lord's side because he is on the right side! The follower of Jesus takes that side which for a season may be unpopular, but which is, according to the Law and to the Testimony, right in the sight of God. Take care, then, how you make your decision as to God, since on that pivot your whole character will turn.

As to this decision there ought to be no possible difficulty. A man should decide for God since He is his Creator. Dare you think of being opposed to Him that made you and who can crush you as easily as a moth? He is our Redeemer, the Lord that bought us with His blood! Is it possible that we can be on any other side than His? He is our daily Preserver, in whose hands our breath is—can we live in antagonism to Him? Our relation to our God ought to be an easy question to decide when we remember our obligations. We are not only indebted to God for our being, but for every favor which we now enjoy or ever hope to possess. Should not a man be on the side of his friend? On the side of the best of friends? Think of our responsibilities as they arise out of all the blessings which God bestows and there should be an instant verdict of the heart for God and for His Christ.

It should not be difficult to any right-minded man to say, "Yes, I am on the side of truth," and because God is Truth, we should be on His side. Every right principle demands that we yield ourselves to God. His is the just side, the true side, the side which must ultimately conquer, the side deliberately adopted and earnestly upheld by all holy angels and perfected spirits. Should our decision need much considering? Who needs time to debate when the way is plain? And yet it is sadly true that, through our sinfulness, an honest, sincere, practical decision is not soon arrived at. No, it will *never* be arrived at unless the Holy Spirit shall influence our minds and deliver us from the thralldom of our sinful lusts! Oh, that the

Spirit of God might lead us to choose God's side although it is not the side of self, but directly the opposite!

The most of men are swayed by their own interests—"Which is the best side for *me*? Which will bring *me* the most wealth, or the most esteem, or the most quiet?" But he that is on the side of God scorns such selfish considerations and favors not that which is profitable for the present, but that which is just and right. Alas, many are influenced by the fear of men. What a potent factor is this evil element in directing human affairs! Men would do right, but they dare not! They would avoid that which is wrong, but then they might be ridiculed for too great precision and, therefore, they indulge the side which their conscience condemns.

My Brothers and Sisters, may the Lord give us a different mind from this. May the opinion of men have small weight with us. Let us not be afraid to make enemies rather than disobey God! I would have you of the same mind as the old Spartan who said the question with him never was, "How many are my enemies?" but, "where are they?" Yes, that is it, "Where are they?" That is all. We are ready for them and do not count the odds. If adversaries to the Truth of God and righteousness abound, never think of them! Do not calculate their strength, nor estimate what an attack upon them may cost you, but at once throw down the gage of battle and for God and for righteousness—take the right side.

One other remark must be made—this decision involves but one alternative. If we are not on God's side, we are on the opposite side. All through the Word of God there is no preparation made for a third party. There is a very numerous body of people who try to inhabit the "Betweenities." They will, if they can, go on both sides, or on neither side—they want to be left alone—they wish to keep themselves to themselves and say nothing and do nothing either way. Now, there is no preparation made for you, either in this world or in the next! There is no synagogue of the undecided on earth and no "purgatory" of middle men in the unseen world.

As to this world, there is no comfort held out to you. You are not praised, but you are denounced by the Scriptures and even cursed most bitterly for not coming to the help of the Lord against the mighty. You are regarded as enemies to God until you are His friends and it must be so, for he that is not honest is dishonest! He that is not chaste is impure and He that is not for God is necessarily against Him. It is a matter about which a soul cannot be colorless, so far from this even being possible. This matter is one about which there is usually much intensity of feeling one way or another—God has fervent friends and bitter foes. All great questions raise in men's minds strong movements one way or the other and this greatest of questions is sure to do so.

Though at present, my Friend, you feel no strong movement in the wrong direction, yet that which can produce a great evil movement is lurking in your spirit and if it is not slain, by the Grace of God leading you to be on God's side, one of these days that slumbering sin of yours may awaken itself to an awful display of power. As when a viper, which before was numbed by the cold, is warmed into vitality and stings all who are near it, so does sin when its hour comes. As the lion cub which has not tasted blood is tame as a cat and yet, by-and-by, it assumes all the fury of

the beast of prey, so is it with the demon of iniquity which hides within the human spirit! One way or another you must have God and His Christ, or you must be the servants of Satan—holiness must hold you or sin will bind you—Heaven must win you and attract you to itself—or Hell will mark you for its own and down you will descend!

There, then, I leave the matter of decision, praying earnestly that all who have decided may stand to it and that those who have not decided may be led of the Spirit to make up their minds at once.

II. Secondly, let us consider the ACKNOWLEDGMENT. “Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me.” The Hebrew is more sharp. It reads like this—“Who is on Jehovah’s side? To me.” It is like the cry of one who strikes the first blow in war and, unfurling the standard, summons men to enlist. “For God—to me.” “If you really are His servants, come and gather to me.” In this acknowledgment there is, first of all, a coming out. They were to come out from among the idolaters. You who are on the Lord’s side, away in your tents where you have gone that you might not join with the riotous crowd—come to me! You that are away there in the furthest limits of the camp who have gone to be quiet from all this noise and uproar—come into the gate of the camp to me and show yourselves! None must hide their colors this day.

Now then, I say this morning to you who are on God’s side, do not conceal your religion! Be not wickedly reticent. Be not ungratefully retiring, but come forward. “Come you out from among them! Be you separate; touch not the unclean thing.” There is too little separation from the world, nowadays, among Christian professors. I do not wonder at the question a little girl asked of her mother when she had been reading the New Testament, “Mother, don’t you think it would be very nice if we could all move away and go and live where there are Christians?” Her mother said, “Why, there are many Christians around us.” “Oh no, Mother, not like those I have been reading of in the New Testament.”

I am afraid the child was right, though there are some New Testament Christians even here. I wish there were many more who, in all things, followed not the fashions of the world and the follies of the times but walked with God in the separated path where Jesus’ footsteps are seen. This avowal, however, was not only a mere coming out—they were to come to the *leader*. Moses stood there and said, “Let him come unto me.” He stood there as God’s representative and seemed to say, “I am on God’s side; there is no question about that, though I stand alone—now let others who are on God’s side come to me.”

“Ah,” you say this morning, “We wish we had a leader bold and brave to whom we could come.” I reply, you have such a leader! Where is He? He is gone into the highest heavens, but your faith may see Him! It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is first and foremost on God’s side! He proved it by His life and proved it by His death and this morning He bids all that are on God’s side to come to Him! Come and let Him be your Master and Lord! Come and imitate His example and keep His precepts! Come and proclaim His Gospel and defend His Kingdom! He that is on the Lord’s side let him come to Christ and follow the Lamb wherever He goes!

And yet there is this much more about it. Those who were to come to Moses were, of course, to come to one another. When Moses said, "Who is on the Lord's side? Let him come unto me," He was virtually gathering a Church and enlisting an army of men whose hearts God had touched. Such came forth at Moses' call. Come, then, you that love the Lord, come and join with others who think as you do! Do not birds of a feather flock together? If God has made you birds of Paradise, hasten to fly like doves to your windows! Friend, if I am on the Lord's side and you are on the Lord's side, why should we be strangers to one another? There are few enough to stand up for Christ! Surely they ought to be knit together in closest affection.

Unity is strength and as we have no strength to spare, let us be united. Come forth you that know the Lord and acknowledge your allegiance by joining with others who love your King! Enlist under the same Captain and inscribe your names in the same muster roll. I cannot give out this call with all the energy I would, or I would publish it from every market. I beseech those who are not on the Lord's side not to attempt to unite with any visible Church, for that would be rank hypocrisy! But I would encourage and invite and entreat and almost go the length of *commanding* those who are on the Lord's side to declare themselves! Come you to us, for we, also, are on the Lord's side. Lend us your help. Afford us your company. Let us enter into fellowship with one another and let us be banded together for everything that is good and true because we are on the Lord's side. Attend to this, I pray you and make an acknowledgment of your decision for God as speedily as possible.

III. In the third place, with this acknowledgment should come CONSECRATION. Those who are on the Lord's side should not merely give their names, but give *themselves*. When we are on the side of Christ we belong to Christ. Every man who really is on the Lord's side should feel that he is bound to obey God's will. I thank God that I learned this lesson when I first knew the Savior. I did not think that in matters of religion I was to follow my father, or any other good man. It seemed to me that God had put into my hand the Bible and I was to read it—I was to find out with diligent searching whatever the Lord taught me in that Book and I was to believe and to do as His Word taught me.

I feel it now to be a great comfort to my heart that I took nothing at secondhand. I received my doctrine not of men, neither was I taught it, but I went directly to the wellhead and drank from the source itself, by the teaching of the Spirit of God. I want you all to do this. Do not follow a Church—do not follow any great preacher—pin yourself to no man's sleeve. To the Law and to the Testimony, if men speak not according to this Word of God it is because there is no Light of God in them. If everybody would do this, there might still remain diversities of judgment, but I am inclined to think that unity in doctrine and in practice would be far sooner attained by this habit than by any other means.

If each one would go to the Word for himself and no longer settle down in an "ism" learned from somebody else, we would know the Truth of God and come together in our views of it. Following in a certain track because you happen to be put in it by the circumstances of your birth and educa-

tion is not the way of a candid and enlightened mind! I care not for the decrees of Churches, or the dogmas of men. I honor both Churches and holy men, but not as dictators to my faith! This one book, the Bible, contains the religion of the true Christian, so far as it can be described by letters and the Spirit of God has promised to enlighten us as to its meaning.

God grant we may never say, "I do such-and-such because it is in the Prayer-Book" or, "Because it is according to our denominational standards." What have you to do with any book but the Bible, or with any denomination but the Church of Christ, unless it is that the book and the denomination are scriptural? See you well to this, for careful obedience to God is much needed in these times. I have referred to a Spartan once or twice this morning, for something of the Spartan spirit would do well if saturated with the spirit of Christ. A Spartan in the midst of battle was about to kill his foe. His sword was lifted up as the trumpet sounded a retreat and he drew back his weapon. And when one asked, "Why did you allow him to escape?" he replied, "I would sooner obey my general than kill an enemy."

For a Christian there is nothing like obedience. "To obey is better than sacrifice and to listen, than the fat of rams." Let us learn that. When we come to be on the Lord's side we are not only to be willing to obey His will, but we are to serve Him actively and energetically. Moses said to these men, "Gird every man his sword upon his thigh." You are not to enlist on the Lord's side to idle away your time. Hosts of people think when they get into the bosom of the Church that they are to sleep there like babies in their mothers' arms. The Gospel coach goes by and they climb to a box seat if they can, and ride. But the idea of ever driving the coach—the idea of *working* for the Master—never enters into their heads. It must not be so with us. We must throw our activities and our energies into the side which is God's, even as the tribe of Levi fought valorously against the rebellious people. And we must do this at all risks and costs.

These men had a very painful duty to perform. They were made executioners of their relatives who were found guilty of high treason against God, their King. It cost their hearts much to kill, every man, his brother or friend. But if they found them obdurate in their idolatry, they were commanded to slay them without mercy and they did so. Their hands did not spare, neither did their eyes have pity upon any who persisted in rebellion. See what Moses said of them—"Of Levi he said, let your Thummim and your Urim be with your Holy One, whom you did prove at Massah and with whom you did strive at the waters of Meribah. Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Your Word and kept Your Covenant."

They were thorough with God and so must we be. When you join Christ's Church there must be a cutting off of right arms and a plucking out of right eyes if necessary. There must be a mortifying of the flesh with its affections and lusts. We are called to a battle and we must prepare for it and not be afraid. Now, because these men were thus faithful to God, they were made the teachers of Israel forever afterwards. Let me continue to read to you what Moses says of them, in Deuteronomy 33:10, because

they had impartially executed the sentence of the Lord. "They shall teach Jacob Your judgments and Israel Your Law; they shall put incense before You and whole burnt sacrifice upon Your altar." Furthermore, they were to be preserved and made more than conquerors because of their stern faithfulness.

They had smitten through the loins of God's enemies and now the prayer of the man of God breathes this blessing over them—"Bless, Lord, his substance and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him and of them that hate him, that they rise not again." Levi smote God's enemies—God will smite his enemies. Those who mind God's work shall find that God works for them. They did their duty with stern integrity and, therefore, God makes them leaders of His people, teachers of His nation and they shall henceforth triumph over all their adversaries. I would have every man who is on the Lord's side and who has acknowledged it, follow the Lord's Word in all things, cost what it may. You will find, in the Bible, doctrines which the world will denounce as harsh—hold them and let them call you cruel if they please!

You will have to publish stern doctrines which will smite the tall crest of human pride and thwart the pleasing inclinations of fleshly minds—publish them, nevertheless! God will justify you in so doing and vindicate you from all aspersions. Allow no reservations. Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof. If you are "a soldier of the Cross, a follower of the Lamb," it is yours to do what God bids you. Yours not to reason why, yours, if necessary, to dare and die and still in all holy meekness and gentleness to maintain Truth, rough and rugged though it seems to the dainty philosophers of our day. Be ever on the side of right! May the Spirit of God help us in all this, for unless He helps us, I am sure we shall fail. But if He is with us, we shall conquer!

Those of you who are as yet little in Israel should take care that you do your work well for God in your obscure places and then you shall be lifted to more prominent positions. These Levites were made *teachers* because they had dared, at God's bidding, to be *executioners*, a work associated in men's minds with dishonor. They were bold enough, though but a few, to confront the whole camp and now they shall be made wise enough to teach all the tribes. Use well the lowest position and do it honor. Aerials the Spartan, when they placed him in a back seat, took no umbrage at it, but said, "I will honor the seat if the seat does not honor me." So, if you are placed in the lowliest place in Christ's house, do honor to it and, by-and-by, when the King comes in to see the guests, He will say, "Friend, come up higher."

If you are faithful over a few things, He will make you ruler over many things. Only take heed to it that you *fully* consecrate yourselves to Him on whose side you are. I wish, in conclusion, to show the suitability of my subject to this present time. I am sure it is not out of season. "Who is on the Lord's side?" let him come to Christ and consecrate himself this day to Him. For first, the worship of the golden calf is pretty general now. Men are esteemed according to the amount of money which they possess. Indeed, we say a man is "worth so much." Though the man may not be worth a pair of old shoes, yet if he has a big house, a fair estate and a

huge capital, he is said to be worth so much. Poor little creature! In many cases his worth might be written on your thumbnail.

It is not the *man* that has worth—his house, his lands and his gold have the worth—not the man! There is far too much bowing down and cringing before the golden calf in all classes of society. No end of dodges are tried to get a scraping of one of the creature's hoofs! Brother, you must sooner endure poverty than do a wrong thing for the sake of riches and you must learn to value men for what they *are*, not for what they *have*! It needs not Christianity to tell you that some of the worthiest, noblest and most kingly of men earn their bread by the sweat of their brow. When you meet them, love and honor them. On the other hand, you must know that some of the vilest of men have, at times, climbed to high places of wealth and power. Do not cringe to any man, but least of all bow to a mere moneybag. Value men by their characters and not by their positions. God grant that none of us may ever be found worshipping the golden calf!

Yet to get into society the meanest things are done. I do not know what sort of thing society may be, but I have heard that it is a very wonderful achievement to get into society—to have the privilege of enjoying the empty ceremonies and hollow shams of stupid splendor! To have the privilege of talking to those persons who spend more on their dress than on their religion. From what little I do know of this wonderful thing called, "society," I have felt no ambition to partake in its felicities. And yet to get into society I have seen men fling away their principles, forsake their friends, stifle their consciences, abandon their Church fellowship and become traitors to their God! Indeed, they are successful in business and hope to rank among the county families and so they leave those who love them to entertain, at lavish cost, those who sneer at them! The Lord save those of you who are prosperous from being thus degraded.

The next thing you need to be firm and strong about is the superstitions which are too often associated with religious worship. Remember, God is to be worshipped and only God. That is the essence of the First Commandment. And God is to be worshipped in His own way—that is the essence of the Second Commandment. The first is, "You shall have no other God," and the second, virtually, is, "You shall not make any graven image to represent God, nor bow down to it, nor worship it." Moses made the rebellious people *drink* their god as a punishment. But in these times persons live among us who literally *eat* their god as an act of devotion!

The high spiritual mystery in which we are described as spiritually feeding upon our Lord Jesus has my deepest and most solemn reverence, but the superstitious opinion that men can and do literally *eat the flesh* of Christ under the form of consecrated bread awakens my abhorrence and disgust! The worship of what is called the "Blessed Sacrament" is as vile an idolatry as the worship by the Egyptians of onions and other pot herbs which grew in their own gardens! There is not a pin to choose between the one and the other and yet this is getting to be common! Bread, which is nothing but bread and when you have said all you can say over it still remains bread, must not be produced in a court of law, or if it is so produced, a great bishop, who should know better, assures his brethren that he has taken care that it is reverently consumed!

I wonder what became of the moldy bread? Oh, that ever I, an Englishman, should be forced to believe that another Englishman in this 19th century reverences the baker's paste! Great God in Heaven, is this the country of Latimer? Is this the land of Gospel Light? Or have we clean gone back to Rome and all its idolatries? I want you to be very stiff and straight about this! Do not pay religious honor to *anything* which can be seen by the eyes! Worship no symbol, however ancient! Worship only God! Abhor every act which approximates to reverence paid to pictures, *images*, crucifixes, pyxes, wafers, chalices, or altars! Away with the whole idolatrous business—no epithet of scorn will be misapplied if it is turned against these superstitions! I will not now quote the words of ridicule which our fathers poured upon this wickedness, but I beseech you follow them in sternly refusing by word, or look, or sign, to pay the slightest regard for objects of superstitious reverence, lest by mingling with the heathen you incur their guilt!

These idolatrous Israelites would have pleaded that they did not worship the golden calf but they worshipped Jehovah under the figure of a bull—and then they said, “See what a beautiful emblem it is! The bull is the image of strength and God is almighty! How instructive it is! The ox plows our fields and so produces our harvests—what a teaching symbol of the goodness of God! Many of the common people will learn more from this than from a sermon.” Certain artistic people would add, each one in his own manner, “This symbolic worship is so tasteful that it helps me to worship. When I was in the camp and there was no golden image, I could never enter into such a bare worship, but I greatly admire this decorous and hearty service. The extemporary prayers of Moses and his brother were too poor for me. That beautiful bull is aesthetic and awakens thought and emotion and the ceremonies of Apis is to my mind quite a model. Give me a little of Israelite-Egyptian, in which you have the old embellished by the new and, by the help of music and genuflections I can, indeed, adore.” You know who they are who talk in this fashion nowadays!

Afterwards came the popular sports—for it is written of the people “they ate and they drank and they rose up to play”—the superstitious are usually fond of vain amusements. The Laudean churchman admired The Book of Sports. The Book of Sports usually gets upon the same shelf as the Book of Ceremonies. “Oh, that is the religion for me,” cries one, “none of your straight-laced talk about worshipping God in spirit and in truth.” My Brothers and Sisters, I want you to feel that you are on God's side about this, for every symbol, I repeat it, whether *image*, picture, bread, or whatever you please, must be denounced if it is set up as an object of worship. Whereas the bread and wine are appointed by our Lord Jesus to be used for a memorial of Him, they are so to be used with loving thoughtfulness, but we must not, we *dare* not, pay the slightest worship to them, for that were to make sin of the blackest dye out of the most tender of all memories.

The next point is, I would to God we were on the Lord's side in view of the sinful amusements which appear to have such charms for many that even Christian people go quite as far as they should in reference to them. When they had bowed before this golden calf they “rose up to play,” and

very pretty play it was. It does not bear explanation. There is about the world a good deal of this “playing.” Beware, I pray you, of every amusement which prevents your redeeming the time, or tends to pollute the mind. There are recreations of a healthy, manly, refreshing kind—but those which are of no possible service to you are unprofitable. The same spirit which made the Puritan refuse to reverence the so-called holy days and holy things of superstition led him so to reverence God and His sacred Law that he would not join in the debasing amusements of the period, which were, indeed, so gross, as a rule, that even irreligious people would not, in these times, endure them.

We have somewhat of the same protest to bear and we must not flinch from it. We have better joys than the wanton and the foolish can bring to us. We say of a pastime—if this is pure and clean, if this is health-giving to the body, or restful and invigorating to the mind—we are not led by any old-fashioned whim to denounce it and we do *not* denounce it. But if about it there is a taint of vice or a temptation that way, or if it is mere folly, we cannot endure it. We venture not where Jesus would not have gone. We would not go where we should be afraid to die, or should tremble to hear the trumpet announcing the coming of the Lord. This is stern teaching—are you enough on the Lord’s side to bear it? I pray God to put backbones into modern professors! Every other part of their bodies seems to grow firm except their spinal column, which remains soft and easily distorted. We need to be made resolute and faithful on the Lord’s side!

“Oh,” says one, “these are small points.” Yes, but I want you to be like the Spartan who painted on his shield a fly. “Your escutcheon is very small,” said one. “True,” he said, “but I hold it very close to the enemy.” If our points of conscience seem to be small, so much the more need that we hold them in the very faces of those who think little of the things of God! A small point where God is involved is a great matter! Trifling with small things leads to trifling with great things! Lastly, we need firm decision for God and bold acknowledgment of it in this day of general tampering with principle. Numbers of people whom we meet say, “You are right, no doubt, but—” Now, the Christian way of talking is, “If it is right we know no, ‘but!’” “Oh, yes,” says one, “I agree that it is the straight thing and yet—.” A genuine Christian has no, “and yet’s.”

If words plainly mean such-and-such a thing, he uses them in that sense and not in an unnatural sense. And he never dares to say, “I know that such-and-such things are wrong and they trouble my conscience, but still, you see, I am doing a vast amount of good and we must submit to a little evil in order to gain a great good.” The plain Christian will do no evil that good may come—he loathes the Jesuitical notion! He believes that it is a great evil to attempt to do good by doing evil. To him, truth, right, the teaching of God, the will of Christ are supreme objects. Oh, that you all possessed this spirit and were steadfast in it! In your family circle; in your business—everywhere—be true, be thorough, be upright, be godlike, be Christ-like and may the Divine Spirit help you to this, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

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“WHO IS ON THE LORD’S SIDE?”

NO. 2884

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MAY 19, 1904.**

***DELIVERED BY C H SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD’S-DAY EVENING, APRIL 9, 1876.***

***“Then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said,
Whoever is on the LORD’S side—come to me!
And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him.”
Exodus 32:26.***

THOSE idolatrous people seem to have been awestruck by the appearance of Moses in their midst. You can picture them gathered around Aaron, worshipping the golden calf and performing their unclean rites—but, as soon as ever Moses marches into the camp, they recognize his commanding presence and his kingly authority. “Drag down that abomination,” he cries! “And break it in pieces.” And though, just now, they were adoring it, they implicitly obey him. The calf is hurled from its pedestal, burnt in the fire, ground to powder and mingled with the water that the idolaters drank. Then rings out the grand challenge of our text. The brave man who seems to stand like a solid rock amid the raging billows, feels it necessary to strike a decisive blow for Jehovah—and once and for all put an end to that shameful idolatry. So, taking his stand, as though to lift up the banner of Jehovah, he cries, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side—come to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him—the men who afterwards became the priests of the Most High God. Then came that just but terrible command to execute the idolaters—and three thousand of the people perished as a warning to the rest—and that cursed image-worship was stamped out of the camp, at least, for a time.

Now, dear Friends, very much as Moses did on that occasion, needs to be done very frequently in every age. It is necessary that a banner should be displayed because of the Truth of God and that men should be called out to rally around it. And those who do so, those who are the most fearless and the most faithful, shall receive a great reward, even as we read in the Book of Deuteronomy that Moses bestowed a special blessing upon the tribe of Levi because its sons were faithful in that trying and testing time—“And of Levi he said, Let Your Thummim and Your Urim be with Your holy one, whom You did prove at Massah, and with whom You did strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Your word and kept Your covenant.” Blessed are they, also, who in these days bow not down

before the modern idols that so many worship! Blessed are the brave men who never question whether a certain course will “pay” or not, but who do the right thing, whatever the consequences of their action may be! These are they who, amidst the bright ones in Heaven, shall be doubly bright and who, here below, shall be the officers in the army of the Lord who shall be called to lead the way in the day of battle. I would that we had many among us who would come forward with brave decision and yield themselves up, without doubt or fear, to follow wherever the God of Truth and the Truth of God should lead them. High shall their renown be and great shall their reward be, even as it was with these courageous sons of Levi who so promptly responded to the challenge of Moses, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side—let him come unto me!”

What I am going to try to do is, first, *to describe the conflict and show which is the Lord’s side*. Secondly, *to point out to the Lord’s followers what they must do*. Thirdly, *to remind the Lord’s hosts of their encouragements* and, fourthly, *to repeat the question of the text—and to put forward proposals for enlistment in the army of the Lord*.

I. First, then, I have TO DESCRIBE THE CONFLICT WHICH IS NOW GOING ON AND TO SHOW YOU WHICH IS THE LORD’S SIDE. That is not a very difficult task and the conscience of each one of you ought to help me in its accomplishment.

This is where “the Lord’s side” begins—*Belief in God against Atheism and other forms of unbelief*. Infidelity assumes many forms—the doubt as to whether there is any God at all—the daring defiance of God if there is a God. Or the indifference which utterly neglects God, not caring about Him either one way or another. Believers are on the opposite side to all of these and you know that the side they are on is “the Lord’s side.” To fear Him, to reverence Him, to trust Him, to love Him, to serve Him, to worship Him—that is being on “the Lord’s side.” On which side are you, dear Friend? Are you a believer, a fearer, a truster, a lover, a worshipper of God, or are you a neglecter, a rejecter, a hater of Him?

Here again are two sides—*obedience to the commands of God, or a determination to please ourselves*. Are we endeavoring to obey the moral law or are we pouring contempt upon that law and seeking to be happy by having our own way? How is it with you, my dear Friend? Are you making yourself into your only god? Are you allowing your own lusts and passions to be the supreme governing influence over you? Are you saying to yourself, “I will have my own way. I will do as I please. As long as I can make myself merry, I care nothing whatever about the commands of God”? If that is the way you talk, it is quite clear on which side you are. Between the will of the flesh and the will of God, there is no possible question as to which is “the Lord’s side.”

Here is another battleground—*Christ and His righteousness, or your self-righteousness*—cleansing in Christ’s blood and covering with His perfect righteousness, on the one hand and—on the other, salvation by your own works, salvation by your own prayers, salvation by your almsgiving, or by anything of your own. You know, at once, which is “the Lord’s side” out of those two, for the Lord is always on Christ’s side. Indeed, Christ, Himself, is God! Justification by faith is the side on which God is, but

justification by the works of the Law is a lie—in fact, it is an impossibility! Now, dear Friends, on which side are you with regard to this matter of salvation by Christ or salvation by self? Are you “on the Lord’s side” of that question?

Here is yet another point from which to view this great conflict—the *Gospel of the Grace of God, or the superstitions and lies of men*. The Bible teaches us that sinners are saved by believing in Jesus Christ, but superstition says, “No, they are saved by being sprinkled with water through the subtle influences that trickle from priestly fingers. They are saved by baptism, saved by sacraments. Here, then, is a sharp conflict between salvation by Christ and salvation by priests. We know which is “the Lord’s side” of that controversy, but, dear Friend, on which side are you? Do you go directly to the Lord Jesus Christ as your Great High Priest and do you trust alone to the merit of His atoning Sacrifice, or will you go crouching to your fellow creature and pour the infamous story of your sin into his ear and so defile him even more than he already is? And then will you come back deluded with the false notion that you have obtained “absolution” at his hands? We know that none can forgive sins save God, alone—this is the Lord’s way of making reconciliation through the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son. So, Friends, are you for Zion or for Rome? Are you on the side of Christ or on the side of antichrist?

There is a fierce battle still raging in the world *between Scripture and tradition*—between this Grand Old Book and certain things which have been handed down by tradition from the fathers. They are said to be customs of the early church, or to have been ordained by various councils, or decreed by “infallible” popes. Well, dear Friends, are you on the side of God’s Word or of man’s word? Is your rule of life, “Thus says the Lord,” or, “Thus say the fathers,” or, “Thus say the councils,” or, “Thus say the popes”? Who is on the Lord’s side in this matter? There is a stern fight still to be fought over this question—the battle has long been raging and it will continue to rage until the victory is won by the Truth of God. I am looking forward to the time when there will be only two parties left to fight—the men who will have this text emblazoned on their standards, “One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism,” and who will have nothing but the Bible for their rule of conduct—and those bearing the other banner in praise of the inventions of men and the traditions of the fathers. They will cling to their errors, I have no doubt, as long as they can, but the Lamb will overcome them—and they who are on “the Lord’s side” will also come off more than conquerors through Him that has loved them!

There are two sides to all the moral questions in the world. There is holiness, for instance. You all know on whose side that is. And there is unholiness—and you have no difficulty in deciding on whose side *that* is! Then, as to order, peace, quietness, love, generosity and so on, you all know on whose side they are. And you equally know on whose side disorder, strife, disaffection, tumult, selfishness and covetousness are. You are well aware, Brothers and Sisters, that wherever there is anything that is right, true, pure, holy and of good report, that is “the Lord’s side.” Therefore, always be on that side. But if there is anything that is impure, unchaste, unlovely, unjust—that is not “the Lord’s side” and it should

not be His people's side. At the present time this dear land of ours seems as if it were going to be swallowed up by the demon of drunkenness. Temperance, righteousness, sobriety—these are all on "the Lord's side" of that question, so let every Christian see that he takes the same side as the Lord does. I need not go into all the questions that are prominent at the present time because they keep on changing their positions—and sometimes it is one question that is most prominent and sometimes another—but to almost every question which comes up, there is "the Lord's side" and there is another side. And the question must always be asked, "Which is the Lord's side?" And I trust as soon as that question is answered, you will say, "That is the side for me to take—the side upon which the Lord is."

II. Now, secondly, I am TO POINT OUT TO THE LORD'S FOLLOWERS WHAT THEY MUST DO TO SHOW THAT THEY ARE ON HIS SIDE.

And the first thing is, *they must acknowledge it*. The Truth of God deserves to have bold adherents and brave proclaimers. Righteousness ought not to be claimed as the portion of men who are ashamed to acknowledge it. Suppose that those sons of Levi had slunk away to their tents and had said, "Oh, yes, we are on the Lord's side, but we do not mean to expose ourselves to any risk in dealing with these idolaters." That would have been like the coward spirit of a soldier who shirks his proper place on the field of battle. He is too modest, too retiring to fight—that is only another way of saying that he is a coward and unworthy of the uniform he wears! In like manner, it is a mean, beggarly spirit that will not lay down life and limb, substance and honor—and everything else that one has—for the cause of God and His Truth. Oh, for more of the true spirit of chivalry among those who call Jesus their Lord and Master! It is a shame that they should ever blush to acknowledge His name! They might rather blush with shame to think that they have ever been ashamed of Him! I count it *nothing*, Brothers and Sisters, to speak for the cause that everybody thinks to be good, or to float with the stream by agreeing with what the multitude reckons to be right. Every timeserver can do that! But, to swim against the stream, to speak unpopular Truths of God, to declare that which God has taught you, even though nobody else believes it, to beard the lion in his den, to stand—like Athanasius—against the whole world for God and for His Christ—this is being a man, indeed! No, more—this is being a Christian! And the time shall come when this shall be reckoned the noblest kind of man whom even God, Himself, has made. So, if you are on God's side, admit it!

Then, next, *rally to the standard*. Moses cried, "Whoever is on the Lord's side—come to me!" If you are a Christian, you should unite with other Christians. I believe, Brothers and Sisters, that it is the duty of all converts to test the various sections of the professing church by the Word of God and then to cast in their lot with that part which holds the Truth of God most fully and clearly. And, having conscientiously done that, to rally with the hosts of God in the great battle against wrong. Oh, you converts who have never joined the church, what are you doing? I beseech you, think over this matter, pray over it and remember that in the olden times, they first gave themselves to the Lord and afterwards

they gave themselves to His people—according to the will of God. And so ought you to do. Believers ought not to be solitary stones, lying by themselves—they should be built up into “a holy temple in the Lord, built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” So, dear Friends, if you are on “the Lord’s side,” admit it and join with those who also are on that side.

Then, next, if you are on “the Lord’s side,” *be willing to be in the minority*. It is true that minorities have generally come in for kicks and blows rather than kisses and caresses, but, at the great Day of Judgment, all such wrongs will be righted. And, after all, it has often been a minority—yes, and even a minority of *one*—that has done great things for God, after all! Just now I mentioned Athanasius. You remember that when the whole of Christendom seemed to swing round to Arianism, it was Athanasius, standing alone, “*Athanasius contra mundum*,” as he truly said, who brought the Church back to belief in the Deity of Christ! And in the days of Luther, who can ever tell what a pivot and hinge that one lone man was for Germany and Europe? And in Scotland, what force there was in the one brave man, John Knox, whose preaching and prayers Queen Mary feared more than an army of soldiers! Few followed these brave leaders at the first, for following meant the stake, the scaffold, prison, suffering, shame, reproach and death—yet these were the men and women who did the true work of God, after all, and who fought the good fight of faith!

Be you followers of them. Run not with the multitude to do evil—rather choose the narrow way that leads unto life, though few there are that find it. From the days of Noah the followers of the Lord have usually been in the minority. If the rightness of any course could be decided by the counting of heads, the devil would mostly be in the right—but we do not count in that way. We test every question by the Word of God, not by the votes of men! If the Lord has said anything, believe it, even if no one else does. If the Lord has revealed any Truth to your conscience, hold to it, even though, to all others, it should seem to be a lie and, verily, I say unto you, you shall have your reward! The sons of Levi were in a minority in comparison with the great host of idolaters in the camp of Israel, yet they came out boldly for the Lord, and are, therefore, held in honor even to this day!

Further, *you must be aggressive* if you are on “the Lord’s side.” These sons of Levi, as soon as they declared that they were on the side of Jehovah, had to come forth to smite and slay His enemies. So must you, if you are a follower of the Lord. There is nothing that the devil likes better than to be left alone. I am often asked, “Why do you not preach what you believe and leave other people’s doctrine alone?” Ah, just so! Why don’t I? And why did not the Lord Jesus Christ let the devil alone and let false teachers alone? And why does not the Gospel let error and falsehood alone? When the Lord Jesus Christ came into the world, one part of His work was to destroy the works of the devil. The demons said to Him, “Let us alone: what have we to do with You, You Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us?” His answer was, “Hold your peace and come out of him.” And when the demons say to us, “Leave us alone,” we reply, “That

is the very thing that we cannot do and that we dare not do!” We must not let falsehood, and sin, and error alone! Christ Himself said, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.” His faithful servants are to follow His example—to quarrel with error, to fight against sin—to be aggressive against everything that is opposed to our Lord and His Truth!

The devil is quite ready to make a league of peace with us, or to agree to a truce and say, “Now, do not go on fighting any longer. Let us shake hands and be friends. There can be no reason why I should not continue to be the prince of the power of the air, and Christ should also have His disciples—only let them be very decorous and quiet—and mind their own business.” But we will make no such wicked league or truce as that, for we are to resist the devil! As Peter writes, “whom resist steadfast in the faith.” The sons of Levi had to kill the adversaries of God and so must you, *spiritually*, who are on “the Lord’s side.”

You must also *let love to God rule all nature’s ties* if you are on “the Lord’s side.” Moses expressly commended Levi for this—“Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children.” They were so jealous for the Lord of Hosts, that they would not tolerate idolatry in their nearest kith and kin! Happily, Brothers and Sisters, we have not to fight anybody with a sword of steel. God forbid that any of us should ever take the life of a fellow creature! Our one weapon is the two-edged sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God! The force we use is the force of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. But, I charge you, never do a wrong thing, or even a *questionable* thing in order to please father, or mother, or wife, or child. And never allow any wrong to go unrebuked in the dearest friend you have, for, “faithful are the wounds of a friend.” Some have condoned sin to please a wife or a husband, but they who are faithful to God must also be faithful to the members of their own household. This may involve persecution for themselves, but they must be willing to bear it for Christ’s sake—and they must not yield an inch, or an iota, in any matter of principle, or any question of truth and right, even to the beloved of their heart. Can you do this? If so, you are worthy to be counted among those who are on “the Lord’s side.”

Once more, they who are on “the Lord’s side” *must do as they are told*. They must be prepared to obey all Christ’s commands to the letter—and also in the spirit of them—right to the end of life. I am ashamed of the way in which some professing Christians ignore so much of the Bible, shutting their eyes to Christ’s commands, or, like, Nelson, turning their blind eye to those they don’t wish to read. Finding themselves in a certain community, they believe what the community believes without ever testing it and trying it by the Word of God. They do not want to know too much and if anybody tries to teach them a Truth of God which they do not know, they are unwilling to learn it lest it should unsettle them in their ecclesiastical position. I bless God that when I was converted to Christ, I laid down this rule for myself—“Whatever the Lord teaches me in His Word, I will follow. If it should lead me into a path where I shall be quite alone because I can find nobody to believe as I believe, yet will I be-

lieve and teach that which the Holy Spirit reveals to me in the Word.” At this moment I have not an atom of respect for any authority in matters relating to Divine Truth except the authority of God—and I would strongly urge all young people to try all catechisms, creeds, customs, doctrines, practices and everything else by that Infallible test—“To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light of God in them.”

III. Thirdly, I am to remind THE LORD’S HOSTS OF THEIR ENCOURAGEMENTS.

First, we may be encouraged to be on “the Lord’s side” *because it is the cause of right and truth*. To me it seems to be a sufficient reward to a man to know that he is defending a right cause even if he has to die for it. Do you crave the applause of human hands and voices? Do you covet the glance of approving eyes? If so, your self-respect has already fallen below the point which it ought to mark. Are you right in the course you are now pursuing? If you are, you need not ask for anything more. To be right and yet to be poor—to be right and to be abused, or even to be put to death—is, surely, sufficient for any follower of the Lord!

Better still, if there can be any better, remember that *you are on God’s side*. He who is Almighty looks upon you as His friend! Or, rather, say that He who is Almighty is your Friend! He is much more than that, for He is your All-in-All. You may shelter yourself beneath His wings. Behind the bosses of His buckler you may hide yourself in perfect security!

Moreover, *Jesus the Crucified is with you* if you are on “the Lord’s side.” There He stands, whose head was crowned with the cruel thorns and whose hands and feet were pierced by the terrible nails. Blessed is every soldier of the Cross, for he has Christ for his Captain and where His flag waves, victory must surely come!

Further, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ, *all the saints of God are with us*—the countless hosts of the redeemed before the Throne of God, above, are all on His side and ours—and so are *all the holy angels* “that excel in strength, that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His Word.” All the unfallen intelligences in the universe are on “the Lord’s side.” Therefore let us not be afraid, who are enrolled beneath the banner of the Cross, and let others cast in their lot with us, for they will be siding with a noble host that has gone on before us! The lineage of the saints of God is a very high one. Talk of the blood royal or imperial—bah, a single drop of the blood of the martyrs flowing through our veins is far more to be desired! To walk as they walked, “of whom the world was not worthy”—those first confessors of the destitute, afflicted, tormented”—this is to be a member of the blood royal of Heaven, the highest nobility that can be gained in this world! How many of you, young men and young women, or older men and women, are ready to say, “We are on the Lord’s side”? The air all around us is crowded with the spirits of just men made perfect! They are watching to see how we run the Christian race and wrestle for the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus! And they sing a new song of praise unto the Lord as He leads one and another to contend earnestly for the faith once and for all delivered to the saints—to

stand out boldly for Christ and Him crucified—and to speak, or serve, or suffer as best shall glorify the Lord Most High!

IV. Time and strength both fail me, so I cannot say more upon that point, though much more might be said. I am, in closing my discourse, **TO REPEAT THE QUESTION OF THE TEXT AND TO MAKE PROPOSALS FOR ENLISTMENT IN THE ARMY OF THE LORD.** I should like to act as a recruiting sergeant and to enlist some new soldiers for King Jesus.

“Whoever is on the Lord’s side? Well,” says one, “I wish to be.” Well, I will gladly help you enlist. You know what the sergeant does when he enlists a young man—the first thing he does is to give him something—a shilling. And if you intend to be a follower of the Lord, *you must receive something* or, rather, you must receive **SOMEONE**—even the Lord Jesus Christ, for, “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” You cannot be on “the Lord’s side” unless you receive the Lord’s Christ as your Savior! But as soon as you accept Him as the free Gift of Jehovah’s Free Grace, you are enlisted into the army of the Lord! Will you take Him on those terms? Will you have the Lord Jesus Christ as your Captain? I pray His gracious Spirit to make you say, “Yes, that I will, by His Grace.”

Next, the sergeant puts the ribbons in the young man’s hat and, if you receive Christ, the next thing you have to do is to *confess Christ openly by being baptized*. Our Captain’s own words, as recorded in the Gospel according to Mark, are these—“He that believes and is baptized shall be saved”—and what He has joined together, no one has the right to put asunder. So, get the colors in your hat, young recruit, if you really are enlisted on “the Lord’s side.”

When you have done that, the next thing for us to do is to *take you to the barracks and drill you*. You will not be fully fitted to fight the Lord’s battles until you have been drilled and trained by your new officers. So, submit yourself to the discipline of the Church of Christ. Be willing to take your place in the ranks with your Brothers and Sisters, to follow the New Testament Church order, to be taught what are the first principles of the Christian faith and to be instructed yet further in the things of God, so that, afterwards, you may be able, in your turn, to instruct others. Christ’s commission runs thus, “All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go you therefore, and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them (those who are made disciples) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” So, you see, we are to teach *before* we baptize and afterwards still further to teach those who have been made disciples and who have been baptized into the triune name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Then, we shall want you to *put on your full regimentals*. What are the regimentals of a Christian? The garments of holiness, the livery of love and the whole armor of God. We pray the Lord to clothe you from head to foot in the Divine Panoply wherein all the warriors of the Cross should be arrayed—the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel of Peace, the shield of faith, “the helmet of salvation and

the sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God.” There is nothing like having your Bible always with you and being able to turn to any passage that you need when you are confronting the foe, for, “It is written,” is a wondrous weapon against the devil, as Christ Himself proved! Satan flees from this sharp sword. And other adversaries of the Lord and His people feel the force of the Word when they will not yield to anything else.

Then, when you are fully armed, drilled and trained, *we shall expect you to wage war for King Jesus*. And the first war must be a civil war—war within your own soul—war to the bitter end against every sin, every evil habit, every false word! All iniquity must be driven out of your spirit at the point of the bayonet, and no quarter must be given to any enemy of the Most High God. Then even while the civil war is raging, we shall want you to carry the war into the enemy’s territory. Attack the foe on all sides—speak to your friends about Christ. So live that they will see Christ’s life reproduced in you, at least in a measure. Plead with those with whom you work or live—the servants in the house, or your companions, all sorts and conditions of men—tell them all about Jesus Christ! If we were once to have a church fully awakened and zealous for Christ and His Truth, we would soon have the persecuting times back again. The early Christian Church was very enthusiastic—they went everywhere preaching the Word. Somebody says, “Ah, they lived in the days of persecution.” But it was not the persecution which made them enthusiastic—it was their enthusiasm that brought upon them persecution for Christ’s sake! And probably if we were as good Christians as we ought to be, we would not be half as well liked by the world as we now are! And if there were more noise and opposition made against the followers of Christ, it would not be at all a bad sign! If those who hate righteousness, hated Christians more heartily than they now do, it might be a token that God was more manifestly at work in us, making us more “out-and-out” for Him than we are at present.

Now, then, you who are on “the Lord’s side” in this congregation—you who really believe in Jesus—I invite all of you to confess your faith in Him if you have not already done so. No, more than that—in the name of Jesus in whom you believe, I exhort and command you to confess your faith in Him! Be not ashamed to avow your convictions. Do not try to conceal yourselves from your fellow Christians. Come out and come out soon—and may the numbers of this church, or of some other church be greatly swollen by the addition of those who are truly upon “the Lord’s side.” I wish I could persuade some of you not to put off this confession any longer, but to say, “I love my Savior, and I mean to come out and confess that I am on ‘the Lord’s side.’ I have been far too long hesitating and halting between two opinions, but I will not let another week go by without saying, as plainly as words can say it, ‘I have given myself to Christ and now I wish to give myself to His Church.’” May God bless you all for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
EXODUS 32:1-29.**

Verse 1. *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron and said to him, Up, make us gods which shall go before us, for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.* They needed something to look at—something visible that they could adore. It was not that they meant to cease to worship Jehovah, but they intended to worship Him under some tangible symbol. That is the great fault of Ritualists and Romanists—they aim at worshipping God, but they must do so through some sign, some symbol, some cross, some crucifix, or something or other that they can see.

2, 3. *And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.* People are often very generous in their support of a false religion and, to make idol gods, they will sacrifice their most precious treasures, as these idolaters willingly gave their golden earrings!

4. *And he received them at their hand and fashioned it with a engraving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt.* No doubt they copied the Egyptian god which was in the form of a bull, which the Holy Spirit, by the pen of Moses, here calls a *calf*. The Psalmist probably also alludes to it when he speaks of “an ox or a bullock that has horns and hoofs.” It seems strange that these people should have thought of worshipping the living God under such a symbol as that!

5. *And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD. “To Jehovah.”* They intended to worship Jehovah under the form of a bull—the image of strength! Other idolaters go further and worship Baal and various false gods, but, between the worship of a golden calf and the worship of false gods, there is very little choice. And between the idolatry of the heathen and Popery, there is about as much difference as there is between six and half a dozen!

6. *And they rose up early on the morrow and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.* It was usual to worship false gods with music and dancing and with orgies of drunkenness and obscene rites—and the Israelites fell into the same evils as they had seen among their neighbors.

7. *And the LORD said unto Moses.* Just in the midst of his hallowed communion, the Lord said to him.

7. *Go, get you down; for your people, which you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.* God would not acknowledge them as *His* people. He called them Moses’ people—“your people, which you brought out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”

8-10. *They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto and said, these are your gods, O Israel, which have brought you up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people:*

now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of you a great nation. For Moses began at once to pray for the people—to interpose between God and the execution of His righteous wrath and, therefore, the Lord said to him, “Let Me alone...that I may consume them.”

11. *And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people? See how he dares even to say to God, “They are Your people, though they have acted so wickedly. ‘Why does Your wrath wax hot against Your people?’”*

11-13. *Which You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Therefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from Your fierce wrath and repent of this evil against Your people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own Self, and said unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of Heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.* Moses pleaded the Covenant which the Lord had made with Abraham, Isaac, and Israel—and there is no plea like that. Although it might have been to his own personal interest that the people should be destroyed, Moses would not have it so. And he pleaded with God for the sake of His own honor, His faithfulness and His Truth, not to run back from the Word which He had spoken.

14, 15. *And the LORD repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people. And Moses turned and went down from the mount.* Does it not seem sad for Moses to have to go down from the immediate Presence of God and to stand among the idolatrous and rebellious people in the camp? Yet that is often the lot of those whom God employs as His servants—they have, as it were, to come down from Heaven to fight with Hell upon earth.

15-17. *And the two tablets of the testimony were in his hands: the tablets were written on both sides, on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp.* For Joshua was a younger man than Moses, and also a soldier, so his ears were quicker to hear what he took to be “a noise of war in the camp.”

18. *And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear.* Moses knew that it was not a battle-cry either of the victors or the vanquished—but the song of idolatrous worshippers.

19. *And it came to pass, as soon as he came near unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount.* In righteous indignation, preserving those sacred tablets from the profane touch of the polluted people by dashing them to fragments in his holy anger

20. *And he took the calf which they had made and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strew it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink it.* Think of the courage of this one man to go single-handed right into the middle of the idolaters’ camp and deal thus with their precious god!

21-24. *And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto you, that you have brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: you know the people, who they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him. And I said unto them, Whoever has any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me: then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.* Which was a lie. Aaron was a poor weak-minded creature, easily persuaded to do wrong. And when his stronger-minded and more gracious brother was absent, he became the willing tool of the idolatrous people—and yet Aaron is called, by the Psalmist, “the saint of the Lord,” and so he was, taking him as a whole. One black spot on the face of a fair man does not prove him to be a Negro. And so one sin in the life of a man who is usually holy, does not put him among the ungodly.

25-28. *And when Moses saw that the people were naked, (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies) then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, Whoever is on the LORD’S side—come to me! And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. And he said unto them, Thus says the LORD God of Israel, Put every man, his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses.* The rebellious, the idolatrous, the men who had defied the authority of God were to be summarily executed on the spot.

28, 29. *And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that He may bestow upon you a blessing this day.* Such a colossal crime as that must be expiated before the Lord could again bless the chosen race.

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

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

CHOICE FOOD FOR PILGRIMS TO CANAAN

NO. 1583

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

***“And He said, My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”
Exodus 33:14.***

MAY the inexpressibly precious promises of our text be fulfilled to every one of you throughout the whole of your lives. What could heart desire, or mind conceive beyond the heaped-up blessedness of my text? God’s Presence and God’s rest—a ring of finest gold set with the choicest pearl! The benedictions are worthy of God, Himself, and such as only His boundless love could have uttered. Think them over and use them as food for your souls—with them you may well be content even if the preacher’s lips should be shut up as a spring, a sealed fountain! You do not need any sermon—only let the Holy Spirit speak these words with power as coming directly from the great Father’s lips to you and your inmost soul will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness!—

***“Enough, my gracious Lord,
Let faith triumphant cry!
My heart can on this promise live,
Can on this promise die.
‘My Presence will go with you,
And I will give you rest.’”***

It is instructive to remember that a very short time before this promise was given, the Israelites had greatly grieved their God by setting up an image of gold before which they prostrated themselves, saying, “These are your gods, O Israel.” They had seen the greatness and Glory of God at the Red Sea and during their journey in the wilderness up to that time—and yet they were so foolish that they bowed in worship before the image of an ox which eats grass! We do not marvel that the living God was angry, but we are filled with astonishment that, after such wanton provocation, He should, nevertheless, turn away His wrath from them and say to them—for the promise was not to Moses only, but to them as a people—“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Will God, then, go with sinners? Will He go with those who have provoked Him so grossly, with those who have sinned against Light and knowledge in so shameful a manner? Will He put away the iniquity of great offenders and speak comfortably to them? Yes, He will, for He is slow to wrath and bears with our ill manners for many a day. Here are His own words—“For My name’s sake will I defer My anger and for My praise will I refrain for you, that I cut you not off” (Isa. 48:9). O my Brothers and Sisters, what a consolation it is to us, while laboring under a sense of sin, that the Lord is able to put away sin so that we shall not die and He will

come and walk with us and dwell in the midst of us, notwithstanding all our former wickedness!

You know what a righteous God He is and how jealous He is, especially of those He loves. And yet, for all that, though He is a consuming fire, He is so gracious that, passing by transgression, iniquity and sin, He will still return unto His people and again speak comfortably to them. There is a secret, however, which must never be forgotten, namely, that Moses had made mightily prevalent intercession for the people, crying with many tears, "Oh, this people has sinned a great sin and has made them gods of gold! Yet now, if you will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your Book which You have written." He had gone up into the fiery mount, even up into the eternal Presence and there he had in will, though it was not accepted in deed, offered *himself* as a sacrifice for the nation in that memorable sentence, "If not, blot my name out of the Book which You have written."

Though the Lord could not accept the substitution of Moses, yet He remembered a greater One—He remembered One that was then, to Him, as much present as if it had already taken place, for He sees the end from the beginning and the Sacrifice of Christ was always present in the mind of God, before whom His Son, Jesus, is "the Lamb slain from before the foundations of the world." If, then, we carefully search to the bottom of things we shall find that it was by virtue of the Mediator that this promise was given to Israel and God thus spoke to Moses and the people! Atonement had been made, intercession had been offered and, therefore, the Lord's Presence was guaranteed and rest was promised. This is the only ground upon which God can dwell with you and with me and give us rest—an Advocate, one of a thousand—has stood in the gap, presented His life for our life, obtained favor of the Lord and turned away indignation by the power of His intercession!

God in Christ Jesus has come down to dwell with sinful men! And that Presence will never be removed from us, for He says, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you." He invites Himself into our company. He offers to sup with us. Do not our hearts cry, "Come, Lord, manifest Yourself to us, we pray You, and let the promise which has been read in our ears be now fulfilled in our hearts by the power of Your Spirit!"—"My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." It may be that I am addressing some who are about to leave this congregation for other assemblies at a distance and, if so, I hope I may be the bearer of seasonable comforts. I have spoken to some, just now, whose faces we may not, perhaps, see again, who are going far away to their great sorrow and to our intense regret.

I saw the tear when they bade good-bye to us and to the house they have loved so well. Go in peace and God be with you, my Beloved! What more can I say? You are going to leave your native land—whether you shall ever return to it again is written in the decree of Providence—but is all unknown to you. Little need you care, for we are all exiles and are journeying towards the dear Fatherland where we shall be at home for-

ever! Others, it may be, are now making a very important change in life—shifting their habitation, or looking out for another occupation altogether. Many of us here who are serving the Lord are going forward to fresh work, planning new service for the Lord. At such a time, this Word of God will be peculiarly precious to all in a changing state if the Holy Spirit will lay it home to their hearts—“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Come, then, you who bid farewell to old England’s shores, you who move to a strange family, you who, in any sense remove your tents and advance toward the unknown land—come, I say, and listen to these gentle accents, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” We will think of the subject in this way—First, what are the benefits of this Presence? Secondly, to be practical, what are the *demands* of this Presence if we come to enjoy it? And then, thirdly, what is the choice blessing which is appended to this Presence—“I will give you rest”?

I. First, then, WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE WHICH IS HERE PROMISED? “My Presence will go with you.” The first is manifest in the chapter. It is the acknowledgment of the people as being peculiarly the Lord’s. Notice Moses puts it thus, “Wherein shall it be known here that I and Your people have found Grace in Your sight? Is it not in that You go with us? So shall we be separated, I and Your people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.” This clearly shows that the Presence of God with His people is God’s way of acknowledging them and saying to all mankind and to themselves, “These are My people and I am their God.”

Now, my dear fellow Believer, what clearer acknowledgment of you by God can you conceive of than that God should be *present* with you? I think you cannot ask a surer, better seal than this and if you have it not, I cannot see what can be a token of peace to you at all. Is God never with you? Are you never conscious of His Presence? Let me ask you to judge your case as if it were mine—can I be a sheep in His fold if the shepherd never comes to me? Can I be a child of the family if I have never had my heart warmed with my Father’s love and have never heard my Father’s voice speaking comfortably to me? The saints are married unto Christ, but that were a strange union in which there was no sort of converse or communion whatever!

If I am unable to see my Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus, because my soul is in darkness, I must walk by *faith*—I must not think the darkness light and try to be comfortable without Him! I must feel that until the daystar shines again and Christ’s Presence returns, I must be unhappy and I must search the city and go about the streets, saying, “Have you seen Him whom my soul loves?” But if I have never at all enjoyed His Presence—if never once I could say, “He is near me. He is with me”—then how can it be possible that I am His? If I go forth to the business of the day and never recognize God. If I come home at night and have never seen God’s hand with me. If I go to my bed and never, before I sleep, have a kind word from

Him then, surely, I cannot be one of His! I lack the acknowledgment which the great Father must and will give to His own children!

I do not see how a man can feel at all certain, no, how he can entertain the *hope*, even, that he belongs to the Lord, except as he enjoys His Presence. Every true child of God needs His Father's company. Every true wife desires the presence of her spouse. Our Lord's Presence is life and light, health and wealth, strength and song to us! Our prayer is—If Your Presence go not with me, carry me not up, for I should go forth a sheep untended to stray where grievous wolves watch for their feeble victims! That is the first benefit of the Presence of God. It is the glory which lights up the soul of the Believer and marks it as the special property of Heaven!

Secondly, it is by that Presence that we are preserved and protected. When Israel came out of Egypt, the Egyptians followed hard behind them. Pharaoh was fierce to slay them or to drive them back, but he could not touch them. They came not near one another all that night because the Lord descended and, like an impenetrable shield of darkness, turned Himself upon the enemy—while like a sun He turned the brightness of His Glory upon His people! The Presence of God enabled Israel to pass through the sea on dry foot and that same Presence brought down the floods upon their foes and swept them away! All through the wilderness they might have been fallen upon by the wandering tribes, especially of the Amalekites, but the camp of Israel was never stormed by an orderly army, nor even plundered by a marauding band!

Never did an invader's foot plant itself within those streets of canvas! There were no bastions and fortifications, but the Presence of the Lord was a wall of fire round about His people. None could touch them so long as the Lord was there. It was true that Amalek fell upon them once upon their march and slew the hindermost of them, but this showed that those farthest off from God are in the greatest danger! But even these would not have been overthrown had not Israel sinned. Even their hindermost would have been secure if they had walked aright with God. Who can harm those whom Jehovah ordains to keep? Who shall fight against the Invincible and Omnipotent God? If enemies come out against His chosen, He will utterly destroy them! Who shall break through ramparts of fire to touch the sons of God? I think every child of God must acknowledge how safe he has been when he has enjoyed the Divine Presence.

When you get out of that Presence, you are liable to temptations which, in the Divine Presence scarcely come to you, or, if they come, they are shaken off as trifles which have no power over you. When we dwell near God, the baser passions lie still—like the beasts in Noah's ark, they cause no uproar. But when God is gone, those baser passions rush to the front and the inferior appetites and propensities try to get the mastery over us and cause us all sorts of trouble. While we are in the Presence of God, we may safely stand in the midst of wicked men if Providence calls us there and we shall keep our tongue with a bridle and baffle all their cunning. Yes, our soul may be among lions, but no lion can touch us when God is with us in the den! We may go into the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar, but

the glowing coals cannot leave, even, the *smell* of fire upon us while God is with us in the flames!

We are always safe in the Presence of God in any place and in any work. But, if the Lord is withdrawn from us, then in His sanctuary we shall be tempted to transgress like Eli's sons—and in His Temple the devil will meet with us and ply his horrible temptations. In the most common transactions of life we shall blunder and transgress if we move without the Lord, for the Presence of God is the only protection of saints. Our sanctity depends upon communion with God! Like the moon, we are bright while the sun shines on us—all our glory is borrowed from our Lord. Oh, how blessed is the promise, then, if we view it in that light, for we all wish to be preserved from the defilement of the world and this is the one golden method of sanctity, "My Presence will go with you."

There is a third privilege which the Presence of God brought to Israel and brings to us. It is that of direction and guidance. Their route lay through a wilderness without a trail and they could not have known which way to go except the fiery cloudy pillar, which was the index of the Presence of God, had gone before them. Their path was a very strange one as it was, winding in and out, backwards and forwards, but, "He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation." Such is our pathway to the skies—a maze, a tangle, to ourselves—but all plain to the All-Wise! You and I know nothing of what is going to happen to us between here and Heaven. No, we cannot tell what will occur within the *hour*—but some amazing blessing may come!

I have no doubt you, my Brothers and Sisters, have had in your own lifetime, days of surprises. You have been jogging along the ordinary road of life pretty comfortably. You never thought of what was going to happen, but you have come to a place where the road suddenly diverged and from that instant new scenes have opened up before you. You hardly knew whether you were to go to the right or to the left and you were at your wits end as you pulled up, for there was no signpost and no mark to guide you. At such times, if the Presence of God has been with you, you have not been left to ask the way—but that ancient promise has become true in your experience. "Your ears shall hear a voice behind you saying, This is the way: walk in it."

You could not explain to other people why you took that particular road, but you can see that if you had taken any other your whole life would have been darkened! After a fashion you explain to yourself why you did this, rather than that. But if you had talked about it to your most intimate friend, it is just possible he would have replied, "Don't you think there may be a touch of fanaticism about your action? Is there not a little superstition in your reasoning?" So it might be thought, but there is a secret something between you and your God which is the key of the position and accounts for acts which otherwise were unaccountable! If God were not there it *would* have been superstition—but as God *was* really there and you are one with whom He has become so graciously familiar that He

gives you the Urim and the Thummim and reveals to you His Light and His Truth to guide you—there was no superstition or fanaticism in it!

O the soft, sweet guidances of the royal Presence! They have made my life radiant! Like all His other gentlenesses, they have made me great! “He leads me,” and yet again, “He leads me,” is one of the most joyous notes of my song of love! Ah, if the Lord is not with us, it is extraordinary what muddles we make. I have sometimes had very, very difficult things to do and I have accomplished them with ease under the Lord’s own eyes. But if I am without my Lord’s Presence, I give very bad advice and I most judiciously do very stupid things and most prudently follow a course which everybody would say was prudent but which turns out to be imprudent!

I have noticed—and I often have to bless God for it—that when I have felt myself to be quite done over and nonplussed, I have simply asked guidance and something has occurred to me which I had never thought of before—or something which I had thought of and rejected, but which was the best, has occurred strongly to my mind again. Or somebody else has come in and taken the leadership and put me aside—and somehow or other God has been glorified and I have been happy when I have had His Presence! I am sure that every Believer will find it so in daily life. Therefore the first thing is not to have commonsense and to be wise, as some say, but to have a sense of God’s Presence which is better than commonsense! And to trust in Him for guidance which is better than being shrewd!

He will make the young men wise and prudent. He will give to babes knowledge and discretion if they are but willing to be led by His Divine instruction. You will find it so if you have His Presence with you. But if you have it not, you will do just as the Israelites did about the matter of the Gibeonites which seemed too simple to pray about. You will be taken in with those moldy crusts and those cracked shoes and those crafty rascals that say, “We come from a far country.” And, without taking counsel with God, you will find yourself in fellowship with a brood of scheming Canaanites who will entangle you and do you no end of harm!

You will say, “Oh, but they are such nice old people and it is amazing how religiously they talk and how nicely they persuade me to their side.” Yes, when Satan would deceive, his traps are very simple ones, such as you would never think to be traps at all! When you are quite clear about a thing, pray about it! When you are in difficulty, do as you like. I believe in that fine piece of advice—“When it is a fine day in this country, carry an umbrella with you. When it is raining hard, do just as you like.” I put it into another shape and beg you to remember it. “Why,” you say, “the matter is as plain as the nose on my face.” Then pray to God about it, for the nose on your face may bring you trouble! He that trusts to his own understanding may turn out to have very little understanding to trust to! Take plain matters to God. Get into the Presence of God and stay there and see all things in the Light of that Presence—that will be to you instinct, commonsense, judgment, wisdom!

We have thus seen that rich blessings are found in the Presence of God—Divine acknowledgment, Divine protection and Divine direction. But there was another thing that Israel had by virtue of the Presence of God and that was real worship in the wilderness! Their sacrifices could not have been presented if God had not been among them! There would not have been the Tabernacle with all its accessories if God had not been there. God would not have commanded them to build Him a house that He did not intend to inhabit and He would not have instituted ordinances which He did not mean to fill up by His Presence! If it is imaginable that there should be a Tabernacle with all its outward gear and sacrifices, even until rivers of the blood of fed beasts should be poured out, yet it would have been all an empty, hollow sham if God had not, Himself, been there!

Brothers and Sisters, we cannot worship God in spirit and in truth if we feel Him to be absent! We must believe that He “is” and it is a part of the, “is,” that He is everywhere present! We must believe that God is here, at this moment, or we are quite unable to pray to Him. To pray to a God who is many leagues away is like the worshipper of Baal who says, “Perhaps he is on a journey or he is hunting, or he sleeps and must be awakened.” Elijah never thought that of Jehovah. When he stood by the altar and began to plead with the Lord God of Israel, it never entered into his head that He was sleeping and must be awakened, or that He was up among the stars and needed to be awakened by shouting! The Prophet knew that he spoke right into the eternal ear and talked right into the Divine heart, for he felt that God was there! No worship will do us good, or can be accepted by God except the Lord is present with us in it.

When you live in the Presence of God, how delightful worship is! You can right jubilantly sing songs upon your stringed instruments when the Lord Jehovah hears your praise. The same is true of prayer. You can wrestle with the Angel and hold Him when you are sure He is there. But if He is not there, you cannot wrestle with Him, or even hold Him! You can go forth to preach right bravely when you go in the strength of the Lord God to make mention of His righteousness, even of that only. But if the Lord goes not with the minister what a vain-glorious place the pulpit is and what empty stuff our talk must be! How delightful to come to the Lord’s Table if the King sits there and His spikenard gives forth a sweet perfume! But what is bread and what is wine—and what is the table—if the King, Himself, is not there? The Presence of Jesus consciously enjoyed is the sweetness of our worship and all goes awry where this is not found. Oh, that we may never attempt to do anything for God except with God, or think that we can worship at all unless the Spirit of God is in the worship prompting and quickening it!

Once more, if God had withdrawn from Israel there would have been no communion with Him. God’s Presence meant communion with God. The Israelites could speak with God through their priests when He was in the midst of them, but if He had departed, all fellowship would have closed. And is not that one of the greatest enjoyments of a child of God—that he can speak to his Father whenever he desires it? No child, I think, as a rule

asks permission to speak to his father, but feels an unquestioned freedom on that point. I did go, some time ago, into a house where I sat with the head of the family and heard a humble knock at the door. It was his wife who asked if she might come in, but her lord and master spoke somewhat sharply and she went away. I heard, afterwards, one of the girls come to knock at the door to know whether *she* might come in and I wondered at it, because it is rather unusual, nowadays, for a man to be lord enough, but this gentlemen was lord *too much* by a long way!

I thank God that I have never seen more than one instance in which a wife or a child was called upon humbly to knock at the door before she could come into the majestic presence of her husband or her father! I have always enjoyed the respect of my sons, but it has never occurred to them to ask permission to speak to me! Yet many professed Christians treat their heavenly Father in that way—they are afraid of Him and dare not tell Him all their hearts—but this is just the sweet privilege of a dear child, that he may turn his eyes to the great Father whenever he pleases and have a private audience with the King of kings at any hour of the day or night! Strangers may not do this! Strangers must get an introduction. Strangers must come with a great deal of ceremony if they want to see a king, but the little prince does not need any usher of the black rod to introduce him to his father.

The Believer's relation to his Father is a key which opens every door. We are on familiar terms with the great God, as it is written, "I will dwell in them and walk in them and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." In another place He puts it thus—"They shall be My sons and daughters." Oh sweet words—"My sons and daughters!" This is a privilege which is secured to us by the Presence of God! If any of you have lost the Presence of God, I have no doubt you have some kind of awe that makes you stand a long way off as Israel stood at a distance from the burning mount of Sinai. But if God is with you, then no notion of standing a long way off need come to you. "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." We eat and drink and sleep eternal life! Whatever we do, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the power of His abiding Presence!

The Presence of God comes to be as palpable to us as the air we breathe, perhaps more so. It is as certain to us as the life we live. We know Him to be with us and we are as much in the habit of speaking with Him as with our dearest friends! No, much more because we must be parted from the dearest friend, at times, but from our God we are never divided! Wherever we may be and in whatever frame of mind we may be, we can always speak with Him! "When I awake I am still with You." "I fall asleep and He is at my bedside. I wake up at any hour of the night and there He is." "He that keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." He is always ready for fellowship with His people! May you have this ever-enjoyable, always encompassing Presence with you all the year round!

May the Spirit of God put it to those whom I have mentioned, who are moving or shifting their place by taking a long journey, or who are about to take the last long journey—who feel that the sentence of death is writ-

ten upon them—is not this Presence all that your spirits can possibly crave? Even death will give you no alarm if this sweet text is fully enjoyed by you—“My Presence will go with you.” Certainly the hardships and dangers of emigration dwindle into insignificance before this promise—“My Presence will go with you among strangers. My Presence will go with you across the sea. My Presence will go with you to the bed of sickness. My Presence will go with you through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.” That is the first point.

II. The second head shall not occupy much time, but I hope that it will be hammered out into a lifelong sermon preached by yourselves. **WHAT ARE THE DEMANDS OF THIS PRESENCE?** Supposing that the Divine Presence shall go with us, what then? Why, first it is necessary that we rely upon it. Beloved, if the Presence of God is with us, do not let us act as if it were *not* with us, or as if it were not worth much although it is with us! If God’s Presence is with us, what have we to be afraid of? Where is the excuse for our spirit being cast down? If God’s Presence is with us, why do we talk about difficulties? That word should not be in our dictionary, now that Omnipotence is at our right hand! If God’s Presence is with us, why should we speak about fears? Whom shall we fear? “You are the strength of my life. Of whom shall I be afraid?”

Oh, let this Presence of God be real to you, if you are enjoying it! Do not talk about it and then speak as if you were all alone and go forth to your work, saying, “I am not strong enough.” What? Even if the Lord is with you? Set your God at a right figure in all your calculations. That is to say, if you can find a figure that will represent Him. What is your strength? A unit? Well, if you like, you may make a cipher of it, for that is nearer the truth. But what is *God’s* strength? Oh, you may carry it up to the *n*th, as we say in algebra. You may work it out to the utmost conceivable limit, but you will never get a figure that will come near expressing the power of the Presence of God! “I am with you”—“I,” and the universe echoes to the voice, as the words, “I AM,” roll in thunder peals along the heavens!

“I have formed the earth and laid its foundations and reared up the arches of the sky. I am with you, with My Omnipotence, Omniscience, All-Sufficiency.” Well, if that is so, rely upon it! Stay yourself upon God and do not play the fool by being dismayed and cast down. “I am with you.” Away with melancholy! Should a little child be always trembling and sobbing out, “Mother, I am alone and I am afraid”? Her mother says, “I am with you, dear child. I am with you.” Will she not have done with her sobbing? So does the Lord say, “How can you fear? How can you fall? I am with you.” If we have His Presence, let us treat it as a matter of fact and be filled with rest!

In the next place, if we have His Presence, let us use it. Every now and then we meet with persons who have thousands of pounds and yet are half starved. We have heard of two great lords who were spending the evening together at a coffee-house and the bill came to an odd sum and they quarreled about who should pay the odd farthing till one of the waiters said, “Look up here! Here are two lords worth 50,000 a year *each* and they

are quarrelling about a farthing!” That was a strange sight, but have you not seen Christian people behaving quite as inconsistently? They have the revenues of the universe to spend and yet they starve themselves by the little enjoyment that they dare to take! Of heavenly food they live upon a crumb a day.

They are just like the elder brother who said to his father, “These many years have I served you. I have neither transgressed your commandments at any time and yet you never gave me a kid that I might make merry with my friends.” You remember his father’s answer? He said, “You are always with me and all that I have is yours. If you have not eaten all the goats, it is your own fault. You might have been as merry with your friends as you liked, for all that I have is yours.” And so may the Lord often reproach His people. “I am with you, but you do not use Me. You do not exercise faith in Me as to the mountains which lie before you which would become plains if you left them to Me. You do not leave Me your sycamine trees for me to pluck them up by the roots. I can do all things and here you are using this poor feeble arm of yours with all its wasting, aching sinews—when there is an everlasting arm which would be made bare for your defense and which would shake Heaven and earth rather than fail to bring you deliverance.” Why, Brothers and Sisters? Why are we so slow to believe? Oh, if you have the Presence of God, utilize it!

And then, next, if you have the Presence of God, do not grieve Him. Do not lose it. In the presence of a king, men behave themselves. Have you never known, as a boy, when you have been up to some little trick, someone has said, “Hush, here is Father coming”? Why, you stopped your game at once! Oh, how reverently, how cautiously, how jealously, how holy ought we to behave ourselves who are in the Presence of God! It is amazing what God will do for us. He often surprises us with what He does. He seems to be inventive in the liberality of His Grace. He will make our path smooth though before it had been roughness itself! Often and often does He enrich our way as though we were like the lepers who followed the Assyrians when they threw away their silver and their gold!

We are surprised to find what goodness His mercy has scattered for us. Do we not feel that we must walk tenderly towards One who deals with us so gently? Such mercy as His should make us fear and tremble because of the great goodness of God! It must be, I was going to say, a terrible thing to be a king’s favorite but what a terribly *blessed* thing it is to be the favorite of God—to be lifted up so near to Him as to enjoy the light of His Countenance! We ought to look at all our words before we speak them when we are in His Presence and stop our thoughts before we think them, if such a thing could be, lest any of them should vex His Spirit and prove unbecoming in the Presence of His Majesty.

And, oh, when you have the Presence of God, take care to glorify Him all that you possibly can! Does He deign to dwell in you? Then lay yourself out for His honor. Seek out those who have lost His company and go and cheer them. Find out all the daughters of sorrow, all the backsliders and wanderers, all the poor sinners that are on the wild mountains and seek

to bring them where you are, yourself—into the Presence of the gracious Three in One! I think that if we do not work at any other season, we certainly should do so when we are abiding in the light of His Countenance. If my soul keeps no holiday at any other time, she shall certainly be dressed in her bravest and shine in her best when the King, Himself, visits me! It is a grand thing to go to work for God with the Glory of God about your brow, the love of God warming your heart, the strength of God making your spirit courageous and the wisdom of God directing you in the choice of words! Thus shall you work to purpose and a work shall be done which will redound to the eternal Glory!

And thus you see that the Presence of God has its demands.

III. My time has gone and, therefore, I must say only two or three words about that last word of promise. WHAT IS THE CHOICE BLESSING WHICH IS APPENDED TO THIS PRESENCE? “My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.” In this particular text we must confine the, “rest,” to the end of the journey, for Israel was to have their rest in Canaan and so the promise was, “My Presence shall go with you through the wilderness, and I will give you rest in the land that flows with milk and honey.” Beloved, it were no narrowing of the promise if we were to limit it to that sense, tonight. If God’s Presence is with us *here*, we shall be in God’s Presence hereafter—and there we shall have rest!

Some of you good workpeople come in here on Thursday nights and cannot come in quite on time. Well, never mind, you can come late. I would sooner have you for 10 minutes than not at all. A piece of a loaf is better than starving. I know that to many of you the idea of rest must be very sweet. To those who work very, very hard, as some of you do, the thought of an everlasting rest is very pleasant. But perhaps some of you have never been converted. I want to put this thought into your mind—Will you rest? Will you rest at last? They will lay your bones in the cemetery and apparently you will rest, but *will you rest?* Oh, will you rest?

Do you think you can rest if you die with unforgiven sin? Can you rest if you die unreconciled to God? Ah, no. “There is no peace,” says my God, unto the wicked. “They are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.” Only imagine if that should be your portion forever and ever—never to rest, but to be like the troubled sea, foaming, raging and tossed about throughout eternity! God grant, dear Hearer, that such a fearful *unrest* may not be your portion!

But oh, if you will trust in Jesus and value His Presence with you here, what sweet rest there will be above! I have heard some people speak about the rest of Heaven as though it were only a bribe to lazy people. They sneer at the idea of rest, but those people who do not desire rest are unacquainted with hard work! I am persuaded of that! Your lackadaisical ladies and gentlemen who never did a stroke of work in all their lives and could not if they tried, may despise Heaven as a rest, but to many of us, that Scripture is most pleasant, “There remains a rest for the people of God.” The idea of service is, undoubtedly, very sweet—eternal service—very sweet to the strong, active young Christian.

But I tell you that when you get older and when your heads often ache with anxious care and oftentimes you are worn down in the service of your Master, you will get more inclined to look upon Heaven as a place of rest. And you will thank God that the Holy Spirit was not quite so hard as these fine ladies and gentlemen, but did speak to us of Heaven as a place where the saints shall rest from their labors and their works shall follow them! We do not know where we shall go between now and Heaven, but we shall get Home, at last, and then we shall rest! We do not know how much more work we have to do. We cannot tell how often the burden will press our shoulders, but we shall rest one day. “I will give you rest.”

Ah, poor toiler, you shall rest. O poor aching eyes, you shall rest when you shall see the King in His beauty. O poor aching brain, you shall rest when you shall have nothing to do but to joy in God and praise Him day and night in His Temple! But I think that under the Gospel dispensation we may take this promise in a far wider sense. “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest,” even now, for, “we which have believed do enter into rest.” While we are *believing* we obtain rest, we have not the rest of inactivity, but that of peace! The Israelites kept journeying on and yet the Lord was their dwelling place. We have not the rest of luxury—the Israelites had to tread the barren sand and live in tents. But ours is the rest which is consistent with daily service and with frequent trial.

We rest in this way—we are perfectly at ease about everything. As to the future, what have we to do with that? We have not yet come to it! God arranges things to come. As for the present, we “cast our care upon Him, for He cares for us.” As to our sins, they are gone—dead, buried, lost—never to be seen again! They cannot be found, for God Himself has cast them behind His back! As for the devil, he is a chained enemy. As for the world, Christ has said, “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” As for the needs of the body, He has said, “Your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure.”

As for the needs of the soul, Christ is ours and all things are ours in Christ. As for our eternal safety, “Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” He will glorify us as certainly as He has justified us—

**“All that remains for me
Is but to love and sing,
And wait until the angels come
To bear me to the King.”**

“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

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

TWO CHOICE ASSURANCES

NO. 3330

**A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1912.**

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

***“Fear not, Abram: I am your shield and your exceedingly great reward.”
Genesis 15:1.***

***“And He said, ‘My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.’”
Exodus 33:14.***

IN the splendid Psalm that sets forth the Divine Glory of the matchless Word of God as compared even with the greatest wonders of God’s visible Creation—that is in the 19th Psalm—we read in the 10th verse, “Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.” This is applied to “the judgments of the Lord” which are “true and righteous altogether.” Of course, this expression sets forth David’s esteem of the Law of God as he knew it—a very small volume compared with our complete Bible—and yet we may surely apply it to the whole of the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments! The Hebrew original has it, “Sweeter than the dropping of honeycombs.” Whereupon gracious Thomas Brookes, the Puritan Divine, observes, “it is sweeter than those drops which fall naturally and instantly from the comb without any force or act, and which are counted as being the purest, choicest and richest honey.” How true is this! There are some texts of Scripture that may yield their treasures of instruction, comfort, or direction after deep study and holy meditation—but there are others which are marvelously free in the giving forth of their sweetness, calling for little else than a heart that loves and longs to hear God speak!

As little children have their own confections that need no vigorous chewing, but will melt in the mouth, so some passages of Scriptures are prepared as choice morsels for the Lord’s children—they have only to receive them by transparent faith and unaffected love—and their enjoyment is great.

I know that some of the words of the Lord are as nuts that need breaking open to secure their nourishment, or as grapes that must be trod in the winepress, for their richest meaning lies not upon the surface and plain to all. But these others of which we speak—as the droppings of the honeycomb—are simple sweetnesses, prepared pleasures. Plain, unmistakable, choice delicacies for God’s loved ones!

To enjoy these, one needs not to be a deep theologian, a learned grammarian, or even much less, a profound philosopher or baffling mystic! The honey of the meaning flows easily and sweetly out of the comb of the words as liquid love, pure joy, choice consolation and perfect Truths of God! The student does not require to pore over his books, or the

preacher to search his library, or the hearer to gather up all his knowledge to receive and enjoy these. The dainty comfort offers itself at once to the soul's receiving and, without effort, the sweetness and savor pervade the whole inner being.

So as the Holy Spirit shall open up the word to me, I hope to be able to give you, Beloved, some honey out of the Rock by dwelling on one or two choice, plain texts that speak their sweetness direct to the heart. Not so much for intellectual gratifying—though that is included—as for spiritual satisfying and stimulating. Some preachers seem to make their main business to be the leading of people among the thorns, to be torn with perplexities, or into the fog to tantalize with uncertainties. Be it ours on this occasion to run as did Ahimahaz by way of the plain—along the level road of gracious and comforting teaching! We do well, sometimes, to let the heart have undivided play and gain, thereby, the solace and joy that we so much need!

The droppings of the honeycomb are not so much for labor and toil as for renewal and delight—that the mere student and man of affairs may for a while come and sit and indulge in holy pleasures!

Let this suffice for introduction to our first word of sacred assurance as given to Abram.

“Fear not, Abram: I am your shield, and your exceedingly great reward.”

“Fear not, Abram.” No more necessary or practical word could be spoken to the great Father of the Faithful than this. Fear, alas, is a malaria which haunts all the marshlands of earth! It can beset the king on his throne, the peasant in his cottage, the statesman in his lofty office and the poor old mother who dreads the pauper's lot and fare. It is the shadow that follows us when the sun is shining brightly before—how to escape it is the problem that perplexes thousands of the saints of God. We might be sure that it was so, when so mighty a Believer as Abram was in great peril of it! Does he need a, “fear not,” from Jehovah's lips? Then we may be sure that we shall require it, too. I am afraid that wherever there is faith there will also be a measure of fear, though the less of it, the better. How tenderly the Lord quiets the fears of His children and lulls their forebodings to rest! “Fear not, Abram.” As much as if He had said “You are all alone, but fear not, for I am with you. You are in much labor, needing great strength, but fear not, I will help you. You have no portion, but are a stranger and sojourner in this land, but fear not, for I am your God. Do not fear concerning the past, nor the present, nor the future. Fear neither the fury of foes, nor the worse trial—the failure of friends. Be brave, calm, trustful, hopeful, joyful. Fear not, Abram.” “You have just been fighting the kings—you desired to be a man of peace and were not, indeed, accustomed to the deadly strife. But I have given the marauders and plunderers like driven stubble to your bow—and you have brought back Lot and all his train of servants that were taken prisoners. You need not fear even for your relatives! I will bless and keep them for your sake. Besides, since you have borne yourself in a right royal fashion and not touched a thread or a shoe lace of the king of Sodom's goods, do not

fear to enjoy your success, for you shall be safe from all attacks and shall command the respect of the great ones around you.” This blessed “fear not” was a quietus to every form of alarm and misgiving which might come near and threaten this man of God!

Is not this our Lord’s own message to His children everywhere today? He has scattered His, “fear nots,” all over His blessed Word as some riverbanks are all spread with sweet forget-me-nots! And these “fear nots,” cover every emergency of our life and answer to them with the assurance that His love will never forget or fail us! And if we will but remember this, we shall have no cause whatever to fear.

But the Lord appears to teach Abram that after his conflict and signal victory he might begin to sink. Such is often the case with the bravest men. The natural reaction, unless special Divine Grace is given, is very great. It was so with Elijah, the Prophet of Fire. Men have little time or space to dread while the fierce conflict is raging—their spirit of dash and enterprise is awakened and equal to the struggle and the danger! But when all is over and strained body and brain and nerves begin to assert themselves, then they greatly need the Lord’s reviving and fortifying, “fear not.”

Beloved, have you never felt yourself strangely supported under the direst afflictions, so that they seemed not afflictions at all? And yet when pressure has been removed you have been ready to faint like Samson after he had slain the Philistines! Fear is a strange contradiction, a grim inconsistency, for it is apt to be greatest when the reason for it is least and smallest.

We are often quiet in a storm and distracted in a calm. We are mysteries to ourselves and riddles to our neighbors. Our constitutions and dispositions sometimes appear to be made up of odds and ends and gatherings from all manner of beasts, and birds, and fishes—and none can understand us but the Lord who made us! But, blessed be His name, He knows us altogether and therefore He can and does bring forth at the right moment the exact consolation and the precise heartening that we need, saying, “Fear not,” in the *instant* wherein we are most likely to fear!

“Fear not, Abram.” Were there not mainly two things about which the Patriarch might have feared? First, about his own safety. This was met by the assurance, “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield.” When he had no other guard, Abram was garrisoned in God. He was like a sheep in the midst of wolves, a lone stranger surrounded by hostile nations! But a strange Divine spell had fallen upon the Canaanites, for the Lord had made them hear Him saying, “Touch not My anointed and do My Prophet no harm.” The protected of the Lord needed not to wear armor, nor bear a sword, nor have any human panoply, for Jehovah had said, “I am your shield.” Abram possessed no fortress, commanded no army but his few servants. He had not even a permanent house in which to dwell. His tents were frail and undefended and yet so guarded by Heaven, that no one ever broke into them or dared molest or threaten those who dwelt within! No assassin waylaid him, no marauder attacked him—he dwelt at

ease, for was he not under the broad shield of the Almighty? He was as safe as if he had been enclosed within walls that reached to the skies! The armor of God covered him from head to foot!

So, dear Friends, when we seem to have nothing, certainly nothing visible, to protect us, what a blessing it is to know that we are nevertheless completely guarded by the Omnipotent though invisible God!

The visible is necessarily the limited and finite, but the invisible God is Infinite and there is no searching of His understanding, or resistance to His power. You are infinitely safe if you really trust the living God—your beginning and ending, your waking and sleeping, your resting and journeying, your work and suffering, your honor or your reproach, your poverty or wealth, your success or failure, your life or death—your all forever and ever is most secure when the Lord is your Keeper and your Shield upon your right hand. Be it ours in truest wisdom and sincerest trust to give up our hearts to the repose of simple faith in Him!

Come, sing with me that verse of the beloved singer Toplady—

***“Inquirer and Hearer of prayer,
You Shepherd and Guardian of Thine,
My all to Your Covenant care,
I sleeping and waking resign!
If You are my shield and my sun,
The night is no darkness to me—
And fast as the moments roll on,
They bring me but nearer to Thee!”***

We are invulnerable and invincible if God is with us! We may be in the very midst of cruel adversaries, but no weapon that is formed against us can prosper if God is our Shield. Our Lord did not say to Abram, and does not say to us, “I will shield you,” but that I, that am the Almighty, I am your Shield: it is not alone My power, My wisdom, My love which will protect you, but I, Myself, will be your Shield!

Then Abram may have thought, “I shall be protected, but shall I not spend my life in vain?” *He might have feared for his success.* He led the life of a gypsy, roaming through a land in which he owned no foot of ground. Therefore the Lord added, “I am your Reward.” Do you see? He does not say, “I will reward you,” but “I *am* your Reward.” If we who work for Christ see souls saved, how we rejoice, for they are a kind of reward to us—but nevertheless we will not rejoice so much but rather rejoice that our names are written in Heaven! I have in these words quoted an old text, first spoken to chosen men who had healed the sick and cast out devils in Christ’s name. And if many receive our word it is a joy to us, but still we may be disappointed even in professed conversions and, at best, our success will not equal our desires. The only reward that a Christian can fully rejoice in—and without any reservation—is this assurance of his Master and Lord, “I am your Reward.” Did not the father in the parable say to the elder son, when he growled and grumbled at the reception given to his brother, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours”? That was reward enough, was it not? It is wealth enough to a Believer to possess his God, honor enough to please his God, happiness enough to enjoy his God. My heart’s best treasure lies here—

“This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death.”

“Oh, but,” you say, “people have been so ungrateful to me.” True, but God is not unfaithful to forget your work of faith and labor of love. “Ah, Sir, but I am dreadfully poor.” Yet you have God All-Sufficient, and all things are yours! “Alas! I am so ill.” But Jehovah-Rophi is the Lord that heals you! “Alas! I have no friends left.” Yet this best of friends changes not and dies not. Is He not better to you than a host of other friends?

How great is your God? Does He not fill all things? Then what more can you seek? Would you have two persons occupying the same place? If God fills all, what room is there left for another? Is not God’s Grace sufficient for you? Do you bemoan a cup of water that has been spilled at your feet? A well is near! Did I hear you cry, “I have not a drop in my bucket?” A river flows hard by—the river of God which is full of water! Oh, mournful Soul, why are you disquieted? What ails you that you should fret your life into rags?

Very fitly does the Lord say to Abram, “I am your *exceedingly great reward*.” He is infinitely more as a reward than we could ever have desired, expected, or deserved! There is no measuring such a reward as God Himself. If we were to pine away into poverty or sickness, it would still be joy enough to know that God gives Himself to be our portion. The tried people of God will always confess that in their sharpest time of sorrow, their joys have reached their floodtide when they knew and felt that the Lord is their Covenant God, their Father, their All! Our cup runs over when faith receives Jehovah, Himself, as the crown of the race, the wages of the service! What more can even God bestow, than Himself?

Now you see what I meant at the beginning by droppings from the honeycomb. I have not strained after novel thoughts or choice words, but have persuaded you to taste the natural sweetness of this fine Scripture promise. Receive it as God gives it and go your way—and let the flavor of it fill your souls all the week! Fear not, Mary! Fear not, William! Fear not, Sarah! Fear not, John! The Lord says to you, even as to Abram, “I am your shield and exceedingly great reward.” No Scripture is of private interpretation—you may take out the name of Abram and put your own name into the promise if you are of Abram’s spiritual seed—and do not stagger at the promise by reason of unbelief. “If children, then heirs” applies to all the spiritual family and to the pledging of all the promises to them!

The ground whereon you lie, the Lord your God has given you. If you can rest on this Word of God, it is truly yours to rest upon. The Lord is your Defender and Rewarder and by the double title He designs to shut out all fear and so make your rest and safety to be doubly sure! Therefore, cease you from all anxiety! Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him! This day He bids you dwell at ease and delight yourself in Him!

But we turn from Abram to Moses and we find this sweetly solacing assurance given also to him in time of special need and strain.

“*And He said, ‘My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.’*”

It was not a pleasure trip that Moses was taking—it was a journey through the wilderness on most important business—and with a great pressure of burden on his heart. He took his case to his God and earnestly appealed to Him, “See, You say unto me, Bring up this people, and You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, I know you by name, and you have also found Grace in My sight. Now, therefore, I pray You, if I have found Grace in your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You, that I may find Grace in Your sight: and consider that this nation is Your people.”

It is very beautiful to notice the argument that Moses uses. He says, “Lord, You have set me to take care of this people. How can I do it? But they are Your people.” Therefore he appeals to Jehovah, Himself, for assistance. “You have not let me know whom You will send with me” is his complaint, but he seems to always have before him the fact that He, whose people they were, who had put him into commission to guide them, and to bear all their provocations, must intend to give him some very superior help! The answer to that is, “My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.” What more could Moses need, and what more can we need? We are so foolish that we look about for strength away from God—but there is none except in Him! For all preachers and evangelists, how precious is this promise! They need Divine help in journeying from place to place—and that help lies in the constant fellowship of heart with their Lord—the continual Presence of God consciously enjoyed! They have a great burden of souls lying upon them—their only strength to bear it bravely and triumphantly is that each hears for himself the promise from God’s own lips, “My Presence shall go with you.” It may not appear to some that the quarter of an hour in the morning spent in looking into the face of God with ecstatic joy can fill us with strength, but we know from blessed experience that there is no strength like it! If the Eternal overshadows us, then Omnipotence comes streaming into us! Jehovah in Infinite, condescending liberality gives forth His might to us!

Notice, Beloved, that Moses was not informed that God would send Hobab, his father-in-law, to go with him. Nor that Joshua, his successor, should accompany him. Nothing either was said about the 70 elders who were, by-and-by, to share the burden of responsibility with him. Moses was, indeed, to have their presence and help, but his true power was to lie in this—“My Presence shall go with you.” The journey upon which he was to start was one of great importance foreseen by God to be a journey of great trial and great provocation—a journey that was to last for 40 years—but this is all the provision that he needs and God, Himself, could give him no more.

And then He adds, “*And I will give you rest.*” Little as we sometimes imagine it, yet it is still true, that the most important possession of any Christian worker is rest—deep rest of soul in God—“A heart at leisure from itself.” “I do not expect any rest,” says one, “while I am here.” Do you not? Then you will not do much mighty and effective work for the Lord! Those who work most must learn the holy art of resting in the Lord. Indeed, it cannot be done well at all unless they have plenty of rest.

You will notice how people that get greatly excited often talk sad nonsense—and people who are very fretful or fearful do not speak or act as they should. If we are to move others, we must have both feet firmly fixed—there is nothing like having a good grip of the ground if you are to wrestle with and throw your antagonist! My restfulness in God enables me to wrestle and conquer all sorts of difficulty and hard toil that is to be overcome.

“Do you think Moses had this rest?” someone will ask. Yes, I am sure he had because of the meekness of his spirit. You remember how the Lord Jesus said, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest to your souls.” It is true that meekness of heart produces rest. And yet it is a still deeper Truth of God that rest produces meekness of heart! You can very well afford to be quiet with your fellows when you, yourself, are perfectly restful in the living God. I remember a man being run over in the street one day. Somebody rushed off, post haste, for the nearest doctor. And when the medical man heard of the accident, he went calmly into his surgery, turned over his case of instruments, selected those he thought he might need and then walked quietly to the spot where the injured man lay. The messenger tried to hurry him, but it was of no use. “Be quick, Doctor,” he cried, “the man’s leg is broken, every moment is precious.” Now the surgeon knew that he was doing the very best thing that he could do, and he was far wiser than he would have been if he had rushed off in wild haste, perhaps forgetting the very instrument he most needed, and arriving out of breath and quite unfit for the delicate duty required of him! The doctor’s composure was not the result of coldness of heart, but of the resolve to do the best possible thing in the best possible fashion.

If you are conscious of the Lord’s Presence, you will do the best thing possible by being very calm, deliberate and quiet in His service. “He that believes,” in that sense, “shall not make haste,” but he shall go about the business in a restful spirit.

Mark, too, the kind of rest that is here mentioned. “I will give you rest.” All the rest that God gives we may safely take! No man ever rested too long on the bosom of Jesus. I believe many Christian workers would be better if they enjoyed more. I was speaking to a large gathering of preachers the other day upon this very matter, my subject being the Savior asleep during the storm on the Sea of Galilee. He knew there was a storm coming on, but He felt so happy and restful in His Father’s love and care that He went into the back part of the boat—the best place for sleep—and taking the steersman’s cushion for a pillow, lay down and went to sleep! It was the very best thing He could do. He had been busy all day, teaching and feeding the multitudes, and He felt that it was His duty to go to sleep that He might be ready and fit for the next day’s toil. When *you* get very weary and perhaps worried as well, the best thing you can do is to go to sleep. Go to bed, Brother, and go to sleep!

It is astonishing what a difference a night’s rest makes with our troubles. I would say this literally to fidgeting, worrying people like my-

self, "Go to bed, Brother, go to bed!" But I would also say it spiritually to all sorts of people! When you are feeling weak and disturbed, and you do not know what to do for the best, "Go into the Presence of Lord and there get rest." "My Presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest." I will give you a little bit of worldly wisdom, which is also of Divine inspiring. Whenever you do not know what to do, do not do it! But some people, when they do not know what to do, go and do it, directly, and get themselves into all sorts of trouble. Many of us, like Moses, need to be taught to rest. Moses has to bear two millions of people on his heart—he needs rest. He has to put up with them for 40 years—he needs rest. Never had another man such a family as that! Never was another so likely to be fluttered and worried! And he was a meek-spirited man, too, who could not make a dash as others might have done. This is his strength—that he dwells in the Divine Presence and is, therefore, restful, calm and strong! It is only now and then that he let the human meekness be for a moment clouded. Thus was he enabled to march along, like a king in Jeshurun, as he was—and his soul dwelt in the eternity of God, ever singing amidst ten thousand graves, for he had 40 of his people dying every day!

Shall not we who love the Savior hear this same gracious promise sounding clear and sweet in our souls and trusting in the abiding Presence of God find that He gives the unparalleled rest, the rest that endures? And if, on the other hand, we are strangers to that brave, strong peace, shall we not listen as He calls, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest"? And answering to it, enter into that rest that always follows true believing! The Lord grant it may be so, with each one, for His name's sake!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 10:1-30; HEBREWS 1:1-14.**

Verse 1. *Verily, verily, I say unto you.* Now we may be absolutely certain that there is something of the utmost importance wherever Christ uses the solemn phrase, "Verily, verily"—the same word is, "Amen, amen" and it has been well observed that if it were not for Christ's, "Amens," our "Amens" would be of little value. It is because He who is the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, pleads in Heaven that our, "Amens," are accepted there. If, dear Friends, Christ pays an earnest attention to our, "Amens," how much more ought we to attend to His, especially when He doubles them—"Amen, amen, I say unto you."

1-3. *He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter opens; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out.* Here the people of God are compared to sheep. Their harmlessness and gentle character, their feebleness and quiet in the fold, their profitable uses, their defenseless state—requiring someone to always watch over them—the patience with which they are led to the shearer or to the

slaughter and the constancy with which they are associated with sacrifice—render sheep a most excellent symbol of the people of God! Doubtless the fold is the Church and within this fold all the saints of God are gathered, not always in the visible, but always in the invisible and indivisible Church of Christ. None may set up to be shepherds of this fold except those who come in a proper and fitting way—and that is not by a pretended Apostolic descent, that is, not by a commission which they have received from their own assumption, but by a commission direct from Christ—coming in through Him as by the Door. The great true Shepherd, the antitype of all shepherds, is Christ, Himself. To Him the porter opens. All the prophecies, which, like porters, kept the gates, opened at once to Christ! All godly hearts, which, like the porters of the gate, were watching for the coming of the true Shepherd, opened at once to Jesus! Whether it were Anna or Simeon, they at once confessed Him. The sheep hear His voice and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out.

We are told by Eastern travelers that in the large district folds into which the sheep herders put their different flocks, while they are all assembled in one common flock, the shepherd of any one flock has but to make his appearance and begin to speak and his sheep at once recognize him. Though another person should dress up in his garments, they would take no notice of him—they know their shepherd by his voice.

4. *And when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.* The genius of the Law is driving—the spirit of the Gospel is leading! And the joyful imitation follows.

5. *And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.* Heretics attract their companies, but the faithful followers of Christ never go after them. They cleave to the Truth of God, which is the voice of Christ—and they will not be persuaded by the most marvelous lying wonders, nor by the greatest arrogance, to depart from Him who is their All!

6-8. *This parable spoke Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spoke unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.* They made loud professions of being the true Messiah, and some of them gathered great multitudes and rebelled against the Roman power, but the true sheep who waited for the true Shepherd did not hear them!

9-14. *I am the door: by Me if any man enters in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees: and the wolf catches them, and scatters the sheep. The hireling flees, because he is an hireling, and cares not for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known by My own.*

This Good Shepherd proves Himself to be so by His actions. Remember, Brothers and Sisters, how carefully He watches His sheep from the tower of the flock, not one of them ever being absent from His eyes for a single moment! How graciously He guides those sheep, leading them always by a right way that He may bring them to safety at the last. How plentifully does He pasture His flock, making them to lie down in green pastures beside the still waters. And oh, how gloriously does He defend His flock, dashing into the thickest of their foes, snatching the lamb out of the jaws of the lion and out of the paws of the bear! And we must not conclude this list of His deeds without remembering how readily He has bought that flock, and how well He has washed that flock in blood flowing from His own veins, that He might present them all at the last, not one of them being lacking, nor one of them impure, but each of them like sheep that come up fresh from the washing! "I know My sheep." It is not as if salvation was left to haphazard. He knew them before they were created! Having foreordained, He did foreknow. He knew them when they did not know themselves—when they were wallowing in the mire like swine, He still knew them! He knows them now—unknown to fame, unregistered, perhaps, in the books of the visible Church—"I know My sheep wherever they may be." Then notice the next sentence, for this is the practical way by which you may judge whether you are His or not—"I am known of My own." They know Him as their only hope and trust. They know the sweetness of fellowship with Him. They know the power of His arm, the efficacy of His blood, the faithfulness of His heart. They know the preciousness of His Cross and the glory of His crown.

15-16. *As the Father knows Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.* No recognition of free-will here. Christ speaks as one who has the hearts of men in His control. He knows who are His that as yet are not called. He does not say He hopes they will yield to hear His voice, but they shall. Oh, Irresistible Grace, what can stand against you? The blood-bought shall all be blood-washed; the foreordained and foreknown shall yet know Him who has saved them by His blood. In this we ought constantly to rejoice. The feebleness of the minister is no barrier to the carrying out of God's purpose, nor is the hardness of the human heart any impediment to the completion of the Divine Decree. "Them also must I bring." There is a heavenly necessity that all the chosen should be saved.

17, 26. *Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father. There was a division, therefore, again among the Jews for these sayings. And many of them said, He has a devil and is mad, why hear you Him? Others said, These are not the words of him that has a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind? And it was at Jerusalem the Feast of the Dedication, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the Temple on Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews*

round about Him, and said unto Him, How long do You make us to doubt? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and you believed not: the work that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you believe not, because you are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. Believing does not make them sheep, but being sheep by Divine Election proves them to be such.

27-30. *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them to Me, is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and my Father are One.* Happy are they, then, who have received the character of sheep, for thus they prove themselves to be the chosen of God! And in the hand of Christ, and in His Father's grasp, they are eternally secure—

***“If in my Father's love
I share a filial part,
Send down your Spirit like a dove
To rest upon my heart.”***

Hebrews 1. In this Chapter our Savior's glorious Person is very plainly set before us. And it is made the ground of our faith and a reason why we should give the more earnest heed to His words, lest at any time we should let them slip.

Verses 1:1, 2. *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son.* The best last is always God's rule. “You have kept the best wine until now.” Prophets are a very blessed means of communication, but how much more sure, how much more condescending is it for God to speak to us by His Son!

2, 3. *Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His Glory, and the express Image of His Person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He Had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.* You see, dear Friends, how glorious was His original—the “express Image” of His Father's Person. How lowly did He become to purge away our sins and that by Himself, too, using His own body to be the means, by His sufferings, of taking away our guilt! Not by proxy did He serve us, but by Himself. Oh, this is wondrous love! And then see the Glory which followed after the shame. He has now ascended up on high and sits down at the right hand of God's great Majesty. Follow Him, Believer, follow Him with the eyes of your faith! Let your soul lovingly track Him in His upward march, and as you see Him, say—“He is my Lord and my God,” and know that all that He did and all that He is, He is—and He did for you!

4, 5. *Being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are My Son, this day have I begotten You? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son?* They are servants, but they are not sons! They are created, but they are not

begotten! You see what He says to the Son—"I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son.

6-8. *And again, when He brings in the Only-Begotten into the world, He says, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He says, Who makes His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire? But unto the Son He says, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. So you perceive that Christ is no created angel! He is sometimes compared to an angel. He is sometimes called the Angel of the Covenant, but He is not a created angel. He is higher in nature, higher in rank, higher in intellect and higher in power than they. He is nothing less than very God of very God! The very Man who suffered on Calvary—*

***"This is the Man, the exalted Man,
Whom we unseen adore."***

9. *You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness, above Your fellows. As Man, Christ claims all men as His fellows, but as God, He counts it no robbery to be thought equal to God. As Man, He is most truly Man, and only superior to man by reason of the purity of His birth and the perfection of His Nature, and the exaltation of His Manhood by God. As God, He is nothing less than God, though He took upon Himself the nature of men.*

10-12. *And, You, Lord, in the beginning have laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Your hands: they shall perish; but You remain, and they all shall grow old as does a garment; and as a vesture shall You fold them up, and they shall be changed: but You are the same, and Your years shall not fail. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever!*

13, 14. *But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?*

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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MOVING NO. 2811

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 28, 1902.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 24, 1861

*“If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.”
Exodus 33:15.*

THIS is a prayer which has been used hundreds of times and which is found quite in place on many different occasions. Moses was in the wilderness when he uttered it. He was about to lead the people into Canaan, the land that flowed with milk and honey, yet he felt that he would rather continue to endure the inconveniences of the tent and of the wilderness, with the Presence of his God, than enjoy the rest and the fatness of the land of promise without Him. God had made the desert to become to Moses like a garden, but he felt that all the gardens of Canaan and the vineyards of Eshcol would be as nothing to him if God should withdraw His Presence.

Throughout the history of the Church of Christ, there have been particular places where men of God have been compelled to fall on their knees and pray this prayer of Moses. I can conceive of our Puritan forefathers, when they first left this spot, Southwark, to seek in another land the liberty which they could not find here, bowing their knees before they entered their little vessel, “The Mayflower,” and crying to God, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.” I can imagine John Bunyan—after he had been 12 years in prison and had become almost habituated to it, before he crossed the threshold, when the time of his imprisonment was over—looking upon the cold, damp walls of the prison on Bedford Bridge—and saying to his Lord, “If Your Presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.” The immortal dreamer would rather abide in his “den” with his God than go forth into the world and leave his Master behind him!

Many a time, dear Friends, in your experience and mine, we also have had to feel the force of such a prayer as this. When, rather more than seven years ago, I left my kind and loving little flock at Waterbeach to come and preside over this great assembly, I could not help crying out to God, from my inmost soul, “If Your Presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.” When you, Beloved, have to pass through any changes in life. When, in God’s good Providence, you are removed from one sphere of service to another, I think that you, also, may look up to God in prayer

and say, "If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." And at last, when you and I shall be about to die, when the hour shall approach for us to leave this world behind us and to wade through the cold stream of death, what prayer can be more appropriate than this, "If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence"? To go anywhere without our God is terrible—but to die without the Presence of God would be awful beyond expression. To go down into death's dark river with no kind helper, with no loving voice saying to us, "Fear you not, for I am with you; My rod and My staff shall comfort you," would be sad, indeed. It would be, indeed, a solemn thing to meet death alone, to have no Presence of God to cheer us in the last dread conflict!

I have thus mentioned various circumstances in which we might pray this prayer and expect a gracious answer to it. But I think, as a church and people, such a text as this is peculiarly appropriate at this time. We are about to leave this place, which has, to many of us, very hallowed associations. When some of our older friends left Carter Lane Chapel, which once stood on the site now occupied by the London Bridge railway, I have no doubt that they felt it to be a very dreadful thing to leave the old place. Yet, perhaps, it was one of the best things that could have occurred to the church—that they were obliged to come out and build a larger structure—although it is built, I suppose, in as bad a place as they could have found by a microscopic survey of this entire metropolis.

There are, doubtless, many who will always cherish great love for this place because here Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth before their eyes, crucified among them. I think all of these will join with us, who are younger, and therefore less subject to pain concerning changes, and we will all unite—despite all the advantages which we hope will follow our entering upon a larger and more public place of worship—despite the fact that three or four times as many will be able to listen to the Word of God as can listen to it here. Despite all this, we will unite in saying to our Lord, "If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence." Here let us abide unless You, who are the true Shekinah, will go with us, and still shine forth from between the cherubim." I feel inclined to stop my sermon and to bow my head and ask you to bow yours, that we may together present this petition to our God. But, as you have already prayed by the mouth of two or three Brothers, I spread it before you and "stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance," and urge you to plead it in secret, and at your family altars, before your God—"If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence."

I will arrange my subject under three heads. First, *what the Presence of God always involves*. Secondly, *what our present move involves*. And thirdly, *the sins by which God's Presence may be driven away and the means by which that Presence may still be secured to us*.

I. First, then, let us think WHAT THE PRESENCE OF GOD ALWAYS INVOLVES.

The one great need in the Church of Christ is the Presence of God. What is needed in our places of worship is not that they should be spe-

cimens of the highest style of architecture, although, certainly, God's House ought not to be meaner than our own. It is not necessary that they should be sumptuously adorned, although the greatest riches are not too much to be devoted to the service of God. It is not essential that rich people should be in the congregation, although there is a promise which says, "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat your favor." It is not absolutely necessary that the minister should be eloquent or talented, although it is well that if a man has 10 talents, he should consecrate them all to Christ, since talent never glitters so much as when it is consecrated and given up to God. There are many things that the churches may need, or may not need, but, certainly, the one thing they need beyond everything else is the Presence of God! It was better for the Church of Christ in England when her members met together by tens and twenties in the woods and were hunted about by informers, and their ministers hauled off to prison—it was better for them to be persecuted and even put to death, in the conscious enjoyment of the Lord's Presence, than it would have been for them to have had such soft, gentle days as these, but not to have had their Lord with them!

It was better for the Church of Christ in Scotland when Cargill read his text by the lightning's flash and when the Covenanter's worshipped God in dens and caves at midnight, through fear of Claverhouse's dragoons—it was better for them to have their Lord with them in the midst of the snow and the tempest than to meet calmly and peacefully in a fine ceiled house from which the Lord Himself was absent! It would be far better for us to go back to the age of old barns, dingy thatched buildings and to the times of an uneducated ministry, when God's power was manifestly with His servants, rather than to go forward and to become great, mighty and intellectual—but to lack the Presence, power and blessing of the most High God! It is the Presence of God that makes the house glorious. Where He is, there is Glory—and where He is not—"Ichabod" is written on the wall, even though that wall should be covered with pure gold!

Why is God's Presence the one thing necessary for His Church? *Is it not God's Presence that makes joy in His sanctuary?* When are we most glad? Is it not when we consciously realize the Presence of our God? That puts more joy into our hearts than when our corn, wine and oil are increased. What is it that comforts the mourners in Zion? Is it not a sight of Jesus' face and a vision of His Glory? What handkerchief can wipe the weeping eyes like that which is held in the hand of a covenant-keeping God? Where is the balm for our wounds and the cordial for our fears, but in Him? "As the hart pants after the water brooks," so does our spirit cry out for God, even the living God—and unless we have His Presence, our soul refuses to be comforted!

Further, *what is it, but the Presence of God that makes His people holy?* Is it not because they see the face of Christ that they are transformed into His likeness? It is not mere teaching that can make a man Christ-

like. It is beholding Christ—Christ shining upon that man's face and the man reflecting the Light of God which he has thus received. The Presence of God is absolutely essential for the edification, instruction, growth and perfecting of Believers! If we have not this, the means of Grace are empty, vain and void. Clouds without rain that mock the thirsty land. Wells without water that tantalize the perishing caravan, but yield no moisture to burning lips—a mere mirage in the desert, looking like pools of water and fruit-bearing palm trees—but only mocking the wayfarer's gaze. We must have the Presence of God for His people's sake, for without Him they can do nothing!

And, my Brothers, *where is the power of our ministry with sinners unless we have the Presence of God?* We sow the seed, I grant you, but who prepares the soil and makes the furrows soft with showers? Who sends the genial sunshine? Would not the seed rot under the clods unless the heavenly Farmer watched over it and took care of it? There was never yet one sinner who was converted by man! It is not in man's power to create, nor is it in his power to new-create. Let a man first attempt to make a fly and if he succeeds in doing that, then let him try to make a new heart and a right spirit. Go, you who think you can do anything to change human nature, or change the Ethiopian's blackness into snowy whiteness, or remove the spots from the leopard's skin—go, check Niagara in its dashing might and make the stream leap upward and return to its source—go, bit the tempest, bind the clouds, bid the winds only howl to music and the waves dance in chorus—but when you have done all this, even then you may not hope to make a new heart and a right spirit by any ministry apart from the Spirit of God!

Ah, my Friends! We have had the Presence of God here [New Park Street] full often, as many of you can testify. If this were the time and place to do so, there are hundreds of you who could stand up and say, “. Christ met with me here, standing on yon spot where the crowd is now.” Here, or there, or in the schoolroom—yes, and behind the pillar, too! There have been many of you who have heard the Word of God to purpose in this place. Drunks have strayed in here and some arrow from the bow drawn at a venture has reached their heart! The harlot has come into these aisles, on the way to the bridge to destroy herself—and Christ has met with her—and she now lives to praise His name. Here the thief, the burglar, the passer of bad money and the very worst and vilest of men have stepped in—and Christ has met with them, glory be to His holy name! No man shall stop me from this glorying as I remember how God has, right here, plucked brands from the burning. All the philosophers in the world have never, by their philosophy, worked such a work as the Gospel has worked here, for I can point to hundreds—I might probably with truth say *thousands*—of those who, having before scorned God and scoffed at His name, now love Him with all their heart and desire to live to His Glory—and who would be willing to die for His honor! You may tell this in Gath and publish it in the streets of Askelon—let the mighty men of Philistia tremble and let fear take hold of the sons of Moab, for God

has made bare His arm and smitten His enemies—and the old Gospel has proved itself worthy of its ancient prowess! God has triumphed gloriously and put to flight both our sins and our adversaries! But what would we do now without His Presence? It is He who has accomplished all that has been done, so again we cry to Him, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”

II. Secondly, consider WHAT OUR PRESENT MOVE INVOLVES.

We are about to move to our new Tabernacle. We must move. It is not even humane to continue to worship here. On the lowest ground of common humanity, it is not right that such a multitude of people should be crowded into so small a structure. With every attempt that we have made to get proper ventilation, it is not possible, in such a building as this—overcrowded as it is—that persons should be able to breathe in a healthy way. I feel it as the minister and I am quite certain that you must feel it as the congregation. If I ever by chance I see anybody asleep—and that has occurred, I think, only twice in the last seven years—it is no matter of astonishment to me—the wonder is that you do not all go to sleep under the influence of such unwholesome air as is often bred here by the multitudes.

But, on far higher grounds, we must go hence. Here, every Sabbath night, there are crowds in the streets. Let the faintest gleam of sunshine come out and there are many more obliged to go away than are able to enter this building. It is a pleasing thing that so many are willing to listen to the same minister for seven years right on. The glory must be given to God—but the responsibility is with us. If people will come to hear, the least thing that the Church of God can do is to find accommodation for them! The time was when many of us would almost have plucked out our right eye to get them to come. When they are anxious to come, it is but a small thing that we should provide a suitable structure where they may be housed. The theater services are, no doubt, a great blessing. To my mind, however, they lack one great essential for permanent success—not being connected with any distinct place of worship, whatever good may be done is scarcely heard of—great efforts are put forth with small apparent results. In the theater, the seed is sown, but there is no barn provided in which the harvest can be housed. If some two or three men could be found constantly to preach and if endeavors could be made to induce the people to advance from what is, after all, an irregular form of worship, to some place which should be their own spiritual home where they could worship God constantly, more permanent good to the Church of Christ-at-large would certainly result. We pray God to speed every effort for the proclamation of the Gospel, but we are most glad when there seems the greatest prospect of permanent success.

We must move, then, to our new Tabernacle, but still the prayer recurs, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.” *We are going to a place concerning which we entertain great expectations.* We hope to see there vast multitudes attentively listening to the Word of God. We trust that many of these will be converted, that the Church will

be largely increased and that out of the Church there will spring up young men who will be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, men who will preach the Truth of God as it is in Jesus, throughout this land! And some of them, we hope, in far distant countries. But if God's Presence go not with us, our expectations will be vain, we shall have flattered ourselves with a pleasing picture which shall never be completed—we will have raised a cup to our lips, the sweet draught of which we shall never drink if God's Presence go not with us!

Next, *we are going to a place of great opportunities*. What opportunities you will all have for doing good—myself especially, though I certainly do not lack for opportunities. I have always before me a wide and open door. Oh, that I had the strength to do more and that there were more time in which I could work! Still, when some five or six thousand people are constantly being addressed, it is no small opportunity for usefulness. Who can tell how many holy thoughts may be inspired, how many wrong desires quenched, how many evil motives exposed, how many right designs prompted in human hearts? O Lord, You have, indeed, given to Your servant high opportunities, but what are these if Your Presence go not with us? They are opportunities that will be wasted. They are chances of attack upon the enemy that will certainly end in our own defeat if the Presence of God is not with us! It is the same with each of you in your measure—Sunday school teachers, I hope there will open up before you a far wider sphere. Ragged-school teachers, and you who distribute tracts, you who preach in the streets and all of you who feel any desire to do good to your fellow creatures—all of you, I think, will have presented before you a golden opportunity, the like of which seldom occurs! Pray, I beseech you—by all that is good and holy—I implore you to pray to God that His Presence may go with you, for, if not, these opportunities will all be thrown away! It would have been as well for you to have been obscure Christians in some remote hamlet of the Orkneys or Shetlands, where you could not reach a congregation without peril of your lives, as to be members of this largest of Dissenting Churches and yet not to have the Presence of God with you!

There is a still more solemn thought. *Our great house will involve greater responsibilities*. Many persons kindly suggest to me the solemnity of my position. I know I do not feel it as I might, but I do *realize* it as fully as I dare. I sometimes feel, in preaching to such multitudes, as a man must feel who walked along a tightrope and was always in danger of falling—and I shall fail if I look *down*. But if I look *up*, I can walk there even though Hell itself is foaming at my feet! There is no need of fear to the man who relies upon his God, but there is every reason for fear to the man who begins to rely upon himself. The Prophet Habakkuk says, “The Lord God is my strength, and He will make my feet like hinds' feet, and He will make me to walk upon my high places.” So may it be with us, but what an awful responsibility it is! You know how the Lord said to the Prophet Ezekiel, “So you, O son of man, I have set you a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear the word at My mouth, and

warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, you shall surely die; if you do not speak to warn the wicked from his ways, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hands.”

I think I have chewed and masticated that text many times. My deacons know well enough how, when I first preached in Exeter Hall, there was scarcely an occasion in which they left me alone for ten minutes before the service, but they would find me in a most fearful state of sickness produced by that tremendous thought of my solemn responsibility. And, even now, if I ever sit down and begin to turn that thought over, and forget that Christ has all power in Heaven and in earth, I am always affected in the same way. I scarcely dare to look that thought in the face and I am compelled to put my responsibilities where I put my sins—on the back of the Lord Jesus Christ, hoping, trusting, believing, knowing, that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that Last Great Day.

You also have your responsibilities—you must be a holy people. “A city set on a hill cannot be hid.” I never care what is said of me, except one thing. When I hear that any member of this Church has been betrayed into an unholy deed, that cuts me to the very quick. I had sooner that you should diminish by death one-half, than that there should be even one in a hundred who should fall into sin! It is sorrow enough to bury our friends, but it is a still greater sorrow to have to excommunicate them from fellowship or to censure them for misdeeds. You must be a holy people—nor less must you be an active people. If God has done so much for you and you begin to sleep upon your oars, or to sit still and say, “We have done enough, now we will be quiet,” the curse of God will fall upon you! As surely as you are men or women, He has not brought you to this post of duty that you may cease your efforts or stand still! He puts you into the middle of the battle that you may fight with sterner vigor, that you may deal your blows with both your hands to win the battle for your Lord and Master! There are responsibilities that lie upon you as a Church that will utterly crush you unless this prayer is answered for you, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”

III. Thirdly, we are to consider THE SINS BY WHICH GOD’S PRESENCE MAY BE DRIVEN AWAY—AND THE MEANS BY WHICH THAT PRESENCE MAY BE RETAINED.

We can easily get rid of God’s Presence *if we grow proud*. Stand inside your new house and say, “This great Babylon that I have built!” “And it will be a Babylon to you at once! Begin to say, “We are a great people, we can do anything that we wish! We have but to attempt and we can accomplish.” Offer incense to your own acts. Bow down and worship your own sword as though it had gotten you the victory and the Lord shall say, and the ears of Christians shall hear it as distinctly as the Jews at the siege of Jerusalem heard the rustling of wings and a voice saying, “Arise, let us go from here.” A proud heart is never God’s palace—and a proud church will never be honored by the Lord.

Further, you can easily drive away the Holy Spirit *by sloth*. Be as lazy as some churches are, or do as little as they do. Be as little consecrated, as sleepy, as dull, as cold, as lukewarm as too many professing Christians are and you shall soon find that the Lord has withdrawn Himself from you. It is fire in the church that is constantly needed—Divine energy to quicken the whole man into an intense activity for his Lord and Master's cause! If you, as a church, fall into sloth, you will hear Him say, "This is not My rest. If it is the place of your sleep, you have polluted it and I will depart from you."

Disunion, too, among yourselves will soon cause the Holy Spirit to leave you. It has been my constant joy to see union in the Church. We are men and, therefore, we do not always see eye to eye with one another. But I trust that we are also Christians and, therefore, that we are always willing to bear with one another's shortcomings. I daresay that you have a good deal to put up with from me—I know that I have, sometimes, a good deal to put up with from some of you! Sometimes there is one person and at other times there is another person who would give offense—and it has been one part of my work, since I have been pastor, whenever the ship has sprung a leak, not to say much about it, but to pick the plug, myself, and to go down and drive it in and so stop the water from coming in at that place.

There are some of you who have often done similar work. This ship would have been scuttled long ago if it had not been for some loving spirits who would not let other people disagree. If any of you have disagreed, I hope you will settle your disagreements at once. If there are any dissensions, I hope you will leave them all behind at Park Street! If any of you are not perfectly at one with each other, we cannot expect God's Presence to go with us until these things are once and for all forgiven and forgotten! Let us feel as perfectly one as though we were all perfect men and women and may God always grant us such a spirit of mutual forbearance! May He give to us that charity which hopes all things, believes all things and endures all things—for then we shall have the Master's Presence. But without this, the Holy Spirit, who is the Dove, will never stay with us!

Furthermore, if we wish to have God's Presence taken from us, there is another quick way of securing that end—*that is by getting slack and slow in prayer*. The Prayer Meeting is the gauge of the Church's spiritual condition. You may always test our prosperity by the multitudes who assemble to pray. Yes, and if we could enter your families and hear how you pray there—and if my ear could be close to your closet door, that I might hear how you pray for the Church in private—then I would know how the Church will succeed! Grow lax and careless, here—do but cease to entreat the Lord for a blessing—and then He will say, "I will not bless this people. I will not give unto them, for they do not cry unto Me. My door of mercy shall not be opened to them, for they refuse to knock." O Beloved, let us be instant and earnest in prayer! And let us have more faith. I wish I could leave all my unbelief behind me and I wish you could

all do the same—it would be a blessed legacy, I am sure, to this Chapel—and the next person who comes to preach here would, I trust, sweep it all out! Oh, that we could get rid of our wicked distrust of our God and our suspicion of His faithfulness, our doubts as to His veracity, our troubles and our fears about the future! O Lord, help us to stay ourselves on You! May we now, as a Church and people, *expect* great things, *attempt* great things, *do* great things and *believe* great things! Then shall we see greater things than we have ever yet beheld! Give us more faith, Lord, and drive away our unbelief!

But how can we keep the Spirit of God with us, now that we are about to go to our new Tabernacle? We can do it by His aid, by cultivating those Divine Graces which are just the reverse of the evils I have mentioned. First, *we must be humble*. Walk humbly with your God, walk humbly towards one another, be patient towards all men. Brothers and Sisters, we must be willing to be *nothing*—we shall never be anything till we are willing to be nothing. If any man will be perfectly content to be nobody, he shall be somebody. But he who must be somebody shall be nobody. I have always noticed, in a somewhat wide observation of personal character, that the most assuming and pretentious are the least respected, but the most humble, disinterested, self-denying and even self-detracting, are those whom men delight to honor. Crown yourself and every fool will try to knock the crown off your head! Go crownless and there will be some who will be wise enough to say, “That man deserves a crown. Let us put one on his head.” For Christ’s sake as a Church, let us be humble.

Then, *let us be united*. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.” They were two women, but even good women will sometimes quarrel. Perhaps you ask, “What did it matter that they were not of the same mind?” Ah, but they were members of the Church at Philippi, and the Apostle Paul did not like for even two women to disagree if they were members of the same Church! What shall I say of two male members of the Church—what shall I say of two aged members of the Church—what if I should look around me and say, “There are some who, I fear, are not perfectly at one with each other”? No, I will not say it. I will suppose that there are none in that condition, but if there are, let me now entreat them to be of the same mind in the Lord! What if one of them has an angry temper and the other has a hard disposition? What if one thinks he has a grievance and the other says that he is the one who ought to complain? What if one of you has spoken ill of another and he has spoken ill of you in return? Do not attempt to revive those old quarrels, but let them be buried! Come, let me throw the first handful of earth upon them. “Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.” Yet I must gratefully confess that I never knew, or heard, or read of a Church more thoroughly and intensely one than this Church is. But it may be that we have, in our midst, some such as I have been describing—and if so, I pray that if you

would have the Presence of God to go with us to our new sanctuary, you will see to it that all this evil is done away with once and for all!

Next to this, my dear Friends, let us go up into our new sanctuary with *a mind to work*. I do not think I ever have to whip you to work—I do get a great deal of work out of you. I always seek, whenever there is anything extra to be done, to preach Christ to you in such a way that you fall in love with Him over again and you *want* to do something more for Him than you have ever done before! You hardly know all that you have already done and I believe you are just as ready to build another new Tabernacle, now, as you were when we first began! You would have more faith, I daresay, concerning building a second than you had concerning the first. Let each man who has done nothing for the Master up to now, say, “I must begin to do something at once. Though I have been lazy at New Park Street, I must not be lazy in the new Tabernacle.” You know that we are going near “The Elephant and Castle.” Well, when we once get there, let every elephant carry his own castle, or, in other words, let every man bear his own burden—let every Christian do his own work—whether that service is the offering of prayer and praise, or the hewing of wood and the drawing of water for the House of the Lord.

Then, again, let us take care that we carry up to that new place, *fervent hearts full of prayer*. Come, Brothers and Sisters, let us fill our censers afresh before we start. Let us put in the frankincense and all manner of precious spices, and let us plead for the sacred fire to descend! And then let us stand, as long as that house stands, or we live, waving those censers between the living and the dead, praising the Lord for His mercies and praying to Him for yet further favors! I do not know how to plead with you as fervently as I wish to do, but I trust that I have set my text before you in such a way as to make you cry to the Lord, “If Your Presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”

Finally, let us ask *for greater faith*. When sailing in the little ship, you had the little man’s faith. You are about to step on board the larger vessel, so seek to get larger faith in proportion to it. Suppose we all had three times as much faith as we now possess—might we not do three times as much work? Yes, but surely that will not be our limit, will it? No, Lord, give us 10 times as much faith! Take away our unbelief! Help us to believe Your Word and teach us to act as though we believed it! Then shall we see far greater things than we have ever yet seen.

My dear Friends, after all, the main objective of our ministry is the winning of souls to God. Have I any here who have listened to me for these seven years, but who are still unconverted? Oh, what if this last hour in this house should be the time of your conversion? Soul, are you willing to die without a hope in Christ? Surely not! You know yourself to be lost, ruined and undone. I pray you, just as you are, to make a confession of your guilt and come to Christ’s Cross! He is just as willing to receive you, now, as He was when I first addressed you seven years ago! Though you have refused His invitation all these years, His heart still yearns with compassion over you. He has spared your life until now! He

has not cut down the old cumber-ground yet. Sinner, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved! O Spirit of God, change the sinner's heart! Give him faith that he may now cast himself on Christ! "Come now"—NOW, this moment—"and let us reason together, says the Lord: though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." May each one of us now pray the prayer of the penitent thief upon the cross, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom!" Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
2 SAMUEL 7:18-29.**

Verse 18. *Then went King David in, and sat before the LORD.* This was not the usual Oriental posture of prayer, but David was mingling meditation with his supplication, so that his attitude was not according to ordinary rules.

18. *And he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD?* Why, you are David, the valiant man who slew Goliath! No, no, no—the man of God is nobody in his own esteem!

18, 19. *And what is my house that You have brought me up to now? And this was yet a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; but You have spoken also of Your servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?* No, it is not the manner of man in general, but it is the manner of the Man Christ Jesus!

20-22. *And what can David say more unto You? For You, Lord GOD, know Your servant. For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, have You done all these great things, to make Your servant know them. Therefore You are great, O LORD God: for there is none like You, neither is there any God beside You, according to all that we have heard with our ears.* There is some sweet doctrine here! The Lord blesses David, not because of David's virtue, or David's merit, or David's prowess, but for His own sake—"For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, have You done all these great things, to make Your servant know them." The reason why streams of love flow from God is just this—it is according to His Nature. He is a fountain, so the blessing must flow from Him. He is a sun, so He must shine. It is not only because we need His love, but because, "God is Love," that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us. Now what is the inference from all this? Does David say, "Therefore, O Lord, I am great and honorable"? Oh, no! He has nothing to say in praise of himself! He says, "Therefore You are great, O Lord God: for there is none like You, neither is there any God beside You, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

23-25. *And what one nation in the earth is like Your people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for You great things and terrible, for Your land, before Your people, which You redeemed to You from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For You have confirmed to Yourself Your people Israel to*

be a people unto You forever: and You, LORD, have become their God. And 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. What a blessed prayer this is, “Do as You have said”! Get hold of a promise of the Lord, take it to the Throne of Grace and then urge this plea, “Do as You have said.” It is a good argument for every upright man to use when he reminds Him of His promise and asks Him to keep His pledged word. And we certainly may use this plea with the thrice holy God—“Do as You have said.”

26. *And let Your name be magnified forever.* Or, “be greatened”—be made great “forever.” Notice the way David returns to God the words that were addressed to himself. The Lord said to him, “I have made you a great name, like unto the name of the great that are in the earth.” And David replies, “Let Your name be made great forever. You, Jehovah of Hosts, are God over Israel; if You have made me king, and if my throne shall be established, much more shall Yours.”

26, 27. *Saying, The LORD of Hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of Your servant David be established before You. For You, O LORD of Hosts, God of Israel.* Notice how the name of the Lord seems to grow in this chapter until here it comes to its full force, dignity and majesty—“You, O Jehovah of Hosts, God of Israel.”

27. *Have revealed to Your servant, saying, I will build you an house: therefore has Your servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto You.* That is the best place to find a prayer—in your heart—no prayer comes up before God, with acceptance, but that which comes out of the very heart which should be like the sacred ark of old, wherein were hidden Israel’s most precious things. God’s words had gone right down into David’s heart and touched the secret springs of it—and now they welled up in this blessed prayer!

28, 29. *And now, O Lord GOD, You are that God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness unto Your servant: therefore now let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue forever before You: for You, O Lord GOD, have spoken it.* There is that grand pleading again—“You, O Lord God, have spoken it.” If you can remind God of His own promise, you may have whatever you will of Him. If He has said anything, His word shall surely be fulfilled.

29. *And with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever.*

END OF VOLUME 48

[SEE VOLUME 7 FOR MANY SERMONS REGARDING THE BEGINNING OF WORSHIP IN THE “METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE PULPIT.”]

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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A VIEW OF GOD'S GLORY

NO. 3120

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1908.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

“And he said, I beseech You, show me Your Glory.”
Exodus 33:18.

THAT was a large request for Moses to make. He could not have asked for more. “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” Why, it is the greatest petition that man ever asked of God! It seems to me the greatest stretch of faith that I have either heard or read of. It was great faith which made Abraham go into the plain to offer up intercession for a guilty city like Sodom. It was vast faith which enabled Jacob to grasp the Angel. It was mighty faith which made Elijah rend the heavens and fetch down rain from skies which had been like brass. But it appears to me that this prayer contains a greater amount of faith than all the others put together! It is the greatest request that man could make to God—“I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” Had he requested a fiery chariot to whirl him up to Heaven. Had he asked to cleave the water-floods and drown the chivalry of a nation. Had he prayed the Almighty to send fire from Heaven to consume whole armies, a parallel to his prayer might possibly have been found. But when he offers this petition, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” he stands alone—a giant among giants—a colossus even in those days of mighty men! His request surpasses that of any other man—“I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” Among the lofty peaks and summits of man’s prayer that rise like mountains to the skies, this is the culminating point. This is the highest elevation that faith ever gained—it is the loftiest place to which the great ambition of faith could climb—it is the topmost pillar of all the towering structures that confidence in God ever piled! I am astonished that Moses himself should have been bold enough to supplicate so wondrous a favor. Surely, after he had uttered the desire, his bones must have trembled, his blood must have curdled in his veins and his hair must have stood on end! Did he not wonder at himself? Did he not tremble at his own boldness? We believe that such would have been the case had not the faith which prompted the prayer sustained him in the review of it!

From where, then, came faith like this? How did Moses obtain so eminent a degree of this virtue? Ah, Beloved, it was by communion with God! Had he not been for forty days in the council chamber with his God? Had he not tarried in the secret pavilion of burning fire? Had not Jehovah spoken to him as a man speaks with his friend, he would not have had courage enough to ask so large a favor. Yes, more, I doubt whether all this communion would have been sufficient if he had not also

received a fresh testimony to the Grace of God in sparing the guilty nation through his intercession. Moses had argued with God—he had pleaded the Covenant—and although God had said, “Let Me alone, that I may destroy them,” he had still maintained his hold. He had even dared to say to the Lord, “This people have sinned a great sin and have made them gods of gold. Yet now if You will forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of the book which you have written.” He had wrestled hard with God and had prevailed! The strength gained by this victory, joined with his former communion with the Lord, made him mighty in prayer! But had he not received Grace by these means, I think the petition would have been too large even for Moses to dare to carry to the Throne. Would you, my Brothers and Sisters, have like faith? Then walk in the same path! Be much in secret prayer. Hold constant fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, and so shall you soar aloft on wings of confidence! And so shall you also open your mouth wide and have it filled with Divine favors! And if you do not offer the same request, yet you may have equal faith to that which bade Moses say, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.”

Allow me to refer you to the 13th verse of this Chapter, where Moses speaks unto his God, “Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found Grace in Your sight, show me now *Your way*.” Moses asked a smaller favor before he requested that greater one. He asked to see God’s *way* before he prayed to see His *Glory*. Mark you, my Friends, this is the true mode of prayer. Rest not content with past answers, but go again and double your request! Look upon your past petitions as the small end of the wedge opening the way for larger ones. The best way to repay God, and the way He loves best, is to take encouragement from past answers to prayer and ask Him ten times as much each time! Nothing pleases God as much as when a sinner comes again very soon with twice as large a petition, saying, “Lord, You did hear me last time, and now I have come again.” Faith is a mighty Grace and always grows upon that on which it feeds. When God has heard prayer for one thing, faith comes and asks for two things! And when God has given those two things, faith asks for six. Faith can scale the walls of Heaven. She is a giant Grace. She takes mountains up by their roots and piles them on other mountains and so climbs to the Throne of God in confidence with large petitions, knowing that she shall not be refused. We are, most of us, too slow to go to God. We are not like the beggars who come to the door 20 times if you do not give them anything. But if we have been heard once, we go away, instead of coming time after time, and each time with a larger prayer. Make your petitions larger and larger. Ask for ten and if God gives them, then for a thousand! Then for ten thousand, and keep going on until at last you will positively get faith enough to ask, if it is right and proper, as great a favor as Moses did, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.”

Now, my Friends, since we have spoken a little upon the prayer itself, we shall have to see how it was received at the Throne. It was answered, first, by a *gracious manifestation*. Secondly, by a *gracious concealment*. And, thirdly, by a *gracious shielding*.

I. First of all, this prayer which Moses offered was heard by God and He gave him A GRACIOUS MANIFESTATION—"And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

I think that when Moses put up this prayer to God, he was very much like Peter, when, on the mountaintop, he knew not what he said. I do think that Moses himself hardly understood the petition that he offered to God. With all the clearness of his ideas, however pure his conception of the Divinity might be, I think that even Moses himself had not adequate views of the Godhead. He did not then know as much of God as he has now learned where he stands before the Throne of the Most High. I believe that Moses knew that "God is a Spirit." I think he must have been sensible that the mind of man can never conceive an adequate idea of the incomprehensible Jehovah. He must have learned that the God of Mount Sinai, the King whose feet glowed like a furnace and made the mountain smoke, could never be grasped by the sense of a mortal. Yet it is likely, with all this knowledge, that the great Lawgiver had a vague and indistinct idea that it might be possible for Divinity to be seen. My Friends, it is hard for creatures encumbered with flesh and blood to gain a just conception of a spirit. We are so linked with the material that the spiritual is above our reach. Surely, then, if a mere spirit is above our comprehension, much more, "the Father of spirits, the Eternal, Immortal, Invisible."

The poet sings most truly—

***"The more of wonderful
Is heard in Him, the more we should assent.
Could we conceive Him, God He could not be—
Or He not God, or we could not be men.
A God alone can comprehend a God."***

These eyes are but organs to convey to me the knowledge of material substances—they cannot discern spirits! It is not their duty—it is beyond their province. Purer than celestial ether of the most refined nature. Subtler than the secret power of electricity. Infinitely above the most rarefied forms of matter is the existence we call a spirit. As well might we expect to bind the winds with cords, or smite them with a sword, as to behold spirits with eyes which were only made to see gross solid materialism.

We find that Moses "saw no similitude"—no visible form passed before him. He had an audience. He had a vision, but it was an audience from behind a covering and a vision, not of a Person, but of an attribute. Behold, then, the scene. There stands Moses, about to be honored with visions of God. The Lord is about to answer you, Moses! God is come—do you not tremble, do not your knees knock together—are not your bones loosened? Are not your sinews broken? Can you bear the thought of God coming to you? Oh, I can picture Moses, as he stood in that cleft of the rock, with the hand of God before his eyes and I can see him look as man

never looked before, confident in faith, yet more than confounded at himself that he could have asked such a petition!

Now, what attribute is God about to show to Moses? His petition is, "Show me Your Glory." Will He show him His justice? Will He show him His holiness? Will He show him His wrath? Will He show him His power? Will He break yon cedar and show him that He is almighty? Will He rend yonder mountain and show him that He can be angry? Will He bring his sins to remembrance and show that He is Omniscient? No! Hear the still small Voice, "I will make all My goodness pass before you." Ah, *the goodness of God is God's Glory*. God's greatest Glory is that He is good! The brightest gem in the crown of God is His goodness! "I will make all My goodness pass before you." There is a panorama such as time would not be long enough for you to see!

Consider the goodness of God in Creation. Who could ever tell all God's goodness there? Why, every creek that runs up into the shore is full of it where the fish dance in the water! Why, every tree in every forest rings with it, where the feathered songsters sit and make their wings quiver with delight and ecstasy! Why, every atom of this air which is dense with animalcule is full of God's goodness! The cattle on a thousand hills He feeds! The ravens come and peck their food from His liberal hands! The fishes leap out of their element and He supplies them! Every insect is nourished by Him! The lion roars in the forest for his prey and He sends it to him! Ten thousand thousand creatures are all fed by Him! Can you tell, then, what God's goodness is? If you knew all the myriad works of God, would your life be long enough to make all God's creative goodness pass before you?

Then think of His goodness to the children of men. Think how many of our race have come into this world and died. We are of yesterday and we know nothing. Man is as a flower—he lives, he dies, he is the infant of a day and he is gone tomorrow—but yet the Lord does not forget him. O my God, if You should make all Your goodness pass before me, all Your goodness to the children of man, I must sit down on an adamant rock forever and look through eternity! I should wear these eyes out and must have eyes of fire, or else I should never be able to see all Your goodness towards the sons of men!

But then rise still higher and think of His Sovereign goodness towards His chosen people. O my Soul, go back into eternity and see your name in God's book of predestinating, unchanging Grace! And then come down to the time of redemption and see there your Savior bleeding and agonizing. O my Soul, there were drops of goodness before, but rivers of goodness roll before you now! When you saw the Son of God groaning, agonizing, shrieking, dying, buried in His grave and then rising again, you saw the goodness of God! "I will make all My goodness pass before you." I say again, what a panorama! What a series of dissolving views! What sight upon sight, each one melting into the other! Could I stand here this morning and borrow the eloquence of an angel. Could I speak to you as I might wish—but, alas, I cannot break these bonds that hold my stammering tongue! Could I loose these lips and speak as angels

Speak, then could I tell you *something, but not much*, of the goodness of God, for it is past our finding out! Since I cannot utter it myself, I would invoke all creation to be vocal in His praise. You hills, lift up your voices—let the shaggy forests upon your summits wave with adoration! You valleys, fill the air with the bleating of your sheep and the lowing of your cattle! You that have life, if you have voices, tune His praise and if you walk in silence, let your joyful motions show the thanks you cannot speak! O you trees of the field, clap your hands! You winds, in solemn harmony chant to His Glory! You ocean, with your myriad waves, in all your solemn pomp, your motion to and fro, forget not Him who bids a thousand fleets sweep over you in vain and write no furrow on your ever-youthful brow! And you, you storms, howl out His greatness—let your thunders roll like drums in the march of the God of armies! Let your lightning write His name in fire upon the midnight darkness! Let the illimitable void of space become one mouth for song and let the unnavigated ether, through its shoreless depths, bear through the infinite remote the name of Him who is always good and does good!

I can say no more concerning God's goodness. But this is not all that Moses saw. If you look to the words which follow my text, you will see that God said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you," but there was something more. No one attribute of God sets God out to perfection—there must always be another. He said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." There is another attribute of God, there is His Sovereignty. *God's goodness without His Sovereignty does not completely set forth His Nature.* I think of the man who, when he was dying, sent for me to see him. He said, "I am going to Heaven." "Well," I replied, "what makes you think you are going there, for you never thought of it before?" Said he, "God is good." "Yes," I answered, "but God is just." "No," he said, "God is merciful and good." Now that poor creature was dying and being lost forever—for he had not a right conception of God. He had only one idea of God—that God is good. But that is not enough. If you only see one attribute, you only see part of God. God is good, but He is a Sovereign and does what He pleases—and though He is good to all, in the sense of benevolence, He is not obliged to be good to any. "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."

Do not be alarmed, my Friends, because I am going to preach about Divine Sovereignty. I know some people, when they hear about Sovereignty, say, "Oh, we are going to have some terrible high Doctrine!" But as it is in the Bible, that ought to be enough for you. Is not that all you need to know? If God says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," it is not for you to say that it is high Doctrine. Who told you it was high Doctrine? It is *good* Doctrine. What right have you to call one Doctrine high and another low? Would you like me to have a Bible with "H" against high, and "L" against low, so that I should leave the high Doctrine out to please

you? My Bible has no mark of that kind! It says, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious." There is Divine Sovereignty! I believe some are afraid to say anything about this great Doctrine lest they should offend some of their people, but, my Friends, it is true and you *shall* hear it! God is a Sovereign. He was a Sovereign before He made this world. He lived alone and this thought was in His mind, "Shall I make anything, or shall I not? I have a right to make creatures, or not to make any." He resolved that He would fashion a world. When He made it, He had a right to form the world in what shape and size He pleased. And He had a right, if He chose, to leave the globe untenanted by a single creature. When He had resolved to make man, He had a right to make him whatever kind of creature He liked. If He wished to make him a worm or a serpent, He had a right to do it. When He made him, He had a right to put any command on him that He pleased. And God had a right to say to Adam, "You shall not touch that forbidden tree." And when Adam offended, God had a right to punish him and all the race forever in the bottomless pit!

God is so far Sovereign that He has a right, if He likes, to save anyone in this Chapel, or to crush all who are here. He has a right to take us all to Heaven if He pleases, or to destroy us. He has a right to do just as He pleases with us. We are as much in His hands as prisoners are in the hands of Her Majesty when they are condemned for a capital offense against the law of the land—yes, as much as clay in the hands of the potter. This is what He asserted when He said, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." This Doctrine stirs up your carnal pride, does it not? Men want to be somebody. They do not like to lie down before God and have it preached to them that God can do just as He wills with them. Ah, you may hate this Doctrine but it is what the Scripture tells us. Surely it is self-evident that God may do as He wills with His own! We all like to do what we will with our own property. God has said that if you go to His Throne in prayer, He will hear you—but He has a right not to do so if He likes. He has a right to do just as He pleases. If He chooses to let you go on in the error of your ways, that is His right. And if He says, as He does, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," it is His right to do so. That is the high and awful Doctrine of **DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY**. [This subject is further discussed in the following Sermons by Mr. Spurgeon—#77, Volume 2—**DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY**; #442, Volume 8—**GOD'S WILL AND MAN'S WILL** and #553, Volume 10—**ELECTION NO DISCOURAGEMENT TO SEEKING SOULS**—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

Put the two together, goodness and Sovereignty, and you see God's Glory! If you take Sovereignty alone, you will not understand God. Some people only have an idea of God's Sovereignty and not of His goodness—such are usually gloomy, harsh and ill humored. You must put the two together—that God is good and that God is a Sovereign. You must speak of Sovereign Grace. God is not gracious alone, He is sovereignly gracious! He is not Sovereign alone, but He is graciously Sovereign. That is the true idea of God. When Moses said, "I beseech You, show me Your Glory." God made him see that He was glorious and that His Glory was His Sovereign goodness. Surely, Beloved, we cannot be wrong in loving

the Doctrine of free, unmerited, distinguishing Grace when we see it thus mentioned as the brightest jewel in the crown of our Covenant God! Do not be afraid of Election and Sovereignty. The time has come when our ministers must tell us more about them or, if not, our souls will be so lean and starved that we shall mutiny for the Bread of Life! Oh, may God send us more thorough Gospel men who will preach Sovereign Grace as the Glory of the Gospel!

II. The second point is, there was A GRACIOUS CONCEALMENT.

Read the next verse. "He said, You cannot see My face; for there shall no man see Me, and live." There was a gracious concealment and there was as much Grace in that concealment as there was in the manifestation. Mark you, Beloved, when God does not tell us anything, there is as much Grace in His withholding it as there is in any of His Revelations. Did you ever hear or read the sentiment that there is as much to be learned from what is not in the Bible as from what there is in the Bible? Some people read the Scriptures and they say, "We wish we knew such-and-such." Now you ought not to wish such a thing, for if it were right for you to know it, it would be there—and there is as much Divine Grace in what God has not put in the Bible as in what He has put there. If He had put more in it, it would have been our destruction. There is just enough and no more. Do you know how Robert of Normandy lost his sight? His brother passed a red-hot copper bowl before his face and burned his eyes out of their sockets. And there are some Doctrines that men want to know, which, if they could understand them, would be like passing a red-hot bowl before their eyes! They would scorch their eyes out and their understandings would be completely crushed. We have seen this in some ministers who have studied so much that they have gone out of their minds. They have gone further than they ought to have ventured. There is a point to which we may rightly go, but no further—and happy is the man who goes as near to it as possible without overstepping it. God said to Moses, "You cannot see My face; for there shall no man see Me, and live." There are two senses in which this is true. No man can see God's face as a sinner—and no man can see God's face even as a saint.

First, *no man can see God's face as a sinner*. There comes a guilty wretch before the Throne of God. God has spread open His books and set His seat of judgment. There comes a man before the Throne of God. Look at him! He is wearing a robe of his own righteousness. "Wretch, how came you in here?" And the guilty creature tries to look at God and cries that he may live. But no, God says, "*He cannot see My face, and live.*" Thus says the righteous Judge, "Executioner of my vengeance, come forth!" Angels come with crowns on their brows—they grasp their swords and stand ready. "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into outer darkness." The wretch is cast away into the fire of Hell. He sees written in letters of fire, "No man can see My face, and live." Clothed in his own righteousness, he must perish.

Then, again, it is true that *no man, even as a saint, can see God's face and live*—not because of moral disability, but because of physical inability. The body is not strong enough to bear the sight or vision of God. I cannot tell whether even the saints in Heaven see God. God dwells among them, but I do not know whether they ever behold Him. That is a speculation. We can leave that till we get there—we will decide it when we get to Heaven. I hardly know whether finite beings, even when glorified, will be capable of seeing God. This much is certain, that no man on earth, however holy, can ever see God's face and yet live. Why, Manoah, even when he saw an angel, thought he should die! He said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." If you and I were to meet an angel, or a troop of angels, as Jacob did at Mahanaim, we would say, "We shall die." The blaze of splendor would overwhelm us! We could not endure it. We "cannot see God and live." All that we can ever see of God is what He called His "back parts." The words, I think, signify "regal train." You have seen kings with regal trains trailing behind them—and all we can ever see of God is His train that floats behind Him. You see the sun that burns in the heavens with all his effulgence, you think is bright—you look upon him and he dazzles you—but all his splendor is but a single thread in the regal skirts of the robe of Deity! You have seen night wrapped in her sable mantle, woven with gems and stars—there they shine as ornaments worked by the needles of God in that brilliant piece of tapestry which is spread over our heads like a tent for the inhabitants of the earth to dwell in! You have said, "Oh, how majestic! That star, that comet, that silver moon, how splendid!" Yet they are nothing but just a tiny portion of the skirts of God that drag in the dust!

But what are the shoulders, the girdle of Divinity, the bracelets of Godhead, the crowns that adorn His lofty brow, man cannot conceive! I could imagine that all the planets and constellations of stars might be put together and threaded into a string and made into a bracelet for the arm, or a ring for the finger of Jehovah—but I cannot conceive what God Himself is! All I can ever learn, all that the thunder ever spoke, all that the boisterous ocean ever could teach me, all that the Heaven above, or the earth beneath, can ever open to my mind is nothing but the "back parts" of God. I can never see Him, nor can fully understand what He is.

III. Now, Beloved, we go to the third point and that is THE GRACIOUS SHIELDING.

Moses had to be put into a cleft of a rock before he could see God. There was a Rock in the wilderness, Moses smote it, and water gushed out. The Apostle tells us "*that rock was Christ.*" Very well, Paul, I believe it was, but there is another thing that I believe—I believe that *this rock was Christ!* I know it was not Christ literally. Moses stood in a literal rock—he stood on the top of a high mountain, hidden in a cleft of a real rock. But, O my Soul, what is the cleft of the rock where *you* must stand if you would ever see God's face and live? Oh, it is the "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," where I must hide! Oh, what a cleaving that was when Jesus died! O my Soul, enter into the hole in Jesus' side! That is the cleft of the Rock where you must abide to see God—

***“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find.
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind.”***

But when I get into the cleft of that Rock, O my Soul, when I get into that cleft whose massive roof is the well-ordered Everlasting Covenant, whose solid golden floor is made of the solemn decrees of the Predestination of the Most High, and whose sides are called Jachin and Boaz, that is, *establishment* and *strength*, I am in a cleft of a Rock which is so enduring that time can never dissolve it! Precious Christ, may I be found in You amidst the concussion of the elements when the world shall melt away and the heavens shall be dissolved! Oh, may I stand in You, You precious cleft of the Rock, for You are All-in-All to my soul! Some of you, I know, are in that cleft of the Rock. But let me ask others, “Where are you?” Let it be a personal question. I have preached a long while about God. I have tried to mount the height of this great argument and speak of the wondrous things of God. I may have failed, but let me say to each one of you, “Are you in that cleft of the Rock?” Can you sing this verse?—

***“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.”***

In closing, I want to draw one practical inference. What shall it be? Draw it yourselves. Let it be this—There is an hour coming when we must all, in a certain sense, see God. We must see Him as a Judge. It becomes us, then, to think seriously whether we shall stand in the cleft of the Rock when He comes. There is a passage I would mention before closing—“And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.” There was Death on the pale horse—and the original says, “*Hades* followed with him.” You know that the word, *Hades*, comprises both Heaven and Hell—it means the abode or state of departed spirits. Yes, Death is after me and you. Ah, run! Run! Run! But run as you will, the rider on the pale horse shall overtake you! If you can escape him for 70 years, he will overtake you at last. Death is riding! Here comes his pale horse! I hear his snorting, I feel his hot breath. He comes! He comes! And you must die!

BUT, WICKED MAN, WHAT COMES AFTERWARDS? Will it be Heaven or Hell? Oh, if it is Hell that is after you, where will you be when you are cast away from God? I pray God to deliver you from Hell. Hell is coming after you sure enough—and if you have no hiding place, woe be unto you! See that cleft in the Rock? See that Cross? See that blood? There is security there, but only there! Your works are but a useless encumbrance, cast them away and with all your might flee to the mountain! Cry to Jesus—

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

Yes, more than this, you will need Divine aid even in coming to Christ, so cry yet again—

“But oh, for this no strength have I,

My strength is at Your feet to lie.”

And, poor helpless one, if you are but hidden in Christ, you are forever secure! Storms may arise, but you cannot be overwhelmed! Old Boreas may blow until his cheeks burst, but not a breath of wind can injure you, for in the cleft of the Rock you shall be hidden until the vengeance is gone!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
HEBREWS 11:1-21.**

This is the *Arc de Triomphe* erected to the memory of the heroes of faith, whose names are here recorded by the Apostle's Inspired pen with a brief mention of some of their most memorable actions. If it had not been for their faith, which moved them to accomplish such valiant deeds, we might not have known anything about them.

Verse 1. *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Though the “things” are only “hoped for” and “not seen” at present, the eye of faith can see them and the hand of faith can grasp them! Faith is more mighty than any of our senses, or than all our senses combined!

2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report.* It is noteworthy that they obtained this “good report” by their faith. Doubt gives a man an evil reputation—it is only Believers who obtain such a “report” as even the Holy Spirit describes as “good.”

3. *Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.* It is only by believing the Inspired record that we can obtain a true understanding of the wondrous work of Creation. Science and reason are of little or no use here, but the opening words of Divine Revelation explain the great mystery—“In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth.”

4. *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaks.* It was the sacrifice of the believing Abel that was well pleasing in God's sight. And though his brother, Cain, out of jealousy and malice, slew him, his good reputation continues even to this day. That is the best way of living which enables a man to go on speaking for God even after he is dead.

5. *By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death: and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* It was by faith, not by works, that this truly gracious man, “was translated that he should not see death.” We never read of any unbeliever, “that he pleased God,” but this is the Inspired testimony concerning Enoch. [See Sermons #1307, Volume 22—ENOCH; #107, Volume 3—FAITH; #2100, Volume 35—FAITH ESSENTIAL TO PLEASING GOD; #2513, Volume 43—HOW TO PLEASE GOD and #2740, Volume 47—WHAT IS ESSENTIAL IN COMING TO GOD—Read/download the entire sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

6. *But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.* No one can come to God if he does not believe that there is a God and that He justly dispenses rewards and punishments.

7. *By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.* [See Sermon #2147, Volume 36—NOAH'S FAITH, FEAR, OBEDIENCE AND SALVATION—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] *By which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.* There is an unholy fear which is cast out by perfect love, but there is a holy fear, a filial fear, which dwells most happily with faith. So was it with Noah, who, "by faith...moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

8. *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed: and he went out, not knowing where he went.* Though Abraham did not know where he was going, God knew, and that was quite sufficient for the Patriarch. As a little child is willing to be led by his parent, so Abraham was willing to be led by God, even though that meant leaving his own country and his own people and going to the distant land which God intended to give him.

9, 10. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God.* [See Sermon #2292, Volume 39—ABRAHAM, A PATTERN TO BELIEVERS—Read/download the entire sermon, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.] He was only a sojourner in the land of promise, he knew that even the promised land was only a tenting-ground for him and his descendants, but he also knew that he was on his way to a Divinely planned and Divinely built city—not like the temporary cities of earth, which shall all perish and pass away, but a city with everlasting foundations, a city that will last as long as God, Himself, exists.

11. *Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised.* Sarah's faith was not like Abraham's, yet it was true faith and, therefore, her name appears among faith's worthies.

12, 13. *Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* Though the promises could only be seen afar off, faith has such long arms that it embraced them, clung to them as loving relatives cling to one another and would not let them go. So may we see the promises, and be persuaded that they belong to us, and embrace them as we clasp to our bosom those who are nearest and dearest to us!

14, 15. *For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from which*

they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. True pilgrims never think of going back—they know that whatever difficulties and trials lie ahead of them, there are far greater ones in “that country from which they came out.” Bunyan’s Christian was quite resolved not to go back to the City of Destruction whatever perils he might have to face on his way to the Celestial City.

16. *But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He has prepared for them a city.* Their desire for “a better country” has been implanted within them by God, Himself, and “He has prepared for them a city” which will more than satisfy their utmost desires.

17-19. *By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall your seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.* However puzzled Abraham may have been by the command to offer up the son in whom his seed was to be called, his plain duty was to obey that command and to leave the Lord to fulfill His own promise in His own way. Perhaps he had also learned, through his mistake concerning Ishmael, that God’s way of fulfilling His promise might not be his way—and that God’s way was always best.

20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.* He was old and blind, so that he did not know which of his sons came for the first blessing, yet he could see into the future sufficiently to bless both his sons “concerning things to come.” What wondrous power there is in faith even when it is exercised by very imperfect individuals!

21. *By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.* That staff had been Jacob’s companion on many memorable occasions, so it was most fitting that he should lean upon it while blessing his grandsons!

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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GOD'S GLORY AND HIS GOODNESS

NO. 3448

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 4, 1915.

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

“And he said, I beseech You, show me Your Glory. And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And He said, You cannot see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while My Glory passes by, that I will put you in a cliff of the rock, and will cover you with My hand when I pass by: and I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen.”
Exodus 33:18-23.

IT has frequently happened that good men in times of great trial have asked God either to give them a signal token of His love, or a special Revelation of Himself, that they might be strengthened and encouraged thereby. I suppose of many here present it is true that when called by the Master to great labor or deep affliction, you have been conscious of the same inward desire—your heart has craved after some extraordinary dispensation of Grace to counterbalance the extraordinary visitation of suffering that has overtaken you. Were you indulged with singular nearness to God and unusual glimpses of His Glory, you feel it would then be easy to leave all matters in His hands and acquit yourselves valiantly—strong for service, whatever there is to do—and patient in enduring whatever there may be to bear. That prayer, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” is a natural yearning, a spontaneous impulse of the soul. Albeit, I know that there is a grievous incredulity, a sinful unbelief which asks to see signs and wonders—and without them men will not believe—yet I think there is a desire which springs up in the breasts of Believers from an earnest childlike feeling of dependence upon the great Father God which is not sinful, and which God accepts—and to which He often sends a gracious reply.

Now we will not linger over any preliminary reflections. Our text is rather long, and our time this evening is very short. Let us draw your attention, in the first place, to the fact that—

I. GOD'S GLORY EVIDENTLY LIES IN HIS GOODNESS.

You observe that when Moses said, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory,” the answer given him was this, “I will make all My goodness pass before you.” So then, Beloved, if we could actually see the Glory of the

Lord, then the Infinite graciousness of His thoughts, His words and His deeds, all concentrated in one noontide effulgence and all beaming forth with ineffable brightness, would break on our vision! But, of course, it is not a Glory to be seen with mortal eyes, for God is a Spirit and, therefore, He is not to be discerned by our weak senses, or to be understood by our gross materialism. Still, I put it thus—could God be beheld by the mind of man and His perfections unfolded to our creature apprehensions, we would perceive that the chief splendor of His Majesty lay in His Infinite Benevolence! God is Love. This is the prominent point of the Divine Character. Though all excellent qualities beyond measure or degree, surpassing thought or reckoning, could be found in Him, yet, like the blended hues of many colors in the rainbow, the whole might be summed up in such words as these, “Your goodness.”

Some sublime evidences and brilliant reflections of this goodness of God may be seen *in the works of Creation*. Who can leisurely walk in the fields, or saunter among the hills and dells, observing the beauty and order, the uses and capabilities of this fertile earth, without breathing a tribute of gratitude to the goodness of the Creator? Who can look up to the heavens with a gleam of sensibility, or a glimmer of intelligence, by day or by night from these dusky streets of ours, and observe the luster of the constellations, or meditate on the regular motion of the celestial bodies, without an overwhelming impression of the transcendent goodness of the Lord? Yes, “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.” The woods ring with the melody of “happy birds that hymn their rapture in the ear of God.” The cattle on a thousand hills low out His praises and winged insects in countless numbers hum their joy! The world is His temple in which everything speaks of His Glory! Some glimpses of His goodness may be perceived in Providence, too. The history of man is the unrolling of the volume of Divine Benevolence to a great extent. That silver thread runs through all the web of human history. Yet, my Brothers and Sisters, these are but glimpses, for, alas, in Creation (and in Providence, too) much is to be seen of the terror and of the Justice of God as well as of His goodness. Earthquakes swallow cities. Storms sweep away not only the possessions men own, but the men, themselves, who own the possessions. Shipwrecks are constantly occurring and the sea is a vast cemetery. Dire famines are still abroad. Fell diseases stalk forth and mow down their helpless victims. The Lord Most High is terrible, yet surely He is good! His decrees are inscrutable. What then? We must be always ready to worship Him with resignation as well as with exultation, with bated breath as well as with grateful song. Tell me of the goodness of God to the whole animate Creation! Commend me to the tiny insects that dance in the sunbeams of His widespread benevolence and I tell you that He is great in power! His ways baffle our scrutiny. For by one chill wind, by one cold frost, in the course of a night millions of millions of those creatures perish at once! Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God! Whether in Creation or in Providence, between the tenderness that fosters life and the sternness that destroys life, the balance is

held so steadily that we can but get glimpses of God's goodness by broadly surveying or minutely examining them.

The full display of the goodness of God, however, is reserved for the *working of His Grace in the redemption of man*. Do you ask wherein the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared? The answer is, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." It is here at the Cross, by the blood of the Covenant, that Jehovah makes His goodness known in its most Divine forms! That God should be good to creatures is something to be thankful for, but that He should be good to *sinful creatures* exhibits His Character in a far more marvelous light and should compel our gratitude beyond all degree. That He should plan a scheme of redemption, that He should give His Son to carry out that purpose, that His Holy Spirit should bow the heavens and come down and be resident on earth, dwelling in the bodies of His people, that He might work out the good pleasure of His own will—herein is goodness! Is the earth a temple?—its windows are few and narrow, letting in little light compared with the Temple of God's Grace which seems to be a very crystal palace, letting in the light of His Grace on all sides! Or rather it is like one huge pearl, whose light beams from within and makes the earth and the nations bright with the radiance of its glory! If you would see the goodness of God in its purest tenderness, you must come into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, into the Holy of Holies, where He dwells in the hearts of His people, who form the living Temple of the living God! The experience of one and all who know Him will bear witness to this. It would appear, however, that in the manifestation of this Grace, the goodness of God shines in a peculiar light. Another attribute is blended with it. Permit me to read the verse to you—"I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."

You observe here, that while God's goodness is His Glory, *the very glory of His goodness lies in His Sovereignty*. What less than this can be meant by the sentence, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." God is not bound to be gracious to anyone, and He is peculiarly jealous of His right to bestow His Grace where He will. "Shall I not do as I will with My own?" is the question which the Most High seems to be constantly asking. He will show mercy, but He will take care so to grant it that His own absolute prerogative shall be conspicuous. He exercises a right of His own in every act of mercy—it is not of debt, but of Grace—therefore, no flesh shall glory in His Presence. The creature may not say unto his Maker, "Why did You made me thus?" No man is permitted to challenge His authority, or ask, "Why do You withheld such a gift from me, or why have You bestowed such a gift on another"? Against His fiat there is no appeal. "I will be gra-

scious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." I know this attribute of Divine Sovereignty does not shine in a very lovely light to many eyes. Oh, may those eyes be touched with a heavenly salve—and they will see better! The naked grandeur of the fact is not to be impeached—the eyes are at fault! Let them be abashed—the eyes that are dazzled and blinded by the excess of its splendor, for the Lord is God, He gives no account of His doings. The Lord Most High does as He wills among the armies of Heaven and with the inhabitants of this lower world!

Glory be to His name. Some of us have learned to love this attribute and to rejoice therein. We thank God that He is King. We delight in His absolute Sovereignty, knowing as we do that He is too wise to err, too good to be unkind. Therefore, we say, "Let His will be done on earth even as it is in Heaven"—and in all things let His counsels prevail—for in submission to Him we find all the purposes of His heart on our side, while in resistance to Him we find all His decrees set in array against us! Let not the creature, therefore, ask account from the Creator! Let not the subject call in question his rightful Lord! Above all, let not the disciple have a scruple about His Master's teaching. Not, indeed, that we should gaze at this one attribute till our eyes are so blinded with its dazzling splendor that we cannot perceive other attributes of the Almighty. All His perfections blend and harmonize—none of them clash or contradict one another!

God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, but *He always exercises that Sovereignty with respect to justice*. He treats no man unequally. In judgment He is impartial. Among lost spirits, not one shall dare charge the Judge of All with partiality. The equity of their sentence shall be palpable alike to the criminal and the foe. Unmoved by passion or by prejudice, the heavens shall declare His righteousness—and Hell itself shall be unable to impeach the integrity with which He administers the laws and statutes of His universal Kingdom! Neither does God exercise that Sovereignty inconsistently with wisdom. He has chosen a people, and He did not choose them because of their merits, yet depend upon it, He made a wise choice! Were we endowed with more wisdom, we might easily discern the choice God has made is not only gracious, but highly judicious. He is not blind and unwitting that the counsel of His heart should be distorted with a random change or an inevitable fatality. What though we cannot decipher the why or the wherefore, there is a reason which He has not been pleased to reveal. Therefore, it ill becomes us to pry into matters so far beyond the sphere of our intelligence! And still less would it be fitting to ascribe to mere caprice motives which we are unable to fathom. Our Sovereign Lord acts according to His own will, it is true, but know that He acts *according to the counsel of His will*, that is to say, not without deliberation, forethought and prescience of all the issues! Nor is this Sovereign choice of God ever exercised *apart* from His goodness. He is infinitely gracious, infinitely benevolent, infinitely loving.

His election makes the Grace He bestows, the compassion He feels and the love He manifests more abundantly conspicuous.

Some preachers have set forth this Doctrine as if it were their delight to represent the Almighty as an austere Ruler, to be dreaded rather than to be revered! By exaggerating one feature of His admirable Character, or rather by neglecting to draw other features in their due proportion, they have produced an unseemly caricature, instead of an attractive delineation. His absolute dominion has thus made men shudder as if it were an awful despotism wherewith He tramples down the creatures whom verily He upholds by His power! But know you that the Lord is good, that His tender mercy is over all His works, and His mercy endures forever! Though in the exercise of His supreme prerogative, He says, "I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy," yet He speaks again in words like these, "As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in him that dies, but had rather that he turn unto Me and live." He wills not, He declares, the death of the sinner. Infinite Mercy is not inconsistent with unrivalled Sovereignty. Do you tell me to show you that? No, but I cannot show you it—it is for God to show you! Who am I that I should attempt to reveal the Infinite? Go to Him and put up the prayer, "Show me Your Glory," and you shall see His goodness with His Sovereignty illuminating it like a blaze of light, always making it more resplendent, never obscuring it! At any rate, Beloved, the Doctrine is transparent enough to arrest attention. Do not, I beseech you, reject it. I know how angry it makes some men to allude to it, but I know also how good a thing it often proves for them to be incensed, when the Truth of God is more understandable than edible, for if the arrows of God stick fast in their conscience and wound them, there will come healing afterwards. Anything that wakes men from their apathy and makes them think is good. What though this Doctrine may look like a stumbling block in your pathway, it is one of the great thought leaders that has often brought men on their knees before the majesty of Heaven!

But ah, the best of men, while here below, can only have a partial view of this Glory of God's goodness and sovereignty. Moses, highly favored as he was, beholds it but in a measure. He sees the skirts of God's garment—he cannot see His face. And yet it has been well observed that this very Moses afterwards saw the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ on the mountain of Transfiguration. "What you know not now, you shall know hereafter." Here you can but know in part, but soon, and oh, how soon!—you shall know even as you are known. The veil will soon be torn, my Brothers and Sisters! If we have believed in Jesus, the least among us shall soon be wiser than the wisest of those who still linger behind in the wilderness! We shall stand before the Throne of God upon that sea of glass that glows with fire and cast our crowns before the Eternal One, and see the Infinite One and rejoice in the sight! Thus have we tried to show you that the Glory of God lies in His goodness and His Sovereignty.

II. HIS GLORY CAN BE BEST SEEN IN THE CLIFF OF THE ROCK.

Moses was put into the cliff of the rock. Surely I am not guilty of trifling with a literal fact or fancifully spiritualizing the sacred narrative, when I take up the language of the Apostle Paul, and say, "That Rock was Christ." If the Rock from which the Israelites drank was Christ, surely this Cliff in the Rock, this splitting of the Rock, this making a shield and shelter of the Rock, was a true type of our Lord Jesus Christ—

***"Rock of Ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."***

It is no poetical fiction, no coinage of the brain. It is a substantial Truth of God that Jesus is the Cliff of the Rock wherein we stand when we come to God in Christ Jesus. There it is that we can look upon the goodness and the Sovereignty of Jehovah, and more fully survey the glorious vision than it were possible for us to behold anywhere else. *Apart from Christ, men do not see the true goodness of God.* The description that some preachers give of God's goodness amounts to this—that men's sins are such trifles that God will entirely overlook them as frailties of the creature, or if He should punish the transgressors, it will be with gentle discipline and not with fiery indignation—and that only for a short time—after which they will either perish by annihilation, or else perhaps they will enter into life everlasting by a general restitution. Sin is treated with an indifference that borders on levity! It excites so little aversion among men, that they begin to think it of no very great account in the sight of God! He is too good and generous to be hard upon His poor subjects, who did but follow their own inclinations and trample on His Laws! Knowing what they are, He pities them, as if vice were a disease and crime a misfortune! Take heed, my Friends, of all such sophistries! That leniency is not goodness. In fact, it is the very opposite. It has neither integrity nor benignity to recommend it. Take the case of a legislator or a judge, whose sense of justice might be lax, while his feelings were too tender to denounce a crime and too timid to condemn a criminal. Would you consider him deserving of eulogy? Suppose a magistrate on the bench should say, "Well, it is true this man did break into a dwelling house, smite the servant, kill the owner and wreck the property. The evidence is clear, but there are extenuating circumstances. He needed a little money, or he would not have done it. Poor man! The money tempted him! Let us take a merciful view of the matter. Is not money a commodity that everybody is anxious to get? Are we not all exposed to temptation? Do not put him in prison! Do not sentence him to death—how would you like to be hanged? Admonish the unhappy fellow, but give him his liberty! Encourage him with the hope of a better career in the future."

What would you think of this new species of charity? When felony is but a misdemeanor, and murder is condoned as a casualty, I can hardly imagine you would feel very comfortable with the red-handed culprit by your side in this Tabernacle! You would rather not have him go home and sleep in one of your houses tonight—your generous hospitality would rather grudge him a cordial welcome! No, we say that kindness to the murderer is cruelty to the nation! The easy good nature that makes

light of sin is a wrong to the community! The reprieve and the release of heinous offenders is a breaking up of the defenses that shield us from men whose conduct is unscrupulous and whose disposition is ferocious. Or when, to give another example, I see a man in Holland, digging away at the dykes which are made to keep out the sea, I might ignorantly resent any interference with him. Why should not the man have a little sand if he needs it to put on his floor, or why may not he take home a bag of earth to make the things in his garden grow better? Do not molest him! No, but with the knowledge I now possess of the consequences, I would say he will let in the sea—he will break up the ramparts! It cannot be endured. It must not be tolerated. He infringes the law to the hazard of his neighbors, so that it becomes such a high offense that mercy extended to him would be a misery to the surrounding population! What say you, then, my dear Friends, shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Would you impute to Him a pitiful clemency that rather exposes weakness than exhibits strength of character? No such callousness or apathy, no such disregard of the rights and wrongs of the inhabitants of the world belongs to the government of the Most High! Even the mercy of God, which is revealed in Christ and recorded in the Bible, is wise and discriminating. He is as severe as if He were not kind and He is as tender as if He were not rigorous. His Justice is never eclipsed by His Mercy and His Mercy is not diminished, but rather is increased in splendor by His Justice! Never, I pray you, think that men can understand the goodness of God till they see Christ Jesus! When they see Him Crucified, they discover how He pardons sin, but not till an Atonement is made—how He puts away the transgression, but not till His Law is fulfilled and made honorable by the suffering of the Only Begotten! He does not pull up the sluices of iniquity and let loose the floods upon mankind. He is too good to do that. He lays help upon One that is mighty and executes His vengeance upon the sinner's Substitute. You never see His goodness till you get into Christ.

Nor does any man ever see God's Sovereignty aright until he comes into the Cliff of the Rock, Jesus Christ. I love the high Doctrines of the Covenant of Grace, I must confess, most devoutly and devotedly. But of this I am quite certain, that all the counsels of the Father concerning His people, and all the benefits He has conferred on His people were bestowed in the Person of His Well-Beloved Son! Still, I know of no greater pest under Heaven than high Doctrine preached or believed in as an abstract system of divinity or a blind fatalism by those who have not their heart set upon the One Mediator whom God appointed, the blessed Redeemer whom He has accepted as our Representative. Oh, how they caricature God as a Moral Governor! Oh, how they burlesque the Gospel as a proclamation of good tidings to the children of men! The love they attempt to describe is unlovely—and the mercy they essay to publish is unattractive! They sing hymns of Grace to the tune of reprobation! But in Christ Jesus you may see how Sovereignty blends with sympathy and

how the strong will that knows no mutability is consistent with the goodwill that owns no animosity! The Lord is King, but the silver scepter is in His hand. He fulfils His own decrees, but His decrees are not grievous, for Christ is the Messenger of the Covenant and He proclaims His readiness to receive every heavy-laden soul that comes to Him for mercy!

Now I further remark that *in the gifts of the Gospel and the blessings of Christ we see Divine Goodness*. You will never see Divine Goodness so clearly as you do in the fact that God gave His Son. "God so loved the world that He gave"—gave what?—Gave what token of His love? Gave the air we breathe, the fruits of the earth we feed upon, the flowers that charm our eyes, the gorgeous sun that shines resplendent in the skies—these are proofs of His benevolence no doubt, but all other proofs are comprehended in this—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The Gospel of good news declares everywhere that whoever believes in Christ is not condemned. Herein the amazing goodness of God is described in a few words—an Infinity of meaning is pressed into a single sentence! The blessings that God has conferred on us in Christ—comprehending as they do the Holy Spirit who brings all things to us—show the riches of His goodness! Earthly blessings are but the lower springs—and they are often discolored in a measure by the soil through which they flow—but heavenly blessings are the upper springs, leaping from the Eternal Throne, immortal and pure, making those that drink pure and immortal, so that they shall never die! In Christ you can see Divine Sovereignty as you never saw it before. Oh, I like to think that Christ is King—that over all the world He reigns—that God has committed all power into His hands who is our Brother, touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

The sons of Jacob might not go to Pharaoh, but it was a good thing when it was said, "Go to Joseph," for they would, none of them, be afraid to go to their brother! And now there is a mediatorial Kingdom set up on the earth in which Christ, alone, is the Head. And who would wish to have a better Head and a better King? We can trust the power with Him, for He has absolute wisdom, unlimited goodness, unbounded Grace. Oh, how glad are we that the Lord reigns and that Christ Jesus is Head over all things to His Church, that He is King of kings and Lord of lords, according to that ancient saying, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." In Christ, Sovereignty and goodness shine as with noontide radiance!

And now I would ask you, my dear Hearers, to remember that *the Sovereign Grace of God may be seen in the Gospel that is preached to you*. God might, if He had willed, have made salvation conditional upon your performing certain works. He has not done so—He has been pleased to give salvation to every soul that will believe in Jesus Christ! In His Sovereignty He has been pleased to make faith the channel of saving blessing. He, in His Sovereignty, might have ordained a thousand Graces as the way to mercy, but He has only put two. "Repent," He says, and in another

er place, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." The knowledge of salvation might have been put so far beyond the reach of common intelligence that the whole of the British Museum could not have contained the volumes in which it was written—and an entire lifetime could not have sufficed to learn the rudiments of this best of all the sciences! Instead of that, He has put it in these simple sentences, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." "He that believes not shall be damned." Here is His Sovereignty and His goodness, too! Thank God for so simple a plan of salvation and thank Him, I pray you, for such promises as He has made. Listen, Sinner! He has said, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He has said, "Let the wicked forsake his ways and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him." He might have chosen to send the Gospel to the great and mighty, but He has dispensed it freely to the poor! He has directed it to the humble, yes, and He has made a special mark that He has provided it for every broken and contrite heart that trembles at His Word! How can you kick at Sovereignty, however absolute, which is exercised in so tender, so gentle, so merciful a manner? Instead of rebelling against His scepter, come and kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way! Bow down before His nailed feet and ask the pardon that His wounds and death have purchased! Come to His Cross and let your trust fix itself on His passion which has expiated the guilt of all Believers! On His Resurrection which has secured life to all that trust Him, and on His intercession, which guarantees salvation to all that come unto God by Him—salvation even to the uttermost! Oh, see Him! He might, if He had so willed, have withheld the Gospel! He might, if He willed, have clogged the Gospel with terms and conditions which would make the acceptance of it a hardship! Or He might have denied to you the hearing of it, even though He gave others that unspeakable privilege. What, then, should be your gratitude, when He has been pleased to send His messenger to you with these tidings of Grace, this proclamation of pardon—"Trust in the Only Begotten, who died on the Cross, and I will forgive you—forgive you now"? "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as snow." Oh, yield, yield now! May His blessed Spirit come with these words of mine, which I would to God could be made more quick and powerful than they are—may His eternal Spirit come and clothe them with might and with energy to convict your conscience, to convert your heart, to renew your spirit, to make you bow before the Infinite heart so good and yet so absolute! Then might you say, "Great God, I acknowledge You as my King! I love You because You are a gracious God. I worship You because You could reject me if You willed. I kneel at Your footstool and pray You to accept me, not for my merit, since I have none, but for Your mercy's sake! Oh, for Christ's sake, have pity upon me!" He will hear you, Sinner! An answer of peace shall be given you—shall be given you *now!*

The practical end of all this may be summed up in a few sentences. Sinner—unsaved, you are in the hands of God to do what He likes with you. He can destroy you. He can save you. A moth is not more feeble beneath the finger of a man than you are beneath the finger of God. Be not, therefore, high-minded. Submit yourself to Him whose power is able to crush or to uphold you. But know that He in whose hands you are, is infinitely good and gracious! Therefore, appeal to Him for mercy. By all means cherish hope. Yield not to despair. Suffer not that demon, like a nightmare, to sit on your breast, to crush out all your energies, stifle all your cries and prevent your drawing near to God in prayer! He is not more majestic and absolute as a Sovereign than He is benignant and compassionate! When you are in His hands, you are in good hands. Resist not His will! Repine not at His decrees! Confide in His clemency. Approach Him in the courts of His house. Fall down at His Mercy Seat! Adore Him by His generous titles. Seek shelter in His love. Give earnest attention to the Gospel—believe it implicitly. Right soon will you then get silent musings, obvious reasoning, solid arguments to banish fear and nourish hope! God need not have sent His Son into the world to suffer and to die. It must have been gratuitous on His part. That you should have a share in this great Redemption could never be inferred from His Justice! It must be referred to His Grace. But if you believe Him, then the Redemption is yours! The faith you have in Him is a token of the favor He has towards you. If you rely upon the simple fact that Christ died for you, your faith is the substance of the thing you hope for, and it shall be the evidence of your special Redemption! His blood was shed for your remission. Because He poured out His soul unto death, therefore your soul is raised up to everlasting life! Your relying upon Christ is my warranty for accrediting you with all the immunities and all the advantages of His salvation!

This Sovereign goodness of God ought to be a great encouragement to any of you that have been great sinners, because while there is no competition on your part in which merit might bear the palm, there is a complacency on His part in which Grace can assert its claims. If He can save whom He will, He may be as willing to save you who are the most depraved as He is to save those who have been the most virtuous of mankind! Do you heartily repent, at this good hour, of your transgressions? God has not limited the promise of this mercy to those who have transgressed but a little, but He is known to make the chief of sinners the objects of His greatest mercy! It is well for us that Grace is distributed Sovereignly. Better that we should look to His goodwill than dream of our own free will. To be suitors for the great benefits He has treasured up for His people is far preferable to being schemers seeking to justify ourselves and forge a righteousness void of worth, graceless, heartless and good for nothing! Since He does as He wills, He may be willing to give to you what you are desirous to ask of Him. No, He does will to give to you if now He moves your will to accept at His hand the rich fruit of the Savior's passion! Never did a soul desire God, but God desired that soul. Whenever a

soul yearns to be saved through Jesus Christ, admiring the Grace as it has been vouchsafed to others, and craving the same Grace for itself, that hunger and thirst are prompted by God, and by God it shall be satisfied, for blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness—they shall be filled!

Oh, come then, come and welcome! What more, what better can I do to conclude than ring again that silver bell which has so often resounded clear and loud in this Tabernacle? It has not lost any of its sacred melody or its enchanting power—

***“From the Mount of Calvary,
Where the Savior deigned to die,
What transporting sounds I hear,
Bursting on my ravished ear—
Love’s redeeming work is done!
Come and welcome, Sinner, come!”***

Come, I pray you, for His mercy’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ISAIAH 45:1-16.**

Verses 1-4. *Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held, to subdue nations before him; and loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before you, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give you the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that you may know that I, the LORD, which call you by your name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob My servant’s sake, and Israel My elect, I have even called you by your name: I have surnamed you, though you have not known Me.* Long before the period of Cyrus’s birth, this prophecy was written by Isaiah—and surely it must have flashed solemn conviction upon the heart of the king when he came to read words like these, in which his very name was mentioned—and all his exploits and successes, with which he vanquished his enemies, captured their strong places and cut the gates of brass in pieces! Our God has all things present before Him. To Him there is no future. All things are in one eternal *now* with Him and, therefore, He tells His Prophets the things that shall be.

5. *I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside Me: I girded you; though you have not known Me.* It is a wonderful subject—the Providential government of God over princes and potentates that know Him not—how He raised up Cyrus on the behalf of His people, that they might be delivered—and though Cyrus did not know it, yet was he, as it were, an instrument in the hand of God—moved according to the Divine Will!

6, 7. *That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD*

do all these things. It was to correct the Persian mistake into which Cyrus had fallen of a duplicate deity—one power creating light and another power creating darkness. “No,” says Jehovah, “I alone am God.”

8, 9. *Drop down, you heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it. Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! As many do in these days. Tongue-valiant men who dare accuse the Most High and arraign Him at their bar.*

9. *Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Let them strive with their equals, but who is he that shall come into conflict with the eternal God?*

9, 10. *Shall the clay say to him that fashioned it, What are you making? Or your work, He has no hands? Woe unto him that says unto his father, What did you beget? Or to the woman, What have you brought forth? Quarreling with God is a waste of time, is audacity and presumption! It will end in disaster to us, for the Lord is Lord of All!*

11-13. *Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands command you Me? I have made the earth, and created man upon it. I, even My hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their hosts have I commanded. I have raised him—That is, Cyrus.*

13-15. *Up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build My city, and he shall let go My captives, not for price nor reward, says the LORD of Hosts. Thus says the LORD, The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto you, and they shall be yours: they shall come after you: in chains shall they come over, and they shall fall down unto you, they shall make supplication unto you, saying, Surely God is in you; and there is none else, there is no God. No other God. The day shall come in which this shall all be true, when men shall relinquish their idols and believe in that one great invisible God, the Maker of all things! For the present we do not see this.*

15. *Verily you are a God that hides Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior.* Throughout these long and weary years, man has forgotten or blasphemed his Maker, and God has sat still and borne it in the majestic patience of His Infinity.

16. *They shall be ashamed, and also confounded, all of them: they shall go to confusion together that are makers of idols.*

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

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

ELECTION NO DISCOURAGEMENT TO SEEKING SOULS NO. 553

**DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 7, 1864,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“I will be gracious upon whom I will be gracious,
and will show mercy upon whom I will show mercy.”
Exodus 33:19.***

BECAUSE God is the Maker and Creator and Sustainer of all things, He has a right to do as He wills with all His works. “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?” God’s absolute supremacy and unlimited Sovereignty naturally flow from His Omnipotence and from the fact that He is the Source and Support of all things. Moreover, if it were not so, the superlative excellence of the Divine Character would entitle Him to absolute dominion.

He *should* be Chief who is best. He who cannot err, being perfect in wisdom. He who *will* not err, being as perfect in holiness. He who can do no wrong, being supremely just. He who must act in accordance with the principles of kindness, seeing He is essentially Love, is the most fitting Person to rule. Tell me not of the creatures ruling themselves—what a chaos were this! Talk not of a supposed republic of all created existences, controlling and guiding themselves.

All the creatures put together, with their combined wisdom and goodness—if, indeed, it were not combined folly and wickedness—all these, I say, with all the excellencies of knowledge, judgment and love which the most fervid imagination can suppose them to possess—could not make the equal of that great God whose name is Holiness, whose Essence is Love, to whom all power belongs and to whom alone wisdom is to be ascribed. Let Him reign supreme, for He is infinitely superior to all other existences.

Even if He did not actually reign, the suffrages of all wise men would choose the Lord Jehovah to be absolute Monarch of the universe. And if He were not already King of kings and Lord of lords, doing as He wills among the armies of Heaven and the inhabitants of this lower world, it were the path of wisdom to lift Him up to that Throne. Since men have sinned, there becomes a yet further reason, or, rather, a wider scope for the display of Sovereignty. The creature, as a creature, may be supposed to have some claim upon the Creator—at least, it may expect that He shall not make it intentionally and despotically to put it to pain. That He shall not arbitrarily and without cause or necessity cause its existence to be one of misery.

I will not venture to judge the Lord, but I do think it is altogether incompatible with His goodness that He should have made a creature and,

as a creature, have condemned it to misery. Justice seems to demand that there shall be no punishment where there is no sin. But man has lost all his rights as a creature. If he ever had any he has sinned them away. Our first parents have sinned and we, their children, have attained ourselves by high treason against our liege Lord and Sovereign. All that a just God owes to any one of us on the footing of our own claim is wrath and displeasure.

If He should give to us our due, we should no longer remain on praying ground, breathing the air of mercy. The creature, before its Creator, must now be silent as to any demands upon Him. It cannot require anything of Him as a matter of right. If the Lord wills to show mercy, it shall be so. But if He withholds it, who can call Him to account? "Can I not do as I will with My own?" is a fit reply to all such arrogant enquiries—for man has sinned himself out of court and there remains no right of appeal from the sentence of the Most High.

Man is now in the position of a condemned criminal whose only right is to be taken to the place of execution and justly to suffer the due reward of his sins. Whatever difference of opinion there might have been about the Sovereignty of God as exercised upon creatures in the pure mass, there should be none and there will be none, except in rebellious spirits, concerning the Sovereignty of God over rebels who have sinned themselves into eternal ruin and have lost all claim even to the mercy, much more the love of their offended Creator.

However, whether we all of us agree to the doctrine that God is Sovereign or not is a very little matter to Him, for He is so. De jure, by right, He should be so. Defacto, as matter of fact, He is so. It is a fact concerning which you have only to open your eyes and see that God acts as a Sovereign in the dispensation of His Divine Grace. Our Savior, when He wished to quote instances of this, spoke on this wise—"Many widows there were in Israel in the time of Elijah the Prophet. But unto none of these was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman who was a widow."

Here was election! Elijah is not sent to nourish and to be nourished by an Israelite widow, but to a poor idolatress across the border. The blessing of the Prophet's company is graciously granted. Again our Savior says, "Many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the Prophet. And none of them were cleansed, save only Naaman the Syrian"—not an Israelite at all, but one who bowed in the house of Rimmon. See how distinguishing Grace finds out strange objects! Although our Savior only gave these two instances and no more, because they sufficed for His purpose, there are thousands of such cases on record.

Look at man and the fallen angels. How is it that fallen angels are condemned to endless fire and reserved in chains of darkness unto the Great Day? There is no Savior for angels! No precious blood was ever shed for Satan. Lucifer falls and falls forever, never to hope again. There is no dispensation of mercy to those nobler spirits. But man who was made lower than the angels, is selected to be the object of Divine Redemption! What a great mystery is here! This is a most industrious and indisputable instance of the exercise of the prerogatives of Divine Sovereignty.

Look again at the nations of the earth. Why is this Gospel preached to-day to us Englishmen? We have committed as many offenses—I will even venture to say we have perpetrated as many political crimes as other nations. Our eye is always prejudiced towards everything which is English. But if we read our history fairly, we can discover in the past and detect in the present grave and serious faults which disgrace our national banner. Can we pass off as minor offenses the late barbarities in Japan and our frequent wars of extermination in New Zealand and at the Cape? And let it crimson the cheek of every inhabitant of the British Isles when we do but hint at the opium traffic with China.

Yet to us the Gospel is graciously sent, so that few nations enjoy it so fully as we do. It is true that Prussia and Holland hear the Word and that Sweden and Denmark are comforted by the Truth of God, but their candle burns but dimly. It is a poor flickering lamp which cheers their darkness, while in our own dear land, partly from the fact of our religious liberty and yet more graciously through the late revival, the sun of the Gospel shines brightly and men rejoice in the light of day.

Why this? Why no Grace for the Japanese? Why no Gospel preached to the inhabitants of Central Africa? Why was not the Truth of God displayed in the Cathedral of Santiago, instead of the mummeries and follies which disgraced both dupes and deceivers and were the incidental cause of the horrible burnings of that modern Tophet? Why today is not Rome, instead of being the seat of the beast, become the Throne of Jesus Christ? I cannot tell you. But assuredly, Divine Sovereignty passing by many races of men has been pleased to pitch upon the Anglo-Saxon family, that they may be as the Jews were aforetime—the custodians of Divine Truth and the favorites of mighty Grace.

We need not further speak upon national elections, for the principle is plainly carried out in individuals. Do you see anything, my Brethren, in that rich publican, whose coffers are gorged with the results of his extortion, when he climbs the sycamore tree so that his short stature may not prevent his seeing the Savior? Do you see anything in him why the Lord of Glory should halt beneath that sycamore tree and say, “Zaccheus, make haste and come down! For today I must abide at your house”?

Can you find me a reason why yonder adulterous woman, who has had five husbands and who is now living with a man who is not her husband, should constrain the Savior to journey through Samaria that He might tell her of the Water of Life? If you can see anything, I cannot. Look at that bloodthirsty Pharisee, hurrying to Damascus with authority to haul men and women to prison and shed their blood! The heat of midday cannot stop him, for his heart is hotter with religious rage than the sun with noontide rays.

But look, he is stopped in his tracks! A brightness shines round about him! *Jesus* speaks from Heaven the words of tender rebuke. And Saul of Tarsus becomes Paul, the Apostle of God. Why? Why? What answer can we give but this? “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.” Read the “Life of John Newton”—had he not ripened into the grossest of all villains? Turn to the history of John Bunyan—by his own confession the lowest of all blackguards! And tell me, can you find in either of these offenders any sort of reason why the Lord should have chosen them to be

among the most distinguished heralds of the Cross? No man in his senses will venture to assert that there was anything in Newton or Bunyan why they should engross the regard of the Most High. It was Sovereignty and nothing but Sovereignty.

Take your own case, dear Friends, and that shall be the most convincing of all to you. If you know anything of your own heart, if you have formed a right estimate of your own character, if you have seriously considered your own position before the Most High—the reflection that God loves *you* with an everlasting love and that, therefore, with the bands of His kindness He has drawn you—will draw forth from you at once the exclamation, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Your name give Glory, for Your mercy and for Truth’s sake.” Brothers and Sisters! The whole world is full of instances of Divine Sovereignty, for in every conversion some beam of the absolute dominion of God shines forth upon mankind!

When a sinner is anxiously disturbed about his soul’s affairs, his chief and main thought should not be upon this subject. When a man would escape from wrath and attain to Heaven, his first, his last, his middle thought should be the Cross of Christ. As an awakened sinner, I have vastly less to do with the secret purposes of God than with His revealed commands. For a man to say, “You command all men to repent, yet will I not repent because I do not know that I am chosen to eternal life,” is not only unreasonable, but exceedingly wicked. That it is unreasonable you will clearly see on a moment’s reflection.

I know that bread does not of itself nourish my body, “For man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word which proceeds out of the mouth of God.” It depends, therefore, upon God’s decree whether that bread shall nourish my body or not—for if He has not purposed that it shall, it may even choke me and so become rather the cause of my *death* than the staff of my life. Do I, therefore, when I am hungry, thrust my hands into my pockets and stand still and refuse to help myself from the well-loaded table because I do not know whether God has decreed that the bread shall nourish me or not? If I did, I would be an idiot or a madman! Or, if in my senses, I would starve myself on such a pretense and I should richly deserve the burial of a suicide.

I am not absolutely sure that there will be a harvest upon my field next year. Unless God has ordained that the corn shall spring up and shall ripen, all my farming will be labor lost. There are worms in the earth, frosts in the air, birds in the sky, mildews in the winds—all of which may destroy my corn and I may lose every single grain of the handfuls which I throw into my furrows. Shall I, therefore, leave my farm to be one perpetual fallow because I do not know whether God has decreed that there shall be a harvest or not next year?

If I become a bankrupt—if I am unable to pay my rent—if the thorn and the thistle grow taller and higher, and if at last my landlord thrusts me from my tenancy—all that men will say will be, “It serves him right!” True, because I was such a fool as to make the secret purposes of God a matter of paramount consideration instead of performing my known duty. I am ill and sick—a physician comes to me with medicine. I am not clear that his medicine will heal me. It has healed a great many others, but if God has

decreed that I shall die, I shall die—if I take any quantity of medicine or take none at all.

My arm mortifies, but I will not have it cut off because I do not know whether God has decreed that I shall die of mortification or not. Who but a crazed idiot, or raving maniac, would talk thus? When I put the case in that light, you all reply, “Nobody ever talks in that way. It is too absurd.” Of course nobody does! And the fact is, even in the things of God, nobody really does argue in that way. A man may say, “I will not believe in Christ because I am afraid I am not elected,” but the thing is so stupid, so absurd, that I do not believe that any man not absolutely demented can be so grossly foolish as to believe that in his own reasoning.

I am far rather inclined to think that it is a wicked and perverse method of endeavoring to stupefy conscience on the theory that a bad excuse is better than none and that even a foolish argument is better than having one’s mouth shut in speechless confusion. But since men will everlastingly be getting to this point and there are so many who are always giving this as a reason why they do not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, because, “It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy,” I shall try, this morning, to talk with these people on their own ground.

And I shall endeavor, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to show that the doctrine of the Sovereignty of God, so far from discouraging anybody, has not in it, if regarded aright, any sort of discouragement whatever for any souls believing in Jesus Christ. For one moment let me detain you from my object, while I reply to a very common method of misrepresenting the doctrine. It may be as well to start with a clear idea of what the doctrine really is.

Our opponents put the case thus—suppose a father should condemn some of his children to extreme misery and make others supremely happy, out of his own arbitrary will. Would it be right and just? Would it not be brutal and detestable? My answer is, of course it would! It would be execrable in the highest degree, and far, very far is it from us to impute such a course of action to the Judge of all the earth! The case stated is not at all the one under consideration, but one as opposite from it as light from darkness!

Sinful man is not now in the position of a well-deserving, or innocent child! Neither does God occupy the place of a complacent parent. We will suppose another case far nearer the mark. Indeed, it is no supposition but an exact description of the whole matter. A number of criminals, guilty of the most aggravated and detestable crimes, are righteously condemned to die and die they must unless the king shall exercise the prerogative vested in him and give them a free pardon. If for good and sufficient reasons, known only to himself, the king chooses to forgive a certain number and to leave the rest for execution, is there anything cruel or unrighteous here?

If, by some wise means, the ends of justice can be even better answered by the sparing of the pardoned ones than by their condemnation, while at the same time, the punishment of some tends to honor the justice of the lawgiver, who shall dare to find fault? None, I venture to say, but those

who are the enemies of the State and of the king. And so may we well ask, "Is there unrighteousness with God?" God forbid!

"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, even us, whom He has called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" Who is he that shall impugn the mingled mercy and severity of Heaven, or make the eternal God an offender, because, "He has mercy on whom He will have mercy?" Let us now proceed to our proper subject and endeavor to clear this Truth of God from the terrors supposed to cluster round it.

I. Let us begin with this assertion, which we are absolutely sure is correct—THIS DOCTRINE DOES NOT OPPOSE ANY COMFORT DERIVED FROM OTHER SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS. This doctrine, stern as it may seem to be, does not oppose the consolation which may be rightly derived from any other Truth of Revelation. Those who hold the free will theory say that our doctrine, that salvation is of the Lord alone and that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, takes away from man the comfort derivable from God's goodness.

God is Good, infinitely Good in His Nature. God is Love, He wills not the death of any, but had rather that all should come to repentance. "As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, but had rather that he should turn unto Me and live." Our friends very properly insist upon it that God is good to all and His tender mercies are over all His works—that the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. Let me assure them that we shall never quarrel on these points, for we also rejoice in the same facts.

Some of you have listened to my voice for these ten years—I ask you whether you have heard me utter a single sentence which at all contradicts the doctrine of God's great Goodness? You may have so construed it by mistake, but no such teaching has passed my lips. Do I not, again and again, assert the universal benevolence of God—the infinite and overflowing goodness of the heart of the Most High? If any man can preach upon the great text, "God is Love," though I may not be able to preach with the same eloquence, I will venture to vie with him in the decision, heartiness, delight, earnestness and plainness with which he may expound his theme, be he who he may, or what he may.

There is not the slightest shadow of a conflict between God's Sovereignty and God's Goodness. He may be a Sovereign and yet it may be absolutely certain that He will always act in the way of goodness and love. It is true that He will do as He wills. And yet it is quite certain that He always wills to do that which, in the widest view of it, is good and gracious. If the sons of sorrow fetch any comfort from the goodness of God, the doctrine of election will never stand in their way.

Only mark, it does with a two-edged sword cut to pieces that false confidence in God's goodness which sends so many souls to Hell. We have heard dying men singing themselves into the bottomless Pit with this lullaby, "Yes, Sir, I am a sinner, but God is merciful! God is good!" Ah, dear Friends, let such remember that God is Just as well as good and that He

will by no means spare the guilty, except through the great Atonement of His Son Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of election, in a most blessedly honest manner does come in and break the neck, once and for all, of all this false and groundless confidence in the uncovenanted mercy of God. Sinner, you have no right to trust to the goodness of God *out of Christ*. There is no Word in the whole Book of Inspiration which gives a shadow of a hope to the man who will not believe in Jesus Christ. It says of him, "He that believes not shall he damned." It declares of you who are resting upon such a poor confidence as the unpromised favor of Heaven, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ the Righteous."

If this is an evil to rob you of a false refuge, the doctrine of election certainly does that! But from the comfort properly derivable from the largest view of God's bounteous goodness and unlimited love, election does not detract a single grain. Much comfort, too, flows to a troubled conscience from the promise that God will hear prayer. "Ask and it shall be given you. Seek and you shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asks receives. And he that seeks finds. And to him that knocks it shall be opened." If you ask anything of God in the name of Jesus Christ, you shall receive it.

Now there are some who imagine that they must not pray because they do not know whether they are God's chosen people. If you refuse to pray on the ground of such bad reasoning as this, you must do so at your own expense. But do mark our solemn assurance for which we have God's warrant, that there is nothing in the Sovereignty of God which at all militates against the great Truth that every sincerely seeking soul, craving Divine Grace by humble prayer through Jesus Christ, shall be a finder.

There may be an Arminian Brother here who would like to get into this pulpit and preach the cheering Truth of God that God has not said to the seed of Jacob, seek you My face in vain. We not only accord him full liberty to preach this doctrine, but we will go as far as he can and perhaps a little further in the enunciation of that Truth. We cannot perceive any discrepancy between personal election amid the prevalence of prayer. Let those who can, vex their brains with the task of reconciling them. To us the wonder is how a man can believe the one without the other!

Firmly must I believe that the Lord God will show mercy to whom He will show mercy, and have compassion on whom He will have compassion. But I know as assuredly that wherever there is a genuine prayer, God gave it—that wherever there is a seeker, God made him seek. Consequently, if God has made the man seek and made the man pray, there is evidence at once of Divine election. And the fact stands true that none seek who shall not find. Very much comfort, also, is supposed to be derived and naturally so, from the free invitations of the Gospel.

"Ah," cries one, "what a sweet thing it is that the Savior cried, 'Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' How delightful to read such a word as this, 'Ho, everyone that thirsts come you to the waters and he that has no money; come you, buy and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.' Sir, my heart is encouraged when I find it written, 'Whoever will, let him take

the Water of Life freely.' But, Sir, I dare not come because of the doctrine of election."

My dear Hearer, I would not say anything harshly to you, but I must express my conviction that this is nothing but an idle excuse for not doing what you have no mind to do, because invitations of the most general character, no, invitations which shall be universal in their scope, are perfectly consistent with the election of God. I have preached here, you know, invitations as free as those which proceeded from the lips of Master John Wesley. Van Armin himself, the founder of the Arminian school, could not more honestly have pleaded with the very vilest of the vile to come to Jesus than I have done. Have I therefore felt in my mind that there was a contradiction here?

No, nothing of the kind! Because I know it to be my duty to sow beside all waters, and like the sower in the parable, to scatter the seed upon the stony ground as well as upon the good land, knowing that election does not narrow the Gospel call which is universal, but only affects the *effectual* call, which is and must be *particular*. And that effectual call is no work of *mine*, seeing that it comes from the Spirit of God. My business is to give the *general* call, the Holy Spirit will see to its application to the chosen.

O my dear Hearers, God's invitations are honest invitations to every one of you. He invites you! In the words of the parable He addresses you, "All things are ready! Come you to the supper, My oxen and My fatlings are killed." "No," He says to His ministers, "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." Though He foreknows who will come in and has before all worlds *ordained* who shall taste of that supper, yet the invitation in its widest possible range is a true and honest one. And if you accept it you shall find it so.

Furthermore, if we understand the Gospel at all, the Gospel in a nutshell is this—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Or, to use Christ's words, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved and he that believes not shall be damned." This promise is the Gospel. Now the Gospel is true, whatever else may be false. Whatever doctrine may or may not be of God, the Gospel certainly is. The doctrine of Sovereign Grace is not contrary to the Gospel, but perfectly consonant therewith. God has a people whom no man shall number, whom He has ordained unto eternal life. This is, by no means, in conflict with the great declaration, "He that believes on Him is not condemned."

If any man who ever lived, or ever shall live, believes in Jesus Christ, he has eternal life! Election or no election, if you are resting upon the Rock of Ages you are saved. If you, as a guilty sinner, take the righteousness of Christ—if all black and foul and filthy you come to wash in the Fountain filled with blood—Sovereignty or no Sovereignty, rest assured of this, that you are redeemed from the wrath to come.

O my dear Friends, when you say, "I will not believe in Christ because of election," I can only say as Job did to his wife, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks." How dare you, because God reveals to you two things, which two things you cannot make square with one another—how dare you charge either the one or the other with being false? If I believe God, I am not only to believe what I can understand, but what I *cannot*

understand! And if there were a Revelation which I could comprehend and sum up as I may count five upon my fingers, I should be sure it did not come from God. But if it has some depths vastly too deep for me—some knots which I cannot untie—some mysteries which I cannot solve, then I receive it with greater confidence, because it now gives me swimming room for my *faith* and my soul bathes herself in the great sea of God's Wisdom, praying, "Lord, I believe; help You my unbelief."

Let it be said over and over again that there shall be no doubt about this matter. If there is any comfort derivable from the Gospel—if there is any sweet consolation flowing from the free invitations and the universal commands of Divine Truth—all those may be received and enjoyed by you, while you hold this doctrine of Divine Sovereignty as much as if you did not hold it and received some wider scheme.

I think I hear one voice say, "Sir, the only comfort I can ever have lies in the infinite value of the precious blood of Christ. O Sir, it seems to me such a sweet thing that there is no sinner so black that Christ cannot wash away his sins and no sinner so old that the meritorious virtue of that Atonement cannot meet his case—not one in any rank or in any condition whom that blood cannot cleanse from all sin. Now, Sir, if that is true, how can the doctrine of election be true?"

My dear Friend, you know in your own heart that the two things are not opposed to each other at all! For what does the doctrine of election say? It says that God has chosen and has saved some of the greatest sinners who ever lived. It says He has cleansed some of the foulest sins ever committed and that He is doing so now and will do the same to the world's end. So the two things exactly tally.

And I will venture to say that if in the fullness of a man's heart he shall say, "There is no sin except the one excepted sin, which cannot be forgiven." And if he boldly announces that, "All manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men." And if he shall plead with power and earnestness that souls would now come to Christ and lay hold upon eternal life, he may go back to his Bible and he may reread every text teaching the Sovereignty of God and every passage upholding Divine election—and he may feel that all these texts look him in the face and say, "Well done! Our spirit and your spirit are precisely the same! We have no conflict together—we are two great Truths which came from the same God—we are alike the Revelation of the Holy Spirit."

But we leave that point. If there is any comfort, Sinner, which you can truthfully and rightly get from any passage of Scripture, from any promise of God, from any invitation, from any open door of mercy, you may have it—for the doctrine of election does not rob you of one atom of the consolation which the Truth of God can afford you.

II. But now we will take another point for a moment. Our second head is that THIS DOCTRINE HAS A MOST SALUTARY EFFECT UPON SINNERS. These may be divided into two classes—those who are awakened and those who are hardened and incorrigible. To the awakened sinner, next to the doctrine of the Cross, this doctrine of distinguishing Grace is perhaps the most fraught with blessings and comfort. In the first place, the doctrine of election, applied by the Holy Spirit, strikes dead forever all

the efforts of the flesh. It is the end of Arminian preaching to make men active—to excite them to do what they can.

The very end and object of Gospel preaching is to make men feel that they have no power of their own and to lay them as dead, at the foot of God's Throne. We seek, under God, to make them feel that all their strength must lie in the Strong One who is mighty to save. If I can convince a man that, let him do what he may, he cannot save himself. If I can show him that his own prayers and tears can never save him apart from the Spirit of God. If I can convince him that he must be born again from above. If I lead him to see that all which is born of the flesh is flesh and only that which is born of the Spirit is spirit—Brethren three parts of the great battle are already won!

“I kill and I make alive,” says God—when a man is killed the work is half done. “I wound and I heal”—when a man is wounded his salvation is commenced. “What? Am I to set a sinner industriously to labor after eternal life by his own works? Then, indeed, I am an ambassador of Hell! Am I to teach him that there is a goodness in him which he is to evolve, to polish and educate and perfect and so to save himself? Then I am a teacher of the beggarly elements of the Law and not the Gospel of Christ! Are we to set forth man's prayers, repenting, and humbling as the way of salvation? If so, let us renounce the righteousness of Christ at once, for the two will never stand together!

I am a mischief maker if I excite the activities of the flesh instead of pointing to the arms of the Redeemer! But if the potent hammer of electing Sovereignty dashes out the brains of all a man's works, merits, doings and willings—while it pronounces over the dead carcass this sentence—“It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy”—then the best thing is done for a sinner that can be done as a steppingstone to the act of faith! When a man is weaned from self and totally delivered from looking to the flesh for help, there is hope for him—and the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty does this through the Holy Spirit's power.

Again, this doctrine gives the greatest hope to the really awakened sinner. You know how the case stands. We are all prisoners condemned to die. God, as Sovereign, has a right to pardon whom He pleases. Now imagine a number of us shut up in a condemned cell, all guilty. One of the murderers says within himself—“I know that I have no reason to expect to be delivered. I am not rich—if I had some rich relations, like George Townley, I might be found insane and delivered. But I am very poor. I am not educated. If I had the education of some men I might expect some consideration. I am not a man of rank and position. I am a man without merit or influence, therefore I cannot expect that I should be selected as one to be saved.”

I believe that if the present authorities of our land were the persons to be taken into consideration, a man who was poor might have a very poor chance of expecting any gratuitous deliverance. But when God is the great Sovereign, the case is different. For then we argue thus—“Here am I. My salvation depends entirely upon the will of God—is there a chance for me?” We take down a list of those whom He has saved and we find that He saves the poor, the illiterate, the wicked, the godless, and the worst of the

worst—the base things and things that are despised. Well, what do we say—“Then why may He not choose *me*? Why not save me?”

“If I had to look for some reason in myself why I should be saved, I shall never find any, and consequently never shall have a hope. But if I am to be saved for no reason at all but that God wills to save me, ah, then there is hope for me! I will approach the gracious King! I will do as He bids me—I will trust in His dear Son and I shall be saved.” So this doctrine opens the door of hope to the worst of the worst and the only persons it discourages are the Pharisees, who say—“Lord, I thank You that I am not as other men are.” Those proud, haughty spirits who say—“No! If I am not to be saved for something good in myself, then I will be damned!” And damned they will be, with a vengeance, too!

Moreover, do you not see, dear Friends, how the doctrine of election comforts the sinner in the matter of power? His complaint is, “I find I have no power to believe. I have no spiritual power of any kind.” Election stoops down and whispers in his ear—“But if God wills to save you, He *gives* the power, *gives* the life and *gives* the Grace. And therefore, since He has given that power and might to others as weak as you, why not to you? Have courage, look to the Cross of Christ and live.”

And oh, what emotions of gratitude, what throbbing of love does this doctrine cause in human hearts. “Why,” says the man, “I am saved simply because God would save me, not because I deserved it, but because His loving heart would save me! Then, I will love Him, I will live to Him, I will spend and be spent for Him.” Such a man cannot be proud, I mean not consistently with the doctrine. He lies humbly at God’s feet. Other men may boast of what they are and how they have won eternal life by their own goodness, but I cannot. If God had left me, I had been in Hell with others—and if I go to Heaven, I must cast my crown at the feet of the Grace which brought me there.

Such a man will become kind to others. He will hold his opinions, but he will not hold them savagely, nor teach them bitterly, because he will say, “If I have light and others have not, my light was given me from God, therefore I have no cause to plume myself upon it. I will try to spread that light but not by anger and abuse. For why should I blame those who cannot see? For could I have seen if God had not opened my blind eyes?” Every virtue this doctrine fosters and every vice it kills when the Holy Spirit so uses it. Pride it treads under foot! And humble, trustful confidence in the mercy of God in Christ it cherishes as a darling child.

My time is gone. But I wanted to have said a word as to the effect of this Gospel upon incorrigible sinners. I will just say this—I know what the effect of it *ought* to be. What do you say who have made up your minds not to repent, you who care not for God? Why, you believe that any day you like you can turn to God since God is merciful and will save you! And therefore you walk about the world as comfortably as possible, thinking it all depends upon *you* and that *you* will get into Heaven just at the eleventh hour.

Ah, Man, that is not your case! See where you are. Do you see that moth fluttering in my hand! Imagine it to be there! With this finger of mine I can crush it—in a moment. Whether it shall live or not depends absolutely upon whether I choose to crush it or let it go. That is precisely your

position at the present moment. God can damn you now. No, let us say to you, "Yours is a worse position than that."

There are some seven persons now doomed for murder and piracy on the high seas. You can clearly say that their lives depend upon Her Majesty's pleasure. If Her Majesty chooses to pardon them, she can. If not, when the fatal morning comes, the bolt will be drawn and they will be launched into eternity. That is your case, Sinner. You are condemned already! This world is but one huge condemned cell in which you are kept until the execution morning comes. If you are ever to be pardoned, God must do it. You cannot escape from Him by flight. You cannot bribe Him by actions of your own. You are absolutely in the hands of God and if He leaves you where you are, and as you are, your eternal ruin is as certain as your existence.

Now, does not this make some sort of trembling come upon you? Perhaps not. It makes you angry. Well, if it does, that will not frighten *me*, because there are some of you who will never be good for anything until you are angry. I believe it is no ill sign when some persons are angry with the Truth of God. It shows that the Truth has pierced them. If an arrow penetrates my flesh, I do not like the arrow. And if you kick and struggle against this Truth of God, it will not alarm me. I shall have some hope that a wound is made. If this Truth should provoke you to think, it will have done for some of you one of the greatest things in the world. It is not your perverse thinking which frightens me. It is the utterly thoughtless way in which you go on. If you had sense enough to consider these things and fight against them, I should then have some faint hope for you.

But alas, many of you have not said enough. You say, "Yes, yes, it is all true." You accept it, but then it has no effect upon you. The Gospel rolls over you like oil down a slab of marble and produces no effect. If you are at all right in heart you will begin to see what your state is and the next thing that will startle your mind will be the reflection—"Is it so? Am I absolutely in God's hands? Can He save me or damn me as He wills? Then I will cry to Him, "O God, save me from the wrath to come—from eternal torment—from banishment from Your Presence. Save me, O God! What would You have me to do? Oh, what would You have me to do, that I may find Your favor and live?"

Then comes the answer to you—"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved," for "whoever believes in Him shall never perish, but shall have eternal life." O that God might bless this Divine doctrine to you! I have never preached this doctrine without conversions and I believe I never shall. At this moment God will cause His Truth to attract your hearts to Jesus, or to frighten you to Him.

May you be drawn as the bird is drawn by the lure, or may you be driven as a dove is hunted by the hawk into the clefts of the rock. Only may you be sweetly compelled to come! May my Lord fulfill this desire of my heart! O that God may grant me your souls for my hire—and to Him shall be the glory, world without end! Amen.

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

THE TABERNACLE—OUTSIDE THE CAMP NO. 359

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 10, 1861,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.

***“And Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it outside the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that everyone which sought the LORD went out unto the Tabernacle of the congregation, which was outside the camp.”
Exodus 33:7.***

I HAVE been somewhat perplexed in studying this text, for according to the book of Exodus, the tabernacle—the tabernacle strictly so called—did not exist at the time to which it refers. In the succeeding chapters of this very book, we have an account of the gifts which were made by the people for the construction of that tabernacle, wherein God dwelt while the children of Israel abode in the wilderness. It seems to me, after looking at the various authorities upon the point and considering the opinions of those who have well studied it, that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt there may have been some large tent constantly pitched in the center of the camp which had no ark of the covenant in it and probably no altar.

The vessels and implements for the service of the sanctuary had not then been made. Not even had the pattern been seen by Moses in the holy mount. The people may be considered to have been at that time under the patriarchal dispensation which reaches on, if I understand Scripture aright, until the time of the giving of the Law and forty days beyond that really—for it was forty days after the giving of the Law before the ceremonies of Levitical worship were thoroughly established.

Moses was forty days in the mount receiving instruction as to how the future worship of God should be ordered. That worship had not then begun in all its glorious splendor—Aaron had not even been ordained a priest. The service of the Levitical dispensation awaited as yet those statutes and ordinances by which its observances were solemnly imposed. Previous to this, as I take it, there was a large tent in the center of the camp set apart for that worship which was common to patriarchal times—for prayer, praise and burnt sacrifices.

Here God dwelt in the midst of this tabernacle. He was in the center of His people. His cloud overshadowed them by day and kept off from their heads the burning heat. That cloud was like a luminous atmosphere above them by night, so that probably they could see by night as well as by day. God was in the midst of them—this was their glory and their boast. They had no strange God. The LORD Himself had made their camp the place for His feet and glorious, indeed, it was. But while Moses had ascended to the mountaintop, the people, who were an unspiritual race, wanted something that they could see. They wanted some visible personification of that spiritual God whom they were unable to worship unless

they confirm Him in type and figure. So they said unto Aaron, “Up, make us gods that shall go before us!” They broke off their earrings and they fashioned there a golden calf and they said, “Those be your Gods, O Israel, that brought you up out of the land of Egypt.”

I do not think that they meant to worship the calf, but they intended to worship Jehovah under the representation of a calf for it is expressly said in the Word, “Then they proclaimed a feast unto Jehovah,” which shows that even their dancing around the calf was but a human invention whereby they hoped to honor and to glorify Jehovah. But they vexed the Holy One unto anger and they grieved His Holy Spirit so that He went forth from the midst of them. He would not acknowledge the camp any more as being the place where He could dwell. A voice might have been heard in Heaven, “Let Us go from here.”

The holy God could not abide any longer in the central spot of a camp so defiled by sin. The pillar of cloud moved and Moses bade the proper officers lift up the sacred tent—they carried it up the side of the hill. Justice was about to take away from the people the presence of God, but Mercy stopped its march. Mercy seemed to say, “Though God cannot abide in the midst of the people, yet He will not go very far from them.”

So He stayed upon the hillside and there was the tabernacle pitched, afar off from the people, but not so far that they could know that God was there. Not so far but that they who “sought the Lord” might reach the tabernacle at an easy distance. This, I say was intended to teach the people that God did not recognize their camp as being any longer His dwelling place, because human invention had stained His worship and laid His honor in the dust.

What use are we to make of this very significant incident? Give heed, Brothers and Sisters, I beseech you. This is just the position, I take it, of God’s tabernacle at the present hour. They that seek the Lord must go out from the camp and from the congregation and if they would commune with the Most High they cannot do it in the camps of even the religious and professing world. They must, like the Master, go forth outside the camp bearing His reproach. The day *will* come in which we shall be able to have fellowship with God in the camp, when the tabernacle of the Lord shall be among men and He shall dwell *among* them.

But that time is not yet. *Now* His tabernacle is out of the camp and away from men. Those who would follow Him must be separate, must come out from the masses, must be distinct and set apart in order to be recognized as the sons and the daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

There are three points upon which I shall enlarge this morning. The first will be that *outside the camp* is the place for true seekers of God. Secondly, that this going forth *from the camp* will involve some considerable inconvenience. And thirdly, I shall earnestly exhort you, as God shall help me, *if you are seeking God*, to take care that you go *outside the camp* afar off from the camp according to His Word.

I. First, then, they that seek the Lord must, at this day, as in the time of the narrative we have just read, GO WITHOUT THE CAMP.

It is scarcely necessary for me to say that no man can be a true seeker of God who has anything to do with the camp of the *profane*. We must take care that our garments are entirely clean from those lusts of the flesh and those blasphemies of the ungodly. It will be impossible for you, O

Seeker, ever to have communion with God while you have fellowship with Belial. You can not go to the synagogue of Satan and to the synagogue of God at the same time. You will be an arrant fool if you shall attempt it. You will be mad if you shall persevere in the attempt. You will be something *more* than lost if you desire to be saved while you continue in so estranged a state.

God will not allow us to do as the old Saxon king did who set up his old gods in one part of the church and hung up the crucifix in another, hoping that by having two strings to his bow he might make sure to be safe. Other religions may be tolerant, but the religion of Christ knows no tolerance with regard to error. Before God's ark Dagon must fall. Dagon may be content for God's ark to stand, if he may stand, too—but the ark of God knows of nothing but an absolute supreme for itself and a total destruction of all other gods.

Either you must serve God or nothing. No compromise must be attempted. It will be considered as an audacious blasphemy of God. Come out, then, if you would be saved—come out from the herd of sinners, leave the godless and the Christless generation for in that camp there will be no possibility of fellowship with God.

Again—we must as much come out from the camp of the *careless* as from the camp of the profane. The largest company in the world is not that of the profane, but of the thoughtless—not those who *oppose*, but those who *neglect* the great salvation. For every man who is openly an antagonist of Truth there are probably a thousand men who care neither for Truth nor error. The Sadducees still remain a very numerous body—men who are content to live as they like, holding really and secretly within them certain evil thoughts, but still willing to go with the crowd and to be numbered with the followers of Christ.

Ah, if you would see the face of God, my Hearer, then come out from among the giddy, thoughtless throng. It is not possible for you to worship Him who bore the Cross while you shall be mingling in the amusements of the world and toying with the charms of the flesh. Come out from among them—be not numbered with them—let your conduct and conversation distinguish you at once from them. Let it be seen that you also were with Jesus of Nazareth. Let none mistake you for a mere bystander, a simple looker on, but let all know that you are one of His disciples because your speech betrays you. Oh, I do again repeat it—let none think that in the camp of the negligent, the thoughtless, those who count it enough to be moral before man, but who never think of God—let none think that salvation is to be found *there*.

But we must go further than this—if a man would have fellowship with God he must go even out of the camp of the *merely steady, sedate and thoughtful*. For there are multitudes whose thoughts are not God's thoughts and whose ways are not His ways who are in every respect conformed outwardly to the Laws of God. They rigidly observe the customs of upright society—they *think* and therefore abhor the trifles of the world—they sit down and meditate and therefore understand the hollowness of this present life, but who, notwithstanding, have never learned to set their affections on things *above*. Though they are not so foolish as to think that the shadows of this world are a substance, yet have they never sought eternal realities.

You must come out from these, for except your righteousness exceed theirs you shall not be saved. Unless there shall be something more in you than in the merely steady, respectable and outwardly moral you shall never know the peace-speaking blood of Christ, nor enter into the “rest which remains for the people of God.” Up! Get away from them. It is not enough to leave the Amalekites—you must leave even the hosts of Moab—brother though Moab may seem to be to the Israel of God.

We must draw yet another line, more marked and distinct than this. He that would know anything of God aright must even come out of the camp of the *merely religious*. See them—how they go to their church. What for? Frequently to show their finery and often to be seen of their friends. See many as they go to chapel. And what for? It is their custom. It is their habit. They sing as God’s people sing. They appear to take a holy delight in the worship of the Most High. They bow as God’s people bow when they pray—they do more—they sit at the Lord’s Table and appear to know somewhat of the joy which that ordinance affords. They come to baptism, they pass through the stream and yet in how many cases they have a name to live and are dead?

Oh, it is one thing to attend to religion, but another thing to be in Christ Jesus. It is one thing to have the name upon the church rolls but quite another thing to have it written in the Lamb’s Book of Life. There is not a church under Heaven that is quite pure. With all our care, with all our industry and watchfulness, we cannot prevent the sad fact. Hypocrites will mingle with the sincere and the tares will be sown with the wheat. So I suppose it must be till the reapers come and gather the tares in bundles to burn. I pray you let none of you think that you have taken out a patent for Heaven when you have made a profession of your faith in Christ. That profession may be a lie. The conduct which springs from it may be but the result of custom.

Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh.” And only “that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Do you believe that one-tenth of the religion you see about you is sincere? What do we say, then, to the fact that when investigation has been made as to articles sold at shops there is scarcely a single article in any trade which is not found to be adulterated. Why is this? If it were only some men who did this and they were notorious, we might flatter ourselves that Christians are surely clear. But what if it grows into a custom!

When the fact comes out that in the most cases our articles of food are shamefully mixed and that with poisonous ingredients in some instances, what are we to say? Can that religion which spreads over London—which seems to be adopted by almost everybody—can that be sound while it allows this thing to go on under its cover? And have you not remarked the course of business? How often you must have noticed “astounding failures,” and that, too, of men professedly religious. How do you sometimes see the most shameful fraudulent bankruptcies and these are perpetrated by men who have occupied your pews and listened to your ministry.

What does this teach us but that there is more glitter than there is gold and that there may be much varnish and much paint where there is but little of the sound material of grace. Oh, Sirs, if half the religion of England were true religion, we should not be such a people as we now are.

Give us but one man out of three of those who profess to be followers of Christ, sincerely His and thoroughly His and how changed would this empire become and what a different face would all the commercial relations of life bear to the eyes even of outward observers! There is, it must be confessed, much delusion. I believe there is more sound godliness in England than ever there was since she was a nation—but yet as in the rolling of every chariot there is a cloud of dust so is there mixed up with the advance of the Savior's kingdom that rolling cloud of dust—hypocrisy and vain pretense.

Let us take heed to ourselves, then, that we go forth outside the camp, that we are distinguished and separated, not merely from the irreligious, but from the religious, too—that we are as separate even from the nominal church as we are from that people who profess not to know the Lord and are therefore cursed.

Here I am stopped by the question, But in what respect is a Christian to come out from all these and more especially to come out from the mere professors? I will tell you, Brethren. There is occasion enough just now for the watchman to sound the notes of warning in your ears. The reasons why the nominal Church at the present time is not the place where the tabernacle is pitched is that the Church has adulterated the worship of God by the addition of *human ceremonies*. I shall not stay to indicate them, but I believe there is a great proportion of the worship of Christians in these days which is not warranted by the Word of God. We have made an advance beyond its plain letter and have added to the pure Word of God inventions of our own.

In coming out from the Church we must leave all ceremonies behind us which are not absolutely taught in the Scriptures. We must shake our garments of every performance, however fair and admirable it may look, unless it has strictly the letter of Divine inspiration to warrant it. Having done this in a Church capacity, we must then come out from all the doctrines of the church which are not strictly Scriptural. We must leave behind us the dogmas of our creeds, if the creeds are not consistent with the Word of God.

We must dare to bear our testimony against all false teaching. We must take care that we share none of the blame of those men who keep back a part of God's Word and therefore mar their ministry and spoil its effect upon their hearers. We must come out from all the practices of the Church which are not in accordance with God's Word. We must never plead the precedent of godly men for any act or thought which God Himself has not enjoined. Come right out. You have nothing to do with what even a Christian man might tolerate. You are to come straight out from the camp and taking heed that you swerve not to the right hand or to the left, "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes."

Take care, too, that you are not actuated by the motives of the nominal Christian. Many nominal Christians have, as the motives of their lives, the maintaining of appearance—the keeping up of the respectable sham of godliness. Your conversation must be in Heaven, your motive must be derived from Heaven and your life must be, not in profession, but in reality, "a life of faith upon the Son of God who loved you and gave Himself for you." In conclusion, if you would have true fellowship with Christ you must come out from the camp and be devoted—your whole spirit, soul

and body—in the Lord’s strength entirely, perpetually and continually to His service.

You must say what many say with the lip, but what few can really feel in the heart, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Nothing short of this will be a true coming out of the camp. Nothing but this will give you that near and intimate relationship and communion with God after which every believer’s soul is panting and without which it cannot find repose.

II. Having thus tried briefly to describe the Truth that outside of the camp is the place for seekers of God, I shall now take the second point—THIS GOING OUT OF THE CAMP WILL INVOLVE MUCH INCONVENIENCE.

Some try to get over the inconvenience in the way Joshua did. They think they will come out of the camp altogether and live in the tabernacle and then there will be no difficulty. You know there are many pious minds, a little over-heated with imagination who think that if they never mixed with the world they could be holy. No doubt they would like to have a building erected in which they could live and pray and sing all day and never go to business, nor have anything at all to do with buying and selling. Thus they think by going outside the camp they should become the people of God.

In this, however, they mistake the object of the Christian religion—“I pray not that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the Evil One.” That were an easy, lazy subterfuge for getting rid of the hard task of having to fight for Christ—to go out of the battle in order that you may win the victory is a strange method indeed of seeking to come off “more than conquerors!”

No, no, we must be prepared like Moses to go *into* the camp and to come *out* of it—always to come out of it when we seek fellowship with God—but still to be in it, to be mixed up with it, to be in the midst of it doing the common acts of man and yet never being tainted by its infection. And never having the spirit troubled by that will and evil which is so rampant there. I counsel you, not that you should come out of the *world*, but that being in it you should be so distinctly not of it that all men may see that you worship the Father outside the camp of their common association and their carnal worship.

This will involve many inconveniences. One stands on the outset. *You will find that your diffidence and your modesty will sometimes shrink from the performance of duty’s stern commands.* If you follow Christ you must confess Him. The Master desires to have no *secret* disciples. If Christ is worth anything, He is worth confessing boldly before the world, before angels and before devils. “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My Words in this adulterous and pitiful generation; of Him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

You must be able to say distinctly, I am not ashamed to avow that my heart is given to Jesus the Crucified. As He espoused my cause publicly before a gazing world, so I espouse His. His Cross have I taken, all else to leave, if it is necessary that I may follow Him. He is my Lord—to Him I will submit. He is my Trust. On Him I lean. He is my Hope—for Him I look.” Do not try the plan which some are attempting—of being Christians in the dark. Put on Christ. You know how the promise is made, “He that believes

and is baptized shall be saved.” Do not shrink from the second part of the command. If you have believed, profess your faith in baptism. Be not ashamed of your Lord and Master. Know you not that the Lord has said, “He that with his heart believes and with his mouth confesses, shall be saved.”

You must make a public confession. I know there is no merit in the *confession* but still, is it not right?—is it not reasonable? How can you expect the blessing of God if you do not *what* Christ tells you and do it not *as* Christ tells you? Come out, wear His badge, bear His name and say to the sons of men, “Let others do as they will, as for me and my house, we will, we must serve the Lord.”

When you have got over that difficulty. When your reserve has given place to a good confession and you appear upon the stage of action, you will find that then your trouble really begins. Perhaps when you go outside the camp *you will lose some of your best friends*. Perhaps your mother may say she would not mind your serving Christ, but she wishes that you belonged to her denomination, while you feel that if you serve Christ at all you must go just where He would have you go and carry out to the letter all His will.

Some of your dearest companions may say. “Well, if you turn religious, certainly our acquaintance must cease, we should never agree and therefore we had better part.” And some with whom you have to live will day after day put you to a sort of martyrdom before a slow fire by giving you the trial of cruel mockings. You will find that many a tie has to be cut when your soul is bound with cords to the horns of the altar. Can you do it? As Christ left His Father for you, can you leave all for Him? Do you know that text and is it terrible to you—“If a man love father and mother more than Me he is not worthy of Me and if a man love son or daughter more than Me he is not worthy of Me”?

Are you ready to carry out your convictions, come what may? Should you turn back, would that be to rely upon the promise which David uttered—“When my father and mother forsake me then the Lord shall take me up”? You are not fit to be a disciple of Christ if you cannot take the like of this into the cost of following your Savior and estimate it as a light affliction compared with the eternal weight of glory which shall be given to them who faithfully serve Him and fully avow themselves His when others would turn them aside.

You will find, too, when you go outside the camp, *you will have some even professedly godly people against you*. It is one of the sorest trials that I know of in the Christian life to have godly men themselves censure you. “Ah,” they will say, when you are filled with the Spirit and are anxious to serve God as Caleb did, with all your heart—“Ah, young man, that is fanaticism and it will grow cool by-and-bye.” When you are called to some good work for your fellow men they will tell you, “That is too bold a deed, too daring an act of enthusiasm.” To say—“Whether any will follow me or not, here I go straight to battle and to victory”—this is the prowess of faith and Christ requires it of every one of you.

The godly will follow you by-and-by, when you succeed, but you must be prepared to go without them sometimes. Look at young David. He knows that he is called to fight with Goliath, but his brothers say, “Because of your pride and the naughtiness of your heart to see the battle are

you come.” But David cares not. He brings back the bloody head of the giant and there is his refutation of their slander. You do the same. Be prepared to meet with cold-hearted Christians.

You will have to stand alone and bear their sneer as well as the sneer of the world. You will have to endure their “judicious” remarks and bear their sage cautions and their serious suggestions against your being too bold and too hot. Let none of these things dismay you. Do your Master’s will and do it thoroughly. Go the whole way with your Lord and Master and you shall come to be had in reverence of them that sit at meat with you.

There is another inconvenience to which you will most surely be exposed, namely, *that you will be falsely charged*. Some will say, “You make too much of non-essentials.” That is a thing I frequently hear—*non-essentials!* There are certain things in Scripture, they tell us, that are *non-essentials* and therefore they are not to be taken any notice of. Doctrinal views and the baptism of believers, for instance—these are non-essential to salvation and therefore is the inference which follows according to the theory of some—we may be very careless about them. Do you know, Believer in Christ, that you are a servant? And what would you think if a servant should first wittingly neglect her duty and then come to you and tell you that it is non-essential?

If she should not light the fire tomorrow morning and when you came down, she were to say, “Well, Sir, it is non-essential. You won’t die though the fire is not lit”—or if, when she spread the breakfast, there was no provision there but a crust of bread and nothing for you to drink. What if she should say, “Well, Sir, it is non-essential, you know? There is a glass of water for you and a piece of bread—the rest is non-essential.” If you came home and found that the rooms had never been swept and the dust was upon them, or that the bed had not been made and that you could not take an easy nights rest and the servant should say, “Oh, it is non-essential, Sir, it is quite non-essential.” I think you would find it to be non-essential for you to keep her any longer, but extremely essential that you should discharge her.

And what shall we say of those men who put aside the words of Christ and say, “His precepts are quite non-essential”? Why, methinks because they are non-essential, they therefore become the test of your obedience. If you could be saved by them and if they were necessary to your salvation, your selfishness would lead you to observe them. But inasmuch as they are not necessary to your salvation they become tests of your willingness to obey Christ.

If the Lord had left a record in His Word—“He that believes and picks up a pebble stone shall be saved,” I dare not neglect to pick up the pebble stone. And if I found that in Holy Scripture there were doctrines even of less value than the great points of our Christian religion, I should still think it were my duty to bow my judgment and to turn any intellect to the reception of God’s Truth just as God sent it forth. That idea about non-essentials is wicked and rebellious. Cast it from you. Go outside the camp. Be particular in every point. To the tiniest jot and tittle seek to obey your Master’s will and seek His grace that you may walk in the way of His Commandments with a perfect heart.

But then, if you do walk according to this rule, others will say, “*You are so bigoted.*” Thus reply to them—“I am very bigoted over myself but I never claim any authority over you. To your own Master *you* stand or fall and *I* do the same.” If it is bigotry to hold decisive views about God’s Truth and to be obedient in every particular, as far as God the Spirit has taught me—if that is bigotry—all hail bigotry!—Most hallowed thing! The thing called bigotry is that which inclines one man to bind another’s conscience. The duty of all men is truly the same. But then I must not make my conscience the standard for another. It must be the standard for *myself* and *I* am not to violate it—“He that knows his Master’s will and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.”

Take heed, therefore, that you do His will when you know it. But if another, not knowing His will, should reprove you, be ready to give an answer to him that speaks to you with meekness. But be not harsh with any man. *You* are not his master. Be not stern with those who differ from you, for you are not made the judge of mankind. You are not arbiter of right and wrong. Leave others to be as conscientious as yourself and believe that a Christian man, though he may differ from you, is as much sincere in his difference as you are in your dissent from him. Yet be careful that no unhallowed charity compel you to lay down the weapons of your warfare.

Be careful that Satan does not deceive you and make you charitable to yourself. Be charitable towards every other man, but never to yourself. Forgive every other man the injuries that he does, but forgive not yourself. Weep, lament and sigh before God and so may He always help you thus to go forth outside the camp.

With one other remark I will leave this point about the inconveniences. If you follow Christ and come outside the camp, *you must expect to be watched.* I have frequently noticed that when a member of our Church does anything wrong, people will say, “There is your religion—a horrible thing!” If a person who scrupulously goes to church but swears, nobody thinks anything of it. But if he is a Dissenter—“Oh, it is horrible!” Well, so it is, I admit. But it shows that people expect those who dissent to be better than those who do not. I only wish their expectation could always be fulfilled.

If you profess to go outside the camp, others will look for something extra in you—mind that they are not disappointed. They *ought* to expect it and I am glad they do expect it. I have heard some say, “I do not want to join the church because then there would be so much expected of me.” Just so and that is the very reason why you should—because their expectation will be a sort of sacred clog to you when you are tempted and may help to give impetus to your character and carefulness to your walk—when you know that you are looked upon by the eyes of men.

I wish to have the members of this Church carefully watched by the ungodly. If you catch them tripping, notice it. If you see them going into sin, let it be spoken of. God forbid we should wish to conceal it. Let it come out. If we are not what we profess to be, the sooner we are unmasked the better. Only do judge us fairly. Do judge the life of a professing Christian honestly. Do not expect perfection of him. He does not profess to be perfect. But he does desire try keep his Master’s Law and to do to others as he would they should do to him.

We would not say to the world, "Shut your eyes." The eyes of the world are intended to be checks upon the Church. The world is the black dog that wakes up Christ's slumbering sheep—yes, and sometimes hunts them into the fold when otherwise they would be wandering upon the mountains. Expect to be watched, Christian. In the day when you say, "I will go outside the camp to follow Christ," expect to be misrepresented. Expect that the dogs of this world will bark at you.

They always bark at a stranger and if you are a stranger and a foreigner, they must bark at you. Expect, too, that they will watch your little slips and let that be a check to you and make you pray each moment, "Lord, hold me up and I shall be safe." I would that there could be trained in all our churches and places of worship a race of men who would be really distinct—as much distinct from the professing church at large as that church is from the ungodly world itself.

III. Now I come to use certain arguments by which I desire **EARNESTLY TO PERSUADE EACH CHRISTIAN HERE TO GO WITHOUT THE CAMP, TO BE EXACT IN HIS OBEDIENCE AND TO BE PRECISE IN HIS FOLLOWING THE LAMB WHEREVER HE GOES.**

I use first a selfish argument—it is to *do it for your own comfort's sake*. If a Christian can be saved while he conforms to this world, at any rate he will be saved so as by fire. Would you like to go to Heaven in the dark and enter there as a shipwrecked mariner climbs the rocks of his native country? Then be worldly, be mixed up with the people and remain in the camp. But would you have a Heaven below as well as a Heaven above? Would you comprehend with all saints what are the heights and depths and know the love of Christ which passes knowledge?

And would you have an abundant entrance into the joy of your Lord? Then come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing. There are many professors and I trust they are true Christians, too, who are very unhappy and generally it is because they are worldly Christians. Oh, We have some members of our church, I trust they are saved, but you know they are as money-getting and as money-keeping as any men whose portion is in this life. They seem to give as much of their whole force to the world as ever a worldling can and then they wonder why they are not happy.

Why, they have laid up much of their treasure on earth and the moth has got at it and the rust has corrupted it and what wonder? Had they put their treasure wholly in Heaven no moth or rust would ever have consumed it. It is our unspiritual heart that makes our misery. If we were more Christ-like we should have more of Christ's Presence and more of that peace of God which passes understanding. For your own comfort's sake, if you are a Christian, be a Christian and be a marked and distinct one—distinct even from the church at large itself.

But I have a better reason than that and it is for *your own growth in grace do it*. If you would have much faith, you cannot have much faith while you are mixed with sinners. If you would have much love, your love cannot grow while you mingle with the ungodly. You may be a babe in grace but you never can be a perfect man in Christ Jesus while you have anything to do with the worldly maxims and business and cares of this life. I do not mean while you have to do with them in a right way, but while you mix yourself up with them and are operated upon by them so as

to turn aside from that straight line in which it is the Christian's duty to walk.

Little stones in the shoe make a traveler's walk very uncomfortable and some of these little practices and *little sins*, as some call them, will make your path to Heaven very unhappy. You will very seldom be able to *run* in God's ways—you will be a mere creeper. It will be a long while before you will bear the image of Him that created you. You will be a marred vessel—perhaps a vessel meant for hollow—but marred upon the wheel notwithstanding that by your mixing up with the customs of the world and going with the worldly church and with the multitude to do evil.

But let me put it to you in another way. I beseech you Christian men and women, come right out and be your Master's soldiers wholly *for the Church's sake*. It is the few men in the Church and those who have been distinct from her, who have saved the Church in all times. Who saved the Church in the days of the Reformation? It was not the good men who were in the midst of the Church of Rome. There were very many humble curates in villages and priest here and there who were doing their best, I believe, to teach the Truth of God. But these men never saved the Church of Christ. She would have gone to ruin for all they did for her.

It was Luther and Calvin and Zwingle who came right out and said, "No, we will have nothing to do with anti-Christ." Who saved the Church a hundred years ago? Why, I dare to say, it was not those excellent men who in their own places of worship were pursuing their holy calling. But it was those who were first called Methodists—Whitfield and Wesley—the men who said, "This cold age will never do. In this absence of the Spirit of God there can never be a time of blessing to the Church." It was men looked upon as fanatics, enthusiasts and heretics—who ought to be excommunicated. They came right out as distinct men, as if they were the particular stars of the sky and they alone cleft the darkness.

So must it be with us. There must be some among us who care nothing for this world—who dash worldly laws and customs to the ground and in the name of God and His Church—and in Truth are prepared—though we may be embarrassed and hindered by what is called public opinion—to defy public opinion and do the right and the true, come what may. And you, too, in your *life* must do what God's ministers must do both with *tongue* and *life*. If the Church is to be saved, it is not by men *in* her, but by the men who seem to go out even from her to bear Christ's reproach and do Him service outside the camp.

And *for the world's sake* let me beg you to do this. Let the Church become more and more adulterated with worldliness. Let her Christians become more and more conformed to the world. Let her lords be cowed down under the bondage and tyranny of worldliness and what will the Church be worth and what will the world do? Her salt will have lost its savor and then the world must rot and putrefy. The Church itself can never be the salt of the world unless there are some particular men who are the salt of the Church. Do you then come out. Be singularly exact in your obedience to Christ, be scrupulously observant of all that He commands. Be you distinct from the professing world and so shall you bless the world through the Church.

And now lastly, *for your Master's sake*. What have you and I to do in the camp when He was driven from it? What have we to do with hosannas

when He was followed with hootings, “Crucify Him, crucify Him”? What have I to do in the tent while my Captain lies in the open battlefield? What have we to do to dwell in our ceiled houses and to be peaceful and to have the smile of men, while Jesus is hounded to His death and nailed to the accursed tree?

By the wounds of Christ, Christian, I beseech you mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. By Him who came unto His own and His own received Him not, expect not to be received even by your own. By Him who was the Heir and of whom they said “Let us kill Him,” I pray you expect the like treatment from the same world. “Shall the servant be above his Master, or the disciple above his Lord?” If they call the Master of the house Beelzebub, what should they say of the servant? Are you prepared for silken ease when your Master fought to win the crown? Did He die to *save* you and will you not be willing to die to *serve* Him?

Again I ask it—what have you to do with making love to that world which put Him to death? Dare you hold a parley with the enemy against whom you are sworn to fight? What? Will you be craven enough to ask for peace at the hands of the foe who has reddened himself with Jesus’ blood? In the name of God and of His Son cast down your gauntlet, draw your sword and throw away its scabbard. The world was never friends with the man that was a friend to Christ. You can not possibly have its friendship and smile and have the fellowship and smile of God, too.

Make your selection, Christian. Make your choice now. Which shall it be—the world or Christ? It cannot be both. Which will you have? Will you be called a right good man, or will you be hissed and pointed at? Will you wear a fool’s cap and a fool’s coat and go to Heaven, or wear a wise man’s gown and go to Hell? Will you wear a thorny crown to be saved, or a golden crown and be lost? Make your choice, Christians, for one of these two things it must come to.

God help us now to say, in the name of Him by whose merit and blood we have been saved—“I do this day take Christ to be my Lord and come fair or foul—

***“Through goods and flames, if Jesus lead,
I’ll follow where He goes.”***

So be it. So be it, for Christ’s sake—that while saved by faith in Jesus—we may *prove* our faith by never shrinking from the trial which that faith necessarily involves. The Lord bless you, for Jesus’ sake.

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

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

A JEALOUS GOD

NO. 502

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 29, 1863,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”
Exodus 34:14.***

THE passion of jealousy in man is usually exercised in an evil manner, but it is not in itself necessarily sinful. A man may be zealously cautious of his honor and suspiciously vigilant over another, without deserving blame. All thoughtful persons will agree that there is such a thing as virtuous jealousy. Self-love is, no doubt, the usual foundation of human jealousy, and it may be that Shenstone is right in his definition of it as, “the apprehension of superiority”—the fear lest another should by any means supplant us.

Yet the word “*jealous*” is so near akin to that noble word, “*zealous*,” that I am persuaded it must have something good in it. Certainly we learn from Scripture that there is such a thing as a godly jealousy. We find the Apostle Paul declaring to the Corinthian Church, “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” He had an earnest, cautious, anxious concern for their holiness, that the Lord Jesus might be honored in their lives.

Let it be remembered, then, that jealousy, like anger, is not evil in itself, or it could never be ascribed to God. His jealousy is ever a pure and holy flame. The passion of jealousy possesses an intense force. It fires the whole nature, its coals are juniper, which have a most vehement flame. It resides in the lowest depths of the heart, and takes so firm a hold that it remains most deeply rooted until the exciting cause is removed. It wells up from the inmost recesses of the nature, and like a torrent, irresistibly sweeps all before it.

Jealously stops at nothing, for it is cruel as the grave (Song. 8:6). It provokes wrath to the utmost, for it is the rage of a man, therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance (Pro. 6:34). It overthrows everything in the pursuit of its enemy, for, “wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous. But who is able to stand before jealousy?” For all these reasons jealousy is selected as some faint picture of that tender regard which God has for His own Deity, honor and supremacy—and the holy indignation which He feels towards those who violate His Laws, offend His majesty, or impeach His Character.

Not that God is jealous so as to bring Him down to the likeness of men, but that this is the nearest idea we can form of what the Divine Being feels. If it is right to use even that word toward Him—when He beholds His Throne occupied by false gods, His dignity insulted, and His glory usurped

by others—we cannot speak of God except by using figures drawn from His works, or our own emotions. We ought, however, when we use the images, to caution ourselves, and those who listen to us, against the idea that the Infinite mind is really to be compassed and described by any metaphors however lofty, or language however weighty.

We might not have ventured to use the word, “jealousy,” in connection with the Most High, but as we find it so many times in Scripture, let us, with solemn awe, survey this mysterious display of the Divine mind. Methinks I hear the thundering words of Nahum, “God is jealous, and the Lord revenges, the Lord revenges and is furious. the Lord will take vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies.” My Soul, be humbled before the Lord, and tremble at His name!

I. Reverently, let us remember that the LORD IS EXCEEDINGLY JEALOUS OF HIS DEITY.

Our text is coupled with the command—“You shall worship no other God.” When the Law was thundered from Sinai, the Second Commandment received force from the Divine jealousy—“You shall not make unto you any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down yourself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord your God am a jealous God.”

Since He is the only God, the Creator of Heaven and earth, He cannot endure that any creature of His own hands, or fiction of a *creature’s* imagination, should be thrust into His Throne and be made to wear His crown. In Ezekiel we find the false god described as, “the image of jealousy which provokes to jealousy.” and the doom on Jerusalem for thus turning from Jehovah runs thus, “My eyes shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head.”

False gods patiently endure the existence of other false gods. Dagon can stand with Bel, and Bel with Ashtaroth—how should stone and wood and silver be moved to indignation? But because God is the only living and true God, Dagon must fall before His Ark. Bel must be broken, and Ashtaroth must be consumed with fire. Thus says the Lord, “You shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.” The idols He shall utterly abolish.

My Brothers and Sisters, do you marvel at this? I felt in my own soul, while meditating upon this matter, an intense sympathy with God. Can you put yourselves in God’s place for a moment? Suppose that you had made the heavens and the earth, and all the creatures that inhabit this round globe. How would you feel if those creatures should set up an image of wood, or brass, or gold, and cry, “These are the gods that made us. These things give us life”?

What? A dead piece of earth set up in rivalry with real Deity! What must be the Lord’s indignation against infatuated rebels when they so far despise Him as to set up a leek, or an onion, or a beetle, or a frog—preferring to worship the fruit of their own gardens, or the vermin of their muddy rivers—rather than acknowledge the God in whose hands their

breath is, and whose are all their ways? Oh, it is a marvel that God has not dashed the world to pieces with thunderbolts, when we recollect that even to this day millions of men have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things!

With what unutterable contempt must the living God look down upon those idols which are the work of man's hands—"They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat." God has long-suffering toward men, and He patiently endures this madness of rebellion.

But, oh, what patience must it be which can restrain the fury of His jealousy, for He is a jealous God and brooks no rival! It was Divine jealousy which moved the Lord to bring all His plagues on Egypt. Careful reading will show you that those wonders were all aimed at the *gods* of Egypt. The people were tormented by the very things which they had made to be their deities, or else, as in the case of the cattle, their sacred animals were, themselves, smitten, even as the Lord had threatened—"Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Jehovah."

Was it not the same with ancient Israel? Why were they routed before their enemies? Why was their land so often invaded? Why did famine follow pestilence, and war succeed to famine? Only because, "they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, He was furious, and greatly abhorred Israel." (Psa. 78:58, 59).

How was it that at the last the Lord gave up Jerusalem to the flames and bade the Chaldeans carry into captivity the remnant of His people? How was it that He abhorred His heritage and gave up Mount Zion to be trod under foot by the Gentiles? Did not Jeremiah tell them plainly that because they had walked after other gods, and forsaken Jehovah, therefore He would cast them out into a land which they knew not?

Brethren, the whole history of the human race is a record of the wars of the Lord against idolatry. The right hand of the Lord has dashed in pieces the Enemy, and cast the ancient idols to the ground. Behold the heaps of Nineveh! Search for the desolations of Babylon! Look upon the broken temples of Greece! See the ruins of pagan Rome! Journey where you will, you behold the dilapidated temples of the gods, and the ruined empires of their foolish votaries. The moles and the bats have covered with forgetfulness the once famous deities of Chaldea and Assyria. The Lord has made bare His arm and eased Him of His adversaries, for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

With what indignation, then, must the Lord look down upon that apostate harlot called *the Roman Catholic Church*, when, in all her sanctuaries, there are pictures and images, relics and altars—and poor infatuated beings are even taught to bow before a piece of bread in this country! Popish idolatry is not so barefaced and naked as it is in other lands, but I have

seen it, and my soul has been moved with indignation like that of Paul on Mars' Hill, when he saw the city wholly succumbed to idolatry.

I have seen thousands adore the wafer, hundreds bow before the image of the Virgin, scores at prayer before a crucifix, and companies of men and women adoring a rotten bone or a rusty nail, because it is said to be the relic of a saint! It is vain for the Roman Catholic to assert that he worships not the things, themselves, but only the Lord *through* them, for this, the Second Commandment expressly forbids—and it is upon this point that the Lord calls himself a jealous God.

How full is that cup which Babylon must drink! The day is hastening when the Lord shall avenge Himself upon her, because her iniquities have reached unto Heaven, and she has blasphemously exalted her Pope into the throne of the Host on High, and thrust her priests into the office of the Lamb. Purge yourselves, purge yourselves of this leaven! I charge you before God, the Judge of the quick and the dead, if you would not be partakers of her plagues, come out from her more and more and let your protest be increasingly vehement against this which exalts itself above all that is called God.

Let our Protestant Churches, which have too great a savor of Popery in them, cleanse themselves of her fornications, lest the Lord visit them with fire and pour the plagues of Babylon upon them! Renounce, my Brothers and Sisters, every ceremony which has not Scripture for its warrant, and every doctrine which is not established by the plain testimony of the Word of God. Let us, above all, never, by any sign, or word, or deed, have any complicity with this communion of devils, this gathering together of the sons of Baal. And since our God is a jealous God, let us not provoke Him by any affinity, gentleness, fellowship, or amity with this Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth.

With what jealousy must the Lord regard the *great mass of the people of this country*, who have another God beside Himself! With what indignation does He look upon many of you who are subject to the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world! To you, Jehovah is nothing. God is not in all your thoughts. You have no fear of Him before your eyes. Like the men of Israel, you have set up your idols in *your heart*. Your god is custom, fashion, business, pleasure, ambition, honor. You have made unto yourselves gods of these things. You have said, "These are your gods, O Israel."

You follow after the things which perish, the things of this world which are vanity. O you sons of men, think not that God is blind! He can perceive the idols in your hearts. He understands the secret things that your souls lust after. He searches your heart, He tries your reins—beware lest He find you sacrificing to strange gods—for His anger will smoke against you, and His jealousy will be stirred. O you that worship not God, the God of Israel, who give Him not dominion over your whole soul, and live not to His honor, repent of your idolatry! Seek mercy through the blood of Jesus, and provoke not the Lord to jealousy any more.

Even *Believers* may be reproved on this subject. God is very jealous of His Deity in the hearts of His own people. Mother, what will He say of you,

if that darling child occupies a more prominent place in your love than your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Husband, what shall He say to you, and with what stripes shall He smite you, when your wife reigns as a goddess in your spirit? And wife, you should love your husband—you do well in so doing. But if you exalt him above God, if you make him to have dominion over your conscience, and are willing to forsake your Lord to please him—then you have made to yourself another god—and God is jealous with you.

Yes, and we may thus provoke Him with the dead as well as with the living. A grief carried to excess. A grief nurtured until it prevents our attention to duty. A grief which makes us murmur and repine against the will of Providence—is sheer rebellion. It has in it the very spirit of idolatry—it will provoke the Lord to anger. And He will surely chasten yet again, until our spirit becomes resigned to His rod. “Have you not forgiven God yet?” was the language of an old Quaker when he saw a widow, who for *years* had worn her weeds, and was inconsolable in her grief—“Have you not forgiven God yet?”

We may weep under bereavements, for Jesus wept. But we must not sorrow so as to provoke the Lord to anger. We must not act as if our friends were more precious to us than our God. We are permitted to take solace in each other, but when we carry love to idolatry, and put the creature into the Creator’s place—and rebel and fret, and bitterly repine—then the Lord has a rod in His hand and He will make us feel its weight, for He is a jealous God. I fear there are some professors who put their house, their garden, their business, their skill—I know not what else—at seasons into the place of God.

It is not consistent with the life of godliness for a man to be perpetually an idolater, but even true Believers will sometimes be overcome with this sin, and will have to mourn over it. Brethren, set up no images of jealousy, but like Jacob of old, cry to yourselves, and to your families, “Put away the strange gods that are among you and be clean.”

Let me warn those of you who neglect this—If you are the Lord’s people, you shall soon smart for it—and the sooner the better—for your own salvation. While, on the other hand, to those ungodly persons who continue to live for *objects* other than Divine, let me say—You not only will suffer in this life by bitter disappointments, but you shall also suffer eternal wrath in the life to come.

Come, let me push this matter home upon your consciences. Let me carry this as a point of the bayonet. Why, my Hearers, there are some of you who never worship God! I know you go up to His house, but then it is only to be seen, or to quiet your conscience by having done your duty. How many of you merchants aim only to accumulate a fortune? How many of you tradesmen are living only for your families? How many young men breathe only for pleasure? How many young women exist only for amusement and vanity?

I fear that some among you make your belly your god and bow down to your own personal charms or comforts. Talk of idolaters! They are here

today! If we desire to preach to those who break the First and Second Commandments, we have no need to go to India, or traverse the plains of Africa. They are here. Unto you who bow not before the Lord, let these words be given, and let them ring in your ears—"The Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." Who shall stand before Him when once He is angry?

When His jealousy burns like fire and smokes like a furnace, who shall endure the day of His wrath? Beware, lest He tear you into pieces and there be none to deliver you. Dreadful shall it be for you, if at the last you shall behold an angry God sitting in judgment. Pause, now, and meditate upon your doom, and imagine you see the Almighty robed in tempest and whirlwind—

***"His Throne a seat of dreadful wrath,
Girt with devouring flames.
The Lord appears consuming fire,
And Jealous is His name."***

God save you for Jesus' sake.

II. The Lord IS JEALOUS OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY. He that made Heaven and earth has a right to rule His creatures as He wills. The potter has power over the clay to fashion it according to his own good pleasure. And we creatures, being made, are bound to be obedient to our Lord. He has a right to issue commands, He has done so—they are holy and just—and wise men are bound to obey. But, alas, they continually revolt against His Sovereignty, and will not obey Him!

No, there are men who deny altogether that He is King of kings, and others who take counsel together saying, "Let us break His bands in sunder, and cast away His cords from us." He that sits in the heavens is moved to jealousy by these sins. He will defend the rights of His crown against all comers, for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

This reminds us of *the Lord's hatred of sin*. Every time we sin we as much as say, "I do not acknowledge God to be my Sovereign. I will do as I please." Each time we speak an ill word we really say, "My tongue is my own, He is not Lord over my lips." Yes, and every time the human heart wanders after evil, and lusts for that which is forbidden, it attempts to dethrone God and to set up the Evil One in His place. The language of sin is, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice? I will not have God to reign over me."

Sin is a deliberate treason against the majesty of God, an assault upon His crown, an insult offered to His Throne. Some sins, especially, have rebellion written on their forehead—presumptuous sins—when a man's conscience has been enlightened and he knows better, but still forsakes the good, and follows after evil. When a man's conscience has been aroused through some judgment, or sickness, or under a faithful ministry—if that man returns, like a dog to his vomit—he has, indeed, insulted the Sovereignty of God.

But have we not all done this, and are there not some here, in particular, of whom we once had good hope, but who have turned back again to

crooked ways? Are there not some of you who, Sunday after Sunday, get your consciences so quickened that you cannot be easy in sin as others are? And though you may, perhaps, indulge in sin, yet it costs you very dearly, for you know better. Did I not hear of one who sits in these seats often, but is as often on the ale bench?

Did I not hear of another who can sing with us the hymns of Zion, but is equally at home with the lascivious music of the drunkard? Do we not know of some who in their business are anything but what they should be, yet for a show, can come up to the house of God? Oh, Sirs, oh, Sirs, you do provoke the Lord to jealousy! Take heed, for when He comes out of His resting place, and takes to Himself His sword and buckler, who are you that you should stand before the dread majesty of His Presence? Tremble and be still! Humble yourselves and repent of this, your sin.

Surely, if sin attacks the Sovereignty of God, *self-righteousness is equally guilty of treason*—for as sin boasts, “I will not keep God’s Law.” Self-righteousness exclaims, “I will not be saved in God’s way. I will make a new road to Heaven. I will not bow before God’s Grace. I will not accept the Atonement which God has worked out in the Person of Jesus. I will be my own redeemer. I will enter Heaven by my own strength and glorify my own merits.” The Lord is very angry against self-righteousness. I do not know of anything against which His fury burns more than against this, because this touches Him in a very tender point—it insults the glory and honor of His Son Jesus Christ.

Joshua said to the children of Israel, when they promised to keep the Law—“You cannot serve the Lord, for He is an holy God. He is a jealous God. And He will not forgive your transgressions, nor your sins.” So I may well say to every self-righteous person, “You cannot keep the Law, for God is a jealous God,” carefully marking every fault, and just to mark your iniquities. Nor will He forgive your iniquities so long as you attempt to win His favor by works of the Law.

Throw away your self-righteousness, you proud one! Cast it with all other idols to the moles and to the bats, for there is no hope for you so long as you cling to it. Self-righteousness is, in itself, the very height and crowning point of rebellion against God. For a man to say, “Lord, I have not sinned,” is the gathering up, the emphasis, the climax of iniquity—and God’s jealousy is hot against it.

Let me add, dear Friends, I feel persuaded that *false doctrine*, inasmuch as it touches God’s Sovereignty, is always an object of Divine jealousy. Let me indicate especially the doctrines of Free will. I know there are some good men who hold and preach them, but I am persuaded that the Lord must be grieved with their doctrine though He forgives them their sin of ignorance. Free Will doctrine—what does it do? It magnifies man into God. It declares God’s purposes null and void, since they cannot be carried out unless men are willing. It makes God’s will a waiting servant to the will of man, and the whole Covenant of Grace dependent upon human action.

Denying election on the ground of injustice, it holds God to be a debtor to sinners, so that if He gives Divine Grace to one, He is bound to do so to *all*. It teaches that the blood of Christ was shed equally for *all* men, and since some are lost, this doctrine ascribes the difference to man's own will—thus making the Atonement, itself, a powerless thing until the will of man gives it efficacy. Those sentiments dilute the Scriptural description of man's depravity—and by imputing strength to fallen humanity, rob the Spirit of the glory of His effectual calling Grace.

This theory says, in effect, that *it is* of him that wills, and of him that runs, and not of God that shows mercy. Any doctrine, my Brothers and Sisters, which stands in opposition to this Truth of God—"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," provokes God's jealousy. I often tremble in this pulpit lest I should utter anything which should oppose the Sovereignty of my God. And though you know I am not ashamed to preach the responsibility of man to God—if God is Sovereign, man must be bound to obey Him—on the other hand, I am equally bold to preach that God has a right to do what He wills with His own.

I preach that He gives no account of His matters, and none may stay His hand, or say unto Him, "What are you doing?" I believe that the Free Will heresy assails the sovereignty of God, and mars the glory of His dominion in all faithfulness. Mingled with sorrow, I persuade you who have been deluded by it, to see well to your ways, and receive the Truth of God which sets God on high, and lays the creature in the dust. "The Lord reigns"—let this be this our joy! The Lord is our King, let us obey Him and defend to the death the crown rights of the King of kings, for He is a jealous God.

While tarrying upon this subject, I ought also to remark that *all the boastings of ungodly men*, whenever they exalt themselves, seeing that they are a sort of claim to sovereignty, must be very vexatious to God, the Judge of all. When you glory in your own power, you forget that power belongs only unto God, and you provoke His jealousy. When kings, parliaments, or synods, trespass upon the sacred domains of conscience, and say to men, "Bow down, that we may go over you"—when we make attempts to lord over another man's judgment, and to make our own opinions supreme, the Lord is moved to jealousy—for HE retains the court of conscience for Himself alone to reign in.

Let us humbly bow before the dignity of the Most High and pay our homage at His feet—

***"Glory to the eternal King,
Clad in majesty supreme!
Let all Heaven His praises sing,
Let all worlds His power proclaim.
O let my transported soul
Ever on His glories gaze!
Ever yield to His control,
Ever sound His lofty praise!"***

Let us crown Him every day! Let our holy obedience, our devout lives, our hearty acquiescence in all His will, our reverent adoration before the

greatness of His majesty—all prove that we acknowledge Him to be King of kings, and Lord of lords—lest we provoke a jealous God to anger.

III. THE LORD IS JEALOUS OF HIS GLORY. God's Glory is the result of His Nature and acts. He is glorious in His Character, for there is such a store of everything that is holy, good, and lovely in God, that He must be glorious. The actions which flow from His Character, the deeds which are the outgoings of His inner Nature—these are glorious, too. And the Lord is very careful that all flesh should see that He is a good and gracious and just God. And He is mindful, too, that His great and mighty acts should not give glory to others, but only to Himself.

How, careful, then, should we be when we do anything for God that God is pleased to accept as our doings, that we never congratulate ourselves. The minister of Christ should disrobe himself of every rag of praise. "You preached well," said a friend to John Bunyan one morning. "You are too late," said honest John, "the devil told me that before I left the pulpit." The devil often tells God's servants a great many things which they should be sorry to hear. Why, you can hardly be useful in a Sunday School but he will say to you—"How well you have done it!"

You can scarcely resist a temptation, or set a good example, but he will be whispering to you—"What an excellent person you must be!" It is, perhaps, one of the hardest struggles of the Christian life to learn this sentence—"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Your name be glory." Now God is so jealous on this point that, while He will forgive His own servants a thousand things, this is an offense for which He is sure to chasten us. Let a Believer once say, "I am," and God will soon make him say, "I am not."

Let a Christian begin to boast, "I can do all things," without adding, "through Christ which strengthens me," and before long he will have to groan, "I can do nothing," and bemoan himself in the dust. Many of the sins of true Christians, I do not doubt, have been the result of their glorifying themselves. Many a man has been permitted by God to stain a noble character, and to ruin an admirable reputation, because the character and the reputation had come to be the man's own, instead of being laid, as all our crowns must be laid, at the feet of Christ.

You may build the city, but if you say with Nebuchadnezzar, "Behold this great Babylon which I have built!" you shall be smitten to the earth. The worms which ate Herod when he gave not God the glory are ready for another meal—beware of vain glory! How careful ought we to be *to walk humbly before the Lord*. The moment we glorify ourselves—since there is only room for one glory in the universe—we set ourselves up as rivals to the Most High.

Penitent souls are always accepted, because they are not in God's way. Proud souls are always rejected, because they *are* in God's way. Shall the insect of an hour glorify itself against the Sun which warmed it into life? Shall the potsherd exalt itself above the man that fashioned it upon the wheel? Shall the dust of the desert strive with the whirlwind? Or the drops of the ocean struggle with the tempest? O you nothingness and vanity,

you puny mortal called man—humble yourself and reverence your Great Creator!

Let us see to it *that we never misrepresent God, so as to rob Him of His honor*. If any minister shall preach of God so as to dishonor Him, God will be jealous against that man. I fear that the Lord has heavy wrath against those who lay the damnation of man at God's door, for they dishonor God, and He is very jealous of His name. And those, on the other hand, who ascribe salvation to *man*, must also be heavily beneath God's displeasure, for they take from Him His Glory. Ah, thieves! Ah, thieves! Will you dare to steal the crown jewels of the universe?

Where do you go, where do you bear the bright pearls which ought to shine upon the brow of Christ? Do you dare put them on the brow of man? Stop! Stop! The Lord will not give His Glory to another! Give unto the Lord, all you righteous, give unto the Lord, glory and strength! Give unto Him the honor that is due unto His name! Any doctrine which does not give all the honor to God must provoke Him to jealousy.

Be careful, dear Friends, that you do not misrepresent God *yourselves*. You who murmur. You who say that God deals harshly with you—you give God an ill Character. When you look so melancholy, worldlings say, "The religion of Jesus is intolerable." And so you stain the honor of God. Oh, do not do this, for He is a jealous God, and He will surely use the rod upon you if you do!

A flash of holy pleasure crosses my mind. I am glad that He is a jealous God. It is enough to make us walk very carefully, but, at the same time it should make us very joyful to think that the Lord is very jealous of His own honor. But, Brothers and Sisters, if we believe in Christ, you and I are safe, because it would dishonor Him if we were not. For His own name's sake, and for His faithfulness' sake, He will never leave one of His people. "His honor is engaged to save the mean of His sheep."

Now, if Christ could trifle with His own honor, if He had no jealousy, you and I might be afraid that He would suffer us to perish. But it never shall be. It shall be said on earth, and sung in Heaven at the last, that God has suffered no dishonorable defeats from the hands of either men or devils. "I chose My people," says the Eternal Father, "and they are Mine now that I make up My jewels." "I bought My people," says the eternal Son, "I became a Surety for them before the Most High, and the infernal lion could not rend the mean of the sheep."

"I quickened My people," says the Holy Spirit. "The temptations of Hell could not throw them down. Their own corruptions could not overpower them. I have gotten the victory in every one of them, not one of them is lost. They are all brought safely to My right hand." Hide yourselves, then, under the banner of Jehovah's jealousy. It is bloody red, I know—its ensign bears a thunderbolt and a flame of fire. But hide yourselves, hide yourselves under it—for what enemy shall reach you there?

If it is to God's Glory to save me, I am entrenched behind munitions of stupendous rock. If it would render God inglorious to let me, a poor sinner, descend into Hell—if it would open the mouths of devils, and make

men say that God is not faithful to His promise—then am I secure, for God's Glory is wrapped up with my salvation, and the one cannot fail because the other cannot be tarnished!

Beloved, let us mind that we are very jealous of God's honor, ourselves, since He is jealous of it. Let us say with Elijah—"I am very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts." May our lives and conduct and conversation prove that we are jealous of our hearts lest they should once depart from Him. And may we smite with stern and unrelenting hand every sin, and every thought of pride that might touch the Glory of our gracious God—living to Him as living before a jealous God.

IV. In the highest sense, **THE LORD IS JEALOUS OVER HIS OWN PEOPLE.** Let me only hint that human jealousy, although it will exercise itself over man's reputation, rights and honor, has one particularly tender place—jealousy guards, like an armed man, *the marriage covenant*. A suspicion here is horrible.

Even good old Jacob, when he came to die, could not look upon his son Reuben without remembering his offense. "He went up to my couch," said the old man—and, as if the remembrance were too painful for him, he hurried on from Reuben to the next. The Lord has been graciously pleased to say of His people, "I am married unto you." The Covenant of Divine Grace is a *marriage covenant*, and Christ's Church has become His spouse.

It is here that God's jealousy is peculiarly liable to take fire. Men cannot be God's favorites without being the subjects of His watchfulness and jealousy—that which might be looked over in another—will be chastened in a member of Christ. As a husband is jealous of his honor, so is the Lord Jesus much concerned for the purity of His Church.

The Lord Jesus Christ, of whom I now speak, *is very jealous of your love*, O Believer! Did He not choose you? He cannot bear that you should choose another! Did He not buy you with His own blood? He cannot endure that you should think you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that He could not stop in Heaven without you. He would sooner die than that you should perish. He stripped Himself to nakedness that He might clothe you with beauty. He bowed His face to shame, and spit that He might lift you up to honor and glory.

He cannot endure that you should love the world and the things of the world. His love is strong as death towards you, and therefore will be cruel as the grave. He will be as a cruel one towards you if you do not love Him with a perfect heart. He will take away that husband. He will smite that child. He will bring you from riches to poverty, from health to sickness, even to the gates of the grave—because He loves you so much that He cannot endure that anything should stand between your heart's love and Him. Be careful, Christians, you that are married to Christ—remember—you are married to a jealous Husband.

He is very jealous *of your trust*. He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He will not endure that you should hew out broken cisterns,

when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. When we come up from the wilderness leaning upon our Beloved, then is our Beloved glad. But when we go down to the wilderness leaning on some other arm. When we trust in our own wisdom, or the wisdom of a friend—worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own—He is angry and will smite us with heavy blows that He may bring us to Himself.

He is also very jealous *of our company*. It were well if a Christian could see nothing but Christ. When the wife of a Persian noble had been invited to the coronation of Darius, the question was asked of her by her husband—“Did you not think the king a most beautiful man?” And her answer was—“I cared not to look at the king. My eyes are for my husband only, for my heart is his.” The Christian should say the same. There is nothing beneath the spacious arch of Heaven comparable to Christ—there should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in Him only—this is true love.

To commune with the world, to find solace in our comforts, to be loving this evil world—this is vexing to our jealous Lord. Do you not believe that nine out of ten of the troubles and pains of Believers are the result of their love to some other person than Christ? Nail me to Your Cross, my bleeding Savior! Put Your thorn crown upon my head to be a hedge to keep my thoughts within its bounds! O for a fire to burn up all my wandering loves. O for a seal to stamp the name of my Beloved indelibly upon my heart! O Love Divine, expel from me all carnal worldly loves, and fill me with Yourself!

Dear Friends, let this jealousy which should keep us near to Christ *be also a comfort to us*. If we are married to Christ, and He is jealous of us, depend upon it—this jealous Husband will let none touch His spouse. Joel tells us that the Lord is jealous for His land, and Zechariah utters the words of the Lord, “I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy.” And then He declares that He will punish the heathen. And will He not avenge His own elect who cry unto Him day and night?

There is not a hard word spoken but the Lord shall avenge it! There is not a single deed done against us, but the strong hand of Him who once died but now lives for us, shall take terrible vengeance upon all His adversaries. I am not afraid for the Church of God! I tremble not for the cause of God! Our jealous Husband will never let His Church be in danger. If any smite her, He will give them a double blow. The gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church, but she shall prevail against the gates of Hell.

Her jealous Husband shall roll away her shame. Her reproach shall be forgotten. Her glory shall be fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners—for He that is jealous of Himself is jealous for her fair fame. The subject is large and deep. Let us prove that we understand it, by from now on walking very carefully. And if any say “Why are you so precise?” let this be our answer—“I serve a jealous God.”

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

THE SHINING OF THE FACE OF MOSES

NO. 2143

A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 18, 1890,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

INTENDED FOR READING
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 4, 1890.

“And it came to pass when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses' hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. And Moses called unto them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came near: and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him in mount Sinai. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the veil off, until he came out. And he came out, and spoke unto the children of Israel that which he was commanded. And the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone: and Moses put the veil upon his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.”
Exodus 34:29-36.

A FAST of 40 days does not improve the appearance of a man's countenance—he looks starved, wrinkled, old, haggard. Moses had fasted 40 days twice, at least, and, according to many competent authorities, the 10th chapter of Deuteronomy seems to imply that he fasted 40 days *three* times in quick succession. I will not assert or deny the third 40 days, but it is certain that, with a very slight interval, Moses fasted 40 days and then 40 days more—and it is probable that to these must be added a third forty.

Small attractiveness would naturally remain in a face which had endured so stern an ordeal, but the Lord whom he served made his face brilliant with an unusual luster! The glory of the Light of God upon his countenance may have been the reason why he remained so free from infirmity in later years of old age. This man of 80 spent 40 more years in guiding Israel and in the end his eyes had not dimmed nor his natural force abated! He that could fast 40 days would be a hard morsel for death. Those eyes which had looked upon the Glory of God were not likely to wax dim amid earthly scenes—and that natural force which had endured the vision of the Supernatural could well support the fatigues of the wilderness.

God so sustained His servant that his long and repeated fasts, during which he did not even drink water, did no harm to his physical constitu-

tion! The abstinence, even from water, renders the fast the more remarkable and lifts it out of similarity to modern feats of fasting. Moses did not know, at the time, that his face was shining—but he did know it afterwards—and he has here recorded it. He gives in detail the fact of the brightness of his own face, how others were struck with it and what he had to do in order to associate with them. We are sure that this record was not made by reason of vanity, for Moses writes about himself in great lowliness of spirit—it was written under Divine direction—with a worthy object.

The man Moses was very meek and his meekness entered into his authorship as into all the other acts of his life—we are therefore sure that this record is for our profit. I am afraid, Brothers and Sisters, that God could not afford to make *our* faces shine—we would grow too proud. It needs a very meek and lowly spirit to bear the brightness of God! We only read of two men whose faces shone—and both were very meek. The one is Moses in the Old Testament—the other is Stephen, in the New—whose last words proved his meekness for, when the Jews were stoning him, he prayed, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.”

Gentleness of nature and lowliness of mind are a fine background on which God may lay the brightness of His Glory! Where these things abound it may be safe for the Lord not only to put His beauty upon a man, but also to make a record of the fact. Moses wrote this record with a reluctant pen. Since he did not write it out of vanity, let us not read it out of curiosity. He wrote it for our *learning*. Let us learn by it and may God the Holy Spirit cause our faces to shine, today, as we read of the shining face of Moses!

It would appear, so far as we can make out the narrative, that his face continued to shine long afterward. After Moses had come down from the mountain the brightness began to diminish. Paul tells us that it was a “glory to be done away”—but when he went into the holy place to commune with God, the brightness was revived and he came out again and spoke to the people with that same glowing Heaven upon his brow. When he addressed the people in the name of God he took off the veil and let them see the brightness of God in His ambassador. But as soon as he had done speaking and fell back into his own private character, he drew a veil over his face that none might be kept at a distance thereby.

The man Moses was as meek with the glory on his countenance as before it gathered there. God put great honor upon him but Moses did not desire to make a display of that honor, nor childishly wish that it should be seen of men. For the people’s sakes and for typical purposes, he veiled his face while in ordinary conversation with the people and only unveiled it when he spoke in the name of the Lord. Brethren, if God honors you as preachers or teachers, accept the honor but do not attribute it to your own worthiness, or even to your own personality—ascribe it to the office to which the Lord has called you.

“I magnify my office,” said Paul—but you never find Paul magnifying himself! He wears the glory as an ambassador of God, not as a private in-

dividual. The dignity that God gives to His servants is bestowed upon their *office*, not upon themselves apart from it. They must never run away with it into daily life and think that they themselves are “reverend,” because their Lord is so—nor may they claim for their own thoughts the serious attention which they rightly demand for the Word of the Lord.

Ministers do not pretend to be a class of sacred beings like the Brahmins of India—the only vantage-ground they occupy is that the Lord speaks through them according to the gift of His Holy Spirit. Unveiled are our faces when we speak *to* God and *for* God—and among our Brethren we would hide anything from which *we* might claim superiority for *ourselves*.

I. With this as my preface I shall now come immediately to my subject. Here is Moses with a strange glory upon his countenance. We will first answer the question, HOW CAME THIS GLORY TO LIE THERE? The skin of Moses’ face shone—why? The answer is, first, *it was a reflection of the Glory which he had seen when he was with God in the holy mount*. It was the result of that partly-answered prayer, “I beseech You, show me Your Glory.” God could not, at that time, grant the prayer in its fullness for Moses was not capable of the vision—and the Lord told him, “You can not see My face and live.” I look upon that prayer, however, as a very wonderful one for this reason, that it was answered to the full, 1,400 years after it was presented!

The glory of God is only to be seen in the face of Christ Jesus—and on the top of Tabor Moses saw the Son of God transfigured—and his prayer was then and there answered to its utmost bounds! In the Transfiguration, God showed to Moses His full Glory, for he was then made able to behold it. But though on the top of Mount Sinai he could not see the full Glory of Jehovah, yet he had seen enough to make an impression upon him of such a kind that the skin of his face shone. God is Light and they that look upon Him are enlightened and reflect Light around them! Moses spoke with God face to face as a man speaks with his friend and this made his countenance glow. As the sun shining upon a reflector has its light thrown back again, often in a most brilliant fashion, so that the reflector looks like a minor sun, so was it with the face of Moses when it reflected the Glory of the Lord.

The face of Moses was to God what the moon is to the sun. A saint shines on men when God has shone on him. We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Presence of the Lord. Would you shine in the valley?—first go up the mountain and commune with God! Would you shine, my Brothers and Sisters, with superior radiance? Then be this your fervent prayer, “Make Your face to shine upon Your servant.” If the Lord lifts upon you the Light of *His* Countenance there will be no lack of Light in *your* countenance! In God’s Light you shall give Light. The Light on the face of Moses was *the result of fellowship with God*. That fellowship was of no common order. It was special and distinguished.

I do not doubt that Moses walked with God after the fashion of believing men in the pursuit of his daily calling—but he spent two periods of 40

days each in solitary fellowship with God. Everybody was away—Aaron, Joshua and all the rest were far down below and Moses was alone with God. His communion with God was intense, close and familiar—and that not for one day but for 80 days at least! Protracted fellowship brings a nearness which brief communion cannot attain. Each morning's sun found him still in the Light of God. Each evening's dew found his soul still saturated with the Divine influence.

What must be the effect of such whole-hearted, undisturbed fellowship with God? He heard no hum of the camp below—not even the lowing of cattle, or bleating of sheep came up from the foot of the mountain. Moses had forgotten the world, save only as he pleaded for the people in an agony of prayer. No interests, either personal or family, disturbed his communion. He was oblivious of everything but Jehovah, the Glorious One, who completely overshadowed him. Oh, for the enjoyment of such heavenly communion! My Brothers and Sisters, have we not lost a great deal by so seldom dwelling apart—so little seeking continuous absorbing fellowship with the Most High? I am sure we have. We snatch a hasty minute of prayer. We afford a hurried quarter of an hour for Bible reading and we think we have done well.

Very far am I from saying that it is *not* well. But if for minutes we had hours, the gain might increase in proportion! Oh, for nights of prayer! Oh, for the close shutting of the closet door and a believing drawing near to God! There is no limit to the power we might obtain if such were the case. Though our faces might not be lit up with splendor, our lives would shine, our characters would become more pure and transparent—and our whole spirit would be so heavenly that men would regard with wonder the brightness of our being!

Thus, you see, the face of Moses shone because he had long looked upon the face of God. I would have you note that this communion with God *included intense intercession for the people*. God will not have fellowship with our *selfishness*. Moses came out of himself and became an intense pleader for the people—and thus he became like the Son of God and the Glory descended on him. How he pleaded! With what sighs and cries he besought Jehovah not to destroy the men who had vexed His Holy Spirit! They had degraded the Godhead by likening it unto a bullock which eats grass! They made a calf in Horeb and bowed before it, saying, "These are your gods, O Israel"!

Moses pleaded for the people down below and not for himself. Here is a point in which, it may be, we fail. The Lord turned again the captivity of Job when Moses prayed for his friends. The Lord loves intercessory prayer! And if ever He makes a man's face to shine, it is when he, like Christ, has made intercession for the transgressors and poured out his soul, not for himself, but for a guilty company! More than that. In that intercession Moses had *exhibited a degree of self-abnegation reaching to the sublime*. God said to him, "Let Me alone, that I may destroy them. I will make of you a great nation."

The Lord's covenant with Abraham was that Abraham's seed should possess the land—but the Lord might have destroyed all the existing tribes except Moses—and then have made of the family of Moses a race in which the Covenant with Abraham could have been kept to the letter. What a prospect was set before him! The children of Moses should grow into an elect nation, heirs of all the promises of God. But no—Moses not only goes the length of putting aside the proffered honor, but he cries, "Blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written." Instead of his name being written in the place of the people, he would let *their* names stand at the expense of his own! When a man can come to that, he is the man, the skin of whose face is a fit parchment on which God may write the Glory of His love! The less of self the more of God! When we can renounce all for God's Glory and the good of His Church, the Lord will not fail to smile upon us.

Yet once more. This man Moses not only obtained this brightness by his long communion and his intercessory prayer and self-oblivion, but by *his faithfulness among the people*. When he went down in the interval between the two fasts and found the people worshipping the golden calf he did not spare them. He loved them, but he did not keep back the stern blow of justice. He said, "Who is on the Lord's side?" And there came to him the tribe of Levi. And he said, "Go through the camp and slay every man his brother who shall be found rebelling against the Lord." At once they cut off the idolaters who were guilty of open treason against the King of Israel!

But this was not enough—the whole *nation* must be chastened for its great sin—and humbled by a symbolical punishment. I think I see Moses, having broken the tablets in his holy wrath, now taking down their idol god, grinding it, pounding it, dissolving it in water and sternly compelling the tribes to drink of the water. He made a nauseous, bitter draught out of their idol—and made them drink it so that their bellies might be filled with their own iniquity and they might know what it was to turn away from the Lord their God! Grand old Moses! Faithful servant of God! Unbending executioner of Divine Justice!

Meek were you, Moses, but by no means indifferent to truth and righteousness! God chooses not milksops, destitute of backbone, to wear His Glory upon their faces! We have plenty of men made of sugar, nowadays, that melt into the stream of popular opinion—but these shall never ascend into the hill of the Lord, nor stand in His Holy Place, nor wear the tokens of His Glory. O my Brothers and Sisters, it is necessary that you be true to the Lord in public if you would have His fellowship in private! If the Lord can challenge you for yours unfaithfulness among men He will never honor you with His own peculiar seal of Light. Moses was no trimmer, no hunter after popularity. He was sternly true to his Lord and therefore he was such that the Lord could safely make his face shine!

Enough of this, though much more might be said—learn the useful lesson which this part of the subject teaches.

II. But, secondly, WHAT DID THIS SHINING OF HIS FACE MEAN? This brightness on his face—what did it signify? Very briefly it meant this—*God’s special favor for Moses*. God seemed to say, “This is My man. I have chosen him above all others. Among those that are born of women there is no greater than he. I have put a measure of My own Glory upon him and the token thereof shines in his face.”

Surely it also meant *special favor for Israel*. If they could but have understood it they would not have been afraid, but conscience made them cowards. God, in effect, said to them, by the shining of the face of Moses, “I have had favor upon you for I have accepted your intercessor. My servant Moses has been pleading for your lives and in proof that I have accepted you and will spare you, I have written your pardon across his shining brow.” Favor to the Lord Jesus is favor to us.

Lord, when I hear You say, “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased,” I rejoice that You are well-pleased with me in Christ Jesus. When God looks on the face of His Anointed, He looks with favor upon us. This brightness on the face of Moses was also *God’s witness to his commission*. He had sent him, for He had glorified him. The people could not doubt his commission when they looked upon his shining face! I suppose rays of light proceeded from it. Michael Angelo, in his famous statue of Moses, represents him with horns—the strange fancy is founded in the Vulgate version, which mistook the meaning of a Hebrew word and translated it “horns.”

Beams of light seemed to rise from that marvelous face! A halo of Glory surrounded that solemn countenance and the people could not but perceive that this was a man on whom God had looked! And more. It was not only a witness of his office, but it was *an increase of his power*. The people were overawed by this strange light. They dared, even after this, to murmur against Moses for they dared to murmur against God Himself—but still, to a people of such a temper as theirs, the supernatural light must have been a source of wonder and of awe—

***“They gazed and looked, and lo, on brow and face,
A glory and a brightness not of earth!
The eyes lit up with fire of heavenly birth,
The whole man bright with beams of God’s great Grace.”***

It gave their Prophet authority with them—it made them tremble before him. They would not dare to contradict one who looked on them with such a face of Glory! His speech was as a flame of fire because his face was on a blaze! The pith of the whole thing, I think, lies in this—*the face of Moses shone typically, to show that there is a great glory about the Law of God*. It has a glory all its own from its spirituality, its holiness, its perfection, its justice, its immutability, its power over the conscience and so forth. It has eminent glory because it has been ordained of God Himself and therefore stands as the sacred Rule of the universe.

But this is not what Paul understands by the glory of the Law. He makes the glory “of that which was to be abolished,” the glory of the *ceremonial* Law, to lie in its end. The end of the Law for righteousness is

Christ. The Law is given to point us to Christ, to drive us to Christ—to be our schoolmaster to whip us to Christ, to convince us of our need of Christ—and to shut us out from every other hope but that which begins and ends with Christ! The Glory of the Law is Christ! And so Moses comes with a Glory on his face which the children of Israel could not perceive, nor steadfastly look into—

***“They looked and saw the Glory and they shrank
From that dread vision, dazzling man frail sight.”***

Even as today men see outward rites that God has given but see not their glorious meaning, so was it with Israel in the wilderness—they saw sacrifices, but they knew not the Great Sacrifice. They saw the oil and the water—but they knew not the Holy Spirit. They saw 10,000 tokens dear and manifest of the ever-blessed Messiah, but they did not perceive Him so as to know Him when He came. Every type and ceremony might say, “Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” The Law is overlaid with the Glory of Christ, as the face of Moses was covered with Light! This is the deepest and innermost meaning of the sacred Light which glowed upon the skin of the face of Moses.

III. And now, thirdly, this Glory upon the face of Moses—WHY DID NOT MOSES KNOW OF IT? For we read that “Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone.” I answer, first, that *it is not easy for a man to see his own face* unless he can borrow a looking-glass. Speaking in parable, the meaning I intend is this—it is not easy for a man to form an accurate judgment of his own character. There are people in the world who think they see their own faces clearly and that they shine like suns—yet they do not shine at all unless it is with brazen impudence and self-conceit.

In other cases lowly men are afraid that their faces do not shine at all—and yet they are brightness itself. It is no small part of the shining of some faces that their owners are modest and humble. Brothers and Sisters, you cannot see your own faces—and until you can do so you must not imagine that you know your own characters. Upon study you may arrive at something like a judgment, but it is not one which you may safely rely upon. Since Moses had no looking-glass, how could he tell that the skin of his face shone?

Our own judgment of our own character usually errs on the side of partiality to ourselves. Nor is the evil so readily cured as some suppose, for the gift of seeing ourselves, “as others see us,” is not so corrective as might be supposed. Some persist in seeing us through the colored spectacles of prejudice and ill-will. And this injustice is apt to create in us a further partiality to ourselves. If other men make mistakes about us who can see us, they probably do not make such great blunders about us as we do about ourselves, since we cannot see our own faces! The truth is that we are very fond of ourselves and have our own characters in high esteem—therefore we are unfair judges on points of difficulty about ourselves.

Our temptation is to gross self-flattery! We dream of strength where all is weakness—of wisdom where all is folly. A man does not need to see his own face if that face is washed to purity—it will be enough that God sees

it and approves its beauty. But I will tell you, further, why Moses did not see the Glory of his own face. It was because *he had seen the Glory of God*. When a man gets a clear view of the holiness of God it is all over with all claim of *personal* excellence. From that day he abhors himself in dust and ashes. I might have thought myself pure, but how can I be when I find that the heavens are not clean in God's sight? I might have thought myself wise, but how can I be when I read that He charged His angels with folly?

How can I speak of perfect purity as a thing of which I am possessed after I have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts? A vision of God is the quietus of boasting! He that has looked into the face of the sun is blinded to all other light. Having given one sufficient reason, I am, perhaps, unwise to add another—but yet it may be profitable to remember that Moses had not seen the shining of his own face because *it had never once entered his thoughts to wish that his face should shine*. That is true beauty of character which comes without being sought—I mean unconscious excellence—a character which commands an admiration which it has never desired.

Are we not too apt to wish to be bright that others may see us? Have we not labored to grow in Grace that we might outgrow others? Does no man pray for success in his ministry with a little squint of his eyes towards an ambition to be thought “so useful”? Does no sister ever seek the salvation of her class that she may be esteemed in the Church as a remarkable soul-winner? Did you never pray for holiness and really mean that you wished to be *considered* holy? Have you never prayed in public with great fervor with a half-suppressed wish to be thought a special man of God? Would it not have greatly gratified you to hear men cry, “What a prayer that was”? Have you not ever labored to be humble that you might rejoice in your humility?

I am afraid it is so. We are always praying, “Lord, make my face to shine.” But Moses never had such a wish and, therefore, when it did shine, he did not know it. He had not laid his plans for such an honor. Let us not set traps for personal reputation or even glance a thought that way. Another reason why he had not thought of it was that *he was so much engaged in doing good for others*. He gave himself up for those stiff-necked Israelites! He actually lived for them and offered himself before God to die for them! He carried the whole people in his bosom as a nurse carries her child. He fed his flock like a shepherd and like the Good Shepherd, he would have given his life for the sheep. Oh, the self-sacrifice of the man Moses!

He never thought about his own face for he was thinking about their faces. What would he have given if they had been capable of such nearness to God as he himself enjoyed! Oh, to be so absorbed in doing good that we have not a thought or a care for our own personal reputation! Then a man may do good in self-forgetfulness and may find himself famous to his own amazement! Once more, Moses could not very well have thought of his own face shining, for *he had no example of such a thing to suggest the idea*. Out of all those around him nobody else's face shone.

When you live with men whose faces shine, then you enquire about yourself, for you naturally wish your face to shine like theirs.

Aaron's face did not shine. Alas, poor Aaron! Nobody's face shone in all that camp and so there was nothing to cause Moses to look for such a radiance on his own brow. Mr. Bunyan, in his beautiful picture of Christiana and Mercy and the children coming up from the bath, represents the opposite state of things, for he says, "When the women were thus adorned, they seemed to be a terror one to the other; for that they could not see that Glory each one on herself which they could see in each other.

"Now, therefore, they began to esteem each other better than themselves. 'For you are fairer than I am,' said one. And, 'You are more comely than I am,' said another. The children also stood amazed to see into what fashion they were brought." It is a great treat to see and admire the Christian virtues of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ—every Christian delights to see his friends comely in all the Graces of the Holy Spirit. Moses had but little to gratify him in that way, especially at the period when he came down from the mountain and found Aaron weakly yielding to the people's sin. Even the choicest of the elders were far inferior to Moses and therefore it was not suggested by his surroundings that his own face might shine.

It is well when men are not self-conscious. It is best, my beloved Brothers and Sisters, that our faces should shine to others and not to ourselves. If you might know your own excelling, do not know it—for there is an ill savor about self-consciousness. To come forward and say, "I am perfectly holy," is babyish. It is like a child who cries, "See my new frock! Look at my pretty new frock!" I tremble to hear one say, "I have quite passed out of the conflict mentioned in the seventh of Romans. I have got this and I have got that." I am reminded of Jehu, when he said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord"—and yet Jehu was not right at *heart* before the Lord. There is not much to see when you wish men to see it. God save us from knowing too much about the shining of our own faces! May the light of His Countenance fill the whole circle of our being while we lie at His feet, mastered by a reverent awe of Him!

IV. I must hasten on to another interesting point. WHY DID MOSES WEAR A VEIL? Having this brightness on his face, why did he hide it? I answer, *in part the natural meekness of the man led him to do so.* He was forced into the position of leader. He never wished to be prominent, but the Lord put great pressure upon him in the desert and drove him on to be as king in Jeshurun. He had no ambitions. Though made to be as God to Pharaoh, he never exalted himself in the Egyptian court.

Among the Israelites he did not monopolize power—he gladly yielded to the chosen elders a portion of his magisterial dignity. The man Moses was very meek and so to hide the brightness of his face was a pleasure and not a trial to him. Like many a lovely woman, he shrank from the public gaze. We shall do well to possess the Grace of humility. He veiled his face *in tender condescension to the people.* When they ran away from him, he called to them to know why they were afraid. "My lord, we fear that splen-

dor on your brow.” “Then, let me veil it,” says he. “I would not terrify, but win.” It was their fault that they could not bear the brightness—their fault! I say again, their fault and yet he does not upbraid, nor stand upon his rights.

He had compassion on their folly as well as on their weakness. It may happen that a gracious man may be so evidently right that when others are offended at him, the offense is to be greatly blamed—and yet he will do well to yield in anything which does not involve principle. There is a modest veiling of excellences which shows a Brother to be still more excellent than his excellences which have proven him. Quench not the light of your sternest principle, but veil it with abounding love. He always sinks himself, this man Moses. The God-given Glory of his face he does not slight, nor seek to abate—but so far as it would bring him honor from men—he puts it under a veil. That he may come closer to the people whom he loves, he is content to hide his glory. Let us also seek to bless the people and to keep in touch with them.

But, Beloved, the chief reason lies elsewhere. Why did Moses veil his face? The answer is this—it *was a judicial symbol, setting forth the sentence of God upon the people*. The Lord, by this token, as good as said, “You are so rebellious, so given to your idolatries, so unwilling to see that from now on you shall not see the brightness of My Glory in the dispensation of the Law in which you live. Moses shall veil his face because the veil is upon your hearts.” It is a dreadful thing when God gives men up to judicial blindness—when He permits the veil which they have woven to abide over their minds, “that seeing they might not see and hearing they might not understand.”

As I told you in the reading, the veil was *literally* on Moses’ face, but *spiritually* it was on *their* hearts. From that time on they were not to see because they had not wished to see. He that willfully shuts his eyes will find that God takes away his sight. If you refuse to understand, justice will make you foolish. The shadow of destruction is insensibility. The eyes are blindfolded before the fatal volley is fired. The practical warning I would earnestly apply. Do you not think we have a great many people around us—may we not belong to them ourselves?—whose foolish hearts are blinded so that the light of the Glory of God in the face of Christ is veiled from them?

Are not many suffering from veiled hearts? In your circle there is a rare man of God—you have heard of his faith—he walks with God. Many have told you what beauties they see in his character. You cannot see anything particular in him. You, on the contrary, despise him and avoid his company. He wears a veil for you. Here is the Bible. “O Book, exquisite sweetness!” Your dear mother calls it beyond all things precious. Dear Soul, how her face brightens when she tells you how she has been sustained by it in the day of trouble!

You read it now and then but you do not see anything remarkable in it, certainly nothing that charms you—the Book is veiled to you. Here is the glorious Gospel of the blessed God! You have heard us say what a wonder-

ful Gospel it is. We have been overjoyed in describing it. You feel no enthusiasm. The Gospel is veiled to you. You have heard a sermon on some grand doctrine. Believers are ready to leap for joy but you are utterly indifferent. The Truth of God is veiled to you. This is a sad omen of a lost estate. The veil is on your heart and your soul is in darkness which may be felt.

Am I not speaking the truth about many of you? O my Friends, when you hear about Christ and do not admire Him, conclude that you must be blind! When you hear the glorious Gospel of the blessed God and it does not charm you, conclude that the veil is on your hearts! Oh, that you would turn unto the Lord! For when you turn to God, the veil shall be taken away. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would come and turn you by His almighty power! May He constrain you to seek the Lord today—then shall the veil be taken away and you shall see the beauty of the Lord Jesus in His salvation!

Here is a little prayer for you—use it often—“Open my eyes, O God, that I may behold wondrous things out of Your Law.” The wondrous things are in the Law—may you behold them. The Holy Spirit must take the veil away and remove the scales from your eyes—then you will see, but not till then. This is why Moses wore the veil—as a testimony that God had given them over to judicial blindness because they refused to know His will. O Lord, deal not thus with this people!

V. I close with this question. WHAT OTHER LESSONS MAY WE LEARN FROM THE FACE OF MOSES? First, learn *the exceeding Glory of our lord Jesus Christ*. HOW SO? Well, this was, so to speak, in a minor degree, the transfiguration of Moses and all it came to was that his *face* shone. But when Christ came He was transfigured as to His *whole* Person! Not only His face shone but His whole Person and His garments, also! Moses could veil his face, but the shining of our Lord could not be thus veiled for it streamed through His raiment which became “white like snow.”

The veil of Moses was, so to speak, a raiment for his face and it was able to keep in the Glory—but our Lord was wearing His usual garment without seam, woven from the top throughout, and the Light shone through His raiment so that He and His clothing were, alike, bright. Nothing could conceal the Glory of our Lord, which was so great that whereas Israel saw it tremblingly, the disciples were cast into a deep sleep thereby. A word is used by an instructive commentator in reference to Christ’s Transfiguration which expresses a forcible idea—he speaks of it as *incandescence*. He was all brightness and light—surpassing the mere shining of the skin even as the sun far surpasses every form of its redaction.

The Glory of Christ is beyond all comparison—the glory which excels. Oh, that I knew how to speak of it! But I feel like Paul when he said, “I could not see for the Glory of that Light.” It overpowers me! The Lamb is the Light of Heaven itself—what more shall I say? John on the rock of Patmos saw our Lord in vision and he said His “countenance was as the sun shines in his strength. And when I saw Him I fell at His feet as dead.” Moses wore a light on his face that might be covered, but Jesus was, and

is, all Light and in Him is no darkness at all. “That was the true Light, which lights every man that comes into the world.” “The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.”

Another lesson is just this. *See the possibilities of Glory which await human nature.* If Moses’ face can shine here, I can understand how, in the next state, when we are risen from the dead, our bodies may be all light and bright and we ourselves like flames of fire. “This corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality.” Unless our Well-Beloved comes quickly, our bodies will be sown in dishonor—and now I see how they can be raised in Glory. Then shall we put on “the Glory of the celestial.” We shall be among the shining ones and shall, ourselves, shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of our Father!

If the wrinkled face of the Patriarch Moses, bronzed and browned by 40 years in the Arabian desert and lined by the long fast on the top of the mountain—if the dry parchment of his face could shine so marvelously—why should not our bodies be endowed with Glory when God shall raise them, again, from the grave? As a crocus bulb looks up from the soil wherein it was buried and boldly lifts up a golden cup which the sun fills with glory from the heavens, why should not we, also, bloom into perfection? “Beloved, now are we the sons of God and it does not yet appear what we shall be”—any more than it did appear what Moses should be—“but we know that, when He shall appear”—whose appearing is more glorious than that of Moses—“we shall be like He is for we shall see Him as He is.”

Lastly, here is one more lesson. *What honor God may put upon any one of us if we really put honor upon Him!* My Brothers, my Sisters, if you are consecrated to God as Moses was, He can give you an unconscious influence which others will be compelled to recognize. Upon your brow the heavenly Light of Divine Grace will rest! From your eyes the lamp of the Truth of God will shine! Walk in the Light, as God is in the Light, and have fellowship with Him—and then you, too, shall shine as God’s Light-bearers and your whole life shall be as the star which guided the wise men to Christ! Influencing men for God, the gracious will follow you and the wicked will be awed by you, even as “Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy.”

O Spirit of God, rest on every one of us according to our capacity to endure the tongue of fire! Say unto us, O Savior, this morning, “Go forth, My Friends and be burning and shining Lights to My praise.” Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
Exodus 34:28-35; 2 Corinthians 3, 4:1-6.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—912, 427, 421.

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