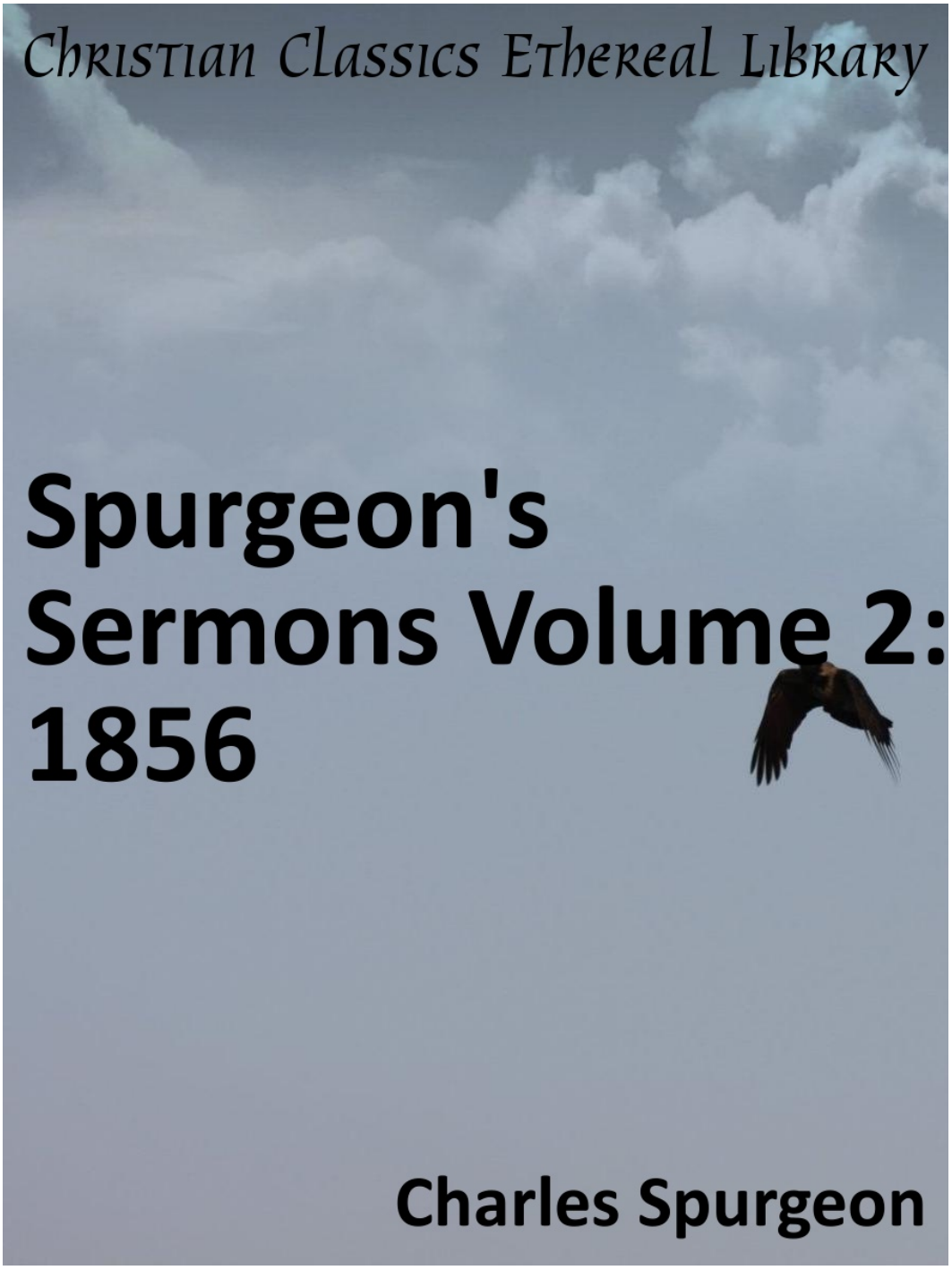
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Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 2: 1856
Charles Spurgeon

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Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 02: 1856

Author(s): Spurgeon, Charles Haddon (1834-1892)

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Description: Called the "Prince of Preachers," Charles Spurgeon was a world-renowned preacher. At the young age of 22, Spurgeon was already preaching to audiences of over 10,000 people. Coming from a Reformed Baptist tradition, he emphasized the gospels and the demands of Christ upon believers' lives in his sermons. This volume contains about 50 sermons, taken from the end of 1855 to the end of 1856. This volume is part of a series, which allows one to read Spurgeon's sermons in chronological order. His sermons are never unduly complex or flowery, but immensely practical and encouraging. They are full of wit and concrete examples. Countless people throughout the world have profited from Spurgeon's moving words.
Tim Perrine
CCEL Staff Writer
This version also contains a scriptural index, for easy reference.

Subjects: Practical theology
Worship (Public and Private) Including the church year, Christian symbols, liturgy, prayer, hymnology
Times and Seasons. The church year

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Christ Our Passover

A Sermon
(No. 54)
Delivered on Sabbath Evening, December 2, 1855, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."—1 Corinthians 5:7.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"A humble man before his foes, a weary man and full of woes."

What tortures the sheepish race have received from us! how are they, though innocent, continually slaughtered for our food! Their skin is dragged from their backs, their wool is shorn to give us a garment. And so the Lord Jesus Christ, our glorious Master, doth give us his garments that we may be clothed with them; he is rent in sunder for us; his very blood is poured out for our sins; harmless and holy, a glorious sacrifice for the sins of all his children. Thus the Paschal Lamb might well convey to the pious Hebrew the person of a suffering, silent, patient, harmless Messiah.

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

Go on further down the chapter. "Your lamb shall be without blemish, *a male of the first year.*" I need not stop to consider the reason why the male was chosen; we only note that it was to be a male of the first year. Then it was in its prime then its strength was unexhausted, then its power was just ripened into maturity and perfection, God would not have an untimely fruit. God would not have that offered which had not come to maturity. And so our Lord Jesus Christ had just come to the ripeness of manhood when he was offered. At 34 years of age was he sacrificed for our sins; he was then hale and strong, although his body may have been emaciated by suffering, and his face more marred than that of any other man, yet was he then in the perfection of manhood. Methinks I see him then. His goodly beard flowing down upon his breast; I see him with his eyes full of genius, his form erect, his mien majestic, his energy entire, his whole frame in full development,—a real man, a magnificent man—fairer than the sons of men; a Lamb not only without blemish, but with all his powers fully brought out. Such was Jesus Christ—a Lamb of the first year—not a boy, not a lad, not a young man, but a full man, that he might give his soul unto us. He did not give himself to die for us when he was a youth, for he would not then have given all he was to be; he did not give himself to die for us when he was in old age, for then would he have given himself when he was in decay; but just in his maturity, in his very prime, then Jesus Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. And, moreover, at the time of his death, Christ was full of life, for we are informed by one of the evangelists that "he cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost." This is a sign that Jesus did not die through weakness, nor through decay of nature. His soul was strong within him; he was still the Lamb of the first year. Still was he mighty; he could, if he pleased, even on the cross, have unlocked his hands from their iron bolts; and descending from the tree of infamy, have driven his astonished foes

before him, like deer scattered by a lion, yet did he meekly yield obedience unto death. My soul; canst thou not see thy Jesus here, the unblemished Lamb of the first year, strong and mighty? And, O my heart! does not the though rise up—if Jesus consecrated himself to thee when he was thus in all his strength and vigour, should not I in youth dedicate myself to him? And if I am in manhood, how am I doubly bound to give my strength to him? And if I am in old age, still should I seek while the little remains, to consecrate that little to him. If he gave his all to me, which was much, should I not give my little all to him? Should I not feel bound to consecrate myself entirely to his service, to lay body, soul, and spirit, time, talents, all upon his altar. And though I am not an unblemished lamb, yet I am happy that as the leavened cake was accepted with the sacrifice, though never burned with it—I, though a leavened cake, may be offered on the altar with my Lord and Saviour, the Lord's burnt offering, and so, though impure, and full of leaven, I may be accepted in the beloved, an offering of a sweet savour, acceptable unto the Lord my God. Here is Jesus, beloved, a Lamb without blemish, a Lamb of the first year!

The subject now expands and the interest deepens. Let me have your very serious consideration to the next point, which has much gratified me in its discovery and which will instruct you in the relation. In the 6th verse of the 12th chapter of Exodus we are told that this lamb which should be offered at the Passover was to be *selected four days before its sacrifice, and to be kept apart:*—"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 be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour 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 6th verse says, "And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month." For four days this lamb, chosen to be offered, was taken away from the rest of the flock and kept alone by itself, for two reasons: partly that by its constant bleatings they might be put in remembrance of the solemn feast which was to be celebrated; and moreover, that during the four days they might be quite assured that it had no blemish, for during that time it was subject to constant inspection, in order that they might be certain that it had no hurt or injury that would render it unacceptable to the Lord. And now, brethren, a remarkable fact flashes before you—just as this lamb was separated four days, the ancient allegories used to say that Christ was separated four years. Four years after he left his father's house he went into the wilderness, and was tempted of the devil. Four years after his baptism he was sacrificed for us. But there is another, better than that:—About four days before his crucifixion, Jesus Christ rode in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem. He was thus openly set apart as being distinct from mankind. He, on the ass, rode up to the temple, that all might see him to be Judah's Lamb, chosen of God, and ordained from the foundation of the world. And what is more remarkable still, during those four days, you will see, if you turn to the Evangelists, at your leisure, that as much is recorded of what he did and said as through all the

other part of his life. During those four days, he upbraided the fig tree, and straightway it withered; it was then that he drove the buyers and sellers from the temple; it was then that he rebuked the priests and elders, by telling them the similitude of the two sons, one of whom said he would go, and did not, and the other who said he would not go, and went; it was then that he narrated the parable of the husbandsmen, who slew those who were sent to them; afterwards he gave the parable of the marriage of the king's son. Then comes his parable concerning the man who went unto the feast, not having on a wedding garment; and then also, the parable concerning the ten virgins, five of whom were very wise, and five of whom were foolish; then comes the chapter of very striking denunciations against the Pharisees:—"Woe unto you O ye blind Pharisees! cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter;" and then also comes that long chapter of prophecy concerning what should happen at the siege of Jerusalem, and an account of the dissolution of the world: "Learn a parable of the fig-tree: when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.: But I will not trouble you by telling you here that at the same time he gave them that splendid description of the day of judgment, when the sheep shall be divided from the goats. In fact, the most splendid utterances of Jesus were recorded as having taken place within these four days. Just as the lamb separated from its fellows, did bleat more than ever during the four days, so did Jesus during those four days speak more; and if you want to find a choice saying of Jesus, turn to the account of the last four days' ministry to find it. There you will find that chapter, "Let not your hearts be troubled;" there also, his great prayer, "Father, I will;" and so on. The greatest things he did, he did in the last four days when he was set apart.

And there is one more thing to which I beg your particular attention, and that is, that during those four days I told you that the lamb was subject to the closest scrutiny, so, also, during those four days, it is singular to relate, that Jesus Christ was examined by all classes of persons. It was during those four days that the lawyer asked him which was the greatest commandment? and he said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." It was then that the Herodians came and questioned him about the tribute money; it was then that the Pharisees tempted him; it was then, also, the Sadducees tried him upon the subject of the resurrection. He was tried by all classes and grades—Herodians, Pharisees, Sadducees, lawyers, and the common people. It was during these four days that he was examined: but how did he come forth? An immaculate Lamb! The officers said, "never man spake like this man." His foes found none who could even bear false witness against him, such as agreed together; and Pilate declared, "I find no fault in him." He would not have been fit for the Paschal Lamb had a single blemish have been discovered, but "I find no fault in him," was the utterance of the great chief magistrate, who thereby declared that the Lamb might be eaten at God's Passover, the symbol and the means of the deliverance of God's people. O beloved!

you have only to study the Scriptures to find out wondrous things in them; you have only to search deeply, and you stand amazed at their richness. You will find God's Word to be a very precious word; the more you live by it and study it, the more will it be endeared to your minds.

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

The next point is *the manner of his death.* I think the manner in which the lamb was to be offered so peculiarly sets forth the crucifixion of Christ, that no other kind of death could by any means have answered all the particulars set down here. First, the lamb was to be slaughtered, and its blood caught in a basin. Usually blood was caught in a golden basin. Then, as soon as it was taken, the priest standing by the altar on which the fat was burning, threw the blood on the fire or cast it at the foot of the altar. You may guess what a scene it was. Ten thousand lambs sacrificed, and the blood poured out in a purple river. Next, the lamb was to be roasted; but it was not to have a bone of its body broken. Now I do say, there is nothing but crucifixion which can answer all these three things. Crucifixion has in it the shedding of blood—the hands and feet were pierced. It has in it the idea of roasting, for roasting signifies a long torment, and as the lamb was for a long time before the fire, so

Christ, in crucifixion, was for a long time exposed to a broiling sun, and all the other pains which crucifixion engenders. Moreover not a bone was broken; which could not have been the case with any other punishment. Suppose it had been possible to put Christ to death in any other way. Sometimes the Romans put criminals to death by decapitation; but by a such death the next is broken. Many martyrs were put to death by having a sword pierced through them; but, while that would have been a bloody death, and not a bone broken necessarily, the torment would not have been long enough to have been pictured by the roasting. So that, take whatever punishment you will—take hanging, which sometimes the Romans practised in the form of strangling, that mode of punishment does not involve shedding of blood, and consequently the requirements would not have been answered. And I do think, any intelligent Jew, reading through this account of the Passover, and then looking at the crucifixion, must be struck by the fact that the penalty and death of the cross by which Christ suffered, must have taken in all these three things. There was blood-shedding; the long continued suffering—the roasting of torture; and then added to that, singularly enough, by God's providence not a bone was broken, but the body was taken down from the cross intact. Some may say that burning might have answered the matter; but there would not have been a shedding of blood in that case, and the bones would have been virtually broken in the fire. Besides the body would not have been preserved entire. Crucifixion was the only death which could answer all of these three requirements. And my faith receives great strength from the fact, that I see my Saviour not only as a fulfilment of the type, but the only one. My heart rejoices to look on him whom I have pierced, and see his blood, as the lamb's blood, sprinkled on my lintel and my door-post, and see his bones unbroken, and to believe that not a bone of his spiritual body shall be broken hereafter; and rejoice, also, to see him roasted in the fire, because thereby I see that he satisfied God for that roasting which I ought to have suffered in the torment of hell for ever and ever.

Christian! I would that I had words to depict in better language; but, as it is, I give thee the undigested thoughts, which thou mayest take home and live upon during the week; for thou wilt find this Paschal Lamb to be an hourly feast, as well as supper, and thou mayest feed upon it continually, till thou comest to the mount of God, where thou shalt see him as he is, and worship him in the Lamb in the midst thereof.

II. HOW WE DERIVE BENEFIT FROM THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. Christ our Passover is slain for us. The Jew could not say that; he could say, *a* lamb, but "*the Lamb*," even "Christ our Passover," was not yet become a victim. And here are some of my hearers within these walls to-night who cannot say "Christ our Passover is slain for us." But glory be to God! some of us can. There are not a few here who have laid their hands upon the glorious Scapegoat; and now they can put their hands upon the Lamb also, and they can say, "Yes; it is true, he is not only slain, but Christ our Passover is slain for us." We derive benefit from the death of Christ in two modes: first, by having his blood sprinkled on us for our *redemp-*

tion; secondly, by our eating his flesh for food, *regeneration and sanctification.* The first aspect in which a sinner views Jesus is that of a lamb slain, whose blood is sprinkled on the door-post and on the lintel. Note the fact, that the blood was never sprinkled on the threshold. It was sprinkled on the lintel, the top of the door, on the side-post, but never on the threshold, for woe unto him who trampleth under foot the blood of the Son of God! Even the priest of Dagon trod not on the threshold of his god, much less will the Christian trample under foot the blood of the Paschal Lamb. But his blood must be on our right hand to be our constant guard, and on our left to be our continual support. We want to have Jesus Christ sprinkled on us. As I told you before, it is not alone the blood of Christ poured out on Calvary that saves a sinner; it is the blood of Christ sprinkled on the heart. Let us turn to the land of Zoan. Do you not think you behold the scene to-night! It is evening. The Egyptians are going homeward—little thinking of what is coming. But just as soon as the sun is set, a lamb is brought into every house. The Egyptian strangers passing by, say, "These Hebrews are about to keep a feast to night," and they retire to their houses utterly careless about it. The father of the Hebrew house takes his lamb, and examining it once more with anxious curiosity, looks it over from head to foot, to see if it has a blemish. He findeth none. "My son," he says to one of them, "bring hither the bason." It is held. He stabs the lamb, and the blood flows into the bason. Do you not think you see the sire, as he commands his matronly wife to roast the lamb before the fire! "Take heed," he says, "that not a bone be broken." Do you see her intense anxiety, as she puts it down to roast, lest a bone should be broken? Now, says the father, "bring a bunch of hyssop." A child brings it. The father dips it into the blood. "Come here, my children, wife and all, and see what I am about to do." He takes the hyssop in his hands, dips it in the blood, and sprinkles it across the lintel and the door-post. His children say, "What mean you by this ordinance?" He answers, "This night the Lord God will pass through to smite the Egyptians, and when he seeth 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 into your houses to smite you." The thing is done; the lamb is cooked; the guests are set down to it; the father of the family has supplicated a blessing; they are sitting down to feast upon it. And mark how the old man carefully divides joint from joint, lest a bone should be broken; and he is particular that the smallest child of the family should have some of it to eat, for so the Lord hath commanded. Do you not think you see him as he tells them "it is a solemn night—make haste—in another hour we shall all go out of Egypt." He looks at his hands, they are rough with labour, and clapping them, he cries, "I am not to be a slave any longer." His eldest son, perhaps, has been smarting under the lash, and he says, "Son, you have had the task-master's lash upon you this afternoon; but it is the last time you shall feel it." He looks at them all, with tears in his eyes—"This is the night the Lord God will deliver you." Do you see them with their hats on their heads, with their loins girt, and their staves in their hands? It is the dead of the night. Suddenly they hear a shriek! The father

says, "Keep within doors, my children; you will know what it is in a moment." Now another shriek—another shriek—shriek succeeds shriek: they hear perpetual wailing and lamentation. "Remain within," says he, "the angel of death is flying abroad." A solemn silence is in the room, and they can almost hear the wings of the angel flap in the air as he passes their blood-marked door. "Be calm," says the sire, "that blood will save you." The shrieking increases. "Eat quickly, my children," he says again, and in a moment the Egyptians coming, say, "Get thee hence! Get thee hence! We are not for the jewels that you have borrowed. You have brought death into our houses." "Oh!" says a mother, "Go! for God's sake! go. My eldest son lies dead!" "Go!" says a father, "Go! and peace go with you. It were an ill day when your people came into Egypt, and our king began to slay your first-born, for God is punishing us for our cruelty." Ah! see them leaving the land; the shrieks are still heard; the people are busy about their dead. As they go out, a son of Pharoah is taken away unembalmed, to be buried in one of the pyramids. Presently they see one of their task-master's sons taken away. A happy night for them—when they escape! And do you see, my hearers, a glorious parallel? They had to sprinkle the blood, and also to eat the lamb. Ah! my soul, hast thou e'er had the blood sprinkled on thee? Canst thou say that Jesus Christ is thine? It is not enough to say "he loved the world, and gave his Son," you must say, "He loved *me*,, and gave himself for *me*." There is another hour coming, dear friends, when we shall all stand before God's bar; and then God will say, "Angel of death, thou once didst smite Egypt's first born; thou knowest thy prey. Unsheath thy sword." I behold the great gathering, you and I are standing amongst them. It is a solemn moment. All men stand in suspense. There is neither hum nor murmur. The very stars cease to shine lest the light should disturb the air by its motion. All is still. God says, "Has thou sealed those that are mine?" "I have," says Gabriel; "they are sealed by blood every one of them." Then saith he next, "Sweep with thy sword of slaughter! Sweep the Earth! and send the unclothed, the unpurchased, the unwashed ones to the pit." Oh! how shall we feel beloved, when for a moment we see that angel flap his wings? He is just about to fly, "But," will the doubt cross our minds "perhaps he will come to me?" Oh! no; we shall stand and look the angel full in his face.

"Bold shall I stand in that great day!
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
While through thy blood absolved
I am From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

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

"Great God! I'm clean! Through Jesus' blood, I'm clean!"

But if, my hearer, thine unwashen spirit shall stand unshriven before its maker, if thy guilty soul shall appear with all its black spots upon it, unsprinkled with the purple tide, how wilt thou speak when thou seest flash from the scabbard the angel's sword swift for

death, and winged for destruction, and when it shall cleave thee asunder? Methinks I see thee standing now. The angel is sweeping away a thousand there. There is one of thy pot companions. There one with whom thou didst dance and swear. There another, who after attending the same chapel like thee, was a despiser of religion. Now death comes nearer to thee. Just as when the reaper sweeps the field and the next ear trembles because its turn shall come next, I see a brother and a sister swept into the pit. Have I no blood upon me? Then, O rocks! it were kind of you to hide me. Ye have no benevolence in your arms. Mountains! let me find in your caverns some little shelter. But it is all in vain, for vengeance shall cleave the mountains and split the rocks open to find me out. Have I no blood? Have I no hope? Ah! no! he smites me. Eternal damnation is my horrible portion. The depth of the darkness of Egypt for thee, and the horrible torments of the pit from which none can escape! Ah! my dear hearers, could I preach as I could wish, could I speak to you without my lips and with my heart, then would I bid you seek that sprinkled blood, and urge you by the love of your own soul, by everything that is sacred and eternal, to labour to get this blood of Jesus sprinkled on your souls. It is the blood sprinkled that saves a sinner.

But when the Christian gets the blood sprinkled, that is not all he wants. *He wants something to feed upon.* And, O sweet thought! Jesus Christ is not only a Saviour for sinners, but he is food for them after they are saved. The Paschal Lamb by faith we eat. We live on it. You may tell, my hearers, whether you have the blood sprinkled on the door by this: do you eat the Lamb? Suppose for a moment that one of the old Jews had said in his heart, "I do not see the use of this feasting. It is quite right to sprinkle the blood on the lintel or else the door will not be known; but what good is all this inside? We will have the lamb prepared, and we will not break his bones; but we will not eat of it." And suppose he went and stored the lamb away. What would have been the consequence? Why, the angel of death would have smitten him as well as the rest, even if the blood had been upon him. And if, moreover, that old Jew had said, "there, we will have a little piece of it; but we will have something else to eat, we will have some unleavened bread; we will not turn the leaven out of our houses, but we will have some leavened bread." If they had not consumed the lamb, but had reserved some of it, then the sword of the angel would have found the heart out as well as that of any other man. Oh! dear hearer, you may think you have the blood sprinkled, you may think you are just; but if you do not live *on* Christ as well as *by* Christ, you will never be saved by the Paschal Lamb. "Ah!" say some, "we know nothing of this." Of course you don't. When Jesus Christ said, "except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you," there were some that said, "This is a hard saying, who can heart it?" and many from that time went back—and walked no more with him. They could not understand him; but, Christian, dost thou not understand it? Is not Jesus Christ thy daily food? And even with the bitter herbs, is he not sweet food? Some of you, my friends, who are true Christians, live too much on your changing frames and feelings, on your experiences and evidences. Now, that is all

wrong. That is just as if a worshipper had gone to the tabernacle and began eating one of the coats that were worn by the priest. When a man lives on Christ's righteousness, it is the same as eating Christ's dress. When a man lives on his frames and feelings, that is as much as if the child of God should live on some tokens that he received in the sanctuary that never were meant for food, but only to comfort him a little. What the Christian lives on is not Christ's righteousness, but Christ; he does not live on Christ's pardon, but on Christ; and on Christ he lives daily, on nearness to Christ. Oh! I do love Christ- preaching. It is not the doctrine of justification that does my heart good, it is Christ, the justifier; it is not pardon that so much makes the Christian's heart rejoice, it is Christ the pardoner; it is not election that I love half so much as my being chosen in Christ ere worlds began; ay! it is not final perseverance that I love so much as the thought that in Christ my life is hid, and that since he gives unto his sheep eternal life, they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand. Take care, Christian, to eat the Paschal Lamb and nothing else. I tell thee man, if thou eatest that alone, it will be like bread to thee—thy soul's best food. If thou livest on aught else but the Saviour, thou art like one who seeks to live on some weed that grows in the desert, instead of eating the manna that comes down from heaven. Jesus is the manna. *In* Jesus as well as *by* Jesus we live. Now, dear friends, in coming to this table, we will keep the Paschal Supper. Once more, by faith, we will eat the Lamb, by holy trust we will come to a crucified Saviour, and feed on his blood, and righteousness, and atonement.

And now, in concluding, let me ask you, are you hoping to be saved my friends? One says, "Well, I don't hardly know; I hope to saved, but I do not know how." Do you know, you imagine I tell you a fiction, when I tell you that people are hoping to be saved by works, but it is not so, it is a reality. In travelling through the country I meet with all sorts of characters, but most frequently with self-righteous persons. How often do I meet with a man who thinks himself quite godly because he attends the church once on a Sunday, and who thinks himself quite righteous because he belongs to the Establishment; as a churchman said to me the other day, "I am a rigid churchman." "I am glad of that," I said to him, "because then you are a Calvinist, if you hold the 'Articles.'" He replied "I don't know about the 'Articles,' I go more by the 'Rubric.'" And so I thought he was more of a formalist than a Christian. There are many persons like that in the world. Another says, "I believe I shall be saved. I don't owe anybody anything; I have never been a bankrupt; I pay everybody twenty shillings in the pound; I never get drunk; and if I wrong anybody at any time, I try to make up for it by giving a pound a year to such-and-such a society; I am as religious as most people; and I believe I shall be saved." That will not do. It is as if some old Jew had said, "We don't want the blood on the lintel, we have got a mahogany lintel; we don't want the blood on the door-post, we have a mahogany door-post." Ah! whatever it was, the angel would have smitten it if it had not had the blood upon it. You may be as righteous as you like: if you have not the blood sprinkled, all the goodness of your door-posts and lintels will be of

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

The Exodus

A Sermon
(No. 55)
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 selfsame 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, but we regard them as being most true and infallible records of the past, and also most bright and glorious foreshadowings of the future, or else most wondrous metaphors and marvellous illustrations of things which are verily received among us, and most truly felt in the Christian heart. We may be wrong—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; 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 of the children of Israel out of Egypt, as being a type and picture of the going out of all the vessels of mercy from the house of their bondage, and 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." Every one who enjoys the liberty wherewith Christ doth 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 ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye 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 ere, 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 was about us for ever. Taking this as 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 ye hence, for we be all dead men;" they begged and entreated them to go; yea, 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 makes slaves of us while we are in Egypt, and when God the Holy Spirit stirs them up against us, how do they beat us with cruel lashes, till our soul is worn with extreme bondage; but those very sins, by God's grace, are made the means of driving us to the Saviour. The dove fleeth not to its cote unless the eagle doth pursue 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 ever 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; but now they all arrayed themselves in their best garments, and at the command of God did borrow of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment; "and the 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 whatsoever 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, hath 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; and 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: oh! no; as long as he wears those he will always keep 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 cometh up from the wilderness?" Is this the poor slave that 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 laboured in Goshen's land without a wage or pay? Yes, it is he; and now he is arrayed like a king, and apparelled as a prince. Lo, each of these men of labour cometh 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, art thou arrayed,
By the great sacred Three;
In sweetest harmony of praise.
Let all thy 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 once, "because they drive me to the Saviour; 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? It came from Egypt, I'll be bound. We get more by being in bondage, under conviction of sin, that we often do by liberty. That bondage state, under which thou art now labouring, thou poor way-worn child of sorrow, shall be good for thee; for when thou comest out of Egypt thou wilt steal jewels from the Egyptians; thou wilt have won pearls from thy very convictions. "Oh!" say some, "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 to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, and 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. "*To-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart," says the Holy Ghost; he never say to-morrow; to-day 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; but he will carry the unleavened bread on his shoulders, he will be in such a hurry to get away. He who hateth the noisomeness of the dungeon, longeth to hear the wards of the lock creak, that he may find liberty; he who hath been long in the pit hasteth to escape; he who hath suffered the task-master's whip fleeth 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 never 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 millions and a half, 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 marvellous thing in history, such as we can hardly conceive of; but here were, to say the least, two millions of 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 of all came out of Egypt. What a mind Moses must have had, to direct so great an army; or rather what a spirit must that have been that 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 outvied 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 the stars of heaven, nor the dust of the earth, nor the sand of the sea; but let us remember that God hath promised to Abraham—"As the sand upon the sea shore, even so shall thy 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 bringeth out a host of thine elect, more countless than the stars and as innumerable as the sands upon a thousand shores! all hail to thy power that doeth 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 Egyp-

tians—dispersed every where; but whatever they might be, they all came from hence. If Pharoah had slaves in his halls, they marched out the self-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 doth decline, and the winter approacheth, 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 stand 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 floweth with milk and honey." Oh! great and glorious works of God! "great are thy works, O Lord, and marvellous are thy doings; and that my soul knoweth 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 quitted Egypt, *it was only one Passover that set them all free*. They did not want 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 ye 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 want 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 whence 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, thou art saying this morning, "This blood cannot save me." What! not save thee, when it is engaged to save thousands upon thousands, and myriads of myriads? Shall the shepherd who gathereth the whole flock together, and leadeth them unto the pastures lose a single lamb? Thou sayest, perhaps, "I am so little." For that very reason then, thou dost not want so much of his power to take care of thee. "But," says one, "I am so great a sinner." Ay, then, so much the better, for he "came to save sinners, of whom I am chief," said Paul; and he came to save thee. Ah! do not fear, ye sons of God; he

who brought the Israelites all out in one night can bring you all out, though you are in the veriest 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 any one else, you think, and your taskmaster has a whip which goes right round you, and cuts the flesh off you every time; you have worse bondage than any one, 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 thee! 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, "There is one that God would not deliver; there 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 bring 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 selfsame 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 that was lame. Ah! you see him throw away his crutches. There is a poor woman sick; ay, 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 greyheaded sire tottered not on his staff. Though eighty 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 shrivelled 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 "one in Jesus now;"

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, Pharoah 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 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 the sheep merely, 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 thy sting? O *grave*, where is thy victory?" O *hell*, where is thy triumph? Thou has not a flag nor a pennon to show of thy victory; there is not a casque or a helmet left upon the battle-field; there is not a single trophy which thou mayest raise up in hell in scorn of Christ. He hath not only delivered his people, but they have gone out with flying colours, 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 selfsame 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 selfsame 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 that 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 seem 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 selfsame 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 thou poor distressed heir of heaven, groaning under sin, and seeking rest, but finding none, believe that it is the Lord's will that thou shouldst be a little longer where there is a smoking furnace. Wait a little he is doing thee good. Like Jesus of old, he is speaking hardly to thee, to try thy faith; he is telling thee now that thou art a dog, because he wants to hear thee say, "Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs." He would not keep thee waiting, if thine eagerness did not thereby get fresh vigour; he would not keep thee 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. 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." Ay, 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 amongst 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 abhored 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 get deliverance; and some of these people are marvellously 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 so 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 door-posts; 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 ye members of Christian churches! there are many of you who have a feigned experience and a feigned religion. How many there are of you who have the externals merely of godliness! ye are white-washed sepulchres, outwardly fair and beautiful, like the garnished gardens of a cemetery; but inwardly ye are full of dead men's bones and rottenness! Be persuaded, I beseech you, to get no deliverance any way except by the blood of the Lamb, and by really feasting on Christ. Many a man gets 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 get out of Egypt by bribing his conscience. "There, master conscience," he says, "I will never get drunk any more; 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 do place their trust. O ye mixed multitude! ye are the ruin of the churches; ye 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 door-post? Have you eaten of Jesus? Do you live on him? Do you have fellowship with him? Has God the Holy Ghost 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 the last solemn hour, the edifice of your own hands should totter. Mixed multitude! hear ye this! ye assembled gatherings of professors! "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your-own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" But if he be not in you, then are ye reprobates still, whom God abhorreth. The Lord bring all his people out of Egypt, and deliver all his children from the house of bondage.

Heaven

A Sermon
(No. 56)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 16th, 1855, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."—1 Corinthians 2:9-10.

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

I have hinted that this passage is most commonly applied to heaven, and I shall myself also so apply it in some measure, this morning. But any one who reads the connexion will discover that the apostle is not talking about heaven at all. He is only speaking of this—that the wisdom of this world is not able to discover the things of God—that the merely carnal mind is not able to know the deep spiritual things of our most holy religion. He says, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." And then he goes on lower down to say, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I take it, that this text is a great general fact, capable of specific application to certain cases; and that the great fact is this—that the things of God cannot be perceived by eye, and ear, and heart, but must be revealed by the Spirit of God; as they are unto all true believers. We shall take that

thought, and endeavour to expand it this morning, explaining it concerning heaven, as well as regards other heavenly matters.

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

And so, moreover, at the close of the Levitical dispensation, the *prophets* might have thus foretold the coming glories. Old Isaiah, standing in the midst of the temple, beholding its sacrifices, and the dim smoke that went up from them, when his eyes were opened by the Spirit of God, said—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for him that love him." He saw by faith Christ crucified upon the cross; he beheld him weltering in his own blood in Gethsemane's garden; he saw the disciples going out of Jerusalem, to preach everywhere the Word of God; he marked the progress of Messiah's kingdom, and he looked down to these latter days, when every man under his own vine and fig tree doth worship God, none daring to make him afraid; and he could well have cheered the captives in Babylon in words like these,—"Now ye sit down and weep, and ye will not sing in a strange land the songs of Zion; but lift up your heads, for your salvation draweth nigh. Your eye hath not seen, nor your ear heard, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but he hath revealed them unto me by his Spirit." And now, beloved, we stand on the borders of a new era. The mediatorial dispensation is almost finished. In a few more years, if prophecy be not thoroughly misin-

terpreted, we shall enter upon another condition. This poor earth of ours, which has been swathed in darkness, shall put on her garments of light. She hath toiled a long while in travail and sorrow. Soon shall her groanings end. Her surface, which has been stained with blood, is soon to be purified by love, and a religion of peace is to be established. The hour is coming, when storms shall be hushed, when tempests shall be unknown, when whirlwind and hurricane shall stay their mighty force, and when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ." But you ask me what sort of kingdom that is to be, and whether I can show you any likeness thereof. I answer, no; "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,' in the next, the millenial dispensation; "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." Sometimes, when we climb upwards, there are moments of contemplation when we can understand that verse, "From whence we look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be revealed from heaven," and can anticipate that thrice blessed hour, when the King of kings shall put on his head the crown of the universe, when he shall gather up sheaves of sceptres, and put them beneath his arm—when he shall take the crowns from the heads of all monarchs, and welding them into one, shall put them on his own head, admist the shouts of ten thousand times ten thousand who shall chaunt his high praises. But it is little enough that we can guess of its wonders.

But persons are curious to know what kind of dispensation the Millennial one is to be. Will the temple, they ask, be erected in Jerusalem? Will the Jews be positively restored to their own land? Will the different nations all speak one language? Will they all resort to one temple? and ten thousand other questions. Beloved, we cannot answer you. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." We do not profess to understand the minutiae of these things. It is enough for us to believe that a latter-day glory is approaching. Our eyes glisten with joy, in the full belief that it is coming; and our hearts swell big at the thought that our Master is to reign over the wide, wide world, and to win it for himself. But if you begin questioning us, we tell you that we cannot explain it. Just as under the legal dispensation there were types and shadows, but the mass of the people never saw Christ in them, so there are a great many different things in this dispensation which are types of the next, which will never be explained till we have more wisdom, more light, and more instruction. Just as the enlightened Jew partially foresaw what the Gospel was to be by the law, so may we guess the Millennium by the present, but we have not light enough: there are few who are taught enough in the deep things of God to explain them fully. Therefore we still say of the mass of mankind—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man, things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them *unto us* by his Spirit," in some measure, and he will do so more and more, by-and-bye.

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

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

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

said, "Surely, these grandeurs must be something like heaven; we have clapped our hands, and exclaimed—

"Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood,

Stand dressed in living green."

We have imagined that there really were fields in heaven, and that things of earth were patterns of things in heaven. It was all a mistake:—"Eye hath not seen" it.

Equally does our text assert that "the ear hath not heard" it. Oh! have we not on the Sabbath day sometimes heard the sweet voice of the messenger of God, when he has by the Spirit spoken to our souls! We knew something of heaven then, we thought. At other times we have been entranced with the voice of the preacher, and with the remarkable sayings which he has uttered; we have been charmed by his eloquence; some of us have known what it is to sit and weep and smile alternately, under the power of some mighty man who played with us as skilfully as David could have played on his harp; and we have said, "How sweet to hear those sounds! how glorious his eloquence! how wonderful his power of oratory! Now I think I know something of what heaven is, for my mind is so carried away, my passions are so excited, my imagination is so elevated, all the powers of my mind are stirred upon so that I can think of nothing but of what the preacher is speaking about!" But the ear is not the medium by which you can guess anything of heaven. The "ear hath not heard" it. At other times perhaps you have heard sweet music; and hath not music poured from the lungs of man—that noblest instrument in the world—or from some manufacture of harmony, and we have thought, "Oh! how glorious this is!" and fancied, "This is what John meant in the Revelation—'I heard a voice like many waters, and like exceeding great thunders, and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps;' and this must be something like heaven, something like the hallelujahs of the glorified." But ah! beloved, we made a mistake. "Ear hath not heard" it.

Here has been the very ground of that error into which many persons have fallen concerning heaven. They have said that they would like to go to heaven. What for? For this reason: *they looked upon it as a place where they should be free from bodily pain*. They should not have the head-ache or the tooth-ache there, nor any of those diseases which flesh is heir to, and whenever God laid his hand upon them they began to wish themselves in heaven, because they regarded it as a heaven of the senses—a heaven which the eye hath seen or the ear heard. A great mistake; for although we shall have a body free from pain, yet it is not a heaven where our senses shall indulge themselves. The labourer will have it, that heaven is a place,

Where on a green and flowery mount

His weary soul shall sit.

Another will have it that heaven is a place where he shall *eat to the full, and his body shall be satisfied*. We may use these as figures; but we are so degenerate that we are apt to

build a fine Mahometan heaven, and to think, there shall we have all the delights of the flesh; there shall we drink from bowls of nectared wine; there shall we lavishly indulge ourselves, and our body shall enjoy every delight of which it is capable. What a mistake for us to conceive such a thing! Heaven is not a place for the delight of mere sense; we shall be raised not a sensual body, but a spiritual body. We can get no conceptions of heaven through the senses; they must always come through the Spirit. That is our first thought. It is not a heaven to be grasped by the senses.

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

Our next point is, that *it is not a heaven of the* INTELLECT. Men who take to themselves the title of intelligent, and who very humbly and modestly call themselves philosophers, generally describe heaven as a place where we shall know all things; and their grandest idea of heaven is, that they shall discover all secrets there. There the rock which would not tell its origin shall bubble forth its history; there the star which would not tell its date, and could not be made to whisper of its inhabitants, shall at once unravel all its secrets; there the animal, the fashion of which could scarcely be guessed at, so long had it been buried amongst other fossils in the earth, shall start up again, and it shall be seen of what form and shape it

really was:—there the rocky secrets of this our earth that they never could discover will be opened to them; and they conceive that they shall travel from one star to another star, from planet to planet, and fill their enobled intellect, as they now delight to call it, with all kinds of human knowledge. They reckon that heaven will be to understand the works of the Creator: and concerning such men as Bacon and other great philosophers, of whose piety we generally have very little evidence, we read at the end of their biographies—"He has now departed, that noble spirit which taught us such glorious things here, to sip at the fountain of knowledge, and have all his mistakes rectified, and his doubts cleared up." But we do not believe anything of the kind. Intellect! thou knowest it now! "It hath not entered into the heart of man." It is high; what canst thou know? It is deep; what canst thou understand? It is only the Spirit that can give you a guess of heaven.

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

First of all, we think a Christian gets a gaze of what heaven is, *when in the midst of trials and troubles he is able to cast all his care upon the Lord*, because he careth for him. When waves of distress, and billows of affliction pass over the Christian, there are times when his faith is so strong that he lies down and sleeps, though the hurricane is thundering in his ears, and though billows are rocking him like a child in its cradle, though the earth is removed, and the mountains are carried into the midst of the sea, he says, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Famine and desolation come; but he says, "Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit on the vine, though the

labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no increase, yet will I trust in the Lord, and stay myself on the God of Jacob." Affliction smites him to the ground; he looks up, and says, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." The blows that are given to him are like the lashing of a whip upon the water, covered up immediately, and he seems to feel nothing. It is not stoicism; it is the peculiar sleep of the beloved. "So he giveth his beloved sleep." Persecution surrounds him; but he is unmoved. Heaven is something like that—a place of holy calm and trust—

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

But there is another season in which the Christian has heaven revealed to him; and that is, *the season of quiet contemplation*. There are precious hours, blessed be God, when we forget the world—times and seasons when we get quite away from it, when our weary spirit wings its way far, far, from scenes of toil and strife. There are precious moments when the angel of contemplation gives us a vision. He comes and puts his finger on the lip of the noisy world; he bids the wheels that are continually rattling in our ears be still; and we sit down, and there is a solemn silence of the mind. We find our heaven and our God; we engage ourselves in contemplating the glories of Jesus, or mounting upwards towards the bliss of heaven—in going backward to the great secrets of electing love, in considering the immutability of the blessed covenant, in thinking of what wind which "bloweth where it listeth," in remembering our own participation of that life which cometh from God, in thinking of our blood-bought union with the Lamb, of the consummation of our marriage with him in realms of light and bliss, or any such kindred topics. Then it is that we know a little about heaven. Have ye never found, O ye sons and daughters of gaiety, a holy calm come over you at times, in reading the thoughts of your fellowmen? But oh! how blessed to come and read the thoughts of God, and work, and weave them out in contemplation. Then we have a web of contemplation that we wrap around us like an enchanted garment, and we open our eyes and see heaven. Christian! when you are enabled by the Spirit to hold a season of sweet contemplation, then you can say—"But he hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit;" for the joys of heaven are akin to the joys of contemplation, and the joys of a holy calm in God. But there are times with me—I dare say there may be with some of you—when we do something more than contemplate—when we arise by meditation above thought itself, and when our soul, after having touched the Pisgah of contemplation by the way, flies positively into the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. There are seasons when the Spirit not only stands and flaps his wings o'er the gulf, but positively crosses the Jordan and dwells with Christ, holds fellow-

ship with angels, and talks with spirits—gets up there with Jesus, clasps him in his arms, and cries, "My beloved is mine, and I am his; I will hold him, and will not let him go." I know what it is at times to lay my beating head on the bosom of Christ with something more than faith—actually and positively to get hold of him; not only to take him by faith, but actually and positively to feed on him; to feel a vital union with him, to grasp his arm, and feel his very pulse beating. You say. "Tell it not to unbelievers; they will laugh!" Laugh ye may; but when we are there we care not for your laughter, if ye should laugh as loud as devils; for one moment's fellowship with Jesus would recompense us for it all. Picture not fairy lands; this is heaven, this is bliss. "He hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit."

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

"Can I Gethesemane forget?
Or there thy conflicts see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,
And not remember thee?
Remember thee and all thy pains,
And all thy love to me,—
Yes, while a pulse, or breath remains,
I will remember thee."

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

"And when these failing lips grow dumb,
And thought and memory flee;
When thou shalt in thy kingdom come,
Jesus, remember me."

O my erring brethren, ye who live on, unbaptized, and who receive not this sacred supper, I tell you not that they will save you—most assuredly they will not, and if you are not saved before you receive them they will be an injury to you;—but if you are the Lord's people, why need you stay away? I tell you, the Lord's table is so high a place that you can see heaven from it very often. You get so near the cross there, you breathe so near the cross, that your sight becomes clearer, and the air brighter, and you see more of heaven there than anywhere else. Christian, do not neglect the supper of thy Lord; for it thou dost, he will hide heaven from thee, in a measure.

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

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

"Once a sinner, near despair,
Sought thy mercy-seat by prayer;
Mercy heard and set him free;
Lord, that mercy came to me."

You say, "What is thy name, Lord?" He will not tell you. You hold him fast still; at last he deigns to bless you. That is certainly some foretaste of heaven, when you feel alone with Jesus. Let no man know your prayers; they are between God and yourselves; but if you want to know much of heaven, spend some extra time in prayer; for God then reveals it to us by his Spirit.

"Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish." You have been saying in your hearts, "The prophet is a fool, and this spiritual man is mad." Go away and say these things; but be it known unto you, that what ye style madness is to us wisdom and what ye count folly "is the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom." And if there is a poor penitent here this morning, saying, "Ah! sir, I get visions enough of hell, but I do not get visions of heaven;" poor penitent sinner, thou canst not have any visions of heaven, unless thou lookest

through the hands of Christ. The only glass through which a poor sinner can see bliss is that formed by the holes in Jesus' hands. Dost thou not know, that all grace and mercy was put into the hand of Christ, and that it never could have run out to thee unless his hand had been bored through in crucifixion. He cannot hold it from thee, for it will run through; and he cannot hold it in his heart, for he has got a rent in it made by the spear. Go and confess your sin to him, and he will wash you, and make you whiter than snow. If you feel you cannot repent, go to him and tell him so, for he is exalted to give repentance, as well as remission of sins. Oh! that the spirit of God might give you true repentance and true faith; and then saint and sinner shall meet together, and both shall not only know what "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard;" but

"Then shall we see, and hear, and know
All we desired or wished below,
And every power find sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy."

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

The Incarnation and Birth of Christ

A Sermon
(No. 57)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 23rd, 1855, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"But thou, Beth-lehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."—Micah 5:2.

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

"Who with more care keep holiday
The wrong, than others the right way."

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

To proceed at once to what we have to say to you: we notice, first, *who it was that sent Christ forth*. God the Father here speaks, and says, "Out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel." Secondly, *where did he come to at the time of his incarnation?* Thirdly, *what did he come for?* "To be ruler in Israel." Fourthly, *had he ever come before?* Yes, he had. "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

I. First, then, WHO SENT JESUS CHRIST? The answer is returned to us by the words of the text. "Out of thee" saith Jehovah, speaking by the mouth of Micah, I out of thee shall he come forth unto me." It is a sweet thought that Jesus Christ, did not come forth without his Father's permission, authority, consent, and assistance. He was sent of the Father, that he might be the Saviour of men. We are, alas! too apt to forget, that while there are distinctions as to the persons in the Trinity, there are no distinctions of honor; and we do very

frequently ascribe the honor of our salvation, or at least the depths of its mercy and the extremity of its benevolence, more to Jesus Christ than we do to the Father. This is a very great mistake. What if Jesus came? Did not his Father send him? If he was made a child did not the Holy Ghost beget him? If he spake wondrously, did not his Father pour grace into his lips, that he might be an able minister of the new covenant? If his Father did forsake him when he drank the bitter cup of gall, did he not love him still? and did he not, by-and by, after three days, raise him from the dead, and at last receive him up on high, leading captivity captive? Ah! beloved, he who knoweth the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost as he should know them, never setteth one before another; he is not more thankful to one than the other; he sees them at Bethlehem, at Gethsemane, and on Calvary, all equally engaged in the work of salvation. "He shall come forth unto me." O Christian, hast thou put thy confidence in the man Christ Jesus? Hast thou placed thy reliance solely on him? And art thou united with him? Then believe that thou art united unto the God of heaven; since to the man Christ Jesus thou art brother and holdest closest fellowship, thou art linked thereby with God the Eternal, and "the Ancient of days" is thy Father and thy friend. "He shall come forth unto *me*". Did you never see the depth of love there was in the heart of Jehovah, when God the Father equipped his Son for the great enterprise of mercy? There had been a sad day in Heaven once before, when Satan fell, and dragged with him a third of the stars of heaven, and when the Son of God launching from his great right hand the Omnipotent thunders, dashed the rebellious crew to the pit of perdition; but if we could conceive a grief in heaven, that must have been a sadder day, when the Son of the Most High left his Father's bosom, where he had lain from before all worlds "Go," saith the Father, "and thy Father's blessing on thy head!" Then comes the unrobing. How do angels crowd around to see the Son of God take off his robes He laid aside his crown; he said, "My father, I am Lord over all, blessed for ever, but I will lay my crown aside, and be as mortal men are." He strips himself of his bright vest of glory; "Father," he says, "I will wear a robe of clay, just such a men wear." Then he takes off all those jewels wherewith he was glorified; he lays aside his starry mantles and robes of light, to dress himself in the simple garments of the peasant of Galilee. What a solemn disrobing that must have been! And next, can you picture the dismissal! The angels attend the Saviour through the streets, until they approach the doors: when an angel cries, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and let the king of glory through!" Oh! methinks the angels must have wept when they lost the company of Jesus—when the Sun of Heaven bereaved them of all its light. But they went after him. They descended with him; and when his spirit entered into flesh and he became a babe, he was attended by that mighty host of angels, who after they had been with him to Bethlehem's manger, and seen him safely, laid on his mother's breast, in their journey upwards appeared to the shepherds and told them that he was born king of the Jews. *The Father* sent him! Contemplate that subject. Let your soul get hold of it, and in every period

of his life think that he suffered what *the Father* willed; that every step of his life was marked with the approval of the great I AM. Let every thought that you have of Jesus be also connected with the eternal, ever-blessed God; for "he," saith Jehovah, "shall come forth unto me." Who sent him, then? The answer is, his Father.

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

1. First, it seemed necessary that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, *because of Bethlehem's history*. Dear to every Israelite was the little village of Bethlehem. Jerusalem might outshine it in splendour; for there stood the temple, the glory of the whole earth, and "beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth was Mount Zion;" yet around Bethlehem there clustered a number of incidents which always made it a pleasant resting-place to every Jewish mind; and even the Christian cannot help loving Bethlehem. The first mention, I think, that we have of Bethlehem is a sorrowful one. There Rachel died. If you turn to the 35th of Genesis you will find it said in the 16th verse—"And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave, that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." A singular incident this—almost prophetic. Might not Mary have called her own son Jesus, her Ben-oni; for he was to be the child of Sorrow? Simeon said to her—"Yea, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." But while she might have called him Ben-oni, what did God his Father call him? Benjamin, the son of my right hand. Ben-oni was he as a man; Benjamin as to his Godhead. This little incident seems to be almost a prophecy that Ben-oni—Benjamin, the Lord Jesus, should be born in Bethlehem. But another woman makes this place celebrated. That woman's name was Naomi. There lived at Bethlehem in after days, when, perhaps, the stone that Jacob's fondness had raised had been covered with moss and its inscription obliterated, another woman named Naomi. She too was a daughter of joy, and yet a daughter of bitterness. Naomi was a woman whom the Lord had loved and blessed, but she had to go to a strange land; and she said, "Call me not Naomi (pleasant) but let my name be called Mara (bitter) for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." Yet was she not alone amid all her losses, for there cleaved unto her Ruth the Moabitess, whose Gentile blood should unite with the pure untainted stream of the Jew, and should thus bring forth the Lord our Saviour, the great king both of Jews and Gentiles. That very beautiful book of Ruth had all its scenery laid in Bethlehem. It was at Bethlehem that Ruth went forth to glean in the fields of Boaz; it was there that Boaz looked upon her,

and she bowed herself before her lord; it was there her marriage was celebrated; and in the streets of Bethlehem did Boaz and Ruth receive a blessing which made them fruitful so that Boaz became the father of Obed, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David. That last fact gilds Bethlehem with glory—the fact that David was born there—the mighty hero who smote the Philistine giant, who led the discontented of his land away from the tyranny of their monarch, and who afterwards, by a full consent of a willing people, was crowned king of Israel and Judah. Bethlehem was a royal city, because the kings were there brought forth. Little as Bethlehem was, it was much to be esteemed; because it was like certain principalities which we have in Europe, which are celebrated for nothing but for bringing forth the consorts of the royal families of England. It was right, then, from history, that Bethlehem should be the birth-place of Christ.

2. But again: *there is something in the name of the place.* "Bethlehem Ephratah." The word *Bethlehem* has a double meaning. It signifies "the house of bread," and "the house of war." Ought not Jesus Christ to be born in "the house of bread?" He is the Bread of his people, on which they feed. As our fathers ate manna in the wilderness, so do we live on Jesus here below. Famished by the world, we cannot feed on its shadows. Its husks may gratify the swinish taste of worldlings, for they are swine; but we need something more substantial, and in that blest bread of heaven, made of the bruised body of our Lord Jesus, and baked in the furnace of his agonies, we find a blessed food. No food like Jesus to the desponding soul or to the strongest saint. The very meanest of the family of God goes to Bethlehem for his bread; and the strongest man, who eats strong meat, goes to Bethlehem for it. House of Bread! whence could come our nourishment but from thee? We have tried Sinai, but on her rugged steeps there grow no fruits, and her thorny heights yield no corn whereon we may feed. We have repaired even to Tabor itself, where Christ was transfigured, and yet there we have not been able to eat his flesh and drink his blood. But Bethlehem, thou house of bread, rightly wast thou called; for there the bread of life was first handed down for man to eat. And it is also called "the house of war;" because Christ is to a man "the house of bread," or else "the house of war." While he is food to the righteous he causeth war to the wicked, according to his own word— "Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth; I am not come to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Sinner! if thou dost not know Bethlehem as "the house of bread," it shall be to thee a "house of war." If from the lips of Jesus thou dost never drink sweet honey—if thou art not like the bee, which sippeth sweet luscious liquor from the Rose of Sharon, then out of the selfsame mouth there shall go forth against thee a two-edged sword; and that mouth from which the righteous draw their bread, shall be to thee the mouth of destruction and the cause of thine ill. Jesus of Bethlehem, house of bread and house of war, we trust we know thee as our bread. Oh!

that some who are now at war with thee might hear in their hearts, as well as in their ears the song—

"Peace on earth, and mercy mild.

God and sinners reconciled."

And now for that word *Ephratah* That was the old name of the place which the Jews retained and loved. The meaning of it is, "fruitfulness," or "abundance." Ah! well was Jesus born in the house of fruitfulness; for whence cometh my fruitfulness and any fruitfulness, my brother, but from Bethlehem? Our poor barren hearts ne'er produced one fruit, or flower, till they were watered with the Saviour blood. It is his incarnation which fattens the soil of our hearts. There had been pricking thorns on all the ground, and mortal poisons, before be came; but our fruitfulness comes from him. "I am like a green fir-tree; from thee is my fruit found." "All my springs are in thee." If we be like trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth our fruit in our season, it is not because we were naturally fruitful, but because of the rivers of water by which we were planted. It is Jesus that makes us fruitful. "If a man abide in me," he says, "and my words abide him, he shall bring forth much fruit." Glorious Bethlehem Ephratah! Rightly named! Fruitful house of bread—the house of abundant provision for the people of God!

3. We notice, next, *the position of Bethlehem*. It is said to be "little among the thousands of Judah." Why is this? Because Jesus Christ always goes among little ones. He was born in the little one "among the thousands of Judah." No Bashan's high hill, not on Hebron's royal mount, not in Jerusalem's palaces. but the humble, yet illustrious, village of Bethlehem. There is a passage in Zechariah which teaches us a lesson:—lt is said that the man on the red horse stood among the myrtle-trees. Now the myrtle-trees grow at the bottom of the hill; and the man on the red horse always rides there. He does not ride on the mountain-top; he rides among the humble in heart. "With this man will I dwell, saith the Lord, with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word." There are some little ones here this morning—"little among the thousands of Judah." No one ever heard your name, did they? If you were buried, and had your name on your tombstone, it would never be noticed. Those who pass by would say, "it is nothing to me: I never knew him." You do not know much of yourself, or think much of yourself; you can scarcely read, perhaps. Or if you have some talent and ability, you are despised amongst men; or, if you are not despised by them, you despise yourself. You are one of the little ones. Well, Christ is always born in Bethlehem among the little ones. Big hearts never get Christ inside of them; Christ lieth not in great hearts, but in little ones. Mighty and proud spirits never have Jesus Christ, for he cometh in at low doors, but he will not come in at high ones. He who hath a broken heart, and a low spirit, shall have the Saviour, but none else. He healeth not the prince and the king, but "the broken in heart, and he bindeth up their wounds." Sweet thought! He is

the Christ of the little ones. "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."

We cannot pass away from this without another thought here, which is, *how wonderfully mysterious was that providence which brought Jesus Christ's mother to Bethlehem at the very time when she was to be delivered*! His parents were residing at Nazareth; and what should they want to travel at that time for? Naturally, they would have remained at home; it was not at all likely that his mother would have taken journey to Bethlehem while in so peculiar a condition; but Caesar Augustus issues a decree that they are to be taxed. Very well, then, let them be taxed at Nazareth. No; it pleases him that they should all go to their city. But why should Caesar Augustus think of it just at that particular time? Simply because, while man deviseth his way, the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord. Why, what a thousand chances, as the world has it, met together to bring about this event! First of all, Caesar quarrels with Herod; one of the Herods was deposed; Caesar says, "I shall tax Judea, and make it a province, instead of having it for a separate kingdom. Well, it must be done. But when is it to be done? This taxing, it is said, was first commenced when Cyreneus was governor. But why is the census to be taken at that particular period—suppose, December? Why not have had it last October and why could not the people be taxed where they were living? Was not their money just as good there as anywhere else? It was Caesar's whim; but it was God's decree. Oh! we love the sublime doctrine of eternal absolute predestination. Some have doubted its being consistent with the free agency of man. We know well it is so, and we never saw any difficulty in the subject; we believe metaphysicians have made difficulties; we see none ourselves. It is for us to believe, that man does as he pleases, yet notwithstanding he always does as God decrees. If Judas betrays Christ, "thereunto he was appointed;" and if Pharaoh hardens his heart, yet, "for this purpose have I raised thee up, for to show forth my power in thee." Man doth as he wills; but God maketh him do as he willeth, too. Nay, not only is the will of man under the absolute predestination of Jehovah; but all things, great or little, are of him. Well hath the good poet said, "Doubtless the sailing of a cloud hath Providence to its pilot; doubtless the root of an oak is gnarled for a special purpose, God compasseth all things, mantling the globe like air." There is nothing great or little, that is not from him. The summer dust moves in its orbit, guided by the same hand which rolls the stars along; the dewdrops have their father, and trickle on the rose leaf as God bids them; yea, the sear leaves of the forest, when hurled along by the tempest, have their allotted position where they shall fall, nor can they go beyond it. In the great, and in the little, there is God—God in everything, working all things according to the counsel of his own will; and though man seeks to go against his Maker, yet he cannot. God hath bounded the sea with a barrier of sand; and if the sea mount up wave after wave, yet it shall not exceed its allotted channel. Everything is of God; and unto him. who guideth the stars and wingeth sparrows,

who ruleth planets and yet moveth atoms, who speaks thunders and yet whispers zephyrs, unto him be glory; for there is God in everything,

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

"Born thy people to deliver;

Born a child, and yet a king."

The moment that he came on earth he was a king. He did not wait till his majority that he might take his empire; but as soon as his eye greeted the sunshine he was a king; from the moment that his little hands grasped anything, they grasped a sceptre, as soon as his pulse beat, and his blood began to flow, his heart beat royally, and his pulse beat an imperial measure, and his blood flowed in a kingly current. He was born a king. He came "to be ruler in Israel. "Ah!" says one, "then he came in vain, for little did he exercise his rule; 'he came unto his own, and his own received him not;' he came to Israel and he was not their ruler, but he was 'despised and rejected of men,' cast off by them all, and forsaken by Israel, unto whom he came." Ay, but "they are not all Israel who are of Israel," neither because they are the seed of Abraham shall they all be called. Ah, no! He is not ruler of Israel after the flesh, but he is the ruler of Israel after the spirit. Many such have obeyed him. Did not the apostles bow before him, and own him as their king? And now, doth not Israel salute him as their ruler? Do not all the seed of Abraham after the spirit, even all the faithful, for he is "the father of the faithful," acknowledge that unto Christ belong the shields of the mighty, for he is the king of the whole earth? Doth he not rule over Israel? Ay, verily he doth; and those who are not ruled over by Christ are not of Israel. He came to be a ruler over Israel. My brother, hast thou submitted to the sway of Jesus? Is he ruler in thine heart, or is he not? We may know Israel by this: Christ is come into their hearts, to be ruler over them. "Oh!" saith one, "I do as I please, I was never in bondage to any man." Ah! then thou hatest the rule of Christ. "Oh!" says another, "I submit myself to my minister, to my clergyman, or to my priest, and I think that what he tells me is enough, for he is my ruler." Dost thou? Ah! poor slave, thou knowest not thy dignity; for nobody is thy lawful ruler but the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ay," says another, "I have professed his religion, and I am his follower." But doth he rule in thine heart? Doth he command thy will? Doth he guide thy judgment? Dost thou ever seek counsel at his hand in thy difficulties? Art thou desirous to honor him, and to put

crowns upon his heart? Is he thy ruler? If so, then thou art one of Israel; for it is written, "He shall come to be ruler in Israel." Blessed Lord Jesus! thou art ruler in thy people's hearts, and thou ever shalt be; we want no other ruler save thyself, and we will submit to none other. We are free, because we are the servants of Christ; we are at liberty, because he is our ruler, and we know no bondage and no slavery, because Jesus Christ alone is monarch of our hearts. He came "to be ruler in Israel;" and mark you, that mission of his is not quite fulfilled yet, and shall not be till the latter-day glories. In a little while you shall see Christ come again, to be ruler over his people Israel, and ruler over them not only as spiritual Israel, but even as natural Israel, for the Jews shall be restored to their land, and the tribes of Jacob shall yet sing in the halls of their temple; unto God there shall yet again be offered Hebrew songs of praise, and the heart of the unbelieving Jew shall be melted at the feet of the true Messias. In a short time, he who at his birth was hailed king of the Jews by Easterns, and at his death was written king of the Jews by a Western, shall be called king of the Jews everywhere—yes, king of the Jews and Gentiles also—in that universal monarchy whose dominion shall be co-extensive with the habitable globe, and whose duration shall be coeval with time itself. He came to be a ruler in Israel, and a ruler most decidedly he shall be, when he shall reign among his people with his ancients gloriously.

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

First, *Christ has had his goings forth in his Godhead*. "From everlasting." He has not been a secret and a silent person up to this moment. That new-born child there has worked wonders long ere now; that infant slumbering in its mother's arms is the infant of to-day, but it is the ancient of eternity; that child who is there hath not made its appearance on the stage of this world; his name is not yet written in the calendar of the circumcised; but still though you wist it not, "his goings forth have been of old, from everlasting."

1. Of old *he went forth as our covenant head in election*, "according as he hath chosen us in *Him*, before the foundation of the world."

Christ be my first elect, he said,
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head."

2. He had goings forth for his people, *as their representative before the throne, even before they were begotten in the world.* It was from everlasting that his mighty fingers grasped the pen, the stylus of ages, and wrote his own name, the name of the eternal Son of God; it was from everlasting that he signed the compact with his Father, that he would pay blood for blood, wound for wound, suffering for suffering, agony for agony, and death for death, in the behalf of his people; it was from everlasting that he gave himself up, without a murmuring word, that from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he might sweat blood, that he might be spit upon, pierced, mocked, rent asunder, suffer the pain of death, and the agonies of the cross. His goings forth as our Surety were from everlasting. Pause, my soul, and

wonder! Thou hadst goings forth in the person of Jesus from everlasting. Not only when thou wast born into the world did Christ love thee, but his delights were with the sons of men before there were any sons of men. Often did he think of them; from everlasting to everlasting he had set his affection upon them. What! believer, has he been so long about thy salvation, and will he not accomplish it? Has he from everlasting been going forth to save me, and will he lose me now? What! has he had me in his hand, as his precious jewel, and will he now let me slip between his precious fingers? Did he choose me before the mountains were brought forth, or the channels of the deep scooped out, and will he lose me now? Impossible!

"My name from the palms of his hands
Eternity cannot erase;
Impress'd on his heart it remains,
In marks of indelible grace."

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

"His love in times past forbids me to think.
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink."

No; since "his goings forth were of old from everlasting," they will be "to everlasting."

Secondly, we believe that Christ *has come forth of old, even to men, so that men have beheld him. I* will not stop to tell you that it was Jesus who walked in the garden of Eden in the cool of the (lay, for his delights were with the sons of men; nor will I detain you by pointing out all the various ways in which Christ came forth to his people in the form of the angel of the covenant, the Paschal Lamb, the and ten thousand types with which the sacred history is so replete; but I will rather point you to four occasions when Jesus Christ our Lord has appeared on earth as a man, before his great incarnation for our salvation. And, first, I beg to refer you to the 18th chapter of Genesis, where Jesus Christ appeared to *Abraham,* of whom we read, "The Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and

bowed himself toward the ground. "But whom did he bow to? He said "My Lord,"only to one of them. There was one man between the other two, the most conspicuous for his glory, for he was the God-man Christ; the other two were created angels, who for a time had assumed the appearance of men. But this was the man Christ Jesus. "And he said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree." You will notice that this majestic man, this glorious person, stayed behind to talk with Abraham. In the 22nd verse it is said,—And the men turned their faces from thence and went towards Sodom;" that is, two of them, as you will see in the next chapter—"but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." You will notice that this man, the Lord, held sweet fellowship with Abraham, and allowed Abraham to plead for the city he was about to destroy. He was in the positive form of man; so that when he walked the streets of Judea it was not the first time that he was a man; lie was so before, in "the plain of Mamre, in the heat of the day." There is another instance-his appearing to *Jacob,* which you have recorded in the 32nd chapter of Genesis and the 24th verse. All his family were gone, "And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And be said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God." This was a man, and yet God. "For as a prince bast thou power with God and with men, and bast prevailed." And Jacob knew that this man was God, for he says in the 30th verse: for I have seen God face to face. and my life is preserved." Another instance you will find in the book of *Joshua* When Joshua had crossed the narrow stream of Jordan, and had entered the promised land, and was about to drive out the Canaanites, lo! this mighty man-God appeared to Joshua. In the 5th chapter, at the 13th verse, we read- And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went unto him, and (like a brave warrior, as he was,) said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay; but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." And Joshua saw at once that there was divinity in him; for Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said to him, "What saith my lord unto his servant?" Now, if this had been a created angel lie would have reproved Joshua, and said, "I am one of your fellow servants." But no; "the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so." Another remarkable instance is that recorded in the third chapter of the book of Daniel, where we read the account of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego being cast into the fiery furnace, which was so fierce that it destroyed the men who threw them in. Suddenly the

king said to his counsellors- Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, king. He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." How should Nebuchadnezzar know that? Only that there was something so noble and majestic in the way in which that wondrous Man bore himself, and some awful influence about him, who so marvellously broke the consuming teeth of that biting an I devouring flame, so that it could not so much as singe the children of God. Nebuchadnezzar recognized his humanity. He did not say,"I see three men and an angel," but he said, "I see four positive men, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.' You see, then, what is meant by his goings forth being I from everlasting:'

Observe for a moment here, that each of these four great occurrences happened to the saints *when they were engaged in very eminent duty, or when they were about to be engaged in it.* Jesus Christ does not appear to his saints every day. He did not come to see Jacob till he was in affliction; he did not visit Joshua before he was about to be engaged in a righteous war. It is only in extraordinary seasons that Christ thus manifests himself to his people. When Abraham interceded for Sodom, Jesus was with him, for one of the highest and noblest employments of a Christian is that of intercession, and it is when he is so engaged that he will be likely to obtain a sight of Christ. Jacob was engaged in *wrestling,* and that is a part of a Christian's duty to which some of you never did attain; consequently, you do not have many visits from Jesus. It was when Joshua was *exercising bravery* that the Lord met him. So with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego: they were in the high places of *persecution,* on account of their adherence to duty, when he came to them, and said, "I will be with you, passing through the fire." There are certain peculiar places we must enter, to meet with the Lord. We must be in great trouble, like Jacob; we must be in great labour, like Joshua; we must have great intercessory faith, like Abraham; we must be firm in the performance of duty, like Shadrach Meshach, and Abednego; or else we shall not know him, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting;" or, if we know him, we shall not be able to "comprehend with all the saints what is the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,"

Sweet Lord Jesus! thou whose goings forth were of old, even from everlasting, thou hast not left thy goings forth yet. Oh! that thou wouldst go forth this day, to cheer the faint, to help the weary, to bind up our wounds, to comfort our distresses! Go forth, we beseech thee, to conquer sinners, to subdue hard hearts-to break the iron gates of sinners' lusts, and cut the iron bars of their sirs in pieces! O Jesus! go forth; and when thou goest forth, come thou to me! Am I a hardened sinner? Come thou to me; I want thee:

"Oh! let thy grace my heart subdue;
I would be led in triumph too;
A willing captive to my Lord,

To sing the honours of thy word."

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

Canaan on Earth

A Sermon
(No. 58)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 30, 1855, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"For the land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year."—Deuteronomy 11:10-12.

IT HAS generally been considered, that the passage of the Jordan by the Israelites is typical of death, and that Canaan is a fitting representation of heaven. We believe that in some sense it is true, and we do fondly cherish the household words of those hymns which describe our passing through Jordan's billows, and landing safe on Canaan's side; but we do think that the allegory does not hold, and that Jordan is not a fair exhibition of death, nor the land of Canaan a fair picture of the sweet land beyond the swelling flood which the Christian gains after death. For mark you, after the children of Israel had entered into Canaan, they had to fight with their enemies. It was a land filled with foes. Every city they entered they had to take by storm, unless a miracle dismantled it. They were warriors, even in the land of Canaan, fighting for their own inheritance; and though each tribe had its lot marked out, yet they had to conquer the giant Anakim, and encounter terrible hosts of Canaanites. But when we cross the river of death we shall have no foes to fight, no enemies to encounter. Heaven is a place already prepared for us; out of it the evil ones have long ago been driven; there brethren shall await us with pleasing faces, kind hands shall clasp ours, and loving words shall alone be heard. The shout of war shall ne'er be raised by us in heaven; we shall throw our swords away, and the scabbards with them. No battles with warriors there, no plains besoaked with blood, no hills where robbers dwell, no inhabitants with chariots of iron. It is "a land flowing with milk and honey;" and it dreams not of the foeman of Canaan of old. We think the church has lost the beauty of Scripture, in taking Jordan to mean death, and that a far fuller meaning is the true allegory to be connected with it. Egypt, as we have lately observed to you, was typical of the condition of the children of God while they are in bondage to the law of sin. There they are made to work unceasingly, without wages or profit, but continually subject to pains. We said, again, that the coming up out of Egypt was the type of the deliverance which every one of God's people enjoys, when by faith he strikes the blood of Jesus on his lintel and his doorpost, and spiritually eats the paschal

lamb; and we can also tell you now, that the passage through the wilderness is typical of that state of hoping, and fearing, and doubting, and wavering, and inconstancy, and distrust, which we usually experience between the period when we come out of Egypt, and attain unto the full assurance of faith.

Many of you, my dear hearers, are really come out of Egypt; but you are still wandering about in the wilderness. "We that have believed do enter into rest;" but you, though you have eaten of Jesus, have not so believed on him as to have entered into the Canaan of rest. You are the Lord's people, but you have not come into the Canaan of assured faith, confidence, and hope, where we wrestle no longer with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers *in the heavenly places* in Christ Jesus—when it is no longer a matter of doubt with us whether we shall be saved, but we feel that we are saved. I have known believers who have existed for years almost without a doubt as to their acceptance. They have enjoyed a sweet and blessed reliance on Christ; they have come into Canaan; they have fed on the good old corn of the land; they now "lie passive in his hand, and know no will but his." They have such a sweet oneness with their blessed Lord Jesus, that they lay their head on his breast all day long, and they have scarcely any nights; they almost always live in days; for though they have not attained unto his perfect image, they feel themselves so manifestly in union with himself that they cannot and dare not doubt. They have entered into rest; they are come into Canaan. Such is the condition of the child of God, when he has come to an advanced stage in his experience, when God has so given him grace upon grace that he can say, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

We will read this passage again; and bear in mind what I understand it to mean. It sets before the Christian's state, after he has attained to this faith and confidence in God; when he is no longer careful about the things of this life, when he does not water the ground with his foot, but has come to a land that drinketh in the rain of heaven. "The land whither thou goest in to possess it,"—the land of high and holy Christian privilege—"is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." We shall have this morning to note, first of all, *the difference between the Christian's temporal condition and that of the Egyptian worldling*; and secondly, *the special privilege vouchsafed to those who have entered into Canaan*—that the eyes of the Lord their God are always upon their land, "from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year."

I. True religion makes a difference not only in a man, but in a man's condition; it affects not only his heart, but his state—not only his nature, but his very standing in society. The

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

First, *the Christian's temporal condition is different to that of the worldling*; for the worldling looks to secondary causes, the Christian looks to heaven; he gets his mercies thence. Read the text, "The land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs." The land of Egypt has never had any rain from heaven; it has been always watered from earthly sources. At a certain season the river Nile overflowed its banks, and covered the land; a stock of water was then accumulated in artificial reservoirs, and afterwards let out in canals, and allowed to run in little trenches through the fields. They had to water it as a garden of herbs. All their dependence was on the nether springs; they looked to the river Nile as the source of all their plenty, and even worshipped it. But the land to which you are coming is not watered from a river; "it drinketh water of the rain of heaven." Your fertility shall not come from such artificial sources as canals and trenches; you shall be fed from the water that descends from heaven! You see how beautifully this pictures a worldling and a Christian. Look at the worldling; what is his dependence? It is all upon the water below; he looks only to the water that flows from the river of this world. "Who will show us any good?" Some rely upon what they call chance—(a river the source of which, like the source of the Nile, is never known;) and though continually disappointed, they still persevere in trusting to this unknown stream. Others, who are more sensible, trust to their hard work and honesty; they look to the source of that river, and they trace it to a fountain of human erection graced by a statue of labour. Ah! that river may yet fail you; it may not overflow its banks, and you may be starved. But, O Christian, what doest thou rely upon? Thy land "drinketh water of the rain of heaven;" thy mercies come not from the hand of chance; thy daily bread cometh not so much from thy industry as from thy heavenly Father's care; thou seest stamped upon every mercy heaven's own inscription, and every blessing comes down to thee perfumed with the ointment and spikenard, and the myrrh of the ivory palaces, whence God dispenses his bounties. Here is the difference between the assured Christian and the mere worldling: the one trusts to natural causes—the other "looks through nature up to nature's God." and seeth his mercies as coming down fresh from heaven.

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

This thought, again, has a great tendency to keep us from an overweening love of the world. If we think that all our mercies come from heaven, we shall not be so likely to love the world, as we shall be if we think that they are the natural products of the soil. The spies went to Eschol, and fetched thence an immense cluster of the grapes which grew there; but you do not find that the people said, "These are fine fruits, therefore we will stay here." No: they saw that the grapes came from Canaan, and thereupon they said, "Let us go on, and possess them." And so, when we get rich mercies, if we think they come from the natural soil of this earth, we feel,

"Here I will for ever stay."

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

"Where our dear Lord his vineyard keeps,

And all the clusters grow."

Christian, then, rejoice, rejoice! Thy mercies come from heaven; however small they be, still they are thy Father's gift; not one comes to thee without his knowledge, and his permission. Bless the Lord, therefore, that thou art come to Canaan; where thy "land drinketh water of the rain of heaven!"

My dearly beloved, just stop here, and console yourselves, if you are in trouble. "Oh!" says one, "I know not what I shall do: where to turn myself I cannot tell." You are not like your brother, who is sitting near you; *he* has a competency; *he* has a river of Egypt to depend on; you have not any; nevertheless, there is the sky still. If you were to tell a farmer, "You have no rivers to water your lands." "Well," he would say, "I don't want them either; for I have clouds up there, and the clouds are enough." So, Christian, if thou hast nothing to de-

pend on down below, turn thine eyes up there, and say, "The land, whither I go in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence I came out, where I sowed my seed, and watered it with my foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither I go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven."

2. But now comes the second distinction, and that is, *a difference in the toilsomeness of their lives*. The worldly man, just like the Israelites in Egypt, has to water his land with his foot. Read the passage:—"For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot as a garden of herbs." This alludes, possibly to the practice, amongst all eastern nations where the land is irrigated, of letting out a certain quantity of water into a trench, and then having small gutters dug in the gardens, to compel the water to run along different parts of the ground. Sometimes one of these gutters might be broken; and then the gardener would press the mould against it with his foot, to keep the water in its proper channel. But I have inclined to think that the passage alludes to the method which those eastern countries have of pumping up the water by a tread-wheel, and so watering the land with their foot. However that may be, it means that the land of Egypt was watered with extraordinary labour, in order to preserve it from sterility. "But," says Moses, "the land, to which ye are going, is not a land which you will have to water with your foot. The water will come spontaneously; the land will be watered by the rain of heaven. You can sit in your own houses, or under your own vine, or under your own fig tree, and God himself shall be your irrigator. You shall sit still, and 'in quietness shall ye possess your souls.'" Now, here is a difference between the godly and ungodly:—*the ungodly man toils*. Suppose his object is ambition; he will labor and labor, and labor, and spend his very life, until he obtains the desire pinnacle. Suppose it is wealth; how will he emaciate his frame, rob his body of its needed sleep, and take away the nourishment his frame requires, in order that he may accumulate riches! And if it is learning, how will he burn his eyes out with the flame of his hot desire, that he may understand all knowledge; how will he allow his frame to become weak, and weary, and wan, by midnight watchings, till the oil wherewith he lighteth himself by night comes from his own flesh, and the marrow of his bones furnisheth the light for his spirit! Men will in this way labour, and toil, and strive. But not so the Christian. No: God "giveth his beloved sleep." His "strength is to sit still." He knows what it is to fulfil the command of Paul:—"I would have you without carefulness." We can take things as God gives them, without all this toil and labour. I have often admired the advice of old Cineas to Pyrrhus. Old story saith, that when Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, was making preparation for his intended expedition into Italy, Cineas, the philosopher, took a favourable opportunity of addressing him thus: "The Romans, sir, are reported to be a warlike and victorious people; but if God permit us to overcome them, what use shall we make of the victory?" "Thou askest," said Pyrrhus, "a thing that is self-evident. The Romans once conquered, no city will resist us; we shall then be masters of all Italy."

Cineas added—"And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?" Pyrrhus not yet aware of his intentions, replied, "Sicily next stretches out her arms to receive us." "That is very probable," said Cineas, "but will the possession of Sicily put an end to the war?" "God grant us success in that," answered Pyrrhus, "and we shall make these only the forerunners of greater things, for then Libra and Carthage will soon be ours: and these things being completed, none of our enemies can offer any further resistance." "Very true," added Cineas, "for then we may easily regain Macedon, and make absolute conquest of Greece; and when all these are in our possession, what shall we do then?" Pyrrhus, smiling, answered, "Why then, my dear friend, we will live at our ease, take pleasure all day, and amuse ourselves with cheerful conversation." "Well sir," said Cineas, "and why may we not do this now, and without the labour and hazard of an enterprise so laborious and uncertain?" So, beloved, says the Christian. The worldly mans says, "Let me go and do this; let me go and do that; let me accumulate so many thousand pounds; let me get so rich; then I will enjoy myself and take my ease." "Nay," says the Christian, "I see no reason for doing it; why should I not make God my refuge now? Why should I not enjoy comfort and peace, and make myself happy now?" He does not want to water his land with his feet; but he sits down quietly, and his land "drinketh in water of the rain of heaven." Do not say I am preaching laziness. No such thing: I am only saying it is vain for you to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness, for, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." But, if "he giveth his beloved sleep," they rest in him; they know not these toils; that is, if they have attained to full assurance, and crossed into the Canaan of full confidence in God. They do not care to go ranging the world to find their happiness; but they say, "God is my ever present help; in him my soul is satisfied." They rest content in him. Their land is watered with the rain of heaven.

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

he saw the vanity of his course; he was driven to desperation, seized his axe, cut down the sign-board of his profession, and said, "Here ends this business." Turning to the same book, he found that it recommended Christianity as the rest of the weary soul; he found it in Christ, and attained to such an understanding of Christ, that he became a preacher of the gospel, and might well have preached on this text—"The land whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs; but the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh the water of heaven: a land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

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

II. We must consider a little time, THE SPECIAL MERCY. "The eyes of the Lord are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." WE must now turn away altogether from the allegoric, and come to this special mercy, which is the lot only of God's people.

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

Then, my brethren, might I not say a word to you concerning *the eyes of the Lord having been upon us as a church*? Ought we to let this year pass without rehearsing the works of the Lord? Hath he not been with us exceeding abundantly, and prospered us? It is during this year that we met together in the great assembly—during this year that these eyes have seen the mighty gatherings of men who listened to our words on the Sabbath-day. We shall not soon forget our sojourn in Exeter Hall-shall we? During those months the Lord brought in many of his own elect, and multitudes who were unsaved up to that time were called by

divine mercy, and brought into the fold. How God protected us there! What peace and prosperity hath he given to us! How hath he enlarged our borders, and multiplied our numbers, so that we are not few, and increased us, so that we are not weak! I do think we were not thankful enough for the goodness of the Lord which carried us there, and gave us so many who have now become useful to use in our church! Remember in how many places ye have worshipped God this year. This place has been enlarged, so that more can be held within its walls; now we can receive more to listen to the voice of the Gospel than we could before; and God seems to say, "Go, forward, go forward still." The goodness of the Lord has increased as we have gone along. I have often feared, lest the people should desert the house, and that when we made it larger we should not have enough to fill it: but the Lord still sends an overwhelming congregation, and still gives us grace to preach his gospel. How thankful should we be! Surely, "the eyes of the Lord" have been upon this church, "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." We have had peace: not a rotten peace, I trust, but the peace of God. Nothing has arisen that should disturb our equanimity. The church has been kept by the grace of God faithful to the doctrines of grace. Ah! what a blessing it is, that our members have been kept from falling into sin! What a glorious thing that we are carried through another year safely! Some old writer has said, "Every hour that a Christian remains a Christian is an hour of miracle." It is true; and every year that the church is kept an entire church is a year of miracle.

It is a year of miracles. Tell it to the wide, wide world; tell it everywhere. "The eye of the Lord" hath been upon us, "from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." Two hundred and ten persons have this year united with us in church fellowship; about enough to have formed a church. One half the churches in London cannot number so many in their entire body; and yet the Lord has brought so many into our midst. And still they come; still they come. Whenever I have an opportunity of seeing those who are converted to God, they come in such numbers that many have to be sent away. Still they come, still they come; and well I am assured, that I have as many still in this congregation, who will during the present year come forward to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. How often has the sacred pool of baptism been opened this year! How sweetly have we assembled round the Lord's table! What precious moments we have had at the Monday evening prayer meetings! And how glorious it has been when we have recognized brother after brother, sister after sister publicly, by giving them the right hand of fellowship! In all our ways we hope we have acknowledged him, and he has directed our paths. Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done wonders; bless his name, for he has worked miracles; praise his grace, for he hath highly exalted his people; for he has worked miracles; praise his grace, for he hath highly exalted his people; unto him be honor, for ever and ever. And mark you, brethren, this church has known what it is to come out of Egypt. We have not toiled with our feet here. I hope there has been no desire to draw unfit persons into the church, I have had no toiling with my feet,

I am sure, in preaching the gospel—no legal preaching—none of your exciting preaching—none of all that toiling with your feet; but we have had nothing but the rain from heaven. We have not laboured to excite carnal passions, nor to preach sermons with a view of driving you into religious fevers. Sturdy old Calvinism will not let us do that. We cannot preach such sermons as Arminians can. The land has been watered by the rain of heaven. We have not had any of those fatal pestilential mists that sometimes gather round the church. It is proverbial, that wherever the revivalists go, they always carry desolation; before them is an Eden; behind them is a desert; wherever they go they scorch the land like firebrands; though hundreds seem to be converted to God, they are converted to ten times blacker sins than before, and the last end of them is worse than the first. We want not the getting up of a little feverish passion by appealing to the natural man; it is the drinking water of the rain of heaven that does the good. I trust it has been so here, and that "the eyes of the Lord" have been upon you "from the beginning of the year even to the end of the year."

So, beloved, I can say that, *as a minister, the eyes of the Lord have been upon me this year*. It has been my privilege, many times this year to preach his word. I think, more than four hundred times have I stood in the pulpit to testify his truth, and the eyes of the Lord have been upon me. Blessed be his name! whether it has been in the north, in the south, in the east, or in the west, I have never lacked a congregation; nor have I ever gone again to any of the places I have preached at, without hearing of souls converted. I cannot remember a single village, or town, that I have visited a second time without meeting with some who blessed God that they heard the word of truth there. When I went to Bradford last time, I stated in the pulpit that I had never heard of a soul being converted through my preaching there; and the good pew-opener came to Brother Dowson, and said, "Why didn't you tell Mr. Spurgeon that such-a-one joined the church through hearing him?" and instantly that dear man of God told me the cheering news. We have met with much opposition this year. Thanks to our brethren in the ministry, we have not had very much assistance from them. We have been enabled to say to them all, "I will not take from you, from a thread to a shoe-latchet, lest ye should say, I have made him rich." But how much of that bigotry which formerly existed has subsided! How much of that sneer, which was at one time so common, has now gone away! I am now, rather more afraid of their smiles than their frowns—though I do not think I feel much of either. *Cedo nulli*, was my motto at the beginning, and I take it once more. I yield to none; but by the grace of God I preach his truth, and still, if he help me, will I hold on my way. And to the Three-one God, be eternal honor. Amen.

Watch-Night Service

(No. 59)

Held at New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

On Tuesday Night, December 31, 1855, by the

REV. C.H. SPURGEON

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

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

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

"Ye virgin souls, arise!
With all the dead awake;
Unto salvation wise;
Oil in your vessels take:
Upstarting at the MIDNIGHT CRY,
Behold Your heavenly bridegroom nigh."

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

EXPOSITION

Psalm 90:1-22

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

Yea Jehovah, WE, they children, can say that thou hast been *our* home, our safe dwelling-place. And oh, what joy, what peace have we found in his sacred bosom. No home like the breast of the Lord, to which, in all generations, true believers fly. Let me ask the unbelievers where their joy is. Where has your habitation been, ye sons of sin and daughters of folly?

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

And the same God too, loving His people, passing by their sins and remembering not their iniquities. Oh, beloved, let this thought cheer you, he was, he is, he will be God. Here change cannot climb, here mutation must not approach. For ever and ever he is God.

"Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men."

How many this year have departed. Oh, where had we been had this been our case? Many of us can say, we should have been in bliss, and we should have *returned* unto God, but alas, many here would have entered the fires of hell and commenced their never-ending torture.

"For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

"Thou carriest them away as with a flood."

Who are they who are carried away as with a flood? Yourselves, my hearers, and myself. Though we know it not, we are always in motion. The impetuous torrent of time is carrying us along like a mighty rolling river. We cannot stand against the force which drives us onwards. As powerless as the straw we are; we can by no means resist it. Whither are we going? Where is the river carrying us to? We cannot stem its torrens; we cannot escape its floods. Oh! where, oh! where, are we going!

"Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up.

"In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth.

"For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled."

No man better understands this than the convinced sinner, when smarting under the rod of God. Truly our strength is then utterly *consumed,* and the troubles of our heart are enlarged.

"Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance."

Hear that! "our *secret* sins." Some of you bear hell's mark on your forehead. Some of you, like Cain, have the mark of justice on your very brow. Your sins are beforehand with you in judgment. Ah! they are there to-night, blabbing out the tale of your sad, sad history. But there are persons here who have "secret sins." Ye have not been found out yet. The night was too dark for human eye to se you; the deed was to secret for mortal to behold; but it is set somewhere. Just as we set a stone in a golden ring, so has God set your "secret sins in the light of *his* countenance." Your sins are this night before the eyes of the infinite Jehovah.

"For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told."

The Vulgate translation has: "Our years pass away like those of a spider." It implies that our life is as frail as the thread of a spider's web. Constituted most curiously the spider's web is; but what more fragile? In what is there more wisdom than in the complicated frame of a human body; and what more easily destroyed? Glass is granite compared with flesh; and vapours are rocks compared with life.

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten;"

Mark, the Psalmist says, "the *days* of our years." How seldom we think of that! Our years we think of, but not "the *days* of our years."

"And if [it is a great "if" indeed, for how many die before they attain to it!] *by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."*

Where do we fly to? Is it upwards that we wing our way, on more than eagles' wings, to realms of joy unknown? Or is it downward that we sink with all our sins round our necks like millstones? Oh! shall we go down, down, till in hell we lift up our eyes, being in torments?

"Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

Here is heavenly arithmetic; an application of numeration seldom thought of even by the wise. May we, during the next year, so measure out our time, that we may apply our hearts to Jesus, who is the true wisdom.

Amen! Lord, may that be granted!

Now we will sing a verse of that solemn hymn—

"When thou my righteous judge shall come,"

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

HYMN

"Let me among thy saints be found
Whene'er the archangel's trump shall sound,
To see thy smiling face:
Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,
While heav'n's resounding mansions ring
With shouts of sovereign grace."

PRAYER

O God, save my people! Save my people! A solemn charge hast thou given to thy servant. Ah! Lord, it is all too solemn for such a child. Help him; help him by thine own grace, to discharge it as he ought. O Lord, let thy servant confess that he feels that his prayers are not as earnest as they should be for his people's souls; that he does not preach so frequently as he ought, with that fire, that energy, that true love to men's souls. But O Lord, damn not the hearers for the preacher's sin. Oh, destroy not the flock for the shepherd's iniquity. Have mercy on them, good Lord, have mercy on them, O Lord, have mercy on them! There are some, Father, that will not have mercy on themselves. How have we preached to them, and

laboured for them! O God thou knowest that I lie not. How have I striven for them, that they might be saved! But the heart is too hard for man to melt, and the soul made of iron too hard for flesh and blood to render soft. O God, the God of Israel, thou canst save. There is the pastor's hope; there is the minister's trust. He cannot but thou canst, Lord; they will not come, but thou canst make them willing in the day of thy power. They will not come unto thee that they may have life; but thou canst draw them, and then they shall run after thee. They cannot come; but thou canst give them power; for though no man cometh except the Father draw him, yet if he draw him then he can come, O Lord, for another year has thy servant preached—thou knowest how. It is not for him to plead his cause with thee—that is in another's hands, and has been there, thank God, years ago. But now, O Lord, we beseech thee, bless our people. Let this our church, thy church, be still knit together in unity; and this night may they commence a fresh era of prayer. They are a praying people, blessed by thy name, and they pray for their minister with all their hearts. O Lord, help them to pray more earnestly. May we wrestle in prayer more than ever, and besiege thy throne until thou makest Jerusalem a praise not only here, but everywhere. But, Father, it is not the church we weep for; it is not the church we groan for; it is the world. O Faithful Promisor, hast thou not promised to thy Son that he should not die in vain? Give him souls we beseech thee, that he may be abundantly satisfied. Hast thou not promised thy church that she shall be increased? Oh, increase her, increase her. And hast thou not promised that thy ministers shall not labour in vain? For thou hast said that "as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, even so shall thy word be: it shall not return unto thee void." Let not the word return void tonight; but now may thy servant in the most earnest manner, with the most fervent heart, burning with love to his Saviour, and with love to souls, preach once more the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Come, Holy Spirit! We can do nothing without thee. We solemnly invoke thee, great Spirit of God! thou who didst rest on Abraham, on Isaac, and on Jacob; thou, who in the night visions speaketh unto men. Spirit of the Prophets, Spirit of the Apostles, Spirit of the Church, be thou our Spirit this night, that the earth may tremble, that souls may be made to hear thy Word, and that all flesh may rejoice together to praise thy name. Unto Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the dread Supreme, be everlasting praise. Amen.

SERMON

"Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord"—Lamentations 2:19.

This was originally spoken to Zion, when in her sad and desolate condition, Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, had wept his eyes dry for the slain of the daughter of his people; and when he had done all he could himself to pour out tears for poor Jerusalem, he then begged

Jerusalem to weep for herself. Methinks I might become a Jeremy to-night, and weep as he, for surely the church at large is in almost as evil a condition. O Zion, how hast thou been veiled in a cloud, and how is thy honor trodden in the dust! Arise, ye sons of Zion, and weep for your mother, yea weep bitterly, for she hath given herself to other lovers, and forsaken the Lord that bought her. I bear witness this night, in the midst of this solemn assembly, that the church at large is wickedly departing from the living God; she is leaving the truth which was once her glory, and she is mixing herself among the nations. Ah! beloved, it were well if Zion now could sometimes weep; it were well if there were more who would lay to heart the wound of the daughter of his people. How hath the city become a harlot! how hath the much fine gold become dim! and how hath the glory departed! Zion is under a cloud. Her ministers preach not with the energy and fire that anciently dwelt in the lips of God's servants, neither is pure and undefiled doctrine proclaimed in her streets. Where are her evangelists who with earnest hearts traversed the land with the gospel on their lips. Where are her apostolic preachers who everywhere declared the good tidings of salvation. Alas for the idle shepherds! Alas for the slumbering ministers! Weep sore, O Zion! weep thee sore, until another reformation comes to sweep thy floor. Weep thee, Zion: weep until he shall come whose fan is in his hand, who shall thoroughly purge his floor; for the time is coming when judgment must begin at the house of God. Oh, that now the princes of Israel had wisdom, that they might seek the Lord; but alas, our leaders have given themselves to false doctrine; neither do they love the thing which is right. Therefore I charge thee, "Arise," O Zion, "cry out in the night, in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord."

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

1.

First, from our text we gather—*that it is never too soon to pray.* "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord." You are lying on your bed; the gracious Spirit whispers—"Arise, and pray to God." Well, there is no reason why you should delay till the morning light: "in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord." We are told there that it is never too soon to pray. How many young persons imagine that religion is a thing for age, or at least for maturity; but they conceive that whilest they are in the bloom of their youth, they need not attend to its admonitions. How many have we found who count religion to be a crutch for old age, who reckon it an ornament to their grey hairs, forgetting that to the young man religion is like a chain of gold around his neck, and like an ornament set with precious jewels, that shall array him with honour. How many there be who think it is yet too soon for them to bear for a single moment the cross of Jesus. They do not want to

have their young shoulders galled with an early burden; they do not think it is true that "it is good for a man to bean the yoke in his youth;" and they forget that "yoke is easy," and that "burden is light." Therefore, hour after hour, and day after day, the malicious fiend whispers in their ear—"It is too soon, it is too soon! Postpone, postpone, postpone! Procrastinate!" Need we tell you once more that oft-repeated axiom, "Procrastination is the thief of time?" Need we remind you that "delays are dangerous?" Need we tell you that those are the workings of Satan? For the Holy Ghost, when he strives with man, says, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." It is never, beloved, too soon to pray. Art thou a child to-night? Thy God heareth children. He called Samuel when he was but a child. "Samuel, Samuel;" and he said, "Here am I." We have had our Josiahs; we have heard of our Timothys; we have seen those in early youth who have been brought to the Saviour. Oh! remember it is not too soon to seek the Saviour, ere you arrive at manhood. If God in his mercy calls you to him, I beseech you think not for a moment that he will not hear you. I trust I know his name; yea, more than that, I know I do. "I know whom I have believed." But he did not call me too early. Though but a child, I descended into the pool of baptism, there to be buried with my Saviour. Oh! I wish I could say that all those fourteen or fifteen year of my life had not been thrown away. Blessed be his name, he never calls us too soon. If he rises early in the morning, and sends some into his vineyard to labour, he does not send them before they should go—before there is work for them to do. Young man, it is not too soon. "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord."

2.

Again; *it is not too late to cry to the Lord;* for if the sun be set, and the watches of the night have commenced their round, the mercy seat is open. No shop is open so late as the House of Mercy. The devil has two tricks with men. Sometimes he puts their clock a little backward, and he says, "Stop, there is time enough yet;" and when that does not answer, he turns the hands on, and he cries out, "Too late! too late" Old man, has the devil said "It is too late?" Convinced sinner, has Satan said "It is too late?" Troubled, distressed one, has the thought risen in thy soul—a bitter and a dark one—"It is too late?" It is not. Within another fifteen minutes another year shall have come; but if the Spirit of God calls you this year, he will not call you too late in the year. If to the last second you should live, if God the Holy Ghost calls you then, he will not have called you too late. Ah! ye desponding ones, who think it is all too late—it is not.

While the lamp holds out to burn,

The vilest sinner that returns

shall find mercy and peace. There have been some older than you can be; some as sinful and vile, and heinously wicked, who have provoked God as much, who have sinned against him as frequently, and yet they have found pardon. If he call thee, sinner, if he call thee to-

night, 12 o'clock is not too late, as 1 o'clock is not too early. If he call thee, whether it be at midnight, or cock-crowing, or noon-day, we would say to thee, as they did to the blind man, "Arise; he calleth thee." And as sure as ever he calls you, he will not send you away without a blessing. It is not too late to call on God. The darkness of night is gathering; it is coming on, and you are near to death. Arise, sleeper, arise! thou who art now taking the last nap of death. "Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord."

3.

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

And verily I say unto you, though he will not rise and give it to him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as much as he needeth. "Arise, cry out in the night," and God will hear you, if you cry out with all your souls, and pour out your hearts before him.

4.

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

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

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

12, some here may be in hell; and blessed be the name of God! some of us may be in heaven! But O, do you know how to estimate your time, my hearers? do you know how to measure your days? Oh! I have not words to speak to-night. Do you know that every hour you are nearing the tomb? that every hour you are nearing judgment? that the archangel is flapping his wings every second of your life, and, trumpet at his mouth, is approaching you? that you do not live stationary lives, but always going on, on, on, towards the grave? Do you know where the stream of life is hastening some of you? To the rapids—to the rapids of woe and destruction! What shall the end of those be who obey not the gospel of God? Ye will not have so many years to live as ye had last year! See the man who has but a few shillings in his pocket, how he takes them out and spends them one by one! Now he has but a few coppers, and there is so much for that tiny candle, so much for that piece of bread. He counts the articles out one by one; and so the money goes! You think there is no bottom to your pockets; you think you have a boundless store of time—but you have not! As the Lord liveth, there is a young man here that has not more than one year to live; and yet he is spending all that he is worth of time, in sin, in folly, and vice. Some of you have not that to live; and yet how are you spending your time! O take care! take care! time is precious! and whenever we have little of it, it is more precious; yea, it is most precious. May God help you to escape from hell and fly to heaven! I feel like the angel, to-night, who put his hand upon Lot, and cried—"Escape! look not behind thee! stay not in all the plain; flee to the mountain, lest thou be consumed!"

And now, I appreciate the power of silence. You will please to observe strict and solemn silence until the striking of that clock; and let each one spend the time as he pleases. [It was now two minutes to twelve, and profound silence reigned, save where sobs and groans could be distinctly heard from penitent lips seeking the Saviour. The clock having struck, Mr Spurgeon continued:] You are now where you never were before; and you never will be again where you have been to-night.

Now we have had a solemn meeting, and let us have a cheerful ending of it. As we go away let us sing a sweet hymn to encourage our hearts.

[A hymn was then sung]

Now may the Lord bless you, and lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace! May you, during this year of grace; receive much grace; and may you proceed onwards towards heaven! And may we as a church, as members of churches, as ministers, as deacons, mutually strive together for the faith of Jesus, and be edified therein! And may the Lord save the ungodly! If the last year is clean gone and they are not yet pardoned and forgiven, let not another year roll away without their finding mercy!

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

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

Sovereignty and Salvation

A Sermon
(No. 60)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 6, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."—Isaiah 45:22.

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

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

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

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

he sat as a king on his throne, the mighty God, for ever to be worshipped—the Dread Supreme, in solemn silence dwelling by himself in vast immensity, making the placid clouds his canopy, and the light from his own countenance forming the brightness of his glory. God was, and God is. From the beginning God was God; ere worlds had beginning, he was "from everlasting to everlasting." Now, when it pleased him to create his creatures, does it not strike you how infinitely those creatures must have been below himself? If you are potters, and you fashion upon the wheel a vessel, shall that piece of clay arrogate to itself equality with you? Nay, at what a distance will it be from you, because you have been in part its creator. So where the Almighty formed his creatures, was it not consummate impudence, that they should venture for a moment to compare themselves with him? Yet that arch traitor, that leader of rebels, Satan, sought to climb to the high throne of God, soon to find his aim too high, and hell itself not low enough wherein to escape divine vengeance. He knows that God is "God alone." Since the world was created, man has imitated Satan; the creature of a day, the ephemera of an hour, has sought to match itself with the Eternal. Hence it has even been one of the objects of the great Jehovah, to teach mankind that he is God, and beside him there is none else. This is the lesson he has been teaching the world since it went astray from him. He has been busying himself in breaking down the high places, in exalting the valleys, in casting down imaginations and lofty looks, that all the world might

"Know that he Lord is God alone,

He can create, and he destroy."

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

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

We reply, he has taught it, first of all, to *false gods, and to the idolaters who have bowed before them.* Man, in his wickedness and sin, has set up a block of wood and stone to be his maker, and has bowed before it. He hath fashioned for himself out of a goodly tree an image made unto the likeness of mortal man, or of the fishes of the sea, or of creeping things of the earth, and he has prostrated his body, and his soul too, before that creature of his own hands, calling it a god, while it had neither eyes to see, nor hands to handle, nor ears to hear. But how hath God poured contempt on the ancient gods of the heathen? Where are they now? Are they so much as known? Where are those false deities before whom the multitudes of Ninevah prostrated themselves? Ask the moles and the bats, whose companions they are; or ask the mounds beneath which they are buried; or go where the idle gazer walketh through the museum—see them there as curiosities, and smile to think that men should ever bow before such gods as these. and where are the gods of Persia? Where are they? The fires are quenched, and the fire-worshipper hath almost ceased out of the earth. Where are the gods

of Greece—those gods adorned with poetry, and hymned in the most sublime odes? Where are they? They are gone. Who talks of them now, but as things that were of yore? Jupiter—doth any one bow before him? And who is he that adores Saturn? They are passed away, and they are forgotten. And where are the gods of Rome? Doth Janus now command the temple? or do the vestal virgins now feed their perpetual fires? Are there any now that bow before these gods? No, they have lost their thrones. And where are the gods of the South Sea Islands—those bloody demons before whom wretched creatures prostrated their bodies? They have well-nigh become extinct. Ask the inhabitants of China and Polynesia where are the gods before which they bowed? Ask, and echo says ask, and ask again. They are cast down from their thrones; they are hurled from their pedestals; their chariots are broken, their sceptres are burnt in the fire, their glories are departed; God hath gotten unto himself the victory over false gods, and taught their worshippers that he is God, and that beside him there is none else. Are their gods still worshipped, or idols before which the nations bow themselves? Wait but a little while, and ye shall see them fall. Cruel Juggernaut, whose car still crushes in its motion the foolish ones who throw themselves before it shall yet be the object of derision; and the most noted idols, such as Buddha, and Brahma, and Vishnu, shall yet stoop themselves to the earth, and men shall tread them down as mire in the streets; for God will teach all men that he is God, and that there is none else.

Mark ye, yet again, how God has taught this truth *to empires*. Empires have risen up, and have been gods of the era; their kings and princes have taken to themselves high titles, and have been worshipped by the multitude. But ask the empires whether there is any beside God? Do you not think you hear the boasting soliloquy of Babylon—"I sit as a queen, and am no widow; I shall see no sorrow; I am god, and there is none beside me?" And think ye not now, if ye walk over ruined Babylon, that ye will meet aught save the solemn spirit of the Bible, standing like a prophet gray with age, and telling you that there is one God, and that beside him there is none else? Go ye to Babylon, covered with its sand, the sand of its own ruins; stand ye on the mounds of Nineveh, and let the voice come up—"There is one God, and empires sink before him; there is only one Potentate, and the princes and kings of the earth, with their dynasties and thrones, are shaken by the trampling of his foot." Go, seat yourselves in the temples of Greece; mark ye there what proud words Alexander once did speak; but now, where is he, and where his empire too? Sit on the ruined arches of the bridge of Carthage, or walk ye through the desolated theatres of Rome, and ye will hear a voice in the wild wind amid those ruins—"I am God, and there is none else." "O city, though didst call thyself eternal; I have made thee melt away like dew. Though saidst 'I sit on seven hills, and I shall last forever; ' I have made thee crumble, and thou art now a miserable and contemptible place, compared with what thou wast. Thou wast once stone, thou madest thyself; I have made thee stone again, and brought thee low." O! how has God taught mon-

archies and empires that have set themselves up like new kingdoms of heaven. that he is God, and that there is none else!

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

Again: our God has had much to do to teach this lesson *to the wise men of this world;* for as rank, pomp, and power, have set themselves up in the place of God, so has wisdom; and one of the greatest enemies of Deity has always been the wisdom of man. The wisdom of man will not see God. Professing themselves to be wise, wise men have become fools. But have ye not noticed, in reading history, how God has abased the pride of wisdom? In ages long gone by, he sent mighty minds into the world, who devised systems of philosophy. "These systems," they said, "will last forever." There pupils thought them infallible, and therefore wrote their sayings on enduring parchment, saying, "This book will last forever; succeeding generations of men will read it, and to the last man that book shall be handed down, as the epitome of wisdom." "Ah! but," said God, "that book of yours shall be seen to be folly, ere another hundred years have rolled away." And so the mighty thoughts of Socrates, and the wisdom of Solon, are utterly forgotten now; and could we hear them speak, the

veriest child in our schools would laugh to think that he understandeth more of philosophy than they. But when man has found the vanity of one system, his eyes have sparkled at another; if Aristotle will not suffice, here is Bacon; now I shall know everything; and he sets to work and says that this new philosophy is to last forever. He lays his stones with fair colors, and he thinks that every truth he piles up is a precious imperishable truth. But, alas! another century comes, and it is found to be "wood, hay, and stubble." A new sect of philosophers rise up, who refute their predecessors. So too, we have wise men in this day—wise secularists, and so on, who fancy they have obtained the truth; but within another fifty years—and mark that word—this hair shall not be silvered over with gray, until the last of that race shall have perished, and that man shall be thought a fool that was ever connected with such a race. Systems of infidelity pass away like a dew-drop before the sun, for God says, "I am God, and beside me there is none else." This Bible is the stone that shall break in powder philosophy; this is the mighty battering ram that shall dash all systems of philosophy in pieces; this is the stone that a woman may yet hurl upon the head of every Abimelech, and he shall be utterly destroyed. O church of God! fear not; thou shalt do wonders; wise men shall be confounded, and thou shalt know, and they too, that he is God, and that beside him there is none else.

"Surely," says one, *"the Church of God* does not need to be taught this." Yes, we answer, she does; for of all beings, those whom God has made the objects of his grace are perhaps the most apt to forget this cardinal truth, that he is God, and that beside him there is none else. How did the church in Canaan forget it, when they bowed before other gods, and therefore he brought against them mighty kings and princes, and afflicted them sore. How did Israel forget it; and he carried them away captive into Babylon. And what Israel did, in Canaan and in Babylon, that we do now. We too, too often, forget that he is God, and beside him there is none else. Doth not the Christian know what I mean, when I tell him this great fact? For hath he not done it himself? In certain times prosperity has come upon him; soft gales have blown his bark along, just where his wild will wished to steer; and he has said within himself: "Now I have peace, now I have happiness, now the object I wished for is within my grasp, now I will say, 'Sit down, my soul, and take thy rest; eat, drink, and be merry; these things will well content me; make thou these thy god, be thou blessed and happy.'" But have we not seen our God dash the goblet to the earth, spill the sweet wine, and instead thereof fill it with gall? and as he has given it to us, he has said—"Drink it, drink it: ye have thought to find a god on earth, but drain the cup and know its bitterness." When we have drunk it, nauseous the draft was, and we have cried, "Ah! God, I will drink no more of these things; thou art God, and beside thee there is none else." And ah! how often, too, have we devised schemes for the future, without asking God's permission! Men have said, like those foolish ones James mentioned, "We will do such-and-such things on the morrow; we will buy and sell and get gain." whereas they knew not what was to be on the morrow,,

for long ere the morrow came they were unable to buy and sell; death had claimed them, and a small span of earth held all their frame. God teaches his people every day, by sickness, by affliction, by depression of spirits, by the forsakings of God, by the loss of the Spirit for a season, by the lackings of the joys of his countenance, that he is God, and that beside him there is none else. And we must not forget that there are some special servants of God raised up to do good works, who in a peculiar manner have to learn this lesson. Let a man, for instance, be called to the great work of preaching the gospel. He is successful; God helped him; thousands wait at his feet, and multitudes hang upon his lips; as truly as that man is a man, he will have a tendency to be exalted above measure, and too much will he begin to look to himself, and too little to his God. Let men speak who know, and what they know let them speak; and they will say, "It is true, it is most true." If God gives us a special mission, we generally begin to take some honor and glory to ourselves. But in review of the eminent saints of God, have you never observed how God has made them feel that he was God, and beside him there was none else? Poor Paul might have thought himself a god, and been puffed up above measure, by reason of the greatness of his revelation, had not there been a thorn in the flesh. But Paul could feel that he was not a god, for he had a thorn in the flesh, and gods *could not* have thorns in the flesh. Sometimes God teaches the minister, by denying him help on special occasions. We come up into our pulpits and say, "oh! I wish I could have a good day to-day!" We begin to labor; we have been just as earnest in prayer, and just as indefatigable; but it is like a blind horse turning round a mill, or like Samson with Delilah: we shake our vain limbs with vast surprise, "make feeble fight," and win no victories. We are made to see that the Lord is God, and that beside him there is none else. Very frequently God teaches this to the minister, leading him to see his own sinful nature. He will have such an insight into his own wicked and abominable heart, that he will feel as he comes up the pulpit stairs that he does not deserve so much as to sit in his pew, much less to preach to his fellows. Although we feel always joy in the declaration of God's Word, yet we have known what it is to totter on the pulpit steps, under a sense that the chief of sinners should scarcely be allowed to preach to others. Ah! beloved, I do not think *he* will be very successful as a minister who is not taken into the depths and blackness of his own soul, and made to exclaim, "Unto me, who am less *than the least of all saints*, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." There is another antidote which God applies in the case of ministers. If he does not deal with them personally, he raises up a host of enemies, that it may be seen that he is God, and God alone. An esteemed friend sent me, yesterday, a valuable old Ms. of one of George Whitefield's hymns which was sung on Kennington Common. It is a splendid hymn, thoroughly Whitefieldian all through. It showed that his reliance was wholly on the Lord, and that God was within him. What! will a man subject himself to the calumnies of the multitude, will he toil and work day after day unnecessarily, will he stand up Sabbath after Sabbath and preach the gospel and have his

name maligned and slandered, if he has not the grace of God in him? For myself, I can say, that were it not that the love of Christ constrained me, this hour might be the last that I should preach, so far as the ease of the thing is concerned. "Necessity is laid upon us; yea, woe is unto us if we preach not the gospel." But that opposition through which God carries his servants, leads them to see at once that he is God, and that there is none else. If every one applauded, if all were gratified, we should think ourselves God; but, when they hiss and hoot, we turn to our God, and cry,

"If on my face, for thy dear name,
Shame and reproach should be,
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
If thou'lt remember me."

II. This brings us to the second portion of our discourse. Salvation is God's greatest work; and, therefore, in his greatest work, he specially teaches us this lesson, That he is God, and that beside him there is none else. Our text tells us *how he teaches it*. He says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." He shows us that he is God, and that beside him there is none else, in three ways. First, by the person to whom he directs us: "look unto *me*, and be ye saved." Secondly, by the means he tells us to use to obtain mercy: "Look," simply, "Look." And thirdly, by the persons whom he calls to "look:" "Look unto me, and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth."*

1. First, *to whom does God tell us to look for salvation?* O, does it not lower the pride of man, when we hear the Lord say, "Look unto *me*, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth?" It is not. "Look to your priest, and be ye saved:" if you did, there would be another god, and beside him there would be some one else. It is not "Look to yourself;" if so, then there would be a being who might arrogate some of the praise of salvation. But it is "Look unto me." How frequently you who are coming to Christ look to yourselves. "O!" you say, "I do not repent enough." That is looking to yourself. "I do not believe enough." That is looking to yourself. "I am too unworthy." That is looking to yourself. "I cannot discover," says another, "that I have any righteousness." It is quite right to say that you have not any righteousness; but it is quite wrong to look for any. It is, "Look unto me." God will have you turn your eye off yourself and look unto him. The hardest thing in the world is to turn a man's eye off himself; as long as he lives, he always has a predilection to turn his eyes inside, and look at himself; whereas God says, "Look unto me." From the cross of Calvary, where the bleeding hands of Jesus drop mercy; from the Garden of Gethsemane, where the bleeding pores of the Saviour sweat pardons, the cry comes, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." From Calvary's summit, where Jesus cries, "It is finished," I hear a shout, "Look, and be saved." But there comes a vile cry from our soul, "Nay, look to yourself! look to yourself!" Ah, my hearer, look to yourself, and you will be damned. That certainly will come of it. As long as you look to yourself there is no hope for you. It is not a consideration of

what you are, but a consideration of what God is, and what Christ is, that can save you. It is looking from yourself to Jesus. P! there be men that quite misunderstand the gospel; they think that righteousness qualifies them to come to Christ; whereas sin is the only qualification for a man to come to Jesus. Good old Crisp says, "Righteousness keeps me from Christ: the whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. Sin makes me come to Jesus, when sin is felt; and, in coming to Christ, the more sin I have the more cause I have to hope for mercy." David said, and it was a strange thing, too, "Have mercy upon me, for mine iniquity is great." But, David, why did not you say that it was little? Because, David knew that the bigger his sins were, the better reason for asking mercy. The more vile a man is, the more eagerly I invite him to believe in Jesus. A sense of sin is all we have to look for as ministers. We preach to sinners; and let us know that a man will take the title of sinner to himself, and we then say to him, "Look unto Christ, and ye shall be saved." "Look," this is all he demands of thee, and even this he gives thee. If thou lookest to thyself thou art damned; thou art a vile miscreant, filled with loathsomeness, corrupt and corrupting others. But look thou here—seest thou that man hanging on the cross? Dost thou behold his agonized head dropping meekly down upon his breast? Dost thou see that thorny crown, causing drops of blood to trickle down his cheeks? Dost thou see his hands pierced and rent, and his blest feet, supporting the weight of his own frame, rent well-nigh in twain with the cruel nails? Sinner! dost thou hear him shriek, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabbacthani?" Dost thou hear him cry, "It is finished?" Dost thou mark his head hang down in death? Seest thou that side pierced with the spear, and the body taken from the cross? O, come thou hither! Those hands were nailed for thee; those feet gushed gore for thee; that side was opened wide for thee; and if thou wantest to know how thou canst find mercy, there it is. "Look!" "Look unto *me*!" Look no longer to Moses. Look no longer to Sinai. Come thou here and look to Calvary, to Calvary's victim, and to Joseph's grave. And look thou yonder, to the man who near the throne sites with his Father, crowned with light and immortality. "Look, sinner," he says, this morning, to you, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." It is in this way God teaches that there is none beside him; because he makes us look entirely to him, and utterly away from ourselves.

2. But the second thought is, *the means of salvation.* It is, "*Look* unto me, and be ye saved." You have often observed, I am sure, that many people are fond of an intricate worship, and involved religion, one they can hardly understand. They cannot endure worship so simple as ours. Then they must have a man dressed in white, and a man dressed in black; then they must have what they call an altar and a chancel. After a little while that will not suffice, and they must have flower-pots and candles. The clergyman then becomes a priest, and he must have a variegated dress, with a cross on it. So it goes on; what is simply a plate becomes a paten, and what was once a cup becomes a chalice; and the more complicated the ceremonies are, the better they like them. They like their minister to stand like a superior being. The world likes a religion they cannot comprehend. But have you never noticed

how gloriously simple the Bible is? It will not have any of your nonsense; it speaks plain, and nothing but plain things. "*Look!*" There is not an unconverted man who likes this, "Look unto Christ, and be ye saved." No, he comes to Christ like Naaman to Elijah; and , when it is said, "Go, wash in Jordan," he replies, "I verily thought he would come and put his hand on the place, and call on the name of his God. But the idea of telling me to wash in Jordan, what a ridiculous thing! Anybody could do that!" If the prophet had bidden him to do some great thing, would he not have done it? Ah! certainly he would. And if, this morning, I could preach that any one who walked from here to Bath without his shoes and stockings, or did some impossible thing, should be saved, you would start off tomorrow morning before breakfast. If it would take me seven years to describe the way of salvation, I am sure you would all long to hear it. If only one learned doctor could tell the way to heaven, how would he be run after! And if it were in hard words, with a few scraps of Latin and Greek, it would be all the better. But it is a simple gospel that we have to preach. It is only "Look!" "Ah!" you say, "Is that the gospel? I shall not pay any attention to that." But why has God ordered you to do such a simple thing? Just to take down your pride, and to show you that he is God, and that beside him there is none else. O, mark how simple the way of salvation is. It is "Look! look! look!" Four letters, and two of them alike! "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Some divines want a week to tell what you are to do to be saved; but God the Holy Ghost only wants four letters to do it. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." How simple is that way of salvation! and O, how instantaneous! It takes us some time to move our hand, buy a look does not require a moment. So a sinner believes in a moment; and the moment that sinner believes and trusts in his crucified God for pardon, at once he receives salvation in full through his blood. There may be one that came in here this morning unjustified in his conscience, that will go out justified rather than others. There may be some here, filthy sinners one moment, pardoned the next. It is done in an instant. "Look! look! look!" And how universal it is! Because, wherever I am, however far off, it just says, "Look!" It does not say I am to see; it only says, "Look!" If we look on a thing in the dark, we cannot see it; but we have done what we were told. So, if a sinner only looks to Jesus he will save him; for Jesus in the dark is as good as Jesus in the light; and Jesus, when you cannot see him, is as good as Jesus when you can. It is only, "Look!" "Ah! says one, "I have been trying to see Jesus this year, but I have not seen him." It does not say, see him, but "Look unto him." And it says that they who looked were enlightened. If there is an obstacle before you, and you only look in the right direction, it is sufficient. "Look unto me." It is not seeing Christ so much as looking after him. The will after Christ, the wish after Christ, the desire after Christ, the trusting in Christ, the hanging on Christ, that is what is wanted. "Look! look! look!" Ah! if the man bitten by the serpent had turned his sightless eyeballs towards the brazen serpent, though he had not seen it, he would still have had his life restored. It is looking, not seeing, that saves the sinner.

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

But, lastly, mark how God has cut down the pride of man, and has exalted himself *by the persons whom he has called to look.* "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." When the Jew heard Isaiah say that, "Ah!" he exclaimed, "you ought to have said, 'Look unto me, O Jerusalem, and be saved.' That would have been right. But those Gentile dogs, are they to look and be saved?" "Yes," says God; "I will show you Jews, that, though I have given you many privileges, I will exalt others above you; I can do as I will with my own."

Now, who are the ends of the earth? Why, there are poor heathen nations now that are very few degrees removed from brutes, uncivilized and untaught; but if I might go and tread the desert, and find the Bushman in his kraal, or go to the South Seas and find a cannibal, I would say to the cannibal or the Bushman, "Look unto Jesus, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." They are some of "the ends of the earth," and the gospel is sent to as much to them as to the polite Grecians, the refined Romans, or the educated Britons. But I think "the ends of the earth" imply those who have gone the farthest away from Christ. I say, drunkard, that means you. You have been staggering back. till you have got right to the ends of the earth; you have almost had *delirium tremens*; you cannot be much worse. There is not a man breathing worse than you. *Is there?* Ah! but God, in order to humble your pride, says to you, "Look unto me, and be ye saved." There is another who has lived a life of infamy and sin, until she has ruined herself, and even Satan seems to sweep her out at the back door; but God says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Methinks I see one trembling here, and saying, "Ah, I have not been one of these, sir, but I have been something

worse; for I have attended the house of God, and I have stifled convictions, and put off all thoughts of Jesus, and now I think he will never have mercy on me." You are one of them. "Ends of the earth!" So long as I find any who feel like that, I can tell them that they are "the ends of the earth." "But," says another, "I am so peculiar; if I did not feel as I do, it would be all very well; but I feel that my case is a peculiar one." That is all right; they are a peculiar people. You will do. But another one says, "There is nobody in the world like me; I do not think you will find a being under the sun that has had so many calls, and put them all away, and so many sins on his head. Besides, I have guilt that I should not like to confess to any living creature." One of "the ends of the earth" again; therefore, all I have to do is to cry out, in the Master's name, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." But thou sayest, sin will not let thee look. I tell thee, sin will be removed the moment thou dost look. "*But I dare not; he will condemn me; I fear to look.*" He will condemn thee more if thou dost not look. Fear, then, and look; but do not let thy fearing keep thee from looking. *"But he will cast me out."* Try him. *"But I cannot see him."* I tell you, it is not seeing, but looking. *"But my eyes are so fixed on the earth, so earthly, so worldly."* Ah! but, poor soul, he giveth power to look and live. He saith, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

Take this, dear friends, for a new year's text, both ye who love the Lord, and ye who are only looking for the first time. Christian! in all thy troubles through this year, look unto God and be saved. In all thy trials and afflictions, look unto Christ, and find deliverance. In all thine agony, poor soul, in all thy repentance for thy guilt, look unto Christ, and find pardon. This year, remember to put thine eyes heavenward, and thine heart heavenward, too. Remember, this day, that thou bind round thyself a golden chain, and put one link of it in the staple of heaven. Look unto Christ; fear not. There is no stumbling when a man walks with his eyes up to Jesus. He that looked at the stars fell into the ditch; but he that looks at Christ walks safely. Keep your eyes up all the year long. "Look unto *him*, and be ye saved;" and remember that "*he* is God, and beside *him* there is none else." And thou, poor trembler, what sayest thou? Wilt thou begin the year by looking unto him? You know how sinful you are this morning; you know how filthy you are; and yet it is possible that, before you open your pew door, and get into the aisle, you will be as justified as the apostles before the throne of God. It is possible that, ere you foot treads the threshold of your door, you will have lost the burden that has been on your back, and you will go on your way, singing, "I am forgiven, I am forgiven; I am a miracle of grace; this day is my spiritual birthday." O, that it might be such to many of you, that at last I might say, "Here am I, and the children thou hast given me." Hear this, convinced sinner! "This poor man cried, and the Lord delivered him out of his distresses." O, taste and see that the Lord is good! Now believe on him; now cast thy guilty soul upon his righteousness; now plunge thy black soul into the bath of his blood; now put thy naked soul at the door of the wardrobe of his righteousness;

now seat thy famished soul at the feast of plenty. Now, "Look!" How simple does it seem! And yet it is the hardest thing in the world to bring men to. They never will do it, till constraining grace makes them. Yet there it is, "Look!" Go thou away with that thought. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else."

The Beatific Vision

A Sermon
(No. 61)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 20, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"We shall see him as he is."—1 John 3:2.

IT IS one of the most natural desires in all the world, that when we hear of a great and a good man, we should wish to see his person. When we read the works of any eminent author, we are accustomed to turn to the frontispiece to look for his portrait. When we hear of any wondrous deed of daring, we will crowd our windows to see the warrior ride through the streets. When we know of any man who is holy, and who is eminently devoted to his work, we will not mind tarrying anywhere, if we may but have a glimpse of him whom God has so highly blessed. This feeling becomes doubly powerful when we have any connection with the man; when we feel, not only that he is good to us; not only that he is benevolent, but that he has been a benefactor to us as individuals. Then the wish to see him rises to a craving desire, and the desire is insatiable until it can satisfy itself in seeing that unknown, and hitherto unseen donor, who has done such wondrously good deeds for us. I am sure, my brethren, you will all confess that this strong desire has arisen in your minds concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. We owe to none so much; we talk of none so much, we hope, and we think of none so much: at any rate, no one so constantly thinks of us. We have I believe, all of us who love his name, a most insatiable wish to behold his person. The thing for which I would pray above all others, would be for ever to behold his face, for ever to lay my head upon his breast, for ever to know that I am his, for ever to dwell with him. Ay, one short glimpse, one transitory vision of his glory, one brief glance at his marred, but now exalted and beaming countenance, would repay almost a world of trouble. We have a strong desire to see him. Nor do I think that that desire is wrong. Moses himself asked that he might see God. Had it been a wrong wish arising out of vain curiosity, it would not have been granted, but God granted Moses his desire: he put him in the cleft of the rock, shaded him with his hands, bade him look at the skirts of his garments, because his face could not be seen. Yea, more; the earnest desire of the very best of men has been in the same direction. Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though worms devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God:" that was his desire. The holy Psalmist said, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness;" "I shall behold thy face in righteousness." And most saints on their death-beds have expressed their fondest, dearest, and most blessed wish for heaven, in the expression of longing "to be with Christ, which is far better." And not ill did our sweet singer of Israel put the words together, when he humbly said, and sweetly too:—

"Millions of years my wondering eyes
Shall o'er thy beauties rove;
And endless ages I'll adore
The glories of thy love."

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

By the help of God's mighty Spirit, who alone can put words in our mouths, let us speak first of all concerning *the glorious position*—"AS HE IS;" secondly, *his personal identity*—"we shall see HIM *as he is*;" thirdly, *the positive vision*—"WE SHALL SEE him as he is;" and fourthly, *the actual persons*—"WE shall see him as he is."

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

Consider, first of all, that we shall not see him *abased in his incarnation*, but *exalted in his glory*. We are not to see the infant of a span long; we are not to admire the youthful boy; we are not to address the incipient man; we are not to pity the man wiping the hot sweat from his burning brow; we are not to behold him shivering in the midnight air; we are not to behold him subject to pains, and weaknesses, and sorrows, and infirmities like ours. We are not to see the eye wearied by sleep; we are not to behold hands tired in labour; we are not to behold feet bleeding with arduous journeys, too long for their strength. We are not to see him with his soul distressed; we are not to behold him abased and sorrowful. Oh! the sight is better still. We are to see him exalted. We shall see the head, but not with its thorny crown.

"The head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crown'd with glory now."

We shall see the hand, and the nail-prints too, but not the nail; it has been once drawn out, and for ever. We shall see his side, and its pierced wound too, but the blood shall not issue from it. We shall see him not with a peasant's garb around him, but with the empire of the universe upon his shoulders. We shall see him, not with a reed in his hand, but grasping a golden sceptre. We shall see him, not as mocked and spit upon and insulted, not bone of our bone, in all our agonies, afflictions, and distresses; but we shall see him exalted; no longer Christ the man of sorrows, the acquaintance of grief, but Christ the Man-God, radiant with splendour, effulgent with light, clothed with rainbows, girded with clouds, wrapped in lightnings, crowned with stars, the sun beneath his feet. Oh! glorious vision! How can we guess what *he is*? What words can tell us? or how can we speak thereof? Yet whate'er he is, with all his splendour unveiled, all his glories unclouded, and himself unclothed—*we shall see him as he is*.

Remember again: we are not to see Christ as he was, the *despised*, the *tempted one*. We shall never see Christ sitting in the wilderness, while the arch-traitor says to him, "If thou be the Son of God command that these stones be made bread." We shall not see him standing firmly on the temple's pinnacle, bidding defiance to the evil one who bids him cast himself down from his towering height. We shall not see him erect on the mountain of temptation, with the earth offered to him if he will but crouch at the feet of the demon. Nay; nor shall we see him mocked by Pharisees, tempted by Sadducees, laughed at by Herodians. We shall not behold him with the finger of scorn pointed at him. We shall never see him called a "drunken man, and a wine-bibber." We shall never see the calumniated, the insulted, the molested, the despised Jesus. He will not be seen as one from whom we shall hide our faces, who "was despised, and we esteemed him not." Never shall these eyes see those blessed cheeks dripping with the spittle; never shall these hands touch that blessed hand of his while stained with infamy. We shall not see him despised of men and oppressed; but "*we shall see him as he is.*"

"No more the bloody spear,
The cross and nails no more;
For hell itself shakes at his name,
And all the heavens adore."

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

rejected, but worshipped, honored, crowned, exalted, served by flaming spirits, and worshipped by cherubim and seraphim. "We shall see him as he is."

Mark again. We shall not see the Christ *wrestling with pain*, but Christ *as a conqueror*. We shall never see him tread the winepress alone, but we shall see him when we shall cry, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" We shall never see him as when he stood foot to foot with his enemy: but we shall see him when his enemy is beneath his feet. We shall never see him as the bloody sweat streams from his whole body; but we shall see him as he hath put all things under him, and hath conquered hell itself. We shall never see him as the wrestler; but we shall see him grasp the prize. We shall never see him sealing the rampart; but we shall see him wave the sword of victory on the top thereof. We shall not see him fight; but we shall see him return from the fight victorious, and shall cry, "Crown him! Crown him! Crowns become the victor's brow." "*We shall see him as he is*."

Yet again. We shall never see our Saviour under his Father's *displeasure*; but we shall see him *honored by his Father's smile*. The darkest hour of Christ's life was when his Father forsook him—that gloomy hour when his Father's remorseless hand held the cup to his Son's own lips, and bitter though it was said to him, "Drink my Son—ay, drink;" and when the quivering Saviour, for a moment, having man within him—strong in its agonies for the moment, said, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Oh! it was a dark moment when the Father's ears were deaf to his Son's petitions, when the Father's eyes were closed upon his Son's agonies. "My Father," said the Son, "Canst thou not remove the cup? Is there no way else for thy severe justice? Is there no other medium for man's salvation?" There is none! Ah! it was a terrible moment when he tasted the wormwood and the gall; and surely darker still was that sad mid-day-midnight, when the sun hid his face in darkness while Jesus cried "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Believer, thou wilt never see that sick face; thou wilt never see those tearful eyes; thou wilt never see that pale emaciated body; thou wilt never see that weary, weary heart! thou wilt never see that exceedingly sorrowful spirit; for the Father never turns his face away now. But what wilt thou see? Thou wilt see thy Lord lit up with his Father's light as well as with his own; thou wilt see him caressed by his beloved Parent; thou wilt see him sitting at his Father's right hand, glorified and exalted for ever. "*We shall see him as he is*."

Perhaps I have not shown clearly enough the difference between the two visions—the sight of what he was and what he is. Allow me then, a moment more, and I will try and make it clearer still. When we see Christ as he was how *astonished* we are! One of the first feelings we should have, if we could have gone to the Mount of Olives and seen our Saviour sweating there, would have been, astonishment. When we were told that it was the Son of God in agonies, we should have lifted up our hands, and there would have been no speech in us at the thought. But then, beloved, here is the difference. The believer will be as much astonished

when he sees Jesus' glories as he sits on his throne, as he would have been to have seen him in his earthly sufferings. The one would have been astonishment, and horror would have succeeded it; but when we see Jesus as he is, it will be *astonishment without horror*. We shall not for one moment feel terrified at the sight, but rather

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

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

"Majestic sweetness sits enthroned
Upon his awful brow."

There will be no fear with the awe—but it will be *awe without fear*. We shall not bow before him with trembling, but it will be with joy; we shall not shake at his presence, but rejoice with joy unspeakable. Furthermore, if we had seen Christ as he was, we should have had great *love* for him; but that love would have been compounded with *pity*. We should stand over him, and say,

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed,
And did my Sovereign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

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

"All-hail, the power of Jesu's name;
Let angels prostrate fall:
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

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

Yet more. If we had seen our Saviour as he was, it would have been a *triumph* to see how he conquered, but still there would have been *suspense* about it. We should have feared lest he might not overcome. But when we see him up there it will be *triumph without suspense*.

Sheathe the sword; the battle's won. 'Tis over now. "Tis finished," has been said. The grave has been past; the gates have been opened; and now, henceforth, and for ever, he sitteth down at his Father's right hand, from whence also he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

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

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

"Oh! how the thought that I shall know
The man that suffered here below,
To manifest his favour,
For me, and those whom most I love,
Or here, or with himself above,
Does my delighted passion move,
At that sweet word "for ever."
For ever to behold him shine,
For evermore to call him mine,
And see him still before me.
For ever on his face to gaze,
And meet his full assembled rays,
While all the Father he displays,
To all the saints for ever."

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

"Bright *like a man* the Saviour sits;
The God, how bright he shines."

But then you will know Christ by his *wounds*. Have you never heard of mothers having recognized their children years after they were lost by the marks and wounds upon their bodies? Ah! beloved, if we ever see our Saviour we shall know him by his wounds. "But," you say, "They are all gone." Oh no; for he

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

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

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

Yet more, we have known him better than by Scripture sometimes—by close and intimate *fellowship* with him. Why, we meet Jesus in the dark sometimes; but we have sweet conversation with him, and he puts his lips against our ear, and our lip goes so close to his ear, when we hold converse with him. Oh! we shall know him well enough when we see him. You may trust the believer for knowing his Master when he finds him. We shall not need to have Jesus Christ introduced to us when we go to heaven; for if he were off his throne and sitting down with all the rest of the blessed spirits, we should go up to him directly, and say—"Jesus, I know thee." The devil knew him, for he said, "Jesus I know;" and I am sure God's people ought to know him. "Jesus, I know thee," we shall say at once, as we go up to him. "How dost thou know me?" saith Jesus. "Why sweet Jesus, we are no stranger, thou hast manifested thyself to me as thou dost not unto the world; thou hast given me sometimes

such tokens of thy gracious affection; dost thou think I have forgotten thee? Why, I have seen thy hands and thy feet sometimes by faith, and I have put my hand into thy side, like Thomas, of old; and thinkest thou that I am a stranger to thee? No, blessed Jesus; if thou wert to put thine hand before thine eyes, and hide thy countenance I should know thee then. Wert thou blindfolded once more, mine eyes would tell thee, for I have known thee too long to doubt thy personality." Believer, take this thought with thee: "we shall see *him*," despite all the changes in his position. It will be the same person. We shall see the same hands that were pierced, the same feet that were weary, the same lips that preached, the same eyes that wept, the same heart that heaved with agony; positively the same, except as to his condition. "We shall see *him*." Write the word HIM as large as you like. "We shall see *him* as he is."

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

sanctuary, not the mere Christ shining out of the Bible, not Christ reflected from the sacred pulpit; but "we shall see him as he is."

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

Here, too, *how dimly we see Christ!* It is through many shadows that we now behold our Master. Dim enough is the vision here; but there "we shall see him as he is." Have you never stood upon the hill-tops, when the mist has played on the valley? You have looked down to see the city and the streamlet below; you could just ken yonder steeple, and mark that pinnacle; you could see that dome in the distance; but they were all so swathed in the mist that you could scarcely discern them. Suddenly the wind has blown away from the mist from under you, and you have seen the fair, fair valley. Ah! it is so when the believer enters heaven. Here he stands and looks upon Christ veiled in a mist—upon a Jesus who is shrouded; but when he gets up there, on Pisgah's brow, higher still, with his Jesus, then he shall not see him dimly, but he shall see him brightly. We shall see Jesus then "without a veil between"—not dimly, but face to face.

Here, too, *how distantly we see Christ!* Almost as far off as the farthest star! We see him, but not nigh; we behold him, but not near to us; we catch some glimpse of him; but oh! what lengths and distances lie between! What hills of guilt—a heavy load! But then we shall see him closely; we shall see him face to face; as a man talketh with his friend, even so shall we then talk with Jesus. Now we are distant from him; then we shall be near to him. Away in

the highlands, where Jesus dwells, there shall our hearts be too, when heart and body shall be "present with the Lord."

And oh! *how transitory is our view of Jesus!* It is only a little while we get a glimpse of Christ, and then he seems to depart from us. Our chariots have sometimes been like Amminadib's; but in a little while the wheels are all gone, and we have lost the blessed Lord. Have you not some hours in your life felt so to be in the presence of Christ, that you scarcely knew where you were? Talk of Elijah's chariots and horses of fire; you were on fire yourself; you could have made yourself into a horse and chariot of fire, and gone to heaven easily enough. But then, all of a sudden, did you never feel as if a lump of ice had fallen on your heart, and put the fire out, and you have cried, "Where is my beloved gone! Why hath he hidden his face? Oh! how dark how dim!" But, Christians, there will be no hidings of faces in heaven! Blessed Lord Jesus! there will be no coverings of thine eyes in glory; Is not thine heart a sea of love, where all my passions roll? And there is no ebb-tide of thy sea, sweet Jesus, there. Art thou not everything? There will be no losing thee there—no putting thy hand before thine eyes up there; but without a single alteration, without change or diminution, our unwearied, unclouded eyes, shall throughout eternity perpetually behold thee. "We shall see him as he is!" Blest sight! Oh! that it were come!

Then do you know, there will be another difference. When "we shall see him as he is;" how much better that sight will be than what we have here! When we see Christ here, we see him to our profit; when we see him there, we shall see him *to our perfection*. I bear my Master witness, I never saw him yet, without being profited by him. There are many men in this world whom we see very often, and get very little good by, and the less we see of them the better; but of our Jesus we can say, we never come near him without receiving good by him. I never touched his garments yet, without feeling that my fingers did smell myrrh, and aloes, and cassia out of the ivory palaces. I never did come near his lips, but what his very breath shed perfume on me. I was never near my Master yet, but what he slew some sin for me. I never have approached him, but his blessed eyes burned a lust out of my heart for me. I have never come near to hear him speak, but I felt I was melting when the Beloved spoke; being conformed into his image. But, then beloved, it will not be to improve us, it will be to perfect us, when we see him there. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Oh! that first sweet look on Christ, when we shall have left the body! I am clothed in rags: he looks upon me, and I am clothed in robes of light. I am black; he looks upon me, and I forget the tents of Kedar, and become white as the curtains of Solomon. I am defiled; sin has looked upon me, and there is filth upon my garments: lo, I am whiter than the driven snow, for he hath looked upon me. I have evil wishes and evil thoughts, but they have fled like the demon before his face, when he said, "Get thee hence, Satan; I command thee to come out of the man." "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." I know, beloved, the Saviour seems to you like a great ship, and I like some small boat, trying to pull the ship

out of the harbour. It is how I feel myself. I have the oars, I am trying to pull; but it is such a glorious big ship, that I cannot pull it out. There are some subjects the rudder of which I can take hold of and guide anywhere; they will come out of any harbour, let the passage be ever so narrow; but this is a noble ship—so big that we can hardly get it out to sea. It needs the Holy Ghost to blow the sails for you, and your whole souls to dwell upon it, and desire to think of this wondrous sight; and then I hope you will go away dissatisfied with the preacher, because you will feel that the subject had altogether mastered him and you also.

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

Brother, with snow upon thy head, wilt thou "see him as he is?" Thou hast had many years of fighting and trying, and trouble: if thou ever dost "see him as he is," that will pay for all. "Yes," sayest thou, "I know in whom I have believed." Well, brother, thine old dim eyes will need no spectacles soon. To "see him as he is," will give thee back thy youth's bright beaming eye, with all its lustre and its fire. But are thy grey hairs full of sin? and doth lust tarry in thy old cold blood? Ah! thou shalt see him, but not nigh; thou shalt be driven from his presence. Would God this arm were strong enough to drag thee to a Saviour; but it is not. I leave thee in his hands. God save thee!

And thou, dear brother, and thou, dear sister, who hast come to middle age, struggling with the toils of life, mixed up with all its battles, enduring its ills, thou art asking, it may be, shalt thou see him! The text says, "*We* shall;" and can you and I put our hands on our hearts and know our union with Jesus? If so, "*We* shall see him as he is." Brother! fight on! Up at the devil! Strike hard at him! Fear not! that sight of Christ will pay thee. Soldier of the cross, whet thy sword again, and let it cut deep. Labourer! toil again; delve deeper; life the axe higher, with a brawnier and stouter arm; for the sight of thy Master at last will please thee well. Up, warrior! Up the rampart, for victory sits smiling on the top, and thou shalt meet thy Captain there! When thy sword is reeking with the blood of thy sins, it will be a glory indeed to meet thy master, when thou art clothed with triumph, and then to "see him as he is."

Young man, my brother in age, the text says, "*We* shall see him as he is." Does "we" mean that young man there in the aisle? Does it mean you, my brother, up there? Shall *we* "see him as he is?" We are not ashamed to call each other brethren in this house of prayer. Young man, you have got a mother and her soul doats upon you. Could your mother come

to you this morning, she might take hold of your arm, and say to you, "John, we shall 'see him as he is;' it is not I, John, that shall see him for myself alone, but you and I shall see him together, '*we* shall see him as he is.'" Oh! bitter, bitter thought that just now crossed my soul! O heavens! if we ever should be sundered from those we love so dearly when the last day of account shall come! Oh! if we should not see him as he is! Methinks to a son's soul there can be nought more harrowing than the thought, that it possibly may happen that some of his mother's children shall see God, and he shall not! I had a letter just now from a person who thanks God that he read the Sermon, "Many shall come from the east and from the west;" and he hopes it has brought him to God. He says, 'I am one out of a large family, and all of them love God except myself; I don't know that I should have thought of it, but I took up this sermon of yours, and it has brought me to a Saviour." Oh! beloved, think of bringing the last out of nine to a Saviour! Have not I made a mother's heart leap for joy? But oh! if that young man had been lost out of the nine, and had seen his eight brothers and sisters in heaven, while he himself was cast out, methinks he would have had nine hells—he would be nine times more miserable in hell, as he saw each of them, and his mother and his father, too, accepted, and himself cast out. It would not have been "we" there with the whole family.

What a pleasant thought it is, that we can assemble to-day, some of us, and can put our hands round those we love, and stand, an unbroken family—father, mother, sister, brother, and all else who are dear, and can say by humble faith, "*We* shall see him as he is"—all of us, not one left out! Oh! my friends, we feel like a family at Park Street. I do feel myself, when I am away from you, that there is nothing like this place, that there is nothing on earth which can recompense the pain of absence from this hallowed spot. Somehow or other, we feel knit together by such ties of love! Last Sabbath I went into a place where the minister gave us the vilest stuff that ever was brewed. I am sure I wished I was back here, that I might preach a little godliness, or else hear it. Poor Wesleyan thing! He preached works from beginning to end, from that very beautiful text—"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy!" telling us that whatever we sowed, that we should reap, without ever mentioning salvation for sinners, and pardon required even by saints. It was something like this: "Be good men and women, and you shall have heaven for it. Whatsoever you sow you are sure to reap; and if you are very good people, and do the best you can, you will all go to heaven, but if you are very bad and wicked then you will have to go to hell; I am sorry to tell you so, but whatever you sow that shall you reap." Not a morsel about Jesus Christ, from beginning to end; not a scrap. "Well," I thought, "they say I'm rather hard upon these Arminian fellows; but if I do not drive my old sword into them worse than ever, now I have heard them myself again, then I am not a living man!" I thought they might have altered a little, and not preach works so much; but I am sure there never was a sermon more full of salvation by works preached by the Pope himself, than that was. They do believe in salvation by works, whatever they

may say, and however they may deny it when you come to close quarters with them; for they are so everlastingly telling you to be good, and upright, and godly, and never directing you first to look to the bleeding wounds of a dying Saviour; never telling you about God's free grace, which has brought you out of enormous sins; but always talking about that goodness, goodness, goodness, which never will be found in the creature.

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

"Here our best friends our kindred dwell;
Here God our Saviour reigns."

And the thought of losing one of you grieves me almost as much as the thought of losing any of my relatives. How often have we looked at one another with pleasure! How often have we met together, to sing the same old song to the same old tunes! How often have we prayed together! And how dearly we all of us love the sound of the word "Grace, grace, grace!" And yet there are some of you that I know in my heart, and you know yourselves, will not see him, unless you have a change—unless you have a new heart and a right spirit. Well, would you like to meet your pastor at the day of judgment, and feel that you must be parted from him because his warnings were unheeded and his invitation cast to the wind. Thinkest thou, young man, that thou wouldst like to meet me at the day judgment, there to remember what thou hast heard, and what thou hast disregarded? And thinkest thou, that thou wouldst like to stand before thy God, and to remember how the way of salvation was preached to thee—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved,"—and that thou didst disregard the message? That were sad indeed. But we leave the thought with you, and lest you should think that if you are not worthy you will not see him—if you are not good you will not see him—if you do not do such-and-such good things you will not see him—let me just tell you, whosoever, though he be the greatest sinner under heaven—whosoever, though his life be the most filthy and the most corrupt—whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall have everlasting life; for God will blot out his sins, will give him righteousness through Jesus, accept him in the beloved, save him by his mercy, keep him by his grace, and at last present him spotless and faultless before his presence with exceeding great joy.

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

(See also the accompanying Exposition of 1 John 3:1-10 that follows.)

Exposition: 1 John 3:1-10

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

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

"*Beloved, now are we the sons of God.*" That is easy to read; but it is not so easy to feel. "*Now* are we the sons of God." How is it with your heart this morning? Are you in the lowest depths of sorrow and suffering? "*Now are you* a son of God." Does corruption rise within your spirit, and grace seem like a poor spark trampled under foot? "Beloved, *now* are *you* a son of God." Does your faith almost fail you? and are your graces like a candle well nigh blown out by the wind! Fear not, beloved; it is not your graces, it is not your frames, it is not your feelings, on which you are to live: you must live simply by naked faith on Christ. "Beloved, *now* are we the sons of God." With all these things against us, with the foot of the devil on our neck, and the sword in his hand ready to slay us—beloved *now* in the very depths of our sorrow, wherever we may be—*now*, as much in the valley as on the mountain, as much in the dungeon as in the palace, as much when broken on the wheel of suffering as when exalted on the wings of triumph—"beloved, *now* are we the sons of God." "Ah!" but you say, "see how I am arrayed! my graces are not bright; my righteousness does not shine with apparent glory." But read the next: "*It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but*

we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him." We are not so much like him now, but we have some more refining process to undergo, and death itself, that best of all friends, is yet to wash us clean. "We know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

"And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law for sin is the transgression of the law.

"And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin."

Believer, read these words in two senses. He was manifested to take away thy sins that thou hast committed; and that he accomplished, when "the just for the unjust," he sustained the penalties of them. And he was manifested to take away the power of thy sins; that is to say, to conquer thy reigning lusts, to take away thine evil imaginations, to purify thee, and make thee like himself. Well, beloved, what a mercy it is that some one was manifested to take away our sins from us! for some of us have been striving a long, long while, to conquer our sins, and we cannot do it. We thought we had driven them out, but they had "chariots of iron," and we could not overcome them; they lived "in the hill country," and we could not get near them. As often as we worsted them in one battle, they came upon us thick and strong, like an army of locusts; when heaps and heaps had been destroyed they seemed as thick as ever. Ah! but there is a thought—they shall all be taken away. "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins;" and so he will. The time will come when you and I shall stand without spot or blemish before the throne of God: for they are "without fault before the throne of God" at this moment, and so shall we be ere long.

"Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him."

This plain, simple verse, has been twisted by some who believe in the doctrine of perfection, and they have made it declare that it is possible for some to abide in Christ, and therefore not to sin. But you will remark that it does not say, that *some* that abide in Christ do not sin; but it says that *none* who abide in Christ sin. "*Whosoever* abideth in him sinneth not." Therefore this passage is not to be applied to a few who attain to what is called by our Arminian friends the fourth degree—perfection; but it appertains to all believers; and of every soul in Christ it may be said, that he sinneth not. In reading the Bible, we read it simply as we would read another book. We ought not to read it as a preacher his text, with the intention of making something out of every word; but we should read it as we find it written: "Whosoever abideth in Christ sinneth not." Now we are sure that cannot mean that he does not sin at all, but it means that sins not habitually, he sins not designedly, he sins not finally, so as to perish. The Bible often calls a man righteous; but that does not mean that he is perfectly righteous. It calls a man a sinner, but it does not imply that he may not have done some good deeds in his life; it means that that is the man's general character. So with the

man who abides in Christ: his general character is not that he is a sinner, but that he is a saint—he sinneth not openly wilfully before men. In his own heart, he has much to confess, but his life before his fellow creatures is such a one that it can be said of him: "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; but whosoever sinneth [the sins of this world. in which the multitude indulge] hath not seen him, neither known him."

"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous."

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

"He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

It were well if we always remembered that practical godliness is the soul of godliness; that it is not talking religion, but walking religion which proves a man to be sincere; it is not having a religious tongue, but a religious heart; it is not a religious mouth, but a religious foot. The best evidence is the salvation of the soul. Avaunt! talkative; go thy way, thou mere professing formalist! Your ways lead down to hell, and your end shall be destruction; for "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he mighty destroy the works of the devil."

Marvellous Increase of the Church

A Sermon
(No. 63)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 27, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"—Isaiah 60:8.

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

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

I. First, the church of old, and our church now, appears to have been the subject of WONDER when she saw so many come to know the Lord. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?" Take the first sentence of the text first: "Who are these that fly as a cloud?"

The church wondered, first of all, *at the number of her converts*. They did "fly as a cloud." Not here and there a convert—not now and then one—not converts like solitary bitterns of the desert; but they "did fly as a cloud." Not a convert now and then, like a meteor, a thing we see but seldom, which flashes across the sky, rejoices the darkness, and then is gone; not

now and then a convert, as a *rara avis*,—a spiritual prodigy. "But who are these?" saith she, "who fly as a cloud?" She wonders at their number. But, my brethren, why should we be astonished? Did not the apostle Peter become the instrument of converting three thousand under one sermon? And have we not heard of Whitfield, that while ten thousand listened to him, it has been known that two thousand at a time have felt the power of God manifested in their hearts? And why should we wonder if hundreds were brought to God now? "Is his arm shortened, that he cannot save? Is his ear heavy, that he cannot hear?" Have we not cried unto the God of Jacob; and is anything impossible to him? Remember how he "cut Rahab and wounded the dragon." Think of his prodigies by the Red Sea, and the miracles he worked in the field of Zoan. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Oh! thou distrustful church, dost thou marvel because thy Lord giveth thee many children? Is it not written—"More are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife," saith the Lord. I tell thee, the Lord will show thee greater things than these. The increase we have had shall yet be exceeded, if God wills it. Nothing is impossible with him. He who converts one, could as easily convert a hundred; and he who redeems a hundred, could save a thousand by the self-same power. Is not the blood of Jesus sufficient? Is not the Holy Ghost powerful enough? and is not the mighty Three-one God "able to do for us exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think?" Yet, so it is; so little are our expectations, and so unprepared are we for God's mercies, that when he pours out a blessing upon us, so that we have not room enough to receive it, we begin shutting up the windows altogether, and think, "Surely it cannot come from God, because there is so much of it." Why, that is the very reason why we should believe it to be. If there were few conversions, then we might tremble, and fear lest they might be man's; but when there are so many none but a God can accomplish it. When one or two are brought to join a church, we may shake for fear and examine them with caution; but when they fly like a cloud, we can only say, "Great art thou, O God, marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." Doubtless, brethren, until larger views of God's power and increased faith shall diminish the wonder, we shall always stand in amazement, and say, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"

But, secondly, the Chaldee has the idea in it, not of numbers, but of *swiftness*. "Who are these that fly as a cloud," for swiftness? Ye have seen clouds dashing along, like chariots drawn by mighty horses, or flying like a fugitive army, when the swift winds have pursued them, and ye have said, "See how swiftly the clouds career along the sky;" and it is notable, that in great revivals of religion, persons are generally more swift in their religious growth and experience than they are in dull and degenerate times. "Why," says one, "how soon persons join the church here! how very soon they attain to assurance of faith! how very speedily they come to understand gospel doctrines. It was not so in my days; for I know I was months and months, and tried a long while, before I dared think of obeying my Master—before I could say, 'I know whom I have believed.'" Just so; but these are brighter days

than your days, and you are wondering now because the converts fly so swiftly. But that is just the idea of the text: "Who are these that fly *as swiftly* as a cloud?" I know, brethren, it used to be the custom with our churches, when a convert came to keep him a summer and a winter—to summer him and to winter him. Now, that is very prudent and very wise; but it is not at all scriptural: there is nothing in the word of God to support it. The example of Jesus and his apostles is altogether against it; and I take it that scripture is to go before prudence, and that his example is always to be above man's wisdom. Why should the people of God tarry in these days? Let them haste, and delay not to keep his commandments; and what if young people do grow in grace faster now than they did in your time? Perhaps God has now poured out a larger measure of his Spirit. He has placed us in brighter days; and plants in the warm sunshine must expect to grow faster than those that dwell in the frost. We know that in the short summers of Sweden, a harvest will ripen in two or three months, or less than that. Why should we complain of the corn of Sweden, because it ripens so swiftly, when it is just as good as ours that takes several months to ripen? The Lord does as he wills and as he pleases; and if some fly swiftly, whilst others travel slowly, let those who go slowly bless God that they go at all, but let them not murmur that others go a little faster. Nevertheless, it will always be to God's church a source of wonder: "Who are these that fly so swiftly like a cloud?"

The Targum has another idea, that of *publicity*. "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" The cloud, you know, flies so that everybody can see it. So do these converts fly openly before the world. It is a matter of admiration with this church and with God's church whenever it is increased, that the converts become so bold and fly so publicly. In the first days of the church, Nicodemus, the ruler of the Jews, came to Jesus by night; he was somewhat ashamed, lest he should be put out of the synagogue. Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man, was afraid to profess his Lord, and therefore loved Jesus "secretly, for fear of the Jews." But you do not read that any of them were afraid, when God poured out the Holy Ghost on the day that Peter preached; but "they broke their bread from house to house, and did eat it in singleness of heart, praising God." They went up to the beautiful gate of the temple, and in the very teeth of all the people, Peter and John healed the lame man. They worked their miracles openly before all men. They were not ashamed. So, when there is a glorious ingathering of souls, you will always notice how bold the people become. Why, there never were such a brazen-faced set of people as those who assemble here. They are not ashamed of their religion. Why, I have seen persons come to the pool of baptism, fearing, shaking, and trembling: but I have not found it so with the majority of those who have been baptized in this place. They seem proud to own their Master. They can sing,—

"Ashamed of Jesus? Sooner far
Let evening blush to own a star!
Ashamed of Jesus? Just as soon

Let midnight be ashamed of noon!"

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

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

Again: there is the idea of *power*. Who is he that shall bridle a cloud, or stop it in its march? What man is he who by a word can stay the careering clouds, and make them still? Who is he that can bid them, when they are driving northward, turn their course to the south? Who is he that can rein the coursers of the wind, and forbid them to drag the chariots of darkness along to the west? The clouds yield to none; no majesty can control them; they laugh to scorn the sceptre of the prince, and they move on, despite the rattling of the sabres of armies. None can stop the clouds; they are invincible, uncontrollable; and in their majesty they move themselves right royally, like the kings of heaven. And who is he that can stop the converts of Zion? Who is he that can keep back the children of Jerusalem; when the Lord shall "bring again the captivity of his people," who is he that shall stop them? When his people of old were in Babylon, could "the two-leaved gates" bar them in? Could Cyrus, with all his armies, have kept them prisoners? Nay, the two-leaved gates open, the bars of

brass give way; and Cyrus himself sends them back to their country, with gold and silver to build their temple. And when in latter days the Jews shall return to their own land again, to worship God, who shall stop them? Shall the might of Russia? Shall the power of Egypt? Shall the tyranny of Turkey? Shall aught keep them back? No; the city shall be builded again upon her own heap, and the tribes of the Lord shall yet go up again, to worship God where their forefathers bowed before them. O, people of God! it is so with you. "Who are these that fly as a cloud!" Try, try, O enemy, to stop one of the Lord's doves, when he is coming to the windows! You cannot do it. Did not the devil try to stop you, O brother, when you were coming to God? Ah! he did; but it was all in vain. And when you went to join the church, how many difficulties there were in the way! But when you are called to God you will not be afraid, you will fly like a cloud. Ah! the world says we shall stop by-and-by; that all our success is as nothing; that it will soon die away; that it is a mere excitement, and will soon end. Ah! let them talk so, if they please. We are flying like a cloud. We have God within us; we have good within us; we have the might of the Deity within our church; and who is he that shall stop us? We bid the mighty men of this earth come; we bid carnal reason array itself against us; we bid the wisdom of the critic try to stop us. But they cannot do it. The weakness of God is mightier than man; and he who took us from the sheep-folds to lead his people Israel will not desert his David; he who has put us before his people will not cast us away, nor will he leave his church, nor forsake his chosen ones. "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?"

Thus have I tried to picture to you the amazement of Christ's Church. "Who are these that fly as a cloud?" And, now, Church of God, one word with thee, ere I leave thee. Your success is amazing one way; but it is not amazing if you look at it in another direction. It is amazing that any man should be saved, if you look at man; it is not amazing if you consider God. It is amazing that the wilderness should blossom as the rose, if you look at the wilderness; but it is not amazing, if you consider Jehovah. It is wonderful that a desert should have the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: but, wonder all dies away, when you recollect that God who doeth as he wills in the armies of heaven doeth as he pleases in this lower world. O, Church of God! give the honor and the glory to thy God, and to thy God only. Write his name upon thy banners; let thy sacrifice smoke before him, and before the shields of the mighty. "I am, and there is none else besides me." Bow before him; lest, if you give praise to the creature, and if you think we have done anything, and say, "Behold this great Babylon that I have builded," God would say, "Because thou hast exalted thyself like the cedars of Lebanon, therefore will I bring thee down to the earth, and thy glory shall be taken from thee." May the Lord in his mercy keep us from pride, and also keep us living on him, believing in his might, and trusting in his power!

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

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

"Humble, teachable, and mild,
Changed into a little child;
Pleased with all the Lord provides,
Weaned from all the world besides."

"Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth." Be not like the unclean bird, that will devour all kinds of filth; but be like the dove, that liveth on the "good corn of the kingdom." And be ye sure that you are like them, loving and kind one to another; and, like them, always mourn when you lose your mate; weep when your Jesus is gone from you, and you lose his delightful presence. Be ye like the dove in all these things.

Again: the church feels pleasure, not only in their character, but in their *condition*. Like doves "that fly." Lowth translates this portion of the verse "like doves on the wing." The church feels pleasure in thinking that her converts are "like doves on the wing." Do you never, beloved, get into such a condition, that you are not like a dove on the wing, but like a dove in a secret place, in the cleft of the rock, hiding yourself in darkness, because you are afraid to be seen? For my own part, I am often not like a dove on the wing, but like a dove hiding its head under its wing, afraid to fly. But "he reneweth our strength like the eagle's." There is a moulting time for the Lord's doves; but their feathers grow again, and then they have the wings of the dove, covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold; and they can fly upwards towards Jesus. And will not our church rejoice, when her converts appear to be all on the wing, not doubting, fearful converts, not converts that stand timidly, afraid to come; but converts on the wing, flying upwards towards Jesus, prayerful, laborious, active; not sitting still, doing nothing, but labouring and flying upwards towards Jesus. These are the converts we want. And the church is pleased when she can say, "Who are these that are like doves on the wing?"

Furthermore; the translation of the Septuagint gives us another idea. "Who are these that fly like doves *with their young*?" The church rejoices at the company that the converts bring with them. How charming is the sight when a father unites himself with the people of God, and then his children after him! We had an instance a little while ago here, of two sons followed by their mother, and we have had many instances of a mother following her daughters, and of daughters following their mothers, and sons following their fathers. Oh! how blessed it is, to see the doves come with their young! If there is anything more beautiful than a dove, it is the little dove that flieth by its side. Beloved, do you not rejoice, some of you, that you have your children in the church? that you can run your eye along the pew, where your offspring are sitting with you, and can say, "Ah! glory be to God, it is not only I that have received his mercy, but here are my sons, too; and there sits my daughter drinking from the same well as I draw from; living on the same spiritual manna, looking to the same cross for salvation, and hoping for the same heaven! But I notice some families here—I could point them out if I would: I notice them with sadness; where there is a father and a mother, both of them heirs of heaven, but of whose sons we have no evidence and no hope that they are the children of God. And there are some of you, my friends, whose young ones have come before you. We have daughters here that have prayerless mothers; we have sons that have ungodly fathers. Oh! does it not seem hard that the children should be in the kingdom before the parents? For if it be hard that a parent should see his children perishing, surely there is tenfold horror in the thought of children saved, and parents going to hell; your offspring entering into the joy of their Lord, and ye yourselves cast "into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." Daughter of Zion! plead for your children. Men of Jerusalem! plead for your children.

The church, again, feels pleasure *at the direction in which these doves move*. "Who are these that fly as the doves *to their windows*?" Where should the dove fly to else but to its dovecot? The word means the dovecot, where the doves live, the little pigeon holes, into which the doves enter and dwell. The joy of the church is, that the poor sinner does not fly to man, nor to the law, but flies to Christ, the dovecot! I can recollect when, like a poor dove, sent out by Noah from his hand, I flew over the wide expanse of waters, and hoped to find some place where I might rest my wearied wing. Up towards the north I flew; and my eye looked keenly through the mist and darkness, if perhaps it might find some floating substance, on which my soul might rest its foot, but it found nothing. Again it turned its wing, and flapped it, but not so rapidly as before, across that deep water that knew no shore; but still there was no rest. The raven had found his resting-place upon a floating body, and was feeding itself upon the carrion of some drowned man's carcass; but my poor soul found none. I went on: thought I saw a ship floating out at sea; it was the ship of the law; and I thought I would put my feet on its canvass, or rest myself on its cordage for a time, and find some refuge. But ah! it was an airy phantom, on which I could not rest; for my foot had no right to rest on the law, I had not kept it, and the soul that keepeth it not must die. At last I saw the barque Christ Jesus—that happy ark; and I thought I would fly thither; but my poor wing was weary, and I could fly no further, and down I sank into the water, but as providence would have it, when my wings were flagging, and I dropped into the stream to be drowned, just below me was the roof of the ark, and I saw a hand put out from it, that took me, and said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore I have not delivered the soul of my turtle dove into the company of the wicked; come in, come in!" and then I found I had an olive branch in my mouth of peace with God and peace with man, plucked off with Jesus' power. Poor soul! hast thou found a resting-place in the ark? hast thou fled to thy window? or art thou, O Ephraim, like the silly dove that hath no heart, that goeth down to Egypt, and resteth itself in Assyria? Oh, say thou, why is it that thou are looking for rest, where none can be found? There be many that say, "Who will show us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me!" That is the dove's resting-place; that is his house. Have you found your home in Christ? If you have not, when the storm comes, O dove, with ruffled plumage thou shalt be driven before the swift tempest; thou shalt be blown along like a small feather before the stream, onward, onward, through the dark unknown until thou findest thyself with burned and singed wings, falling into flames that have no bottom. The Lord give you deliverance, and help you to fly to Jesus.

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

it;" and she says, "Who are they?" That is the question! Now I address myself to an anxious church to answer it.

First, they are *those that fly*. Our text says, "Who are these that fly?" They are those who fly because they cannot stop where they were, and they are flying somewhere else for refuge. We trust that those who have joined our church are those who are persuaded that the land wherein they dwelt is to be consumed with fire, who feel a necessity to come out of the place where they once lived, and have a strong desire to seek "a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." We hope, beloved, that those who have joined with us here are those who are escaping from hell and flying to heaven; such as once had no sins that they cared for, but now come out because they needs must come, for their house has got too hot for them, and they cannot abide any longer in their sins. Here we have the idea of conviction. They are those that fly. They are not content now to make their nest of their own good works, with here and there a little bit of down picked off Morality-common, and here apiece of yarn that they have picked up in Legality palace, and here a piece of good work that they have found in the barn-yard of Ceremonialism. No; they are poor souls that have no rest anywhere, but a re flying, and flying with rapid wing, until they can get to their windows. Are you such, my beloved, that have joined the church? or are you not? If you are not, you have deceived me, and you have deceived the church, for we thought you were; we want to have none united with us but those who are flying to us. We want no self-righteous ones; no self-sufficient ones, no good moral people; we want those who feel that they are ragged sinners, clothed by Jesus; poor dead sinners, made alive by Jesus. I ask God, when I ask him to give me any, to give me those who are flying with haste for a Saviour; and if any of you that have come to us making a profession of flying are not such, I beseech you by everything that is solemn, by that hell of hypocrites, which is the hell of hells, and by the heaven you would lose, to bethink yourselves how sinfully you are acting, in continuing members of a Christian church when you are hypocrites and have never fled.

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

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

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

We give thee yet another answer, O thou timid church. Those who come to join themselves with thee are *persons who have been regenerated*; for they are *doves*. They were not doves by nature; they were ravens; but they are doves now. They are changed from ravens into doves, from lions into lambs. Beloved, it is very easy for you to pretend to be the children of God; but it is not easy for you to be so. The old fable of the jackdaw dressed up in peacock's feathers often takes place now. Many a time have we seen coming to our church, a fine strutting fellow, with long feathers of prayer behind him. He could pray gloriously; and he has come strutting in, with all his majesty and pride, and said, "Surely I must come; I have everything about me; am I not rich and polite? have I not learning and talent?" In a very little while we have found him to be nothing but an old prattling jackdaw, having none of the true feathers belonging to him; by some accident one of his borrowed feathers have dropped out, and we have found him to be a hypocrite. I beseech you, do not be hypocrites. The glory of the gospel is not that it paints ravens white, and whitewashes blackbirds, but that it turns them into doves. it is the glory of our religion not that it makes a man seem what he is not, but that it makes him something else. It takes the raven and turns him into a dove; his ravenish heart becomes a dove's heart. It is not the feathers that are changed, but the man himself. Glorious Gospel, which takes a lion, and doth not cut the lion's mane off, and then cover him with a sheep's skin, but makes him into a lamb! O church of God! these that have come like doves to their windows are trophies of regenerating grace, which has transformed them, and made them as new creatures in Christ Jesus.

The last answer I shall give respecting those who have come to join themselves with us is, that they are those, we hope, who have *fled to their windows*, and found a refuge in Christ my Lord. There is nothing we want to know of a person coming before the church, except this. Dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Hast thou had pardon from his hands? Hast thou had union with his person? Dost thou hold communion with him day by day? Is

he thy hope, thy stay, thy refuge, thy trust? If so, then thou mayest come in. If thou art one living in the dovecot we will not drive thee away; if thou hast fled like a dove to thy window, we are glad to have thee. But there is the anxious question—Have you fled to Christ? Beloved, there are some who think they have fled to Christ that have not; and there are some who think they have not fled to Christ that have. There are some of you who think yourselves safe for heaven, that are nothing but whitewashed sepulchres, like the Pharisees of old. It is a horrible thought, that there are some, we fear, who lay their head upon their death pillow, as they think, in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection, but will in hell lift up their eyes, being in torment. A dove, you know, can find good shelter for itself in other places beside a dovecot; there may be some little hole in the barn, and in there the dove gets and builds its nest, and is very happy and comfortable. Ah! dove, but there is no place that will protect you that is not a dovecot; and there is only one dovecot. You have built a nice snug nest perhaps in some of your trees; you are building your hope in some one of your merits; you are putting your trust in some of your own works. It is all in vain. There is only one dovecot. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ and him crucified." There is only one hope for a poor sinner from the justice of Jehovah; and that is in the "Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," who "gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair." Do you know how *that* dovecot was made for you? Do you know how it is lined for you, and how large the door is? It was made by Jesus, the carpenter's son; it is lined with the blood of his own heart; and the door is so wide that the biggest sinner can get in, but he who has any righteousness will find that the door is not large enough to let him carry his righteousness with him. Poor soul! hast thou a dovecot? and art thou living in it? If so, we rejoice with thee, and glad enough should we be to have thee united with our church; for we love all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, lest thou shouldst not understand our holy religion, one moment shall suffice, and thou shalt go. Dost thou not know that the law which God made on Sinai has been broken by us all, and that God, the "jealous God," will "by no means spare the guilty?" And dost thou not know, O sinner, that thou must offer something to God, to make up a recompense for what thou hast done? Dost thou not know, that God is so angry with the man who sins, that he will damn that man, unless there is some one who will be damned for him, and suffer the punishment in his stead? And dost thou not know, that our religion is a religion of substitution—that Jesus Christ the Son of God became man; that he might take the punishment we ought to have had; that he bore the wrath we ought to have borne; that he took the guilt we committed, just as the scape-goat of old did, and carried it right away into the wilderness of forgetfulness; so that now a sinner who is putting his trust in that substitution can escape punishment. God's justice cannot demand payment twice—

"First at my bleeding Surety's hands,
And then again at mine."

Precious Jesus! what a substitute thou wast for guilt? Sweet Lord Jesus! I kiss thy wounds this day; thou Man! thou God! thou who didst wrestle with Jacob! thou who didst walk with Abraham, the man of God, of Mamre! thou who stoodst in the fiery furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego! Thou Son of God, thou Son of Man, who didst appear to Joshua with thy sword drawn! I worship thee, my substitute, my hope! Oh! that others might do so too, and that the whole of this vast multitude might, with one heart, accept him as their Saviour!

The Enchanted Ground

A Sermon
(No. 64)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, February 3, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others: but let us watch and be sober."—1 Thess. 5:6

As the spiritual guide of the flock of God along the intricate mazes of experience, it is the duty of the gospel minister to point out every turning of the road to heaven, to speak concerning its dangers or its privileges, and to warn any whom he may suspect to be in a position peculiarly perilous. Now, there is a portion of the road which leadeth from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City, which has in it, perhaps, more dangers than any other portion of the way. It doth not abound with lions; there are no dragons in it; it hath no dark woods, and no deep pitfalls; yet more seeming pilgrims have been destroyed in that portion of the road than anywhere else, and not even Doubting Castle, with all its host of bones, can show so many who have been slain there. It is the part of the road called the Enchanted Ground. The great geographer, John Bunyan, well pictured it when he said:

"I then saw in my dream that they went on till they came into a certain country, whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy, if he came a stranger into it. And here Hopeful began to be very dull, and heavy of sleep; wherefore he said unto Christian, I do now begin to grow so drowsy that I can scarcely hold up mine eyes; let us lie down here, and take one nap.

Christian: "By no means, said the other, lest sleeping we never awake more."

Hopeful: "Why, my brother? Sleep is sweet to the laboring man; we may be refreshed if we take a nap."

Christian: "Do you not remember that one of the shepherds bid us beware of the Enchanted Ground? He meant by that, that we should beware of sleeping; wherefore, 'let us not sleep as others do, but let us watch and be sober.'"

There are no doubt, many of us, beloved, who are passing over this plain; and I fear that this is the condition of the majority of churches in the present day. They are lying down on the settles of Lukewarmness, in the Arbors of the Enchanted Ground. There is not that activity and zeal we could wish to see among them; they are not, perhaps, notably heterodox; they may not be invaded by the lion of persecution, but they are somewhat worse than that,—they are lying down to slumber, like Heedless and Too-Bold in the Arbor of Sloth. May God grant that his servants may be the means of arousing the church from its lethargy, and stirring it up from its slumbers, lest haply professors should sleep the sleep of death.

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

I. First, what is that state of sleep into which the Christian man may fall? It is not death. He was dead once, but he is now alive in Christ Jesus; and therefore shall never die; but though a living man shall never die, being quickened by an immortal life, yet that living man may sleep; and that sleep is so nearly akin to death that I have known slumbering Christians mistaken for dead, carnal sinners. Come, beloved, let me picture to you the state of the Christian while he is in a condition of sleep.

First, sleep is a state of *insensibility;* and such is that state which too often falls upon even the best children of God. When a man is asleep he is insensible. The world goes on, and he knows naught about it. The watchman calls beneath his window, and he sleeps on still. A fire is in a neighboring street, his neighbor's house is burned to ashes, but he is asleep, and knows it not. Persons are sick in the house, but he is not awakened; they may die, and he weeps not for them. A revolution may be raging in the streets of his city; a king may be losing his crown; but he that is asleep shares not in the turmoil of politics. A volcano may burst somewhere near him, and he may be in imminent peril; but he escapeth not; he is sound asleep, he is insensible. The winds are howling, the thunders are rolling across the sky, and the lightnings flash at his window; but he that can sleep on careth not for these, and is insensible to them all. The sweetest music is passing through the street; but he sleeps, and only in dreams doth he hear the sweetness. The most terrific wailings may assail his ears; but sleep has sealed them with the wax of slumber, and he hears not. Let the world break in sunder, and the elements go to ruin, keep him asleep, and he will not perceive it. Christian, behold your condition. Have you not sometimes been brought into a condition of insensibility? You wished you could feel; but all you felt was pain because you could not feel. You wished you could pray. It was not that you felt prayerless, but it was because you did not feel at all. You sighed once; you would give a world if you could sigh now. You used to groan once; a groan now would be worth a golden star if you could buy it. As for songs, you can sing them, but then your heart does not go with them. You go to the house of God; but when "the multitude that keep holy day" in the full tide of song send their music up to heaven, you hear it, but your heart does not leap at the sound. Prayer goeth solemnly like the evening sacrifice up to God's throne; once you could pray, too; but now, while your body is in the house of God, your heart is not there. You feel you have brought the chrysalis of your being; but the fly is gone away from it; it is a dead, lifeless case. You have become like a formalist; you feel that there is not savor, that unction, in the preaching that there

used to be. There is no difference in your minister, you know; the change is in yourself. The hymns and the prayers are just the same, but you have fallen into a state of slumber. Once, if you thought of a man's being damned, you would weep your very soul out in tears; but now you could sit at the very brink of hell, and hear its wailings unmoved. Once the thought of restoring a sinner from the error of his ways would have made you start from your bed at midnight, and you would have rushed through the cold air to help rescue a sinner from his sins. Now, talk to you about perishing multitudes, and you hear it as an old, old tale. Tell you of thousands swept by the mighty flood of sin onwards to the precipice of destruction, you express your regret, you give your contribution, but your heart goeth not with it. You must confess that you are insensible.—not entirely, but too much so. You want to be awake: but you groan because you feel yourselves to be in this state of slumber.

Then, again, he that sleepeth is *subject to divers illusions.* When we sleep, judgment goeth from us, and fancy holdeth carnival within our brain. When we sleep, dreams arise and fashion in our head strange things. Sometimes we are tossed on the stormy deep, and anon we revel in king's palaces. We gather up gold and silver as if they were but the pebbles of the sea; and anon we are poor and naked, shivering in the blast. What illusions deceive us! The beggar in his dream becomes richer than Plautus, and the rich man as poor as Lazarus: the sick man is well, the healthy man hath lost his limbs, or is dead. Yea, dreams do make us descend to hell, or even carry us to heaven. Christian, if thou art one of the sleepy brotherhood, thou art subject to divers illusions. Strange thoughts come to thee which thou never hadst before. Sometimes thou doubtest if there be a God, or if thou dost exist thyself. Thou tremblest lest the gospel should not be true, and the old doctrine which once thou didst hold with a stern hand, thou art almost inclined to let go. Vile heresies assail thee. Thou thinkest that the Lord that bought thee was not the Son of God. The devil tells thee that thou art none of the Lord's, and thou dreamest that thou art cast away from the love of the covenant. Thou criest

"I would, but cannot sing;
I would, but cannot pray;"

and thou feelest as if it were all in question whether thou art one of the Lord's or no. Or perhaps thy dreams are brighter, and thou dreamest that thou art somebody, great and mighty, a special favorite of Heaven; pride puffs thee up; thou dreamest that thou art rich, and hast need of nothing, whilst thou art naked, poor, and miserable. Is this thy state, O Christian? If so, may God wake thee up from it!

Again, sleep is *a state of inaction.* No daily bread is earned by him that sleepeth. The man who is stretched upon his couch neither writeth books, nor tilleth the ground, nor plougheth the sea, nor doth aught else. His hands hang down, his pulse beateth, and life there is, but he is positively dead as to activity. O beloved, here is the state of many of you. How many Christians are inactive! Once it was their delight to instruct the young in the

Sabbath- school, but that is now given up. Once they attended the early prayer-meeting, but not now. Once they would be hewers of wood and drawers of water, but alas! they are asleep now. Am I talking of what may happen! Is it not too true almost universally? Are not the churches asleep? Where are the ministers that preach? We have men that read the manuscripts, and talk essays: but is that preaching? We have men that can amuse an audience for twenty minutes. Is that preaching? Where are the men that preach their hearts out, and say their soul in every sentence? Where are the men that make it, not a profession, but a vocation, the breath of their bodies, the marrow of their bones, the delight of their spirits? Where are the Whitefields and Wesleys now? Are they not gone, gone, gone? Where are the Rowland Hills now, who preached every day, and three times a day, and were not afraid of preaching everywhere the unsearchable riches of Christ? Brethren, the Church slumbers. It is not merely that the pulpit is a sentry-box with the sentinel fast asleep; but the pews are affected. How are the prayer-meetings almost universally neglected! Our own church stands out like an almost solitary green islet in the midst of a dark, dark, sea; one bright pearl in the depths of an ocean of discord and confusion. Look at neighboring churches. Step into the vestry, and see a smaller band of people than you would like to think of, assembled round the pastor, whose heart is dull and heavy. Hear one brother after another pour out the dull monotonous prayer that he has said by heart these fifty years; and then go away and say: "Where is the spirit of prayer, where the life of devotion?" Is it not almost extinct? Are not our churches "fallen, fallen, fallen from their high estate?" God wake them up, and send them more earnest and praying men!

Once more. The man who is asleep is *in a state of insecurity.* The murderer smiteth him that sleeps: the midnight robber plundereth his house that resteth listlessly on his pillow. Jael smiteth a sleeping Sisera. Abner taketh away the spear from the bolster of a slumbering Saul. A sleeping Eutychus falleth from the third loft, and is taken up dead. A sleeping Samson is shorn of his locks, and the Philistines are upon him. Sleeping men are ever in danger; they cannot ward off the blow of the enemy, or strike another. Christian, if thou art sleeping, thou art in danger. Thy life, I know, can never be taken from thee; that is hid with Christ in God. But O! thou mayest lose thy spear from thy bolster; thou mayest lose much of thy faith; and thy cruse of water, wherewith thou dost moisten thy lips, may be stolen by the prowling thief. O! thou little knowest thy danger. Even now the black-winged angel takes his spear, and standing at thy head, he says to Jesus (to David), "Shall I smite him? I will smite him but once." (David says) Our Jesus whispers, "Thou shalt not smite him. Take his spear and his cruse, but thou shalt not kill him." But O! awake, thou slumber! Start up from the place where thou now liest in thy insecurity! This is not the sleep of Jacob, in which ladders unite heaven and earth, and angels tread their ascending rounds; but this is the sleep where ladders are raised from hell, and devils climb upward from the pit to molest thy spirit.

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

And first, O Christian! awake from thy slumber, *because thy Lord is coming.* That is the grand reason used in the text. The apostle says, "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day." "Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." "Ye brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." O Christians! do you know that your Lord is coming? In such an hour as ye think not, the man who once hung quivering on Calvary will descend in glory; "The head that once was crowned with thorns" will soon be crowned with a diadem of brilliant jewels. He will come in the clouds of heaven to his church. Would you wish to be sleeping when your Lord comes? Do you want to be like the foolish virgins, or like the wise ones, either, who, while the bridegroom tarried, slumbered and slept? If our Master were to appear this morning, are there not half of us in such a state that we should be afraid to see him? Why, you know, when a friend comes to your house, if he is some great man, what brushing and dusting there is. Every corner of the room has its cobwebs removed; every carpet is turned up; and you make every effort to have the house clean for his coming. What! and will you have your house dusty, and the spiders of neglect building the cobwebs of indolence in the corners of your house, when your Lord may arrive tomorrow? And if we are to have an audience with the Queen, what dressing there is! How careful will men be that everything should be put on aright, that they should appear properly in court dress! Do you not know, servant of the Lord, that you are to appear before the king in his beauty, and to see him soon on earth? What! will ye be asleep when he comes? When he knocks at the door, shall he have for an answer, "The good man is asleep; he did not expect you"? Oh, no; be ye like men who watch for their Lord, that at his coming he may find you ready. Ah! ye carnal professors, who attend plays and balls, would you like Christ to come and find you in the middle of your dance? would you like him to look you in the face in the opera? Ah! ye carnal tradesmen, ye can cheat, and then pray after it. Would you like Christ to find you cheating? Ye devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers. You would not mind him coming in the middle of your long prayer; but he will come just at that poor widow's house is sticking

in your throat, just as you are swallowing the lands of the poor oppressed on, and putting in your pocket the wages of which you have defrauded the labourer. Then he will come; and how terrible will he be to such as you! We have heard of the sailor, who, when his ship was sinking, rushed to the cabin to steal a bag of gold, and though warned that he could no swim with it, tied it about his loins, leaped into the sea with it, and sank to rise no more. And I am afraid there be some rich men who know not how to use their money, who will sink to hell, strangled by their gold, hanging like millstones round their necks. O Christian, it shall not be so with you; but wake from thy slumbers, for thy Lord cometh.

But again, Christian, thou art benevolent; thou lovest men's souls, and I will speak to thee of that which will touch thy heart. Wilt thou sleep while *souls are being lost?* A brother here, some time ago, rushed into a house which was burning, and he saved a person from it; he then returned to his wife, and what did she say to him? "Go back again, my husband, and see if you cannot save another. We will not rest till all are delivered." Methinks that this is what the Christian man would say: "If I have been the means of saving one soul, I will not rest until I have saved another." Oh, hast thou ever thought how many souls sink into hell every hour? Did the dreary thought that the death-knell of a soul is tolled by every tick of yonder clock, ever strike thee? Hast thou never thought that myriads of thy fellow creatures are in hell now, and that myriads more are hastening thither? and yet dost thou sleep? What! physician, wilt thou sleep while men are dying? Sailor, wilt thou sleep when the wreck is out at sea, and the life- boat is waiting for hands to man it! Christian, wilt thou tarry while souls are being lost? I do not say that thou canst save them—God alone can do that—but thou mayest be the instrument; and wouldst thou lose the opportunity of winning another jewel for thy crown in heaven? wouldst thou sleep while work is being done? Well, said the British king, at the battle of Agincourt, "Come on, and conquer."

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

So methinks, when souls are being saved, Christians in bed may think themselves accursed they are not here. Sleep Christian, let me shout in thine ears—thou art sleeping while souls are being lost—sleeping while men are being damned—sleeping while hell is being peopled—sleeping while Christ is being dishonored—sleeping while the devil is grinning at thy sleepy face— sleeping while demons are dancing around thy slumbering carcase, and telling it in hell that a Christian is asleep. You will never catch the devil asleep; let not the devil catch you asleep. Watch, and be sober, that ye may be always up to do your duty.

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

III. Now it may be asked, When is the Christian most liable to sleep?

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

Now another dangerous time is *when all goes well in spiritual matters.* You never read that Christian went to sleep when lions were in the way; he never slept when he was going through the river Death, or when he was in Giant Despair's castle, or when he was fighting with Apollyon. Poor creature! he almost wished he *could* sleep then. But when he got halfway up the Hill Difficulty, and came to a pretty little arbor, in he went, and sat down and began to read his roll. O, how he rested himself! How he unstraped his sandals and rubbed his weary feet! Very soon his mouth was open, his arms hung down, and he was fast asleep. Again, the enchanted ground was a very easy, smooth place, and liable to send the pilgrim to sleep. You remember Bunyan's description of some of the arbors: "Then they came to an arbor, warm, and promising much refreshing to the weary pilgrims; for it was finely wrought above head, beautified with greens, and furnished with benches and settles. It had also in it a soft couch, where the weary might lean." "The arbor was called the Slothful's Friend, and was made on purpose to allure, if it might be, some of the pilgrims to take up their rest there when weary." Depend upon it, it is in easy places that men shut their eyes and wander into the dreamy land of forgetfulness. Old Erskine said a good thing when he remarked, "I like a roaring devil better than a sleeping devil." There is no temptation half so bad as not being

tempted. The distressed soul does not sleep; it is after we get into confidence and full assurance that we are in danger of slumbering. Take care, thou who art full of gladness. There is no season in which we are so likely to fall asleep as that of high enjoyment. The disciples went to sleep after they had seen Christ transfigured on the mountain-top. Take heed, joyous Christian, good frames are very dangerous; they often lull you into a sound sleep.

Yet there is one more thing; and, if I ever were afraid of anything, I should fear to speak before my grave and reverend fathers in the faith the fact that one of the most likely places for us to sleep in is *when we get near our journey's end.* It is ill for a child to say that, and I will therefore back it up by the words of that great pilot John Bunyan: "For this enchanted ground is one of the last refuges that the enemy to pilgrims has; wherefore it is, as you see, placed almost at the end of the way, and so it standeth against us with the more advantage. For when, thinks the enemy, will these fools be so desirous to sit down as when they are weary? and when so like to be weary as when almost at their journey's end? Therefore it is, I say, that the enchanted ground is placed so nigh to the land Beulah, and so near the end of their race. Wherefore let pilgrims look to themselves, lest it happen to them as it has done to these that, as you see, are fallen asleep, and none can awake them." May a child speak to those who are far before him in years and experience? But I am not a child when I preach. In the pulpit we stand as ambassadors of God, and God knoweth nothing of childhood or age; he teacheth whom he willeth, and speaketh as he pleases. It is true, my brethren, that those who have been years in grace are most in danger of slumbering. Somehow we get into the routine of the thing; it is usual for us to go to the house of God; it is usual for us to belong to the church, and that of itself tends to make people sleepy. Go into some of your churches in London, and you will hear a most delicious sermon preached to a people all sound asleep. The reason is that the service is all alike; they know when they have got to the third "Our Father which art in heaven." when they have passed the confession general, and when they have got to the sermon,—which is the time to sleep for twenty minutes. If the minister should smite his fist ecclesiastic upon the Bible, or enliven his faculties with a pinch of snuff, or even use his pocket handkerchief, the people would wake up, because it would be something out of the usual course. Or if he uttered an odd sentiment, they might be aroused, and would probably think that he had broken the 59th commandment, in making some of the congregation smile. But he never violates decorum; he stands, the very mirror of modesty and the picture of everything that is orderly. I have digressed, but you will see what I mean. If we are always going on the same road we are liable to sleep. If Moab gets at ease, and is not emptied from vessel to vessel, he sleeps on, for he knows no change, and when years have worn our road with a rut of godliness, we are apt to throw the reins on our horse's neck and sleep soundly.

IV. Now, lastly let me give a little good advice to the sleeping Christian. But, Christian, if thou art asleep, thou wilt not hear me. I will speak gently, then, and let thee sleep on. No,

I will not, I will shout in thine ears, "Awake, thou that sleepest! Arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise. Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem. Put on thy glorious array, thou church of the living God."

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

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

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

And he said, too—

"Here I'd sit, for ever viewing
Mercies' streams in streams of blood."

But he never said, "Here I would lay down and sleep;" for he could not sleep with that shriek, *"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,"* in his ears. He could not sleep with "It is finished!" going into his very soul. Keep thou near to the cross, Christian, and thou wilt not sleep.

Then I would advise thee to *let the wind blow on thee;* let the breath of the Holy Spirit continually fan thy temples, and thou wilt not sleep. Seek to live daily under the influence of the Holy Ghost; derive all thy strength from him, and thou wilt not slumber.

Lastly, labor to *impress thyself with a deep sense of the value of the place to which thou art going.* If thou rememberest that thou art going to heaven, thou wilt not sleep on the road. If thou thinkest that hell is behind thee, and the devil pursuing thee, I am sure thou wilt not be inclined to sleep. Would the man-slayer sleep if the avenger of blood were behind him, and the city of refuge before him? Christian, wilt thou sleep whilst the pearly gates are open;

the songs of angels waiting for thee to join them; a crown decorated with delight to be worn upon thy brow? Ah, no!

"Forget the steps already trod,
And onward urge thy way."
"Weak as thou art, thou shalt not faint,
Or, fainting, shalt not die;
He feeds the strength of every saint,
He'll help thee from on high."

Dearly beloved, I have finished my sermon. There are some of you that I must dismiss, because I find nothing in the text for you. It is said, "Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober." There are some here who do not sleep at all, because they are positively dead; and, if it takes a stronger voice than mine to wake the sleeper, how much more mighty must be that voice which wakes the dead. Yet even to the dead I speak; for God can wake them, though I cannot. O, dead man! dost thou not know that thy body and thy soul are worthless carrion? that whilst thou art dead thou liest abhorred of God, abhorred of man? that soon the vultures of remorse will come and devour thy lifeless soul; and, though thou hast lived in this world these seventy years (perhaps) without God and without Christ, in thy last hour the vulture of remorse shall come and tear thy spirit; and, though thou laughest now at the wild bird that circles in the sky, he will descend upon thee soon, and thy death will be a bed of shrieks, howlings, and wailings, and lamentations and yells! Dost thou know more still, that afterwards that dead soul will be cast into Tophet; and, as in the East they burn the bodies, so thy body and thy soul together shall be burned in hell? Go not away and dream that this is a metaphor. It is truth. Say not it is a fiction; laugh not at it as a mere picture. Hell is a positive flame; it is a fire that burns the body, albeit that it burns the soul, too. There is physical fire for the body, and there is spiritual fire for the soul. Go thy way, O man; such shall be thy fate. E'en now thy funeral pile is building, thy years of sin have laid huge trees across each other; and see, the angel is flying down from heaven with a brand already lit; thou art lying dead upon the pile; he puts the brand to the base thereof; thy disease proves that the lower parts are kindling with the flame; those pains of thine are the crackling of the fire. It shall reach thee soon, thou poor diseased one; thou art near death, and when it reaches thee thou shalt know the meaning of the fire that is unquenchable, and the worm that dieth not. Yet while there is hope I will tell thee the gospel. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be," must be "damned." He that believeth on the Lord Jesus, that is, with a simple, naked faith, comes and puts his trust in him, shall be saved, without anything else; but he that believeth not shall inevitably—hear it, men, and tremble—he that believeth not shall assuredly be damned.

P.S.—It is frequently objected that the preacher is censorious: he is not desirous of defending himself from the charge. He is confident that many are conscious that his charges

are *true,* and if true, Christian love requires us to warn those who err; nor will candid men condemn the minister who is bold enough to point out the faults of the church and the age, even when all classes are moved to anger by his faithful rebukes, and pour on his head the full vials of their wrath. IF THIS BE VILE, WE PURPOSE TO BE VILER STILL.—C.H.S.

Lions Lacking—But the Children Satisfied

A Sermon
(No. 65)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, February 10, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.
On behalf of the Baptist Fund for the Relief of Poor Ministers.

"The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."—Psalm 34:10.

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

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

I. First, we have here a very short, but very beautiful DESCRIPTION OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN: he is said to "seek the Lord." "They that seek the Lord (Or Jehovah, as the original has it) shall not want any good thing." Ah! beloved, if some of us had the drawing up of this description we should have made it too narrow. Possibly some of you might have said, "They that seek the Lord in the established church, within the pale of the state religion, shall not lack any good thing;" others might have said, "They that seek the Lord in the orthodox Calvinistic manner shall not lack any good thing;" and others might have said, "They that seek the Lord in the Baptist fashion, or the Methodist fashion, or some other, shall not lack any good thing." But it is not written so. It is written, "They that seek the Lord," in order that it may take in the Lord's people of all classes and denominations, and all shades of character. It is a description very brief, yet full and comprehensive, including Christians in

all stages and positions. Now let me show you that the Christian, in whatever portion of his spiritual history he may be, is one that seeks the Lord.

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

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

"Now, freed from sin I walk at large,
My Jesu's blood's my full discharge."

You will find that he has not left off seeking the Lord. No; he seeks now to know more of him; he seeks to understand more of the heights and depths, and lengths, and breadths of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. I ask any one here who has an assurance that he is a pardoned man, thoroughly justified and complete in Christ—are you not seeking the Lord? "Oh yes," you say, "I thirst, I long to know more of him; I feel that all I have ever known of him is like the whispering of the sea in the shell, while the awful roar of the sea itself has not yet reached mine ears. I have heard the whisperings of Christ in some little mercy, and I have heard his bounties sing of bottomless, eternal, unchangeable love; but oh! I long to plunge into the sea itself, to bathe myself in the broad ocean of his infinite generosity and love to me." No Christian ever fancies that he knows enough of his Master; there is no Christian who has found the Lord who does not desire to be better acquainted with him. "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest," is the cry of the man who has had his sins forgiven. He sitteth down at the feet of Jesus, and looketh up to him, and saith,

"Master, teach me more; I am a little child; thou art a great instructor; oh! I long to love and learn more of thee." He is ever seeking the Lord; and, in this more advanced stage, the promise to him is, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

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

"His steady soul doth fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar."

He can read his "title clear to mansions in the skies;" he has climbed the Delectable Mountain; his feet are standing fast upon a rock, and his goings are established; but even then he is seeking the Lord. In the highest flights of his assurance, on the topmost pinnacle of his faith, there is something yet beyond. When he had sailed farthest into the sea of Acceptance, there are Fortunate Isles that he hath not reached; there is an *ultima thule*, a distant land, that he hath not yet seen. He is still seeking the Lord; he feels that he has "not yet attained;" he is still "pressing forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." But then he seeks the Lord in a different fashion; he seeks him that he may put a crown on his head; he is not seeking him for mercy, but to give him praise. Oh, that my heart could find thee! that all its strings might sing sweet music to thee. Oh that my mouth could find thine ear, and that I might bid it open and listen to the whisper of my song. Oh that I knew where thou didst dwell, that I might sing hard by the eaves of thy habitation, and that thou mightest hear me ever—that I might perpetually send the songs of my gratitude up to thy sacred courts? I seek thee that I may break the alabaster box of praise on thy dear sacred head. I seek thee that I may put my soul upon the altar, and sacrifice my living self to thee. I seek thee, that I may go where cherubim are singing, whom I envy, because they

"All night long unwearied sing
High praises to the Eternal King."

I will seek thee in business, that there I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. I will seek thee in my songs that I may hymn thy praise. I will seek thee in my musings, that I may magnify the Lord in my thoughts. I will seek thee in my words, that my conversation may show forth thy praise. I will seek thee in my gifts of benevolence, that I may be like my Saviour. I will seek thee ever, for enough I have attained to know that I am thine and thou art mine, though I have nought else to ask of thee, seeing thou hast given me thyself; though thou art

"Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh,
My kinsman near allied by blood,"

though now my soul stands perfect in thee, and

"Not a shadow of a spot

Can on my soul be found,"

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

Then bring the Christian to the last period of life, to the *brink of death*. Set him on those hoary rocks that skirt the edge of Jordan; let him sit there, looking down at the dark stream rolling rapidly below, not afraid to wade it, but rather wishing to die that he may be with Jesus. Ask the old man what he is doing, and he will answer, "Seeking the Lord." But I thought thou hadst found him many a year, old man? "So I have, but when I found him I sought him more; and I am seeking him now—seeking him that I may be complete in him, at his appearing; that I may be like him when I shall see him as he is. I have sought to understand more of his love to me, and now I do not know it all. I know as much as mortal can know; I am living in the land of Beulah. See this bunch of spices; angel hands have brought it to me, a present from my King; here are tokens of his love, his mercy, and his grace. And dost not see yonder the golden light of the celestial city? and didst not hear just now the sweet singing of the angels?" "Nay, nay," saith the young man, "I hear them not." "But," the old man replies, "I am on the edge of Jordan, and my ears are open, whereas thine are dull, still I am doing what I have done all my life-long—seeking the Lord, and till this pulse shall cease its perpetual beating, I will still seek him, that dying, I may clasp him in my arms, the antidote of death."

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

But let us not leave this one point without asking you one solemn question. Will you answer it? I beseech you to answer it to yourselves. Are ye seeking the Lord? Nay; some of you there, if you only can have your bottle of wine and your fowl, that will satisfy you better than seeking the Lord. There is another—give you health and strength and let you enjoy the pleasures of this world, and that will be better to you than seeking the Lord. There is another flying in the face of the Almighty, cursing and swearing—you are not seeking the Lord. Another is here this morning who once thought that he did seek the Lord, but he has

left off doing it now; he went away from us because he was not of us, for, "if he had been of us, he doubtless would have continued with us." There is a young woman who thought she sought the Lord once, but she has gone astray, she has backslidden, proving that after all that it was mere excitement. Would God I could include you all in this promise this morning; but can I, dare I, must I? No, I must not. As the Lord liveth, if you are not seeking the Lord, the devil is seeking *you*; if you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels. Even now, the swift-winged angel of justice is holding the torch before the fierce messenger of vengeance who, with his naked dagger, is about to execute the wrath of God upon your spirit. Ah! take no lease of your lives; fancy not that you are to live for ever. If you have not sought the Lord, as Jonathan Edwards said, "thou standest over the mouth of hell upon a single plank, and that plank is rotten." You are hanging over hell by a single rope, and all the strands of the rope are creaking, snapping, breaking. Remember after death, judgment; and after judgment, woe; and after woe, nought; for woe, woe, woe, must be for ever. "The wrath to come! The wrath to come! The wrath to come!" It needs a damned spirit to start from the grave to preach to you, and let you know something of it; but though one should rise from the grave with all the scars of all his torments upon him, with his hair all crisp by the hot fire of vengeance, his body scorched in the flames which no abatement know, though he should tell you with a tear at every word and a groan as a stop at every sentence, and a deep sigh on every syllable, how horribly he feels, how damnably he is tormented, still ye would not repent. Therefore we will say little of it. May God the Holy Ghost seek you, and then you will seek him, and you shall be turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Poor, helpless worms in Christ possess
Grace, wisdom, peace, and righteousness."

Again, by young lions we may understand *men of cunning* and *men of wisdom*. The lion goeth out at night, and prowleth silently through the jungle. It hath a keen scent, and knoweth where to find its prey. It scenteth the fountain, and knoweth that the antelope will go there to drink. When he comes, the lion croucheth down, with wild eyes looks upon him, and in a moment, ere the antelope is aware, he is in the fangs of the lion. Men of cunning and wisdom—have you not seen such? Have you not heard their boastful exclamation, "Submit myself to a dogmatical preacher! No, sir, I will not. Believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures! I cannot believe in any such absurdity. Sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him in the Scriptures! No, sir, I cannot. I like something to discuss; I like an intellectual religion; I cannot believe everything simply because God says it. I want to be allowed to judge for myself. Am I not wise learned?" And when he sees us in distress, sometimes he says, "Nonsense! you have no brains! you, poor Calvinists must be bereft of your senses." And yet we can show as many men of sense as they can, and we are not afraid of them, however much they glory in their wisdom. But sometimes the poor Christian is frightened by them; he cannot answer their sophisms; he does not see his way through their labyrinths, and cannot escape from their nets. Well, don't try to escape from them. Let them talk on; the best answer is often silence. But do you know that these young lions so gloriously self-sufficient when in argument with you, in secrecy often "lack and suffer hunger?" There was never an infidel in the world that did not suffer spiritual hunger, though he might not confess it. His creed did not satisfy him; there was a hollow place, an aching void somewhere, which the world could never fill. But "they that seek the Lord," who take the Scriptures for their guide, who

bow implicity to the words of Jehovah, "do not lack any good thing." They feel no hollow unoccupied; Christ has filled their hearts, and they are satisfied with his presence and his love. "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

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

Then we may take it in a *temporal sense*. Young lions may mean *deep cunning schemers*. Have you never seen men with their thousand schemes and plans to make themselves rich, men who can overreach others, who are so subtle that you cannot see through them? Their instinct seems to be cunning. They are always lying in wait to take advantage of others; they prowl the world around, to seize on the helpless widow and the defenceless orphan. Or, perhaps, they may be following more legitimate schemes yet, such as are full of speculation and will involve the exercise of all their wits. Surely such can live if others stand. But no, they are just the men who "lack and suffer hunger;" their schemes all prove futile; the arrow which they shoot returneth on their own head and woundeth them. But they who lie gently down in passive faith, singing

"Father, I wait thy daily will;
Thou shalt divide my portion still,
Give me on earth what seems thee best,
'Till death and heaven reveal the rest,"

do not lack any good thing.

Again, by "young lions," we may understand "*rich men*"—men who have abundance. We have known persons who have ridden in fine carriages and dwelt in noble mansions, brought to the depths of poverty. Every now and then we hear of men, almost millionares, who are turned out into the very streets. Kings have walked our soil without their crowns,

and nobles even now are living on our charity. Daughters of men in high positions have to work as menials, and long sometimes to be allowed to do that. The rich sometimes "lack, and suffer hunger;" but they that wait on the Lord," poor as they may be, "do not lack any good thing."

Again, this may apply to you who earn your living by bodily labour. Perhaps you are a weak and sickly man; you are not one of the "young lions," like your neighbour, a strong big fellow, who can earn his day's wages without the least difficulty. He says to you, perhaps, "I shouldn't like to be such a poor lean thing as you are. If you should be ill, what would become of you? You trust in Providence, but I trust in my big arms. The best providence is to take care of yourself—to go and eat a good dinner, and keep yourself in trim." Nay, nay; have you not seen those young lions, "lack and suffer hunger?" Our missionary can tell of strong men whom he visits, who cannot find employment, but are brought almost to starvation; while he does not find that they that wait on the Lord lack any good thing. Don't be afraid because you have a sick and weakly frame; labour as hard as you can, and be sure, that if you wait on the Lord you will not lack any good thing.

Once more, the lion is a creature that *overcomes and devours all others*. We have some such in our society; you find them everywhere. They put their hand upon you, and you feel you are in a vice. They understand law better than you do: and woe be to you if you make a mistake! won't they take advantage of you? So in business they can always over-reach you; like sharks, if they do not devour you altogether, they leave you minus a leg or an arm. Yes, but you have seen these men, too, "lack and suffer hunger." And amongst all the miserable miscreants that walk the earth, there is none so destitute as the young lion that lacks, and suffers hunger. He puts his money into a bag full of holes; and methinks hell laughs at the covetous man, at him who grasps his neighbour's wealth. "Ha! ha!" says the devil, "damn thy soul to win—nothing! send thy soul to hell to win—a dream! A thing which thou hadst, but is gone; thou didst grasp it—it was a shadow! Sold thine immortal spirit to win a bubble which burst in thy grasp." Christian, do not be concerned about temporal things; trust in God; for while "young lions do lack, and suffer hunger, they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.

III. And now, I come to the third part, which is THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROMISE. Time fails me, and I shall not try to prove to you that God can in the ordinary course of his providence make a distinction between the righteous and the wicked; that would be an easy task. While God has the hearts of all men under his control, he can make the rich give where he pleases; and he can influence the church, and those that love the Lord, always to take care of the Lord's poor. But I am going to state one or two facts by way of stimulating you to assist me in the noble enterprise of endeavouring to support the poor disabled ministers of the everlasting gospel. Amongst the particular Baptists we have a fund called the Baptists Fund. It was instituted in 1717, in order to afford assistance to ministers in England and

Wales, who were in poverty and distress, in consequence of the inability of their churches and congregations to furnish them with a competent maintenance for themselves and their families. During nearly a century and a half, it has carried out, so far as its funds were sufficient, the benevolent purposes for which it was established. It publishes its accounts yearly; and from the last printed statement for 1854-5, it appears that in that year, one hundred and sixty-five cases were relieved in England, and sixty-five in the Principality, by grants in money to the amount of £1,560, no one receiving a larger sum than £10, and no grant being in any case made where the minister's income from every source exceed £80. In addition to the money grants, books also of the value together of £155 have been presented to thirty-five poor ministers unable to purchase them. Towards raising the necessary funds to meet these cases, collections are annually made in this and in number, character, and circumstances of the objects to be relieved, and the purpose for which the relief is afforded are considered, it will be well understood that this is no ordinary collection. We have the right of four votes, one for the pastor and three messengers sent by us, owing to our fathers having in olden times deposited £150 by way of starting the fund, the interest of which sum, and of that given by other churches, is spent every year. Different legacies having been left by other persons, a considerable sum has accumulated, and I believe the yearly income is somewhere about £2,000 at the present time. We need, however, much more. I am not going to detain you long by telling you about the fund, but I will read you one or two letters from the recipients. The first is from an old minister aged eighty.

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

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

always be given in that way, for so the deed directs it. I bless God for this society, and I ask you, under God, to take care of it, that while "the young lions do lack, and suffer hunger," the ministers of the Lord shall "not want any good thing."

The Resurrection of the Dead

A Sermon
(No. 66)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, February 17, 1856, by the
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At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both the of the just and unjust."—Acts 24:15.

Reflecting the other day upon the sad state of the churches at the present moment, I was led to look back to apostolic times, and to consider wherein the preaching of the present day differed from the preaching of the apostles. I remarked the vast difference in their style from the set and formal oratory of the present age. I remarked that the apostles did not take a text when they preached, nor did they confine themselves to one subject, much less to any place of worship, but I find that they stood up in any place and declared from the fulness of their heart what they knew of Jesus Christ. But the main difference I observed was in the *subjects* of their preaching. Surprised I was when I discovered that the very staple of the preaching of the apostles was the resurrection of the dead. I found myself to have been preaching the doctrine of the grace of God, to have been upholding free election, to have been leading the people of God as well as I was enabled into the deep things of his word; but I was surprised to find that I had not been copying the apostolic fashion half as nearly as I might have done. The apostles when they preached always testified concerning the resurrection of Jesus, and the consequent resurrection of the dead. It appears that the Alpha and the Omega of their gospel was the testimony that Jesus Christ died and rose again from the dead according to the Scriptures. When they chose another apostle in the room of Judas, who had become apostate, Acts I.22, they said, "One must be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection;" so that the very office of an apostle was to be a witness of the resurrection. And well did they fulfil their office. When Peter stood up before the multitude, he declared unto them that "David spoke of the resurrection of Christ." When Peter and John were taken before the council, the great cause of their arrest was that the rulers were grieved :because they taught the people and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead." Acts iv. 2. When they were set free, after having been examined, it is said, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Acts iv. 33. It was this which stirred the curiosity of the Athenians when Paul preached among them, "They said, he seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection of the dead." And this moved the laughter of the Areopagites, for when he spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "Some mocked, and others said, we will hear thee again of this matter." Truly did Paul say, when he stood before the council of the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am

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

There are very few Christians who believe the resurrection of the dead. You may be surprised to hear that, but I should not wonder if I discovered that you yourself have doubts on the subject. By the resurrection of the dead is meant something very different from the immortality of the soul: that, every Christian believes, and therein is only on a level with the heathen, who believes it too. The light of nature is sufficient to tell us that the soul is immortal, so that the infidel who doubts it is a worse fool even than a heathen, for he, before Revelation was given, had discovered it—there are some faint glimmerings in men of reason which teach that the soul is something so wonderful that it must endure forever. But the resurrection of the dead is quite another doctrine, dealing not with the soul, but with the body. The doctrine is that this actual body in which I now exist is to live with my soul; that not only is the "vital spark of heavenly flame" to burn in heaven, but the very censer in which the incense of my life doth smoke is holy unto the Lord, and is to be preserved for ever. The spirit, every one confesses, is eternal; but how many there are who deny that the bodies of men will actually start up from their graves at the great day? Many of you believe you will have a body in heaven, but you think it will be an airy fantastic body, instead of believing that it will be a body like to this—flesh and blood (although not the same kind of flesh, for all flesh is not the same flesh), a solid, substantial body, even such as we have here. And there are yet fewer of you who believe that the wicked will have bodies in hell; for it is gaining ground everywhere that there are to be no positive torments for the damned in hell to affect their bodies, but that it is to be metaphorical fire, metaphorical brimstone, metaphorical chains, metaphorical torture. But if ye were Christians as ye profess to be, ye would

believe that every mortal man who ever existed shall not only live by the immortality of his soul, but his *body* shall live again, that the very flesh in which he now walks the earth is as eternal as the soul, and shall exist for ever. That is the peculiar doctrine of Christianity. The heathens never guessed or imagined such a thing; and consequently when Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, "Some mocked," which proves that they understood him to speak of the resurrection of the body, for they would not have mocked had he only spoken of the immortality of the soul, that having been already proclaimed by Plato and Socrates, and received with reverence.

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

I. There shall be A RESURRECTION OF THE JUST.

The first proof I will offer of this, is, that it has been the *constant and unvarying faith of the saints from the earliest periods of time*. Abraham believed the resurrection of the dead, for it is said in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 11 verse 19, that he "accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." I have no doubt that Joseph believed in the resurrection, for he gave commandment concerning his bones; and surely he would not have been so careful of his body if he had not believed that it should be raised from the dead. The Patriarch Job was a firm believer in it, for he said in that oft repeated text, Job. xix. 25, 26: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter-day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." David believed it beyond the shadow of a doubt, for he sang of Christ, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." Daniel believed it, for he said, that "Many who sleep in the dust shall rise, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt." Souls do not sleep in the dust; bodies do. It will do you good to turn to one or two passages and see what these holy men thought. For instance, in Isaiah, ch. xxvi. 19, you read: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." We will offer no explanation. The text is positive and sure. Let another prophet speak—Hosea, ch. vi. verses 1 and 2: "Come and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." Although this does not declare the resurrection, yet it uses it as a figure which it would not do were it not regarded as a settled truth. It is declared by Paul, also, in Hebrews xi. 35, that such was the constant faith of the martyrs; for he says, "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." All those holy men and women, who, during the time of the Maccabees, stood fast by their faith, and endured the fire and sword, and tortures unutterable, believed in the

resurrection, and that resurrection stimulated them to give their bodies to the flames, not caring even for death, but believing that thereby they should attain to a blessed resurrection. But our Saviour brought the resurrection to light in the most excellent manner, for he explicitly and frequently declared it. "Marvel not," said he, "at what I have said unto you. Behold the hour cometh when they that are in their graves shall hear the voice of God." "The hour is coming when he will call the dead to judgment, and they shall stand before his throne." Indeed, throughout his preaching, there was one continued flow of firm belief, and a public and positive declaration of the resurrection of the dead. I will not trouble you with any passages from the writings of the Apostles; they abound therewith. In fact, Holy Scripture is so full of this doctrine that I marvel, brethren, that we should so soon have departed from the stedfastness of our faith, and that it should be believed in many churches that the actual bodies of the saints will not live again, and especially that the bodies of the wicked will not have a future existence. We maintain as our text doth, that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."

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

There is a remarkable passage in Jude, where it speaks of Michael the Archangel contending with the devil about the body of Moses, and using no "railing accusation." Now, this refers to the great doctrine of *angels watching over the bones of the saints*. Certainly, it tells us that the body of Moses was watched over by a great archangel; the devil thought to disturb that body, but Michael contended with him about it. Now would there be a contention about that body if it had been of no value? Would Michael contend for that which was only to be the food of worms? Would he wrestle with the enemy for that which was to be scattered to the four winds of heaven, never to be united again into a new and goodlier fabric? No; assuredly not. From this we learn that an angel watches over every tomb. It is no fiction, when on the marble we carve the cherubs with their wings. There are cherubs with outstretched wings over the head of the grave-stones of all the righteous; ay, and where "the

rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep," in some nook o'ergrown by nettles, there an angel standeth night and day to watch each bone and guard each atom, that at the resurrection those bodies, with more glory than they had on earth, may start up to dwell for ever with the Lord. The guardianship of the bodies of the saints by angels proves that they shall rise again from the dead.

Yet, further, the *resurrections that have already taken place* give us hope and confidence that there shall be a resurrection of all saints. Do you not remember that it is written, when Jesus rose from the dead many of the saints that were in their graves arose, and came into the city, and appeared unto many? Have ye not heard that Lazarus, though he had been dead three days, came from the grave at the word of Jesus? Have you never read how the daughter of Jarius awoke from the sleep of death when he said, "*Talitha cumi*?" Have you never seen him at the gates of Nain, bidding that widow's son rise from the bier? Have you forgotten that Dorcas who made garments for the poor, sat up and saw Peter after she had been dead? And do you not remember Eutychus who fell from the third loft and was taken up dead, but who, at the prayer of Paul, was raised again? Or, does not your memory roll back to the time when hoary Elijah stretched himself upon the dead child, and the child breathed, and sneezed seven times, and his soul came to him? Or have you not read that when they buried a man, as soon as he touched the prophet's bones he rose again to life? These are pledges of the resurrection; a few specimens, a few chance gems flung into the world to tell us how full God's hand is of resurrection jewels. He hath given us proof that he is able to raise the dead by the resurrection of a few, who afterwards were seen on earth by infallible witnesses.

We must now, however, leave these things, and refer you once more to the Holy Spirit by way of confirming the doctrine that the saints' bodies shall rise again. The chapter in which you will find one great proof is in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, vi. 13: "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." *The body, then, is the Lord's*. Christ died not only to save my soul, but to save my body. It is said he "came to seek and to save that which was lost." When Adam sinned he lost his body, and he lost his soul too; he was a lost man, lost altogether. And when Christ came to save his people, he came to save their bodies and their souls. "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord." Is this body for the Lord, and shall death devour it? Is this body for the Lord, and shall winds scatter its particles far away where they never shall discover their fellows? No! the body is for the Lord, and the Lord shall have it. "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise us by his own power." Now look at the next verse: "Know ye not that *your bodies are the members of Christ*." Not merely is the soul a part of Christ—united to Christ, but the body is also. These hands, these feet, these eyes, are members of Christ, if I be a child of God. I am one with him, not merely as to my mind, but one with him as to this outward frame. The very body is taken into union. The golden chain which binds Christ to his people

goes round the body and soul too. Did not the apostle say "they two shall be *one flesh*. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church?"—Ephesians v. 31, 32. "They are one flesh;" and Christ's people are not only one with him in spirit, but they are "one flesh" too. The flesh of man is united with the flesh of the God-man; and our bodies are members of Jesus Christ. Well, while the head lives the body cannot die; and while Jesus lives the members cannot perish. Further the Apostle says, in the 19th verse, "Know yet not that your *body is the temple of the Holy Ghost* which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price." This body he says, is the temple of the Holy Ghost; and where the Holy Ghost dwells in a body, he not only sanctifies it, but renders it eternal. The temple of the Holy Ghost is as eternal as the Holy Ghost. You may demolish other temples and their gods too, but the Holy Ghost cannot die, nor "can his temple perish." Shall this body which has once had the Holy Ghost in it be always food for worms? Shall it never be seen more, but be like the dry bones of the valley? No; the dry bones shall live, and the temple of the Holy Ghost shall be built up again. Though the legs, the pillars, of that temple fall—though the eyes, the windows of it be darkened, and those that look out of them see no more, yet God shall re-build this fabric, re-light the eyes, and restore its pillars and regild it with beauty, yea, "this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible put on incorruption.

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

I come now to some practical thoughts from this doctrine before I go to the other. My brethren, what thoughts of comfort there are in this doctrine, that the dead shall rise again. Some of us have this week been standing by the grave; and one of our brethren, who long

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

"Their inbred sins require
Their flesh to see the dust,
But as the Lord their Saviour rose,
So all his followers must."

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

And here is comfort for you too, you poor sufferers, who suffer in your bodies. Some of you are almost martyrs with aches of one kind and another—lumbagoes, gouts, rheumatisms, and all sorts of sad afflictions that flesh is heir to. Scarcely a day passes but you are tormented with some suffering or other; and if you were silly enough to be always doctoring yourselves, you might always be having the doctor in your home. Here is comfort for you. That poor old rickety body of yours will live again without its pains, without its agonies; that poor shaky frame will be repaid all it has suffered. Ah! poor negro slave, every scar upon your back shall have a stripe of honor in heaven. Ah! poor martyr, the crackling of thy bones in the fire shall earn thee sonnets in glory; all thy sufferings shall be well repaid by the hap-

piness thou shalt experience there. Don't fear to suffer in your frame, because your frame will one day share in your delights. Every nerve will thrill with delight, every muscle move with bliss; your eyes will flash with the fire of eternity; your heart will beat and pulsate with immortal blessedness; your frame shall be the channel of beatitude; the body which is now often a cup of wormwood will be a vessel of honey; this body which is often a comb out of which gall distilleth, shall be a honeycomb of blessedness to you. Comfort yourselves then, ye sufferers, weary languishers upon the bed: fear not, your bodies shall live.

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

But now a word of *warning*, and then I have done with this part of the subject. If your bodies are to dwell in heaven, I beseech you take care of them. I do not mean, take care of what you eat and rink, and wherewithal you shall be clothed; but I mean, take care that you do not let your bodies be polluted by sin. If this throat is to warble for ever with songs of glory, let not words of lust defile it. If these eyes are to see the king in his beauty, even let this be your prayer, "Turn off my eyes from beholding vanities." If these hands are to hold a palm branch, oh, let them never take a bribe, let them never seek after evil. If these feet are to walk the golden streets, let them not be swift after mischief. If this tongue is for ever to talk of all he said and did, ah! let it not utter light and frothy things. And if this heart is to pulsate for ever with bliss, I beseech you give it not unto strangers; neither let it wander after evil. If this body is to live for ever, what care we ought to take of it; for our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, and they are members of the Lord Jesus.

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

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

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

But this is not the only text to prove the doctrine, I will give you a better one—Matt. v. 29. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."—not "thy whole *soul*," but "thy whole *body*." Man, this does not say that thy soul shall be in hell—that is affirmed many times—but it positively declares that *thy body* shall. That same body which is now standing in the aisle, or sitting in the pew, if thou diest without Christ, shall burn for ever in the flames of hell. It is not a fancy of man, but a truth that thy actual flesh and blood, and those very bones shall suffer: "thy whole body shall be cast into hell."

But lest that one proof should not suffice thee, hear another out of the same gospel—chapter 10:28. "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and *body* in hell." Hell will be the place for bodies as well as for souls. As I have remarked, wherever Christ speaks of hell and of the lost state of the wicked, he always speaks of their bodies; you scarcely find him saying anything about their souls. He says, "Where their worm dieth not," which is a figure of physical suffering—the worm torturing for ever the inmost heart, like a cancer within the very soul. He speaks of the "fire that never shall be quenched." Now, do not begin telling me that this is metaphorical fire: who cares for that? If a man were to threaten to give me a metaphorical blow on the head, I should care very little about it; he would be welcome to give me as many as he pleased. And what say the wicked? "We do not care about metaphorical fires." But they are *real*, sir—yes, as real as yourself. There is a real fire in hell, as truly as you have now

a real body—a fire exactly like that which we have on earth in everything except this—that it will not consume, though it will torture you. You have seen the asbestos lying in the fire red hot, but when you take it out it is unconsumed. So your body will be prepared by God in such a way that it will burn for ever without being consumed; it will lie, not as you consider, in a metaphorical fire, but in actual flame. Did our Saviour mean fictions when he said he would cast body and soul into hell? What should there be a pit for if there were no bodies? Why fire, why chains, if there were to be no bodies? Can fire touch the soul? Can pits shut in spirits? Can chains fetter souls? No; pits and fire and chains are for bodies, and bodies shall be there. Thou wilt sleep in the dust a little while. When thou diest thy soul will be tormented alone—that will be a hell for it—but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin hells, body and soul shall be together, each brimfull of pain, thy soul sweating in its inmost pore drops of blood, and thy body from head to foot suffused with agony; conscience, judgment, memory, all tortured, but more—thy head tormented with racking pains, thine eyes starting from their sockets with sights of blood and woe; thine ears tormented with

"Sullen moans and hollow groans.

And shrieks of tortured ghosts."

Thine heart beating high with fever; thy pulse rattling at an enormous rate in agony; thy limbs crackling like the martyrs in the fire, and yet unburnt; thyself, put in a vessel of hot oil, pained, yet coming out undestroyed; all thy veins becoming a road for the hot feet of pain to travel on; every nerve a string on which the devil shall ever play his diabolical tune of Hell's Unutterable Lament; thy soul for ever and ever aching, and thy body palpitating in unison with thy soul. Fictions, sir! Again, I say, they are no fictions, and as God liveth, but solid, stern truth. If God be true, and this Bible be true, what I have said is the truth, and you will find it one day to be so.

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

"Tell her, though she paint herself an inch thick,

To this complexion she must come at last."

And something more than that: that fair face shall be scarred with the claws of fiends, and that fine body shall be only the medium for torment. Ah! dress thyself proud gentleman for the worm; anoint thyself for the crawling creatures of the grave; and worse, come thou

to hell with powdered hair—a gentleman in hell; come thou down to the pit in goodly apparel; my lord, come there, to find yourself no higher than others, except it be higher in torture, and plunged deeper in flames. Ay, it ill becomes us to waste so much time upon the trifling things here, when there is so much to be done, and so little time for doing it, in the saving of men's souls. O God, our God, deliver men from feasting and pampering their bodies when they are only fattening them for the slaughter, and feeding them to be devoured in the flame.

Again, hear me when I say to you who are gratifying your lusts-do you know that those bodies, the lusts of which you gratify here, will be in hell, and that you will have the same lusts in hell that you have here? The debauchee hastes to indulge his body in what he desires—can he do that in hell? Can he find a place there where he shall gratify his lust and find indulgence for his foul desire? The drunkard here can pour down his throat the intoxicating and deadly draught; but where will he find the liquor to drink in hell, when his drunkenness will be as hot upon him as it is here! Ay, where will he find so much as a drop of water to cool his parched tongue? The man who loves gluttony here will be a glutton there; but where will be the food to satisfy him, when he may hold his finger up and see the loaves go away from him, and the fruits refuse his grasp. Oh! to have your passions and yet not to satisfy them! To shut a drunkard up in his cell, and give him nothing to drink! He would dash himself against the wall to get the liquor, but there is none for him. What wilt thou do in hell, O drunkard, with that thirst in thy throat, and having nought but flames to swallow, which increase thy woe? And what wilt thou do, O rake, when still thou wouldst be seducing others, but there are none with whom thou canst sin? Do I speak plainly? Did not Christ do so? If men will sin, they shall find men who are not ashamed to reprove them. Ah! to have a body in hell, with all its lusts, but not the power to satisfy them! How horrible that hell will be!

But hear me yet again. Oh! poor sinner, if I saw thee going into the inquisitor's den to be tormented, would I not beg of thee to stop ere thou shouldst put thy foot upon the threshold? And now I am talking to you of things that are real. If I were standing on a stage this morning, and were acting these things as fancies, I would make you weep: I would make the godly weep to think that so many should be damned, and I would make the ungodly weep to think that they should be damned. But when I speak of realities, they do not move you half as much as fictions would, and ye sit just as ye did ere the service had commenced. But hear me while I again affirm God's truth. I tell thee sinner, that those eyes that now look on lust shall look on miseries that shall vex and torment thee. Those ears which now thou lendest to hear the song of blasphemy, shall hear moans, and groans, and horrid sounds, such as only the damned know. That very throat down which thou pourest drink shall be filled with fire. Those very lips and arms of thine will be tortured all at once. Why, if thou hast a headache thou wilt run to thy physician; but what wilt thou do when thy head, and

heart, and hands, and feet ache all at once? If thou hast but a pain in thy reins, thou wilt search out medicines to heal thee; but what wilt thou do when gout, and rheum, and vertigo, and all else that is vile attack thy body at once? How wilt thou bear thyself when thou shalt be loathsome with every kind of disease, leprous, palsied, black, rotten, thy bones aching, thy marrow quivering, every limb thou hast filled with pain; thy body a temple of demons, and a channel of miseries. And will ye march blindly on? As the ox goeth to the slaughter, and the sheep licketh the butcher's knife, so is it with many of you. Sirs, you are living without Christ, many of you; you are self-righteous and ungodly. One of you is going out this afternoon to take his day's pleasure; another is a fornicator in secret; another can cheat his neighbour; another can now and then curse God; another comes to this chapel, but in secret he is a drunkard; another prates about godliness, and God wots he is a wretched hypocrite. What will ye do in that day when ye stand before your Maker? It is a little thing to have your minister upbraid you know; it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment; what will ye do when God shall thunder out not your accusation, but your condemnation, "Depart ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" Ah! sensual ones, I knew I should never move you will I spoke about torments for your souls. Do I move you now? Ah no! Many of you will go away and laugh, and call me, as I remember once being called before, "a hell-fire parson." Well, go; but you will see the hell-fire preacher one day in heaven, perhaps, and you yourselves will be cast out; and looking down thence with reproving glance, it may be, I shall remind you that you heard the word, and listened not to it. Ah! men, it is a light thing to hear it; it will be hard enough to bear it. You listen to me now unmoved; it will be harder work when death gets hold of you and you lie roasting in the fire. Now you despise Christ; you will not despise him them. Now ye can waste your Sabbaths; then ye would give a thousand worlds for a Sabbath if ye could but have it in hell. Now ye can scoff and jeer; there will be no scoffing or jeering then: you will be shrieking, howling, wailing for mercy; but—

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

O my hearers! the wrath to come! the wrath to come! the wrath to come. Who among you can dwell with devouring fire? Who among you can dwell with everlasting burnings? Can you, sir? can you? Can you abide the flame for ever? "Oh, no," sayest thou, "what can I do to be saved?" Hear thou what Christ hath to say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou *shalt* be saved." "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." "Come, now let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

1 Corinthians 15

There were people in the Apostles' days who had an idea that there was no resurrection. Paul endeavours torefute the idea, and teaches the Corinthians that there was a resurrection from the dead. From the 1st to the 11th verse he proves the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and upon that grounds the doctrine of the resurrection of the just.

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, and wherein ye stand:

"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."

Now, we expect to hear a whole list of doctrines when the apostle says "I declare unto you the gospel;" but instead of that, he simply tells us of the resurrection of Jesus, for that is the very marrow of the gospel, the foundation of it—that Jesus Christ died and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."

"And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

That is the whole of the gospel. He who perfectly understands that, understands the first principles; he has commenced aright. This is the starting point if we wish to learn the truth, "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

"And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve.

After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is one of the best attested facts on record. There were so many witnesses to behold it, that if we do in the least degree receive the credibility of men's testimonies, we cannot and we dare not doubt that Jesus rose from the dead. It is all very easy for infidels to say that these persons were deceived, but it is equally foolish, for these persons could not every one of them have been so positively deceived as to say that they had seen this man, whom they knew to have been dead, afterwards alive; they could not all, surely, have agreed together to help on this imposture: if they did, it is the most marvellous thing we have on record, that not one of them ever broke faith with the others, but that the whole mass of them remained firm. We believe it to be quite impossible that so many rogues should have agreed for ever. They were men who had nothing to gain by it; they subjected themselves to persecution by affirming the very fact; they were ready to die for it, and did die for it. Five hundred or a thousand persons who had seen him at different times, declared that they did see him, and that he rose from the dead; the fact

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

"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God."

When he looked upon the mercies that God gave to him he always recollected how little he deserved; and when he found himself preaching, oh! with what pathos did he preach to the ungodly, for he could always close up:—"But I obtained mercy, that in me first Christ might show forth all long-suffering as a pattern to them that believe." Have I a persecutor here? Let him know that his sin is a most damnable sin that will sink him lower into hell than any other; but even for him there is mercy, and abundant pardon; for Paul says he obtained mercy even though he persecuted the church of God.

"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

"Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

"But by the grace of God I am what I am." That is about as far as most of us can get; we shall never get any further. "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all." Then he stops himself: "Yet, not I, but the grace of God which was with me." We should always take care that we do not take any of our good works to ourselves: they are the effects of grace within us. If we once get putting the crown on our own heads we shall soon have heavy heads for our trouble; but if we put them all on the head of Jesus, he will honour us if we honour him.

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

"Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

"But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen!

"And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

"Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

"And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins:",

Perhaps it does not strike you at first sight that there is an indissoluble connection between the resurrection of Christ and that of all his people; perhaps you do not see the marrow of the argument. The apostle says, "If the dead do not rise, then Christ did not rise; and if Christ did rise, then all the dead will rise." Do you see how it is? Why, because Christ and human nature are now so linked together that what Christ did, he did as the representative of all his people. When Adam sinned, the world sinned, and the world died. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Christ could not rise except as the representative of his people; and "if Christ rose," says Paul, "then his people will rise; and if he did not rise then we shall not rise, because we are one with him; and if we do not rise Christ did not rise, because we are one with him." See here a connection which cannot be broken,—that if Christ rose, then must the dead rise also. This brings another argument

"Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished."

How do you like that thought?

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

For they were then persecuted, cast to the wild beasts, shut up in prison; and if this life were all, what would be the value of the Christian religion? If would only make men miserable.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

It is no use for the Arminian to strain this, and say that it proves that every one receives grace through Christ. It says no such thing; it simply says, "die" and "live." Everybody shall live at the resurrection.

"But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits: afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

"For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

"The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

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

"For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.

"And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

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

"Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

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

"And why stand in jeopardy every hour?

"I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

"If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."

It does not say that Paul did fight with beasts at Ephesus; but a great many others did. It was a common practice to put Christians to the lions, giving them a short sword, and bidding them fight for their lives; and sometimes, strengthened by God, they fought manfully, and come off alive. But "if," says Paul, "I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not?" I might as well give up my religion; then I could lie down and be at peace. "Let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die." Oh! wicked Paul! to quote from

a heathen poet! How disgraceful. If I were to repeat a verse, and it looked as if Shakespere or any profane author ever wrote such a thing, how criminal! say you. But I like good things wherever I find them. I have often quoted from the devil, and I dare say I shall often quote from his people. Paul quoted this from Meander, and another heathen poet, who wrote far worse things than have been written by modern poets, and if any of us who may have stored our minds with the contents of books we wish we had never read, and if there be some choice gems in them which may be used for the service of God, by his help we will so use them.

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

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

"For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

"O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

"The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

"But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

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

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Just Published, Price Twopence, "Come, ye Children," a Sermon addressed to Sunday School Teachers, by the Rev. C. H. SPURGEON, preached on behalf of the Western Kent Sunday School Union, at the "Temple," Saint Mary Cray, Kent, on Wednesday Afternoon, February 20th, 1856.

A Solemn Warning for All Churches

A Sermon
(No. 68)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, February 24, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy."—Revelation 3:4.

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

I. GENERAL DEFILEMENT. The holy apostle, John, said of the church in Sardis, "These things saith he that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou has a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou has received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments."

The first charge of general defilement he brings against the church in Sardis was that they had *a vast deal of open profession*, and but little of sincere religion. "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." That is the crying sin of the present age. I am not inclined to be morbid in my temperament, or to take a melancholy view of

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

Then the next charge was, that there was *a want of zeal* throughout the church of Sardis. He says, "Be watchful." He looked on the church and saw the bishops slumbering, the elders slumbering, and the people slumbering; they were not, as once they were, watchful for the faith, striving together and earnestly contending for it, not wrestling against the enemy of souls, labouring to spread their Master's kingdom, but the apostle saw sleepiness, coldness, lethargy; therefore he said, "Be watchful." Oh! John, if from thy grave thou couldst start up, and see the church as thou didst at Sardis, having thine eyes anointed by the Spirit, thou wouldst say it is even so now. Ah! we have abundance of cold, calculating Christians, multi-

tudes of professors; but where are the zealous ones? where are the leaders of the children of God? where are your heroes who stand in the day of battle? where are your men who "count not their lives dear unto them," that they might win Christ, and be found in him? where are those who have an impassioned love for souls? How many of our pulpits are filled by earnest, enthusiastic preachers? Alas! look, at the church. She has builded herself fine palaces, imitating popery; she hath girded herself with vestments; she has gone astray from her simplicity; but she has lost the fire and the life which she once had. We go into our chapels now, and we see everything in good taste: we hear the organ play; the psalmody is in keeping with the most correct ear; the gown and the noble vestments are there, and everything is grand and goodly, and we think that God is honored. Oh for the days when Whitfields would preach on tubs once more, when their pulpits should be on Kennington Common, and their roofs the ceiling of God's sky. Oh for the time when we might preach in barns again, or in catacombs either, if we might but have the life of God that once they had in such places. What is the use of garnishing the shell when you have lost the kernel. Go and whitewash, for the life is gone. Garnish the outside of your cups and platters; but ye have lost the pure word of God. Ye have it not for a piece of bread; they flinch to speak the whole truth, or if they seem to speak it, it is with cold, meaningless, passionless words, as if it were nothing whether souls were damned or saved, whether heaven were filled or heaven depopulated, or whether Christ should see of the travail of his would and be satisfied. Do I speak fierce things? I can say as Irving once did, I might deserve to be broken on the wheel if I did not believe what I say to be the truth; for the utterance of such things I might deserve the stake; but God is my witness, I have endeavoured to judge and to speak impartially. With all that universal cant of charity now so prevalent I am at arm's length; I care not for it. Let us speak of things as we find them. WE do believe that the church has lost her zeal and her energy. But what do men say of us? "Oh! you are too excited." Good God! excited! when men are being damned; *Excited!* When we have the mission of heaven to preach to dying souls. EXCITED! *preaching too much!* when souls are lost. Why should it come to pass that one man should be perpetually labouring all the week, while others are lolling upon their couches, and preach only upon the Sabbath-day? Can I bear to see the laziness, the slothfulness, the indifference of ministers, and of churches, without speaking. No! there must be a protest entered, and we enter it now. Oh! Church of God, thou has a name to live, and art dead; thou art not watchful. Awake! awake! arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

The third charge which John brought against Sardis was that they *did not "look to the things that remained and were ready to die."* I take it that this may related to the poor feeble saints, the true children of God, who were sorrowing, mourning, and groaning in their midst, who were so oppressed with sorrow on account of the state of Sardis, that they were "ready to die." And what does the church do now? Do the shepherds go after those that are wounded and sick, and those that are weary? Do they carry the lambs in their bosom, and

gently lead those that are with young? Do they see to poor distressed consciences, and speak to those who feel their deadness in trespasses and sins? Yes, but how do they speak? They tell them to do things they cannot do—to perform impossible duties—instead of "strengthening the things that remain and are ready to die" In how much contempt are the truly new-born children of God held in these times! They are called peculiar men, scouted as Antinomians, hissed at as being oddities, high doctrine men who have departed from the usual mode of pulling down God's word to men's fancies; they are called bigots, narrow-minded souls, and their creed is set down as dry, hard, rough, severe Calvinism. God's gospel called hard, rough, and severe! The things for which our fathers died are not called infamous things! Mark whether, if ye stand out prominently in the truth, you will not be abhorred and scouted. If you go into a village, and hear of poor people who are said to be doing a deal of mischief, are they not the people who understand most of the gospel? Go and ask the minister who are the persons that he most dislikes? and he will say, "We have a nasty lot of Antinomians here." What does he mean by that? Men who love the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and will have it, and are therefore called a nasty set of Antinomians. Ah! we have lost what once we had. We do not now "strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die;" they are not looked after as they ought to be, not beloved, not fostered. The salt of the earth are now the offscouring of all things; men whom God has loved, and who have attained a high standing in godliness—these are the men who will not bow the knee to Baal, and who therefore are cast into the fiery furnace of persecution and slander. O Sardis! Sardis! I see thee now. Thou hast defiled thy garments. Thank God, there are a few who have not followed the multitude to do evil, and who shall "walk in white, for they are worthy."

Another charge which God has brought against the church is, that *they were careless about the things which they heard.* He says, "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast; and repent." If I am wrong upon other points, I am positive that the sin of this age is impurity of doctrine, and laxity of faith. Now you know you are told every Sunday that it does not signify what you believe; that all sects and denominations will be saved; that doctrines are unimportant things; that as to the doctrines of God's grace, they are rather dangerous than otherwise, and the less you inquire about them the better; they are very good things for the priests, but you common people cannot understand them. Thus they keep back a portion of the gospel with cautious reserve; but having studied in the devil's new Jesuitical college, they understand how to call themselves particular Baptists, and then preach general doctrines, to call themselves Calvinists, and preach Arminianism, telling the people that it does not signify whether they preach damnable heresies instead of the truth of God. And what do the congregations say? "Well, he is a wise man, and ought to know." So you are going back into as bad a priestcraft as ever. Presbyter has become priest written large, and minister has become priest in many a place because persons do not search for

themselves and endeavour to get hold of the truth of God. It is everywhere proclaimed that we are all right; that though one says God loved his people from before the foundation of the world, and the other that he did not; though one says that God is changeable and turns away from his people, and the other, that he will hold them fast to the end; though the one says that the blood of Christ avails for all for whom it was shed and the other, that it is inefficacious for a large number of those for whom he died; though one says that the works of the law are in some measure necessary, or at any rate that we must endeavour to improve what we have, and then we shall get more, while the other says, that "by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God," yet both are right. A new age this, when falsehood and truth can kiss each other! New times these when fire and water can become friendly! Glorious times these when there is an alliance between hell and heaven, though God knows, we are of vastly different families. Ah! now, who cares for truth except a few narrow-minded bigots as they are called. Election—*horrible!* Predestination—*awful!* Final perseverance—*desperate!* Yet, turn to the pages of the Puritans, and you will see that these truths were preached every day. Turn to the Fathers; read Augustine, and you will see that these were the truths for which he would have bled and died. Read the Scriptures, and if every page is not full of them I have not read them aright, or any child of God either. Ay, laxity of doctrine is the great fault now; we solemnly protest against it. You may fancy that I am raising an outcry about nothing at all. Ah! no; my anxious spirit sees the next generation—what will that be. *This* generation—Arminianism. What next? Pelagianism. And what next? Popery. And what next? I leave you to guess. The path of error is always downward. We have taken one step in the wrong direction; God knows where we shall stop. If there had not been sturdy men in ages gone by, the Lord would not have left to us a remnant even now; all grace must have died, and we had become like unto Gomorrah and unto Sodoma. Oh, church of the living God, awake! awake! Once more write truth upon thy banner; stamp truth upon thy sword; and for God and for his word, charge home. Ye knights of truth, and truth alone, shall sit king over the whole world!

But now I have lifted up the whip, I must have another lash. Look on any section of the church you like to mention, not excepting that to which I belong; and let me ask you whether they have not defiled their garments. Look at the church of England. Her articles are pure and right in most respects; yet see how her garments are defiled. She hath made the Queen her Head instead of God; she bows before the state, and worships the golden calf that is set up before her. Look at her abominations, her pluralities, her easy living bishops doing nothing; look at her ungodly clergymen in the country, living in sin. The churchman who does not know that his church has defiled her garments is partial to his mother, as indeed he ought to be, but he is too partial to speak the truth. But good churchmen themselves weep, because what I say is true. Then look at John Wesley's body; have not they defiled their garments? See how they have lately been contending with a despotism as accursed as

any that ever brooded over the slaves in America? See how they have been rent in sunder, and how imperfect in doctrine they are too after all, professedly at least, not holding the truth of God. Look into what denomination you please, Independent, or Baptist, or any other—have they not all defiled their garments in some way or other? Look at the churches around, and see how they have defiled their garments by giving baptism to those who whom it was never intended, and degrading a holy church ordinance to become a mere sop with which they feed their babes. And see how they have taken away Christ's honor, how they have taken the bread that was meant for the children, and cast it to ungodly persons. Look at our own denomination: see how it has deserted the leading truths of the gospel. For a proof hereof, I refer you to hundreds of our pulpits. Oh church of God! I am but a voice crying in the wilderness, but I must cry still, "How art thou fallen from heaven, thou son of the morning! how art thou fallen!" "Remember how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent." If thou dost not watch, thy Master will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know in what hour he will come unto thee.

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

the knee to Baal." Take heart, Christian, there are a few in Sardis—do not forget that—who have not defiled their garments. Take heart. It is not all rotten yet; there is a soundness in the core after all; there is "a remnant according to the election of grace;" there is "salt," and for the sake of that salt, many who have defiled their garments in a measure will be saved. They will enter into heaven even as these few will; but unto the few there will be special honor and special blessing. Take heart then; and whenever you go to your chamber and mourn over the sad condition of the church, think you hear that good old woman in her closet groaning and crying; think you hear that minister faithfully dispensing the word; think you see that valiant deacon standing up for God's truth; think you see that young man strong in the midst of temptation; think of these few in Sardis, and they will cheer you. Do not be quite downcast. Some heroes have not turned their backs in the day of battle; some mighty men still fight for the truth. Be encouraged; there are a few in Sardis. But be careful, for perhaps you are not one of the few. Since there are but a few, there ought to be great searchings of heart. Let us look to *our* garments and see whether they be defiled. If they be not, we shall walk in white, for we are worthy through Jesus. Be active; be prayerful. The fewer the workmen to do the work the greater reason is there that you should be active. Be instant in season and out of season, because there are so few. Oh! if we had hundreds behind us, we might say, "Let *them* do the work;" but if we stand with only a few, how should each of those few rush hither and thither! A city is besieged: it is full of inhabitants; half of them are asleep; the others watch the walls, and thus they relieve each other. Another city has but a few defenders: see how that champion rushes first to that breach and routs the enemy; now he brings his might to another place; a bastion is assaulted, and he is there; now a postern is attacked—there he is with all his force behind him; he is here, he is there, he is everywhere, because he feels there is but a handful of men who can gather round him. Take courage, take heart; stir yourselves up to the sternest activity, for verily there are but a few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments. Above all, be prayerful. Put up your earnest cries to God that he would multiply the faithful, that he would increase the number of chosen ones who stand fast, that he would purify the church with fire in a furnace seven times heated, so that he might bring out her third part through the fire; cry unto God that the day may come when the much fine gold shall be no longer dim, when the glory shall again return unto Zion. Beg of God to remove the cloud, to take away "the darkness that may be felt." Be doubly prayerful, for there are but a few in Sardis who have not defiled their garments.

III. This brings us to the third point, which is a PECULIAR REWARD. "They shall walk in white, for they are worthy." The attentive reader will observe, that in quoting the passage just now, I left out two of the sweetest words in the passage. It reads: "They shall walk *with me* in white, for they are worthy." That is the very pith of the honor; if the rest of it be gold this is the jewel. "They shall walk *with me* in white." That is to say, communion with Christ on earth shall be the special reward of those who have not defiled their garments. Now, I

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

Abundant sweetness while I sing
Thy love, my ravish'd heart o'erflows;
Secure in thee my God and King
Of glory that no period knows."

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

But we must dwell on the rest of the passage. "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." A good old author says there is a reference here to that fact, that the rabbis allowed persons to walk in white who could trace their pedigree without a flew; but if they found any blot on their escutcheon, and could not trace their birth up to Abraham, they were not allowed to walk in white on certain days. Well, he says he thinks the passage means that those who have not defiled their garments will be able to prove their *adoption,* and will walk in white garments as being sure they are the sons of God. If we would be certain that we are the people of God, we must take care that we have no blots on our dress, for each one of those spatterings of the mire of this earth will cry out, and say "Perhaps you are not a child of God." Nothing is such a father of doubts as sin; sin is the very mother of our distress. He who is covered with sin must not expect to enjoy full assurance, but he who liveth close to his God, and keeps his garments unspotted from the world—he shall walk in white, knowing that his adoption is sure.

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

A matchless robe which far exceeds
What earthly princes wear;"

that they have been washed and make whiter than snow, and purified and made more cleanly than wool.

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

And lastly, it refers to *walking in white before the throne of God.* Those who have not defiled their garments here, shall most certainly walk in white up yonder, where the white-robed hosts sing perpetual hallelujahs to the Most High. If thou hast not defiled thy garments, thou mayest say, "I know whom I have believed;" not for my works, not by way of merit, but as the reward of grace. If there be joys inconceivable, happiness beyond a dream, bliss which imagination knoweth not, blessedness which even the stretch of desire hath not reached, thou shalt have all these: thou shalt walk in white, since thou art worthy. Christ shall say to thee "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

But what shall be done with such persons as live in the church, but are not of it having a name to live, but are dead? What shall be done with mere professors who are not possessors? What shall become of those who are only outwardly religious but inwardly are in the gall of bitterness? We answer, as good Calvin did once: "They shall walk in black, for they are unworthy." They shall walk in black—the blackness of God's destruction. They shall walk in black—the blackness of hopeless despair. They shall walk in black—the blackness of incomparable anguish. They shall walk in black—the blackness of damnation. They shall walk in black for ever, because they were found unworthy. O professors, search yourselves. O ministers, search yourselves. O ye, who make a profession of religion now, put your hands within your hearts, and search your souls. You live in the sight of a rein-trying God. Oh! try your own reins, and search your own hearts. It is not a matter of half-importance for which I plead, but a matter of double importance. I beseech you, examine and cross-examine your own souls, and see whether ye be in the path, for it will go ill with you if ye shall find at last that ye were in the church, but not of it, that ye make a profession of religion, but it was only a cloak for your hypocrisy—if ye should have entered into his courts below, and

be shut out of the courts above. Remember, the higher the pinnacle of profession the direr your fall of destruction. Beggared kings, exile princes, crownless emperors, are always subjects of pity. Professor, what wilt thou think of thyself when thy robes are taken from thee, when thy crown of profession is taken from thy head, and thou standest the hiss of even vile men, the scoff of blasphemers, the jeer of those who, whatever they were, were not hypocrites, as thou art? They will cry to thee, "Art thou become like one of us? Thou professor, thou high-flying man, art thou become like one of us?" And ye will hide your guilty heads in the dark pit of perdition, but all in vain, for you never will be able to avoid that hiss which shall ever greet you. "What! *thou!*" the drunkard whom you told to drink no more will say "Art *thou* become like one of us?" And the harlot whom you scorned, and the young debauched man whom you warned, will stare you in the face, and say, "What! you! You who talked of religion. A pretty fellow you were! Art thou become one of us?" Oh! I think I hear them saying in hell, "Here's a parson, come here; here's a deacon; here's a church member; here's a man who has had the sacramental wine within his lips; here's a man that has had the baptismal water on his garments." Ah! take care. There are but a few names in Sardis who shall walk in white. Be ye of that few. May God give you grace that ye be not reprobates, but may be accepted of the Lord in that day! May he give you mercy, that when he severs the chaff from the wheat, you may abide as the good corn, and may not be swept away into unquenchable fire! The Lord in mercy bless this warning, and hear our supplication, for Christ's sake. Amen.

The Allegories of Sarah and Hagar

A Sermon
(No. 69)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 2, 1856, by the
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At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"These are the two covenants."—Galatians 4:24.

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

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

I. First, we invite you to notice THE TWO WOMEN—Hagar and Sarah. It is said that they are the types of the two covenants; and before we start we must not forget to tell you what the covenants are. The first covenant for which Hagar stands, is the covenant of works, which is this: "There is my law, O man; if thou on thy side wilt engage to keep it, I on my side will engage that thou shalt live by keeping it. If thou wilt promise to obey my commands perfectly, wholly, fully, without a single flaw, I will carry thee to heaven. But mark me, if

thou violatest one command, if thou dost rebel against a single ordinance, I will destroy thee for ever." That is the Hagar covenant—the covenant propounded on Sinai, amidst tempests, fire and smoke—or rather, propounded, first of all, in the garden of Eden, where God said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." As long as he did not eat of the tree, but remained spotless and sinless, he was most assuredly to live. That is the covenant of the law, the Hagar covenant. The Sarah covenant is the covenant of grace, not made with God and man, but made with God and Christ Jesus, which covenant is this: "Christ Jesus on his part engages to bear the penalty of all his people's sins, to die, to pay their debts, to take their iniquities upon his shoulders; and the Father promises on his part that all for whom the Son doth die shall most assuredly be saved; that seeing they have evil hearts, he will put his law in their hearts, that they shall not depart from it, and that seeing they have sins, he will pass them by and not remember them any more for ever." The covenant of works was, "Do this and live, O man!" but the covenant of grace is, "Do this, O Christ, and thou shalt live, O man!" The difference of covenants rests here. The one was made with man, the other with Christ; the one was a conditional covenant, conditional on Adam's standing, the other is a conditional covenant with Christ, but as perfectly unconditional with us. There are no conditions whatever in the covenant of grace, or if there be conditions, the covenant gives them. The covenant gives faith, gives repentance, gives good works, gives salvation, as a purely gratuitous unconditional act; nor does our continuance in that covenant depend in the least degree on ourselves. The covenant was made by God with Christ, signed, sealed, and ratified, in all things ordered well.

Now come and look at the allegory. First, I would have you notice, that *Sarah who is the type of the new covenant of grace, was the original wife of Abraham*. Before he knew anything about Hagar, Sarah was his wife. The covenant of grace was the original covenant after all. There be some bad theologians who teach that God mad man upright, and made a covenant with him; that man sinned, and that as a kind of afterthought God mad a new covenant with Christ for the salvation of his people. Now, that is a complete mistake. The covenant of grace was made before the covenant of works; for Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world, did stand as its head and representative; and we are said to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. We, long ere we fell, were loved of God; he did not love us out of pity to us, but he loved his people, considered purely as creatures. He loved them when they became sinners; but when he started with them he considered them as creatures. He allowed them to fall into sin, to show forth the riches of his grace, which existed before their sin. He did not love them and choose them from among the rest, after their fall, but he loved them beyond their sin, and before their sin. He made the covenant of grace before we fell by the covenant of works. If you could go back to eternity, and ask which is the oldest born, you would hear that grace was born before law—that it came into the world long before the law

was promulgated. Older even than the fundamental principles which guide our morals is that great fundamental rock of grace, in covenant made of old, long ere seers preached the law, and long ere Sinai smoked. Long before Adam stood in the garden God had ordained his people to eternal life, that they might be saved through Jesus.

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

But notice again, *Hagar was not intended to be a wife; she never ought to have been anything but a hand-maid to Sarah*. The law was never intended to save men: it was only designed to be a hand-maid to the covenant of grace. When God delivered the law on Sinai, it was apart from his ideas that any man would ever be saved by it; he never conceived that man would attain perfection thereby. But you know that the law is a wondrous handmaid to grace. Who brought us to the Saviour? Was it not the law thundering in our ears? We should never have come to Christ if the law had not driven us there; we should never have known sin if the law had not revealed it. The law is Sarah's handmaid to sweep our hearts, and make the dust fly so that we may cry for blood to be sprinkled that the dust may be laid. The law is, so to speak, Jesus Christ's dog, to go after his sheep, and bring them to the shepherd; the law is the thunderbolt which affrighteth ungodly men, and maketh them turn from the error of their ways, and seek after God. Ah! if we know rightly how to use the law, if we understand how to put her in her proper place, and make her obedient to her mistress, then all will be well. But this Hagar will always be wishing to be mistress, as well as Sarah; and Sarah will never allow that, but will be sure to treat her harshly, and drive her out. We must do the same; and let none murmur at us, if we treat the Hagarenes harshly in these days—if we sometimes speak hard things against those who are trusting in the works of the law. We will quote Sarah as an example. *She* treated Hagar harshly, and so will we. We mean to make Hagar flee into the wilderness: we wish to have nothing to do with her. Yet it is very remarkable, that coarse and ill-featured as Hagar is, men have always a greater love for her than they have for Sarah; and they are prone continually to be crying, "Hagar, thou shalt be my mistress," instead of saying, "Nay, Sarah, I will be thy son, and Hagar shall be bond-

maid." What is God's law now? It is not *above* a Christian—it is *under* a Christian. Some men hold God's law like a rod, *in terrorem*, over Christians, and say, "If you sin you will be punished with it." It is not so. The law is under a Christian; it is for him to walk on, to be his guide, his rule, his pattern. "We are not under the law, but under grace." Law is the road which guides us, not the rod which drives us, nor the spirit which actuates us. The law is good and excellent, if it keeps its place. Nobody finds fault with the handmaid, because she is not the wife; and no one shall despise Hagar because she is not Sarah. If she had but remembered her office, it had been all well, and her mistress had never driven her out. We do not wish to drive the law out of chapels, as long as it is kept in its right position; but when it is set up as mistress, away with her; we will have nought to do with legality.

Again: *Hagar never was a free woman, and Sarah never was a slave*. So, beloved, the covenant of works never was free, and none of her children ever were. All those who trust in works never are free, and never can be, even could they be perfect in good works. Even if they have no sin, still they are bond-slaves, for when we have done all that we ought to have done, God is not our debtor, we are debtors still to him, and still remain as bond-slaves. If I could keep all God's law, I should have no right to favour, for I should have done no more than was my duty, and be a bond-slave still. The law is the most rigorous master in the world, no wise man would love its service; for after all you have done, the law never gives you a "Thank you," for it, but says, "Go on, sir, go on.!" The poor sinner trying to be saved by law is like a blind horse going round and round a mill, and never getting a step further, but only being whipped continually; yea, the faster he goes, the more work he does, the more he is tired, so much the worse for him. The better legalist a man is, the more sure he is of being damned; the more holy a man is, if he trust to his works, the more he may rest assured of his own final rejection and eternal portion with Pharisees. Hagar was a slave; Ishmael, moral and good as he was, was nothing but a slave, and never could be more. Not all the works he ever rendered to his father could make him a free-born son. Sarah never was a slave. She might be sometimes taken prisoner by Pharoah, but she was not a slave then; her husband might sometimes deny her, but she was his wife still; she was soon owned by her husband, and Pharoah was soon obliged to send her back. So the covenant of grace might seem once in jeopardy, and the representative of it might cry, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;" but it never was in real hazard. And sometimes the people under the covenant of grace may seem to be captives and bond-slaves; but still they are free. Oh! that we knew how to "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

One thought more. *Hagar was cast out, as well as her son; but Sarah never was*. So the covenant of works has ceased to be a covenant. Not only have the people been cast away who trusted in it, not simply was Ishmael cast out, but Ishmael's mother too. SO the legalist may not only know himself to be damned, but the law as a covenant has ceased to be, for

mother and son are both driven out by the gospel, and those who trust in law are sent away by God. You ask to-day who is Abraham's wife? Why Sarah; does she not sleep side by side with her husband in the Machpelah's cave at this instant? There she lies, and if she lie there for a thousand years to come, she will still be Abraham's wife, while Hagar never can be. Oh, how sweet to think, that the covenant made of old was in all things ordered well, and never, never shall be removed. "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Ah! ye legalists, I do not wonder that ye teach the doctrine of falling away, because that is consistent with your theology. Of course, Hagar has to be driven out, and Ishmael too. But we who preach the covenant of free and full salvation know, that Isaac never shall be driven out, and that Sarah never shall cease to be the friend and wife of Abraham. Ye Hagarenes! ye ceremonialists! ye hypocrites! ye formalists! of what avail will it be, when at last ye shall say, "Where is my mother? Where is my mother, the law?" Oh! she is driven out, and thou mayest go with her into eternal oblivion. But where is my mother? the Christian can say at last; and it will be said, "There is the mother of the faithful, Jerusalem above, the mother of us all; and we shall enter in, and dwell with our Father and our God."

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

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

with a legalist, and he conquers you, say, "Ah! I expected that; it shows I am an Isaac, for Ishmael will be sure to give Isaac a thrashing, and I am not at all sorry for it. Your father and mother were in the prime of life, and were strong; and it was natural that you should overcome me, for my father and mother were quite old people.

But where was the *difference* between the two lads in their outward appearance? There was *no difference between them as to ordinances*, for both of them were circumcised. There was no distinction with regard to outward and visible signs. So, my dearly beloved, there is often no difference between Ishmael and Isaac, between the legalist and the Christian, in matters of outward ceremonies. The legalist takes the sacrament and is baptized; he would be afraid to die if he did not. And *I do not believe there was much difference as to character*. Ishmael was nearly as good and honorable a man as Isaac; there is nothing said against him in Scripture; indeed, I am led to believe that he was an especially good lad, from the fact that when God gave a blessing, he said, "With Isaac shall the blessing be." Abraham, said, "O that Ishmael might live before thee." He cried to God for Ishmael, because he loved the lad, doubtless, for his disposition. God said, yes, I will give Ishmael such-and-such a blessing; he shall be the father of princes, he shall have temporal blessings; but God would not turn aside, even for Abraham's prayer. And when Sarah was rather fierce, as she must have been that day when she turned Hagar out of the house, it is said, "It grieved Abraham because of his son;" and I do not suspect that Abraham's attachment was a foolish one. There is one trait in Ishmael's character that you love very much. When Abraham died, he did not leave Ishmael a single stick or stone, for he had previously given him his portion and sent him away; yet he came to his father's funeral, for it is said that his sons Ishmael and Isaac buried him in Machpelah. There seems then to have been but little difference in the characters of the two. So, dearly beloved, there is little difference between the legalist and the Christian as to the outward walk. They are both the visible sons of Abraham. It is not a distinction of life; for God allowed Ishmael to be as good as Isaac, in order to show that it was not the goodness of man that made any distinction, but that he "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will be hardeneth."

Then *what was the distinction*? Paul has told us that the first was born after the *flesh*, and the second after the *Spirit*. The first was a natural son, the other a spiritual one. Ask the legalist, "You do good works; you have repented, you say: you are keeping the law, and you have no need to repent. Now, where did you get your strength from?" Perhaps he says, "Grace;" but if you ask him what he means, he says that he used it; he had grace, but he used it. Then the difference is, *you* used your grace, and others did not. Yes. Well, then, it is your own doing. You may call it grace, or you may call it mustard; it was no grace after all, for it was your using, you say, that made the difference. But ask poor Isaac how he has kept the law, and what does he say? Very badly, indeed. Are you a sinner, Isaac? "Oh! yes, an exceedingly great one; I have rebelled against my father times without number; I have often gone

astray from him." Then you do not think yourself quite as good as Ishmael, do you? "No." But yet there is a difference between you and him after all. What has made the difference? "Why, grace has made me to differ." Why is not Ishmael an Isaac? Could Ishmael have been an Isaac? "No," says Isaac, "it was God who made me to differ, from the first to the last; he made me a child of promise before I was born, and he must keep me so."

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

Isaac has more really good works; he does not stand second to Ishmael. When he is converted, he labours, if it be possible, to serve his father far more than the legalist does his master; but still doubtless, if you were to hear both their tales, you would hear Isaac say that he was a poor miserable sinner, while Ishmael would make himself out a very honorable Pharisaic gentleman. The difference is not in works, however, but in motives; not in the life, but in the means of sustaining life—not in what they do, so much as in how they do it. Here, then, is the difference between some of you. Not that you legalists are worse than Christians; you may be often better in your lives, and yet you may be lost. Do you complain of that as unjust? Not in the least. God says men must be saved by faith, and if you say, "No, I will be saved by works," you may try it, but you will be lost for ever. It is as if you had a servant, and you should say, "John, go and do such-and-such a thing in the stable;" but he goes away and does the reverse, and then says, "Sir, I have done it very nicely." "Yes," you say, "but that is not what I told you to do." So God has not told you to work out your salvation by good works; but he has said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." So that when you come before God with your good works he will say, "I never told you to do that. I said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved." "Ah!" you say, "I though the other was a great deal better way." Sir, you will be lost for your thoughts. "Why is it that the Gentiles, who followed not after righteousness, have attained unto righteousness," when Israel, who followed after righteousness, hath not attained it? It is this: "Because they sought it not by faith, but by the works of the law."

III. Now I will briefly say a word or two concerning ISHMAEL'S CONDUCT TO ISAAC. It says that Ishmael mocked Isaac. Have not some of you, dear sons of Hagar, felt exceedingly irritated when you heard this doctrine? You have said, "It is dreadful, it is horrible, it is quite unjust, that I may be as good as I like, but if I am not a son of the promise, I cannot be saved; it is really awful, it is an immoral doctrine; it does a deal of damage, and ought to be stopped." Of course! That shows that you are an Ishmael. Of course Ishmael will mock at Isaac; and we need no further explanation. Where the pure sovereignty of God is preached, where it is held that the child of the promise, and not the child of the flesh, is the heir, the child of

the flesh always makes a hubbub about it. What said Ishmael to Isaac? "What business have you here? Am I not my father's eldest son? I should have had all the property, if it had not been for you. Are you above me?" That is how the legalist talks. "Is not God the father of everybody? Are we not all his children? He ought not to make any difference." Said Ishmael: "Am not I as good as you? Do I not serve my father as well? As for you, you know you are your mother's favourite, but my mother is as good as yours." And so he teased and mocked at Isaac. That is just how you Arminians do with free salvation. The legalist says, "I don't see it, I cannot have it, and I won't; if we are both equal in character, it cannot be fair that one should be lost, and the other saved." And thus he mocks at free grace. You may get on very easily, if you do not preach free grace too fully, but if you dare to speak such things, though they are obnoxious to the crowd, what will people say? They call them "baits for popularity." (See the *so-called* FREEMAN Newspaper.) Few fishes, however, bite at those baits. Most men say, "I hate him, I cannot bear him; he is so uncharitable." You say we preach this to gain popularity! Why, it is, upon the surface of it, a bare-faced lie; for the doctrine of God's sovereignty will always be unpopular; men will always hate it, and grind their teeth, just as they did when Jesus taught it. Many widows he said, were in Israel, but to none of them was the prophet sent, save unto a widow of Sarepta. And many lepers were in Israel, but none of them were healed, except one who came far away from Syria. A fine popularity our Saviour got from that sermon. The people ground their teeth at him; and all the popularity he had, would have been to be pushed down the hill, from which, it is said, they would have cast him headlong, but he made his way out of them and escaped. What! *popular* to humble a man's pride, to abolish man's standing, and make him cringe before God as a poor sinner? No; it will never be popular till men be born angels, and all men love the Lord, and that will not be just yet, I ween.

IV. But we have to enquire WHAT BECAME OF THE TWO SONS.

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

thee. But if thou art a poor Isaac, a poor guilty trembling sinner—and if thou sayest, "Ishmael has his hands full,

But nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling."

If thou art saying this morning—

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

If thou renouncest all the works of the flesh, and dost confess, "I the chief of sinners am, but I am the child of the promise; and Jesus died for me," thou shalt have an inheritance, and thou shalt not be robbed of it by all the mocking Ishmaels in the world; nor shall it be diminished by the sons of Hagar. Thou mayest sometimes be sold, and carried down to Egypt, but God will bring his Josephs and his Isaacs back again, and thou shalt yet be exalted to glory, and sit on Christ's right hand. Ah! I have often thought what consternation there will be in hell when outwardly good men go there. "Lord," saith one as he goes in, "am I to go into that loathsome dungeon? Did not I keep the Sabbath? Was not I a strict Sabbatarian? I never cursed or swore in all my life. Am I to go there? I paid tithes of all that I possessed, and am I to be locked up there? I was baptized; I took the Lord's supper; I was everything that ever a man could be, that was good. It is true, I did not believe in Christ; but I did not think I needed Christ, for I thought I was too good and too honorable; and am I to be locked up there?" Yes, sir! and amongst the damned thou shalt have this pre-eminence, that thou didst scorn Christ most of all. They never set up an anti-Christ. They followed sin, and so didst thou in thy measure, but thou didst add to thy sin this most damnable of sins: that thou didst set up thyself as an anti-Christ, and bowed down and worshipped thine own fancied goodness. Then God will proceed to tell the legalist, "On such a day I heard thee rail at my sovereignty; I heard thee say it was unfair of me to save my people, and distribute my favors after the counsel of my own will; thou didst impugn thy Creator's justice, and justice thou shalt have in all its power." The man had thought he had a great balance on his side, but he finds it is only some little grain of duty; but then God holds up the immense roll of his sins, with this at the bottom: "Without God, without hope, a stranger from the common wealth of Israel!" The poor man then sees that his little treasure is not half a mite, while God's great bill is ten thousand million talents; and so with an awful howl, and a desperate shriek, he runs away with all his little notes of merit that he had hoped would have saved him; crying, "I am lost! I am lost with all my good works! I find my good works were sands, but my sins were mountains; and because I had not faith, all my righteousness was but white-washed hypocrisy."

Now, once more, *Ishmael was sent away, and Isaac was kept in the house*. So there you are some of you, when the searching day shall come to try God's church, though you have been living in the church as well as others, though you have got the mask of profession on

you, you will find that it will not avail. You have been like the elder son; whenever a poor prodigal has come into the church, you have said, "As soon as thy son is come which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." Ah! envious legalist, thou wilt be banished at last from the house. I tell you legalist, and formalist, that you have no more to do with Christ than the heathens have, and thou you have been baptized with Christian baptism, though you sit at a Christian table, though you hear a Christian sermon, you have neither part nor lot in the matter, any more than a Catholic or a Mahomedan, unless you are trusting simply in the grace of God, and are an heir according to the promise. Whosoever doth trust to his works, though it be ever so little, will find that that little trust will ruin his soul. All that nature spins must be unravelled. That ship which works have builded must have her keel cut in halves. A soul must trust simply and wholly to the covenant of God, or else that soul is lost. Legalist, thou hopest to be saved by works. Come, now, I will treat thee respectfully. I will not charge thee with having been a drunkard, or a swearer; but I want to ask thee, Art thou aware, that in order to be saved by thy works, it is requisite that thou shouldst be entirely perfect? God demands the keeping of the whole law. If you have a vessel with the smallest crack in it, it is not a whole one. Have you never committed sin in all your life? Have you never thought an evil thought, never had an evil imagination? Come, sire, I would not suppose that you have stained those white kid gloves with anything like lust, or carnality, or that your fine mouth which uses such chaste language ever condescended to an oath, or anything like lasciviousness; I will not imagine that you have ever sung lascivious son; I will leave that out of the question—but hast thou never sinned? "Yes," sayest thou. Then, mark this: "*the soul that sinneth, it shall die*;" and that is all I have to say to thee. But if thou wilt deny that thou hast ever sinner, dost thou know that if in future thou commit but one sin—though thou shouldst live for seventy years a perfect life, and at the end of that seventy years thou shouldst commit one sin, all thy obedience would go for nothing; for "*He that offends in one point is guilty of all.*" "Sir," you say, "you are going on a wrong supposition, for though I believe I ought to do some good works, I believe Jesus Christ is very merciful, and though I am not exactly perfect, I am sincere, and I think sincere obedience will be accepted instead of perfect obedience." You do, indeed! and pray what is sincere obedience? I have known a man get drunk once a week; he was very sincere, and he did not think he was doing wrong so long as he was sober on a Sunday. Many people have what they call a sincere obedience, but it is one which always leaves a little margin for iniquity. But then you say, "I do not take too much margin, it is only a little sin I allow." My dear sir, you are quite in error as to your sincere obedience, for if this be what God requires, then hundreds of the vilest characters are as sincere as you are. But I do not believe you are sincere. If you were sincere, you would obey what God says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." It strikes me thy sincere obedience is a sincere delusion, and such thou wilt find it. "Oh," sayest thou, "I believe that after all we have done, we must go to Jesus

Christ, and we must say, "Lord, there is a great deficiency here, wilt thou make it up?" I have heard of weighing witches against the parish Bible, and if they were found heavier they were declared to be innocent; but to put the witch and the Bible in the same scale is a new idea. Why, Christ will not get in the scale with such a conceited fool as thou art. You wish Christ to be a make-weight. He is much obliged to you for the compliment, but he will accept no such menial service. "Oh," sayest thou, "he shall *assist* me in the matter of salvation." Yes, I know that would please you; but Christ is a very different kind of Saviour; he has a propensity when he does a thing to do it all. You may think it strange, but he never likes any assistance. When he made the world, he did not ask the angel Gabriel so much as to cool the molten matter with his wing, but he did it entirely himself. So it is in salvation: he says, "My glory I will not give to another." And I beg to remind thee, as thou professest to go to Christ, and yet to have a little share in the business thyself, that there is a passage in the Scriptures which is *apropos* to thee, and which thou mayest masticate at thy leisure, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work." For if you mix the two together, you spoil them both. Go home, sir, and make yourself a stirabout with fire and water, endeavour to keep in your house a lion and a lamb, and when you have succeeded in doing these, tell me that you have made works and grace agree, and I will tell you, you have told me a lie even then, for the two things are so essentially opposite, that it cannot be done. Whosoever amongst you will cast all his good works away, and will come to Jesus, with this "Nothing, *nothing*, NOTHING,

Nothing in my hands I bring,

Simply to the cross I cling,

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

Good Works

A Sermon
(No. 70)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 16, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Zealous of good works."—Titus 2:14.

WE SHALL not be afraid of leading any of you into a legal spirit this morning through what we shall say, for after our frequent exhortations to avoid anything like trusting in your works, attended as they have been, we trust, by the Holy Spirit, we are not afraid that you will so misunderstand us, as to suppose that when we speak of good works, to-day, we shall in any way whatsoever wish you to imagine that they can promote your eternal salvation. We laboured when here the Sabbath morning before last, to let you know the difference between the two covenants, the covenant of grace and the covenant of works; we shall beg you to remember what we then said, and if by any slips of the tongue we should say anything that should look like legality, we beg you will put the two together, and wherein we shall err from the great truth of justification by faith, to reject our testimony.

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

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

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

Again: *nothing is a good work unless it is done with a good motive*; and there is no motive which can be said to be good but the glory of God. He who performs good works with a view to save himself, does not do them from a good motive, because his motive is selfish. He who does them also to gain the esteem of his fellows and for the good of society, has a laudable motive, so far as man is concerned; but it is, after all, an inferior motive.—What end had we in view? If for the benefit of our fellow-creatures, then let our fellow-creatures pay us; but that has nought to do with God. Work is not good, unless a man does it with a view to God's glory, and he has been brought into subjection to God's divine will, so that in everything he has an eye to the Most High, and works in order to promote his glory and honor in the world. And even, beloved, when our works are done from the best motives, nothing is a good work unless it is done with faith; for "without faith it is impossible to please God." Like Cain, we may build the altar, and lay the first fruits of the salt of faith, there it will lie—it will not be accepted by God, for without faith it is impossible to please him. Bring me a man who all his life long has been spending his health and strength for his fellow-creatures; fetch me some public officer, who has fully discharged his trust, who has laboured night and day, even to the wearing down of his constitution, because he believed that England expected every man to do his duty, and he wished to do it; bring me that man; let me see all his charitable works; let me witness the most lavish benevolence, the most profuse bounty; tell me that he has always, with a consistent motive, laboured for his country; and then, if he cannot answer this question. "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" I shall

be bound in all honesty to tell him that he has not done a solitary good work in all his life, so far as God is concerned.

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

And now, beloved, do you think you have any good works? "Oh!" you say "I am afraid I have not many myself-nay, I know I have not; but thanks be unto his love, he who accepted my person in Christ, accepts my works through Christ; and he who blessed me in him, that I should be a chosen vessel, has been pleased to accept that which he himself poured into the vessel, 'to the praise of the glory of his grace, where he hath made me accepted in the beloved.'"

And now, ye *moralists*, ye who have trusted in yourselves that ye are righteous, if what I have said be true, what has become of all your holiness? You are saying "I am a charitable man." Grant that you are! I tell you to go and appeal to your fellow-creatures, and let them pay you for your charity. You say, "Ay, but I am a consistent and moral man. I am a great credit to the country; if all men would act as I do, what a good thing for this world and generation!" Of course you have served your generation. Then send in your bill, and let your generation pay you. I tell you, you have toiled for nought; you have only sown the wind, and likely enough you will reap the whirlwind. God owes you nothing; you have not

lived to his honor; you must honestly confess that you have not performed a single action with a desire to please him; you have laboured to please yourself—that has been the highest motive you have had; you felt that if you were good you would go to heaven, and that if you were evil you would be sure to go to hell. You have been thoroughly selfish, from first to last. Reckon up your accounts and settle with yourself. God owes you nothing; you have done nothing for him; and if you have, then consider within yourself, you have so much violated God's commands, and so frequently done all you could to injure your Maker, if it were possible, that all your accounts are easily struck off. And as for your good works, where are they? Where are they? Ah! it is a figment and a fiction, a laugh and a dream. Good works in sinners? There are no such things. Augustine well said, "Good works, as they are called, in sinners, are nothing but splendid sins." This is true of the best works of the best man, who is out of Christ, they are nothing but splendid sins—vanished sins. God forgive you, dear friends, for your good works! You have as great need to be forgiven for your good works as you have for your bad ones, if you are out of Christ; for I reckon they are both alike, bad, if they come to be sifted.

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

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

congruous. Our good works, if we have any, spring from a real conversion; yet more, they spring also from a constant spiritual influence exercised upon us, from the time of conversion even until the hour of death. Ah! Christian, thou wouldst have no good works if thou hadst no fresh influence day by day. Thou wouldst not find the grace given thee at the first hour sufficient to produce fruit to-day. It is not like the planting of a tree in our hearts, which naturally of itself bringeth forth fruit; but the sap cometh up from the root of Jesus Christ. We are not trees by ourselves, but we are branches fixed on the living vine. Good works, I know whence you come! Ye come floating down on the stream of grace, and if I did not have that stream of grace always flowing, I should never find good works coming from me. Good works from the creature? Impossible! Good works are the gifts of God, his choice pearls, which he sendeth down with his grace.

And again: we think that *good works spring from union with Christ*. We believe that the more a man knows and feels himself to be one with Jesus, the more holy will he be. The very fact that Christ and the Christian become one, makes the Christian Christ-like. Why is a Christian's character like Christ's character? Only for this reason, that is joined and united to the Lord Jesus Christ. Why doth that branch bring forth grapes? Simply because it has been engrafted into the vine, and therefore it partakes of the nature of the stem. So, Christian, the only way whereby thou canst bring forth fruit to God is by being grafted into Christ and united with him. You Christians who think you can walk in holiness without keeping up perpetual fellowship with Christ have made a great mistake. If you would be holy, you must live close to Jesus. Good works spring only thence. Hence we draw the most powerful reasons against anything like trusting in works; for as works are only the gift of God, how utterly impossible does it become for an unrighteous, unconverted, ungodly man, to produce any such good works in himself. And if they are God's gifts, how little merit can there be in them.

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

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

Well, we do love good works. Do you ask, of what use are they? I reply, first: *Good works are useful as evidences of grace*. The Antinomian says,—But I do not require evidences; I can live without them. This is unreasonable. Do you see yonder clock? That is the evidence of the time of day. The hour would be precisely the same if we had not that evidence. Still, we find the clock of great use. So we say, good works are the best evidence of spiritual life in the soul. Is it not written, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren?" Loving the brethren is a good work. Again, "If any man abide in me, he shall bring forth fruit." Fruits of righteousness are good works, and they are evidence that we abide in Christ. If I am living in sin day by day, what right have I to conclude I am a child of God? A man comes to this chapel, and while he hears the gospel, he exclaims, "What delicious truth! what heavenly doctrine!" Yet when he leaves the place, you may see him enter one public-house for another, and get intoxicated. Has this man any right to think himself an heir of heaven? The man who comes to God's house, and drinks "wine on the lees, well refined," and then goes away and drinks the cup and enjoys the company of the ungodly, gives no evidence that he is a partaker of divine grace. He says, "I do not like good works." Of course he does not. "I know I shall not be saved by good works." Of this we are certain, for he has none to be saved by. Many are ready enough to say,

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to the cross I cling;"

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

Secondly, we think good works are *the witnesses or testimony to other people of the truth of what we believe*. Every Christian was sent into the world to be a preacher; and just like every other creature that God has made, he will always be preaching about his Lord. Doth not the whole world preach God? Do not the stars, while they shine, look down from heaven and say there is a God? Do not the winds chaunt God's name in their mighty howling? Do not the waves murmur it upon the shore, or thunder it in the storms? Do not the floods and the fields, the skies and the plains, the mountains and the valleys, the streamlets and the

rivers, all speak for God? Assuredly they do; and a new-born creature—the man created in Christ—must preach Jesus Christ wherever he goes. This is the use of good works. He will preach, not with his mouth always, but with his life. The use of good works is, that they are a Christian's sermon. A sermon is not what a man says, but what he does. You who practice are preaching; it is not preaching and practising, but practising is preaching. The sermon that is preached by the mouth is soon forgotten, but what we preach by our lives is never forgotten. There is nothing like faithful practice and holy living, if we would preach to the world. The reason why Christianity does not advance with a mightier stride, is simply this:—that professors are in a large measure a disgrace to religion, and many of those who are joined to the church have no more godliness than those who are out of it. If I preached such a contradictory sermon on a Sunday as some of you have preached the most part of your lives, you would go out and say, "We will not go again till he can be a little more consistent with himself." There is a difference in the very tone of the voice of some people when they are in the chapel engaged in prayer, and when they are in the workshop; you would hardly think them the same persons. Out upon your inconsistency! Professors, take heed lest your inconsistencies should blot your evidence, and some of you should be found manifesting, not inconsistency, but a most fearful consistency, because living in sin and iniquity, and therefore being consistent with yourselves in hypocrisy.

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

with modesty. It would be a good thing, perhaps, if we went back to Wesley's rule, to come out from the world in our apparel, and to dress as plainly and neatly as the Quakers, though alas! they have sadly gone from their primitive simplicity. I am obliged to depart a little sometimes, from what we call the high things of the gospel; for really the children of God cannot now be told by outward appearance from the children of the devil, and they really ought to be; there should be some distinction between the one and the other; and although religion allows distinction of rank and dress, yet everything in the Bible cries out against our arraying ourselves, and making ourselves proud, by reason of the goodliness of our apparel. Some will say, "I wish you would leave that alone!" Of course you do, because it applies to yourself. But we let nothing alone which we believe to be in the Scriptures; and while I would not spare any man's soul, honesty to every man's conscience and honesty to myself demands, that I should always speak of that which I see to be an evil breaking out in the Church. We should always take care that in everything we keep as near as possible to the written Word. If you want ornaments here they are. Here are jewels, rings, dresses, and all kinds of ornament; men and women, ye may dress yourselves up till ye shine like angels. How can you do it? By dressing yourselves out in benevolence, in love to the saints, in honesty and integrity, in uprightness, in godliness, in brotherly-kindness, in charity. These are the ornaments which angels themselves admire, and which even the word will admire; for men must give admiration to the man or the woman who is arrayed in the jewels of a holy life and godly conversation. I beseech you, brethren, "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

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

Some say that what is called Calvinism, which is an *alias* for the true gospel, is calculated to lead men into sin. Now, we will refute that, just by reminding them, that the holiest people in the world have been those who professed the doctrine which we hold. If you ask who in the dark ages were the great moral lights of the world, the answer will be, such as Athanasius, Ambrose, Chrysostom; and then coming lower still, such men as Wickliffe, Jerome of Prague, and Calvin; and every one of these held the doctrines which we love to proclaim. And just let me remind you, there never were better men in the world than the Puritans, and every one of them held fast the truth we love. I happened to find in a book the other day a statement which pleased me so much, that I thought I would read it to you. The writer says, "The Puritans were the most resolved Protestants in the nation; zealous Calvinists; warm and affectionate preachers. They were the most pious and devout people in the land; men of prayer in secret and in public, as well as in their families. Their manner of devotion was fervent and solemn, depending on the assistance of the Divine Spirit. They had a profound reverence for the holy name of God, and were great enemies not only to profane swearing,

but to foolish talking and jesting. They were strict observers of the Lord's day, spending the whole of it in public and private devotion and charity. It was the distinguishing mark of a Puritan, in these times, to see him going to church twice a day, with his Bible under his arm; and while others were at plays and interludes, at revels, or walking in the fields, or at the diversions of bowling, fencing, &c., on the eve of the Sabbath, these with their families were employed in reading the Scriptures, singing psalms, repeating sermons, catechising their children, and prayer. Nor was this the work only of the Lord's day, but they had their hours of family devotion in the week days; they were circumspect, as to all excess in eating and drinking, apparel, and lawful diversions; being frugal, industrious, exact in their dealings, and solicitous to give every one his own." That is a noble testimony to puritanic truth and the power of the gospel. But I have one, which I think will please you, in another part of the book. A learned Infidel says of the modern Calvinists and Jansenists, that "When compared with their antagonists, they have excelled, in no small degree, in the most rigid and respectable virtues; that they have been an honor to their own age, and the best model for imitation to every age succeeding." Only think of an infidel speaking like that. I think it was an infidel that said, "Go the Arminians to hear about good works; but go to the Calvinists to see them exhibited." And even Dr. Priestly, who was a Unitarian, admits that, "They who hold the doctrines of grace, have less apparent conformity to the world, and more of a principle of real religion, than his own followers: and that they who, from a principle of religion, ascribe more to God and less to man than others, have the greatest elevation of piety."

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

But once more: in just hastily running over the doctrines, we ask, *what could more tend to make men holy, than the truths we preach*? Do we not teach you, that God has chosen to himself a people who must be holy? Is that an unholy doctrine? Do we not tell you that God has chosen to himself a people who in this world shall show forth his praise, by holy living? Is that an unholy doctrine? And we have told you that the Holy Ghost gives a new heart, and a right spirit, and that there is something more required than you can do yourselves; that you are unable to perform such good things as God expects from you, therefore God

the Spirit must renovate you. Do you call that an unholy doctrine? Is the doctrine, that men by nature are vile and need renewing grace, unholy? And the doctrine that the true saints will certainly hold on to the end: is that unholy? Methinks the contrary to these doctrines are the most unholy in the world. Is the doctrine that only those who believe have an interest in the blood of Christ an unholy thing? Is the doctrine that I preach, that Christ has redeemed only such as live in holiness, having been brought thereto by the Holy Ghost, an unholy thing? Methinks not. We challenge all those who love to speak against our doctrines to prove that there is a single one of them which has an unholy tendency. Charge us with not holding good works? Come and try to get into our church, and you will soon have a proof that you are wrong. Why, we would not have you, sir, if you would give us a thousand pounds, unless we considered you were a holy man. If you have not good works, it will be a long time before we will receive you; and if you were to steal into our church, you would be turned out in a week, if you lived in sin and unrighteousness; for it would soon be reported to the pastor and deacons, and you would see whether we did not hold the necessity of good works. If you did not exhibit them every day we would cast you out from amongst us, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Our church order is the best refutation of the calumny.

What more can we say, then? We hope we have proved our points to all honest and consistent men. We only send you away, ye hypocrites, with this ringing in your ears, "Except ye have the spirit of Christ, ye are none of his." Except ye live like Christ, ye shall not be with Christ at last; if your spirit be not sanctified in this world, you will not find that God will sanctify you when you come before his throne. But you, poor sinners, who have no holiness of your own, and no good works at all; I know you have not any, because you are not a child of God. Do you feel that you have not? Come then, and Christ will give you some: he will give you himself. If you believe on the Lord Jesus, he will wash you from all your sins, give you a new heart, and henceforth your life shall be holy, your conduct shall be consistent, he shall keep you to the end, and you shall most assuredly be saved. God bless this testimony to any such as are living in sin, that they may be reclaimed from it; for Christ's sake! Amen.

A Bottle in the Smoke

A Sermon
(No. 71)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 23, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget they statutes."—Psalm 119:83.

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

First, *God's people have their trials*—they get put in the smoke; secondly, *God's people feel their trials*—they "become like a bottle in the smoke;" thirdly, *God's people do not forget God's statutes in their trials*—"I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes."

I. GOD'S PEOPLE HAVE THEIR TRIALS. This is an old truth, as old as the everlasting hills, because trials were in the covenant, and certainly the covenant is as old as the eternal mountains. It was never designed by God when he chose his people, that they should be an

untried people; that they should be chosen to peace and safety, to perpetual happiness here below, and freedom from sickness and the pains of mortality. But rather, on the other hand, when he made the covenant, he made the *rod* of the covenant too; when he drew up the charter of privileges, he also drew up the charter of chastisements; when he gave us the roll of heirship, he put down the rods amongst the things to which we should inevitably be heirs. Trials are a part of our lot; they were predestinated for us in God's solemn decrees; and so surely as the stars are fashioned by his hands, he has fixed their orbits, so surely are our trials weighed in scales; he has predestinated their season and their place, their intensity and the effect they shall have upon us. Good men must never expect to escape troubles; if they do, they shall be disappointed; some of their predecessors have escaped them.

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

Mark Job, of whose patience ye have heard; read ye well of Abraham, for he had his trials, and by his faith under them, when he offered up Isaac, he became "the father of the faithful." Note ye well the biographies of all the patriarchs, of all the prophets, of all the apostles and martyrs, and you shall discover none of those, whom God made vessels of mercy, who were not hung up like bottles in the smoke. It is ordained of old, that the cross of trouble, even as the sparks fly upwards; and when born again, it does seem as if we had a birth to double trouble; and double toil and trouble come to the man who hath double grace and double mercy bestowed upon him. Good men must have their trials; they must expect to be like bottles in the smoke.

Sometimes these trials arise from *the poverty of their condition*. It is the bottle in the cottage which gets into the smoke, not the bottle in the palace. The Queen's plate knows nothing of smoke; we have seen at Windsor how carefully it is preserved; it knoweth nothing of trial, no hands are allowed to touch that, so as to injure it, although even it may be stolen by accident when the guards are not careful over it. Still, it was not intended to be subject to smoke. So with God's poor people; they must expect to have smoke in their dwellings. We should suppose that smoke does not enter into the house of the rich, although even then our supposition would be false; but certainly we must suppose there is more smoke where the chimney is ill built, and the home is altogether of bad construction. It is the poverty of the Arab that puts his bottle in the smoke; so the poverty of Christians exposes them to much trouble, and inasmuch as God's people are for the most part poor, for that reason must they always be for the most part in affliction. We shall not find many of God's people in the higher ranks; not many of them shall ever be illustrious in this world. Until happier times come, when kings shall be their nursing fathers, and queens their nursing mothers, it must still be true that "God hath chosen the poor in this world, rich in faith, that they should be heirs of the kingdom." Poverty hath its privileges, for Christ hath lived in it; but it hath its ills, it hath its smoke, it hath it trials. Ye know not sometimes how ye shall be

provided for; ye are often pinched for food and raiment, ye are vexed with anxious cares, ye wonder whence tomorrow's food shall come, and where ye shall obtain your daily supplies. It is because of your poverty that ye are hung up like a bottle in the smoke.

Many of God's people, however, are not poor; and even if they are, poverty does not occasion so much trouble to them as some suppose; for God, in the midst of poverty, makes his children very glad, and so cheers their hearts in the cottage that they scarce know whether it e a palace or a hovel; yea, he doth send such sweet music across the waters of their woe, that they know not whether they be on dry land or not.

But there are other trials: and this brings us to remark, that *our trials frequently result from our comforts*. What makes the smoke? Why, it is the fire, by which the Arab warms his hands, that smokes his bottle, and smokes him too. So, beloved, our comforts usually furnish us with troubles. It is the law of nature, that there should never be a good, without having an ill connected with it. What if the stream fertilize the land? It can sometimes drown the inhabitants. What if the fire cheer us? doth it not frequently consume our dwellings? What if the sun enlighten us? does he not sometimes scorch and smite us with his heat? What if the rain bring forth our food, and cause the flowers to blossom on the face of the earth? does it not also break the young blossom from the trees, and cause many diseases? There is nothing good without its ill, there is no fire without its smoke. The fire of our comfort will always have the smoke of trial with it. You will find it so, if you instance the comforts you have in your own family. You have relations; mark you, every relationship engenders its trial, and every fresh relationship upon which you enter opens to you, at one time certainly, a new source of joys, but infallibly also a new source of sorrows. Are you parents? your children are your joy; but those children cause you some smoke, because you fear, lest they should not be brought up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" and it may be, when they come to riper years, that they will grieve your spirits,—God grant they may not break your hearts by their sins! You have wealth. Well, that has its joys with it; but still, hath it not its trials and its troubles? Hath not the rich man more to care for than the poor? He who hath nothing sleepeth soundly, for the thief will not molest him; but he who hath abundance often trembles lest the rough wind should blown down that which he hath builded—lest the rude storm should wreck that argosy laden with his gold—lest an overwhelming and sudden turn in the tide of commerce should sweep away his speculations and destroy his hopes. Just as the birds that visit us fly away from us, so do our joys bring sorrow with them. In fact, joy and sorrow are twins; the blood which runs in the veins of sorrow, runs in the veins of joy too. For what is the blood of sorrow, is it not the tear? and what is the blood of joy? When we are full of joy do we not weep? Ah! that we do. The same drop which expresses joy is sorrow's own emblem; we weep for joy, and we weep for sorrow. Our fires gives smoke, to tell us that our comforts have their trials with them. Christian men! you have extraordinary fires, which others have never kindled; expect then to have

extraordinary smoke. You have the presence of Christ; but then you will have the smoke of fear, lest you should lose it. You have the promise of God's Word—there is the fire of it: but you have the smoke sometimes, when you read it without the illumination of God's Spirit. You have the joy of assurance; but you have also the smoke of doubt, which blows into your eyes, and well nigh blinds you. You have your trials, and your trials arise from your comforts. The more comfort you have, the more fire you have, the more sorrows shall you have, and the more smoke.

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

I think, however, that David had one more thought. The poor bottle in the smoke *keeps there for a long time, till it gets black*; it is not just one puff of smoke that comes upon it; the smoke is always going up, always girding the poor bottle; it lives in an atmosphere of smoke. So, beloved, some of us hang up like bottles in the smoke, for months, or for a whole year. No sooner do you get out of one trouble, than you tumble into another; no sooner do you get up one hill, than you have to mount another; it seems to be all up hill to heaven with you. You feel that John Bunyan is right in his ditty—"A Christian man is seldom long at ease; when one trouble's gone, another doth him seize." You are always in the smoke. You are linked perhaps with an ungodly partner; or perhaps you are of a singular temperament, and your temperament naturally puts clouds and darkness round about you, so that you are always in the smoke. Well, beloved, that was the condition of David; he was not just sometimes in trial, but it seemed as if trials came to him every day. Each day had its cares; each hour carried on its wings some fresh tribulation; while, instead of bringing joy, each moment did but toll the knell of happiness, and bring another grief. Well, if this is your case, fear not, you are not alone in your trials; but you see the truth of what is uttered here: you are become like bottles in the smoke.

II. This brings us to the second point: CHRISTIAN MEN FEEL THEIR TROUBLES. They are in the smoke; and they are like *bottles* in the smoke. There are some things that you might hang up in the smoke for many a day, and they would never be much changed,

because they are so black now, that they could never be made any blacker, and so shrivelled now, that they never could become any worse. But the poor skin bottle shrivels up in the heat, gets blacker, and shows at once the effect of the smoke; it is not an unfeeling thing, like a stone, but it is at once affected. Now, some men think, that grace makes a man unable to feel suffering; I have heard people insinuate that the martyrs did not endure much pain when they were being burned to death; but this is a mistake, Christian men are not like stones; they are like *bottles* in the smoke. In fact, if there be an difference, a Christian man feels his trials more than another, because he traces them to God, and that makes them more acute, as coming from the God whom he loves. But at the same time, I grant you, it makes them more easy to bear, because he believes they will work the comfortable fruits of righteousness. A dog will bite the stone that is thrown at it, but a man would resent the injury on the man that threw the stone. Stupid, foolish, carnal unbelief quarrels with the trial; but faith goes into the Court of King's Bench at once, and asks its God "wherefore dost thou content with me." But even faith itself does not avert the pain of chastisement, it enables us to endure, but does not remove the trial. The Christian is not wrong in giving way to his feelings; did not his Master shed tears when Lazarus was dead? and did he not, when on the cross, utter the exceeding bitter cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" *Our Heavenly Father never intended to take away our griefs when under trial*; he does not put us beyond the reach of the flood, but builds us an ark, in which we float, until the water be ultimately assuaged, and we rest on the Ararat of heaven for ever, God takes not his people to an Elysium where they become impervious to painful feelings: but he gives us grace to endure our trials, and to sing his praises while we suffer. "I am become like a bottle in the smoke:" I feel what God lays upon me.

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

And yet more: *trials which are not felt are unprofitable trials*. If there be no blueness in the wound, then the soul is not made better; if there be no crying out, then there will be no emptying out of our depravity. It is just so much as we feel, that we are profited; but a trial unfelt must be a trial unsanctified, a trial under which we do not feel at all, cannot be a blessing to us, because we are only blessed by feeling it, under the agency of God's Holy Spirit. Christian man! do not blush, because you are like a *bottle* in the smoke: because you are sensitive under affliction, for so you ought to be. Do not let others say, you ought not feel it so much, because your husband is dead, or your child is dead, or you have lost your property. Just tell them that you ought; for God sent the trouble, that you might feel it (not excessively, and murmur against God,) but that you might feel the rod, and then kiss it. That is patience: not when we do not feel, but when we feel it, and say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "I am like a bottle in the smoke." Now, a bottle, when it is in the smoke, *gets very black*: so does the Christian, when he is in the smoke of trial, or in the smoke of the gospel ministry, or the smoke of persecution, get very black to his own esteem. It is marvellous how bright we are when everything goes right with us; but it is equally marvellous how black we get when a little tribulation comes upon us. We think very well of ourselves while there is no smoke; but let the smoke come, and it just reveals the blackness of our hearts. Trials teach us what we are; they dig up the soil, and let us see what we are made of; they just turn up some of the ill weeds on the surface; they are good, for this reason, they make us know our blackness.

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

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

Have I described any of your characters? I dare say some of you are like bottles in the smoke. You do feel your trials; you have a soft, tender heart, and the arrows of the Almighty sink fast in it. You are like a piece of sea-weed, affected by every change of the weather; not like a piece of rock, that might be hung up and would never change, but you are capable of being affected, and it is quite right you should be: you are "become like a bottle in the smoke."

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

What are God's statutes? God has two kinds of statutes, both of them engraved in eternal brass. The first are *the statutes of his commands*; and of these he has said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of the law shall fail till all be fulfilled." These statutes are like the statutes of the Medes and Persians; they are binding upon all his people. His precepts are a light and easy yoke; but they are one which no man must cast from his shoulders; all must carry the commands of Christ, and all who hope to be saved by him must take up his cross daily and follow him. Well, the Psalmist said, "In the midst of my trials I have not swerved from thy statutes; I have not attempted to violate thy commands; I have not in any way moved from the strict path of integrity; and in the midst of all my persecutions, I have gone straight on, never once forgetting God's statutes or commands." And then again: there are *statutes of promise*, which are equally firm, each of them as immortal as God who uttered them. David did not forget these; for he said of them, "Thy statutes have been my song, in the house of my pilgrimage;" and he could not have sung about them if he had forgotten them.

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

Another reason why, when David was in the smoke, he did not forget God's statutes was this, that *Jesus Christ was in the smoke with him, and the statutes were in the smoke with him too*. God's statutes have been in the fire, as well as God's people. Both the promise and the precept are in the furnace; and if I hang up in the smoke, like a bottle, I see hanging up by my side, God's commands, covered with soot, and smoke, subject to the same perils.

Suppose I am persecuted: It is a comfort to know that men do not persecute me, but my Master's truth. It is a singular thing, with regard to all the envenomed shafts that have been hurled at me, that they have generally fallen on that part of my frame which is most invulnerable, because they have generally fallen on something I have quoted from somebody else, or proved from Scripture. They may go on; it is sweet to think that Jesus Christ is in the smoke as well as we are; and the more flame there is, the better we shall be able to see our Master in the smoke with us.

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

Another reason why David did not forget the statutes was, *they were in the soul, where the smoke does not enter*. Smoke does not enter the interior of the bottle; it only affects the exterior. So it is with God's children: the smoke does not enter into their hearts; Christ is there, and grace is there, and Christ and grace are both unaffected by the smoke. Come up, clouds of smoke! curl upward, till ye envelop me! Still will I hang on the Nail, Christ Jesus—the sure Nail, which never can be moved from its place—and I will feel, that "while the outward man decayeth, the inward man is renewed day by day;" and the statutes being there, I do not forget them. "For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet I do not forget thy statutes." To such of you as can join with David, let me give a word of consolation. If you have been persecuted, and still hold fast by God's word—if ye have been afflicted, and still persevere in the knowledge of our Lord and Master, you have every reason to believe yourself a Christian. If under your trials and troubles you remain just what you were when at ease, you may then hope, and not only so, but steadfastly believe and be assured that you are a child of God. Some of you, however, are very much like Christians, when you hear sermons full of promises; when I preach to you about bruised reeds, or address you with the invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labour;" but when I give you a smoky sermon—one which you cannot endure—if you then can say, guilty, weak, and helpless I may be, but still I fall into his arms; sinful I know I am, and I have grace cause for doubt, but still

"There, there, unshaken will I rest,

Till this vile body dies;"

I know, poor, weak, and helpless though I am, that I have a rich Almighty Friend; if you can stand a little smoke, then you may believe yourself to be a child of God. But there are some fantastic people we know of, who are shocked with a very puff of smoke, they cannot endure it, they go out at once, just like rats out of the hold of a ship when they begin to smoke it; but if you can live in the smoke and say, "I feel it, and still can endure it,"—if you can stand a smoky sermon, and endure a smoky trial, and hold fast to God under a smoky persecution, then you have reason to believe, that you are certainly a child of God. Fair-weather birds! you are good for nothing; it is the stormy petrels that are God's favorites. He loves the birds that can swim in the tempest; he loves those who can move in the storm, and like the eagle, companion of the lightening flash, can make the wind their chariot, and ride upon forked flames of fire. If in the heat of battle, when your helmet is bruised by some powerful enemy, you can still hold up your head, and say, "I know whom I have believed," and do not swerve from your post, then you are verily a child of heaven; for constancy, endurance, and perseverance, are the true marks of a hero of the cross, and of the invincible warriors of the Lord. Those are no invincible ships that flee away before a storm; he is no brave warrior who hears reports from others that a fort is impregnable, and dares not attack it; but he is brave, who dashes his ship beneath the guns, or runs her well nigh aground, and gives broadside after broadside with a desperate valour against his foe; he who in the smoke and the tempest, in the clamour and roar of the battle, can yet cooly give his commands, and knowing that every man is expected to do his duty, can fight valiantly, he is a brave commander, he is a true soldier, he shall receive from his master a crown of glory. O Christian! cleave to thy Master in the smoke, hold on to thy Lord in the trials, and thou shalt be refined by thine afflictions; yea, thou shalt exceedingly increase, and be profited beyond measure.

However, I have some here who can consume their own smoke. There are some of my congregation who, when they have any trials, can manage to get over them very well themselves. They say, "Well, I don't care, you seem to be a sad set of simpletons, you feel everything; but as for me, it all rolls off, and I don't care for anything." NO, I dare say you don't but the time will come when you will find the truth of that little story you used to read when you were children, that don't care came to a very bad end. These persons are not like bottles in the smoke, but like pieces of wood hanging over it; but they will find there is something more than smoke by-and-bye; they will come to a place, where there is not only smoke, but fire; and though they can endure the smoke of this world's troubles, they will find it not so easy as they imagine to endure the unutterable burnings and the everlasting flames of that pit whose fire knows no extinction, and whose worm shall know no death. Oh! hardened sinner, thou hast sorrows now, which are like the skirmishers before an army, a few light-armed troops to lead the way for the whole hosts of God's avengers, who shall

trample thee beneath their feet. One or two drops of woe have fallen on the pavement of thy life; thou laughest at them; ah! but they are the heralds of a shower of fire and brimstone, which God shall rain out of heaven upon thy soul throughout eternity. And yet you may be pitying us poor Christians, because of our troubles and sufferings. Pity us, do you? Ah! but our light afflictions is but for a moment, and it worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Take your pity back, and reserve it for yourselves; for your light joy, which is but for a moment, worketh out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of torment, and your little bliss will be the mother of an everlasting, unutterable torture, which we shall happily escape. Your sun will soon set, and at its setting your night shall come; and when your night cometh, it will be night for ever, without hope of light again. Ere thy sun setteth, my hearer, may God give thee grace. Dost thou inquire what thou shouldst do to be saved? Again comes the old answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved." If thou art no sinner, I have no salvation for thee; if thou art a Pharisee, and knowest not thy sins, I have no Christ to preach to thee; I have no heaven to offer to thee, as some have; but if thou art a sinner, a *bona-fide* sinner, if thou art a real sinner, not a sham one, I have this to tell thee: "Jesus Christ came to save sinners, even the chief;" and if thou wilt believe on him, thou shalt go out of this house of prayer, shriven, absolved, without a sin; forgiven, pardoned, washed, without a stain, accepted in the Beloved. As long as thou livest, that pardon shall avail thee; and when thou diest, thou wilt have nought to do, but to show it at the gates of paradise, to gain admittance. And then, in a nobler and sweeter song, that pardon shall form the basis of thy praise, while heaven's choirs shall sing, or while the praise of the Eternal shall be the chaunt of the universe. God bless thee! Amen.

Israel at the Red Sea

A Sermon
(No. 72)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 30, 1856, by the
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At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

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

SEVERAL Sabbaths ago we preached upon the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, by the blood of the passover: and we told you then, that we believed that event to be typical of the coming forth of God's people from that spiritual house of bondage, that furnace of mental suffering whence they are delivered by the omnipotent grace of God, at the time of their conversion. This morning we pursue the narrative. No doubt the children of Israel supposed that now all was over; the Egyptians has sent them away, entreating them to depart, and loading them with riches. Terror had smitten the heart of Egypt, for from the king on the throne to the prisoner in the dungeon, all was dismay and fear on account of Israel. Egypt was glad for them when they departed. Therefore the children of Israel said within themselves, "We shall now march to Canaan at once; there will be no more dangers, no more troubles, no more trials; the Egyptians themselves have sent us away, and they are too much afraid of us ever to molest us again. Now shall be tread the desert through with hasty footstep; and when a few more days have passed, we shall enter into the land of our possession—the land that floweth with milk and honey." "Not quite so speedily," says God; "the time is not arrived yet for you to rest. It is true I have delivered you from Egypt; but there is much you have to learn before you will be prepared to dwell in Canaan. Therefore I shall lead you about, and instruct you, and teach you." And it came to pass that the Lord led the children of Israel about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea, till they arrived over against Baalzephon, where on either side the craggy mountains shut them in. Pharoah hears of it; he comes upon them, to overcome them; and they stand in terrible fright and jeopardy of them, to overcome them; and they stand in terrible fright and jeopardy of their lives. Now, beloved, it is usually so with the believer: he marches out of Egypt spiritually at the time of his conversion, and he says within himself, "Now I shall always be happy." He has a bright eye, and a light heart, for his fetters have been dashed to the ground, and he feels no longer the lash of conscience upon his shoulder. "Now," says he, "I may have a short life, but it will be a happy one."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The first they had was a great trial sent by God himself. *There was the Red Sea in the front of them*. Now, it was not an enemy that put the sea there; it was God himself. We may therefore think, that the Red Sea represents some great and trying providence, which the Lord will be sure to place in the path of every new-born child; in order to try his faith, and to test the sincerity of his trust in God. I do not know, beloved, whether your experience will back up mine: but I can say this, that the worst difficulty I ever met with, or I think I

can ever meet with, happened a little time after my conversion to God. And you must generally expect, very soon after you have been brought to know and love him, that you will have some great, broad, deep Red Sea straight before your path, which you will scarcely know how to pass. Sometimes it will occur in the family. The husband says, for instance—if he is an ungodly man—"You shall not attend such-and-such a place of worship; I positively forbid you to be baptized, or to join that church;" there is a Red Sea before you. You had done nothing wrong; it is God himself who places that Red Sea before your path. Or perhaps before that time, you were carrying on a business which now you cannot conscientiously continue; and there is a Red Sea which you have to cross in renouncing your means of livelihood. You don't see how it is to be done; how you are to maintain yourself, and to provide things honest in the sight of all men. Or perhaps your employment calls you amongst men with whom you lived before on amicable terms, and now on a sudden, they say, "Come! won't you do as you used to do?" There, again, is a Red Sea before you. It is a hard struggle; you do not like to come out and say, "I cannot, I shall not, for I am a Christian." You stand still, half afraid to go forward. Or perhaps it is something proceeding more immediately from God. You find that just when he plants a vine in your heart, he blasts all the vines in your vineyard; and when he plants you in his own garden, then it is that he uproots all your comforts and your joys. Just when the Sun of Righteousness is rising upon you, your own little candle is blown out; just when you seem to need it most, your gourd is withered, your prosperity departs, and your flood becomes an ebb. I say again, it may not be so with all of you, but I think that most of God's people have not long escaped the bondage of Egypt, before they find some terrible, rolling sea, lashed perhaps by tempestuous winds directly in their path; they stand aghast, and say, "O God, how can I bear this? I thought I could give up all for thee; but now I feel as if I could do nothing! I thought I should be in heaven, and all would be easy; but here is a sea I cannot ford—there is no squadron of ships to carry me across: it is not bridged even by thy mercy; I must swim it, or else I fear I must perish."

Then the children of Israel had a second difficulty. They would not have cared about the Red Sea a single atom, if they had not been *terrified by the Egyptians who were behind them*. These Egyptians, I think may be interpreted this morning, by way of parable, as the representatives of those sins of ours, which we thought were clean dead and gone. For a little while after conversion sin does not trouble a Christian; he is very happy and cheerful, in a sense of pardon; but before many days are past, he will understand what Paul said, "I find another law in my members, so that when I would do good, evil is present with me." The first moment when he wins his liberty he laughs and leaps in an ecstacy of joy. He thinks, "Oh! I shall soon be in heaven; as for sin, I can trample that beneath my feet!" But mark you, scarce has another Sabbath gladdened his spirit, ere he finds that sin is too much for him; the old corruptions which he fancied were laid in their graves get a resurrection and start up afresh, and he begins to cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me

from the body of this death?" He sees all his old sins galloping behind him: like Pharoah and his host pursuing him to the borders of the Red Sea. There is a great trial before him. Oh! he thinks he could bear that; he thinks he could walk through the Red Sea; oh! those Egyptian—they are behind him! He thought he should never have seen them any more for ever; they were the plague and torment of his life when they made him work in the brick-kiln. He sees his old master, the very man who was wont to lay the lash on his shoulders, riding post haste after him; and there are the eyes of that black Pharoah, flashing like fire in the distance; he sees the horrid scowling face of the tyrant, and how he trembles! Satan is after him, and all the legions of hell seem to be let loose, if possible, utterly to destroy his soul. At such a time, moreover, our sins are more formidable to us than they were before they were forgiven; because, when we were in Egypt, we never saw the Egyptians mounted on horses, or in chariots; they only appeared as our task-masters, with their whips; but now these people see the Egyptians on horseback, clad in armour; they behold all the mighty men of valour come out with their warlike instruments to slay them. So did I find, speaking for myself, that when I first knew the weight of sin, it was as a burden, as a labour, as a trouble; but when the second time

"I asked the Lord that I might grow,
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face;"

and when he answered me by letting all my sins loose upon me they appeared more frightful than before. I thought the Egyptians in Egypt were not half so bad as the Egyptians out of Egypt; I thought the sins I knew before, though they were cruel task-masters, were not half so much to be dreaded as those soldier-sins, armed with spears and axes, with chariots of iron with scythes upon their axles, hastening to assault me. It is true they did not come so near to me as heretofore; nevertheless they occasioned more fright than when I was their slave. It may be, poor child of God, thou art astonished and amazed to find, that thy sins are more black now than they were when thou wast under conviction; that thou hast less hope than thou hadst even then; and that thy condition is possibly far worse than when the law was beating thee from head to foot, and rubbing brine into the wounds of thy conscience. Thou mayest be saying, "Ah! well, I never thought of this; if I be a child of God, if I were really pardoned and forgiven, how could it be that I should be so vexed and tormented with a sense of my guilt? And if all my transgressions have been cast into the depths of the sea, how is it that I hear the armies of my sins, rattling their horse-hoofs and chariot-wheels behind me?" I tell thee, beloved, in the name of the Lord, that is just what you ought to have expected. The pangs after we come out of Egypt are at times even more painful than those we feel in the house of bondage; and there is usually a time of trial a little while after

the new birth, which is even more terrible and awful than the previous agony of the soul, though not usually so protracted. This was the second difficulty.

But there was a third difficulty, which perhaps wrought them more misery than either of the other two: *these poor children of Israel had such faint hearts*. They no sooner saw the Egyptians than they began to cry out; and when they beheld the Red Sea before them, they murmured against their deliverer. A faint heart is the worst foe a Christian can have; whilst he keeps his faith firm, whilst the anchor is fixed deep in the rock, he never need fear the storm; but when the hand of faith is palsied, or the eye of faith is dim, it will go hard with us. As for the Egyptian, he may throw his spear; while we can catch it on the shield of faith, we are not terrified by the weapon, but if we lose our faith, the spear becomes a deadly dart. While we have faith, the Red Sea may flow before us, as deep and dark as it pleases: for like Leviathan, we trust we can snuff up Jordan at a draught. But if we have no faith, then at the most insignificant streamlet, which Faith could take up in her hands in a single moment, and drink like Gideon's men, poor Unbelief stands quivering and crying, "Ah! I shall be drowned in the floods, or I shall be slain by the foe; there is no hope for me; I am driven to despair. It would have been better for me that I had died in Egypt, than that I should come hither to be slain by the hand of the enemy." The child of God, when he is first born, has but very little faith, because he has had but little experience; he has not tried the promise, and therefore he does not know its faithfulness. He has not used the arm of his faith, and therefore the sinews of it have not become strong. Let him live a little longer, and become confirmed in the faith, and he will not care for Red Seas, nor yet for the Egyptians; but just then his little heart beats against the walls of his body, and he laments, "Ah, me! ah, me! O wretched man that I am! How shall I ever find deliverance?" This description of spiritual geography may be uninteresting to some, because they may not have travelled through this part of the wilderness, but others will view it with attention. Who cared about maps of the Crimea till there was war there? But as soon as our soldiers were engaged in that particular spot, every man bought a map of the Crimea and studied the boundaries of Russia. So if you have been in these straits, you will be very glad of my map this morning, that you may see the way in which God leads his family. These are the three dangers—a great trial, sins pursuing us behind, and an exceedingly faint heart.

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

Oh! child of God? dost thou discern this mystery? Whenever thou hast three trials, thou wilt always have three promises; and if thou hadst forty afflictions, thou wouldst have forty measures of grace. Yes, and if thou hadst a million troubles, thou wouldst have a million measures of mercy. The Israelites had three difficulties, and they had three helps; and as the difficulty was put in the way by providence, so providence did also furnish a relief.

The first help they had was *Providence*. Providence put the Red Sea there, and piled the rocks on either hand, while providence represented by the fiery cloudy pillar, had led them

to its shore, and conducted them into the defile, and now the same pillar of providence came to their assistance. They had not come thither undirected, and therefore they should not be left unprotected, for the same cloudy pillar which led them there, came behind them to protect them.

Cheer up, then, heir of grace! What is thy trial? Has providence brought it upon thee? If so, unerring wisdom will deliver thee from it. What is it thou art now exercised upon? As truly as thou art alive, God will remove it. Dost thou think God's cloudy pillar would ever lead thee to a place where God's right arm would fail thee? Dost thou imagine that he would ever guide thee into such a defile that he could not conduct thee out again? The providence which apparently misleads, will in verity befriend thee. That which leads thee into difficulties guards thee against thy foes; it casts darkness on thy sins, whilst it giveth light to thee. How sweet is providence to a child of God, when he can reflect upon it! He can look out into this world, and say, "However great my troubles, they are not so great as my Father's power; however difficult may be my circumstances, yet all things around me are working together for good. He who holds up yon unpillared arch of the starry heavens can also support my soul without a single apparent prop; he who guides the stars in the well-ordered courses, even when they seem to move in hazy dances, surely he can overrule my trials in such a way that out of confusion he will bring order; and from seeming evil produce lasting good. He who bridles the storm, and puts the bit in the mouth of the tempest, surely he can restrain my trial, and keep my sorrows in subjection. I need not fear while the lightnings are in his hands and the thunders sleep within his lips; while the oceans gurgle from his fist, and the clouds are in the hollow of his hands; while the rivers are turned by his foot, and while he diggeth the channels of the sea. Surely he whose might wings an angel, can furnish a worm with strength; he who guides a cherub will not be overcome by the trials of an emmet like myself. He who makes the most ponderous orb roll in dignity, and keeps its predestined orbit, can make a little atom like myself move in my proper course, and conduct me as he pleaseth. Christian! there is no sweeter pillow than providence; and when providence seemeth adverse, believe it still, lay it under thy head, for depend upon it there is comfort in its bosom. There is hope for thee thou child of God! The great trouble which is to come in thy way in the early part of thy pilgrimage, is planned by love, the same love which shall interpose as thy protector.

Again: the children of Israel had another refuge, in the fact, that *they knew that they were the covenant people of God*, and that, though they were in difficulties, God had brought them there, and therefore God, (with reverence let me say it,) was bound in honor to bring them out of that trouble into which he had brought them. "Well," says the child of God, "I know I am in a strait, but this one thing I also know, that I did not come out of Egypt by myself—I know that *he* brought me out; I know that I did not escape by my own power, or slay my first-born sins myself—I know that he did it; and though I fled from the tyrant—I

know that he made my feet mighty for travel, for there was not one feeble in all our tribes; I know that though I am at the Red sea, I did not run there uncalled, but he bade me go there, and therefore I give to the winds my fears; for it he hath led me here into this difficulty, he will lead me out, and lead me through.

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

"Hell and my sins obstruct my path,
But hell and sin are conquer'd foes;
My Jesus nailed them to his cross,
And sang the triumph as he rose."

Still look thou to that man who once on Calvary died!

III. GOD HAD A DESIGN IN IT. And here, also, we wish you to regard with attention what God's design is, in leading the Christian into exceeding great trials in the early part of his life. This is explained to us by the Apostle Paul. A reference Bible is the best commentator in the world; and the most heavenly exposition is the searching out of kindred, texts, and comparing their meaning. "They were all baptized," says the Apostle, "unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." God's design in bringing his people into trouble, and raising all their sins at their heels, is to give them a thorough baptism into his service, consecrating them for ever to himself. I mean by baptism this morning, not the rite, but what baptism represents. Baptism signifies dedication to God—initiation into God's service. It is not when we are first converted that we so fully dedicate ourselves to God, as afterwards, when some great Red sea rolls before us. I should be delighted to see some of you get into trouble. Am I unkind

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

Now, beloved, let these thoughts rest with you. You may think them unimportant, but I am sure they are not. Believe me, you ought, indeed, to own yourselves on the Lord's side. If God be God, serve him; if Baal be God, serve him. There is nothing which I would more earnestly and ardently press upon you, than the great duty of decision for Jesus Christ. How many of you have a faint and indistinct hope, that when you die you will be Christ's people; and yet you must confess that you are not decided for Christ. You think you are his, but you often neglect duty, and frequently allow what you think a little sin to stain your conscience. You are not godly in worldly affairs. But I beseech you, put truth and righteousness into one scale, and put your own worldly gain into the other, and see which is the most important, and if you think that prudence dictates attention to this world instead of God, then remember, that is hellish prudence, and cometh of the devil, and, therefore, reject it. If ye were Egyptians, I might tell you to serve another master; but since you are God's people, or profess to be, I charge home upon you; and I beg of you, if you make a profession, to be out-and-out with it. How we do loathe those hot and cold people, who are neither one thing nor the other! You, who hold with the hare and run with the hounds—you, who are first one thing and then another—you, who are half horse, half alligator, and neither of them—you, who are something between the two, who are neither Christians nor worldlings in your own opinions. We know which you are. I have often thought what a consistent religion the Roman Catholic would be for some of you go-between people. You are not exactly children of God; but you would not like to be called the children of the devil. Where should we put you at last? It would be a very convenient thing to have a purgatory for you, to place you somewhere between the two. But as we have no such place, we do not wish to have any such characters,

and we believe there are none such; you are either servants of God, or servants of the devil. Don't stand halting between two opinions, but just say, once for all, whom you will serve. If you choose the devil, choose him, love him, serve him, and rejoice in your choice. If you choose hell, go there, rush madly there; it's a fearful dwelling place for eternity—an awful home for ever! But if you choose God, I beseech you be in downright earnest about it. The religion of the present day, what mockery it is to call it religion at all! I protest, I believe the common religion of this age will not carry half those who profess it to heaven. It is a religion which *they* might easily carry to heaven, for it is too light to burden them, but *it* is too fragile to carry them there. They have a godliness which has not eaten up their soul. I heart a minister say once to his people, that "it would be a long time before the zeal of God's house would eat them up." Take the churches all round: what a slumbering brotherhood they are! There might almost be a controversy between the prince of this world, and the prince of heaven to whom they belonged. But I beseech you, let there be a marked and decided difference between you and the world. Let your heart be steeped in godliness; let your life be saturated with religion. Take care that, "whether you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, you do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God and the Father by him." So shall God see his great design subserved of making you to be baptized unto Jesus, "in the cloud and in the sea."

In concluding, there is one sad aspect of this picture, which I wish you to regard. It is this. Some of you are journeying in an unconverted state to that bourne from which there is no return. At death you will find a Red Sea in your way—the sea of death staring you in the face. When you come before it, you will find no bridge, no ships; but you must wade that sea alone. And, mark you, if you are living now in an ungodly condition, and are doing so when you die, as certainly as you are here, just when that great sea of death is rolling before you, all the Egyptian hosts of your sins will harass you in the rear. All your sins will come bellowing after you; you will have your iniquities like wild winter wolves pursuing you, athrist for blood, and swift to slay. You will hear fiends howling in your ears. And when already the raging flood of Jordan hath made your bones shake, and your marrow quiver, just then you will see the red eyes of your sins peering through the darkness of your despair, and hear the howlings of your former transgressions, as they hound you to the pit, seeking after your soul's blood. Ah, then, my hearer, thou wilt have no cloudy pillar to give thee light; thou wilt have no pillar of darkness to confound thy foes; but thou wilt have behind thee all thy sins, and before thee that black sea of death, which thou art compelled to cross. But mark thee, those sins will swim that sea with thee; they will not be like the Egyptians which were drowned; but when thou art wading through the sea, thou wilt find thy sins like hounds fixing on a stag, drinking thy heart's blood. Ay, when thou hast landed in eternity, thou wilt find there was not a single one drowned in the sea, but that they are all alive; every sin grown into a giant, every lust brandishing a thousand arms, each arm bearing a thousand

horrid fingers of flame, and each finger a claw of iron, which shall tear thy soul. Oh! I warn thee against these Egyptians of thy sins, for unless the blood be sprinkled on thy door-post and on thy lintel, and unless the destroying angel smite those sins for thee, they will assuredly follow thee across the sea. Methinks I see thee there! Thou art just in the midst of the Jordan. Poor soul! the river itself is work enough for a man to wade through it; for dying is not easy labour. The waters are rushing into his lips, and gurgling in his throat, like a whirlpool. See how he shakes. White as the floods around him, he quivers, like the very waves themselves. And, ah! just when in his fell despair, he shrieks—see, the harpies feed him with black fruits of hell; and when he quivers most, see there the scalding brimstone of Almighty God rained upon his body. Just when he is shrieking in death's torments, then is it that Satan takes the opportunity to howl in his face, and show him his glaring eyes of fire, to terrify his poor soul, worse than death itself. Sinner! when thou diest, remember that thou wilt have to die two deaths, one death which *we* shall *see*, another death which we only know of by the shrieks, and groans, and anguish, which even we may hear on this side of the grave. But what thou wilt experience in the next world, I cannot picture to thee, I cannot tell thee; those dim shapes of horror I cannot paint to thee; those fierce flames of misery I cannot now describe; that doleful *miserere* of desolation, and that awful lament of eternity, I cannot endure to hear; I dare not lift the veil that conceals the dread scenes, which haunt the spirits of the ungodly departed.

Well, then, what shalt thou do to escape this death? What canst thou do to be saved? Why, sinner, in the first place, of thyself thou canst do nothing at all. But, in the second place, there is one—a Man, who can do all for thee. He is the Man Christ Jesus; if thou believest on him, filthy as thou art, and wretched, and outcast, and vile, thou shalt never see the second death, but shalt have eternal life abiding in thee; and when thou diest in this world, instead of black fiends to hound thee through the river, thou wilt have sweet angels playing o'er the stream, waiting to waft thee unto glory; thou wilt feel bright spirits fanning thy hot brow with their soft wings; thou wilt hear songs, sweet as the music of paradise, and when thy troubles are the strongest, thou wilt have a peace with God "which passeth all understanding;" a "joy unspeakable and full of glory," which shall enable thee to "swallow up death in victory." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Poor, trembling, penitent sinner, put thine hand inside the hand of Christ; now fall on his mercy; "to-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your heart." I beseech you for Christ's sake, "be ye reconciled to God." And if ye be penitents, may God give you faith that ye may be believers! As for the rest of you, remember, ere you go, I have told you no fable, but the truth. You may go away and say, "There is no hell." Well, suppose there is none, believers will be as well off as you are. But suppose there is—and there is for a certainty—suppose yourselves in it, you cannot then suppose yourselves out of it any more. May God grant his blessing, for Jesus' sake; turning many of you to righteousness.

Effectual Calling

A Sermon
(No. 73)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 30, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"When Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."—Luke 19:5.

Notwithstanding our firm belief that you are in the main well instructed in the doctrines of the everlasting gospel, we are continually reminded in our conversation with young converts, how absolutely necessary it is to repeat our former lessons, and repeatedly assert and prove over and over again those doctrines which lie at the basis of our holy religion. Our friends, therefore, who have many years ago been taught the great doctrine of effectual calling, will believe that whilst I preach very simply this morning, the sermon is intended for those who are young in the fear of the Lord, that they may better understand this great starting point of God in the heart, the effectual calling of men by the Holy Spirit. I shall use the case of Zaccheus as a great illustration of the doctrine of effectual calling. You will remember the story. Zaccheus had a curiosity to see the wonderful man Jesus Christ, who was turning the world upside down, and causing an immense excitement in the minds of men. We sometimes find fault with curiosity, and say it is sinful to come to the house of God from that motive; I am not quite sure that we should hazard such an assertion. The motive is not sinful, though certainly it is not virtuous; yet it has often been proved that curiosity is one of the best allies of grace. Zaccheus, moved by this motive, desired to see Christ; but there were two obstacles in the way: first, there was such a crowd of people that he could not get near the Saviour; and again, he was so exceedingly short in stature that there was no hope of his reaching over people's heads to catch a glimpse of him. What did he do? He did as the boys were doing—for the boys of old times were no doubt just like the boys of the present age, and were perched up in the boughs of the tree to look at Jesus as he passed along. Elderly man though he is, Zaccheus jumps up, and there he sits among the children. The boys are too much afraid of that stern old publican, whom their fathers dreaded, to push him down or cause him any inconvenience. See him there. With what anxiety he is peeping down to see which is Christ—for the Saviour had no pompous distinction; no beadle is walking before him with a silver mace; he did not hold a golden crozier in his hand: he had no pontifical dress; in fact, he was just dressed like those around him. He had a coat like that of a common peasant, made of one piece from top to bottom; and Zaccheus could scarcely distinguish him. However, before he has caught a sight of Christ, Christ has fixed his eye upon him, and standing under the tree, he looks up, and says, "Zaccheus, make haste,

and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." Down comes Zaccheus; Christ goes to his house; Zaccheus becomes Christ's follower, and enters into the kingdom of heaven.

1. Now, first, effectual calling is a very *gracious* truth. You may guess this from the fact that Zaccheus was a character whom we should suppose the last to be saved. He belonged to a bad city—Jericho—a city which had been cursed, and no one would suspect that any one would come out of Jericho to be saved. It was near Jericho that the man fell among thieves; we trust Zaccheus had no hand in it; but there are some who, while they are publicans, can be thieves also. We might as well expect converts from St. Giles's, or the lowest parts of London, from the worst and vilest dens of infamy, as from Jericho in those days. Ah! my brethren, it matters not where you come from; you may come from one of the dirtiest streets, one of the worst back slums in London but if effectual grace call you, it is an effectual call, which knoweth no distinction of place. Zaccheus also was of an exceedingly bad trade, and probably cheated the people in order to enrich himself. Indeed, when Christ went into his house, there was an universal murmur that he had gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner. But, my brethren, grace knows no distinction; it is no respector of persons, but God calleth whom he wills, and he called this worst of publicans, in the worst of cities, from the worst of trades. Besides, Zaccheus was one who was the least likely to be saved because he was rich. It is true, rich and poor are welcome; no one has the least excuse for despair because of his condition; yet it is a fact that "not many great men," after the flesh, "not many mighty," are called, but "God hath chosen the poor of this world—rich in faith." But grace knows no distinction here. The *rich* Zaccheus is called from the tree; down he comes, and he is saved. I have thought it one of the greatest instances of God's condescension that he can look *down* on man; but I will tell you there was a greater condescension than that, when Christ looked *up* to see Zaccheus. For God to look down on his creatures—that is mercy; but for Christ so to humble himself that he has to look up to one of his own creatures, that becomes mercy indeed. Ah! many of you have climbed up the tree of your own good works, and perched yourselves in the branches of your holy actions, and are trusting in the free will of the poor creature, or resting in some worldly maxim; nevertheless, Christ looks up even to proud sinners, and calls them down. "Come down," says he, "to-day I must abide in thy house." Had Zaccheus been a humble-minded man, sitting by the wayside, or at the feet of Christ, we should then have admired Christ's mercy; but here he is lifted up, and Christ looks up to him, and bids him come down.

2. Next it was a *personal* call. There were boys in the tree as well as Zaccheus but there was no mistake about the person who was called. It was, "*Zaccheus*, make haste and come down." There are other calls mentioned in Scripture. It is said, especially, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Now that is not the effectual call which is intended by the apostle, when he said, "Whom he called, them he also justified." That is a general call which many men, yea, all men reject, unless there come after it the personal, particular call, which makes us

Christians. You will bear me witness that it was a personal call that brought you to the Saviour. It was some sermon which led you to feel that *you* were, no doubt, the person intended. The text, perhaps, was "Thou, God, seest me;" and the minister laid particular stress on the word "me," so that you thought God's eye was fixed upon *you*; and ere the sermon was concluded, you thought you saw God open the books to condemn *you*, and your heart whispered, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord." You might have been perched in the window, or stood packed in the aisle; but you had a solemn conviction that the sermon was preached to *you*, and not to other people. God does not call his people in shoals, but in units. "Jesus saith unto her, *Mary*; and she turned and said unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master." Jesus seeth Peter and John fishing by the lake, and he saith unto them, "Follow me." He seeth Matthew sitting at the table at the receipt of custom, and he saith unto him, "Arise, and follow me," and Matthew did so. When the Holy Ghost comes home to a man, God's arrow goes into his heart: it does not graze his helmet, or make some little mark upon his armour, but it penetrates between the joints of the harness, entering the marrow of the soul. Have you felt, dear friends, that personal call? Do you remember when a voice said, "Arise, he calleth thee." Can you look back to some time when you said, "*My* Lord, *my* God?" when you knew the Spirit was striving with *you*, and you said, Lord, *I* come to thee, for I know that thou callest *me*." I might call the whole of you throughout eternity, but if God call one, there will be more effect through his personal call of one than my general call of multitudes.

3. Thirdly, it is a *hastening* call. "Zaccheus, make *haste*." The sinner, when he is called by the ordinary ministry, replies, "To-morrow." He hears a telling sermon, and he said, "I will turn to God by-and-bye." The tears roll down his cheek, but they are wiped away. Some goodness appears, but like the cloud of the morning it is dissipated by the sun of temptation. He says, "I solemnly vow from this time to be a reformed man. After I have once more indulged in my darling sin, I will renounce my lusts, and decide for God." Ah! that is only a minister's call, and is good for nothing. Hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. These good intentions are begotten by general calls. The road to perdition is laid all over with branches of trees whereon men are sitting, for they often pull down branches from the trees but they do not come down themselves. The straw laid down before a sick man's door causes the wheels to roll more noiselessly. So there be some who strew their path with promises of repentance, and so go more easily and noiselessly down to perdition. But God's call is not a call for to-morrow. "*To-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts: as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me." God's grace always comes with despatch; and if thou art drawn by God, thou wilt run after God, and not be talking about delays. To-morrow—it is not written in the almanack of time. To-morrow—it is in Satan's calendar, and nowhere else. To-morrow—it is a rock whitened by the bones of mariners who have been wrecked upon it; it is the wrecker's light gleaming on the shore, luring poor ships to

destruction. To-morrow—it is the idiot's cup which he fableth to lie at the foot of the rainbow, but which none hath ever found. To-morrow—it is the floating island of Loch Lomond, which none hath ever seen. To-morrow—it is a dream. To-morrow—it is a delusion. To-morrow, ay, to-morrow you may lift up your eyes in hell, being in torments. Yonder clock saith "to-day;" everything crieth "to-day;" and the Holy Ghost is in union with these things, and saith, "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Sinners, are you inclined now to seek the Saviour? are you breathing a prayer now? are you saying, "Now or never! I must be saved now?" If you are, then I hope it is an effectual call, for Christ, when he giveth an effectual call, says, "Zaccheus, make haste."

4. Next, it is a *humbling* call. "Zaccheus, make haste and *come down*." Many a time hath a minister called men to repentance with a call which has made them proud, exalted them in their own esteem, and led them to say, "I can turn to God when I like; I can do so without the influence of the Holy Ghost." They have been called to *go up* and not to *come down*. God always humbles a sinner. Can I not remember when Gold told me to come down? One of the first steps I had to take was to go right down from my good works; and oh! what a fall was that! I have pulled you down from your good works, and now I will pull you down from your self-sufficiency." Well, I had another fall, and I felt sure I had gained the bottom, but Christ said "Come down!" and he made me come down till I fell on some point at which I felt I was yet salvable. "Down, sir! come down, yet." And down I came until I had to let go every bough of the tree of my hopes in despair: and then I said, "I can do nothing; I am ruined." The waters were wrapped round my head, and I was shut out from the light of day, and thought myself a stranger from the commonwealth of Israel. "Come down lower yet, sir! thou hast too much pride to be saved. Then I was brought down to see my corruption, my wickedness, my filthiness. "Come down," says God, when he means to save. Now, proud sinners, it is of no use for you to be proud, to stick yourselves up in the trees; Christ will have you down. Oh, thou that dwellest with the eagle on the craggy rock, thou shalt come down from thy elevation; thou shalt fall by grace, or thou shalt fall with a vengeance one day. He "hath cast down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek."

5. Next, it is an *affectionate* call. "To-day I must abide in *thy house*." You can easily conceive how the faces of the multitude change! They thought Christ to be the holiest and best of men, and were ready to make him a king. But he says, "To-day I must abide in thy house." There was one poor Jew who had been inside Zaccheus's house; he had "been on the carpet," as they say in country villages when they are taken before the justice, and he recollected what sort of house it was; he remembered how he was taken in there, and his conceptions of it were something like what a fly would have of a spider's den after he had once escaped. There was another who had been distrained of nearly all his property; and the idea he had of walking in there was like walking into the den of lions. "What!" said they, "Is this holy man going into such a den as that, where we poor wretches have been robbed

and ill-treated. It was bad enough for Christ to speak to him up in the tree, but the idea of going into his house!" They all murmured at his going to be "a guest with a man who was a sinner." Well, I know what some of his disciples thought: they thought it very imprudent; it might injure his character, and he might offend the people. They thought he might have gone to see this man night, like Nicodemus, and give him an audience when nobody saw him; but publicly to acknowledge such a man was the most imprudent act he could commit. But why did Christ do as he did? Because he would give Zaccheus an *affectionate* call. "I will not come and stand at thy threshold, or look in at thy window, but I will come into thine house—the same house where the cries of widows have come into thine ears, and thou hast disregarded them; I will come into thy parlour, where the weeping of the orphan have never moved thy compassion; I will come there, where thou, like a ravenous lion hast devoured thy prey; I will come there, where thou hast blackened thine house, and made it infamous; I will come into the place where cries have risen to high heaven, wrung from the lips of those whom thou hast oppressed; I will come into thy house and give thee a blessing." Oh! what affection there was in that! Poor sinner, my Master is a very affectionate Master. He will come into your house. What kind of a house have you got? A house that you have made miserable with your drunkenness—a house that you have defiled with your impurity—a house you have defiled with your cursing and swearing—a house where you are carrying on an ill-trade that you would be glad to get rid of. Christ say, "I will come into thine house." And I know some houses now that once were dens of sin, where Christ comes every morning; the husband and wife who once could quarrel and fight, bend their knees together in prayer. Some of my hearers can scarce come for an hour to their meals but they must have a word of prayer and reading of the Scriptures. Christ comes to them. Where the walls were plastered up with the lascivious song and idle picture, there is a Christian almanack in one place, there is a Bible on the chest of drawers; and though it is only one room they live in, if an angel should come in, and God should say, "What hast thou seen in that house?" he would say, "I have seen good furniture, for there is a Bible there; here and there a religious book; the filthy pictures are pulled down and burned; there are no cards in the man's cupboard now; Christ has come into his house." Oh! what a blessing that we have our household God as well as the Romans! Our God is a household God. He comes to live with his people; he loves the tents of Jacob. Now, poor ragmuffin sinner, thou who livest in the filthiest den in London, if such an one be here, Jesus saith to thee, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day *I must abide in thy house*."

6. Again, it was not only an affectionate call, but it was an *abiding* call. "To-day I must *abide* at thy house." A common call is like this: "To-day I shall walk in at thy house at one door, and out at the other." The common call which is given by the gospel to all men is a call which operates upon them for a time, and then it is all over; but the saving call is an abiding call. When Christ speaks, he does not say, "Make haste, Zaccheus, and come down,

for I am just coming to look in;" but "I must *abide* in thy house; I am coming to sit down to eat and drink with thee; I am coming to have a meal with thee; to-day I must abide in thy house." "Ah!" says one, "you cannot tell how many times I have been impressed, sir, I have often had a series of solemn convictions, and I thought I really was saved, but it all died away; like a dream, when one awaketh, all hath vanished that he dreamed, so was it with me." Ah! but poor soul, do not despair. Dost thou feel the strivings of Almighty grace within thine heart bidding thee repent to-day? If thou dost, it will be an abiding call. If it is Jesus at work in thy soul, he will come and tarry in thine heart, and consecrate thee for his own for ever. He says, "I will come and dwell with thee, and that for ever. I will come and say,

Here I will make my settled rest,
No more will go and come;
No more a stranger or a guest,
But master of this home."

"Oh!" say you, "that is what I want; I wan an *abiding* call, something that will last; I do not want a religion that will wash out, but a fast-colour religion." Well, that is the kind of call Christ gives. His ministers cannot give it; but when Christ speaks, he speaks with power, and says, "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must *abide* at thy house."

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

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

I will just tell you an anecdote proving this. "A father was about sending his son to college; but as he knew the influence to which he would be exposed, he was not without a deep and anxious solicitude for the spiritual and eternal welfare of his favourite child. Fearing lest the principles of Christian faith, which he had endeavoured to instil into his mind, would be rudely assailed, but trusting in the efficacy of that word which is quick and powerful, he purchased, unknown to his son, an elegant copy of the Bible, and deposited it at the bottom of his trunk. The young man entered upon his college career. The restraints of a pious education were son broken off, and he proceeded from speculation to doubts, and from doubts to a denial of the reality of religion. After having become, in his own estimation, wiser than his father, he discovered one day, while rummaging his trunk, with great surprise and indignation, the sacred deposit. He took it out, and while deliberating on the manner in which he should treat it, he determined that he would use it as waste paper, on which to wipe his razor while shaving. Accordingly, every time he went to shave, he tore a leaf or two of the holy book, and thus used it til nearly half the volume was destroyed. But while he was committing this outrage upon the sacred book, a text now and then met his eye, and was carried like a barbed arrow to his heart. At length, he heard a sermon, which discovered to him his own character, and his exposure to the wrath of God, and riveted upon his mind the impression which he has received from the last torn leaf of the blessed, yet insulted volume. Had worlds been at his disposal, he would freely have given them all, could they have availed, in enabling him to undo what he had done. At length he found forgiveness at the foot of the cross. The torn leaves of that sacred volume brought healing to his soul; for they led him to repose on the mercy of God, which is sufficient for the chief of sinners." I tell you there is not a reprobate walking the streets and defiling the air with his blasphemies, there is not a creature abandoned so as to be well-nigh as bad as Satan himself, if he is a child of life, who is not within the reach of mercy. And if God says, "To-day I *must* abide in thy house," he then assuredly will. Do you feel, my dear hearer, just now, something in your mind which seems to say you have held out against the gospel a long while, but to-day

you can hold out no longer? Do you feel that a strong hand has god hold of you, and do you hear a voice saying, "Sinner, I must abide in thy house; you have often scorned me, you have often laughed at me, you have often spit in the face of mercy, often blasphemed me, but sinner, I must abide in thy house; you banged the door yesterday in the missionary's face, you burned the tract, you laughed at the minister, you have cursed God's house, you have violated the Sabbath; but, sinner, I must abide in thy house, and I will!" "What, Lord!" you say, "abide in my house! why it is covered all over with iniquity. Abide in my house! why there is not a chair or a table but would cry out against me. Abide in my house! why the joists and beams and flooring would all rise up and tell thee that I am not worthy to kiss the hem of thy garment. What, Lord! abide in my house!" "Yes," says he, "I *must*; there is a strong necessity; my powerful love constrains me, and whether thou wilt let me or no, I am determined to make thee willing, and thou shalt let me in." Does not this surprise you, that Christ not only asks you to come to him, but invites himself to your table, and what is more, when you would put him away, kindly says, "I must, I will come in." Only think of Christ going after a sinner, crying after a sinner, beginning a sinner to let him save him; and that is just what Jesus does to his chosen ones. The sinner runs away from him, but free-grace pursues him, and says, "Sinner, come to Christ;" and if our hearts be shut up, Christ puts his hand in at the door, and if we do not rise, but repulse him coldly, he says, "I must, I will come in;" he weeps over us till his tears win us; he cries after us till his cries prevail; and at last in his own well determined hour he enters into our heart, and there he dwells. "I must abide in thy house," said Jesus.

8. And now, lastly, this call was an *effectual* one, for we see the fruits it brought forth. Open was Zaccheus's door; spread was his table; generous was his heart; washed were his hands; unburdened was his conscience; joyful was his soul. "Here, Lord," says he, "the half of my goods I give to the poor; I dare say I have robbed them of half my property—and now I restore it." "And if I have taken anything from any one by false accusation, I will restore it to him fourfold."—away goes another portion of his property. Ah! Zaccheus, you will go to be to-night a great deal poorer than when you got up this morning—but infinitely richer, too—poor, very poor, in this world's goods, compared with what thou wert when thou first didst climb that sycamore tree; but richer-infinitely richer—in heavenly treasure. Sinner, we shall know whether God calls you by this: if he calls, it will be an effectual call—not a call which you hear and then forget but one which produces good works. If God hath called thee this morning, down will go that drunken cup, up will go thy prayers; if God hath called thee this morning, there will not be *one* shutter up to-day in your shop, but *all*, and you will have a notice stuck up, "This house is closed on the Sabbath day, and will not again on that day, be opened." To-morrow, there will be such-and-such worldly amusement, but if God hath called you, you will not go. And if you have robbed anybody (and who knows but I may have a thief here?) If God call you, there will be a restoration of what you have stolen?

you will give up all that you have, so that you will follow God with all your heart. We do not believe a man to be converted unless he doth renounce the error of his ways; unless, practically, he is brought to know that Christ himself is master of his conscience, and his law is his delight. "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, I must abide at thy house." And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. "And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Now, one or two lessons. *A lesson to the proud*. Come down, proud hearts, come down! Mercy runneth in valleys, but it goeth not to the mountain top. Come down, come down, lofty spirit! The lofty city, he layeth it low even to the ground, and then he buildeth it up. Again, a *lesson to thee, poor despairing soul*: I am glad to see thee in God's house this morning; it is a good sign. I care not what you came for. You heard there was a strange kind of man that preached here, perhaps. Never mind about that. You are all quite as strange as he is. It is necessary that there should be strange men to gather in other strange men. Now, I have a mass of people here; and if I might use a figure, I should compare you to a great heap of ashes, mingled with which are a few steel filings. Now, my sermon if it be attended with divine grace, will be a sort of magnet: it will not attract any of the ashes—they will keep just where they are—but it will draw out the steel filings. I have got a Zaccheus there; there is a Mary up there, a John down there, a Sarah, or a William, or a Thomas, there—God's chosen ones—they are steel filings in the congregation of ashes, and my gospel, the gospel of the blessed God, like a great magnet, draws them out of the heap. There they come, there they come. Why? because there was a magnetic power between the gospel and their hearts. AH! poor sinner, come to Jesus, believe his love, trust his mercy. If thou hast a desire to come, if thou art forcing thy way through the ashes to get to Christ, then it is because Christ is calling thee. Oh! all of you who know yourselves to be sinners—every man, woman, and child of you—yea, ye little children (for God has given me some of you to be my wages), do you feel yourselves sinners? then believe on Jesus and be saved. You have come here from curiosity, many of you. Oh! that you might be met with and saved. I am distressed for you lest you should sink into hell-fire. Oh! listen to Christ while he speaks to you. Christ says, "*Come down*," this morning. Go home and humble yourselves in the sight of God: go and confess your iniquities that you have sinned against him; go home and tell him that you are a wretch, undone without his sovereign grace; and then look to him, for rest assured he has first looked to you. You say, "Sir, oh! I am willing enough to be saved, but I am afraid he is not willing." Stay! stay! no more of that! Do you know that is part blasphemy—not quite. If you were not ignorant, I would tell you that it was part blasphemy. You cannot look to Christ before he has looked to you. If you are willing to be saved, he gave you that will. Believe

on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved. I trust the Holy Spirit is calling you. Young man up there, young man in the window, make haste! come down! Old man, sitting in these pews, come down. Merchant in yonder aisle, make haste. Matron and youth, not knowing Christ, oh, may he look at you. Old grandmother, hear the gracious call; and thou, young lad, Christ may be looking at thee—I trust he is—and saying to thee, "Make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house."

A Willing People and an Immutable Leader

A Sermon
(No. 74)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, April 13, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."—Psalm 110:3.

Never verse in the Scripture has puzzled me more than this to find out its meaning and its connection. In reading it over hastily, at first sight, it may appear very easy; but if you search into it very carefully you will find you can with difficulty string the words together, or give them any intelligible meaning. I have taken down all the commentators I have in my possession; I find they all give a meaning to the words, but not a soul of them—not even Dr. Gill—gives a connected meaning to the whole sentence. After looking at the old translations, and employing every means in my power to discover the meaning, I found myself as far off as when I began. Matthew Henry, one of the wisest commentators, certainly the best for family reading, makes the passage read as if it were like this: "Thy people shall come willingly in the day of thy power in the beauties of holiness. In the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth." That is how he explains it, though he does not say that is the proper translation. He explains the last sentence, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth," as meaning that in early life, from the womb of the morning, young people would give themselves to Jesus Christ. But it is no such thing. There is a colon at the word "morning," dividing the sentence. Besides, it does not say, the "people shall be willing; thou hast the dew of *their* youth," as it would read if it were as the expositors understand it; but it says to Christ, "Thou hast the dew of *thy* youth." It was not until we had thoroughly looked at the connection of the verse, and tried to catch the scope of the Psalm, that we thought we had hit upon its meaning; and even now we shall leave it with your judgment to decide whether or not we have gained the mind of the Spirit, as we hope we have.

The Psalm is a kind of coronation Psalm. Christ is bidden to take his throne: "Sit thou at my right hand." The sceptre is put into his hand. "The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion." And then the question is asked, "Where are his people?" For a king would be no king without subjects. The highest title of kingship is but an empty one that hath no subjects to make up its fulness. Where, then, shall Christ find that which shall be the fulness of him that filleth all in all? The great anxiety we have is not whether Christ is king or not:—we know he is; he is the Lord of creation and of providence; our anxiety is about his subjects. Ofttimes do we ask, "O Lord, where shall we find thy subjects?" When we have preached to hard hearts, and prophesied to dry bones, our unbelief at times says,

"Where shall we find children for Christ? Where shall we find people who will constitute the subjects of his empire?" Our fears are all put to rest by this passage: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning;" and by the second promise, "Thou hast the dew of thy youth." These thoughts are placed here to allay the anxieties of God's believing people, and to let them see how Christ shall indeed be king, and never lack a multitude of subjects.

First, here is *a promise concerning his people*; and secondly, here is *a promise concerning Christ himself*, that he shall always be as strong, as fresh, as new, and as mighty a Christ as ever.

I. First, we shall look at THE PROMISE MADE TO CHRIST'S PEOPLE. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning." Here is a promise of *time*; "in the day of thy power." Here is a promise of *people*: "thy people." Here is a promise of *disposition*: "thy people shall be willing." Here is a promise of *character*: "thy people shall be willing in the beauties of holiness." And here is a *majestic figure* to show the manner in which they shall be brought forth. By a very bold metaphor, they are said to come out as mysteriously as the dew drops from the womb of the morning. We know not how, but they are produced by God. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness." In the womb of the morning they shall come.

1. First, here is a promise concerning *time*. Christ is not to gather in his people every day, but on one special day, the day of *his* power. It is not the day when man feels himself to be the most mighty, that souls are gathered; for alas! God's servants sometimes preach until their self-complacency tells them they have been exceedingly eloquent and mighty, and that, therefore, men must be saved: but there is no promise that in the day of *our* power we shall ever see men gathered to Christ. There are times too when the people seem to have a great power of seeking after God, and when they have the power of hearing, but there is no promise that just when an excitement reigns, and when there appears to be power in the creature, that such a day shall be the day of God's ingathering. It is "the day of *thy* power"—not of the minister's power, nor of the hearers'.

The day of God's power—when is it? We take it, it is *the day when God pours out his own power upon the minister*, so that God's children are gathered in by his preaching.

There are times, beloved, when the ordained servant of the living God will have nothing to do in preaching, but just to open his mouth and allow the words to flow. He will scarcely need stay to think, but the thoughts will be injected into his mind, and while he preaches he will feel there is a power accompanying his word. His hearers too will discern it. Some of them will feel as if they were sitting under a sledge hammer, beating on their hearts. Others will feel as if truth were stealing into their hearts and slaying all their unbelief, in such a way that they could not resist the blessed power. It will often happen that God's

children will find an influence and a might irresistible going with the word. They have heard that minister before, they were delighted with him, they trusted that they had been edified on good soil, every blow hit the mark, there was no arrow shot which did not go into the centre of the soul—there was not a syllable uttered which was not like the word of Jehovah himself, speaking either from Sinai, or Calvary. Have you never known such times? Have you not felt them when you have been standing or sitting in the house of God? Ah! those are times when God, by the manifestation of himself, is pleased to enlighten his children, to gather in his people, and to make poor sinners willing. There is also a day of power *in every sinner's heart*; for, alas! the general day of power which occurs to our congregation omits many—many over whom we have to weep—while hundreds shed tears of penitence, other hundreds sit stolid and unmoved. While some hearts leap for very joy, others are bound in the fetters of ignorance, and are sleeping the sleep of death. While God is pouring out his Spirit till some hearts are full to the very brim, ready to burst, there are some dry, without a drop of the heavenly moisture. But the day of God's power is a day of personal power in our souls, like that day of Zaccheus when the Lord said, "Make haste, and come down." It is a day not of argument of man, but a day of omnipotent power—God working in the heart. It is not a day of intellectual enlightenment, a day of instruction merely, but a day when God shall enter into the heart, and with a mighty hand shall wrench the will and turn it as he would—shall make the judgment judge righteously, the imagination think as it ought, and shall guide the whole soul to himself. Did you never think what power that was which God exerts in every individual heart? There is no power like it. Should a man command the mighty waterfalls to congeal and stand, in heaps? If they should obey him, he would not have worked a miracle half so mighty as that which God works in the heart when he bids the floods of sin to cease flowing. Could I command Etna with its flames and smoke to cease its ebullitions, and should it at once be still, I had not worked a deed so mighty as when God speaks to a boiling spirit sending forth fire and smoke, and bids it stay. The everlasting God exhibits more power in turning a sinner from the error of his ways, than in the creation of a world or the sustentation of an universe. In the day of God's power, God's people shall be willing. Beloved, we also look for *a day of power in the coming period of the reign of Jesus Christ*. I take it there is a time coming when the feeblest among us shall be as David, and when David shall be as the angel of the Lord. The time is approaching when every poor ignorant minister shall preach with power, and when every child of God shall be filled with the knowledge of God. We hope for a happy day when Christ shall come and shall cause the knowledge of the Lord to be spread so rapidly that it shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea. We often cheer ourselves with this subject—well, if we do labour in vain and spend our strength for nought now, it will not be so always; the day will come when the fresh wind of the Spirit will fill the sails of the church, and she shall go swiftly along; when the feeble hand of the minister shall be as mighty as the hand of the boldest

Christian warrior who ever wielded the sword of the Spirit; when every word of Christ shall be as ointment poured forth, spreading perfume over a sinful world; when we shall never preach a sermon without effect; when, as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, it not only shall not return void, but shall water the earth, so that having already brought forth and budded, it shall bring forth fruit to the glory of God—that fruit, the destruction of idols, and the casting down of all false religions. Happy day, that day of power! Christians! why do you not pray for it? Why do ye not ask that God would give his people might, and that Christ may speedily come and find his people willing?

There is, however, another translation to these words. Calvin translates them, "at the time of the assembling of their army," "au jour des montres" "in the day of the review." You sometimes say, "Oh! if a great struggle were to occur, where would be found the men to fight for Christ?" We have heard timid believers say, "Oh, I am afraid if persecution should set in, we should find very few valiant for truth—few ministers would come forward boldly to uphold the gospel of Christ." No such thing, believer! Christ's people will be willing in the day of God's armies. God never had a battle to fight yet when he could say, "I have no soldiers in reserve." God never had an arduous campaign in which his armies were insufficient. Once the prophet said, Zechariah I. 18-21, "Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold four horns. And I said unto the angel that talked with me, What be these? And he answered me, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem. And the Lord showed me four carpenters. Then said I, What come these to do? And he spoke, saying, These are the horns which have scattered Judah, so that no man did lift up his head: but these are come to fray them, to cast out the horns of the Gentiles, which lifted up their horn over the land of Judah to scatter it." God had enough men to cut off the horns, and to build his house, there were four; and he had the right sort of men ready to do his work; for "carpenters" were ready. Whenever a struggle is approaching God will find his men. Whenever a battle is to commence, God will find the men valiant for truth. Never be afraid that God will not take care of his church. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of God's battle." Are you undertaking some noble enterprise? Are you saying, "Here is a grand endeavour to evangelize the world; where shall we find people? The answer is, "God's people shall be willing in the day of his armies." Some Sunday-school teachers are complaining, that in their church they cannot find enough to canvass the district. Why not? Because they have not enough of God's people, for God's people are willing in the day of his armies. We have complained that we cannot get ministers to evangelize. Why not? Because they are not thoroughly imbued with the Master's Spirit, for his people would be willing in the day of God's armies when they are wanted. They always have willing hearts to be ready for the battle. They do not say, "I must consult flesh and blood." No, there is the standard; up go God's soldiers! There is the battle; out go their swords! They are ready for the fight at once. They are always ready in the day of God's armies. Beloved, fear no struggle; dread no enter-

prise; neither think that the silver and the gold will be withholden from us—"The silver and the gold are mind, and the cattle on a thousand hills." Think not, however grand your ideas, that you shall fail therein. God's people will come forward willingly when he requires their aid. We believe that truth firmly; but we must wait for God's day; we must pray for God's day; we must hope for it; we must labour for it, and when it comes, God shall find his people willing, as they ought to be.

2. Next, we have here the promise of *a people, "Thy people* shall be willing in the day of thy power"—nobody else. Here is a promise that Christ shall always have a people. In the darkest ages Christ has always had a church; and if darker times shall come, he will have his church still. Oh! Elijah, thy unbelief is foolish. Thou sayest, "I, only I, am left alone, and they seek my life." Nay, Elijah, in those caves of the earth God has his prophets, hidden by seventies. Thou, too, poor unbelieving Christian, at times thou sayest, "I, even I, am left." Oh! if thou hadst eyes to see, if thou couldst travel a little, thy heart would be glad to find that God does not lack a people. It cheers my heart to find that God has a family everywhere. We do not go anywhere but we find really earnest hearts—men full of prayer. I bless God that I can say, concerning the church wherever I have been, though they are not many, there are a few, who sigh and groan over the sorrows of Israel. There are chosen bands in every church, thoroughly earnest men who are looking out for, and are ready to receive their Master, who cry to God that he would send them times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Do not be too sad; God has a people, and they are willing now; and when the day of God's power shall come, there is no fear about the people. Religion may be at a low ebb, but it never was at such a low ebb that God's ship was stranded. It may be ever so low, but the devil shall never be able to cross the river of Christ's church dry shod. He shall always find abundance of water running in the channel thereof. God grant us grace to look out for his people, believing that there are some everywhere, for the promise is, "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."

3. We next come to *disposition*. God's people are a willing people. Adam Clarke says,—"This verse has been woefully perverted. It has been supposed to point out that irresistible operation of the grace of God on the souls of the elect, thereby making them willing to receive Christ as their Saviour." A doctrine which he utterly discards. Well, my dear Adam Clarke, we are extremely obliged to you for your remark, but at the same time we think that the text has not been "woefully perverted." We believe that the text has been very properly used to show that God makes men willing. For if we read our Bibles rightly, we understand that men, by nature, are not willing; for there is a text you are extremely fond of which we do not think belongs to you, and which says, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "No man can come unto me, except the Father which has sent me, draw him." If you would remember *that*, we think, even though the text does not teach it, you might at least have some respect for the doctrine; but it says, God's people *shall* be willing in the day of

God's power; and if we read it as plain English people, we look from this text that there must be a work of his grace making men willing in the day of God's power. We do not know whether you think that fair logic. We think it is. We have been accused of having no logic, and we are not particularly sorry about that, for we would rather have what men call dogmatism than logic. It is Christ's to prove; it is ours to preach. We leave argument to Christ; for us, we have only to affirm what we see in God's Word. God's people are to be a willing people. We can tell who are the children by the fact that they are willing. I preach to many of you times without number. I tell you of hell; I bid you flee from it; I tell you of Christ; I bid you look to him, but you are unwilling to do so. What do I conclude from that? Either that the day of God's power has not yet come, or that you are not God's people. When I preach with power, and the word is dispensed with unction, if I see you unmoved and unsettled, unwilling to cast yourselves on Jesus Christ, what say I? Why, I fear those are not God's people, for God's people are willing in the day of his power, willing to submit to sovereign grace, to give themselves up into the hands of the Mediator, to hang simply on his cross for salvation. I ask again what has made them willing? Must it not have been something in grace which has turned their will? If the will of man be purely free to do right or wrong, I conjure you, my friends, to answer this: if it be so, why do you not turn to God this very moment without divine assistance? It is because you are not willing, and it needed a promise that God's people should be willing in the day of his power.

I think this word applies not only to their being willing to be saved, but willing to work after they are saved. Did you ever know a minister who preached on the Sunday, but who at the prayer-meeting on the Monday night seemed as if he would much rather be at home? And if there was a lecture on Thursday, did not he, poor man, come up as if he were about to perform some enormously hard duty? What do you think of him? Why, you think he is not one of the people of God, else he would be willing. Some persons come to the house of God, but they come just as the negro would to his whipping place, they do not like it, and they are glad to get away again. But what do we say of God's people,—

"Up to her courts with joys unknown,
The sacred tribes repair."

They are a willing people. There is a collection. The Church of God requires some assistance. One man doles out as small a trifle as ever he can to keep up his respectability. You do not think he exhibits the spirit of a Christian because he is not willing; but Christ's people are willing; all that they do, they do willingly, for they are constrained by no compulsion, but by grace alone. I am sure we all can do a thing far better when we are willing than when we are forced. God loves his people's services, because they do them voluntarily. Voluntaryism is the essence of the gospel. Willing people are those whom God delights to have as his servants. He would not have slaves to grace his throne, but free men, who, with gladness and joy, should be willing in the day of his power.

4. We shall scarcely have time for a discussion of the whole text, but we must briefly notice the *character* of these people as well as their dispositions. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." "They shall be willing in the beauties of holiness." This is how they shall be clothed—not merely in holiness, but in the beauties of holiness, for holiness hath its beauties, its gems, its pearls; and what are these? They shall be clothed in the beauties of holiness of imputed righteousness and of imparted grace. God's people are, in themselves a deformed people, hence their comeliness must be given them. The standard of beauty is saintship. If an angel should descend from heaven, and carry up to God the most beautiful creature he could find, he would not cull earth's roses, he would not gather her lilies, but he would take up to heaven the fair character of a child of God. Where he found a self-denying hero, where he discovered a disinterested Christian—an ardent disciple, the angel would take him up, exclaiming, "Great God, here is beauty; take it, this is *thy* beauty." We walk along and admire statues and such-like things, and we say, "Here is beauty," but the Christian has on him the true beauty—the beauties of holiness. Oh! ye young, ye gay, ye proud, ye ask for beauty, but do you know that all the beauties of this earth can do you no good, for you must die and wear a shroud?

"Time will rob you of your bloom,
Death will drag you to the tomb."

But if you have the beauties of holiness, they shall increase and become fairer and fairer, and amongst the fair angels, you, as fair as they, shall stand decked in your Saviour's righteousness. "Thy people shall be willing" to come forward, and they shall be the right sort of people; they will be a holy people, arrayed in all "the beauties of holiness."

5. Now there is a bold metaphor here which we must explain in the last place. The text says, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power in the beauties of holiness." Now you understand that, but what do the next words mean, "From the womb of the morning?" "Why, from the earliest periods of their lives," say the commentators, "God's people shall be willing." No, it does not mean that; there is a bold and brilliant figure here. It is asked, where are they to come from? how are God's people to be brought? what means are to be employed? how is it to be done? The simple answer is this. Did you never see the dew-drops glistening on the earth? and did you never ask, "Whence came these? how came they here so infinite in number, so lavishly scattered everywhere, so pure and brilliant." Nature whispered the answer, "They came from the womb of the morning." So God's people will come forth as noiselessly, as mysteriously, as divinely, as if they came "from the womb of the morning," like the dew drops. Philosophy has laboured to discover the origin of dew, and perhaps has guessed it; but to the Eastern, one of the greatest riddles was, out of whose womb came the dew? Who is the mother of those pearly drops? Now, so will God's people come *mysteriously*. It will be said by the bystander, "There was nothing in that man's preaching; I thought I should hear an orator; this man has been made the means of salvation

to thousands, and I thought I should hear an eloquent man, but I have heard a great many preachers far more intelligent and intellectual than he; how were these souls converted? "Why, they have come from the womb of the morning," mysteriously. Again, the dew drops—who made them? Do kings and princes rise up and hold their sceptres, and bid the clouds shed tears, or affright them to weeping by the beating of the drum? Do armies march to the battle to force the sky to give up its treasure, and scatter its diamonds lavishly? No; God speaks; he whispers in the ears of nature, and it weeps for joy at the glad news that the morning is come. God does it; there is no apparent agency employed, no thunder, no lightning; God has done it. That is how God's people shall be saved; they come forth from the "womb of the morning" *divinely* called, divinely brought, divinely blessed, divinely numbered, divinely scattered over the entire surface of the globe, divinely refreshing to the world, they proceed from the "womb of the morning." You may have noticed in the morning what a *multitude* of dew drops there are, and you may have inquired, "Whence comes so great a multitude?" We answer, the womb of nature is capable of ten thousand births at once. So, "from the womb of the morning" God's children shall come. No struggle, no pang, no shriek, no agony is heard, all is secret; but they shall come fresh "from the womb of the morning." The figure is so beautiful that words cannot explain it. You have only to stand early one morning when the sun is beginning to shoot his rays of light up to the sky, and look at the fields all glistening with dew, and say, "Whence came all these?" The answer is, they came "From the womb of the morning." So when you find that multitudes are saved, and you see them coming so mysteriously, so gently, so divinely, and yet so numerously, you can only compare them to the dew of the morning. You say, "Whence came these?" And the answer is, they have come "from the womb of the morning."

II. Now the second part of the text is the sweetest, and we must have a little time upon that. There was a promise made to Christ concerning his people, and that sets our fears at rest concerning the Church. Now here is ANOTHER PROMISE MADE TO CHRIST: "Thou hast the dew of thy youth." Ah! believer, this is the great source of gospel success, that Christ has the dew of his youth. Jesus Christ, *personally*, has the dew of his youth. Certain leaders in their young days have led their troops to battle, and by the loudness of their voice, and the strength of their bodies, they have inspired their men with courage; but the old warrior hath his hair sown with grey; he begins to be decrepid, and no longer can lead men to battle. It is not so with Jesus Christ. He has still the dew of his youth. The same Christ who led his troops to battle in his early youth leads them now. The arm which smote the sinner with his word smites now; it is as unpalsied as it was before. The eye which looked upon his friends with gladness, and upon his foemen with a glance most stern and high—that same eye is regarding us now, undimmed, like that of Moses. He has the dew of his youth. Oh! it does delight us to think that Christ was "God over all, blessed for ever," in his youth, filled with Almighty power, and he is just the same now. He is not an old Christ—a worn out

Christ, but our leader still. He is as young as ever. The same dew, the same freshness, is about him. You hear it said of a minister, "In his younger days there was a deal of freshness about him, but he is getting old and begins to repeat himself." It is never so with Christ; he always has the dew of his youth. He who "spake as never man spake," once, when he shall come to speak again, will speak just as he did before. He has the dew of his youth personally.

So also *doctrinally*. Christ hath the dew of his youth. Usually, when a religion starts it is very rampant, but it afterwards decays. Look at the religion of Mahommed. For one hundred years or more it threatened to subvert kingdoms, and overturn the whole world, but where are the blades that flashed then? Where are now the willing hands that smote down the foes of Mahommed? Why, his religion has become an old worn-out thing; no one cares about it; and the Turk, sitting on his divan, with his legs crossed, smoking his pipe, is the best image of the Mahommedan religion—old, infirm, effete. But the Christian religion,—ah! it is as fresh as when it started from its cradle at Jerusalem; it is as hale, and hearty, and mighty, as when Paul preached it at Athens, or Peter at Jerusalem. It is not an old religion. Not one particle of it hath waxed old, though hundreds of years have passed away. How many religions have died since Christ's began! How many have risen up, like mushrooms in a night! But is not Christ's as new as it ever was? I ask you, ye old grey heads, you have known your Master in your youth, and you thought his religion sweet and precious; do you find it useless now? Do you find now that Christ has not the dew of youth upon him? No; you can say, "Sweet Jesus, the day I first touched thine hand, the day of mine espousals, I thought thee altogether lovely; and thou art not like an earthly friend: thou hast not waxed old; thou art as young as ever. Thy brow hath no furrows on it; thine eyes are not dime. Thine hair is still black as the raven, not white with age; thou art still unmoved, unaltered, notwithstanding all the years that I have known thee. Well, beloved, do you see what encouragement this is to us in the propagation of our Master's kingdom, that we are not preaching an old thing that is out of date, but a religion which has the dew of its youth upon it. The same religion which could save three thousand at Pentecost, can save three thousand now. I preach old doctrine, but it is as new as when it first came from heaven's mint. The image and the superscription is as clear, and the metal is as bright and undimmed as ever. I have an old sword, but it is not a rusty one; though it hath hacked and cut many a Rahab, yet it has not a single mark of weakness upon itself—it is as new as when it was first forged upon the anvil of wisdom. The gospel has the same spirit attending it now, that it had when it was a young gospel. As Peter stood up to preach then so may Peters now, and God shall give them the same unction. As Paul preached then, so shall Pauls now. As Timothy upheld the Lord's word, so may Timothys now, and the same Holy Spirit shall attend it. I am afraid Christ's people do not believe this sentence—that Christ has the dew of his youth. They have a notion that the times of great revivals are gone by. And the fathers, they ask, where are they? We are apt to cry, "The horses of Israel, and the chariots thereof." No one will ever

wear Elijah's mantle again; we shall never see great and wondrous deeds again. O foolish unbelief! Christ has still the dew of his youth. He has as much of the Holy Spirit now as he had at first, for he has it without measure. And though he has dispensed it unto thousands, he will dispense it still. But the question is asked, "How is it that people in these times begin to get tired of the gospel, if it has the dew of its youth?" Why, beloved, it is because the gospel does not come to them in the form of dew at all. Do we not frequently hear a gospel all dry and marrowless, like a lot of bones out of which the marrow has been boiled? Very nice these bones are for your philosophical divines, who like to study antiquities, and discover to what unclean animal this or that bone belongs, but of no service at all to God's children, for there is no food on the bones. We want a gospel covered with unction, full of savour; and when God's people have that, they are never tired of it, they find a dew and a freshness about it which are lasting.

Now, if Christ has the dew of his youth about him, how earnestly ought those of us who are his ministers to proclaim his word. There is nothing like strong faith to make a man preach mightily. If I think I preach a tottering old gospel, I cannot proclaim it with zeal; but if I think I am preaching a strong stalwart gospel, whose frame has not been shaken, and whose might is just as great as ever, how strongly ought I to preach it? Ah! blessed be God, there are a few hearts as hot as ever, a few souls as firm in their Master's cause as ever were the hearts of the Apostles. They are yet a few good men and true, who rally round the cross. Like David's men in the cave Adullam, there are some mighties who rally round the standard. He is not left without his witnesses, he has the dew of his youth yet, and the day may come when those now hidden in darkness, shall, as dew before the sunshine, come out, glistening on every bush, adorning every tree, enlightening every village, cheering every pasture, making the little hills sing for joy. Go, Christian, and put this into the form of prayer. Pray to Christ that his people may be willing in the day of his power, and that he would always retain the dew of his youth.

"Ride forth, sweet Prince, triumphantly,
And bid the world obey."

Go on, and prove thyself to be the same as ever, the blessed God, "God over all, blessed for evermore." Up, Christian, up! fight for your young Monarch! Up with ye, warriors! Let your swords flash from their scabbards! Fight for your King! Up! up! for the old banner is a new banner too. Christ is still fresh and still young. Let the enthusiasm of your youth gird you! Once again, start up, ye aged Christians, and let your young days come again, for if Christ has the dew of his youth about him, it behooves you to serve him with youthful vigour. Up! starting now from your sleep, give to him a new youth, and strive to be as earnest and as zealous for his cause as if it were the first day you ever knew him. Oh! may God make many sinners willing! May he bring many to his feet, for he has promised that they shall be willing in the day of his power.

Final Perseverance

A Sermon
(No. 75)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 23, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."—Hebrews 6:4-6.

THERE are some spots in Europe which have been the scenes of frequent warfare, as for instance, the kingdom of Belgium, which might be called the battle field of Europe. War has raged over the whole of Europe, but in some unhappy spots, battle after battle has been fought. So there is scarce a passage of Scripture which has not been disputed between the enemies of truth and the upholders of it; but this passage, with one or two others, has been the special subject of attack. This is one of the texts which have been trodden under the feet of controversy; and there are opinions upon it as adverse as the poles, some asserting that it means one thing, and some declaring that it means another. We think that some of them approach somewhat near the truth; but others of them desperately err from the mind of the Spirit. We come to this passage ourselves with the intention to read it with the simplicity of a child, and whatever we find therein to state it; and if it may not seem to agree with something we have hitherto held, we are prepared to cast away every doctrine of our own, rather than one passage of Scripture.

Looking at the scope of the whole passage, it appears to us that the Apostle wished to push the disciples on. There is a tendency in the human mind to stop short of the heavenly mark. As soon as ever we have attained to the first principles of religion, have passed through baptism, and understand the resurrection of the dead, there is a tendency in us to sit still; to say, "I have passed from death unto life; here I may take my stand and rest;" whereas, the Christian life was intended not to be a sitting still, but a race, a perpetual motion. The Apostle, therefore endeavours to urge the disciples forward, and make them run with diligence the heavenly race, looking unto Jesus. He tells them that it is not enough to have on a certain day, passed through a glorious change—to have experienced at a certain time, a wonderful operation of the Spirit; but he teaches them it is absolutely necessary that they should have the Spirit all their lives—that they should, as long as they live, be progressing in the truth of God. In order to make them persevere, if possible, he shows them that if they do not, they must, most certainly be lost; for there is no other salvation but that which God has already

bestowed on them, and if that does not keep them, carry them forward, and present them spotless before God, there cannot be any other. For it is impossible, he says, if ye be once enlightened, and then fall away, that ye should ever be renewed again unto repentance.

We shall, this morning, answer one or two questions. The first question will be, *Who are the people here spoken?* Are they true Christians or not? Secondly, *What is meant by falling away?* And thirdly, *What is intended, when it is asserted, that it is impossible to renew them to repentance?*

I. First, then, we answer the question, WHO ARE THE PEOPLE HERE SPOKEN OF? If you read Dr. Gill, Dr. Owen, and almost all the eminent Calvinistic writers, they all of them assert that these persons are not Christians. They say, that enough is said here to represent a man who is a Christian externally, but not enough to give the portrait of a true believer. Now, it strikes me they would not have said this if they had had some doctrine to uphold; for a child, reading this passage, would say, that *the persons intended by it must be Christians*. If the Holy Spirit intended to describe Christians, I do not see that he could have used more explicit terms than there are here. How can a man be said to be enlightened, and to taste of the heavenly gift, and to be made partaker of the Holy Ghost, without being a child of God? With all deference to these learned doctors, and I admire and love them all, I humbly conceive that they allowed their judgments to be a little warped when they said that; and I think I shall be able to show that none but true believers are here described.

First, they are spoken of as having been *once enlightened*. This refers to the enlightening influence of God's Spirit, poured into the soul at the time of conviction, when man is enlightened with regard to his spiritual state, shown how evil and bitter a thing it is to sin against God, made to feel how utterly powerless he is to rise from the grave of his corruption, and is further enlightened to see, that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified," and to behold Christ on the cross, as the sinner's only hope. The first work of grace is to enlighten the soul. By nature we are entirely dark; the Spirit, like a lamp, sheds light into the dark heart, revealing its corruption, displaying its sad state of destitution, and, in due time, revealing also Jesus Christ, so that in his light we may see light. I cannot consider a man truly enlightened unless he is a child of God. Does not the term indicate a person taught of God? It is not the whole of Christian experience; but is it not a part?

Having enlightened us, as the text says, the next thing that God grants to us is *a taste of the heavenly gift*, by which we understand, *the heavenly gift of salvation*, including the pardon of sin, justification by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and all those gifts and graces, which in the earlier dawn of spiritual life convey salvation. All true believers have tasted of the heavenly gift. It is not enough for a man to be enlightened; the light may glare upon his eyeballs, and yet he may die; he must taste, as well as see that the Lord is good. It is not enough to see that I am corrupt; I must *taste* that Christ is able to remove my corruption. It is not enough for me to know that he is the only Saviour;

I must taste of his flesh and of his blood, and have a vital union with him. We do think that when a man has been enlightened and has had an experience of grace, he is a Christian; and whatever those great divines might hold, we cannot think that the Holy Spirit would describe an unregenerate man as having been enlightened, and as having tasted of the heavenly gift. No, my brethren, if I have tasted of the heavenly gift, then that heavenly gift is mine; if I have had ever so short an experience of my Saviour's love, I am one of his; if he has brought me into the green pastures, and made me taste of the still waters and the tender grass, I need not fear as to whether I am really a child of God.

Then the Apostle gives a further description, a higher state of grace: *sanctification by participation of the Holy Ghost*. It is a peculiar privilege to believers, after their first tasting of the heavenly gift, to be made partakers of the Holy Ghost. He is an indwelling Spirit; he dwells in the hearts, and souls, and minds of men; he makes this mortal flesh his home; he makes our soul his palace, and there he rests; and we do assert (and we think, on the authority of Scripture), that no man can be a partaker of the Holy Ghost, and yet be unregenerate. Where the Holy Ghost dwells there must be life; and if I have participation with the Holy Ghost, and fellowship with him, then I may rest assured that my salvation has been purchased by the blood of the Saviour. Thou need'st not fear, beloved; if thou has the Holy Ghost, thou hast that which ensures thy salvation; if thou, by an inward communion, canst participate in his Spirit, and if by a perpetual indwelling the Holy Ghost rests in thee, thou art not only a Christian, but thou hast arrived at some maturity in and by grace. Thou hast gone beyond mere enlightenment: thou hast passed from the bare taste—thou hast attained to a positive feast, and a partaking of the Holy Ghost.

Lest there should be any mistake, however, about the persons being children of God, the Apostle goes to a further stage of grace. They "have *tasted the good word of God*." Now, I will venture to say there are some good Christian people here who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have never "tasted the good word of God." I mean by that, that they are really converted, have tasted the heavenly gift, but have not grown so strong in grace as to know the sweetness, the richness, and fatness of the very word that saves them. They have been saved by the word, but they have not come yet to realize, and love, and feed upon the word as many others have. It is one thing for God to work a work of grace in the soul, it is quite another thing for God to show us that work; it is one thing for the word to work in us—it is another thing for us really and habitually to relish, and taste, and rejoice in that word. Some of my hearers are true Christians; but they have not got to that stage wherein they can love election, and suck it down as a sweet morsel, wherein they can take the great doctrines of grace, and feed upon them. But these people had. They had tasted the good word of God, as well as received the good gift: they had attained to such a state, that they had loved the word, had tasted, and feasted upon it. It was the man of their right hand; they had counted

it sweeter than honey—ay, sweeter than the droppings of the honeycomb. They had "tasted the good word of God." I say again, if these people be not believers—who are?

And they had gone further still. They had attained the summit of piety. They had received "*the powers of the world to come*." Not miraculous gifts, which are denied us in these days, but all those powers with which the Holy Ghost endows a Christian. And what are they? Why, there is the power of faith, which commands even the heavens themselves to rain, and they rain, or stops the bottles of heaven, that they rain not. There is the power of prayer, which puts a ladder between earth and heaven, and bids angels walk up and down, to convey our wants to God, and bring down blessings from above. There is the power with which God girds his servant when he speaks by inspiration, which enables him to instruct others, and lead them to Jesus; and whatever other power there may be—the power of holding communion with God, or the power of patient waiting for the Son of Man—they were possessed by these individuals. They were not simply children, but they were men; they were not merely alive, but they were endued with power; they were men, whose muscles were firmly set, whose bones were strong; they had become giants in grace, and had received not only the light, but the power also of the world to come. These, we say, whatever may be the meaning of the text, must have been, beyond a doubt, none other than true and real Christians.

II. And now we answer the second question, WHAT IS MEANT BY FALLING AWAY?

We must remind our friends, that *there is a vast distinction between falling away and falling*. It is nowhere said in Scripture, that if a man fall he cannot be renewed; on the contrary, "the righteous falleth seven times, but he riseth up again;" and however many times the child of God doth fall, the Lord still holdeth the righteous; yea, when our bones are broken, he bindeth up our bones again, and setteth us once more upon a rock. He saith, "Return, ye backsliding children of men; for I am married unto you;" and if the Christian do backslide ever so far, still Almighty mercy cries, "Return, return, return, and seek an injured Father's heart." He still calls his children back again. Falling is not falling away. Let me explain the difference; for a man who falls may behave just like a man who falls away; and yet there is a great distinction between the two. I can use no better illustration than the distinction between fainting and dying. There lies a young creature; she can scarcely breathe; she cannot herself, lift up her hand, and if lifted up by any one else, it falls. She is cold and stiff; she is faint, but *not* dead. There is another one, just as cold and stiff as she is, but there is this difference—she *is* dead. The Christian may faint, and may fall down in a faint too, and some may pick him up, and say he is dead; but he is not. If he fall, God will lift him up again; but if he fall away, God himself cannot save him. For it is impossible, if the righteous *fall away*, "to renew them again unto repentance."

Moreover, *to fall away is not to commit sin*. under a temporary surprise and temptation. Abraham goes to Egypt; he is afraid that his wife will be taken away from him, and he says,

"She is my sister." That was a sin under a temporary surprise—a sin, of which, by-and-by, he repented, and God forgave him. Now that is falling; but it is not falling away. Even Noah might commit a sin, which has degraded his memory even till now, and shall disgrace it to the latest time; but doubtless, Noah repented, and was saved by sovereign grace. Noah fell, but Noah did not fall away. A Christian may go astray once, and speedily return again; and though it is a sad, and woeful, and evil thing to be surprised into a sin, yet there is a great difference between this and the sin which would be occasioned by a total falling away from grace.

Nor can a man who commits *a sin, which is not exactly a surprise*, be said to fall away. I believe that some Christian men—(God forbid that we should say much of it!—let us cover the nakedness of our brother with a cloak.) but I do believe that there are some Christians who, for a period of time, have wandered into sin, and yet have not positively fallen away. There is that black case of David—a case which has puzzled thousands. Certainly for some months, David lived without making a public confession of his sin, but, doubtless, he had achings of heart, for grace had not ceased its work: there was a spark among the ashes that Nathan stirred up, which showed that David was not dead, or else the match which the prophet applied would not have caught light so readily. And so, beloved, you may have wandered into sin for a time, and gone far from God; and yet you are not the character here described, concerning whom it is said, that it is impossible you should be saved; but, wanderer though you be, you are your father's son still, and mercy cries, "Repent, repent; return unto your first husband, for then it was better with you than it is now. Return, O wanderer, return."

Again, falling away is not even *a giving up of profession*. Some will say, "Now there is So-and-so; he used to make a profession of Christianity, and now he denies it, and what is worse, he dares to curse and swear, and says that he never knew Christ at all. Surely he must be fallen away." My friend, he has fallen, fallen fearfully, and fallen woefully; but I remember a case in Scripture of a man who denied his Lord and Master before his own face. You remember his name; he is an old friend of yours—our friend Simon Peter! he denied him with oaths and curses, and said, "I say unto thee that I know not the man." And yet Jesus looked on Simon. He had fallen, but he had not fallen away; for, only two or three days after that, there was Peter at the tomb of his Master, running there to meet his Lord, to be one of the first to find him risen. Beloved, you may even have denied Christ by open profession, and yet if you repent there is mercy for you. Christ has not cast you away, you shall repent yet. You have not fallen away. If you had, I might not preach to you; for it is impossible for those who have fallen away to be renewed again unto repentance.

But some one says, "What is falling away?" Well, there never has been a case of it yet, and therefore I cannot describe it from observation; but I will tell you what I suppose it is. To fall away, would be for the Holy Spirit entirely to go out of a man—for his grace entirely

to cease; not to lie dormant, but to cease to be—for God, who has begun a good work, to leave off doing it entirely—to take his hand completely and entirely away, and say, "There, man! I have half saved thee; now I will damn thee." That is what falling away is. It is not to sin temporarily. A child may sin against his father, and still be alive; but falling away is like cutting the child's head off clean. Not falling merely, for then our Father could pick us up, but being dashed down a precipice, where we are lost for ever. Falling away would involved God's grace changing its living nature. God's immutability becoming variable, God's faithfulness becoming changeable, and God, himself being undeified; for all these things falling away would necessitate.

III. But if a child of God could fall away, and grace could cease in a man's heart—now comes the third question—Paul says, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BE RENEWED. What did the Apostle mean? One eminent commentator says, he meant that it would be very hard. It would be very hard, indeed, for a man who fell away, to be saved. But we reply, "My dear friend, it does not say anything about its being very hard; it says it is impossible, and we say that it would be utterly impossible, if such a case as is supposed were to happen; impossible for man, and also impossible for God; for God hath purposed that he never will grant a second salvation to save those whom the first salvation hath failed to deliver. Methinks, however, I hear some one say, "It seems to me that it is possible for some such to fall away," because it says, "It is impossible, if they shall fall away, to renew them again into repentance." Well, my friend, I will grant you your theory for a moment. You are a good Christian this morning; let us apply it to yourself, and see how you will like it. You have believed in Christ, and committed your soul to God, and you think, that in some unlucky hour you may fall entirely away. Mark you, if you come to me and tell me that you have fallen away, how would you like me to say to you, "My friend, you are as much damned as the devil in hell! for it is impossible to renew you to repentance?" "Oh! no, sir," you would say, "I will repent again and join the Church." That is just the Arminian theory all over; but it is not in God's Scripture. If you once fall away, you are as damned as any man who suffereth in the gulf for ever. And yet we have heard a man talk about people being converted three, four, and five times, and regenerated over and over again. I remember a good man (I suppose he was) pointing to a man who was walking along the street, and saying, "That man has been born again three times, to my certain knowledge." I could mention the name of the individual, but I refrain from doing so. "And I believe he will fall again," said he, "he is so much addicted to drinking, that I do not believe the grace of God will do anything for him, unless he becomes a teetotaller." Now, such men cannot read the Bible; because in case their members do positively fall away, here it is stated, as a positive fact, that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. But I ask my Arminian friend, does he not believe that as long as there is life there is hope? "Yes," he says:

"While the lamp holds out to burn,

The vilest sinner may return."

Well, that is not very consistent, to say this in the very next breath to that with which you tell us that there are some people who fall away, and consequently fall into such a condition, that they cannot be saved. I want to know how you make these two things fit each other; I want you to make these two doctrines agree; and until some enterprising individual will bring the north pole, and set it on the top of the south, I cannot tell how you will accomplish it. The fact is you are quite right in saying, "While there is life there is hope;" but you are wrong in saying that any individual ever did fall into such a condition, that it was impossible for him to be saved.

We come now to do two things: first, to *prove the doctrine*, that if a Christian fall away, he cannot be saved; and, secondly, to *improve the doctrine*, or to show its use,

I. Then I am going to *prove the doctrine*, that if a Christian fall away—not fall, for you understand how I have explained that; but if a Christian cease to be a child of God, and if grace die out in his heart—he is then beyond the possibility of salvation, and it is impossible for him ever to be renewed. Let me show you why. First, it is utterly impossible, if you *consider the work which has already broken down*. When men have built bridges across streams, if they have been built of the strongest material and in the most excellent manner, and yet the foundation has been found so bad that none will stand, what do they say? Why, "We have already tried the best which engineering or architecture has taught us; the best has already failed; we know nothing that can exceed what has been tried; and we do therefore feel, that there remains no possibility of ever bridging that stream, or ever running a line of railroad across this bog, or this morass, for we have already tried what is acknowledged to be the best scheme." As the apostle says, "These people have been once enlightened; they have had once the influence of the Holy Spirit, revealing to them their sin: what now remains to be tried. They have been once convinced—is there anything superior to conviction?" Does the Bible promise that the poor sinner shall have anything over and above the conviction of his sin to make him sensible of it? Is there anything more powerful than the sword of the Spirit? *That* has not pierced the man's heart; is there anything else which will do it? Here is a man who has been under the hammer of God's law; but that has not broken his heart; can you find anything stronger? The lamp of God's spirit has already lit up the caverns of his soul: if that be not sufficient, where will you borrow another? Ask the sun, has he a lamp more bright than the illumination of the Spirit! Ask the stars, have they a light more brilliant than the light of the Holy Ghost? Creation answers no. If that fails, then there is nothing else. These people, moreover, had tasted the heavenly gift; and though they had been pardoned and justified, yet pardon through Christ and justification were not enough (on this supposition) to save them. How else can they be saved? God has cast them away; after he has failed in saving them by these, what else can deliver them? Already they have tasted of the heavenly gift: is there a greater mercy for them? Is there a brighter dress than the robe of Christ's

righteousness? Is there a more efficacious bath than that "fountain filled with blood?" No. All the earth echoes, "No." If the one has failed, what else does there remain?

These persons, too, have been partakers of the Holy Ghost; if that fail, what more can we give them? If, my hearer, the Holy Ghost dwells in your soul, and that Holy Ghost does not sanctify you and keep you to the end, what else can be tried? Ask the blasphemer whether he knows a being, or dares to suppose a being superior to the Holy Spirit! Is there a being greater than Omnipotence? Is there a might greater than that which dwells in the believer's new-born heart? And if already the Holy Spirit hath failed, O, heavens! tell us where we can fight aught that can excel his might? If that be ineffectual, what next is to be essayed? These people, too, had "tasted the good Word of Life;" they had loved the doctrines of grace; those doctrines had entered into their souls, and they had fed upon them. What new doctrines shall be preached to them? Prophet of ages! where whilt thou find another system of divinity? Who shall we have? Shall we raise up Moses from the tomb? shall we fetch up all the ancient seers, and bid them prophecy? If, then, there is only one doctrine that is true, and if these people have fallen away after receiving that, how can they be saved?

Again, these people, according to the text, have had "the powers of the world to come." They have had power to conquer sin—power in faith, power in prayer, power of communion; with what greater power shall they be endowed? This has already failed; what next can be done? O ye angels! answer, what next! What other means remain? What else can avail, if already the great things of salvation have been defeated? What else shall now be attempted? He hath been once saved; but yet it is supposed that he is lost. How, then, can he now be saved? Is there a supplementary salvation? is there something that shall overtop Christ, and be a Christ where Jesus is defeated.

And then the apostle says, that *the greatness of their sin which they would incur*, if they did fall away, would put them beyond the bounds of mercy. Christ died, and by his death he made an atonement for his own murderers; he made an atonement for those sins which crucified him once; but do we read that Christ will ever die for those who crucify him twice? But the Apostle tells us that if believers do fall away, they will "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Where, then, would be an atonement for that? He has died for me; What! though the sins of all the world were on my shoulders, still they only crucified him once, and that one crucifixion has taken all those sins away; but if I crucified him again, where would I find pardon? Could heavens, could earth, could Christ himself, with bowels full of love, point me to another Christ, show to me a second Calvary, give me a second Gethsemane? Ah! no! the very guilt itself would put us beyond the pale of hope, if we were to fall away?

Again, beloved, *think what it would necessitate to save such a man*. Christ has died for him once, yet he has fallen away and is lost; the Spirit has regenerated him once, and that regenerating work has been of no use. God has given him a new heart (I am only speaking,

of course, on the supposition of the Apostle), he has put his law in that heart, yet he has departed from him, contrary to the promise that he should not; he has made him "like a shining light," but he did not "shine more and more unto the perfect day," he shone only unto blackness. What next? There must be a second incarnation, a second Calvary, a second Holy Ghost, a second regeneration, a second justification, although the first was finished and complete—in fact, I know not what. It would necessitate the upsetting of the whole kingdom of nature and grace, and it would, indeed, be a world turned upside down, if after the gracious Saviour failed, he were to attempt the work again.

If you read the 7th verse, you will see that *the Apostle calls nature in to his assistance*. He says, "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Look! there is a field; the rain comes on it, and it brings forth good fruit. Well, then, there is God's blessing on it. But there is according to your supposition, another field, on which the same rain descends, which the same dew moistens; it has been ploughed and harrowed, as well as the other, and the husbandman has exercised all his craft upon it, and yet it is not fertile. Well, if the rain of heaven did not fertilize it, what next? Already all the arts of agriculture have been tried, every implement has been worn out on its surface, and yet it has been of no avail. What next? There remains nothing but that it shall be burnt and cursed—given up like the desert of Sahara, and resigned to destruction. So, my hearer, could it be possible that grace could work in thee, and then not affect thy salvation—that the influence of Divine grace could come down, like rain from heaven, and yet return unto God void, there could not be any hope for thee, for thou wouldst be "nigh unto cursing," and thine end would be "to be burned."

There is one idea which has occurred to us. It has struck us as a singular thing, that our friends should hold that men can be converted, made into new creatures, then fall away and be converted again. I am an old creature by nature; God creates me into a new thing, he makes me a new creature. I cannot go back into an old creature, for I cannot be uncreated. But yet, supposing that new creatureship of mine is not good enough to carry me to heaven. What is to come after that? Must there be something above a new creature—a new creature. Really, my friends, we have got into the country of Dreamland; but we were forced to follow our opponents into that region of absurdity, for we do not know how else to deal with them.

And one thought more. There is nothing in Scripture which teaches us that there is any salvation, save the one salvation of Jesus Christ—nothing that tells us of any other power, super-excellent and surpassing the power of the Holy Spirit. These things have already been tried on the man, and yet, according to the supposition, they have failed, for he has fallen away. Now, God has never revealed a supplementary salvation for men on whom one salvation has had no effect; and until we are pointed to one scripture which declares this, we will

still maintain that the doctrine of the text is this: that if grace be ineffectual, if grace does not keep a man, then there is nothing left but that he must be damned. And what is that but to say, only going a little round about, that grace *will* do it? So that these words, instead of miltating against the Calvinistic doctrine of final perseverance, form one of the finest proofs of it that could be afforded.

And now, lastly, we come to *improve this doctrine*. If Christians can fall away, and cease to be Christians, they cannot be renewed again to repentance. "But," says one, "You say they cannot fall away." What is the use of putting this "if" in, like a bugbear to frighten children, or like a ghost that can have no existence? My learned friend, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" If God has put it in, he has put it in for wise reasons and for excellent purposes. Let me show you why. First, O Christian, it is put in to keep thee from falling away. God preserves his children from falling away; but he keeps them by the use of means; and one of these is, the terrors of the law, showing them what would happen if they were to fall away. There is a deep precipice: what is the best way to keep any one from going down there? Why, to tell him that if he did he would inevitably be dashed to pieces. In some old castle there is a deep cellar, where there is a vast amount of fixed air and gas, which would kill anybody who went down. What does the guide say? "If you go down you will never come up alive." Who thinks of going down? The very fact of the guide telling us what the consequences would be, keeps us from it. Our friend puts away from us a cup of arsenic; he does not want us to drink it, but he says, "If you drink it, it will kill you." Does he suppose for a moment that we should drink it. No; he tells us the consequences, and he is sure we will not do it. So God says, "My child, if you fall over this precipice you will be dashed to pieces." What does the child do? He says, "Father, keep me; hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." It leads the believer to greater dependence on God, to a holy fear and caution, because he knows that if he were to fall away he could not be renewed, and he stands far away from that great gulf, because he know that if he were to fall into it there would be no salvation for him. If I thought as the Arminian thinks, that I might fall away, and then return again, I should pretty often fall away, for sinful flesh and blood would think it very nice to fall away, and be a sinner, and go and see the play at the theatre, or get drunk, and then come back to the Church, and be received again as a dear brother who had fallen away for a little while. No doubt the minister would say, "Our brother Charles is a little unstable at times." A little unstable! He does not know anything about grace; for grace engenders a holy caution, because we feel that if we were not preserved by Divine power we should perish. We tell our friend to put oil in his lamp, that it may continue to burn! Does that imply that it will be allowed to go out? No, God will give him oil to pour into the lamp continually. Like John Bunyan's figure; there was a fire, and he saw a man pouring water upon it. "Now," says the Preacher, "don't you see that fire would go out, that water is calculated to put it out, and if it does, it will never be lighted again;" but God does not permit that! for there is a man behind

the wall who is pouring oil on the fire; and we have cause for gratitude in the fact, that if the oil were not put in by a heavenly hand, we should inevitably be driven to destruction. Take care, then Christian, for this is a caution.

2. It is to excite our gratitude. Suppose you say to your little boy, "Don't you know Tommy, if I were not to give you your dinner and your supper you would die? There is nobody else to give Tommy dinner and supper." What then? The child does not think that you are not going to give him his dinner and supper; he knows you will, and he is grateful to you for them. The chemist tells us, that if there were no oxygen mixed with the air, animals would die. Do you suppose that there will be no oxygen, and therefore we shall die? No, he only teaches you the great wisdom of God, in having mixed the gases in their proper proportions. Says one of the old astronomers, "There is great wisdom in God, that he has put the sun exactly at a right distance—not so far away that we should be frozen to death, and not so near that we should be scorched." He says, "If the sun were a million miles nearer to us we should be scorched to death." Does the man suppose that the sun will be a million miles nearer, and, therefore, we shall be scorched to death? He says, "If the sun were a million miles farther off we should be frozen to death." Does he mean that the sun will be a million miles farther off, and therefore we shall be frozen to death? Not at all. Yet it is quite a rational way of speaking, to show us how grateful we should be to God. So says the Apostle. Christian! if thou shouldst fall away, thou couldst never be renewed unto repentance. Thank thy Lord, then, that he keeps thee.

"See a stone that hangs in air; see a spark in ocean live;
Kept alive with death so near; I to God the glory give."

There is a cup of sin which would damn thy soul, O Christian. Oh! what grace is that which holds thy arm, and will not let thee drink it? There thou art, at this hour, like the bird-catcher of St. Kilda, thou art being drawn to heaven by a single rope; if that hand which holds thee let thee go, if that rope which grasps thee do but break, thou art dashed on the rocks of damnation. Lift up thine heart to God, then, and bless him that his arm is not wearied, and is never shortened that it cannot save. Lord Kenmure, when he was dying, said to Rutherford. "Man! my name is written on Christ's hand, and I see it! that is bold talk, man, but I see it!" Then, if that be the case, his hand must be severed from his body before my name can be taken from him; and if it be engraven on his heart, his heart must be rent out before they can rend my name out.

Hold on, then, and trust believer! thou hast "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which entereth within the veil." The winds are bellowing, the tempests howling; should the cable slip, or thine anchor break, thou art lost. See those rocks, on which myriads are driving, and thou art wrecked there if grace leave thee; see those depths, in which the skeletons of sailors sleep, and thou art there, if that anchor fail thee. It would be impossible to moor thee again, if once that anchor broke; for other anchor there is none, other salvation

there can be none, and if that one fail thee, it is impossible that thou ever shouldst be saved. Therefore thank God that thou hast an anchor that cannot fail, and then loudly sing—

"How can I sink with such a prop,
As my eternal God,
Who bears the earth's huge pillars up?
And spreads the heavens abroad?"
How can I die, when Jesus lives,
Who rose and left the dead?
Pardon and grace my soul receives,
From my exalted head."

Gospel Missions

A Sermon
(No. 76)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, April 27, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.
On behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society.

"And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."—Acts 13:49.

I SHALL not confine myself to the text. It being an old custom to take texts when we preach, I have taken one, but I shall address you, at large, upon a subject which I am sure will occupy your attention, and has done for many days and years past—the subject of gospel missions. We feel persuaded that all of you are of one mind in this matter, that it is the absolute duty as well as the eminent privilege of the Church to proclaim the gospel to the world. We do not conceive that God will do his own work without instruments, but that, as he has always employed means in the work of the regeneration of this world, he will still continue to do the same, and that it becomes the Church to do its utmost to spread the truth wherever it can reach the ear of man. We have not two opinions on that point. Some churches may have, but we have not. Our doctrines, although they are supposed to lead to apathy and sloth, have always proved themselves to be eminently practical; the fathers of the mission were all zealous lovers of the doctrines of the grace of God; and we believe, the great supporters of missionary enterprise, if it is to be successful, must always come from those who hold God's truth firmly and boldly, and yet have fire and zeal with it, and desire to spread it everywhere. But there is a point on which we have great division of opinion, and that is as to the reason why we have had so little success in our missionary labours. There may be some who say the success has been proportionate to the agency, and that we could not have been more successful. I am far from being of their opinion, and I do not think they themselves would express it on their knees before Almighty God. We have not been successful to the extent we might have expected, certainly not to an apostolic extent, certainly with nothing like the success of Paul or Peter, or even of those imminent men who have preceded us in modern times, and who were able to evangelize whole countries, turning thousands to God. Now, what is the reason of this? Perhaps we may turn our eyes on high, and think we find that reason in the sovereignty of God, which hath withholden his Spirit, and hath not poured out his grace as aforetime. I shall be prepared to grant all men may say on that point, for I believe in the ordination of everything by Almighty God. I believe in a present God in our defeats as well as in our successes; a God as well in the motionless air as in the careering tempest; a God of ebbs as well as a God of floods. But still we must look at home for the cause. When Zion travails, she brings forth children; when Zion is in earnest, God is in

earnest about his work; when Zion is prayerful, God blesses her. We must not, therefore, arbitrarily look for the cause of our failure in the will of God, but we must also see what is the difference between ourselves and the men of Apostolic times, and what it is that renders our success so trifling in comparison with the tremendous results of Apostolic preaching. I think I shall be able to show one or two reasons why our holy faith is not so prosperous as it was then. In the first place, *we have not Apostolic men*; in the second place, they *do not set about their work in an Apostolic style*; in the third place, we have *not Apostolic churches* to back them up; and in the fourth place, we have not *the Apostolic influence of the Holy Ghost*. in the measure which they had it in ancient times.

I. First, WE HAVE FEW APOSTOLIC MEN IN THESE TIMES. I will not say we have none; here and there we may have one or two, but unhappily their names are never heard; they do not start out before the world, and are not noted as preachers of God's truth. We had a Williams once, a true apostle, who went from island to island, not counting his life dear unto him; but Williams is called to his reward. We had a Knibb, who toiled for his Master with seraphic earnestness, and was not ashamed to call an oppressed slave his brother; but Knibb, too, has entered into his rest. We have one or two still remaining, precious and treasured names; we love them fervently, and our prayers shall ever rise to heaven on their behalf. We always say, in our prayers, "God bless such men as Moffat! God bless those who are earnestly toiling and successfully labouring!" But cast your eyes around, and where can we find many such men? They are all good men; we find no fault with them; they are better than we; we, ourselves, shrink into nothingness compared with them; but we must still say of them that they are less than their fathers, they differ from the mighty Apostles in many respects, which we think even they would not be slow to own. I am not speaking of missionaries only, but of ministers too; for I take it we have as much to mourn over in regard to the spread of the gospel in England as in foreign lands, and much to regret the lack of men filled with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

In the first place, we have not men with *Apostolic zeal*. Converted in a most singular way, by a direct interposition from heaven, Paul, from that time forward became an earnest man. He had always been earnest, in his sin and in his persecutions; but after he heard that voice from heaven, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" and had received the mighty office of an apostle, and had been sent forth a chosen vessel to the Gentiles, you can scarce conceive the deep, the awful earnestness which he manifested. Whether he did eat, or drink, or whatsoever he did, he did all for the glory of his God; he never wasted an hour; he was employing his time either in ministering with his own hands unto his necessities, or else lifting those hands in the Synagogue, on Mars-hill, or anywhere where he could command the attention of the multitude. His zeal was so earnest, and so burning, that he could not (as we unfortunately do) restrain himself within a little sphere; but he preached the Word everywhere. It was not enough for him to have it handed down that he was the Apostle of Pisidia,

but he must go also to Pamphylia; it was not enough that he should be the great preacher of Pamphylia and Pisidia, but he must go also to Attalia; and when he had preached throughout all Asia, he must needs take ship to Greece, and preach there also. I believe not once only did Paul hear in his dream the men of Macedonia saying, "Come over and help us," but every day and hour he heard the cry in his ears from multitudes of souls, "Paul, Paul, come over and help us." He could not restrain himself from preaching. "Woe is unto me" he said "if I preach not the gospel. God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ." Oh! if you could have seen Paul preach, you would not have gone away as you do from some of us, with half a conviction, that we do not mean what we say. His eyes preached a sermon without his lips, and his lips preached it, not in a cold and frigid manner, but every word fell with an overwhelming power upon the hearts of his hearers. He preached with power, because he was in downright earnest. You had a conviction, when you saw him, that he was a man who felt he had a work to do and must do it, and could not contain himself unless he did do it. He was the kind of preacher whom you would expect to see walk down the pulpit stairs straight into his coffin, and then stand before his God, ready for his last account. Where are the men like that man? I confess I cannot claim that privilege, and I seldom hear a solitary sermon which comes up to the mark in earnest, deep, passionate longing for the souls of men.

We have no eyes now like the eyes of the Saviour, which could weep over Jerusalem; we have few voices like that earnest impassioned voice which seemed perpetually to cry, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not." If ministers of the gospel were more hearty in their work of preaching; if, instead of giving lectures and devoting a large part of their time to literary and political pursuits, they would preach the Word of God, and preach it as if they were pleading for their own lives, ah! then, my brethren, we might expect great success; but we cannot expect it while we go about our work in a half-hearted way, and have not that zeal, that earnestness, that deep purpose which characterized those men of old.

Then, again, I take it we have not men in our days who can preach like Paul—*as to their faith*. What did Paul do? He went to Philippi; did he know a soul there? Not one. He had his Master's truth, and he believed in the power of it. He was unattended and devoid of pomp, or show, or parade; he did not go to a pulpit with a soft cushion in it to address a respectable congregation, but he walked through the streets and began to preach to the people. He went to Corinth, to Athens, alone, single-handed, to tell the people the gospel of the blessed God. Why? Because he had faith in the gospel and believed it would save souls, and hurl down idols from their thrones. He had no doubt about the power of the gospel; but now-a-days, my brethren, we have not faith in the gospel we preach. How many there are who preach gospel, which they are afraid will not save souls; and, therefore, they add

little bits of their own to it in order, as they think, to win men to Christ! We have known men who believed Calvinistic doctrines, but who preached Calvinism in the morning and Arminianism in the evening, because they were afraid God's gospel would not convert sinners, so they would manufacture one of their own. I hold that a man who does not believe his gospel to be able to save men's souls, does not believe it all. If God's truth will not save men's souls, man's lies cannot; if God's truth will not turn men to repentance, I am sure there is nothing in this world that can. When we believe the gospel to be powerful, then we shall see it is powerful. If I walk into this pulpit, and say, "I know what I preach is true," the world says I am an egotist. "The young man is dogmatical." Ay, and the young man means to be; he glories in it, he keeps it to himself as one of his peculiar titles, for he does most firmly believe what he preaches. God forbid that I should ever come tottering up the pulpit stairs to teach anything I was not quite sure of, something which I hoped might save sinners, but of which I was not exactly certain. When I have faith in my doctrines, those doctrines will prevail, for confidence is the winner of the palm. He who hath courage enough to grasp the standard, and hold it up, will be sure enough to find followers. He who says, "I know," and asserts it boldly in his Master's name, without disputing, will not be long before he will find men who will listen to what he says, and who will say, "This man speaks with authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees." That is one reason why we do not succeed: we have not faith in the gospel. We send educated men to India in order to confound the learned Brahmins. Nonsense! Let the Brahmins say what they like, have we any business to dispute with them? "Oh, but they are so intellectual and so clever." What have we to do with that? We are not to seek to be clever in order to meet them. Leave the men of the world to combat their metaphysical errors; we have merely to say, "This is truth: he that believeth it shall be saved, and he that denieth it shall be damned." We have no right to come down from the high ground of divine authoritative testimony; and until we maintain that ground, and come out as we ought to do, girded with the belt of divinity—preaching not what *may* be true, but asserting that which God has most certainly revealed—we shall not see success. We want a deeper faith in our gospel; we want to be quite sure of what we preach. Brethren, I take it we have not the faith of our fathers. I feel myself a poor drivelling thing in point of faith. Why, methought sometimes I could believe anything; but now a little difficulty comes before me, I am timid, and I fear. It is when I preach with unbelief in my heart that I preach unsuccessfully; but when I preach with faith and can say, "I know my God has said, that in the self-same hour he will give me what I shall preach, and careless of man's esteem, I preach what I believe to be true," then it is that God owns faith and crowns it with his own crown.

Again: we have not enough *self-denial*, and that is one reason why we do not prosper. Far be it from me to say aught against the self-denial of those worthy brethren who have left their country to cross the stormy deep and preach the Word. We hold them to be men who are to be had in honour; but still I ask, where is the self-denial of the Apostles now-a-

days? I think one of the greatest disgraces that ever was cast upon the church in these days was that last mission to Ireland. Men went over to Ireland, but like men who have valour's better part, brave bold men, they came back again, which is about all we can say of the matter. Why do they not go there again? Why, they say the Irish "hooted" at them. Now, don't you think you see Paul taking a microscope out of his pocket, and looking at the little man who should say to him, "I shall not go there to preach because the Irish hooted me?" "What!" he says, "is this a preacher?—what a small edition of a minister he must be, to be sure!" "Oh! but they threw stones at us; you have no idea how badly they treated us!" Just tell that to the Apostle Paul. I am sure you would be ashamed to do so. "Oh! but in some places the police interfered, and said that we should only create a riot." What would Paul have said to that? *The police interfering!* I did not know that we had any right to care about governments. Our business is to preach the Word, and if we must be put in the stocks there let us lie; there would come no hurt of it at last. "Oh! but they might have killed some of us." That is just it. Where is that zeal which counted not its life dear so that it might win Christ? I believe that the killing of a few of our ministers would have prospered Christianity. However we might mourn over it, and none more than myself, I say the murder of a dozen of them would have been no greater ground for grief than the slaughter of our men by hundreds in a successful fight for hearths and homes. I would count my own blood most profitably shed in so holy a struggle. How did the gospel prosper aforetime? Were there not some who laid down their lives for it; and did not others walk to victory over their slain bodies; and must it not be so now? If we are to start back because we are afraid of being killed, heaven knows when the gospel is to spread over the world—we do not. What have other missionaries done? Have they not braved death in its direst forms, and preached the Word amid countless dangers? My brethren, we say again, we find no fault, for we, ourselves, might err in the same manner; but we are sure we are therein not like Paul. He went to a place where they stoned him with stones, and dragged him out as dead. Did he say, "Now for the future I will not go where they will ill-treat me?" No, for he says, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, thrice I suffered shipwreck." I am sure we have not the self-denial of the Apostles. We are mere carpet-knights and Hyde-park-warriors. When I go to my own house and think how comfortable and happy I am, I say to myself, "How little I do for my Master! I am ashamed that I cannot deny myself for his truth, and go everywhere preaching his Word." I look with pity upon people who say "Do not preach so often; you will kill yourself." O my God! what would Paul have said to such a thing as that? "Take care of your constitution; you are rash; you are enthusiastic." When I compare myself with one of those men of old, I say, "Oh that men should be found calling themselves Christians, who seek to stop our work of faith and labour of love, for the sake of a little consideration about the 'constitution,' which gets all the stronger for the preaching of God's Word."

But I hear some one whispering, "You ought to make a little allowance." My dear friend, I make all allowance. I am not finding fault with those brethren; they are a good sort of people; we are "all honorable men;" but I will only say, that in comparison with Paul, we are less than nothing, and vanity; little insignificant Lilliputian creatures, who can hardly be seen in comparison with those gigantic men of old.

Ones of my hearers may perhaps hint that this is not the sole cause, and he observes, "I think you ought to make excuse, for ministers now cannot work miracles." Well, I have considered that too, and certainly it is a drawback, but, I take it, not a very great one; for if it had been, God would not have allowed it to exist. He gave that gift to the Church in its infancy, but now it needs it no longer. We mistake in attributing too much to miracles. What was one of them? Wherever the Apostles went they could speak the language of the people. Well, in the time it would have taken Paul to walk from here to Hindostan, we could learn Hindostani, and we can go over in a very little time by the means of travelling that are now provided: so that is no great gain there. Then, again, in order to make the gospel known amongst the people, it was necessary that miracles should be worked, so that every one might talk about it; but now there is a printing press to aid us. What I say to-day, within six months will be read across the Alleghanies; and so with other ministers, what they say and what they do can soon be printed off and distributed everywhere; so they have facilities for making themselves known which are not much behind the power of miracles. Again, we have a great advantage over the Apostles. Wherever they went they were persecuted, and sometimes put to death; but now, although occasionally we hear of the massacre of a missionary, the occurrence is rare enough. The slaughter of an Englishman anywhere would provoke a fleet of men-of-war to visit the offence with chastisement. The world respects an Englishman wherever he goes; he has the stamp of the great Caesar upon him; he is the true cosmopolite—the citizen of the world. That could not be said of the poor despised Jews. There might be some respect paid to Paul, for he was a Roman citizen, but there would be none paid to the rest. We cannot be put to death now without a noise being made. The murder of two or three ministers in Ireland would provoke a tumult through the country; the government would have to interpose, the orderly of the land would be up in arms, and then we might preach with an armed constabulary around us, and so go through the land, provoking the priests, startling antichrist, and driving superstition to its dens for ever.

II. In the second place, WE DO NOT GO ABOUT OUR WORK IN AN APOSTOLIC STYLE. How is that? Why, in the first place, there is a general complaint that there is *not enough* preaching by ministers and missionaries. They sit down interpreting, establishing schools, and doing this, that, and the other. We have nothing to find fault with in this; but that is not the labour to which they should devote themselves; their office is preaching, and if they preached more, they might hope for more success. The missionary Chamberlain preached once at a certain place, and years afterwards disciples were found there from that

one sermon. Williams preached wherever he went, and God blessed him; Moffat preached wherever he went, and his labours were owned. Now we have our churches, our printing-presses, about which a great deal of money is spent. This is doing good, but it is not doing *the good*. We are not using the means which God has ordained, and we cannot therefore expect to prosper. Some say there is too much preaching now-a-days, in England. Well, it is the tendency of the times to decry preaching, but it is "the foolishness of preaching" which is to change the world. It is not for men to say, "If you preached less, you might study more." Study is required well enough if you have a settled church; but the Apostles needed no study, I apprehend, but they stood up and delivered out the simple cardinal truths of religion, not taking one text, but going through the whole catalogue of truth. So I think, in itinerant evangelical labours, we are not bound to dwell on one subject, for then we need to study, but we shall find it profitable to deal out the whole truth wherever we go. Thus we should always find words to hand, and truths ever ready to teach the people.

In the next place I conceive that a great mistake has been made in *not affirming the divinity of our mission*, and standing fast by the truth, as being a revelation not to be proved by men, but to be believed; always holding out this, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." I am often grieved when I read of our missionaries holding disputes with the Brahmins, and it is sometimes said that the missionary has beaten the Brahmin because he kept his temper, and so the gospel had gained great honour by the dispute. I take it that the gospel was lowered by the controversy. I think the missionary should say, "I am come to tell you something which the One God of heaven and earth hath said, and I tell you before I announce it, that if you believe it you shall be saved, and if not, you shall be damned. I am come to tell you that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became flesh, to die for poor unworthy man, that through his mediation, and death, and suffering, the people of God might be delivered. Now, if you will listen to me you shall hear the word of God: if you do not, I shake the dust of my feet against you, and go somewhere else." Look at the history of every imposture; it shows us that the claim of authority insures a degree of progress. How did Mahommed come to have so strong a religion in his time? He was all alone, and he went into the market-place and said, "I have received a revelation from heaven." It was a lie, but he persuaded men to believe it. People looked at his face; they saw that he looked upon them earnestly as believing what he said, and some five or six of them joined him. Did he *prove* what he said? Not he. "You must," he said, "believe what I say, or there is no Paradise for you." There is power in that kind of thing, and wherever he went his statement was believed, not on the ground of reasoning, but on his authority, which he declared to be from Allah; and in a century after he first proclaimed his imposture, a thousand sabres had flashed from a thousand sheaths, and his word had been proclaimed through Africa, Turkey, Asia, and even in Spain. The man claimed authority—he claimed divinity; therefore he had power. Take again the increase of Mormonism. What has been

its strength? Simply this—the assertion of power from heaven. That claim is made, and the people believe it, and now they have missionaries in almost every country of the habitable globe, and the book of Mormon is translated into many languages. Though there never could be a delusion more transparent, or a counterfeit less skilful, and more lying upon the very surface, yet this simple pretension to power has been the means of carrying power with it. Now, my brethren, *we have power*; we *are* God's ministers; we preach *God's* truth; the great Judge of heaven and earth has told us the truth, and what have we to do to dispute with worms of the dust? Why should we tremble and fear them? Let us stand out and say, "We are the servants of the living God; we tell unto you what God has told us, and we warn you, if you reject our testimony, it shall be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you." If the people cast that away we have done our work. We have nothing to do with making men believe; ours is to testify of Christ everywhere, to preach and to proclaim the gospel to all men.

But there is one passage in the Bible which seems to militate against what I have said, if the common translation be true—the passage which says that Paul "disputed in the school of one Tyrannus." But this is better rendered in English, he "dialogued in the school of one Tyrannous." Albert Barnes says, that "disputed is not a happy translation," for there is no such idea conveyed by the word. Jesus, when he preached, "dialogued." When the man came and said to him, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" he "dialogued" with him. When another said unto him, "Speak, Lord, unto my brother, that he divide with me the inheritance," Christ did not dispute with him, but he "dialogued." His usual style was to address the people, and but rarely to dispute with men. We might give up all the books that have been written in defence of Christianity if we would but preach Christ, if, instead of defending the outposts, we were to say, "God will take care of them," and were at once to make a sortie on the enemy; then by God's Holy Spirit we should carry everything before us. O, Church of God! believe thyself invincible, and thou art invincible; but stay to tremble, and fear, and thou art undone. Lift up thy head and say, "I am God's daughter; I am Christ's bride." Do not stop to prove it, but affirm it; march through the land, and kings and princes shall bow down before thee, because thou hast taken thine ancient prowess and assumed thine ancient glory.

I have one more remark to make here with regard to the style in which we go to work. I fear that we have not enough of the divine method of *itinerancy*. Paul was a great itinerant: he preached in one place, and there were twelve converted there; he made a church at once; he did not stop till he had five hundred; but when he had twelve, he went off to another place. A holy woman takes him in; she has a son and daughter; they are saved and baptized—there is another church. Then he goes on; wherever he goes the people believe and are baptized, wherever he meets a family who believe, he or his companion baptizes all the house, and goes about his way still forming churches and appointing elders over them. We,

now-a-days, go and settle in a place, make a station of it, and work around it by little and little, and think that is the way to succeed. No, no! ravage a continent; attempt great things and great things shall be done. But they say if you just pass over a place it will be forgotten like the summer shower, which moistens all, but satisfies none. Yes, but you do not know how many of God's elect may be there; you have no business to stop in one place; go straight on; God's elect are everywhere. I protest if I could not itinerate this country of England, I could not bear to preach. If I preached *here* always, many of you would become gospel hardened. I love to go ranging here, there, and everywhere. *My* highest ambition is this, that I may be found going through the entire land, as well as holding my head quarters in one position. I do hold that itinerancy is God's great plan. There should be fixed ministers and pastors, but those who are like apostles should itinerate far more than they do.

III. But I have a third thing to say which will strike home to some of us: that is, that WE HAVE NOT APOSTOLIC CHURCHES. Oh! had you seen an Apostolic church, what a different thing it would appear to one of our churches! as different, I had almost said, as light from darkness, as different as the shallow bed of the brook that is dried by summer is from the mighty rolling river, ever full, ever deep and clear, and ever rushing into the sea. Now, where is our *prayerfulness* compared with theirs? I trust that we know something of the power of prayer here, but I do not think we pray like they did. "They broke bread from house to house, and did eat their meat with singleness of heart, giving glory to God." There was not a member of the Church, as a rule, who was half-hearted; they gave their souls wholly to God; and when Anaias and Sapphira divided the price, they were smitten with death for their sin. Oh! if we prayed as deeply and as earnestly as they did, we should have as much success. Any measure of success we may have had here has been entirely owing under God to your prayers; and wherever I have gone, I have boasted that I have a praying people. Let other ministers have as prayerful a people; let missionaries have as many prayers from the Church, and, all things being equal, God will bless them, and there will be greater prosperity than ever.

We have not the Apostolic mode of *liberality*. In the Apostles' days they gave all their substance. It was not *demanded* of them then, and it is not now, no one thinks of asking such a thing; still we have run to the other extreme, and many give nothing at all. Men who have thousands and tens of thousands are so eternally considerate for their families, albeit they *are* provided for, that they give nothing more than the servant girl who sits next to them. It is a common saying, that members of Christian Churches do not give in proportion to their wealth. We give because it is genteel and respectable. A great many of us give I hope, because we love the cause of God; but many of us say, "There is a poor bricklayer, working hard all the week and only earning just enough to keep his wife and family: he will give a shilling; now, I have so many pounds a week—I am a rich man—what shall I give? why, I will give half-a-crown." Another says, "I will give ten shillings this morning." Now, if they

measured their wealth in comparison with his, they would see that he gives all he has left above his maintenance, while they give comparatively nothing. My brethren, we are not half Christians; that is the reason why we have not half success. We are Christianised, but I question whether we are thoroughly so. The Spirit of God hath not entered into us to give us that life, and fire, and soul, which they had in these ancient times.

IV. But lastly, as the result of the other things which have gone before, and perhaps partly as the cause of them too, WE HAVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THAT MEASURE WHICH ATTENDED THE APOSTLES. I see no reason whatever, why, this morning, if God willed it, I should not stand up and preach a sermon which should be the means of converting every soul in the place. I see no reason why I should not, tomorrow, preach a sermon which should be the means of the salvation of all who heard it, if God the Spirit were poured out. The word is able to convert, just as extensively as God the Spirit pleases to apply it; and I can see no reason why, if converts come in by ones and twos now, there should not be a time when hundreds and thousands shall come to God. The same sermon which God blesses to ten if he pleased he could bless to a hundred. I know not but that in the latter days when Christ shall come and shall begin to take the kingdom to himself, every minister of God shall be as successful as Peter on the day of Pentecost. I am sure the Holy Spirit is able to make the word successful, and the reason why we do not prosper is that we have not the Holy Spirit attending us with might and energy as they had then. My brethren, if we had the Holy Spirit upon our ministry, it would signify very little about our talent. Men might be poor and uneducated; their words might be broken and ungrammatical; there might be no polished periods of Hall, or glorious thunders of Chalmers; but if there were the might of the Spirit attending them, the humblest evangelists would be more successful than the most pompous of divines, or the most eloquent of preachers. It is extraordinary *grace*, not talent, that wins the day; extraordinary spiritual power, not extraordinary mental power. Mental power may fill a chapel; but spiritual power fills the Church. Mental power may gather a congregation; spiritual power will save souls. We want spiritual power. Oh! we know some before whom we shrink into nothing as to talent, but who have no spiritual power, and when they speak they have not the Holy Spirit with them; but we know others, simple hearted worthy men who speak their country dialect, and who stand up to preach in their country place, and the Spirit of God clothes every word with power; hearts are broken, souls are saved, and sinners are born again. Spirit of the living God! we want thee. Thou art the life, the soul; thou art the source of thy people's success; without thee they can do nothing, with thee they can do everything.

Thus I have tried to show you what I conceive to be the causes of our partial non-success. And now permit me, with all earnestness, to plead with you on behalf of Christ and Christ's Holy Gospel, that you would stir yourselves up to renewed efforts for the spread of his truth, and to more earnest prayers, that his kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth

even as it is in heaven. Ah! my friends, could I show you the tens of thousands of spirits who are now walking in outer darkness; could I take you to the gloomy chamber of hell, and show you myriads upon myriads of heathen souls in utterable torture, not having heard the word, but being justly condemned for their sins; methinks you could ask yourselves, "Did I do anything to save these unhappy myriads? They have been damned, and can I say I am clear of their blood?" Oh! God of mercy, if these skirts be clear of my fellow creatures' blood, I shall have eternal reason to bless thee in heaven. Oh! Church of Christ! thou hast great reason to ask thyself whether thou art quite clean in this matter. Ye say too often, ye sons of God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Ye are too much like Cain; ye do not ask yourselves whether God will require your fellow-creatures blood at your hands. Oh! there is a truth which says, "If the watchman warn them not, they shall perish, but their blood will he require at the watchman's hands." Ah! there ought to be more of us who are preaching to the heathen, and yet, perhaps, we are indolent and doing little or nothing. There are many of you, yea all of you, who ought to be doing far more than you are for evangelical purposes and the spread of Christ's gospel. Oh! put this question to your hearts; shall I be able to say to the damned spirit if he meets me in hell, "Sinner, I did all I could for thee?" I am afraid some will have to say, "No, I did not; it is true I might have done more; I might have laboured more, even though I might have been unsuccessful, but I did not do it." AH, my dear friends, I believe there is a great reason for some of us to suspect whether we believe our religion at all. An infidel once met a Christian. "Because," said the other, "for years you have passed me on my way to my house of business. You believe, do you not, there is a hell, into which men's spirit are cast?" "Yes, I do," said the Christian. "And you believe that unless I believe in Christ I must be sent there?" "Yes." "You do not, I am sure, because if you did you must be a most inhuman wretch to pass me, day by day, and never tell me about it or warn me of it." I do hold that there are some Christians who are verily guilty in this matter; God will forgive them, the blood of Christ can even wash that out, but they are guilty. Did you ever think of the tremendous value of a single soul. My hearers, if there were but one man in Siberia unsaved, and all the world were saved besides, if God should move our minds, it would be worth while for all the people in England to go after that one soul. Did you ever think of the value of a soul? Ah! ye have not heart the howls and yells of hell; ye have not heard the mighty songs and hosannas of the glorified; ye have no notion of what eternity is, or else ye would know the value of a soul. Ye who have been broken by conviction, humbled by the Spirit, and led to cry for mercy through the covenant Jesus; ye know something of what a soul's value is, but many of my hearers do not. Could we preach carelessly, could we pray coldly, if we knew what a precious thing it is about which we are concerned? No, surely we should be doubly in earnest that God will please to save sinners. I am sure the present state of affairs cannot go on long; we are doing next to nothing; Christianity is at a low ebb. People think it will never be much better; that it is clear impossible to do

wonders in these days. Are we in a worse condition than the Roman Catholic nations were when one man, a Luther, preached? Then God can find a Luther now. We are not in a much worse state than when Whitfield began to preach, and yet God can find his Whitfields now. It is a delusion to suppose that we cannot succeed as they did. God helping us we will; God helping us by his Spirit we will see greater things than this, at any rate, we will never let God's Church rest if we do not see it prosper, but we will enter our earnest hearty protest against the coldness and lethargy of the times, and as long as this our tongue shall move in our mouth, we will protest against the laxity and false doctrine so rampant throughout the Churches, and then that happy double reformation—a reformation in doctrine and Spirit, will be brought about together. Then God knoweth but what we shall say, "Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows," and ere long the shout of Christ shall be heard. He, himself, shall descend from heaven; and we shall hear it said and sung, "Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Divine Sovereignty

A Sermon
(No. 77)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, May 4, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?—Matthew 20:15.

THE householder says, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" and even so does the God of heaven and earth ask this question of you this morning. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" There is no attribute of God more comforting to his children than the doctrine of Divine Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe troubles, they believe that Sovereignty hath ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children of God ought more earnestly to contend than the dominion of their Master over all creation—the kingship of God over all the works of his own hands—the throne of God, and his right to sit upon that throne. On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldlings, no truth of which they have made such a foot-ball, as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on his throne. They will allow him to be in his workshop to fashion worlds and to make stars. They will allow him to be in his almonry to dispense his alms and bestow his bounties. They will allow him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends his throne, his creatures then gnash their teeth; and when we proclaim an *enthroned God*, and his right to do as he wills with his own, to dispose of his creatures as he thinks well, without consulting them in the matter, then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on his throne is not the God they love. They love him anywhere better than they do when he sits with his sceptre in his hand and his crown upon his head. But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon his throne whom we trust. It is God upon his throne of whom we have been singing this morning; and it is God upon his throne of whom we shall speak in this discourse. I shall dwell only, however, upon one portion of God's Sovereignty, and that is God's Sovereignty in the distribution of his gifts. In this respect I believe he has a right to do as he wills with his own, and that he exercises that right.

We must assume, before we commence our discourse, one thing certain, namely, that all blessings are gifts and that we have no claim to them by our own merit. This I think every considerate mind will grant. And this being admitted, we shall endeavour to show that he has a right, seeing they are his own to do what he wills with them—to withhold them wholly

is he pleaseth—to distribute them all if he chooseth—to give to some and not to others—to give to none or to give to all, just as seemeth good in his sight. "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

We shall divide God's gifts into five classes. First, we shall have gifts *temporal*; second, gifts *saving*; third gifts *honourable*; fourth, gifts *useful*; and fifth, gifts *comfortable*. Of all these we shall say, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

I. In the first place then, we notice GIFTS TEMPORAL. It is an indisputable fact that God hath not, in temporal matters, given to every man alike; that he hath not distributed to all his creatures the same amount of happiness or the same standing in creation. There is a difference. Mark what a difference there is in *men* personally (for we shall consider men chiefly); one is born like Saul, a head and shoulders taller than the rest—another shall live all his life a Zaccheus—a man short of stature. One has a muscular frame and a share of beauty—another is weak, and far from having anything styled, comeliness. How many do we find whose eyes have never rejoiced in the sunlight, whose ears have never listened to the charms of music, and whose lips have never been moved to sounds intelligible or harmonious. Walk through the earth and you will find men superior to yourself in vigour, health, and fashion, and others who are your inferiors in the very same respects. Some here are preferred far above their fellows in their outward appearance, and some sink low in the scale and have nothing about them that can make them glory in the flesh. Why hath God given to one man beauty and to another none? to one all his senses, and to another but a portion? why, in some, hath he quickened the sense of apprehension, while others are obliged to bear about them a dull and stubborn body? We reply, let men say what they will, but no answer can be given except this, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." The old Pharisees asked, "Did this man sin or his parents, that he was born blind?" We know that there was neither sin in parents nor child, that *he* was born blind, or that others have suffered similar distresses, but that God has done as it has pleased him in the distribution of his earthly benefits, and thus hath said to the world, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

Mark also, in the distribution of *mental gifts*, what a difference exists. All men are not like Socrates; there are but few Platos; we can discover but here and there a Bacon; we shall but every now and then converse with a Sir Isaac Newton. Some have stupendous intellects wherewith they can unravel secrets—fathom the depths of oceans—measure mountains—dissect the sunbeams, and weigh the stars. Other have but shallow minds. You may educate and educate, but can never make them great. You cannot improve what is not there. They have not genius, and you cannot impart it. Anybody may see that there is an inherent difference in men from their very birth. Some, with a little education do surpass those who have been elaborately trained. There are two boys, educated it may be in the same school, by the same master, and they shall apply themselves to their studies with the same diligence, but

yet one shall far outstrip his fellow. Why is this? Because God hath asserted his sovereignty over the intellect as well as the body. God hath not made us all alike, but diversified his gifts. One man is as eloquent as Whitfield; another stammers if he but speaks three words of his mother tongue. What makes these various differences between man and man? We answer, we must refer it all to the Sovereignty of God, who does as he wills with his own.

Note, again, what are the differences of *men's conditions in this world*. Mighty minds are from time to time discovered in men whose limbs are wearing the chains of slavery, and whose backs are laid bare to the whip—they have black skins, but are in mind vastly superior to their brutal masters. So, too, in England; we find wise men often poor, and rich men not seldom ignorant and vain. One comes into the world to be arrayed at once in the imperial purple—another shall never wear aught but the humble garb of a peasant. One has a palace to dwell in and a bed of down for his repose, while another finds but a hard resting-place, and shall never have a more sumptuous covering than the thatch of his own cottage. If we ask the reason for this, the reply still is, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." So, in other ways you will observe in passing through life how sovereignty displays itself. To one man God giveth a long life and uniform health, so that he scarcely knows what it is to have day's sickness, while another totters through the world and finds a grave at almost every step, feeling a thousand deaths in fearing one. One man, even in extreme old age, like Moses, has his eye undimmed; and though his hair is grey, he stands as firmly on his feet as when a young man in his father's house. Whence, again, we ask is the difference? And the only adequate answer is, it is the effect of Jehovah's Sovereignty. You find, too, that some men are cut off in the prime of their life—the very midst of their days—while others live beyond their threescore years and ten. One departs before he has reached the first stage of existence, and another has his life lengthened out until it becomes quite a burden; we must, I conceive, necessarily trace the cause of all these differences in life to the fact of God's Sovereignty. He is Rule and King, and shall he not do as he wills with his own.

We pass from this point—but before we do so we must stop to improve it just a moment. O thou who art gifted with a noble frame, a comely body, boast not thyself therein, for thy gifts come from God. O glory not, for if thou gloriest thou becomest uncomely in a moment. The flowers boast not of their beauty; be exalted ye sons of comeliness; and O ye men of might and intellect, remember, that all you have is bestowed by a Sovereign Lord; he did create; he can destroy. There are not many steps between the mightiest intellect and the helpless idiot—deep though verges on insanity. Thy brain may at any moment, be smitten, and thou be doomed henceforth to live a madman. Boast not thyself of all that thou knowest, for even the little knowledge thou hast has been given thee. Therefore, I say, exalt not thyself above measure, but use for God what God has given thee, for it is a royal gift, and thou shouldst not lay it aside. But if the Sovereign Lord has given thee one talent, and no more, lay it not up in a napkin, but use it well, and then it may be that he will give thee more. Bless

God that thou hast *more* than others, and thank him also that he has given thee *less* than others, for thou hast less to carry on thy shoulders; and the lighter thy burden the less cause wilt thou have to groan as thou travellest on towards the better land. Bless God then if thou possessest less than thy fellows, and see his goodness in withholding as well as in giving.

II. So far most men probably have gone with us; but when we come to the second point, GIFTS SAVING, there will a large number who will go from us because they cannot receive our doctrine. When we apply this truth regarding the Divine Sovereignty to man's salvation, then we find men standing up to defend their poor fellow creatures whom they conceive to be injured by God's predestination. But I never heard of men standing up for the devil; and yet I think if any of God's creature have a right to complain of his dealings it is *the fallen angels*. For their sin they were hurled from heaven at once, and we read not that any message of mercy was ever sent to them. Once cast out, their doom was sealed; while men were respited, redemption sent into their world, and a large number of them chosen to eternal life. Why not quarrel with Sovereignty in the one case as well as the other. We say that God has elected a people out of the human race, and his right to do this is denied. But I ask, why not equally dispute the fact that God has chosen men and not fallen angels, or his justice in such a choice. If salvation be a matter of right, surely the angels had as much claim to mercy as men. Were they not seated in more than equal dignity? Did they sin more? We think not. Adam's sin was so wilful and complete, that we cannot suppose a greater sin than that which he committed. Would not the angels who were thrust out of heaven have been of greater service to their Maker if restored, than we can ever be? Had we been the judges in this matter we might have given deliverance to angels but not to men. Admire then, Divine Sovereignty and love, that whereas the angels were broken into shivers, God hath raised an elect number of the race of men to set them among princes, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Note again, the Divine Sovereignty, in what *God chose the Israelitish race and left the Gentiles for years in darkness*. Why was Israel instructed and saved, while Syria was left to perish in idolatry? Was the once race purer in its origin and better in its character than the other? Did not the Israelites take unto themselves false gods a thousand times, and provoke the true God to anger and loathing? Why then, should they be favoured above their fellows? Why did the sun of heaven shine upon them while all around the nations were left in darkness, and were sinking into hell by myriads? Why? The only answer that can be given is this, that God is a Sovereign, and "will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."

So, now, also, why is it that God *hath sent his word to us while a multitude of people are still without his word*? Why do we each come up to God's tabernacle, Sabbath after Sabbath, privileged to listen to the voice of the minister of Jesus, while other nations have not been visited thereby? Could not God have caused the light to shine in the darkness there as well

as here? Could not he, if he had pleased, have sent forth messengers swift as the light to proclaim his gospel over the whole earth? He could have done it if he would. Since we know that he has not done it, we bow in meekness, confessing his right to do as he wills with his own.

But let me drive the doctrine home once more. Behold how God displays his Sovereignty in this fact, that *out of the same congregation, those who hear the same minister, and listen to the same truth, the one is taken and the other left*. Why is it that one of my hearers shall sit in yonder pew, and her sister by her side, and yet that the effect of the preaching shall be different upon each? They have been nursed on the same knee, rocked in the same cradle, educated under the same auspices, they hear the same minister, with the same attention—why is it that the one shall be saved and the other left? Far be it from us to weave any excuse for the man who is damned: we know of none: but also, far be it from us to take glory from God. We assert that God makes the difference—that the saved sister will not have to thank herself but her God. There shall even be two men given to drunkenness. Some word spoken shall pierce one of them through, but the other shall sit unmoved, although they shall, in all respects, be equally the same both in constitution and education. What is the reason? You will reply, perhaps, because the one accepts and the other rejects the message of the gospel. But must you not come back to the questions, who made the one accept it, and who made the other reject it? I *dare* you to say that the man made himself to differ. You *must* admit in your conscience that it is God alone to whom this power belongs. But those who dislike this doctrine are nevertheless up in arms against us; and they say, how can God justly make such a difference between the members of his family? Suppose a father should have a certain number of children, and he should give to one all his favors, and consign the others to misery—should we not say that he was a very unkind and cruel father? I answer, yes. But the cases are not the same. You have *not a father* to death with, but a *judge*. You say all men are God's children; I demand of you to prove that. I never read it in my Bible. I dare not say, "Our father which art in heaven," till I am regenerated. I cannot rejoice in the fatherhood of God towards me till I know that I am one with him, and a joint heir with Christ. I dare not claim the fatherhood of God as an unregenerated man. It is not father and child—for the child has a claim upon its father—but it is King and subject; and not even so high a relation as that, for there is a claim between subject and King. A creature—a sinful creature, can have no claim upon God; for that would be to make salvation of works and not of grace. If men can merit salvation, then to save them is only the payment of a debt, and he gives them nothing more than he ought to give them. But we assert that grace must be distinguishing if it be grace at all. O, but some say is it not written that *"He giveth to every man a measure of grace to profit withal?"* If you like to repeat that wonderful quotation so often hurled at my head, you are very welcome, for it is no quotation from Scripture, unless it be an Arminian edition. The only passage at all like it refers to the spiritual gifts of the saints

and the saints only. But I say, granted your supposition, that a measure of grace is given to every man to profit withal, yet he hath given to some a measure of particular grace to make that profit. For what do you mean by grace, which I put out, to profit? I can understand a man's improvement in the use of grace, but grace improved and made use of by the power of man I cannot comprehend. Grace is not a thing which I use; grace is something which uses me. But people talk of grace sometimes as if it was something they could use, and not as influence having power over them. Grace is something not which I improve, but which improves, employs me, works on me; and let people talk as they will about universal grace, it is all nonsense, there is no such thing, nor can there be. They may talk correctly of universal blessings, because we see that the natural gifts of God are scattered everywhere, more or less, and men may receive or reject them. It is not so, however, with grace. Men cannot take the grace of God and employ it in turning themselves from darkness to light. The light does not come to the darkness and say, use me; but the light comes and drives the darkness away. Life does not come to the dead man and say, use me, and be restored to life; but it comes with a power of its own and restores to life. The spiritual influence does not come to the dry bones and say, use this power and clothe yourselves with flesh; but it comes and clothes them with flesh, and the work is done. Grace is a thing which comes and exercises an influence on us.

"The sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace;
Born in the image of his Son,
A new-created race."

And we say to all of you who gnash your teeth at this doctrine, whether you know it or not, you have a vast deal of enmity towards God in your hearts; for until you can be brought to know this doctrine, there is something which you have not yet discovered, which makes you opposed to the idea of God absolute, God unbounded, God unfettered, God unchanging, and God having a free will, which you are so fond of proving that the creature possesses. I am persuaded that the Sovereignty of God must be held by us if we would be in a healthy state of mind. "Salvation is of the Lord alone." Then give all the glory to his holy name, to whom all glory belongs.

III. We now come, in the third place, to notice the differences which God often makes in his Church in HONOURABLE GIFTS. There is a difference made between God's own children—when they are his children. Note what I mean: One hath the honourable gift of *knowledge*, another knows but little. I meet, every now and then, with a dear Christian brother with whom I could talk for a month, and learn something from him every day. He has had deep experience—he has seen into the deep things of God—his whole life has been a perpetual study wherever he has been. He seems to have gathered thoughts, not from books merely, but from men, from God, from his own heart. He knows all the intricacies

and windings of Christian experience: he understands the heights, the depths, the lengths, and the breadths of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. He has gained a grand idea, an intimate knowledge of the system of grace, and can vindicate the dealings of the Lord with his people.

Then you must meet with another who has passed through many troubles, but he has no deep acquaintance with Christian experience. He never learned a single secret by all his troubles. He just floundered out of one trouble into another, but never stopped to pick up any of the jewels that lay in the mire—never tried to discover the precious jewels that lay in his afflictions. He knows very little more of the heights and depths of the Saviour's love than when he first came into the world. You may converse with such a man as long as you like, but you will get nothing from him. If you ask why is it, I answer, there is a Sovereignty of God in giving knowledge to some and not to others. I was walking the other day with an aged Christian, who told me how he had profited by my ministry. There is nothing humbles me like that thought of yon old man deriving experience in the things of God, receiving instruction in the ways of the Lord from a mere babe in grace. But I expect that when I am an old man, if I should live to be such, that some babe in grace will instruct me. God sometimes shutteth the mouth of the old man and openeth the mouth of the child. Why should we be a teacher to hundreds who are, in some respects, far more able to teach us? The only answer we can find is in the Divine Sovereignty, and we must bow before it, for has he not a right to do as he wills with his own? Instead of being envious of those who have the gift of knowledge, we should seek to gain the same, if possible. Instead of sitting down and murmuring that we have not more knowledge, we should remember that the foot cannot say to the head, nor the head to the foot, I have no need of thee, for God hath given us talents as it hath pleased him.

Note, again, when speaking of honourable gifts. Not only knowledge, but *office* is an honourable gift. There is nothing more honourable to a man than the office of a deacon or a minister. We magnify our office, though we would not magnify ourselves. We hold there is nothing can dignify a man more than being appointed to an office in a Christian church. I would rather be a deacon of a church than Lord Mayor of London. To be a minister of Christ is in my estimation an infinitely higher honour than the world can bestow. My pulpit is to me more desirable than a throne, and my congregation is an empire more than large enough; an empire before which the empires of the earth dwindle into nothing in everlasting importance. Why does God give to one man a special call by the Holy Ghost, to be a minister, and pass by another? There is another man more gifted, perhaps, but we dare not put him in a pulpit, because he has not had a special call. So with the deaconship; the man whom some would perhaps think most suitable for the office is passed by, and another chosen. There is a manifestation of God's Sovereignty in the appointment to office—in putting David on a throne, in making Moses the leader of the children of Israel through the wilder-

ness, in choosing Daniel to stand among princes, in electing Paul to be the minister to the Gentiles, and Peter to be the Apostle of the Circumcision. And you who have not the gift of honourable office, must learn the great truth contained in the question of the Master, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

There is another honourable gift, the gift of *utterance*. Eloquence hath more power over men than all else besides. If a man would have power over the multitude, he must seek to touch their hearts, and chain their ears. There are some men who are like vessels full of knowledge to the brim, but having no means of giving it forth to the world. They are rich in all gems of learning but know not how to set them in the golden ring of eloquence. They can collect the choicest of flowers, but know not how to tie them up in a sweet garland to present them to the admirer's eye. How is this? We say again, the Sovereignty of God is here displayed in the distribution of gifts honourable. Learn here, O Christian man, if you have gifts, to cast the honour of them at the Saviour's feet, and if you possess them not, learn not to murmur; remember that God is equally as kind when he keepeth back as when he distributeth his favours. If any among you be exalted, let him not be puffed up; if any be lowly, let him not be despised; for God giveth to every vessel his measure of grace. Serve him after your measure, and adore the King of Heaven who doth as he pleaseth.

IV. We notice in the fourth place, the gift of USEFULNESS. I have often done wrong in finding fault with brother ministers for not being useful, I have said you might have been as useful as I have been had you been in earnest. But surely there are others even more earnest, and more efficient: others labouring as constantly, but with far less effect. And, therefore, let me retract my accusation, and in lieu thereof assert that the gift of usefulness is the result of God's Sovereignty. It is not in man to be useful, but in God to make him useful. We may labour ourselves with all our might, but God alone can make us useful. We can put every stitch of canvass on when the wind blows, but we cannot make the wind blow.

The Sovereignty of God is seen also in the diversity of ministerial gifts. You go to one minister and are fed with plenty of good food: another has not enough to feed a mouse; he has plenty of reproof, but no food for the child of God. Another can comfort the child of God, but he cannot reprove a backslider. He has not strength of mind enough to give those earnest home strokes which are sometimes needed. And what is the reason! God's Sovereignty. One can wield the sledge hammer but could not heal a broken heart. If he were to attempt it, you would be reminded of an elephant trying to thread a needle. Such a man can reprove, but he cannot apply oil and wine to a bruised conscience. Why? Because God hath not given to him the gift. There is another one who always preaches experimental divinity; and very rarely touches upon doctrine. Another is all doctrine, and cannot preach much about Jesus Christ and him crucified. Why? God hath not given him the gift of doctrine. Another always preaches Jesus—blessed Jesus; men of the Hawker school—and many say, oh! they do not give us experience enough; they do not go into the deep experiences of the

corruption which vexes the children of God. But we do not blame them for this. You will notice that out of the same man will at one time flow streams of living water, while at another time he will be as dry as possible. On one Sabbath you go away refreshed by the preaching, and the next you get no good. There is Divine Sovereignty in all this, and we must learn to recognize and admire it. I was preaching on one occasion last week to a large crowd of people, and in one part of the sermon the people were very much affected; I felt that the power of God was there; one poor creature absolutely shrieked out because of the wrath of God against sin; but at another time the same words might have been uttered and there might have been the same desire in the minister's heart, and yet no effect produced. We must trace, I say, Divine Sovereignty in all such cases. We ought to recognize God's hand in everything. But the present is the most godless generation that ever trod this earth, I verily believe. In our fathers' days there was hardly a shower but they declared that God caused it to fall; and they had prayers for rain, prayers for sunshine, and prayers for harvest; as well when a haystack was on fire, as when a famine desolated the land; our forefathers said, the Lord hath done it. But now our philosophers try to explain everything, and trace all phenomena to second causes. But brethren, let it be ours to ascribe the origin and direction of all things to the Lord, and the Lord alone.

V. Lastly, GIFTS COMFORTABLE are of God. O, what comfortable gifts do some of us enjoy in the ordinances of God's house, and in a ministry that is profitable. But how many churches have not a ministry of that kind; and why then have we? Because God hath made a difference. Some here have strong faith, and can laugh at impossibilities; we can sing a song in all ill weathers—in the tempest as well as in the calm. But there is another with little faith who is in danger of tumbling down over every straw. We trace eminent faith entirely to God. One is born with a melancholy temperament, and he sees a tempest brewing even in the calm; while another is cheerful, and sees a silver lining to every cloud, however black, and he is a happy man. But why is that? Comfortable gifts come of God. And then observe that we ourselves, differ at times. For a season we may have blessed intercourse with heaven, and be permitted to look within the veil? but anon, these delightful enjoyments are gone. But do we murmur on that account? May he not do as he will with his own? May he not take back what he has given? The comforts we possess were his before they were ours.

"And shouldst thou take them all away,
Yet would I not repine,
Before they were possessed by me
They were entirely thine."

There is no joy of the Spirit—there is no exceeding blessed hope—no strong faith—no burning desire—no close fellowship with Christ, which is not the gift of God, and which we must not trace to him. When I am in darkness and suffer disappointment, I will look up and say, he giveth songs in the night; and when I am made to rejoice, I will say, my mountain

shall stand fast for ever. The Lord is a Sovereign Jehovah; and, therefore, prostrate at his feet I lie, and if I perish, I will perish there.

But let me say, brethren, that so far from this doctrine of Divine Sovereignty making you to sit down in sloth, I hope in God it will have a tendency to humble you, and so to lead you to say, "I am unworthy of the least of all thy mercies. I feel that thou hast a right to do with me as thou wilt. If thou dost crush, a helpless worm, thou wilt not be dishonoured; and I have no right to ask thee to have compassion upon me, save this, that I want thy mercy. Lord, if thou wilt, thou art able to pardon, and thou never gavest grace to one that wanted it more. Because I am empty, fill me with the bread of heaven; because I am naked, clothe me with thy robe; because I am dead, give me life." If you press that plea with all your soul and all your mind, though Jehovah is a Sovereign, he will stretch out his sceptre and save, and thou shalt live to worship him in the beauty of holiness, loving and adoring his gracious Sovereignty. "He that believeth" is the declaration of Scripture "and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." He that believeth in Christ alone, and is baptized with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, shall be saved, but he who rejecteth Christ and believeth not in him, shall be damned. That is the Sovereign decree and proclamation of heaven—bow to it, acknowledge it, obey it, and God bless you.

The Character of Christ's People

A Sermon
(No. 78)
Delivered on Thursday Evening, November 22, 1855, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."—John 17:16.

CHRIST'S prayer was for a special people. He declared that he did not offer an universal intercession. "I pray for *them*," said he. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." In reading this beautiful prayer through, only one question arises to our minds; Who are the people that are described as "them," or as "they?" Who are these favoured individuals, who share a Saviour's prayers, are recognized by a Saviour's love, have their names written on the stones of his precious breastplate, and have their characters and their circumstances mentioned by the lips of the High Priest before the throne on high? The answer to that question is supplied by the words of our text. The people for whom Christ prays are an unearthly people. They are a people somewhat, above the world, distinguished altogether from it. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

I shall treat my text, first of all, *doctrinally*; secondly, *experimentally*; and thirdly, *practically*.

I. First, we shall take our text and look at it DOCTRINALLY.

The doctrine of it is, that God's people are people who are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. It is not so much that they are not of the world, as that they are "not of the world, *even as Christ was not of the world*." This is an important distinction, for there are to be found certain people who are not of the world, and yet they are not Christians. Amongst these I would mention sentimentalists—people who are always crying and groaning in affected sentimental ways. Their spirits are so refined, their characters are so delicate, that they could not attend to ordinary business. They would think it rather degrading to their spiritual nature to attend to anything connected with the world. They live much in the air of romances and novels; love to read things that fetch tears from their eyes; they would like continually to live in a cottage near a wood, or to inhabit some quiet cave, where they could read "Zimmerman on Solitude" for ever; for they feel that they are "not of the world." The fact is, there is something too flimsy about them to stand the wear and tear of this wicked world. They are so pre-eminently good, that they cannot bear to do as we poor human creatures do. I have heard of one young lady, who thought herself so spiritually-minded that she could not work. A very wise minister said to her, "That is quite correct! you are so spiritually-minded that you cannot work; very well, you are so spiritually-minded that you shall not eat unless you do." That brought her back from her great spiritual-

mindedness. There is a stupid sentimentalism that certain persons nurse themselves into. They read a parcel of books that intoxicate their brains, and then fancy that they have a lofty destiny. These people are "not of the world," truly; but the world does not want them, and the world would not miss them much, if they were clean gone for ever. There is such a thing as being "not of the world," from a high order of sentimentalism, and yet not being a Christian after all. For it is not so much being "not of the world," as being "not of the world, *even as Christ* was not of the world." There are others, too, like your monks, and those other made individuals of the Catholic church, who are not of the world. They are so awfully good, that they could not live with us sinful creatures at all. They must be distinguished from us altogether. They must not wear, of course, a boot that would at all approach to a worldly shoe, but they must have a sole of leather strapped on with two or three thongs, like the far-famed Father Ignatius. They could not be expected to wear worldly coats and waistcoats; but they must have peculiar garbs, cut in certain fashions, like the Passionists. They must wear particular dresses, particular garments, particular habits. And we know that some men are "not of the world," by the peculiar mouthing they give to all their words—the sort of sweet, savoury, buttery flavor they give to the English language, because they think themselves so eminently sanctified that they fancy it would be wrong to indulge in anything in which ordinary mortals indulge. Such persons are, however, reminded, that their being "not of the world," has nothing to do with it. It is not being "not of the world," so much as being "not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world."

This is the distinguishing mark—being different from the world in those respects in which Christ was different. Not making ourselves singular in unimportant points, as those poor creatures do, but being different from the world in those respects in which the Son of God and the Son of man, Jesus Christ, was not of the world in nature; that he was not of the world again, in office; and above all, that he was not of the world in his character.

1. First, *Christ was not of the world in nature*. What was there about Christ that was worldly? In one point of view his nature was divine; and as divine, it was perfect, pure unsullied, spotless, he could not descend to things of earthliness and sin; in another sense he was human; and his human nature, which was born of the Virgin Mary, was begotten of the Holy Ghost, and therefore was so pure that in it rested nothing that was worldly. He was not like ordinary men. We are all born with worldliness in our hearts. Solomon well says, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child." It is not only there, but it is bound up in it; it is tied up in his heart, and is difficult to remove. And so with each of us; when we were children, earthliness and carnality were bound up in our nature. But Christ was not so. His nature was not a worldly one; it was essentially different from that of every one else, although he sat down and talked with them. Mark the difference! He stood side by side with a Pharisee; but every one could see he was not of the Pharisee's world. He sat by a Samaritan woman, and though he conversed with her very freely, who is it that fails to see that he was not of

that Samaritan woman's world—not a sinner like her? He mingled with the Publicans, nay, he sat down at the Publican's feast, and eat with Publicans and sinners; but you could see by the holy actions and the peculiar gestures he there carried with him, that he was not of the Publicans' world, though he mixed with them. There was something so different in his nature, that you could not have found an individual in all the world whom could have set beside him and said, "There! he is of that man's world," Nay, not even John, though he leaned on his bosom and partook very much of his Lord's spirit, was exactly of that world to which Jesus belonged; for even he once in his Boanergean spirit, said words to this effect, "Let us call down fire from heaven on the heads of those who oppose thee,"—a thing that Christ could not endure for a moment, and thereby proved that he was something even beyond John's world.

Well, beloved, in some sense, the Christian man is not of the world even in his nature. I do not mean in his corrupt and fallen nature, but in his new nature. There is something in a Christian that is utterly and entirely distinct from that of anybody else. Many persons think that the difference between a Christian and worldling consists in this: one goes to chapel twice on a Sabbath-day, another does not go but once, or perhaps not at all; one of them takes the sacrament, the other does not; one pays attention to holy things, the other pays very little attention to them. But, ah, beloved, that does not make a Christian. The distinction between a Christian and a worldling is not merely external, but internal. The difference is one of nature, and not of act.

A Christian is as essentially difference from a worldling as a dove is from a raven, or a lamb from a lion. He is not of the world even in his nature. You could not make him a worldling. You might do what you liked; you might cause him to fall into some temporary sin; but you could not make him a worldling. You might cause him to backslide; but you could not make him a sinner, as he used to be. He is not of the world by his nature. He is a twice-born man; in his veins run the blood of the royal family of the universe. He is a nobleman; he is a heaven-born child. His freedom is not merely a bought one, but he hath his liberty his new-born nature; he is essentially and entirely different from the world. There are persons in this chapel now who are more totally distinct from one another than you can even conceive. I have some here who are intelligent, and some who are ignorant; some who are rich, and some who are poor; but I do not allude to those distinctions: they all melt away into nothing in that great distinction—dead or alive, spiritual or carnal, Christian or worldling. And oh! if ye are God's people, then ye are not of the world in your nature; for ye are "not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world."

2. Again: *you are not of the world in your office*. Christ's office had nothing to do with worldly things. "Art thou a king them?" Yes; I am a king; but my kingdom is not of this world. "Art thou a priest?" Yes; I am a priest; but my priesthood is not the priesthood which I shall soon lay aside, or which shall be discontinued as that of others has been. "Art thou

a teacher?" Yes; but my doctrines are not the doctrines of morality, doctrines that concern earthly dealings between man and man simply; my doctrine cometh down from heaven. So Jesus Christ, we say, is "not of the world." He had no office that could be termed a worldly one, and he had no aim which was in the least worldly. He did not seek his own applause, his own fame, his own honour; his very office was not of the world. And, O believer! what is thy office? Hast thou none at all? Why, yes, man! Thou art a priest unto the Lord thy God; thy office is to offer a sacrifice of prayer and praise each day. Ask a Christian what he is. Say to him: "What is your official standing? What are you by office?" Well, if he answers you properly, he will not say, "I am a draper, or druggist," or anything of that sort. No; he will say, "I am a priest unto my God. The office unto which I am called, is to be the salt of the earth. I am a city set on a hill, a light that cannot be hid. That is my office. My office is not a worldly one." Whether yours be the office of the minister, or the deacon, or the church member, ye are not of this world is your office, even as Christ was not of the world; your occupation is not a worldly one.

3. Again, *ye are not of the world in your character*; for that is the chief point in which Christ was not of the world. And now, brethren, I shall have to turn somewhat from doctrine to practice before I get rightly to this part of the subject; for I must reprove many of the Lord's people, that they do not sufficiently manifest that they are not of the world in character, even as Christ was not of the world. Oh! how many of you there are, who will assemble around the table at the supper of your Lord, who do not live like your Saviour. How many of you there are, who join our church and walk with us, and yet are not worthy of your high calling and profession. Mark you the churches all around, and let your eyes run with tears, when you remember that of many of their members it cannot be said, "*ye are not* of this world," for they *are* of the world. O, my hearers, I fear many of you are worldly, carnal, and covetous; and yet ye join the churches, and stand well with God's people by a hypocritical profession. O ye whitewashed sepulchres! ye would deceive even the very elect! ye make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is very wickedness. O that a thundering voice might speak this to your ears!—"Those whom Christ loves are not of the world," but ye are of the world; therefore ye cannot be his, even though ye profess so to be; for those that love him are not such as you. Look at Jesus character; how different from every other man's—pure, perfect, spotless, even such should be the life of the believer. I plead not for the possibility of sinless conduct in Christians, but I must hold that grace makes men to differ, and that God's people will be very different from other kinds of people. A servant of God will be a God's-man everywhere. As a chemist, he could not indulge in any tricks that such men might play with their drugs; as a grocer—if indeed it be not a phantom that such things are done—he could not mix sloe leaves with tea or red lead in the pepper; if he practised any other kind of business, he could not for a moment condescend to the little petty shifts, called "methods of business." To him it is nothing what is called

"business;" it is what is called God's law, he feels that he is not of the world, consequently, he goes against its fashions and its maxims. A singular story is told of a certain Quaker. One day he was bathing in the Thames, and a waterman called out to him, "Ha! there goes the Quaker." "How do you know I'm a Quaker?" "Because you swim against the stream; it is the way the Quakers always do." That is the way Christians always ought to do—to swim against the stream. The Lord's people should not go along with the rest in their worldliness. Their characters should be visibly different. You should be such men that your fellows can recognise you without any difficulty, and say, "Such a man is a Christian." Ah! beloved, it would puzzle the angel Gabriel himself, to tell whether some of you are Christians or not, if he were sent down to the world to pick out the righteous from the wicked. None but God could do it, for in these days of worldly religion they are so much alike. It was an ill day for the world, when the sons of God and the daughters of men were mingled together: and it is an ill day now, when Christians and worldlings are so mixed, that you cannot tell the difference between them. God save us from a day of fire that may devour us in consequence! But O beloved! the Christian will be always different from the world. This is a great doctrine, and it will be found as true in ages to come as in the centuries which are past. Looking back into history, we read this lesson: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." We see them driven to the catacombs of Rome; we see them hunted about like partridges; and wherever in history you find God's servants, you can recognise them by their distinct, unvarying character—they are not of the world, but were a people scarred and peeled; a people entirely distinct from the nations. And if in this age, there are no different people, if there are none to be found who differ from other people, there are no Christians; for Christians will be always different from the world. They are not of the world; even as Christ is not of the world. This is the doctrine.

II. But now for treating this text EXPERIMENTALLY.

Do we, dearly beloved, feel this truth? Has it ever been laid to our souls, so that we can feel it is ours? "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Have we ever felt that we are not of the world? Perhaps there is a believer sitting in a pew to-night, who says, "Well, sire, I can't say that I feel as if I was not of the world, for I have just come from my shop, and worldliness is still hanging about me." Another says, "I have been in trouble and my mind is very much harassed—I can't feel that I am different from the world; I am afraid that I am of the world." But, beloved, we must not judge ourselves rashly, because just at this moment we discern not the spot of God's children. Let me tell you, there are always certain testing moments when you can tell of what kind of stuff a man is made. Two men are walking. Part of the way their road lies side by side. How do you tell which man is going to the right, and which to the left? Why, when they come to the turning point. Now, to-night is not a turning point, for you are sitting with worldly people here, but at other times we may distinguish.

Let me tell you one or two turning points, when every Christian will feel that he is not of the world. One is, when he gets into very deep *trouble*. I do believe and protest, that we never feel so unearthly as when we get plunged down into trouble. Ah! when some creature comfort hath been swept away, when some precious blessing hath withered in our sight, like the fair lily, snapped at the stalk; when some mercy has been withered, like Jonah's gourd in the night—then it is that the Christian feels, "I am not of the world." His cloak is torn from him, and the cold wind whistles almost through him; and then he says, "I am a stranger in the world, as all my fathers were. Lord, thou hast been my dwelling-place in all generations." You have had at times deep sorrows. Thank God for them! They are testing moments. When the furnace is hot, it is then that the gold is tried best. Have you felt at such a time that you were not of the world? Or, have you rather sat down, and said, "Oh! I do not deserve this trouble?" Did you break under it? Did you bow down before it and let it crush you while you cursed your Maker? Or did your spirit, even under its load, still lift itself unto him, like a man all dislocated on the battle-field, whose limbs are cut away, but who still lifts himself up as best he can, and looks over the field to see if there be a friend approaching. Did you do so? Or did you lie down in desperation and despair? If you did that, methinks you are no Christian; but if there was a rising up, it was a testing moment, and it proved that you were "not of the world," because you could master affliction; because you could tread it under foot, and say—

"When all created streams are dry,
His goodness is the same;
With this I well am satisfied,
And glory in his name."

But another testing moment is *prosperity*. Oh! there have been some of God's people, who have been more tried by prosperity than by adversity. Of the two trials, the trial of adversity is less severe to the spiritual man than that of prosperity. "As the fining pot for silver, so is a man to his praise." It is a terrible thing to be prosperous. You had need to pray to God, not only to help you in your troubles, but to help you in your blessings. Mr. Whitfield once had a petition to put up for a young man who had—stop, you will think it was for a young man who had lost his father or his property. No! "The prayers of the congregation are he has need of much grace to keep him humble in the midst of riches." That is the kind of prayer that ought to be put up; for prosperity is a hard thing to bear. Now, perhaps you have become almost intoxicated with worldly delights, even as a Christian. Everything goes well with you; you have loved, and you are loved. Your affairs are prosperous; your heart rejoices, your eyes sparkle; you tread the earth with a happy soul and a joyous countenance; you are a happy man, for you have found that even in worldly things, "godliness with contentment is great gain." Did you ever feel,—

"These can never satisfy;

Give me Christ, or else I die."

Did you feel that these comforts were nothing but the leaves of the tree, and not the fruit, and that you could not live upon mere leaves? Did you feel they were after all nothing but husks? Or did you not sit down and say, "Now, soul, take thine ease; thou hast goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry?" If you did imitate the rich fool, then you were of the world; but if your spirit went up above your prosperity so that you still lived near to God, then you proved that you were a child of God, for you were not of the world. These are testing points; both prosperity and adversity.

Again: you may test yourselves in this way *in solitude and in company*. In solitude you may tell whether you are not of the world. I sit me down, throw the window up, look out on the stars, and think of them as the eyes of God looking down upon me! And oh! does it not seem glorious at times to consider the heavens when we can say, "Ah! beyond those stars in my house not made with hands; those stars are mile-stones on the road to glory, and I shall soon tread the glittering way, or be carried by seraphs far beyond them, and be there!" Have you felt in solitude that you are not of the world? And so again in company. Ah! beloved, believe me, company is one of the best tests for a Christian. You are invited to an evening party. Sundry amusements are provided which are not considered exactly sinful, but which certainly cannot come under the name of pious amusements. You sit there with the rest; there is a deal of idle chat going on, you would be thought puritanical to protest against it. Have you not come away—and notwithstanding all has been very pleasant, and friends have been very agreeable—have you not been inclined to say, "Ah! that does not do for me; I would rather be in a prayer meeting; I could be with the people of God, than in fine rooms with all the dainties and delicacies that could be provided without the company of Jesus. By God's grace I will seek to shun all these places as much as possible." That is a good test. You will prove in this way that you are not of the world. And you may do so in great many other ways, which I have no time to mention. Have you felt this experimentally, so that you can say, "I know that I am not of the world, I feel it; I experience it." Don't talk of doctrine. Give me doctrine ground into experience. Doctrine is good; but experience is better. Experimental doctrine is the true doctrine which comforts and which edifies.

IV. And now, lastly we must briefly apply this in PRACTICE. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." And, first, allow me, man or woman, to apply this to thee. *Thou who art of the world*, whose maxims, whose habits, whose behaviour, whose feelings, whose everything is worldly and carnal, list thee to this. Perhaps thou makest some profession of religion. Hear me, then. Thy boasting of religion is empty as a phantom, and shall pass away when the sun rises, as the ghosts sleep in their grave at the crowing of the cock. Thou hast some pleasure in that professioned religion of thine wherewith thou art arrayed, and which thou carriest about thee as a cloak, and usest as a stalking-horse to thy business, and a net to catch the honour of the world, and yet thou art worldly, like other men. Then I tell

thee if there be no distinction between thyself and the worldly, the doom of the worldly shall be thy doom. If thou wert marked and watched, thy next door tradesman would act as thou dost, and thou actest as he does; there is no distinction between thee and the world. Hear me, then; it is God's solemn truth. Thou art none of his. If thou art like the rest of the world, thou art of the world. Thou art a goat, and with goats thou shalt be cursed; for the sheep can always be distinguished from the goats by their appearance. O ye worldly men of the world! ye carnal professors, ye who crowd our churches, and fill our places of worship, this is God's truth! let me say it solemnly. If I should say it as I ought, it would be weeping tears of blood. Ye are, with all your profession, "in the gall of bitterness;" with all your boastings, ye are "in bonds of iniquity;" for ye act as others and ye shall come where others come; and it shall be done with you as with more notorious heirs of hell. There is an old story which was once told of a Dissenting minister. The old custom was, that a minister might stop at an inn, and not pay anything for his bed or his board; and when he went to preach, from place to place, he was charged nothing for the conveyance in which he rode. But on one occasion, a certain minister stopped at an inn and went to bed. The landlord listened and heard no prayer; so when he came down in the morning, he presented his bill. "Oh! I am not going to pay that, for I am a minister." "Ah!" said the landlord, "you went to bed last night like a sinner, and you shall pay this morning like a sinner; I will not let you go." Now, it strikes me, that this will be the case with some of you when you come to God's bar. Though you pretended to be a Christian, you acted like a sinner, and you shall fare like a sinner too. Your actions were unrighteous; they were far from God; and you shall have a portion with those whose character was the same as yours. "Be not deceived;" it is easy to be so. "God is not mocked," though we often are, both minister and people. "God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

And now we want to apply this to many *true children of God* who are here, by way of caution. I say, my brother Christian, you are not of the world. I am not going to speak hardly to you, because you are my brother, and in speaking to you I speak to myself also, for I am as guilty as thou art. Brother, have we not often been too much like the world? Do we not sometimes in our conversation, talk too much like the world? Come, let me ask myself, are there not too many idle words that I say? Ay, that there are. And do I not sometimes give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme, because I am not so different from the world as I ought to be? Come, brother; let us confess our sins together. Have we not been too worldly? Ah! we have. Oh! let this solemn thought cross our minds: suppose that after all we should not be his! for it is written, "Ye are not of the world." O God! if we are not right, make us so; where we are a little right, make us still more right; and where we are wrong, amend us! Allow me to tell a story to you; I told it when I was preaching last Tuesday morning, but it is worth telling again. There is a great evil in many of us being too light and frothy in our conversation. A very solemn thing once happened. A minister had been preaching in a

country village, very earnestly and fervently. in the midst of his congregation there was a young man who was deeply impressed with a sense of sin under the sermon; he therefore sought the minister as he went out, in hopes of walking home with him. They walked till they came to a friend's house. On the road the minister had talked about anything except the subject on which he had preached, though he had preached very earnestly, and even with tears in his eyes. The young man thought within himself, "Oh! I wish I could unburden my heart and speak to him; but I cannot. He does not say anything now about what he spoke of in the pulpit." When they were at supper that evening, the conversation was very far from what it should be, and the minister indulged in all kinds of jokes and light sayings. The young man had gone into the house with eyes filled with tears, feeling like a sinner should feel; but as soon as he got outside, after the conversation, he stamped his foot, and said, "It is a lie from beginning to end. That man has preached like an angel; and now he has talked like a devil." Some years after the young man was taken ill, and sent for this same minister. The minister did not know him. "Do you remember preaching at such-and-such a village?" asked the young man. "I do." "your text was very deeply laid to my heart." "Thank God for that," said the minister. "Do not be so quick about thanking God," said the young man. "Do you know what you talked of that evening afterwards, when I went to supper with you. *Sir, I shall be damned*! And I will charge *you* before God's throne with being the author of my damnation. On that night I did feel my sin; but you were the means of scattering all my impressions." That is a solemn thought, brother, and teaches us how we should curb our tongues, especially those who are so light hearted, after solemn services and earnest preachings, that we should not betray levity. Oh! let us take heed that we are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.

And Christian, lastly, by way of practice, let me comfort thee with this. Thou art not of the world for thy home is in heaven. Be content to be here a little, for thou art not of the world, and thou shalt go up to thine own bright inheritance by-and-bye. A man in travelling goes into an inn; it is rather uncomfortable, "Well," says he, "I shall not have to stay here many nights; I have only to sleep here to-night, I shall be at home in the morning, so that I don't care much about one night's lodging being a little uncomfortable." So, Christian, this world is never a very comfortable one; but recollect, you are not of the world. This world is like an inn; you are only lodging here a little while. Put up with a little inconvenience, because you are not of the world, even as Christ is not of the world; and by-and-bye, up yonder, you shall be gathered into your father's house, and there you will find that there is a new heaven and a new earth provided for those who are "not of the world."

The Form of Sound Words

A Sermon
(No. 79)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, May 11, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."—2 Timothy 1:13.

MY INCESSANT anxiety for you, dearly beloved in the faith of Jesus Christ, is that I may be able, in the first place, to teach you what God's truth is; and then, trusting that I have to the best of my ability taught you what I believe to be God's most holy gospel, my next anxiety is, that you should "hold fast the form of sound words;" that whatever may occur in the future, should death snatch away your pastor, or should anything occur which might put you in perilous circumstances, so that you were tempted to embrace any system of heresy, you might every one of you stand as firm and as unmoved as rocks, and as strong as mountains be, abiding in "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints," whereof ye have heard, and which we have proclaimed unto you. If the gospel be worth your hearing, and if it be a true gospel, it is worth your holding, and our anxiety is, that you should be so established in the faith, that you may, "hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, for he is faithful that has promised."

The Apostle most earnestly admonished Timothy to "hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard of him in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." I do not suppose that by this it is intended that Paul ever wrote out for Timothy a list of doctrines; or that he gave him a small abstract of divinity, to which he desired him to subscribe his name, as the articles of the church over which he was made a pastor. If so, doubtless the document would have been preserved and enrolled in the canons of Scripture as one of the writings of an inspired man. I can scarce think such a creed would have been lost, whilst other creeds have been preserved and handed down to us. I conceive that what the Apostle meant was this:—"Timothy, when I have preached to you, you have heard certain grand outlines of truth; you have heard from me the great system of faith in Jesus Christ; in my writings and public speakings you have heard me continually insist upon a certain pattern or form of faith; now I bid you, my dearly beloved son in the gospel, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

This morning I shall first attempt to tell you what I conceive to be *a "form of sounds words," which we are to hold fast*. In the second place, I shall endeavour to urge upon you *the strong necessity of holding fast that form*. In the third place, I shall *warn you of some dangers to which you will be exposed, tempting you to give up the form of sound words*. Then,

in the last place I shall mention *the two great holdfasts, faith and love in Christ Jesus*, which are the great means of "holding fast the form of sound words."

1. What is a "FORM OF SOUND WORDS?" Ten thousand persons will quarrel upon this. One will say, "My creed is a form of sound words;" another will declare that his creed also is sound, if not infallible. We will not, therefore, enter into all the minutiae which distinguish creeds from each other, but just simply say, that no system can be a form of sound words unless it is *perfectly scriptural*. We receive no doctrines as the doctrines of men; whatever authority come to us which is not the authority of the Holy Spirit, and inspired by God, is no authority at all to us. We laugh to scorn all the dogmatism of men; we care for nothing they assert, however strongly they declare it, or however eloquently they plead for it; we utterly reject and discard it; we hold it a sin to "take for doctrines the commandments of men;" we give no heed to the traditions that are handed down to us. If our opponent cannot quote text or verse for anything he advances, we hold no argument with him. Scripture is the only weapon we can acknowledge.

But since it is said that texts may be found to prove almost everything, we must remark, that a form of sound words must be *one that exalts God and puts down man*. We dare not for a moment think that any doctrine is sound that does not put the crown upon the head of Jesus, and does not exalt the Almighty. If we see a doctrine which exalts the creature, we do not care one fig about what arguments may be brought to support it; we know that it is a lie, unless it lays the creature in the very dust of abasement, and exalts the Creator. If it does not do this, it is nothing but a rotten doctrine of pride; it may dazzle us with the brilliant malaria rising from its marshes, but it never can shed a true and healthful light into the soul; it is a rotten doctrine, not fit to be builded on the gospel, unless it exalts Jehovah Jesus, Jehovah the Father, and Jehovah the Holy Spirit.

We think, also, that we may judge of the soundness of doctrine *by its tendency*. We can never think a doctrine sound, when we see plainly upon its very surface that it has a tendency to create sin in men. Unless it be a doctrine according to godliness, we cannot conceive it to be a doctrine of God. Unless the believer of it, earnestly and truthfully believing it, doth give himself to virtue—unless that doctrine has in itself a natural tendency to promote in him a love to the right—we are at first sight suspicious of it; and if we find on examination that it is a licentious doctrine—it may have all the glitter and the glare of novelty, but we cast it away as not being the doctrine of Christianity, because it does not promote holiness in the soul.

We shall, perhaps, be asked what we *do* regard as a form of sound words, and what those doctrines are which are scriptural, which at the same time are healthful to the spirit and exalting to God. We answer, we believe a form of sound words must embrace, first of all, the doctrine of *God's being and nature*, we must have the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity. Any doctrine, which hath not the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as equal persons in

one undivided essence, we cast aside as being unsound, for we are sure that such doctrines must be derogatory to God's glory; and if they be so it is enough for us. If any man despise either Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, we despise him, and despise his teachings, and cannot even say to him, "I wish you God speed."

Now, we hold, that a form of sound words must *look upon man aright as well as upon God aright*; it must teach that man is utterly fallen, that he is sinful, and for his sin condemned, and in himself altogether hopeless of salvation. If it exalts man by giving him a character which is not a true one, and clothing him with a spurious robe of righteousness, woven by his own fingers, we reject and discard it utterly.

And next, we think that a doctrine that is sound *must have right views of salvation, as being of the Lord alone*; unless we find in it everlasting, unchanging love, working out a salvation for a people "who were not a people," but were made a people by special grace; unless we find discriminating love, others may say what they will—we cannot consider such a creed to be a form of sound words, unless we discern redeeming mercy openly and boldly taught; unless we see final perseverance, and all those great and glorious truths which are the very bulwarks of our religion, others may embrace the doctrine as being a form of sound words; but we cannot, and we dare not. We love the old system of our forefathers; we love the old truths of Scripture, not because they are old, but because we cannot consider anything to be truth which doth not hold the scriptural view of salvation. Methinks Paul himself, in this very chapter, gives us a form of sound words, where he speaks of "God who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

I need not stop this morning to prove to you that which I have briefly hinted at as a form of sound words, because you believe it, and believe it firmly. I am not about to urge you to receive it, because I know you have already received it; but what I have to say is, "Hold fast," I beseech you, "the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

II. Now let me show you THE NECESSITY OF HOLDING FAST THIS FORM OF SOUND WORD, AND KEEPING IT FOR YOUR OWN SAKE, FOR THE CHURCH'S SAKE, FOR THE WORLD'S SAKE.

First, *for your own sake*, hold it fast, for thereby you will receive ten thousand blessings; you will receive the blessing of peace in your conscience. I protest, before God, that if at any time I ever doubt one of the great things I receive from God, instantly there comes an aching void which the world can never fill, and which I can never get filled until I receive that doctrine again, and believe it with all my heart. When at any time I am cast down and dejected, I always find comfort in reading books which are strong on the doctrines of the faith of the gospel; if I turn to some of them that treat of God's eternal love, revealed to his chosen people in the person of Christ; and if I remember some of the exceeding great and precious

promises made to the elect in their covenant head, my faith at once becomes strong, and my soul, with wings sublime, mounts upwards towards its God. You cannot tell, beloved, if you have never tasted, how sweet is the peace which the doctrines of grace will give to the soul; there is nothing like them. They are—

"A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears."

They are God's sweet lullaby, wherewith he singeth his children to sleep, even in storms. They are God's sheet anchors, which are cast out into the sea, to hold our little vessels fast in the midst of tempests. There is a "peace of God which passeth all understanding," which accrues to a man who is strong believer, but you know the tendency of the day is to give up old land marks and to adopt new ones, and to avow anything rather than the old-fashioned divinity. Well, my dear friends, if any of you like to try new doctrines, I warn you, that if you be the children of God you will soon be sick enough of those new-fangled notions, those newly invented doctrines, which are continually taught. You may, for the first week, be pleased enough with their novelty; you may wonder at their transcendental spirituality, or something else, which entices you on; but you will not have lived on them long, before you will say, "Alas! alas! I have taken in my hands the apples of Sodom; they were fair to look upon, but they are ashes in my mouth." If you would be peaceful, keep fast to the truth, hold fast the form of sound words: so shall "your peace be like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."

"Hold fast the form of sound words," again, let me say, *because it will tend very much to your growth*. He who holds fast the truth will grow faster than he who is continually shifting from doctrine to doctrine. What a mighty number of spiritual weathercocks we have in this world now. We have men who in the morning hear a Calvinistic preacher, and say, "Oh, it is delightful;" in the evening they hear an Arminian, and they say, "Oh, it is just as good; and no doubt they are both true, though one contradicts the other!" The glorious charity of the present day is such, that it believes lies to be as good as truth; and lies and truth have met together and kissed each other; and he that telleth truth is called a bigot, and truth has ceased to be honourable in the world! Ah! beloved, we know better than to profess such unlimited, but false charity; the truth is, we know how to "hold fast the form of sounds words," which has been given to us, because in this way we grow. Changeable people cannot grow much. If you have a tree in your garden plant it in one place to-day, and tomorrow place it somehwere else, how much bigger will it be in six months? It will be dead very likely; or if it does not die, it will not be very much grown; it will be marvellously stunted. So it is with some of you: you plant yourselves there; then you are persuaded that you are not quite right, and you go and plant yourself somewhere else. Why, there are men who are anythingarians; who go dodging about from one denomination to another, and cannot tell what they are; our opinion is, of these people, that they believe nothing, and are good for nothing, and

anybody may have them that likes; we do not consider men to be worth much, unless they have settle principles, and "hold fast the form of sound words." You cannot grow unless you hold it fast. How should I know any more of my faith in ten years' time, if I allowed it to take ten forms in ten years? I should be but a smatterer in each, and know nothing thoroughly of one. But he that hath one faith, and knoweth it to be the faith of God, and holdeth it fast, how strong he becomes in his faith? Each wind or tempest doth but confirm him, as the fierce winds root the oaks, and make them strong, standing firmly in their places; but if I shift and change, I am none the better, but rather the worse. For your own peace sake then, and for your growth, "hold fast the form of sound words."

But, my beloved, I would beseech you to hold it fast for your own sakes, *from a remembrance of the great evils which will follow the contrary course*. If you do not "hold fast the form of sound words," listen to me while I tell you what you will do.

In the first place, *every deviation from truth is a sin*. It is not simply a sin for me to do a wrong act, but it is a sin for me to believe a wrong doctrine. Lately our ministers have absolved us all from obeying God in our judgments; they have told us point blank, many of them, in their drawing-rooms, and some of them in the pulpit, that we shall never be asked in the day of judgment what we believed. We have been told that for our acts we shall be responsible, but for our faith we shall be irresponsible, or something very much like it; they have told us plainly, that the God who made us, although he has authority over our hands, our feet, our eyes and our lips, hath but little authority over our judgments; they have told us, that if we make ever such blunders in divinity, they are no sins, so long as we can live right lives. But is that true? No; the whole man is bound to serve God; and if God gives me a judgment, I am bound to employ that judgment in his service; and if that judgment receive an untruth, it has received stolen goods, and I have sinned as much as if I put forth my hand to take my neighbour's goods. There may be degrees in the sin. If it be a sin of ignorance, it is nevertheless a sin; but it is not so heinous as a sin of negligence, which I fear it is with many. I tell you, beloved, if, for instance, baptism be not by immersion, I commit a sin every time I practice it; and if it be, my brother commits a sin who does not practise it. If Election be true, I am committing a sin if I do not believe it; and if Final Perseverance be true, I am committing a sin before Almighty God, if I do not receive it; and if it be not true, then I sin in embracing what is not scriptural. Error in doctrine is as much a sin as error in practice. In everything we are bound to serve our God with all our might, exercising those powers of judging and believing which he has given unto us; and I warn you, Christians, not to think it is a little thing to hold faith with a feeble hand: it is a sin every time you do aught which makes you waver in the faith of Jesus Christ. Remember, too, that error in doctrine is not only a sin, but a sin which has a great tendency to increase. When a man once in his life believes a wrong thing, it is marvellous how quickly he believes another wrong thing. Once open the door to a false doctrine—Satan says it is but a little one—ay, but he only puts

the little one in like the small end of the wedge, and he means to drive in a larger one; and he will say it is only a little more, and a little more, and a little more. The most damnable heretics who ever perverted the faith of God erred by littles and littles; those who have gone the widest from truth have only gone so by degrees. Whence came the Church of Rome, that mass of abominations? Why, from gradual departures. It did not become abominable at first; it was not the "mother of harlots" all at once; but it first did deck itself in some ornaments, then in others, and by-and-bye it went on to commit its fornications with the kings of the earth. It fell by little and little, and in the same way it separated itself from the truth. For centuries it was a Church of Christ, and it is difficult to say, looking at history, when was the exact point in which it ceased to be numbered with Christian Churches. Take care, Christians, if you commit one error, you cannot tell how many more you will commit.

"Hold fast the form of sound words," *because error in doctrine almost inevitably leads to error in practice*. When a man believes wrongly, he will soon act wrongly. Faith has a great influence on our conduct. As a man's faith, so is he. If you begin to imbibe erroneous doctrines, they soon have an effect on your practice. Keep fast to the bulwarks of your fathers' faith. If you do not, the enemy will make sad havoc with you. "Hold fast the form of sound words which was delivered unto you."

2. And now, *for the good of the Church itself*, I want you all to "hold fast the form of sound words." Would you wish to see the Church prosperous? Would you wish to see it peaceful? Then "hold fast the form of sound words." What is the cause of divisions, schisms, quarrels, and bickerings amongst us? It is not the fault of the truth; it is the fault of the errors. There would have been peace in the Church, entire and perpetual peace, if there had been purity—entire and perpetual purity—in the Church. Going down to Sheerness on Friday, I was told by some one on board that during the late gale several of the ships there had their anchors rent up, and had gone dashing against the other ships, and had done considerable damage. Now, if their anchors had held fast and firm, no damage would have been done. Ask me the cause of the damage which has been done to our churches by the different denominations, and I tell you, it is because all their anchors did not hold fast. If they had held fast by the truth, there would have been no disputing; disputing comes from errors. If there be any ill feeling, you must not trace it to the truth—you must trace it to the error. If the Church had always kept firm to the faith, and had always been united to the great doctrines of the truth, there would have been no disputes. Keep firm to you belief, and you will prevent discord in the Church.

Keep to your faith, I say again, for the Church's sake, *for so you will promote strength in the Church*. I saw lying between Chatham and Sheerness a number of ships that I supposed to be old hulks; and I thought how stupid Government was to let them remain there, and not chop them up for firewood, or something else; but some one said to me, those ships can soon be fitted for service; they look old now, but they only want a little paint, and when the

Admiralty requires them, they will be commissioned and made fit for use. So we have heard some people say, "There are those old doctrines—what good are they?" Wait; there is not a doctrine in God's Bible that has not its use. Those ships that you may think are not wanted, will be useful by-and-bye. So it is with the doctrines of the Bible. Do not say, Break up those old doctrines, you can do without them." Nay, we want them, and we must have them. Some people say, "Why do you preach against Arminians? we have not much to fear from them now." But I like to practice my men against the time comes for action. We are not going to burn our ships; they will be wanted by-and-bye, and when we sail out of harbour, the men will say, "Whence came these old ships?" "Why," we will reply, "they are just the doctrines you thought good for nothing; now we bring them out, and we will make good use of them." Now-a-days we are having new and marvellous hymn-books, full of perfect nonsense; and we are having new theories, and new systems; and they say, "Why be so stringent? our Christian brethren may believe what they like on those points just now;" but as certain as there is a church in this land, they will want our old ships to fight their battles; they may do very well in times of peace, but they will not do in the time of war. They will then need our broadside to support the faith of the gospel, though now they laugh at us. For the strength of the church, my brethren, I bid you "hold fast the form of sound words."

"Well," says one, "I think we ought to hold the truth firmly; but I do not see the necessity for holding *the form* of it; I think we might cut and trim a little, and then our doctrines would be received better." Suppose, my friends, we should have some valuable egg, and some one should say, "Well, now, the shell is good for nothing; there will never be a bird produced by the shell certainly, why not break the shell? I should simply smile in his face and say, "My dear friend, I want the shell to take care of what is inside. I know the vital principle is the most important, but I want the shell to take care of the vital principle." You say, "Hold fast the principle, but do not be so severe about the form. You are an old Puritan, and want to be too strict in religion; let us just alter a few things, and make it a little palatable." My dear friends, do not break the shell; you are doing far more damage than you think. We willingly admit the form is but little; but when men attack the form, what is their object? They do not hate the form; they hate the substance. Keep the substance then, and keep the form too. Not only hold the same doctrines, but hold them in the same shape—just as angular, rough and rugged as they were, for if you do not, it is difficult to change the form and yet to keep fast the substance. "Hold fast *the form* of sound words, which thou has heard of me, in faith and love which is in Jesus Christ."

3. Again, I say, "hold fast the form of sound words," *for the world's sake*. Pardon me when I say that, speaking after the manner of men, I believe that the progress of the gospel has been awfully impeded by the errors of its preachers. I never wonder when I see a Jew an unbeliever in Christianity, for this reason, that the Jew very seldom sees Christianity in its beauty. For hundreds of years what has the Jew thought Christianity to be? Why, pure

idolatry. He has seen the Catholic bow down to blocks of wood and stone; he has seen him prostrating himself before the Virgin Mary and all saints; and the Jew has said, "Ah! this is my watchword—hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is our Lord; I could not be a Christian, for to worship one God is the essential part of my religion." So the heathen, I believe have seen a false system of Christianity, and they have said, "What! is that your Christianity?" and they did not receive it. But I believe that when the gospel is purged from all the rudiments of men, and all the chaff and dust have been winnowed from it, and it is presented in all its naked simplicity, it will be sure to win the day; and I say again, speaking as a man, the gospel might have made a ten thousand fold greater progress, if it had been preached in all its simplicity, instead of that diluted or rather distorted form in which it is commonly proclaimed. If ye would see sinners saved, if ye would see God's elect gathered in, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

III. And now, very briefly, in the third place, LET ME WARN YOU OF TWO DANGERS.

One is, that you will be very much tempted to give up the form of sound words that you hold, *on account of the opposition you will meet with*. I do not prophesy that you will have corporeal persecution, though I know there are some poor creatures here that have to endure that from ungodly husbands, and such like; but you will all of you, in some measure, if you hold the truth, meet with the persecution of the tongue. You will be laughed at: your doctrine will be held up to ridicule, exhibited in a grotesque manner; you will be caricatured in all that you believe, and you will be sometimes tempted to say, "No I do not believe that," though all the while you do. Or if you do not positively say it, you will at times be led to turn a little, because the laughter you cannot stand, and the scoff of the worldly-wise is rather too hard for you. Oh! my beloved, let me warn you against being thus drawn aside. "Hold fast the form of sound words" in the midst of all ridicule. But the greatest obstacle you will have is a sort of slight and cunning, trying to pervert you to the belief, that your doctrine is the same with one which is just the very opposite. The enemy will try to persuade you that something he holds is quite harmless, though opposed to what you hold; and he will say, "You do not want to be broaching these things, that must bring forth controversy; there is a way of squaring your sentiments with mine." And you know we all like to be thought so liberal! The greatest pride in the world now is to be thought liberal in sentiment; and some of us would run a hundred miles, rather than be called a bigot or an Antinomian. I beseech you, be not drawn aside by those who are so ready to subvert your faith, not by openly attacking it, but by insidiously undermining every doctrine, saying, this does not signify, and that does not signify, while all the while they are trying to pull down every castle and fortress wherewith God has guarded his truth and his Church.

IV. And now, in the last place, I am to tell you of THE GREAT HOLDFASTS, WHEREBY YOU ARE TO HOLD FAST THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.

If I might be allowed to mention one or two before coming to those in the text, I should say, in the first place, if you want to hold fast the truth, *seek to get an understanding of it*. A man cannot hold a thing fast, unless he has a good understanding of it. I never want you to have the faith of the collier who was asked what he believed; he said he believed what the Church believed. "Well, but what does the Church believe?" He said the Church believed what he believed, and he believed what the Church believed; and so it went all the way round. We do not want you to have that faith. It may be a very pertinacious faith, a very obstinate faith, but it is a very foolish faith. We want you to understand things, to get a true knowledge of them. The reason why men forsake truth for error is, that they have not really understood that truth; in nine cases out of ten they have not embraced it with enlightened minds. Let me exhort you, parents, as much as lieth in you, to give your children sound instruction in the great doctrines of the gospel of Christ. I believe that what Irving once said is a great truth. He said, "In these modern times you boast and glory, and you think yourselves to be in a high and noble condition, because you have your Sabbath-schools and British-schools, and all kinds of schools for teaching youth. I tell you," he said, "that philanthropic and great as these are, they are the ensigns of your disgrace; they show that your land is not a land where parents teach their children at home. They show you more is a want of parental instruction; and though they be blessed things, these Sabbath-schools, they are indications of something wrong, for it we all taught our children there would be no need of strangers to say to our children 'Know the Lord.'"

I trust you will never give up that excellent puritanical habit of catechising your children at home. Any father or mother who entirely gives up a child to the teaching of another has made a mistake. There is no teacher who wishes to absolve a parent from what he ought to do himself. He is an assistant, but he was never intended to be a substitute. Teach your children; bring up your old catechisms again, for they are after all blessed means of instruction, and the next generation shall outstrip those that have gone before it; for the reason why many of you are weak in the faith is this, you did not receive instruction in your youth in the great things of the gospel of Christ. If you had, you would have been so grounded, and settled, and firm in the faith, that nothing could by any means have moved you. I beseech you, then, understand truth, and then you will be more likely to hold fast by it.

But, then, Christian men, above all things, if you would hold fast the truth, *pray yourselves right into it*. The way to get a doctrine is to pray till you get it. An old divine says, "I have lost many things I learned in the house of God, but I never lost anything I ever learned in the closet." That which a man learns on his knees, with his Bible open, he will never forget. Well, have you ever bowed your knees, and said, "Open thou mind eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law?" If you have seen that wondrous thing you will never forget it. He that prays himself into a truth, will never be got out of it by the very devil himself, though he were to put on the garb of an angel of light. Pray yourselves into the truth.

But the two great holdfasts are here given—*faith and love*. If ye would hold the truth fast, put your faith in Jesus Christ, and have an ardent love towards him.

Believe the truth. Do not pretend to believe it, but believe it thoroughly. And he who does believe it, and fixes his faith first in Christ, and then in all Christ says, will not be likely to let it go. Why, we do not believe religion, most of us. We pretend to believe it, but we do not believe it with all our heart and all our soul, with all our might and all our strength—not with that "faith which is in Christ Jesus;" for if we did, come storms, come trials, like Luther of old, we should not flinch because of persecution, but stand fast in the evil day, having our faith fixed upon a rock.

And then the second holdfast is *love*. Love Christ and love Christ's truth because it is Christ's truth, for Christ's sake, and if you love the truth you will not let it go. It is very hard to turn a man away from the truth he loves. "Oh!" says one, "I cannot argue with you about it, but I cannot give it up: I love it, and cannot live without it; it is a part of myself, woven into my very nature; and though my opponent says that bread is not bread, and I cannot prove that it is, yet I know I go and eat it; it is wonderfully like it to me, and it takes away my hunger. He says that stream is not a pure stream; I cannot prove that it is, but I go and drink of it, and find it the river of the water of life to my soul." And he tells me that my gospel is not a true one: well, it comforts me, it sustains me in my trials, it helps me to conquer sin and to keep down my evil passions, and brings me near to God, and if my gospel be not a true one, I wonder what sort of thing a true one is: mine is wonderfully like it, and I cannot suppose that a true gospel would produce better effects. That is the best thing to do, to believe the Word, to have so full a belief in it, that the enemy cannot pull you away. He may try to do it, but you will say,—

"Amidst temptations sharp and long,
My soul to the same refuge flies;
Faith is my anchor, firm and strong
When tempests blow or billows rise."

Hold on then, Christian, to "faith and love which are by Christ Jesus"—two blessed holdfasts, wherewith we grasp the truth.

And now, brethren and sisters. I pray that my Master will enable you to see the importance of what I have uttered. Perhaps you may not think it so important now, especially those of you who are young; but there are some here, the fathers of this church, who will tell you that the older they grow and the longer they live, the more they find truth to be valuable. They may perhaps in their youth have had a little radicalism in them with regard to truth, but they are conservative in their regard to the truth, we began to be conservative as soon as we believed it, and held it fast and never let it go. I think the chief fault of the present day is, that in seeking to be liberal we do not hold the truth firmly enough. I met some time ago with the case of an eminent minister in the gospel, a brother whom I respect and esteem,

who preached a sermon from the text, "Prove all things." A young man was there who was professedly a believer in Christianity; but such was the style in which the subject was handled, that after hearing that sermon he went home and bought some infidel works, and the consequence is, that he has become entirely apostate even from virtue itself, and has forsaken everything that he once held to be true. I say, send your anchor right down, young Christian, and let whatever may come against you, hold on still by that truth; and you may yet even then "prove all things." But while you are doing it, remember to "hold fast that which is good." Do not "prove all things" by giving up that which is good to do it.

Now such of you as know not the Lord, if you ever are saved, let me tell you that the most likely place for you to meet with salvation is under a pure gospel ministry. Therefore there is a lesson for you. Attend where the gospel is preached.

Again: the most likely way for you ever to receive God's grace is to believe God's truths. Never kick against God's doctrines, but receive them. And I have one thing to say to thee this morning, if in thy heart, poor sinner, thou canst say, "I believe God's gospel to be a glorious gospel," thou art not far from something else. If thou canst say, "I submit to all its demands, I believe God just if he destroys me, and if he saves me, it will be of his sovereign mercy only," then, sinner, there are good hopes of thee; thou hast proceeded some way on the road to heaven. If thou canst but do one thing more, and say, "Though he slay me yet I trust in him," and if thou canst come to the cross of Christ, and say, "Jesus, I love thy gospel and I love thy truth; if I perish, I will perish believing all thy truth, I will perish clasping thy cross; if I die, I will die owning that thou art a just and gracious God, and still in my poor way, holding fast the form of sound words," I tell thee, poor soul, God will never damn thee. If thou dost believe in Jesus Christ, and holdest fast his words, he will look upon thee in love, he will say, "Poor soul! though he does not know that these truths are his, yet he thinks them precious; though he dares not hope that they belong to him, yet he will fight for them; though he does not know that he is really a soldier of the cross, chosen of me ere time began, yet see how valiantly he strives for me;" and the Lord will say, "Poor soul, thou lovest the things that thou thinkest are not thine own—I will make thee rejoice in them as thine own, by my grace; thou lovest election, though thou thinkest thou art not elect—that is an evidence that thou art mine." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved."

And now, my brethren, stand fast, I beseech you. If my tears, if my bended knees, if my cries, yea, if my blood could prevail with you to lay to heart what I have said this morning, here should be tears, and cries, and blood too—if I could but make you all hold fast in these evil, perilous times. Hold fast, ah! with the tenacity of the dying hand of the sinking mariner—"Hold fast," I beseech you, "the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."

God Alone the Salvation of his People

A Sermon
(No. 80)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, May 18, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"He only is my rock and my salvation."—Psalm 92:2.

HOW noble a title. So sublime, suggestive, and overpowering. "MY ROCK." It is a figure so divine, that to God alone shall it ever be applied.

Look on yon rocks and wonder at their antiquity, for from their summits a thousand ages look down upon us. When this gigantic city was as yet unfounded they were grey with age; when our humanity had not yet breathed the air, 'tis said that these were ancient things; they are the children of departed ages. With awe we look upon these aged rocks, for they are among nature's first-born. You discover, embedded in their bowels, the remnants of unknown worlds, of which, the wise may guess, but which, nevertheless, they must fail to know, unless God himself should teach them what hath been before them. You regard the rock with reverence, for you remember what stories it might tell, if it had a voice; of how through igneous and aqueous agency, it has been tortured into the shape it now assumes. Even so is our God pre-eminently ancient. His head and his hair are white like wool, as white as snow, for he is "the ancient of days," and we are always taught in Scripture to remember, that he is "without beginning of years." Long ere creation was begotten, "from everlasting to everlasting," he was God.

"My rock!" What a history the rock might give you of the storms to which it has been exposed; of the tempests which have raged in the ocean at its base, and of the thunders which have disturbed the skies above its head; while it, itself, has stood unscathed by tempests, and unmoved by the buffettings of storms. So with our God. How firm hath he stood—how steadfast hath he been—though the nations have reviled him, and "the kings of the earth have taken counsel together!" By merely standing still he hath broken the ranks of the enemy, without even stretching forth his hand! With motionless grandeur like a rock he hath broken the waves, and scattered the armies of his enemies, driving them back in confusion. Look at the rock again: see how firm and unmoved it stands! It doth not stray from place to place, but it abideth fast for evermore. Other things have changed, islands have been drowned beneath the sea, and continents have been shaken; but see, the rock stands as steadfast as if it were the very foundation of the whole world, and could not move till the wreck of creation, or the loosening of the bands of nature. So with God: how faithful he is in his promises! how unalterable in his decrees! how unswerving! how unchanging!

The rock is immutable, nought hath been worn from it. Yon old granite peak hath gleamed in the sun, or worn the white veil of winter snow—it hath sometimes worshipped God with bare uncovered head, and at other times the clouds furnished it with veiling wings, that like a cherub, it might adore its Maker, but yet itself hath stood unchanged. The frosts of winter have not destroyed it, nor have the heats of summer melted it. It is the same with God. Lo, he is my rock; he is the same, and his kingdom shall have no end. Unchangeable he is in his being, firm in his own sufficiency; he keeps himself immutably the same; and "therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The ten thousand uses of the rock, moreover, are full of ideas as to what God is. You see the fortress standing on a high rock, up which the clouds themselves can scarcely climb, and up whose precipices the assault cannot be carried, and the armed cannot travel, for the besieged laugh at them from their eminence. So is our God a sure defence; and we shall not be moved if he hath "set our feet upon a rock, and established our goings." Many a giant rock is a source of admiration from its elevation; for on the summit we can see the world outspread below, like some small map; we mark the river or broadly spreading stream, as if it were a vein of silver inlaid in emerald. We discover the nations beneath our feet, "like drops in a bucket," and the islands are "very little things" in the distance, while the sea itself seems but a basin of water, held in the hand of a mighty giant. The mighty God is such a rock; we stand on him, and look down on the world, counting it to be a mean thing. We have climbed to Pisgah's top, from the summit of which we can see across this world of storms and troubles to the bright land of spirits—that world unknown to ear or eye, but which God hath revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. This mighty rock is our refuge, and it is our high observatory, from which we see the unseen, and have the evidence of things which as yet, we have not enjoyed. I need not, however, stop to tell you all about a rock, we might preach for a week upon it; but we give you that for your meditation during the week. "*He is my rock*." How glorious a thought! How safe am I, and how secure: and how may I rejoice in the fact, that when I wade through Jordan's stream he will be my rock! I shall not walk upon a slippery foundation, but I shall tread on him who cannot betray my feet; and I may sing, when I am dying, "He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

We now leave the thought of the rock, and proceed to the subject of our discourse, which is this: that God alone is the salvation of his people.

"He ONLY is my rock and my salvation."

We shall notice, first, *the great doctrine, that God only is our salvation*; secondly, *the great experience, to know and to learn that "he only is my rock and my salvation"*; and, thirdly, *the great duty*, which you may guess at, *which is, to give all the glory and all the honor, and place all our faith on him who "only is our rock and our salvation*."

I. The first thing is, THE GREAT DOCTRINE—that God "only is our rock and our salvation." If any one should ask us what we would choose for our motto, as preachers of

the gospel, we think we should reply, "God only is our salvation." The late lamented Mr. Denham has put at the foot of his portrait, a most admirable text, "Salvation is of the Lord>' Now, that is just an epitome of Calvinism; it is the sum and the substance of it. If any one should ask you what you mean by a Calvinist, you may reply, "He is one who says, *salvation is of the Lord*." I cannot find in Scripture any other doctrine than this. It is the essence of the Bible. "He *only* is my rock and my salvation." Tell me anything that departs from this and it will be a heresy; tell me a heresy, and I shall find its essence here, that it has departed from this great, this fundamental, this rocky truth, "God is my rock and my salvation." What is the heresy of Rome, but the addition of something to the perfect merits of Jesus Christ—the bringing in of the works of the flesh, to assist in our justification? and what is that heresy of Arminianism but the secret addition of something to the complete work of the Redeemer? You will find that every heresy, if rough to the touchstone, will discover itself here, it departs from this, "He only is my rock and my salvation."

Let us now explain this doctrine fully. By the term "salvation" here, I understand not simply regeneration and conversion, but something more. I do not reckon that to be salvation which regenerates me, and then puts me in such a position that I may fall out of the covenant and be lost; I cannot call that a bridge which only goes half-way over the stream; I cannot call that salvation, which does not carry me all the way to heaven, wash me perfectly clean, and put me among the glorified who sing constant hosannahs around the throne. By salvation, then if I may divide it into parts, I understand deliverance, preservation continually through life, sustentation, and the gathering up of the whole in the perfecting of the saints in the person of Jesus Christ at last.

1. By salvation, I understand *deliverance* from the house of bondage, wherein by nature I am born, and being brought out into the liberty wherewith Christ makes us free, together with a putting "on a rock, and establishing my goings." This I understand to be wholly of God. And I think I am right in that conclusion, because I find in Scripture that man is dead; and how can a dead man assist in his own resurrection? I find that man is utterly depraved, and hates the divine change. How can a man, then, work that change which he himself hates? I find man to be ignorant of what it is to be born again, and like Nicodemus, asking the foolish question, "How can a man enter again into his mother's womb, and be born?" I cannot conceive that a man can do that which he does not understand: and if he does not know what it is to be born again, he cannot make himself to be born again. No. I believe man to be utterly powerless in the first work of his salvation. He cannot break his chains, for they be not chains of iron, but chains of his own flesh and blood; he must first break his own heart before he can break the fetters that bind him. And how should man break his own heart? What hammer is that which I can use upon my own soul to break it, or what fire can I kindle which can dissolve it? Nay, deliverance is of God alone. The doctrine is affirmed continually to Scripture; and he who doth not believe it doth not receive affirmed

continually in Scripture; and he who doth not believe it doth not receive God's truth. Deliverance is of God alone; "Salvation is of the Lord."

2. And if we are delivered and made alive in Christ, still *preservation* is of the Lord alone. If I am prayerful, God makes me prayerful: if I have graces, God gives me graces; if I have fruits, God gives me fruits; if I hold on in a consistent life, God holds me on in a consistent life. I do nothing whatever towards my own preservation, except what God himself first does in me. Whatever I have, all my goodness is of the Lord alone. Wherein I sin, that is my own; but wherein I act rightly, that is of God, wholly and completely. If I have repulsed an enemy, his strength nerved my arm. Did I strike a foeman to the ground? His strength sharpened my sword and gave me courage to strike the blow. Do I preach his word? It is not I, but grace that is in me? Do I live to God a holy life? It is not I, but Christ that liveth in me? Am I sanctified? I did not sanctify myself; God's Holy Spirit sanctifies me. Am I weaned from the world? I am weaned by *God's* chastisements. Do I grow in knowledge? The great Instructor teaches me. I find in God all I want; but I find in myself nothing. "He only is my rock and my salvation."

3. And again: *sustentation* also is absolutely requisite. We need sustentation in providence for our bodies, and sustentation in grace for our souls. Providential mercies are wholly from the Lord. It is true that rain falls from heaven, and waters the earth, and "maketh it bring forth and bud, that there may be seed, for the sower, and bread for the eater;" but out of whose hand cometh the rain, and from whose fingers do the dew drops distil? It is true, the sun shines, and makes the plants grow, and bud, and bring forth the blossom, and his heat ripens the fruit upon the tree; but who gives the sun his light, and who scatters the genial heat from him? It is true, I work and toil; this brow sweats; these hands are weary; I cast myself upon my bed, and there I rest, but I do not "sacrifice to mine own drag," nor do I ascribe my preservation to my own might. Who makes these sinews strong? who makes these lungs like iron, and who makes these nerves of steel? "God only is the rock of my salvation." He only is the salvation of my body and the salvation of my soul. Do I feed on the word? That word would be no food for me unless the Lord made it food for my soul, and helped me to feed upon it. Do I live on the manna which comes down from heaven? What is that manna, but Jesus Christ himself incarnate, whose body and whose blood I eat and drink. Am I continually receiving fresh increase of might? Where do I gather my might? My salvation is of him: without him I can do nothing. As a branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can I except I abide in him.

4. Then if we gather the three thoughts in one. *The perfection* we shall soon have, when we shall stand yonder, near God's throne, will be wholly of the Lord. That bright crown which shall sparkle on our brow, like a constellation of brilliant stars, shall have been fashioned only by our God. I go to a land, but it is a land which the plough of earth hath never upturned, though it be greener than earth's best pastures, and though it be richer than all

her harvests ever saw. I go to a building of more gorgeous architecture than man hath builded; it is not of mortal architecture; it is "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens". All I shall know in heaven, will be given by the Lord; and I shall say, when at last I appear before him,—

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

II. And now, beloved, we come to THE GREAT EXPERIENCE. The greatest of all experience, I take it, is to know that "he only is our rock and our salvation." We have been insisting upon a doctrine; but doctrine is nothing unless proved in our experience. Most of God's doctrines are only to be learned by practice—by taking them out into the world, and letting them bear the wear and tear of life. If I ask any Christian in this place whether this doctrine is true, if he has had any deep experience, he will reply, "True! ay, that it is; not one word in God's Bible is more true than that, for indeed salvation is of God alone." "He only is my rock and my salvation." But, beloved, it is very hard to have such an experimental knowledge of the doctrine that we never depart from it. It is very hard to believe that "salvation is of the Lord." There are times when we put our confidence in something else but God, and sin by linking hand-in-hand with God—something besides him. Let me now dwell a little upon the experience which will bring us to know that salvation is of God alone.

The true Christian will confess that salvation is of God alone *effectively*; that is, that "he works in him to will and to do of his own pleasure." Looking back on my past life, I can see that the dawning of it all was of God; of God effectively. I took no torch with which to light the sun; but the sun did light me. I did not commence my spiritual life—no, I rather kicked and struggled against the things of the Spirit: when he drew me, for a time, I did not run after him: there was a natural hatred in my soul of everything holy and good. Wooings were lost upon me—warnings were cast to the wind—thunders were despised; and as for the whispers of his love, they were rejected as being less than nothing and vanity. But, sure I am, I can say now, speaking on behalf of myself, and of all who know the Lord, "He only is my salvation, and your salvation too." It was he who turned your heart, and brought you down on your knees. You can say in very deed, then—

"Grace taught my soul to pray,
Grace made my eyes o'erflow."

And coming to this moment, you can say,—

"'Tis grace has kept me to this day,
And will not let me go."

I remember, when I was coming to the Lord, I thought I was doing it all myself, and though I sought the Lord earnestly, I had no idea the Lord was seeking me. I do not think

the young convert is at first aware of him. One day when I was sitting in the house of God, I was not thinking much about the man's sermon, for I did not believe it. The thought struck me, "*How did you come to be a Christian*?" I sought the Lord. "*But how did you come to seek the Lord*?" The thought flashed across my mind in a moment—I should not have sought him unless there had been some previous influence in my mind to *make me* seek him. I am sure you will not be many weeks a Christian, certainly not many months, before you will say, "I ascribe my change wholly to God." I desire to make this my constant confession. I know there are some who preach one gospel in the morning, and another at night—who preach a good sound gospel in the morning, because they are preaching to saints, but preach falsehood in the evening, because they are preaching to sinners. But there is no necessity to preach truth at one time and falsehood at another. "The word of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul." There no need to put anything else in it, in order to bring sinners to the Saviour. But, my brothers, you must confess that "Salvation is of the Lord." When you turn back to the past, you must say, "My Lord, whatever I have, thou gavest it me. Have I the wings of faith? I was a wingless creature once. Have I the eyes of faith? I was a blind creature once; I was dead, till thou madest me alive; blind, till thou openedst my eyes; my heart was a loathsome dunghill, but thou puttest pearls there, if pearls there be, for pearls are not the produce of dunghills; thou hast given me all I have;" And so, if you look at the present, if you experience be that of a child of God, you will trace all to him; not only all you have had in the past, but all you have now. Here you are, sitting in your pew this morning; now, I just want you to review where you stand. Beloved, do you think you would be where you are now if it were not for divine grace? Only think what a strong temptation you had yesterday, they did "consult to cast you down from your excellency;" perhaps you were served like I am sometimes. The devil sometimes seems to drag me right to the edge of a precipice of sin by a kind of enchantment, making me forget the danger by the sweetness which surrounds it; and just when he would push me down, I see the yawning gulph beneath me, and some strong hang put out, and I hear a voice saying, "I will preserve him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom." Do you not feel, that ere this sun goes down you will be damned, if grace does not keep you? Have you anything good in your heart that grace did not give you? If I thought I had a grace that did not come from God, I would trample it beneath my feet, as not being a godly virtue; I would guess it to be but a counterfeit, for it could not be right if it did not come from the mint of glory. It may look ever so much like the right thing: but it is certainly bad unless it came from God. Christian! canst thou say, of all things past and present, "He only is my rock and my salvation?"

And now look forward to the future. Man! think how many enemies thou hast; how many rivers thou hast to cross, how many mountains to climb, how many dragons to fight, how many lions' teeth to escape, how many fires to pass through, how many floods to wade. What thinkest thou, man? Can thy salvation be of anything except of God! Oh! if I had not

that everlasting arm to lean upon, I would cry, "Death! hurl me anywhere; anywhere out of the world." If I had not that one hope, that one trust, bury me ten thousand fathoms deep beneath creation, where my being might be forgotten! Oh! put me far away, for I am miserable if I have not God to help me all my journey through. Are you strong enough to fight with one of your enemies without your God? I trow not. A little silly maid may cast a Peter down, and cast you down too, if God do not keep you. I beseech you, remember this; I hope you know it by experience in the past; but try to remember it in the future, wherever you go, "Salvation is of the Lord." Do not get looking at your heart, do not get examining to see whether you have anything to recommend you, but remember, "Salvation is of the Lord." "He only is my rock and my salvation."

Effectively, it all comes of God; and I am sure we must add, *meritoriously*. We have experienced that salvation is wholly of him. What merits have I? If I were to scrape together all I ever had, and then come to you and beg all you have got, I should not collect the value of a farthing among you all. We have heard of some Catholic, who said that there was a balance struck in his favour between his good works and his bad ones, and therefore he went to heaven. But there is nothing of the sort here; I have seen many people, many kinds of Christians, and many odd Christians, but I never yet met with one who said he had any merits of his own when he came to close quarters. We have heard of perfect men, and we have heard of men perfectly foolish, and we have thought the characters perfectly alike. Have we any merits of our own? I am sure we have not, if we have been taught of God. Once we thought we had; but there came a man called Conviction into our house one night, and took away our gloryings. Ah! we are vile still. I don't know whether Cowper said quite right, when he said,—

"Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine—
Nor hoped but in thy righteousness divine!"

I think he made a mistake, for most Christians get trusting in self at times, but we are forced to own that "salvation is of the Lord," if we consider it meritoriously.

My dear friends, have you experienced this in your own hearts? Can you say "amen" to that, as it goes round? Can you say, "I know that God is my helper?" I dare say you can, most of you; but you will not say it so well as you will by-and-bye, if God teach you. We *believe* it, when we commence the Christian life; we *know* it afterwards; and the longer we live, the more we find it to be the truth—"Cursed is he that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm, but blessed is he who trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is." In fact, the crown of Christian experience is to be delivered from all trust in self or man, and to be brought to rely wholly and simply on Jesus Christ. I say, Christian, thy highest and

noblest experience is not to be groaning about thy corruption, is not to be crying about thy wanderings, but is to say—

"With all my sin, and care, and woe,
His Spirit will not let me go."

"Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." I like what Luther says: "I would run into Christ's arms if he had a drawn sword in his hands." Trust is called venturesome believing; but as an old divine says, there is no such thing as venturesome believing; we cannot venture on Christ; it is no venture at all; there is no hap-hazard in the least degree. It is a holy and heavenly experience, when we can go to Christ, amid the storm, and say, "Oh! Jesus, I believe I am covered by thy blood;" when we can feel ourselves to be all over rages, and yet can say, "Lord, I believe that through Christ Jesus, ragged though I am, I am fully absolved." A saint's faith is little faith when he believes as a saint; but a sinner's faith is true faith when he believes as a sinner. The faith, not of a sinless being, but the faith of a sinful creature—that is the faith which delights God. Go, then, Christian: ask that this may be thy experience, to learn each day, "He only is my rock and my salvation."

III. And now, in the third place, we speak of THE GREAT DUTY. We have had the great experience; now we must have the great duty.

The great duty is—if God only be our rock, and we know it, are we not bound to put all our trust in God, to give all our love *to* God? If God be all I have, sure, all I have shall be God's. If God alone is my hope, sure, I will put all my hope upon God; if the love of God is alone that which saves, sure, he shall have my love alone. Come, let me talk to thee, Christian, for a little while, I want to warn thee not to have two Gods, two Christs, two friends, two husbands, two great Fathers; not to have two fountains, two rivers, two suns, or two heavens, but to have only one. I want to bid thee now, as God hath put all salvation in himself, to bring all thyself unto God. Come, let me talk to thee!

In the first place, Christian, *never join anything with Christ*. Wouldest thou stitch thy old rags into the new garment he giveth? Wouldest thou put new wine into old bottles? Wouldst thou put Christ and self together? Thou mightest as well yoke an elephant and an emmet; they could never plough together. What! wouldst thou put an archangel in the same harness with a worm, and hope that they would drag thee through the sky! *How inconsistent*! how foolish! What! thyself and Christ? Sure, Christ would smile; nay, Christ would weep, to think of such a thing! Christ and man together? CHRIST AND CO? No, it never shall be; he will have nothing of the sort; he must be all. Note how inconsistent it would be to put anything else with him; and note, again, *how wrong* it would be. Christ will never bear to have anything else places with him. He calls them adulterers and fornicators that love anything else but him; he will have thy whole heart to trust in him, thy whole soul to love him, and thy whole life to honor him. He will not come into thy house, till thou puttest all the

keys at his girdle; he will not allow thee to give him all the keys but one; he will not come till thou givest him garret, parlour, drawing-room, and cellar too. He will make thee sing—

"Yet if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call,
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I should give him all."

Mark thee, Christian; it is a sin to keep anything from God.

Again, *Christ is very grieved* if you do it. Assuredly you do not desire to grieve him who shed his blood for you. Surely there is not one child of God here who would like to vex his blessed elder Brother. There cannot be one soul redeemed by blood who would like to see those sweet blessed eyes of our best beloved bedewed with tears. I know ye will not grieve your Lord; will ye? But I tell you ye will vex his noble spirit if ye love aught but him; for he is so fond of you, that he is jealous of your love. It is said, concerning his Father, that he is "a jealous God," and he is a jealous Christ you have to deal with; therefore, put not your trust in chariots, stay not yourselves in horses, but say, "He only is my rock and my salvation."

I beg thee, mark also, one reason why thou shouldest not look at anything else; and that is, if thou lookest at anything else *thou canst not see Christ so well*. "Oh!" thou sayest, "I can see Christ in his mercies;" but thou canst not see him so well there, as if you viewed his person. No man can look at two objects at the same time, and see both distinctly. You may afford a wink for the world, and a wink for Christ; but you cannot give Christ a whole look and a whole eye, and the world half an eye too. I beseech thee, Christian, do not try it. If thou lookest on the world, it will be a speck in thine eye; if thou trustest in anything but him, betwixt two stools thou wilt come to the ground, and a fearful fall wilt thou have. Therefore, Christian, look thou only on him. "He only is my rock and my salvation."

Mark thee, again, Christian, I would bid thee never put anything else with Christ; for as sure as ever thou dost, *thou wilt have the whip for it*. There never was a child of God who harboured one of the Lord's traitors in his heart, but he always had a charge laid against him. God has sent out a search warrant against all of us; and do you know what he has told his officers to search for? He has told them to search for all our lovers, all our treasures, and all our helpers. God cares less about our sins as sins, than he does about our sins, or even our virtues, as usurpers of his throne. I tell thee, there is nothing in the world thou settest thy heart upon that shall not be hung upon a gallows higher than Haman's. If thou lovest anything but Christ, he will make it to do penance; if thou lovest thy house better than Christ, he will make it a prison to thee; if thou lovest thy child better than Christ, he will make it an adder in thy breast to sting thee; if thou lovest thy daily provisions better than Christ, he will make thy drink bitter and thy food like gravel stones in thy mouth, till thou comest to live wholly on him. There is nothing which thou hast, which he cannot turn into

a rod, if thou lovest it better than him; and rest assured he will do so, if thou makest it anything to rob thy Christ.

And, mark thee, once again, if thou lookest at anything save God, *thou wilt soon go into sin*. If the mariner will steer by the pole-star he shall go to the north; but if he steers sometimes by the pole-star and sometimes by another constellation, he knoweth not where he shall go. If thou dost not keep thine eye wholly on Christ, thou wilt soon be wrong. If thou ever dost give up the secret of thy strength, namely, thy trust I Christ; if thou ever dalliest with the Delilah of the world, and lovest thyself more than Christ, the Philistines will be upon thee, and shear thy locks, and take thee out to grind at the mill, till thy God give thee deliverance by means of thy hair growing once more, and bringing thee to trust wholly in the Saviour. Keep thine eye, then, fixed on Jesus; for if thou dost turn away from him, how ill wilt thou fare! I bid thee, Christian, beware of thy graces; beware of thy virtues; beware of thy experience; beware of thy prayers; beware of thy hope; beware of thy humility. There is not one of thy graces which may not damn thee, if they are left alone to themselves. Old Brooks saith, when a woman hath a husband, and that husband giveth unto her some choice rings, she putteth them on her fingers; and if she should be so foolish as to love the rings better than her husband; if she should care only for the jewels, and forget him who gave them; how angry would the husband be, and how foolish she would be herself! Christian! I warn thee, beware of thy graces; for they may prove more dangerous to thee than thy sins. I warn thee of everything in this world; for everything has this tendency, especially a high estate. If we have a comfortable maintenance, we are most likely not to look so much to God. Ah! Christian, with an independent fortune, take care of thy money; beware of thy gold and silver; it will curse thee if it comes between thee and thy God. Always keep thine eye to the cloud, and not to the rain,—to the river, and not to the ship that floateth on its bosom. Look thee not to the sunbeam, but to the sun; trace thy mercies to God, and say perpetually, "He only is my rock and my salvation."

Lastly, I bid thee once more to keep thine eye wholly on God, and on nothing in thyself, *because what art thou now, and what wast thou ever, but a poor damned sinner if thou wert out of Christ*! I had been preaching the other day all the former part of the sermon, as a minister; presently I thought I was a poor sinner, and then, how differently I began to speak! The best sermons I ever preach are those I preach, not in my ministerial capacity, but as a poor sinner preaching to sinners. I find there is nothing like a minister recollecting that he is nothing but a poor sinner, after all. It is said of the peacock, that, although he has fine feathers, he is ashamed of his black feet: I am sure that we ought to be ashamed of ours. However gay our feathers may appear at times, we ought to think of what we should be if grace did not help us. Oh! Christian, keep thine eye on Christ, for out of him thou art no better than the damned in hell; there is not a demon in the pit but might put thee to the blush, if thou art out of Christ. Oh that thou wouldest be humble! Recollect what an evil

heart thou hast within thee, even when grace is there. Thou hast grace—God loves thee; but recollect, thou hast a foul cancer in thy heart still. God has removed much of thy sin, but still the corruption remains. We feel that though the old man is somewhat choked, and the fire somewhat damped by the sweet waters of the Holy Spirit's influence, yet it would blaze up worse than before, if God did not keep it under. Let us not glory in ourselves, then. The slave need not be proud of his descent: he has the brand-mark upon his hand. Out upon pride! Away with it! Let us rest wholly and solely upon Jesus Christ.

Now, just one word to the ungodly—you who do not know Christ. You have heard what I have told you, that salvation is of Christ alone. Is not that a good doctrine for you? For you have not got anything, have you? You are a poor, lost, ruined sinner. Hear this, then, sinner: thou hast nothing, and thou dost not want anything, for Christ has all. "Oh!" sayest thou, "I am a bond slave." Ah! but he has got the redemption. "Nay," sayest thou, "I am a black sinner." Yes, but he has got the bath that can wash thee white. Sayest thou, "I am leprous?" Yes, but the good Physician can take thy leprosy away. Sayest thou, "I am condemned?" Ay, but he has got the acquittal warrant signed and sealed, if thou dost believe in him. Sayest thou, "But I am dead?" Ay, but Christ has life, and he can give thee life. Thou wantest nothing of thine own—nothing to rely on but Christ; and if there be a man, woman or child here, who is prepared to say solemnly after me, with his or her heart, "I take Christ to be my Saviour, with no powers and no merits of my own to trust in; I see my sins, but I see that Christ is higher than my sins; I see my guilt, but I believe that Christ is mightier than my guilt;"—I say, if any one of you can say that, you may go away and rejoice, for you are heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

I must tell you a singular story, which was related at our church meeting, because there may be some very poor people here who may understand the way of salvation by it. One of the friends had been to see a person who was about to join the church; and he said to him, "Can you tell me what you would say to a poor sinner who came to ask you the way of salvation?" "well," said he, "I do not know—I think I can hardly tell you; but it so happened that a case of this sort did occur yesterday. A poor woman came into my shop, and I told her the way; but it was in such a homely manner that I don't like to tell you." "Oh, yes, tell me; I should like to hear it," Well, she is a poor woman, who is always pawning her things, and by-and-bye she redeems them again. I did not know how to tell her better than this. I said to her:—'Look here; your soul is in pawn to the devil; Christ has paid the redemption money; you take faith for your ticket, and so you will get your soul out of pawn.'" Now, that was the most simple, but the most excellent way of imparting a knowledge of salvation to this woman. It is true our souls were pawned to Almighty vengeance; we were poor, and could not pay the redemption money; but Christ came and paid it all, and faith is the ticket which we use to get our souls out of pawn. We need not take a single penny with us; we have only to say, "Here, Lord, I believe in Jesus Christ. I have brought no money to pay for

my soul, for there is the ticket; the money has been paid long ago. This is written in thy word: 'The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.'" If thou takest that ticket, thou wilt get thy soul out of pawn; and thou wilt say, "I'm forgiven, I'm forgiven, I'm a miracle of grace." May God bless you, my friends, for Christ's sake.

The God of the Aged

A Sermon
(No. 81)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, May 25, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

The substance of which was also delivered at Stambourne, Essex, on the commemoration of the Jubilee of his Grandfather, the REV. JAMES SPURGEON, *Tuesday 27th May. 1856.*

"Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you. I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you."—Isaiah 46:4.

THOSE will be peculiar circumstances under which I shall stand up to address the people next Tuesday; circumstances which perhaps seldom occur,—possibly may never have occurred before. It might have been more in order that the aged minister should himself address the people; but nevertheless, as it is his own choice, so it must be; and I shall draw my consolation from the third verse, where it is declared, that though God be the God of the close of our life, yet he is also the God of its beginning. He carries us from the very womb; therefore the child may trust in God, as well as the grey head; and he who giveth special blessings to the hoary hairs does also crown the head of the young with his perpetual favor, if they be his children.

"Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."

Will you allow me to expound *the doctrine of this text*, and then to show you how *it is carried out, especially in the time of old age*?

I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE TEXT I hold to be, *the constancy of God's love, its perpetuity, and its unchangeable nature*. God declares that he is not simply the God of the young saint; that he is not simply the God of the middle-aged saint: but that he is the God of the saints in all their ages from the cradle to the tomb. "Even to old age I am he;" or, as Lowth beautifully and more properly translates it: "Even to old age I am the same, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you."

The doctrine, then is twofold: that God *himself is the same*, whatever may be our age; and that *God's dealings towards us*, both in providence and in grace, his carryings and his deliverings, *are alike unchanged*.

As to the first part of the doctrine, that *God himself is unchanged* when we come to old age, surely I have no need to prove that. Abundant testimonies of Scripture declare God to be an immutable being, upon whose brow there is no furrow of old age, and whose strength is not enfeebled by the lapse of ages; but if we need proofs, we might look even abroad on nature, and we should from nature guess that God would not change during the short period of our mortal life. Seemeth it unto me a hard thing, that God should be the same for

seventy years, when I find things in nature that have retained the same impress and image for many more years? Behold the sun! The sun that led our fathers to their daily labour, lighteth us still; and the moon by night is unchanged,—the self-same satellite, glittering with the light of her master, the sun. Are not the rocks the same? And are there not many ancient trees, which remain well night the same for multitudes of years, and outlive centuries? Is not the earth, for the most part, the same? Have the stars lost their light? Do not the clouds still pour their rain upon the earth? Does not the ocean still beat with its one great pulse of ebb and flow? Do not the winds still howl, or breathe in gentle gales upon the earth? Doth not the sun still shine? Do not plants grow as heretofore? Hath the harvest changed? Hath God forgotten his covenant of day and night? Hath he yet brought another flood upon the earth? Doth it not still stand in the water and out of the water? Surely, then, if changing nature, made to pass away in a few more years, and to be "dissolved with fervent heat," remains the same through the cycles of seventy years, may we not believe that God, who is greater than nature, the creator of all worlds, would still remain the same God, through so brief a period? Does not that suffice? Then, we have another proof. Had we a new God, we should not have the Scriptures: had God changed, then we should need a new Bible. But the Bible which the infant readeth is the Bible of the grey head; the Bible which I carried with me to my Sunday School, I shall sit in my bed to read, when, hoary-headed, all strength shall fail save that which is divine. The promise which cheered me in the young morning of life, when first I consecrated myself to God, shall cheer me when my eyes are dim with age, and when the sunlight of heaven lights them up, and I see bright visions of far-off worlds, where I hope to dwell for ever. The word of God is still the same; there is not one promise removed. The doctrines are the same; the truths are the same; all God's declarations remain unchanged for ever; and I argue, from the very fact that his years do not change him. Look at our worship—is not that the same? Oh! hoary heads! well can ye remember how ye were carried to God's house in your childhood; and ye heard the self-same hymns that now ye hear. Have they lost their savour? Have they lost their music? At times, when prayer is offered, ye remember that your ancient pastor prayed the same petition fifty years ago; but the petition is as good as ever. It is still unchanged; it is the same praise, the same prayer, the same expounding, the same preaching. All our worship is the same. And with many it is the same house of God, where first they were dedicated to God in baptism. Surely, my brethren, if God had changed, we should have been obliged to make a new form of worship; if God had not been immutable, we should have needed to have sacrificed our sacred service to some new method; but since we find ourselves bowing like our fathers, with the same prayers, and canting the same psalms, we rightly believe that God himself must be immutable.

But we have better proofs than this that God is still unchanged. We learn this *from the sweet experience of all the saints*. They testify that the God of their youth is the God of their later years. They own that Christ "hath the dew of his youth." When they saw him first, as

the bright and glorious Immanuel, they thought him "altogether lovely;" and when they see him now, they see not one beauty faded, and not one glory departed: he is the self-same Jesus. When they first rested themselves on him, they thought his shoulders strong enough to carry them; and they find those shoulders still as mighty as ever. They thought at first his bowels did melt with love, and that his heart was beating high with mercy; and they find it is still the same. God is unchanged; and therefore they "are not consumed." They put their trust in him, because they have not yet marked a single alteration in him. His character, his essence, his being, and his deeds are all the same; and, moreover, to crown all, we cannot suppose a God, if we cannot suppose a God immutable. A God who changed would be no God. We could not grasp the idea of Deity if we once allowed our minds to take in the thought of mutability. From all these things, then, we conclude that "even from old age he is the same, and that even to hoary hairs he will carry us."

2. The other side of the doctrine is this, not only that God is *the same in his nature*, but that he is *the same in his dealings*; that he will carry us the same, that he will deliver us the same, that he will bear us the same as he used to do. And here, also, we need scarcely to prove to you that God's dealings towards his children are the same, especially when I remind you that God's promises are made not to age, but to people, to persons, and to men. It has been recently declared by some ministers, that certain ages are more likely to be converted than other ages. We have heard persons state, that should a man outlive thirty years of life, if he has heard the Gospel, he is not at all likely to be saved; but we believe a more palpable, bare-faced lie was never uttered in the pulpit, for we have, ourselves, known multitudes who have been saved at forty, fifty, sixty, seventy, and even bordering on the grave at eighty. We find some promises in the Bible made to some particular conditions; but the main, the great, the grand promises, are made to sinners as sinners; they are made to the elect, to the chosen ones, irrespective of their age or condition. We hold, that the man who is old, can be justified in the same way as the way who is young; that the robe of Christ is broad enough to cover the strong full-grown man as well as the little child. We believe the blood of Christ avails to wash out seventy years, as well as seventy days of sin; that "with God there is no respect of persons," that all ages are alike to him, and that "whosoever cometh unto Christ, he will in no wise case out," and sure we are, that all the good things of the Bible are as good at one time as at another. The perfect robe of righteousness that I wear, will that change by years? The sanctification of the Spirit, will that be destroyed by years? The promises, will they shake? The covenant, will that be dissolved? I can suppose that the everlasting hills shall melt; I can dream that the eternal mountains shall be dissolved, like the snow upon their peaks; I can conceive that the ocean may be licked up with tongues of forked flame; I can suppose the sun stopped in his career; I can imagine the moon turned into blood; I can conceive the stars falling from the vault of night; I can imagine "the wreck of nature and the crash of worlds;" but I cannot conceive the change of a single mercy, a single covenant

blessing, a single promise, or a single grace, which God bestows upon his people, for I find every one of them in itself stamped with immutability, and I have no reason to put this merely upon guess-work. I find, when I turn over the whole Bible that the experience of the saints, one thousand, two thousand, three thousand years ago, was just the same as the experience of the saints now; and if I find God's mercy is unchanged from David's time till mine, can I conceive that God, who lasts the same for thousands, would change during the brief period of seventy? Nay, still we hold that he will carry us, and he will bear us in old age as well as in our youth. But, besides that, we have living witnesses, living testimonies. I could fetch up from the ground floor of this place, and from the galleries, not one or two, but twenty, yea a hundred living witnesses, who, rising up, would tell you that God doth carry them now, as he did of old, and that he still doth bear them. I need not appeal to my friends, or they would stand up in their pews, and with tears trickling down their cheeks, they would say, "Young men, young women, trust your God! he hath not forsaken me!" I find that—

"Even down to old age, all his people *do* prove,
His sovereign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And when hoary hairs do their temples adorn,
Like lambs they now still in his bosom are borne."

Ask yon aged friend, ask any aged Christian, whether he finds God has, in the least forsaken him, and you will see him shake his head, and hear him say, "O young man, if I had another seventy years to live, I would trust him still, for I have not found him fail all the way that the Lord God hath led me. Not one promise hath failed, but all hath come to pass;" and I think I see him lifting up his hand in the midst of the assembly, and saying, "I have nothing to regret but my sin. If I had to live over again, I should only want to put myself into the hands of the same Providence, to be led and directed by the self-same grace." Beloved, we need not prove to you farther, for living witnesses do testify, that God carries out his promise, "I have made and will bear; even I will carry and deliver you."

II. But now we come to our real subject, which is, to consider THE TIME OF OLD AGE AS A SPECIAL PERIOD, and to mark, therefore, the constancy of divine love—that God bears and succours his servants in their later years. I cannot imagine or dream that I need offer any apology for preaching to aged people. If I were in sundry stupid circles where people call themselves ladies and gentlemen, and always want to conceal their ages, I might have some hesitation; but I have nothing to do with that here. I call an old man, an old man, and an old woman, an old woman; whether they think themselves old or not is nothing to me. I guess they are, if they are getting anyway past sixty, on to seventy or eighty. Old age is *a time of peculiar memories, of peculiar hopes, of peculiar solicitudes, of peculiar blessedness, and of peculiar duties*; yet in all this, God is the same, although man be peculiar.

(1.) First, *old age is a time of peculiar memory*; in fact, it is the age of memory. We young men talk of remembering such-and-such things a certain time ago; but what is our memory,

compared to our father's? Our father looks back on three or four times the length of time over which we cast our eyes. What a peculiar memory the old man has! How many joys he can remember! How many times has his heart beat high with rapture and blessedness! How many times has his house been gladdened with plenty! How many harvest homes has he seen! How many treadings of the vintage! How many times has he heard the laugh run round the ingle fire! How many times have his children shouted in his ear, and rejoiced around him! How many times have his own eyes sparkled with delight! How many hill Mizars has he seen! How many times has he had sweet banquetting with the Lord! How many periods of communion with Jesus! How many hallowed services hath he attended! How many songs of Zion hath he sung! How many answered prayers have gladdened his spirit! How many happy deliverances have made him laugh for joy! When he looks back, he can string his mercies together by the thousand! and looking upon them all, he can say, though he will think of many troubles that he has had to pass through, "Surely, goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life." God hath been with him to hoary hairs, and even to old age he hath carried him. His joys he looks back upon as proof of God's constancy.

And how many griefs hath he had! How many times hath that old man been to the chamber of sickness! How many times hath that aged sister been stretched on the bed of affliction! How many diseases can he or she look back upon! How many hours of bitter travail and pain! How many seasons of trouble, infirmity, and approachings to the grave? How many times hath the old man tottered very near that bourne from which no traveller can return? How many times hath he had the Father's rod upon his shoulders? And yet, looking back upon all, he can say, "Even to old age he is the same; and even to hoary hairs he hath carried me." How frequently, took, hath that old man gone to the grave where he hath buried many he has loved? There, perhaps, he has laid a beloved wife, and he goes to weep there; or, the husband sleeps, while the wife is yet alive. Sons and daughters, too, that old man can remember—snatched away to heaven almost as soon as they were born; or, perhaps, permitted to live until their prime, and then cut down just in their youthful glory. How many of the old friends he hath welcomed to his fireside hath he buried? How frequently has he been forced to exclaim, "Though friends have departed, yet 'there is a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother,' on him I still trust, and to him I still commit my soul."

And mark, moreover, how many times temptation hath shattered that venerable saint! how many conflicts hath he had with doubts and fears! how many wrestlings with the enemy! how often he hath been tempted to forsake his faith! how frequently he hath had to stand in the thickest part of the battle; but yet he has been preserved by mercy, and not quite cut down. He has been enabled to persevere in the heavenly road. How travel-sore are his feet! how blistered by the roughness of the way, but he can tell you, that notwithstanding all these

things, Christ hath "kept him till this day, and will not let him go;" and his conclusion is, "even to old age God hath been the same, and even to hoary hairs he hath carried him."

There is one said reflection which we are obliged to mention when we look upon the bald head of the aged saint, and that is, how many sins he hath committed! Ah! my beloved, however pure may have been your lives, you will be obliged to say, "Oh! how have I sinned, in youth, in middle age, and even when infirmities have gathered around me! Would to God I had been holy! How often have I forsaken God! how frequently have I wandered from him! alas! how often have I provoked him! How frequently have I doubted his promises, when I had no cause whatever to distrust him! how frequently has my tongue sinned against my heart! how constantly have I violated all I knew to be good and excellent! I am forced to say now, in my grey old age,—

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

I am still—

"A monument of grace,
A sinner saved by blood"

I have no hope now, save in the blood of Christ, and can only wonder how it is that Christ could have preserved me so long. Truly, I can say, "Even to old age he is the same, and even to hoary hairs he hath carried me."

(2.) The aged man, too, hath *peculiar hopes*. He hath no such hopes as I or my young friends here. He hath few hopes of the future in this world; they are gathered up into a small space, and he can tell you, in a few words, what constitutes all his expectation and desire. But he has one hope, and that is the very same which he had when he first trusted in Christ; it is a hope "undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them that are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Let me talk a little of that hope, and you will see from it that the Christian is the same as ever he was; and even down to hoary hairs God deals the same with him. My venerable brother, what is *the ground* of thy hope? Is it not the same as that which animated thee when thou wast first united with the Christian Church? Thou saidst then, "My hope is in the blood of Jesus Christ." I ask thee, brother, what is thy hope now, and I am sure thou wilt answer, "I do not hope to be saved because of my long service, nor because of my devotedness to God's cause."

"All my hope on Christ is staid,
All my help from him I bring:
He covers my defenceless head
With the shadow of his wing."

And, my brother, what is *the reason* of thy hope? If thou art asked what reason thou hast to believe thou art a Christian, thou wilt say, "The self-same reason I gave at the Church-meeting." When I came before it, I said, then "I believe myself to be a child of God, because

I feel myself to be a sinner, and God has given me grace to put my trust in Jesus." I think that is all the reason you have to believe yourself a child of God now. At times you have some evidence, as you call it; but there are hours when your graces and virtues are obscured, and you cannot see them, for gloomy doubts prevail, and you will confess, I am sure, that the only way to get rid of your doubts will be, to come and say, again—

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Christ's kind arms I fall;
He's still my strength and righteousness,
My Saviour and my all."

And *the object or end* of hope, is not that the same? What was your hope when you first went to the wicket gate? Why, your hope was that you might arrive at the land of the blessed. And is it not the same now? Is your hope of heaven changed? Do you wish for anything else, or for anything better? "No," you will say, "I thought when I started I should one day be with Jesus; that is what I expect now. I feel that my hope is precisely the same. I want to be with Jesus, to be like him, and to see him as he is." And is not *the joy* of that hope just the same? How glad you used to be when your minister preached about heaven, and told you of its pearly gates and streets of shining gold! and has it lost any of its beauty in your eyes now? Do you not remember, that in your father's house, at family prayer, one night, they sang,—

"Jerusalem, my happy home,
Name, ever dear to me!
When shall my labors have an end.
In joy, and peace, and thee"?

Cannot you sing that now? Do you want any other city besides Jerusalem? Do you remember how they used to rise up sometimes in the house of God, when you were children, and sing,—

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,
And cast a wishful eye!"

Will not that hymn do for you now even better than it did for you then? You can now sing it, as your old father used to sing it, with a firm heart, and yet with a quivering lip. The hope that ravished you then ravishes you now. You start at the same watchword. Heaven is your home still.

"There your best friends, your kindred dwell,
There, God your Saviour reigns."

Does not all this prove, again, that though our hopes are somewhat more contracted than they were, yet "God is still the same, and even to hoary hairs he will carry us."

(3.) Again, old age is a time of *peculiar solicitude*. An old man is not anxious about self. He hath not the cares of starting in business, as he once had. He hath no children to launch

out in business. He hat not to cast his anxious eyes on his little family. But his solicitude hath somewhat increased in another direction. He hath more solicitude about his bodily frame than he once had. He cannot now run as he used to do; but he must walk with more sober gait. He fears every now and then that the pitcher will be "broken at the cistern;" for "the noise of the grinders is low." He hath no longer that strength of desire he once possessed; his body begins to totter, to shake, and to quiver. The old tenement has stood these fifty years; and who expects a house to last for ever? A bit of mortar has gone off from one place, and a lath out of another; and when a little wind comes to shake it about, he is ready to cry out, "The earthly house of my tabernacle is about to be dissolved." But I told you before, this peculiar solicitude is but another proof of divine faithfulness; for now that you have little pleasure in the flesh, do you not find that God is just the same? and that, though the days are come when you can say, "I have no pleasure in *them*," yet the days are not come when you can say, "I have no pleasure in *him*;" but, on the contrary,

"Though all created streams are dry,
His goodness is the same:
With this you still are satisfied,
And glory in his name."

If he had only been your God when you were a strong young man, you might have thought that he loved you for what you could do for him; but, now you have become a poor worn-out pensioner, have you any better proof that he is an unchanging God, because he loves you when you can do so little for him? I tell you, even your bodily pains are but proofs of his love; for he is taking down your old tenement stick by stick, and is building it up again in brighter worlds, never to be taken down any more.

And remember, too, there is another solicitude—a failure of mind, as well as of body. There are many remarkable instances of old men, who have been as gifted in their old age as in their youth; but with the majority the mind becomes somewhat impaired, especially the memory. They cannot remember what was done yesterday, although it is a singular fact that they can remember what was done fifty, sixty, or seventy years ago. They forget much which they would wish to remember; but still they find that their God is just the same; they find that his goodness does not depend on their memory; that the sweetness of his grace does not depend upon their palate. When they can remember but little of the sermon, they still feel that it leaves as good an impression on their heart as when they were strong in their memories; and thus they have another proof that God, even when their mind faileth a little, carries them down to their hoar hairs, their old age, and that to them he is ever the same.

But the chief solicitude of old age is death. Young men may die soon. Old men *must* die. Young men, if they sleep, sleep in a siege; old men, if they sleep, sleep in an attack, when the enemy has already made a breach, and is storming the castle. A greyheaded old sinner is a greyheaded old fool; but an aged Christian is an aged wise man. But even the Christian

hath peculiar solicitudes about death. He knows he cannot be a long way from his end. He feels that, even in the course of nature, apart from what is called accidental death, there is no doubt but in a few more years he must stand before his God. He thinks he may be in heaven in ten or twenty years; but how short do those ten or twenty years appear! He does not act like a man who thinks a coach is a long way off, and he may take his time; but he is like one who is about to go a journey, and hears the post-horn blowing down the street, and is getting ready. His one solicitude now is, to examine himself whether he is in the faith. He fears that if he is wrong now, it will be terrible to have spent all his life dabbling in profession, and to find at last that he hath got nothing for his pains, except a mere empty name, which must be swept away by death. He feels now how solemn a thing the Gospel is; he feels the world to be as nothing; he feels that he is near the bar of doom. But still, beloved, mark, God's faithfulness is the same; for if he be nearer death, he has the sweet satisfaction that he is nearer heaven; and if he has more need to examine himself than ever, he has also more evidence whereby to examine himself, for he can say, "Well, I know that on such-and-such an occasion the Lord heard my prayer; at such-and-such a time he manifested himself to me, as he did not unto the world," and, though examination presses more upon the old, still they have greater materials for it. And here, again, is another proof of this grand truth. "Even unto old age I am the same," says God; "and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."

(4.) And now, once more, old age hath its *peculiar blessedness*. Some time ago I stepped up to an old man whom I saw when preaching at an anniversary, and I said to him, "Brother, do you know there is no man in the whole chapel I envy so much as you!" "Envy me," he said—"why, I am eighty-seven." I said, "I do, indeed; because you are so near your home, and because I believe that in old age there is a peculiar joy, which we young people do not taste at present. You have got to the bottom of the cup, and it is not with God's wine as it is with man's. Man's wine becomes dregs at the last, but God's wine is sweeter the deeper you drink of it." He said, "That's very true, young man," and shook me by the hand. I believe there is a blessedness about old age that we young men know nothing of. I will tell you how that is. In the first place, the old man has a good experience to talk about. The young men are only just trying some of the promises; but the old man can turn them over one by one, and say, "There, I have tried that, and that, and that." We read them over and say, "I *hope* they are true;" but the old man says, "I *know* they are true." And then he begins to tell you why. He has got a history for everyone, like a soldier for his medals; and he takes them out, and says, "I will tell you when the Lord revealed that to me; just when I lost my wife: just when I buried my son; just when I was turned out of my cottage, and did not get work for six weeks; or, at another time, when I broke my leg." He begins telling you the history of the promises, and says, "There, now. I know they are all true." What blessed thing, to look upon them as paid notes; to bring out the old cheques that have been cashed and say, "I know they are genuine, or else they would not have been paid." Old people have not

the doubts young people have about the doctrine. Young people are apt to doubt; but when they get old, they begin to get solid and firm in the faith. I love to get some of my old brethren, to talk with me concerning the good things of the kingdom. They do not hold the truth with their two fingers, as some of the young men do; but they get right hold of it, and nobody can take it from their grasp. Rowland Hill once somewhat lost his way in a sermon, and he turned to this text—"Oh, Lord, my heart is fixed." "Young men," he said, "there is nothing like having your hearts fixed. I have been all these years seeking the Lord; now my heart is fixed. I never have any doubts now about election, or any other doctrine. If man brings me a new theory, I say, 'Away with it!' I stand hard and fast by the truth alone." An old gentleman wrote me a little time ago, and said I was a little too high. He said he believed the same doctrine as I do, but he did not think so when he was as old as I am. I told him it was just as well to begin right as to end right, and it was better to be right at the beginning than to have to rub off so many errors afterwards. An old countryman once came to me, and said, "Ah! young man, you have had too deep a text; you handled it well enough, but it is an old man's text, and I felt afraid to hear you announce it." I said, "Is God's truth dependant on age? If the thing is true, it is just as well to hear it from me as from any one else; and if you can hear it better anywhere else, you have got the opportunity." Still, he did not think that God's precious truths were suitable to young people; but I hold they are suitable to all God's children; therefore I love to preach them. But how blessed it is to come to a position in life where you have good anchorage for your faith,—where you can say,

"Should all the forms that hell devise,
Assail my faith with treacherous art."

I shall not be very polite to them—

"I'll call them vanity of lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart."

And I think there are peculiar joys which the old Christian has, of another sort; and that is, he has peculiar fellowship with Christ, more than we have. At least, if I understand John Bunyan rightly, I think he tells us that when we get very near to heaven there is a very glorious land. "They came into the country of Beulah, whose air was very sweet and pleasant; the way lying directly through it, they solaced themselves there for a season. Yes, here they heard continually the singing of birds, and saw every day the flowers appear on the earth, and heard the voice of the turtle in the land. In this country the sun shineth night and day; wherefore this was beyond the valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting-castle. Here they were within sight of the City they were going to: also here met them some of the inhabitants thereof: for in this land the shining ones commonly walked, because it was upon the borders of heaven. In this land also the contract between the Bride and the Bridegroom was renewed; yea, here, 'as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so doth their God rejoice over them.'

Here they had not want of corn and wine; for in this place they met with abundance of what they had sought for in all their pilgrimages. Here they heard voices from out of the City, loud voices, saying, 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh! Behold, His reward is with him!' Here all the inhabitants of the country called them, 'the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.'" There are peculiar communings, peculiar openings of the gates of paradise, peculiar visions of glory, just as you come near to it. It stands to reason that the nearer you get to the bright light of the celestial city, the clearer shall be the air. And therefore there are peculiar blessednesses belonging to the old, for they have more of this peculiar fellowship with Christ. But all this only proves that Christ is the same; because, when there are fewer earthly joys, he gives more spiritual ones. Therefore, again, it becomes the fact—"Even to old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you."

(5.) And now, lastly, the aged saint has *peculiar duties*. There are certain things which a good man can do, which nobody else ought to do, or can do well. And that is one proof of divine faithfulness; for he says of his aged ones, "They shall bring forth fruit in old age;" and so they do. I will just tell you some of them.

Testimony is one of the peculiar duties of old men. Now, suppose I should get up, and say, "I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," some one would reply, "Why, you are not twenty-two yet; what do you know about it?" But if an old man gets up, and says, "I have been young, and now am I old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," with what power that testimony comes! Suppose I say to you, "Trust in God, with all thy troubles and trials; *I* can bear witness that he will not forsake you;" you will reply, "Oh! yes, young man, but you have not had many troubles; you have not been a child of God above these six years; how should you know?" But up gets an old Christian—and well do I remember an ancient Christian rising up at the sacramental table, and saying, "Dear brethren, we are met again around this table, and I think all an old man can do is to bear testimony to his master. These five-and-forty years, I have walked in his truth. Young people, hear what I have to say. He has been my God these five-and-forty years, and I have no fault to find with him; I have found religion's ways to be ways of pleasantness, and her paths to be paths of peace." You know, if you hear an old man talk, you pay greater attention to what he says, from the fact that he is old. I remember hearing the late Mr. Jay. I fancy that if I had heard the same sermon preached by a young man, I should not have thought so much of it; but there appeared such a depth in it because is came from an old man, standing on the borders of the grave; it was like an echo of the past, coming to me, to let me hear my God's faithfulness, that I might trust for the future. Testimony is the duty of old men and women; they should labour whenever they can to bear testimony to God's faithfulness, and to declare that now also, when they are old and grey-headed, their God forsakes them not.

There is another duty which is peculiarly the work of the aged, and that is, the work of comforting the young believer. There is no one more qualified that I know of than a kind-hearted old men to convert the young. I know that down in some parts of the country there is a peculiar breed of old man, who for the good of the Church I heartily hope will soon become extinct. As soon as they see a young believer, they look at him with suspicion, expecting him to be a hypocrite; they go off to his house, and find everything satisfactory; but they say, "I was not so confident as that when I was young; young man, you must be kept back a bit." Then there are some hard questions put, and the poor young child of God gets hardly pressed, and is looked upon with suspicion, because he does not come up to their standard. But the men I allude to are such as some I have here, with whom I delight to speak, who tell you not hard things, but utter gentle words: who say, "I was imprudent when I was a young man. I know that when I was a little child I could not have answered these questions; I do not expect so much from you as from one who is a little older." And when the young Christian comes to them they say, "Do not fear; I have gone through the waters, and they have not overflown me; and through the fire, and have not been burned. Trust in God; 'for down to old age he is the same, and to hoar hairs he will carry you.'"

Then there is another work that is the work of the old, and that is, the work of *warning*. If an old man were to go out in the middle of the road, and shout out to you to stop, you would stop sooner than you would if a boy were to do it; for then you might say, "Out of the way, you young rascal," and go on still. The warnings of the old have great effect; and it is their peculiar work to guide the imprudent, and warn the unwary.

Now I have done, except the application. And I want to speak to three classes of persons.

What a precious thought, young men and women, is contained in this text—"That even to old age God will be the same to you; and even down to you hoar hairs he will not forsake you!" You want a safe investment; well, here is an investment safe enough. A bank may break; but heaven cannot. A rock may be dissolved, and if I build a house on that it may be destroyed; but if I build on Christ, my happiness is secure for ever. Young man! God's religion will last as long as you will; his comforts you will never be able to exhaust in all your life; but you will find that the bottle of your joys will be as full when you have been drinking seventy years, as it was when you first began. Oh! do not buy a thing that will not last you: "eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Oh! how pleasant it is to be a young Christian! How blessed it is to begin in the early morning to love and serve God! The best old Christians are those who were once young Christians. Some aged Christians have but little grace, for this reason—that they were not young Christians. Oh! I have sometimes thought, that if there is any man who will have an abundant entrance into heaven, it is the man who in early life was brought to know the Lord. You know, going into heaven will be like the ships going into harbour. There will be some tugged in almost by miracle, "saved so as by fire;" others will be going in just with a sheet or two of canvas—they

will "scarcely be saved!" but there will be some who will go in with all their canvas up, and unto these "an abundant entrance shall be ministered into the kingdom of their God and Saviour." Young people! it is the ship that is launched early in the morning that will get an abundant entrance, and come into God's haven in full sail.

Now, you middle aged men, you are plunged in the midst of business, and are sometimes supposing what will become of you in your old age. But is there any promise of God to you when you suppose about to-morrows? You say, "Suppose I should live to be as old as so-and-so, and be a burden upon people, I should not like that." Don't get meddling with God's business; leave his decrees to him. There is many a person who thought he would die in a workhouse, that has died in a mansion; and many a woman that thought she would die in the streets, has died in her bed, happy and comfortable, singing of providential grace and everlasting mercy. Middle aged man! listen to what David says, again, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." Go on, then, unsheath thy sword once more. "The battle is the Lord's;" leave thy declining years to him, and give thy present years to him. Live to him now, and he will never cast you away when you are old. Do not lay up for old age and keep back from the cause of God; but rather trust God for the future. Be "diligent in business;" but take care you do not hurt your spirit, by being too diligent, by being grasping and selfish. Remember you will

"Want but little here below,
Nor want that little long."

And lastly, my dear venerable fathers in the faith, and mothers in Israel, take these words for your joy. Do not let the young people catch you indulging in melancholy, sitting in your chimney corner, grumbling and growling, but go about cheerful and happy, and they will think how blessed it is to be a Christian. If you are surly and fretful, they will think the Lord has forsaken you; but keep a smiling countenance, and they will think the promise is fulfilled. "And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." Do, I beseech you, my venerable friends, try to be of a happy temperament and cheerful spirit, for a child will run away from a surly old man; but there is not a child in the world but loves his grand-papa if he is cheerful and happy. You can lead us to heaven if you have got heaven's sunlight on your face; but you will not lead us at all if you are cross and ill-tempered, for then we shall not care about your company. Make yourselves merry with the people of God, and try to live happily before men; for so will you prove to us—to a demonstration, that even to old age God is with you, and that when your strength faileth, he is still your preservation. May God Almighty bless you, for the Saviour's sake! Amen.

The foregoing sermon exceeding the limits of the usual Penny Number, and it being desirous that it should be given in full, it has been deemed advisable to make the present a double

number. The two appended Tracts have been inserted as a specimen of a series called "The New Park Street Tracts," printed in a large type, at 1s. 4d. per 100.

EDITED BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON.

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The Infidel's Sermon to the Pirates.

native of Sweden who had imbibed infidel views, had occasion to go from one port to another in the Baltic Sea. When he came to the place whence he expected to sail, the vessel was gone. On inquiring, he found a fishing boat going the same way, in which he embarked. After being for some time out to sea, the men observing that he had several trunks and chests on board, concluded he must be very rich, and therefore agreed among themselves to throw him overboard. This he heard them express, which gave him great uneasiness. However, he took occasion to open one of his trunks, which contained some books. Observing this, they remarked among themselves that it was not worth while to throw him into the sea, as they did not want any books, which they supposed were all the trunks contained. They asked him if he were a priest. Hardly knowing what reply to make them, he told them he was; and at this they seemed much pleased, and said they would have a sermon on the next day, as it was the Sabbath. This increased the anxiety and distress of his mind, for he knew himself to be as incapable of such an undertaking as it was possible for any one to be, as he knew very little of the Scriptures; neither did he believe in the inspiration of the Bible.

At great length they came to a small rocky island, perhaps a quarter of a mile in circumference, where was a company of pirates, who had chosen this little sequestered spot to deposit their treasures. He was taken to a cave, and introduced to an old woman, to whom they remarked that they were to have a sermon preached the next day. She said she was very glad of it, for she had not heard the Word of God for a great while. His was a trying case, for preach he must; still he knew nothing about preaching. If he refused, or undertook to preach and did not please, he expected it would be his death. With these thoughts he passed a sleepless night; and in the morning his mind was not settled upon anything. To call upon God, whom he believed to be inaccessible, was altogether vain. He could devise no way whereby he might be saved. He walked to and fro, still shut up in darkness striving to collect something to say to them, but could not think of even a single sentence.

When the appointed time for the service arrived, he entered the cave, where he found the men assembled. There was a seat prepared for him, and a table with a Bible on it. They sat for the space of half an hour in profound silence; and even then the anguish of his soul was as great as human nature was capable of enduring. At length these words came to his mind: "Verily, there is a reward for the righteous: verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth." He arose and delivered them; then others words presented themselves, and so on,

till his understanding became opened, and his heart enlarged in a manner astonishing to himself. He spoke upon subject suited to their condition; the reward of the righteous, the judgments of the wicked, the necessity of repentance, and the importance of a change of life. The matchless love of God to the children of men had such a powerful effect upon the minds of these wretched beings, that they were melted into tears. Nor was he less astonished at the unbounded goodness of Almighty God, in thus interposing to save his spiritual as well as his natural life; and well might he exclaim, "This is the Lord's doing and marvellous in our eyes." Under a deep sense of God's goodness, his heart became filled with thankfulness, which it was out of his power to express. What a marvellous change was thus suddenly brought about by Divine interposition! He who a little while before disbelieved in communion with God and the soul, became as humble as a little child; and they who were so lately meditating on his death, now were filled with love and goodwill towards each other, particularly towards him; manifesting affectionate kindness, and willing to render him all the assistance in their power.

The next morning they fitted out one of their vessels, and conveyed him whither he desired. From that time he became a changed man; from being a slave to the influence of infidelity, he was brought to be a sincere believer in the power and efficacy of the truth as it is in Jesus.

[How marvellous the providence of God, and the sovereignty of his grace! Who is he that has stepped beyond the range of Almighty love? or has sinned too much to be forgiven? Reader! are you an infidel? What would you do in a similar situation? What other doctrine than that of Scripture would benefit pirates? Certainly not your own. What would you like to teach your own children? Certainly not your own sentiments. You feel that you would not wish to hear your own offspring blaspheming God. Moreover, forgive us, if we declare our opinion that thou knowest that there is a God, though with thy lips thou deniest him. Think, we beseech thee, of thy Maker, and of his Son, the Saviour; and may Eternal love bring even thee to the Redeemer.—C. H. S.]

No. 3—The Actress.

n actress in one of the English provincial or country theatres, was, one day, passing through the streets of the town in which she then resided, when her attention was attracted by the sound of voices, which she heard in a poor cottage before her. Curiosity prompted her to look in at an open door, when she saw a few poor people sitting together, one of whom, at the moment of her observation, was giving out the following hymn, which the others joined in singing:—

"Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?"

The tune was sweet and simple, but she heeded it not. The words had riveted her attention, and she stood motionless, until she was invited to enter by the woman of the house, who had observed her standing at the door. She complied, and remained during a prayer which was offered up by one of the little company; and uncouth as the expressions might seem in her ears, they carried with them a conviction of sincerity on the part of the person then employed. She quitted the cottage, but the words of the hymn followed her; she could not banish them from her mind, and at last she resolved to procure the book which contained the hymn. The more she read it, the more decided her serious impressions became. She attended the ministry of the Gospel, read her hitherto neglected and despised Bible, and bowed herself in humility and contrition of heart before him whose mercy she felt she needed, whose sacrifices are those of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and who has declared that therewith he is well pleased.

Her profession she determined at once, and for ever, to renounce; and for some little time excused herself from appearing on the stage, without, however, disclosing her change of sentiments, or making known her resolution finally to leave it.

The manager of the theatre called upon her one morning, and requested her to sustain the principal character in a new play which was to be performed the next week for his benefit. She had frequently performed this character to general admiration; but she now, however, told him her resolution never to appear as an actress again, at the same time giving her reasons. At first he attempted to overcome her scruples by ridicule, but this was unavailing; he then represented the loss he should incur by her refusal, and concluded his arguments by promising, that if to oblige him she would act on this occasion, it should be the last request of the kind he would ever make. Unable to resist his solicitations, she promised to appear, and on the appointed evening went to the theatre. The character she assumed required her, on her first entrance, to sing a song; and when the curtain was drawn up, the orchestra immediately began the accompaniment; but she stood as if lost in thought and as one forgetting all around her, and her own situation. The music ceased, but she did not sing; and supposing her to be overcome by embarrassment, the band again commenced. A second time they paused for her to begin, and still she did not open her lips. A third time the air was played, and then, with clasped hands, and eyes suffused with tears, she sang, not the words of the song, but—

"Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me!"

It is almost needless to add, that the performance was suddenly ended; many ridiculed, though, some were induced from that memorable night to "consider their ways," and to reflect on the wonderful power of that religion which could so influence the heart and change the life of one hitherto so vain, and so evidently pursuing the road which leadeth to destruction.

It would be satisfactory to the reader to know, that the change in Miss _____ was as permanent as it was singular; she walked consistently with her profession of religion for many years, and at length became the wife of a minister of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Perhaps, dear reader, you are a great transgressor, then you fear there is no forgiveness for you; let this remove your fears. You may be the vilest creature out of hell, and yet grace can make you as pure as the angels in heaven. God would be just should he damn you, but he can be just and yet save you. Do you feel that the Lord has a right over you to do as he pleases? Do you feel that you have no claim upon him? Then, rejoice, for Jesus Christ has borne *your* guilt, and carried *your* sorrows, and you shall assuredly be saved. You are a *sinner* in the true sense of that word, then remember Jesus came to save sinners, and you among the rest, if you know yourself to be a sinner.—C. H. S.]

"Lo, th' incarnate God ascended,
Pleads the merit of his blood:
Venture on him, venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

Indwelling Sin

A Sermon
(No. 83)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, June 1, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am vile."—Job 40:3-4.

SURELY, if any man had a right to say, I am *not* vile, it was Job; for, according to the testimony of God himself, he was "a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God and eschewed evil." Yet we find even this eminent saint, when by his nearness to God he had received light enough to discover his own condition, exclaiming, "Behold I am vile." We are sure that what Job was forced to say, we may each of us assent unto, whether we be God's children or not; and if we be partakers of divine grace, it becomes a subject of great consideration for us, since even we, although we be regenerated, must exclaim, each one for himself, "Behold, I am vile."

It is a doctrine, as I believe, taught us in Holy Writ, that when a man is saved by divine grace, he is not wholly cleansed from the corruption of his heart. When we believe in Jesus Christ all our sins are pardoned; yet the power of sin, albeit that it is weakened and kept under by the dominion of the new-born nature which God doth infuse into our souls, doth not cease, but still tarrieth in us, and will do so to our dying day. It is a doctrine held by all the orthodox, that there dwelleth still in the regenerate, the lusts of the flesh, and that there doth still remain in the hearts of those who are converted by God's mercy, the evil of carnal nature. I have found it very difficult to distinguish, in experimental matters, concerning sin. It is usual with many writers, especially with hymn writers, to confound the two natures of a Christian. Now, I hold that there is in every Christian two natures, as distinct as were the two natures of the God-Man Christ Jesus. There is one nature which cannot sin, because it is born of God—a spiritual nature, coming directly from heaven, as pure and as perfect as God himself, who is the author of it; and there is also in man that ancient nature which, by the fall of Adam, hath become altogether vile, corrupt, sinful, and devilish. There remains in the heart of the Christian a nature which cannot do that which is right, any more than it could before regeneration, and which is as evil as it was before the new birth—as sinful, as altogether hostile to God's laws, as ever it was—a nature which, as I said before, is curbed and kept under by the new nature in a great measure, but which is not removed and never will be until this tabernacle of our flesh is broken down, and we soar into that land into which there shall never enter anything that defileth.

It will be my business this morning, to say something of that evil nature which still abides in the righteous. That is does remain, I shall first attempt to prove; and the other points I will suggest to you as we proceed.

I. The FACT, the great and terrible fact, that EVEN THE RIGHTEOUS HAVE IN THEM EVIL NATURES. *Job* said, "Behold, I am vile." He did not always know it. All through the long controversy he had declared himself to be just and upright: he had said, "My righteousness I will hold fast, and I will not let it go;" and notwithstanding he did scrape his body with a potsherd, and his friends did vex his mind with the most bitter revilings, yet he still held fast his integrity, and would not confess his sin; but when God came to plead with him, he had no sooner listened to the voice of God in the whirlwind, and heard the question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" than at once he put his finger on his lips, and would not answer God, but simply said, "Behold, I am vile." Possibly some may say, that Job was an exception to the rule; and they will tell us, that other saints had not in them such a reason for humiliation; but we remind them of *David*, and we bid them read the 51st penitential Psalm, where we find him declaring that he was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did his mother conceive him; confessing, that he had sin within him. In many other places in the Psalms, David doth continually acknowledge and confess, that he is not perfectly rid of sin; that still the evil viper doth twist itself around his heart. Turn also, if you please, to *Isaiah*. There you have him, in one of his visions, saying that he was a man of unclean lips, and that he dwelt among a people of unclean lips. But more especially, under the gospel dispensation, you find Paul, in that memorable chapter we have been reading, declaring, that he found in "his members a law warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin." Yea, we hear that remarkable exclamation of struggling desire and intense agony, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Do you expect to find yourselves better saints than Job? do you imagine that the confession which befitted the mouth of David is too mean for you? are ye so proud, that ye will not exclaim with Isaiah, "I also am a man of unclean lips?" Or rather, have ye progressed so far in pride, that ye dare to exalt yourselves above the laborious Apostle Paul, and to hope that in you, that is, in your flesh, there dwelleth any good thing? If ye do think yourselves to be perfectly pure from sin, hear ye the word of God: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we say we have no sin, we make God a liar."

But scarcely do I need to prove this, beloved; for all of you, I am sure, who know anything about the experience of a living child of God, have found that in your best and happiest moments sin still dwells in you; that when you would serve your God the best, sin frequently works in you the most furiously. There have been many saints of God who have abstained, for a time, from doing anything they have known to be sin; but still there has not been one who has been inwardly perfect. If a being were perfect, the angels would come down in ten minutes, and carry him off to heaven, for he would be ripe for it as soon as he had attained

perfection. I have found in talking to men who have said a good deal about perfection, that after all they really did not believe in any such thing. They have taken with the word and attached a different meaning to it, and either then proved a doctrine which we all knew before, or else supposed a perfection so absurd and worthless, that I would not give three half-pence for it if I might have it. In many of them it is a fault, I believe, of their brains, rather than their hearts; and as John Berridge says, "God will wash their brains before they get to heaven." But why should I stay to prove this, when you have daily proofs of it yourselves? how many times do you feel that corruption is still within you? Mark how easily you are *surprised into sin*. You rise in the morning, and dedicate yourselves by fervent prayer to God, thinking what a happy day you have before you. Scarce have you uttered your prayer, when something comes to ruffle your spirit, your good resolutions are cast to the winds, and you say, "This day, which I thought would be such a happy one, has suffered, a terrific inroad; I cannot live to God as I would." Perhaps you have thought, "I will go up stairs, and ask my God to keep me." Well, you were in the main kept by the power of God, but on a sudden something came; an evil temper on a sudden surprised you; your heart was taken by storm, when you were not expecting an attack; the doors were broken open, and some unholy expression came forth from your lips, and down you went again on your knees in private, exclaiming, "Lord, I am vile." I have found out that I have a something in my heart, which, when I have bolted my doors, and think all is safe, creeps forth and undoes every bolt, and lets in the sin. Besides, beloved, you will find in your heart, even when you are not surprised into sin, such *an awful tendency to evil*, that it is as much as you can do to keep it in check, and to say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further." Nay, you will find it more than you can do, unless a divine power is with you, and preventing grace restrains your passions and prevents you from indulging your inbred lusts. Ah, soldiers of Jesus, ye have felt—I know ye have felt the uprisings of corruption, for ye know the Lord in sincerity and in truth; and ye dare not, unless you would make yourselves liars to your own hearts, hope to be in this world perfectly free from sin.

Having stated that fact, I must just make a remark upon it, and leave it. How wrong it is of any of us, from the fact of our possessing evil hearts, to excuse our sins. I have known some persons, who profess to be Christians, speak very lightly of sin. There was corruption still remaining, and therefore they said they could not help it. Such persons have no visible part nor lot in God's covenant. The truly loving child of God, though he knows sin is there, hates that sin; it is a pain and misery to him, and he never makes the corruption of his *heart* as an excuse for the corruption of his *life*; he never pleads the evil of his nature, as an apology for the evil of his conduct. If any man can, in the least degree, clear himself from the conviction of his own conscience, on account of his daily failings, by pleading the evil of his heart, he is not one of the broken-hearted children of God; he is not one of the tried servants of the Lord, for they *groan* concerning sin, and carry it to God's throne; they know it is in

them—they do not, therefore, leave it, but seek with all their minds to keep it down, In order that it may not rise and carry them away. Mind that, unless you should make what I say a cloak to your licentiousness, and a covering to your guilt.

II. Thus we have mentioned the fact, that the best of men have sin still remaining in them. Now, I will tell you what are the doings of this sin. What does the sin which still remains in our hearts do? I answer—

1. Experience will tell you that *this sin exerts a checking power upon every good thing*. You have felt, when you would do good, that evil was present with you. Just like the chariot, which might go swiftly down the hill, you have had a clog put upon your wheels; or, like the bird that would mount towards heaven, you have found your sins, like the wires of a cage, preventing your soaring towards the Most High. You have bent your knee in prayer, but corruption has distracted your thoughts. You have attempted to sin, but you have felt "hosannah's languish on your tongue." Some insinuation of Satan has taken fire, like a spark in tinder, and well nigh smothered your soul with its abominable smoke. You would run in your holy duties with all alacrity; but the sin that doth so easily beset you entangles your feet, and when you would be nearing the goal, it trips you up, and down you fall, to your own dishonor and pain. You will find indwelling sin frequently retarding you the most, when you are most earnest. When you desire to be most alive to God—you will generally find sin most alive to repel you. The "evil heart of unbelief" puts itself straight in the road, and saith, "Thou shalt not come this way;" and when the souls says, "I will serve God—I will worship in his temple," the evil heart saith, "Get thee to Dan and Beersheba, and bow thyself before false gods, but thou shalt not approach Jerusalem; I will not suffer thee to behold the face of the Most High." You have often felt this to be the case: a cold hand has been placed upon your hot spirit when you have been full of devotion and prayer. And when you have had the wings of the dove, and thought you could flee away and be at rest, a clog has been put upon your feet, so that you could not mount. Now, that is one of the effects of indwelling sin.

2. But indwelling sin does more than that: it not only prevents us from going forward, but at times even *assails us*, as well as seeks to obstruct us. It is not merely that I fight with indwelling sin; it is indwelling sin that sometimes makes an assault on me. You will notice, the Apostle says, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Now, this proves that he was not attacking his sin, but that this sin was attacking him. I do not seek to be delivered from a man against whom I lead the attack: but it is the man who is opposing from whom I seek to be delivered. And so sometimes the sin that dwelleth in believers flies at us, like some foul tiger of the woods, or some demon, jealous of the celestial spirit within us. The evil nature riseth up: it doth not only seek to stop us in the way, but, like Amalek, it labours to destroy us and cut us off utterly. Did you ever feel, beloved, the attacks of inbred sin? It may be, you have not: but if not, depend upon it you

will. Before you get all the way to heaven, you will be attacked by sin. It will not be simply your driving out the Canaanite; but the Canaanite, with chariot of iron, will attempt to overcome you, to drive you out, to kill your spiritual nature, damp the flame of your piety, and crush the new life which God has implanted in you.

3. The evil heart which still remaineth in the Christian, doth always, when it is not attacking or obstructing, *still reign and dwell within him*. My heart is just as bad when no evil emanates from it, as when it is all over vileness in its external developments. A volcano is ever a volcano; even when it sleeps, trust it not. A lion is a lion, even though he play like a kid; and a serpent, is a serpent, even though you may stroke it while for a season it slumbers; there is still a venom in its sting when its azure scales invite the eye. My heart, even though for an hour, it may not have had an evil thought, is still evil. If it were possible that I could live for days without a single temptation from my own heart to sin, it would be still just as evil as it was before; and it is always either displaying its vileness, or else preparing for another display. It is either loading its cannon to shoot against us, or else it is positively at warfare with us. You may rest assured that the heart is never other than it originally was; the evil nature is still evil; and when there is no blaze, it is heaping up the wood, wherewith it is to blaze another day. It is gathering up from my joys, from my devotions, from my holiness, and from all I do, some materials to attack me at some future period. The evil nature is only evil, and that continually, without the slightest mitigation or element of good. The new nature must always wrestle and fight with it; and when the two natures are not wrestling and fighting, there is no truce between them. When they are not in conflict, still they are foes. We must not trust our heart at any time; even when it speaks most fair, we must call it liar; and when it pretends to the most good, still we must remember its nature, for it is evil, and that continually.

The doings of indwelling sin I will not mention at length: but it is sufficient to let you recognize some of your own experience, that you may see that it is in keeping with that of the children of God, for that you may be as perfect as Job, and yet say, "Behold, I am vile."

III. Having mentioned the doings of indwelling sin, allow me to mention, in the third place, THE DANGER WE ARE UNDER FROM SUCH EVIL HEARTS. There are few people who think what a solemn thing it is to be a Christian. I guess there is not a believer in the world who knows what a miracle it is to be kept a believer. We little think the miracles that are working all around us. We see the flowers grow; but we do not think of the wondrous power that gives them life. We see the stars shine; but how seldom do we think of the hand that moves them. The sun gladdens us with his light; yet we little think of the miracles which God works to feed that sun with fuel, or to gird him like a giant to run his course. And we see Christians walking in integrity and holiness; but how little do we suspect what a mass of miracles a Christian is. There are as great a number of miracles expended on a Christian every day, as he hath hairs on his head. A Christian is a perpetual miracle. Every hour that

I am preserved from sinning, is an hour of as divine a might as that which saw a new-born world swathed in its darkness, and heard "the morning stars sing for joy." Did ye never think how great is the danger to which a Christian is exposed from his indwelling sin? Come let me tell you.

One danger to which we are exposed from indwelling sin arises from the fact that *sin is within us*, and therefore it has a great power over us. If a captain has a city, he may for a long preserve it from the constant attacks of enemies without. He may have walls so strong, and gates so well secured, that he may laugh at all the attacks of besiegers; and their sallies may have no more effect upon his walls than sallies of wit. But if there should happen to be a traitor inside the gates—if there should be one who hath charge of the keys, and who could unlock every door and let in the enemy, how is the toil of the commander doubled! for he hath not merely to guard against foes without, but against foes within. And here is the danger of the Christian. I could fight the devil; I could overcome every sin that ever tempted me, if it were not that I had an enemy within. Those Diabolians within do more service to Satan than all the Diabolians without. As Bunyan says in his Holy War, the enemy tried to get some of his friends within the City of Mansoul, and he found his darlings inside the walls did him far more good than all those without. Ah! Christians, thou couldst laugh at thine enemy, if thou hadst not thine evil heart within; but remember, thine heart keeps the keys, because out of it are the issues of life. And sin is there. The worst thing thou has to fear is the treachery of thine own heart.

And moreover, Christian, remember *how many backers* thy evil nature has. As for thy gracious life, it finds few friends beneath the sky; but thine original sin hath allies in every quarter. It looks down to hell, and it finds them there, demons ready to let slip the dogs of hell upon thy soul. It looks out into the world, and sees "the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life." It looks around, and it seeth all kinds of men, seeking, if it be possible, to lead the Christian from his steadfastness. It looks into the Church, and it finds all manner of false doctrine ready to inflame lust, and guide the soul from the sincerity of its faith. It looks to the body, and it finds head, and hand, and foot, and all other members ready to be subservient to sin. I could overcome my evil heart if it had not such a mighty host of allies, but it makes my position doubly dangerous, to have foes without the gates, in league and amity with a foe more vile within.

And I would have thee recollect, Christian, one more thing, and that is, that this evil nature of thine is *very strong and very powerful*—stronger than the new nature, if the new nature were not sustained by Divine power. How old is my old nature? "It is as old as myself," the aged saint may say, "and has become all the stronger from its age." There is one thing which seldom gets weaker through old age—that is, old Adam; he is as strong in his old age as he is in his young age, just as able to lead us astray when our head is covered with grey hairs, as he was in our youth. We have heard it said that growing in grace will make our

corruptions less mighty; but I have seen many of God's aged saints, and asked them the question, and they have said, "*No*," their lusts have been essentially as strong, when they have been many years in their Master's service, as they were at first, although more subdued by the new principle within. So far from becoming weaker, it is my firm belief that sin increases in power. A person who is deceitful becomes more deceitful by practising deceit. So with our heart. It did inveigle us at first, and easily entrapped us, but having learnt a thousand snares, it doth mislead us now perhaps more easily than before; and although our spiritual nature has been more fully developed, and grown in grace, yet still the old nature hath lost little of its energy. I do not know that the house of Saul waxeth weaker and weaker in our hearts; I know that the house of David waxeth stronger; but I do not know that my heart gets less vile, or that my corruptions become less strong. I believe that if I should ever say my corruptions are all dead, I should hear a voice, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson;" or, "The Philistines be in thee, Samson." Notwithstanding all former victories, and all the heaps upon heaps of sins I may have slain, I should yet be overcome if Almighty mercy did not preserve me. Christian! mind thy danger! There is not a man in battle so much in danger from the shot, as thou art from thine own sin. Thou carriest in thy soul an infamous traitor, even when he speaks thee fair he is not to be trusted; thou hast in thy heart a slumbering volcano, but a volcano of such terrific force that it may shake thy whole nature yet; and unless thou art circumspect, and art kept by the power of God, thou hast a heart which may lead thee into sins the most diabolical, and crimes the most infamous. Take care, O take care, ye Christians! If there were no devil to tempt you, and no world to lead you astray, you would have need to take care of your own hearts. Look, therefore, at home. Your worst foes are the foes of your own households. "Keep thine heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life," and out of it death may issue too,—death which would damn thee if sovereign mercy did not prevent. God grant, my brethren, that we may learn our corruptions in an easy way, and not discover them by their breaking out into open sin.

IV. And now I come to the fourth point, which is, THE DISCOVERY OF OUR CORRUPTION. Job said, "Behold, I am vile." That word "behold" implies that he was astonished. The discovery was unexpected. There are special times with the Lord's people, when they learn by experience that they are vile. They heard the minister assert the power of inbred lust, but perhaps they shook they heads and said, "I cannot go so far as that;" but after a little while they found, by some clearer light from heaven, that it was a truth after all—"Behold, I am vile." I remember preaching a little while ago from some deep text concerning the desperate evil of the heart; and one of my most esteemed friends said, "Well, I have not discovered that," and I thought within myself, what a blessing, brother! I wish I had not; for it is a most fearful experience to pass through: I dare say there are many here now who say "I trust in no righteousness of my own. I trust in nothing in the world but the blood of Christ; but still I have not discovered the vileness of my heart in the way you have men-

tioned." Perhaps not, brother; but it may not be many years before you are made to learn it. You may be of a peculiar temperament. God has preserved from all contact with temptations which would have revealed your corruptions, or perhaps he has been pleased, as a reward of his grace for deeds which you have been enabled to do for him, to give you a peaceable life, so that you have not been often tossed about by the tumults of your own soul; but nevertheless, let me tell you, that you must expect to find, in the inmost depths of your heart, a lower depth still. God comfort you, and enable you, when you come out of the furnace, to lie lower than ever at the footstool of divine mercy! *I believe we generally find out most of our failings when we have the greatest access to God.* Job never had such a discovery of God as he had at this time. God spoke to him in the whirlwind, and then Job said, "I am vile." It is not so much when we are desponding, or unbelieving, that we learn our vileness; we do find out something of it then, but not all. It is when by God's grace we are helped to climb the mount, when we come near to God, and when God reveals himself to us, that we feel that we are not pure in his sight. We get some gleams of his high majesty; we see the brightness of his skirts, "dark—with insufferable light;" and after having been dazzled by the sight, there comes a fall: as if, smitten by the fiery light of the sun, the eagle should fall from his lofty heights, even to the ground. So with the believer. He soars up to God, and on a sudden down he comes. "Behold," he says, "I am vile. I had never known this if I had not seen God. Behold, I have seen him; and now I discover how vile I am." Nothing shows blackness like exposure to light. If I would see the blackness of my own character, I must put it side by side with spotless purity; and when the Lord is pleased to give us some special vision of himself, some sweet intercourse with his own blessed person, then it is that the soul learns, as it never knew before, with an agony perhaps which it never felt, even when at first convinced of sin, "Behold, I am vile." God is pleased to do this. Lest we should be "exalted above measure, by the abundance of the revelation," he sends us this "thorn in the flesh," to let us see *ourselves* after we have seen *him*.

There are many men who never know much of their vileness till after the blood of Christ has been sprinkled on their consciences, or even till they have been many years God's children. I met, some time ago, with the case of a Christian, who was positively pardoned before he had a strong sense of sin. "I did not," he said, "feel my vileness, until I heard a voice, 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions;' and after that, I thought how black I had been. I did not think of my filthiness," said he, "till after I saw that I had been washed." I think there are many of God's people, who, though they had some notion of their blackness before they came to Christ, never knew how thoroughly vile they were till afterwards. They thought then, "How great must have been my sin to need such a Saviour! how desperate my filth, to require such a washing! how awful my guilt, to need such an atonement as the blood of Christ." You may rest assured, that the more you know of God and of Christ, the more you will know of yourself; and you will be obliged to say, as you did before, "Behold,

I am vile;" vile in an extraordinary sense, even as you never guessed or fancies until now. "Behold, I am vile!" "I am vile, indeed!" No doubt many of you will still think, that what I say concerning your evil nature is not true, and you may, perhaps, imagine that grace has cut your evil nature up; but you know little about spiritual life, if you suppose that. It will not be long before you find the old Adam as strong in you as ever; here will be a war carried on in your heart to your dying day, in which grace shall prevail, but not without sighs, and groans, and agonies, and wrestlings, and a daily death.

V. Here is the way in which God discovers our vileness to ourselves. Now, if it be true that we are still vile, WHAT ARE OUR DUTIES? And here let me solemnly speak to such of you as are heirs of eternal life, desiring as your brother in Christ Jesus to urge you to some duties which are most necessary, on account of the continual filthiness of your heart.

In the first place, if your hearts be still vile, and there be still an evil nature in you, *how wrong it is to suppose that all your work is done*. There is one thing concerning which I have much reason to complain of some of you. Before your baptism you were extremely earnest; you were always attending the means of grace, and I always saw you here; but there are some, some even now in this place, who, as soon as they had crossed that rubicon, began from that moment to decrease in zeal, thinking that the work was over. I tell you solemnly, that I know there are some of you who were prayerful, careful, devout, living close and near to your God, until you joined the church; but from that time forth, you have gradually declined. Now, it really appears to me a matter of doubt whether such persons are Christians. I tell you I have very grave doubts of the sincerity of some of you. If I see a man less earnest after baptism, I think he had no right to be baptized; for if he had had a proper sense of the value of that ordinance, and had been rightly dedicated to God, he would not have turned back to the ways of the world. I am grieved, when I see one or two who once walked very consistently with us, beginning to slide away. I have no fault to find with the great majority of you, as to your firm adherence to God's word. I bless God, that for the space of two years and more you have held firm and fast by God. I have not seen you absent from the house of prayer, nor do I think your zeal has flagged; but there are some few who have been tempted by the world, who have been led astray by Satan, or who, by some change in their circumstances, or some removal to a distance, have become cold, and not diligent in the work of the Lord. There are some of my hearers who are not as earnest as they once were. My dear friends, if you know the vileness of your hearts, you would see the necessity of being as earnest now as ever you were. Oh! if, when you were converted, your old nature were cut up, there would be no need of watchfulness now. If all your lusts were entirely gone, and all the strength of corruption dead within you, there would be no need of perseverance; but it is just because ye have evil hearts, that I bid you be just as earnest as ever you were, to stir up the gift of God which is in you, and look as well to yourselves as ever you did. Fancy not the battle is over, man; it is but the first trump, summoning to the warfare. The trump has

ceased, and thou thinkest the battle is over; I tell thee, nay, the fight has but now begun; the hosts are only just led forth, and thou hast newly put on thine harness; thou hast conflicts yet to come. Be thou earnest, or else that first love of thine shall die, and thou shalt yet "go out from us, proving that thou wast not of us." Take care, my dear friends, of backsliding; it is the easiest thing in the world, and yet the most dangerous thing in the world. Take care of giving up your first zeal; beware of cooling in the least degree. Ye were hot and earnest once; be hot and earnest still, and let the fire which once burnt within you still animate you. Be ye still men of might and vigour, men who serve their God with diligence and zeal.

Again, if your evil nature is still within you, *how watchful you ought to be*! The devil never sleeps; your evil nature never sleeps; you ought never to sleep. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch." These are Jesus Christ's words, and there is nothing needs repetition half so much as that word "watch." We can do almost anything better than watch; for watching is very wearisome work, especially when we have sleepy souls to watch with. Watching is very fatiguing work. There is little open honor got by it, and therefore we do not have the hope of renown to cheer us up. Watching is a work that few of us, I am afraid, rightly perform; but if the Almighty had not watched over you, the devil would have carried you away long ago. Dear friends, I bid you watch constantly. When the adjoining house is on fire, how speedily do persons rise from their beds, and if they have combustibles, move them from the premises, and watch, lest their house also should become a prey to the devouring element! You have corruption in your heart: watch for the first spark, lest it set your soul on fire. "Let us not sleep as do others." You might sleep over the crater of a volcano, if you liked; you might sleep with your head before the cannon's mouth; you might, if you pleased, sleep in the midst of an earthquake, or in a pest-house; but I beseech you, do not sleep while you have evil hearts. Watch your hearts; you may think they are very good, but they will be your ruin if grace prevent not. Watch daily; watch perpetually; guard yourselves, lest you sin. Above all, my dear brethren, if our hearts be, indeed, still full of vileness, how necessary it is that we should *still exhibit faith in God*. If I must trust my God when I first set out, because of the difficulties in the way, if those difficulties be not diminished, I ought to trust God just as much as I did before. Oh! beloved, yield your hearts to God. Do not become self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is Satan's net, wherein he catcheth men, like poor silly fish, and doth destroy them. Be not self-sufficient. Think yourselves nothing, for ye are nothing, and live by God's help. The way to grow strong in Christ is to become weak in yourself. God poureth no power into man's heart till man's power is all poured out. Live, then, daily, a life of dependence on the grace of God. Do not set thyself up as if thou wast an independent gentleman; do not start in thine own concerns as if thou couldst do all things thyself; but live always trusting in God. Thou has as much need to trust him now as ever thou hadst; for, mark thee, although thou wouldst have been damned without Christ, at

first, thou wilt be damned without Christ now, unless he still keeps thee, for thou has as evil a nature now as thou hadst then.

Dearly beloved, I have just one word to say, not to the saints, but to the ungodly—one cheering word, sinner, poor lost sinner! You think you must not come to God because you are vile. Now, let me tell you, that there is not a saint in this place but is vile too. If Job, and Isaiah, and Paul, were all obliged to say, "I am vile," oh, poor sinner, wilt thou be ashamed to join the confession, and say, "I am vile," too? If I come to God this night in prayer, when I am on my knees by my bedside, I shall have to come to God as a sinner, vile and full of sin. My brother sinner! dost thou want to have any better confession than that? Thou wantest to be better, dost thou? Why, saints in themselves are no better. If divine grace does not eradicate all sin in the believer, how dost thou hope to do it thyself? and if God loves his people, while they are yet vile, dost thou think thy vileness will prevent his loving thee? Nay, vile sinner, come to Jesus! vilest of the vile! Believe on Jesus, thou off-cast of the world's society, thou who art the dung and dross of the streets, I bid thee come to Christ. Christ bids thee believe on him.

"Not the righteous, not the righteous,
Sinners, Jesus came to save."

Come now; say, "Lord, I am vile; give me faith. Christ died for sinners; I am a sinner. Lord Jesus, sprinkle thy blood on me." I tell thee, sinner, from God, if thou wilt confess thy sin, thou shalt find pardon. If now with all thy heart thou wilt say, "I am vile; wash me;" thou shalt be washed now. If the Holy Spirit shall enable thee to say with thine heart now, "Lord, I am sinful—

'Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.'"

Thou shalt go out of this place with all thy sins pardoned; and though thou comest in here with every sin that man hath ever committed on thy head, thou shalt go out as innocent, yea, more innocent than the new-born babe. Though thou comest in here all over sin, thou shalt go out with a robe of righteousness, white as angels are, as pure as God himself, so far as justification is concerned. For "now," mark it "now is the accepted time," if thou believest on him who justifieth the ungodly. Oh! may the Holy Spirit give thee faith that thou mayest be saved now, for then thou wilt be saved for ever! may God add his blessing to this feeble discourse for his name's sake!

Salvation to the Uttermost

A Sermon
(No. 84)
Delivered on Sabbath Evening, June, 8, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"Where he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—Hebrews 7:25.

SALVATION is a doctrine peculiar to revelation. Revelation affords us a complete history of it, but nowhere else can we find any trace thereof. God has written many books, but only one book has had for its aim the teaching of the ways of mercy. He has written the great book of creation, which is our duty and our pleasure to read. It is a volume embellished on its surface with starry gems and rainbow colours, and containing in its inner leaves marvels at which the wise may wonder for age, and yet find a fresh theme for their conjectures. Nature is the spelling-book of man, in which he may learn his Maker's name, he hath studded it with embroidery, with gold, with gems. There are doctrines of truth in the mighty stars, and there are lessons written on the green earth and in the flowers upspringing from the sod. We read the books of God when we see the storm and tempest, for all things speak as God would have them; and if our ears are open we may hear the voice of God in the rippling of every rill, in the roll of every thunder, in the brightness of every lightning, in the twinkling of every star, in the budding of every flower. God has written the great book of creation, to teach us what he is—how great, how mighty. But I read nothing of salvation in creation. The rocks tell me, "Salvation is not in us;" the winds howl, but they howl not salvation: the waves rush upon the shore, but among the wrecks which they wash up, the reveal no trace of salvation; the fathomless caves of ocean bear pearls, but they bear no pearls of grace; the starry heavens have their flashing meteors, but they have no voices of salvation. I find salvation written nowhere, till in this volume of my Father's grace I find his blessed love unfolded towards the great human family, teaching them that they are lost, but that he can save them, and that in saving them he can be "just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." Salvation, then, is to be found in the Scriptures, and in the Scriptures only; for we can read nothing of it elsewhere. And while it is to be found only in Scripture, I hold that the peculiar doctrine of revelation is salvation. I believe that the Bible was sent not to teach me history, but to teach me grace—not to give me a system of philosophy, but to give me a system of divinity—not to teach worldly wisdom, but spiritual wisdom. Hence I hold all preaching of philosophy and science in the pulpit to be altogether out of place. I would check no man's liberty in this matter, for God only is the Judge of man's conscience; but it is my firm opinion that if we profess to be Christians, we are bound to keep to Christianity; if we profess to be Christian

ministers, we drivel away the Sabbath-day, we mock our hearers, we insult God, if we deliver lectures upon botany, or geology, instead of delivering sermons salvation. He who does not always preach the gospel, ought not to be accounted a true-called minister of God.

Well, then it is salvation I desire to preach to you. We have, in our text, two or three things. In the first place, we are told *who they are who will be saved*, "them that come into God by Jesus Christ;" in the second place we are told *the extent of the Saviour's ability to save*, "He is able to save to the uttermost;" and in the third place, we have *the reason given why he can save*, "seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

I. First, we are told THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TO BE SAVED. And the people who are to be saved are "those who come unto God by Jesus Christ." There is no limitation here of sect or denomination: it does not say, the Baptist, the Independent, or the Episcopalian that come unto God by Jesus Christ, but it simply says, "*them*," by which I understand men of all creeds, men of all ranks, men of all classes, who do but come to Jesus Christ. They shall be saved, whatever their apparent position before men, or whatever may be the denomination to which they have linked themselves.

1. Now, I must have you notice, in the first place, *where these people come to*. They "come unto God." By coming to God we are not to understand the mere formality of devotion, since this may be but a solemn means of sinning. What a splendid general confession is that in the Church of England Prayer Book: "We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us." There is not to be found a finer confession in the English language. And yet how often, my dear friends, have the best of us mocked God by repeating such expressions verbally, and thinking we have done our duty! How many of you go to chapel, and must confess your own absence of mind while you have bowed your knee in prayer, or uttered a song of praise! My friends, it is one thing to go to church or chapel; it is quite another thing to go *to God*. There are many people who can pray right eloquently, and who do so; who have learned a form of prayer by heart, or, perhaps, use an extemporary form of words of their own composing: but who, instead of going to God, are all the while going from God. Let me persuade you all not to be content with mere formality. There will be many damned who never broke the Sabbath, as they thought, but who, all their lives were Sabbath-breakers. It is as much possible to break the Sabbath in a church as it is to break the Sabbath in the park; it is as easy to break it here in this solemn assembly as in your own houses. Every one of you virtually break the Sabbath when you merely go through a round of duties, having done which, you retire to your chambers, fully content with yourselves, and fancy that all is over—that you have done your day's work—whereas, you have never come to God at all, but have merely come to the outward ordinance and to the visible means, which is quite another thing from coming to God himself.

And let me tell you, again, that coming *to God* is not what some of you suppose—*now and then sincerely performing an act of devotion, but giving to the world the greater part of your life*. You think that if sometimes you are sincere, if now and then you put up an earnest cry to heaven, God will accept you; and though your life may be still worldly, and your desires still carnal, you suppose that for the sake of this occasional devotion God will be pleased, in his infinite mercy, to blot out your sins. I tell you, sinners, there is no such thing as bringing half of yourselves to God, and leaving the other half away. If a man has come here, I suppose he has brought his whole self with him; and so if a man comes to God, he cannot come, half of him, and half of him stay away. Our whole being must be surrendered to the service of our Maker. We must come to him with an entire dedication of ourselves, giving up all we are, and all we ever shall be, to be thoroughly devoted to his service, otherwise we have never come to God aright. I am astonished to see how people in these days try to love the world and love Christ too; according to the old proverb, they "hold with the hare and run with the hounds." They are real good Christians sometimes, when they think they ought to be religious; but they are right bad fellows at other seasons, when they think that religion would be a little loss to them. Let me warn you all. It is of no earthly use for you to pretend to be on two sides of the question. "If God be God, serve him; If Baal be God, serve him." I like an out-and-out man of any sort. Give me a man that is a sinner: I have some hope for him when I see him sincere in his vices, and open to acknowledging his own character; but if you give me a man who is half-hearted, who is not quite bold enough to be all for the devil, nor quite sincere enough to be all for Christ, I tell you, I despair of such a man as that. The man who wants to link the two together is in an extremely hopeless case. Do you think, sinners, you will be able to serve two masters, when Christ has said you cannot? Do you fancy you can walk with God and walk with mammon too? Will you take God on one arm, and the devil on the other? Do you suppose you can be allowed to drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of Satan at the same time? I tell you, ye shall depart, as cursed and miserable hypocrites, if so you come to God. God will have the whole of you come, or else you shall not come at all. The whole man must seek after the Lord; the whole soul must be poured out before him; otherwise it is no acceptable coming to God at all. Oh, halters between two opinions, remember this and tremble.

I think I hear one say, "Well, then, tell us what it is to come to God." I answer, coming to God implies, *leaving something else*. If a man comes to God, he must leave his sins; he must leave his righteousness; he must leave both his bad works and his good ones, and come to God, leaving them entirely.

Again, coming to God implies, *there is no aversion towards him*; for a man will not come to God while he hates God; he will be sure to keep away. Coming to God signifies having *some love to God*. Again: coming to God signifies *desiring God*, desiring to be near to him. And, above all, it signifies *praying to God and putting faith in him*. This is coming to God;

and those that have come to God in that fashion are among the saved. The come *to God*: that is the place to which their eager spirits hasten.

2. But notice, next, *how they come*. The "come unto God *by Jesus Christ*." We have known many persons who call themselves natural religionists. They worship the God of nature, and they think that they can approach God apart from Jesus Christ. There be some men we wot of who despise the mediation of the Saviour, and, who, if they were in an hour of peril, would put up their prayer at once to God, without faith in the Mediator. Do such of you fancy that you will be heard and saved by the great God your Creator, apart from the merits of his Son? Let me solemnly assure you, in God's most holy name, there never was a prayer answered for salvation, by God the Creator, since Adam fell, without Jesus Christ the Mediator. "No man can come unto God but by Jesus Christ;" and if any one of you deny the Divinity of Christ, and if any soul among you do not come to God through the merits of a Saviour, bold fidelity obliges me to pronounce you condemned persons; for however amiable you may be, you cannot be right in the rest, unless you think rightly of him. I tell you, ye may offer all the prayers that ever may be prayed, but ye shall be damned, unless ye put them up through Christ. It is all in vain for you to take your prayers and carry them yourself to the throne. "Get thee hence, sinner; get thee hence," says God; "I never knew thee. Why didst not thou put thy prayer into the hands of a Mediator? It would have been sure of an answer. But as thou presentest it thyself, see what I will do with it!" And he read your petition, and casts it to the four winds of heaven; and thou goest away unheard, unsaved. The Father will never save a man apart from Christ; there is not one soul now in heaven who was not saved by Jesus Christ; there is not one who ever came to God aright, who did not come through Jesus Christ. If you would be at peace with God, you must come to him through Christ, as the way, the truth, and the life, making mention of his righteousness, and of his only.

3. But when these people come, *what do they come for*? There are some who think they come to God, who do not come for the right thing. Many a young student cries to God to help him in his studies; many a merchant comes to God that he may be guided through a dilemma in his business. They are accustomed, in any difficulty, to put up some kind of prayer which, if they knew its value, they might cease from offering, for "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." But the poor sinner, in coming to Christ, has only one object. If all the world were offered to him, he would not think it worth his acceptance if he could not have Jesus Christ. There is a poor man, condemned to die, locked up in the condemned cell: the bell is tolling: he will soon be taken off to die on the gallows. There, man, I have brought you a fine robe. What! not smile at it? Look! it is stiff with silver! Mark you not how it is bedizened with jewels? Such a robe as that cost many and many a pound, and much fine workmanship was expended on it. Contemptuously he smile at it! See here, man, I present thee something else: here is a glorious estate for thee, with broad acres, fine

mansions, parks and lawns; take that title deed, 'tis thine. What! not smile, sir? Had I given that estate to any man who walked the street, less poor than thou art, he would have danced for very joy. And wilt not thou afford a smile, when I make thee rich and clothe thee with gold? Then let me try once more. There is Caesar's purple for thee; put it on thy shoulders—there is his crown; it shall sit on no other head but thine. It is the crown of empires that know no limit. I'll make thee a king; thou shalt have a kingdom upon which the sun shall never set; thou shalt reign from pole to pole. Stand up; call thyself Caesar. Thou art emperor. What! no smile? What dost thou want? "Take away that bauble," says he of the crown; "rend up that worthless parchment; take away that robe; ay, cast it to the winds. Give it to the kings of the earth who live; but I have to die, and of what use are these to me? Give me a pardon, and I will not care to be a Caesar. Let me live a beggar, rather than die a prince." So is it with the sinner when he comes to God: he comes for salvation. He says—

"Wealth and honor I disdain;
Earthly comforts, Lord, are vain,
These will never satisfy,
Give me Christ, or else I die."

Mercy is his sole request. O my friends, if you have ever come to God, crying out for salvation, and for salvation only, then you have come unto God aright. It were useless then to mock you. You cry for bread: should I give you stones? You would but hurl them at me. Should I offer you wealth? It would be little. We must preach to the sinner who comes to Christ, the gift for which he asks—the gift of salvation by Jesus Christ the Lord—as being his own by faith.

4. One more thought upon this coming to Christ. *In what style do these persons come*? I will try and give you a description of certain persons, all coming to the gate of mercy, as they think, for salvation. There comes one, a fine fellow in a coach and six! See how hard he drives, and how rapidly he travels; he is a fine fellow: he has men in livery, and his horses are richly caparisoned; he is rich, exceeding rich. He drives up to the gate, and says, "Knock at that gate for me; I am rich enough, but still I dare say it would be as well to be on the safe side; I am a very respectable gentleman; I have enough of my own good works and my own merits, and this chariot, I dare say, would carry me across the river death, and land me safe on the other side; but still, it is fashionable to be religious, so I will approach the gate. Porter! undo the gates, and let me in; see what an honorable man I am." You will never find the gates undone for that man; he does not approach in the right manner. There comes another; he has not quite so much merit, but still he has some; he comes walking along, and having leisurely marched up, he cries, "Angel! open the gate to me; I am come to Christ: I think I should like to be saved. I do not feel that I very much require salvation; I have always been a very honest, upright, moral man; I do not know myself to have been much of a sinner; I have robes of my own; but I would not mind putting Christ's robes on; it would not hurt

me. I may as well have the wedding garment; then I can have mine own too." AH! the gates are still hard and fast, and there is no opening of them. But let me show you the right man. There he comes, sighing and groaning, crying and weeping al the way. He has a rope on his neck, for he thinks he deserves to be condemned. He has rags on him, he comes to the heavenly throne; and when he approaches mercy's gate he is almost afraid to knock. He lifts up his eyes and he sees it written, "Knock, and it shall be opened to you;" but he fears lest he should profane the gate by his poor touch; he gives at first a gentle rap, and if mercy's gate open not, he is a poor dying creature; so he gives another rap, then another and another; and although he raps times without number, and no answer comes, still he is a sinful man, and he knows himself to be unworthy; so he keeps rapping still; and at last the good angel smiling from the gate, says, "Ah! this gate was built for beggars not for princes; heaven's gate was made for spiritual paupers, not for rich men. Christ died for sinners, not for those who are good and excellent. Hoe came into the world to save the vile.

'Not the righteous—

Sinners, Jesus came to call.'

Come in, poor man! Come in. Thrice welcome!" And the angels sin, "Thrice welcome!" How many of you, dear friends, have come to God by Jesus Christ in that fashion? Not with the pompous pride of the Pharisee, not with the cant of the good man who thinks he deserves salvation, but with the sincere cry of a penitent, with the earnest desire of a thirsty soul after living water, panting as the thirsty hart in the wilderness after the water-brooks, desiring Christ as they that look for the morning; I say, more than they that look for the morning. As my God who sits in heaven liveth, if you have not come to God in this fashion, you have not come to God at all; but if you have thus come to God, here is the glorious word for you—"He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him."

II. Thus we have disposed of the first point, the coming to God; and now, secondly, WHAT IS THE MEASURE OF THE SAVIOUR'S ABILITY? This is a question as important as if it were for life or death—a question as to the ability of Jesus Christ. How far can salvation go? What are its limits and its boundaries? Christ is a Saviour: how far is he able to save? He is a Physician: to what extent will his skill reach to heal diseases? What a noble answer the text gives! "He is able to save to the uttermost." Now, I will certainly affirm, and no one can deny it, that no one here knows how far the uttermost is. David said, if he took the wings of the morning, to fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there should God reach him. But who knoweth where the uttermost is? Borrow the angel's wing, and fly far, far beyond the most remote star: go where wing has never flapped before, and where the undisturbed ether is as serene and quiet as the breast of Deity itself; you still, beyond the bounds of creation, where space itself falls, and where chaos takes up its reign: you will not come to the uttermost. It is too far for mortal intellect to conceive of; it is beyond the range of reason or of thought. Now, our text tells us that Christ is "able to save to the uttermost."

1. Sinner, I shall address thee first; and saints of God, I shall address you afterwards. Sinner, Christ is "able to save to the uttermost;" by which we understand that *the uttermost extent of guilt* is not beyond the power of the Saviour. Can any one tell what is the uttermost amount to which a man might sin? Some of us conceive that Palmer has gone almost to the uttermost of human depravity; we fancy that no heart could be much more vile than that which conceived a murder so deliberate, and contemplated a crime so protracted; but I can conceive it possible that there might be even worse men than he, and that if his life were spared, and he were set at large, he might become even a worse man than he is now. Yea, supposing he were to commit another murder, and then another, and another, would he have gone to the uttermost? Could not a man be yet more guilty? As long as ever he lives, he may become more guilty than he was the day before. But yet my text says, Christ is "able to save to the uttermost." I may imagine a person has crept in here, who thinks himself to be the most loathsome of all beings, the most condemned of all creatures. "Surely," says he, "I have gone to the utmost extremity of sin; none could outstrip me in vice." My dear friend, suppose you had gone to the uttermost, remember that even then you would not have gone beyond the reach of divine mercy; for he is "able to save to the uttermost," and it is possible that you yourself might go a little further, and therefore you have not gone to the uttermost yet. However far you may have gone—if you have gone to the very artic regions of vice, where the sun of mercy seems to scatter but a few oblique rays, there can the light of salvation reach you. If I should see a sinner staggering on in his progress to hell, I would not give him up, even when he had advanced to the last stage of iniquity. Though his foot hung trembling over the very verge of perdition, I would not cease to pray for him; and though he should in his poor drunken wickedness go staggering on till one foot were over hell, and he were ready to perish, I would not despair of him. Till the pit had shut her mouth upon him I would believe it still possible that divine grace might save him. See here! he is just upon the edge of the pit, ready to fall; but ere he falls, free grace bids, "Arrest that man!" Down mercy comes, catches him on her broad wings, and he is saved, a trophy of redeeming love. If there be any such in this vast assembly—if there be any here of the outcast of society, the vilest of the vile, the scum, the draff of this poor world,—oh! ye chief of sinners! Christ is "able to save to the uttermost." Tell that everywhere, in every garret, in every cellar, in every haunt of vice, in every kennel of sin; tell it everywhere! "To the uttermost!" "He is able to save them to the uttermost."

2. Yet again: not only to the uttermost of crime, but *to the uttermost of rejection*. I must explain what I mean by this. There are many of you here who have heard the gospel from your youth up. I see some here, who like myself are children of pious parents. There are some of you upon whose infant forehead the pure heavenly drops of a mother's tears continually fell; there are many of you here who were trained up by one whose knee, whenever it was bent, was ever bent for you, her first-born son. Your mother has gone to heaven, it

may be, and all the prayers she ever prayed for you are as yet unanswered. Sometimes you wept. You remember well how she grasped your hand, and said to you, "Ah! John, you will break my heart by this your sin, if you continue running on in those ways of iniquity: oh! if you did but melt, and you would fly to Christ." Do you not remember that time? The hot sweat stood upon your brow, and you said—for you could not break her heart—"Mother, I will think of it;" and you did think of it; but you met your companion outside, and it was all gone: your mother's expostulation was brushed away; like the thin cobwebs of the gossamer, blown by the swift north wind, not a trace of it was left. Since then you have often stepped in to hear the minister. Not long ago you heard a powerful sermon; the minister spoke as though he were a man just started from his grave, with as much earnestness as if he had been a sheeted ghost come back from the realms of despair, to tell you his own awful fate, and warn you of it. You remember how the tears rolled down your cheeks. while he told you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; you remember how he preached to you Jesus and salvation by the cross, and you rose up from your seat in that chapel, and you said, "Please God I am spared another day, I will turn to him with full purpose of heart." And there you are, still unchanged—perhaps worse than you were; and you have spent your Sunday afternoon the angel knows where: and your mother's spirit knows where you have spent it too, and could she weep, she would weep over you who have this day despised God's Sabbath, and trampled on his Holy Word. But doest thou feel in thine heart to-night the tender motions of the Holy Spirit? Dost thou feel something say, "Sinner! come to Christ now?" Dost thou hear conscience whispering to thee, telling thee of thy past transgression? And is there some sweet angel voice, saying, "Come to Jesus, come to Jesus; he will save you yet?" I tell you, sinner, you may have rejected Christ to the very uttermost; but he is still able to save you. There are a thousand prayers on which you have trampled, there are a hundred sermons all wasted on you, there are thousands of Sabbaths which you have thrown away; you have rejected Christ, you have despised his Spirit; but still he ceases not to cry, "Return, return!" He is "able to save thee to the uttermost," if thou comest unto God by him.

3. There is another case which demands my particular attention to-night. It is that of the man who has gone *to the uttermost of despair*. There are some poor creatures in the world, who from a course of crime have become hardened, and when at last aroused by remorse and the pricklings of conscience, there is an evil spirit which broods over them, telling them it is hopeless for such as they are to seek salvation. We have met with some who have gone so far that they have thought that even devils might be saved rather than they could. They have given themselves up for lost, and signed their own death-warrant, and in such a state of mind have positively taken the halter in their hand, to end their unhappy lives. Despair has brought many a man to a premature death; it hath sharpened many a knife, and mingled many a cup of poison. Have I a despairing person here? I know him by his

sombre face and downcast looks. He wishes he were dead, for he thinks that hell itself could be scarce worse torment than to be here expecting it. Let me whisper to him words of consolation. Despairing soul! hope yet, for Christ is able to save to the uttermost;" and though thou art put in the lowest dungeon of the castle of despair, though key after key hath been turned upon thee, and the iron grating of thy window forbids all filing, and the height of thy prison-wall is so awful that thou couldst not expect to escape, yet let me tell thee, there is one at the gate who can break every bolt, and undo every lock; there is one who can lead thee out to God's free air and save thee yet, for though the worst may come to the worst, he "is able to save thee to the uttermost."

4. And now a word to the saint, to comfort him: for this text is his also. Beloved brother in the gospel! Christ is able to save thee to the uttermost. Art thou brought very low by *distress*? hast thou lost house and home, friend and property? Remember, thou hast not come "to the uttermost" yet, Badly off as thou art, thou mightest be worse. He is able to save thee; and suppose it should come to this, that thou hadst not a rag left, nor a crust, nor a drop of water, still he would be able to save thee, for "he is able to save to the uttermost." So with temptation. If thou shouldst have the sharpest *temptation* with which mortal was ever tried, he is able to save thee. If thou shouldst be brought into such a predicament that the foot of the devil should be upon thy neck, and the fiend should say, "Now I will make an end of thee," God would be able to save thee then. Ay, and in the uttermost *infirmity* shouldst thou live for many a year, till thou art leaning on thy staff, and tottering along thy weary life, if thou shouldst outlive Methusaleh, thou couldst not live beyond the uttermost, and he would save thee then. Yes, and when thy little bark is launched by *death* upon the unknown sea of eternity, he will be with thee; and though thick vapours of gloomy darkness gather round thee, and thou canst not see into the dim future, though thy thoughts tell thee that thou wilt be destroyed, yet God will be "able to save thee to the uttermost."

Then, my friends, if Christ is able to save a Christian to the uttermost, do you suppose he will ever let a Christian perish? Wherever I go, I hope always to bear my hearty protest against the most accursed doctrine of a saint's falling away and perishing. There are some ministers who preach that a man may be a child of God (now, angels! do not hear what I am about to say, listen to me, ye who are down below in hell, for it may suit you) that a man may be a child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow; that God may acquit a man, and yet condemn him—save him by grace, and then let him perish—suffer a man to be taken out of Christ's hands, though he has said such a thing shall never take place. How will you explain this? It certainly is no lack of power. You must accuse him of a want of love, and will you dare to do that? He is full of love; and since he has also the power, he will never suffer one of his people to perish. It is true, and ever shall be true, that he will save them to the very uttermost.

III. Now, in the last place, WHY IS THAT JESUS CHRIST IS "ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST?" The answer is, that he "ever liveth to make intercession for them." This implies that *he died*, which is indeed the great source of his saving power. Oh! how sweet it is to reflect upon the great and wonderous works which Christ hath done, whereby he hath become "the high priest of our profession," able to save us! It is pleasant to look back to Calvary's hill, and to behold that bleeding form expiring on the tree; it is sweet, amazingly sweet, to pry with eyes of love between those thick olives, and hear the groanings of the Man who sweat great drops of blood. Sinner, if thou askest me how Christ can save thee, I tell thee this—he can save thee, because he did not save himself; he can save thee, because he took thy guilt and endured thy punishment. There is no way of salvation apart from the satisfaction of divine justice. Either the sinner must die, or else some one must die for him. Sinner, Christ can save thee, because, if thou comest to God by him, then he died for thee. God has a debt against us, and he never remits that debt; he will have it paid. Christ pays it, and then the poor sinner goes free.

And we are told another reason why he is able to save: not only because he died, but *because he lives to make intercession for us*. That Man who once died on the cross is alive; that Jesus who was buried in the tomb is alive. If you ask me what he is doing; I bid you listen. Listen, if you have ears! Did you not hear him, poor penitent sinner? Did you not hear his voice, sweeter than harpers playing on their harps? Did you not hear a charming voice? Listen! what did it say? "O my Father! forgive—!" Why, he mentioned your own name! "O my Father, forgive him; he knew not what he did. It is true he sinned against light, and knowledge, and warnings; sinned wilfully and woefully; but, Father, forgive him!" Penitent, if thou canst listen, thou wilt hear him praying for thee. And that is why he is able to save.

A warning and a question, and I have done. First, a warning. Remember, *there is a limit to God's mercy*. I have told you from the Scriptures, that "he is *able* to save to the uttermost;" but there is a limit to his purpose to save. If I read the Bible rightly, there is one sin which can never be forgiven. It is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Tremble, unpardoned sinners, lest ye should commit that. If I may tell you what I think the sin against the Holy Ghost is, I must say that I believe it to be different in different people; but in many persons, the sin against the Holy Ghost consists in stifling their convictions. Tremble, my hearers, lest to-night's sermon should be the last you hear. Go away and scorn the preacher, if you like; but do not neglect his warning. Perhaps the very next time thou laughest over a sermon, or mockest at a prayer, or despisest a text, the very next oath thou swearest, God may say, "He is given to idols, let him alone; my Spirit shall no more strive with that man; I will never speak to him again." That is the warning.

And now, lastly, the question. *Christ has done so much for you: what have you ever done for him*? Ah! poor sinner, if thou knewest that Christ died for thee—and I know that he did,

if thou repentest—if thou knewest that one day thou wilt be his, wouldst thou spit upon him now? wouldst thou scoff at God's day, if thou knewest that one day it will be thy day? wouldst thou despise Christ, if thou knewest that he loves thee now, and will display that love by-and-bye? Oh! there are some of you that will loathe yourselves when you know Christ because you did not treat him better. He will come to you one of these bright mornings, and he will say, "Poor sinner, I forgive you;" and you will look up in his face, and say. "What! Lord, forgive me? I used to curse thee, I laughed at thy people, I despised everything that had to do with religion. Forgive me?" "Yes," says Christ, "give me thy hand; I loved thee when thou hatedst me: come here!" And sure there is nothing will break a heart half so much as thinking of the way in which you sinned against one who loved you so much.

Oh! beloved, hear again the text,—"He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." I am no orator, I have no eloquence; but if I were the one, and had the other, I would preach to you with all my soul. As it is, I only talk right on, and tell you what I do know; I can only say again,

"He is able;
He is willing: doubt no more.
Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify:
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh—
Without money,
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy."

For he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." O Lord! make sinners come! Spirit of God! make them come! Compel them to come to Christ by sweet constraint, and let not our words be in vain, or our labour lost; for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

Omniscience

A Sermon
(No. 85)
Delivered on Sabbath Evening, June 15, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"Thou God seest me."—Genesis 16:13.

There are more eyes fixed on man than he wots of: he sees not as he is seen. He thinks himself obscure and unobserved, but let him remember that a cloud on witnesses hold him in full survey. Wherever he is, at every instant, there are beings whose attention is riveted by his doings, and whose gaze is constantly fixed by his actions. Within this Hall, I doubt not, there are myriads of spirits unseen to us—spirits good and spirits evil; upon us to-night the eyes of angels rest: attentively those perfect spirits regard our order; they hear our songs; they observe our prayers; it may be they fly to heaven to convey to their companions news of any sinners who are born of God, for there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth, both when we wake and when we sleep; midnight is peopled with shadows unseen, and daylight hath its spirits too. The prince of the power of the air, attended by his squadron of evil spirits, flits through the ether oft; evil spirits watch our halting every instant, while good spirits, battling for the salvation of God's elect, keep us in all our ways and watch over our feet, lest at any time we dash them against a stone. Hosts of invisible beings attend on every one of us at different periods of our lives. We must remember, also, that not only do the spirits of angels, elect or fallen, look on us, but "the spirits of the just made perfect" continually observe our conversation. We are taught by the Apostle that the noble army of martyrs, and the glorious company of confessors, are "witnesses" of our race to heaven, for he says, "seeing, then, that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." From yon blue heaven the eyes of the glorified look down on us; there the children of God are sitting on their starry thrones, observing whether we manfully uphold the banner around which they fought; they behold our valour, or they detect our cowardice; and they are intent to witness our valiant deeds of noble daring, or our ignominious retreat in the day of battle.

Remember that, ye sons of men, ye are not unregarded; ye do not pass through this world in unseen obscurity. In darkest shades of night eyes glare on you through the gloom. In the brightness of the day angels are spectators of your labours. From heaven there look down upon you spirits who see all that finite beings are capable of beholding. But if we think that thought worth treasuring up, there is one which sums up that and drowns it, even as a drop is lost in the ocean; it is the thought, "Thou God seest me." It is nought that angels see

me, it is nought that devils watch me, it is nought that the glorified spirits observe me, compared with the overwhelming truth, that thou God at all times seest me. Let us dwell on that now, and may God the Spirit make use of it to our spiritual profit!

In the first place, I shall notice *the general doctrine*, that God observes all men. In the second place, I shall notice *the particular doctrine*, "Thou God seest *me*." And in the third place, I shall *draw from it some practical and comforting inferences* to different orders of persons now assembled, each of whom may learn something from this short sentence.

1I. In the first place, THE GENERAL DOCTRINE, that God sees us.

1. This may be easily proved, even from the nature of God. It were hard to suppose a God who could not see his own creatures; it were difficult in the extreme to imagine a divinity who could not behold the actions of the works of his hands. The word which the Greeks applies to God implied that he was a God who could see. They called him *Theos* (*Theos*); and they derived that word, if I read rightly, from the root *Theisthai* (*Theisthai*), to see, because they regarded God as being the all-seeing one, whose eye took in the whole universe at a glance, and whose knowledge extended far beyond that of mortals. God Almighty, from his very essence and nature, must be an Omniscient God. Strike out the thought that he sees me, and you extinguish Deity by a single stroke. There were no God if that God had no eyes, for a blind God were no God at all. We could not conceive such an one. Stupid as idolators may be, it were very hard to think that even they had fashioned a blind god: even they have given eyes to their gods, though they see not. Juggernaut hath eyes stained with blood; and the gods of the ancient Romans had eyes, and some of them were called far-seeing gods. Even the heathen can scarce conceive of a god that hath no eyes to see, and certainly we are not so mad as to imagine for a single second that there can be a Deity without the knowledge of everything that is done by man beneath the sun. I say it were as impossible to conceive of a God who did not observe everything, as to conceive of a round square. When we say, "*Thou God*," we do, in fact, comprise in the word "God" the idea of a God who sees everything. "Thou God seest me."

2. Yet, further, we are sure that God must see us, for we are taught in the Scriptures that *God is everywhere*, and if God be everywhere, what doth hinder him from seeing all that is done in every part of his universe? God is here: I do not simply live near him, but "*in* him I live, and move, and have my being." There is not a particle of this mighty space which is not filled with God: go forth into the pure air, and there is not a particle of it where God is not. In every portion of this earth whereon I tread, and the spot whereon I moved, there is God.

"Within thy circling power I stand;
On every side I find thy hand:
Awake, asleep, at home, abroad,
I am surrounded still with God."

Take the wings of the morning and fly beyond the most distant star, but God is there. God is not a being confined to one place, but he is everywhere; he is there, and there, and there; in the deepest mine man ever bored; in the unfathomable caverns of the ocean; in the heights, towering and lofty; in the gulfs that are deep, which fathom can never reach; God is everywhere. I know from his own words that he is a God who filleth immensity; the heavens are not wide enough for him; he graspeth the sun with one hand and the moon with the other; he stretcheth himself through the unnavigated ether, where the wing of seraph hath never been flapped, there is God; and where the solemnity of silence has never been broken by the son of Cherub, there is God. God is everywhere. Conceive space, and God and space are equal. Well, then, if God be everywhere, how can I refrain from believing that God sees me wherever I am? He doth not look upon me from a distance: if he did, I might screen myself beneath the shades of night; but he is here, close by my side, and not *by* me only, but *in* me; within this heart; where these lungs beat; or where my blood gushes through my veins; or where this pulse is beating, like a muffled drum, my march to death; God is there: within this mouth; in this tongue; in these eyes; in each of you God dwells; he is within you, and around you; he is beside you, and behind, and before. Is not much knowledge too wonderful you? Is it not high, and you cannot attain unto it? I say, how can you resist the doctrine, which comes upon you like a flash or lightning, that if God be everywhere he must see everything, and that therefore it is a truth, "Thou God seest me."

3. But, lest any should suppose that God may be in a place, and yet slumbering, let me remind him that in every spot to which he can travel, there is, not simply God, but also *God's activity*. Wherever I go I shall find, not a slumbering God, but a God busy about the affairs of this world. Take me to the green sward, and pleasant pasture—why, every little blade of grass there has God's hand in it, making it grow; and every tiny daisy, which a child likes to pluck, looks up with its little eye, and says, "God is in me, circulating my sap, and opening my little flower." Go where you will through this London, where vegetation is scarcely to be found, look up yonder and see those rolling stars; God is active there: it is his hand that wheels along the stars, and moves the moon, in her nightly course. But if there be neither stars nor moon, there are those clouds, heavy with darkness, like the cars of night, who steers them across the sea of azure? Doth not the breath of God blowing upon them drive them along the heavens? God is everywhere, not as a slumbering God, but as an active God. I am upon the sea; and there I see God making the everlasting pulse of nature beat in constant ebbs and flows. I am in the pathless desert, but above me screams the vulture, and I see God winging the wild bird's flight. I am shut up in a hermitage; but an insect drops from its leaf, and I see in that insect, life which God preserves and sustains; yea, shut me out from the animate creation, and put me on the barren rock, where moss itself cannot find a footing; and I shall there discern my God bearing up the pillars of the universe, and sustaining that bare rock as a part of the colossal foundation whereon he hath built the world.

"Where'er we turn our gazing eyes,
Thy radiant footsteps shine;
Ten thousand pleasing wonders rise,
And speak their source divine.
The living tribes of countless forms,
in earth, and sea, and air,
The meanest files, the smallest worms,
Almighty power declare."

Ye shall see God everywhere: if ye see him not around you, look within you; and is he not there? Is not your blood now flowing through every portion of your body, to and fro your heart? And is not God there active? Do you not know that every pulse you beat needs a volition of Deity as its permit, and yet more, needs an exertion of Divine power as its cause? Do you not know that every breath you breathe needs Deity for its inspiration and expiration, and that you must die if God withdraw that power? If we could look within us, there are mighty works going on in this mortal fabric—the garment of the soul—which would astonish you, and make you see, indeed, that God is not asleep, but that he is active and busy. There is a working God everywhere, a God with his eyes open everywhere, a God with his hands at work everywhere; a God doing something, not a God slumbering, but a God labouring. Oh! sirs, does not the conviction flash upon your mind with a brightness, against which you cannot shut your eyes, that since God is everywhere, and everywhere active, it follows, as a necessary and unavoidable consequence, that he must see us, and know all our actions and our deeds?

4. I have one more proof to offer which I think to be conclusive. God, we may be sure, sees us, when we remember that *he can see a thing before it happens*. If he beholds an event before it transpires, surely reason dictates, he must see a thing that is happening now. Read those ancient prophecies, read what God said should be the end of Babylon and of Nineveh; just turn to the chapter where you read of Edom's doom, or where you are told that Tyre shall be desolate; then walk through the lands of the East, and see Nineveh and Babylon cast to the ground, the cities ruined; and then reply to this question—"Is not God a God of foreknowledge? Can he not see the things that are to come?" Ay, there is not a thing which shall transpire in the next cycle of a thousand years which is not already past to the infinite mind of God; there is not a deed which shall be transacted to-morrow, or the next day, or the next, through eternity, if days can be eternal, but God knoweth it altogether. And if he knows the future, does he not know the present. If his eyes look through the dim haze which veils us from the things of futurity, can he not see that which is standing in the brightness of the present? If he can see a great distance, can he not see near at hand! Surely that Divine Being who discerneth the end from the beginning, must know the things which occur now;

and it must be true that "Thou God seest us," even the whole of us, the entire race of man. So much for the general and universally acknowledged doctrine.

II. Now, I come, in the second place, to the SPECIAL DOCTRINE: "Thou God seest *me*."

Come now, there is a disadvantage in having so many hearers, as there is always in speaking to more than one at a time, because persons are apt to think, "He does not speak to me." Jesus Christ preached a very successful sermon once when he had but one hearer, because he had the woman sitting on the well, and she could not say that Christ was preaching to her neighbour. He said to her, "Go, call thy husband, and come hither." There was something there which smote her heart; she could not evade the confession of her guilt. But in regard to our congregations, the old orator might soon see his prayer answered, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears," for when the gospel is preached, we lend our ears to everybody; we are accustomed to hear for our neighbours, and not for ourselves. Now, I have no objection to your lending anything else you like, but I have a strong objection to you lending your ears; I shall be glad if you will keep them at home for a minute or two, for I want to make you hear for yourselves this truth "Thou God seest me."

Mark, God sees *you*—selecting any one out of this congregation—he sees you, he sees you *as much as if there were nobody else in the world for him to look at*. If *I* have as many people as there are here to look at, of course my attention must be divided; but the infinite mind of God is able to grasp a million objects at once, and yet to set itself, as much upon one, as if there were nothing else but that one; so that you, to-night, are looked at by God as much as if throughout space there were not another creature but yourself. Can you conceive that? Suppose the stars blotted out in darkness, suppose the angels dead; imagine the glorified spirits above are all gone, and you are left alone, the last man, and there is God looking at you. What an idea it would be for you to think of—that there was only you to be looked at! how steadily he could observe you! how well he would discern you! But mark you, God does really look at you this night as much, as entirely, as absolutely without division of sight, as if you were the only being his hands had ever made. Can you grasp that? God sees you with all his eyes, with the whole of his sight—you—you—you—you are the particular object of his attention at this very moment. God's eyes are looking down upon you; remember that!

In the next place God sees you *entirely*. He does not merely note your actions; he does not simply notice what is the appearance of your countenance; he does not merely take into his eyesight what your posture may be; but remember, God sees what you are thinking of; he looks within. God has a window in every man's heart, through which he looks; he does not want you to tell him what you are thinking about—he can see that, he can read right through you. Do you not know that God can read what is written on the rocks at the bottom of the ocean, even though ten thousands fathoms of dark water roll above? And I tell you

he can read every word that is in your breasts; he knows every thought, every imagination, every conception, yea every unformed imagination, the thought scarce shot from the bow, reserved in the quiver of the mind; he sees it all, every particle, every atom of it.

"My thoughts, scarce struggling into birth,
Great God! are known to thee:
Abroad, at home, still I'm enclosed
With thine immensity.
"Behind I glance, and thou art there:
Before me, shines thy name;
And 'tis thy strong almighty hand
Sustains my tender frame."

Can you appropriate that thought? From the crown of your head to the sole of your foot, God is examining you now; his scalpel is in your heart, his lancet in your breast. He is searching your heart and trying your reins; he knows you behind and before. "Thou God seest me;" thou seest me entirely.

Note again, God sees you *constantly*. You are sometimes watched by man, and then your conversation is tolerably correct; at other times you seek retirement, and you indulge yourselves in things which you would not dare to do before the gaze of your fellow creatures. But recollect, wherever you are, God sees you; you may lay yourselves down by the side of the hidden brook where the willows shelter you, where all is still, without a sound—God is there looking at you! You may retire to your chamber, and draw the curtains of your couch, and throw yourself down for repose in midnight's gloomiest shade—God sees you there! I remember going into a castle sometime ago, down many a winding stair, and round and round, and round, and round, where light never penetrated; at last I came to a space, very narrow, about the length of a man. "There," said the keeper, "such-and-such-a-one was shut for so many years, a ray of light never having penetrated: sometimes they tortured him, but his shrieks never reached through the thickness of these walls, and never ascended that winding staircase: here he died, and there, sir, he was buried," pointing to the ground. But though that man had none on earth to see him, God saw him. Yea, you may shut me up for ever, where ear shall never hear my prayer, where eye shall never see my misery; but one eye shall look upon me, and one countenance smile on me, if I suffer for righteousness' sake. If for Christ's sake I am in prison, one hand shall be upon me, and one voice shall say, "Fear not; I will help thee"—at all times, in all places, in all your thoughts, in all your acts, in all your privacy, in all your public doings, at every season; this is true, "Thou God seest me."

Yet once more, "Thou God seest me," *supremely*. I can see myself, but not as well as either my friends or foes. Men can see me better than I can see myself, but man cannot see me as God sees me. A man skilled in the human heart might interpret my deeds and translate their motives, but he could not read my heart as God can read it. None can tell another as

God can tell us all: we do not know ourselves as God knows us: with all your self knowledge, with all you have been told by others, God knows you more fully than you know yourself: no eye can see you as God sees you—you may act in daylight; you may not be ashamed of your actions, you may stand up before men and say, "I am a public man, I wish to be observed and noticed:" you may have all your deeds chronicled, and all men may hear of them, but I wot men will never know you as God will know you; and if you could be chained, as Paul was, with a soldier at your arm; if he were with you night and day, sleeping with you, rising with you; if he could hear all your thoughts, he could not know you as God knows you, for God sees you superlatively and supremely.

Let me now apply that to you: "Thou God sees *me*." This is true of each of you; try and think of it for a moment. Even as my eye rests on *you*, so, in a far, far greater sense does God's eye rest on *you*; standing, sitting, wherever you are, this is true, "Thou God sees *me*." It is said that when you heard Rowland Hill, if you were stuck in a window, or farther away at the door, you always had the conviction that he was preaching at you. Oh! I wish I could preach like that; if I could make you feel that I was preaching at you in particular; that I singled you out, and shot every word at you, then I should hope for some effect. Try and think, then, "Thou God seest me."

III. Now I come to DIFFERENT INFERENCES for different persons, to serve different purposes.

First, to the *prayerful*. Prayerful man, prayerful woman, here is a consolation—God sees you: and if he can see you, surely he can hear you. Why, we can often hear people, when we cannot see them. If God is so near to us, and if his voice is like the thunder, sure his ears are as good as his eyes, and he will be sure to answer us. Perhaps you cannot say a word when you pray. Never mind; God does not want to hear; he can tell what you mean even by seeing you. "There," says the Lord, "is a child of mine in prayer. He says not a word; but do you see that tear rolling down his cheek? do you hear that sigh?" Oh! mighty God, thou canst see both tear and sigh; thou canst read desire when desire hath not clothed itself in words. The naked wish God can interpret; he needs us not to light the candle of our desires with language; he can see the candle ere it is lit.

"He knows the words we mean to speak,
When from our lips they cannot break,"

by reason of the anguish of our spirit. He knows the desire, when words stagger under the weight of it; he knows the wish when language fails to express it. "Thou God seest me." Ah, God, when I cannot pray with words, I will throw myself flat on my face, and I will groan my prayer; and if I cannot groan it I will sigh it; and if I cannot sigh it I will wish it: and when these eye-strings break, and when death has sealed these lips, I will enter heaven with a prayer, which thou wilt not hear but which thou wilt see—the prayer of my inmost spirit, when my heart and my flesh fail me, that God may be the strength of my life and

portion for ever. There is comfort for you, you praying ones, that God sees you. That is enough; if you cannot speak he can see you.

I have given a word for the prayerful; now a word for the *careful*. Some here are very full of care, and doubts, and anxieties, and fears. "Oh! sir," you say, "if you could come to my poor house, you would not wonder that I should feel anxious. I have had to part with much of my little furniture to provide myself with living; I am brought very low; I have not a friend in London; I am alone, alone in the wide world." Stop, stop, sir! you are not alone in the world; there is at least one eye regarding you; there is one hand that is ready to relieve you. Don't give up in despair. If your case be ever so bad, God can see your care, your troubles, and your anxieties. To a good man it is enough to *see* destitution to relieve it; and for God it is enough to see the distresses of his family at once to supply their wants. If you were lying wounded on the battle-field, if you could not speak, you know right well your comrades who are coming by with an ambulance will pick you up, if they do but see you; and that is enough for you. So if you are lying on the battle-field of life, God sees you; let that cheer you: he will relieve you; for he only needs to look at the woes of his children at once to relieve them. Go on then; hope yet; in night's darkest hour, hope for a brighter morrow. God sees these, whatever thou art doing;

"He knows thy cares, thy tears, thy sighs;
He shall lift up thy head."

And now a word to the *slandered*. There are some of us who come in for a very large share of slander. It is very seldom that the slander market is much below par; it usually runs up at a very mighty rate; and there are persons who will take shares to any amount. If men could dispose of railway stock as they can of slander, those who happen to have any scrip here would be rich enough by to-morrow at twelve o'clock. There are some who have a superabundance of that matter; they are continually hearing rumours of this, that, and the other; and there is one fool or another who has not brains enough to write sense, nor honesty sufficient to keep him to the truth, who, therefore, writes the most infamous libels upon some of God's servants, compared with whom he himself is nothing, and whom for very envy he chooses to depreciate. Well, what matters it? Suppose you are slandered; here is a comfort: "Thou *God* seest me." They say that such-and-such is your motive, but you need not answer them; you can say, "God knows that matter." You are charged with such-and-such a thing of which you are innocent; your heart is right concerning the deed, you have never done it: well, you have no need to battle for your reputation; you need only point your finger to the sky, and say, "There is a witness there who will right me at last—there is a Judge of all the earth, whose decision I am content to wait; his answer will be a complete exoneration of me, and I shall come out of the furnace, like gold seven times purified." Young men, are you striving to do good, and do others impute wrong motives to you? Do not be particular about answering them. Just go straight on, and your life will be the best refutation of the

calumny. David's brethren said that in his pride and the naughtiness of his heart he had come to see the battle. "Ah!" thought David, "I will answer you by-and-bye." Off he went across the plain to fight Goliath; he cut off his head, and then came back to his brethren with a glorious answer in his conquering hand. If any man desires to reply to the false assertions of his enemies, let him go and do good, and he needs not say a word—that will be his answer. I am the subject of detraction, but I can point to hundreds of souls that have been saved on earth by my feeble instrumentality, and my reply to all my enemies is this, "You may say what you like; but seeing these lame men are healed, can you say anything against them? You may find fault with the style or manner, but God saves souls, and we will hold up that fact, like giant Goliath's head, to show you that although it was nothing but a sling or stone, so much the better, for God has gotten the victory." Go straight on and you will live down your slanderers; and remember when you are most distressed, "Thou God seest me."

Now, *a sentence or two to some of you who are ungodly* and know not Christ. What shall I say to you but this,—how heinous are your sins when they are put in the light of this doctrine! Remember, sinner, whenever thou sinnest, thou sinnest in the teeth of God. It is bad enough to steal in darkness, but he is a very thief who steals in daylight. It is vile, it is fearfully vile to commit a sin which I desire to cover, but to do my sin when man is looking at me shows much hardiness of heart. Ah! sinner, remember, thou sinnest with God's eyes looking on thee. How black must be thy heart! how awful thy sin! for thou sinnest in the very face of justice when God's eye is fixed on thee. I was looking the other day at a glass bee-hive, and it was very singular to observe the motions of the creature inside. Well, now this world is nothing but a huge glass bee-hive. God looks down on you, and he sees you all. You go into your little cells in the streets of this huge city; you go to your business, your pleasure, your devotions, and your sins; but remember, whenever you go, you are like the bees under a great glass shade, you can never get away from God's observation. When children disobey before the eyes of their parents it shows that they are hardened. If they do it behind their parents' back, it proves that there is some shame left. But you, sirs, sin when God is present with you; you sin while God's eyes are searching you through and through. Even now you are thinking hard thoughts of God while God is hearing all those silent utterances of your evil hearts. Does not that render your sin extremely heinous? Therefore, I beseech you, think of it, and repent of your wickedness, that your sins may be blotted out through Jesus Christ.

And one more thought. If God sees thee, O sinner, *how easy it will be to condemn thee*. In the late horrible case of Palmer, witnesses were required, and a jury was empanelled to try the accused. But if the judge could have mounted the bench and have said, "I saw the man, myself, mix the poison; I stood by and saw him administer it; I read his thoughts; I knew for what purpose he did it; I read his heart; I was with him when he first conceived the black design, and I have tracked him in all his evasions, in all those acts by which he

sought to blindfold justice; and I can read in his heart that he knows himself to be guilty now;" the case then would have been over; the trial would have been little more than a form. What wilt thou think, O sinner, when thou art brought before God, and God shall say, "Thou didst so-and-so," and will mention what you did in the darkness of the night when no eye was there? You will start back amazed, and say, "Oh, heavens! how shall God know? is there knowledge in the Most High?" He will say, "Stop, sinner; I have more to startle thee yet;" and he will begin to unfold the records of the past: leaf after leaf he will read of the diary he has kept of your existence. Oh! I can see you as he reads page after page, your knees are knocking together, your hair is standing on end, your blood is frozen in your veins, congealed for fright, and you stand like a second Niobe, a rock bedewed with tears. You are thunder struck to find your thoughts read out before the sun, while men and angels hear. You are amazed beyond degree to hear your imaginations read, to see your deeds photographed on the great white throne, and to hear a voice saying, "Rebellion at such a time; uncleanness at such a time; evil thoughts at such an hour; hard thoughts of God at such a period; rejection of his grace on such a day; stiflings of conscience at another time;" and so on to the end of the chapter, and then the awful final doom. "Sinner, depart accursed! I saw thee sin; it needs no witnesses; I heard thy oath; I heard thy blasphemy; I saw thy theft; I read thy thought. Depart! depart! I am clear when I judge thee; I am justified when I condemn thee: for thou hast done this evil in my sight."

Lastly, you ask me what you must do to be saved; and I will never let a congregation go, I hope, till I have told them that. Hear, then, in a few words, the way of salvation. It is this. Christ said to the Apostles, "Preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Or, to give you Paul's version, when he spoke to the jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Thou asked what thou art to believe. Why, this: that Christ died and rose again; that by his death he did bear the punishment of all believers; and that by his resurrection he did wipe out the faults of all his children. And if God give thee faith, thou wilt believe that Christ died for thee; and wilt be washed in his blood, and thou wilt trust his mercy and his love to be thine everlasting redemption when the world shall end.

Unimpeachable Justice

A Sermon
(No. 86)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, June 15, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."—Psalm 51:4.

YESTERDAY was to me a day of deep solemnity; a pressure rested on my mind throughout the whole of it, which I could not by any possibility remove, for at every hour I remembered that during that day one of the most fallen of my fellow-creatures was launched into an unknown world, and made to stand before his Maker. Some might have witnessed his execution without tears; I think I could not even have thought of it for long together without weeping, at the terrible idea of a man so guilty, about to commence that endless period of unmingled misery, which is the horrible doom of the impenitent, which God hath prepared for sinners. Yesterday morning the sun saw a sigh which sickened it—the sight of a man launched, by a judicial process, into eternity, for guilt which has rendered him infamous, and which will stamp his name with disgrace as long as it shall be remembered.

There is now agitating the public mind something which I thought I might improve this day, and turn to very excellent purpose. There are only two things concerning which the public have any suspicion. The verdict of the jury was the verdict of the whole of England; we were unanimous as to the high probability, the well-nigh absolute certainty of his guilt; but there were two doubts in our minds—one of them but small, we grant you, but if both could have been resolved we should have felt more easy than we do now. The one was concerning the criminal's guilt, and the other was concerning his punishment. At least some few of our fellow-countrymen have been afraid, lest we may not have been justified when we spoke against him, and quite clear when he was judged. Two things were wanted: we should have liked to have had his own confession, and certainly we should have preferred something more than circumstantial evidence; we desired to have had the testimony of an eye-witness, who could swear to the deed of murder done. But, moreover, there is also a strong feeling in the mind of many, that the severity of the punishment is questionable. There are some who pronounce authoritatively, that the murderer's blood must be shed for murder; but there are some who think the Christian dispensation has ameliorated the law, and that now it is no longer "eye for eye, tooth for tooth." Many persons in England have shuddered at the thought of executing a penalty so fearful, on any man, however great his crime, seeing that it puts him beyond the pale of hope. I shall not enter into the question of the rightness of capital punishment; I have my opinion upon it, but this is not exactly the

place to state it: I only wish to use these facts as an illustration of the text. David says, "O Lord, hear my own confession: 'against thee, thee only, have I sinned,' and by my own confession thou wouldst 'be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.' And, Lord, there is something else besides my own confession. Thou, thyself, wast eye-witness of my deed. 'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight;' and now thou art, indeed, 'justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest.' And as to the severity of my punishment, there can be no doubt of that." There may be doubt of the severity, when man executes punishment for a crime against man, but there can be no doubt when God himself executes vengeance for a crime that is committed against himself. "Thou art justified when thou speakest; thou art clear when thou judgest."

Our subject this morning, then, will be, both in the condemnation and in the punishment of every sinner, God will be justified: and he will be made most openly clear, from the two facts of the sinner's own confession, and God himself having been an eye-witness of the deed. And as for the severity of it, there shall be no doubt upon the mind of any man who shall receive it, for God shall prove to him in his own soul, that damnation is nothing more nor less than the legitimate reward of sin.

There are two kinds of condemnation: the one *is the condemnation of the elect*, which takes place in their hearts and consciences, when they have the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves—a condemnation which is invariably followed by peace with God, because after that there is no further condemnation, for they are then in Christ Jesus, and they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. The second condemnation is that of *the finally impenitent*, who, when they die, are most righteously and justly condemned by God for the sins they have committed—a condemnation not followed by pardon, as in the present case, but followed by inevitable damnation from the presence of God. On both these condemnations we will discourse this morning. God is clear when he speaks, and he is just when he condemns, whether it be the condemnation which he passes on Christian hearts, or the condemnation which he pronounces from his throne, when the wicked are dragged before him to receive their final doom.

I. In the first place, CONCERNING THE CHRISTIAN, when he feels himself condemned by conscience and by God's Holy Spirit, and when he hears the thunders of God's law proclaiming against him a sentence which, if it had not been already executed on his Saviour, would have been fulfilled on him, the man has no grounds whatever at that time to plead any excuse; but he will say in the words of the Psalmist, "Thou art justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest." Let me show you how.

1. In the first place, *there is a confession*. With regard to the man who was executed yesterday, there was no confession; we could not have expected it; such crimes could not have been committed by a man capable of confessing them. The fact that he died hardened in his guilt is proof well-nigh conclusive that he was guilty; for had he betrayed any emotion,

or had he bowed his knees and cried for mercy, we might then have suspected that he had not been guilty of so dark a deed of blood; but from the very fact that he hardened his heart, we infer that he was capable of committing crimes, the infamy of which point them out as the offspring of a seared and torpid conscience. The Christian, when he is condemned by the Holy Law, makes a confession, a full and free confession. He feels, when God records the sentence against him, that the execution of it would be just, for his now honest heart compels him to confess the whole story of his guilt. Allow me to make some remarks on the confession which is followed by pardon.

First, such a confession is a *sincere one*. It is not the prattling confession used by the mere formalist, when he bends his knee and exclaims that he is a sinner; but it is a confession which is undoubtedly sincere, because it is attended by awful agonies of mind, and usually by tears, and sighs, and groans. There is something about the penitent's demeanour which puts it beyond the possibility of a fear that he is a deceiver when he is confessing his sin. There is an outward emotion, manifesting the inward anguish of the spirit. He stands before God, and does not merely turn king's evidence against himself, as the means of saving himself, but with tears in his eyes he cries, "O God, I am guilty;" and then he begins to recount the circumstances of his crime, even as if God had never seen him. He tells to God what God already knows, and then the Gracious One proves the truth of the promise, "He that confesseth his sin shall find mercy."

In the next place, that confession is *always abundantly sufficient* for our own condemnation. The Christian feels that if he had only half the sin to confess that he is obliged to tell out to God, it would be enough to damn his soul for ever—that if he had only one crime to acknowledge, it would be like a millstone round his neck, to sink him for ever in the bottomless pit. He feels that his confession is superabundantly enough to condemn him—that is almost a work of supererogation to confess all, for there is enough in one tenth of it to send his soul to hell, and make it abide there for ever. Have you ever confessed your sins like this? If not, as God liveth, you have never known what it is to make a true confession of your sin; you have never had the sentence of condemnation passed on you, in that way which is succeeded by mercy; but you are yet awaiting that terrible sentence which shall be succeeded by no words of love, but by the execution of the sentence of infinite indignation and displeasure.

This confession is attended with *no apology on account of sin*. We have heard of men who have confessed their guilt, and afterwards tried to extenuate their crime, and shew some reasons why they were not so guilty as apparently they would seem to be; but when the Christian confesses his guilt, you never hear a word of extenuation or apology from him. He says, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight:" and in saying this, he makes God just when he condemns him, and clear when he sentences him for ever. Have you ever made such a confession? Have you ever thus bowed yourselves before

God? Or have you tried to palliate your guilt, and call your sins by little names, and speak of your crimes as if they were but light offences? If you have not, then you have not felt the sentence of death in yourselves, and you are still waiting till the solemn death-knell shall toll the hour of your doom, and you shall be dragged out, amidst the universal hiss of the execration of the world, to be condemned for ever to flames which shall never know abatement.

Again: after the Christian confesses his sin, *he offers no promise that he will of himself behave better*. Some, when they make confessions to God, say, "Lord, if thou forgive me I will not sin again;" but God's penitents never say that. When they come before him they say, "Lord, once I promised, once I made resolves, but I dare not make them now, for they would be so soon broken, that they would but increase my guilt; and my promises would be so soon violated, that they would but sink my soul deeper in hell. I can only say, if thou wilt create in me a clean heart, I will be thankful for it, and will sing to thy praise for ever; but I cannot promise that I will live without sin, or work out a righteousness of my own. I dare not promise, my Father, that I will never go astray again;

'Unless thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
And prove like them at last.'

Lord, if thou dost damn me, I cannot murmur; if thou dost cast me into perdition, I cannot complain; but have mercy upon me, a sinner, for Jesus Christ's sake." In that case, you see, God is justified when he condemns, and he is clear when he judges, even clearer than any earthly judge can be, because it is seldom that such a confession as that is ever made before the bar.

2. Again: when the Christian is condemned by the law in his conscience, there is something else which makes God just in condemning him beside his confession, and that is the fact, that *God himself*, the Judge, comes forward as *a witness* to the crime. The convinced sinner feels in his own soul that his sins were committed to the face of God, in the teeth of his mercy, and that God was an exact and minute observer of every part and particle of the crime for which he is now to be condemned, and the sin which has brought him to the bar. "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil *in thy sight*: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

The convinced sinner who has just become a Christian feels at that time that God was a witness, and that he was a most *veracious* witness—that he saw, and saw most clearly; and when God, by his law, says to him, "Sinner, you did such-and-such a thing, and such-and-such a thing," the awakened conscience says, "Lord, that is true; it is true in every circumstance." And when God goes on to say, "Your motives were vile, your objects were sinful," conscience says, "Ay, Lord, that is true; I know that thou didst see it, and that thou art a sure observer; thou art no false witness, but all that thou sayest in thy law about me is true."

When God says, "The poison of asps is under thy lips, thy throat is an open sepulchre, thou dost flatter with thy tongue," conscience says, "It is all true;" and when he says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," conscience says, "It is all true;" and the sinner has this awful thought, that every sin he ever sinned is written in heaven, and God records it there; he feels, therefore, that God is just when he condemns, and clear when he judges.

And, moreover, God is not simply a veracious witness, but the testimony God gives is *an abundant one*. You know that in some cases which are brought before our courts, the witness swears that he saw the man do so-and-so; but then he may be mistaken as to the identity of the person; perhaps he did not see the whole transaction; and then he has not pried into the man's heart to see what was the man's reasons, which may make the crime lighter or greater, as the case may be. But here we have a witness who can say, "I saw all the crime; I saw the lust when it was conceived; I saw the sin when it was brought forth; I saw the sin when it was finished, bringing forth death; I saw the motive; I beheld the first imagination; I saw the sin when, as a black rivulet, it started on its way, when it suddenly began to increase by contributions of evil, and I saw it when it became at last a broad ocean of unfathomable depth—an ocean of guilt which human foot could not pass, and over which the ship of mercy could not have sailed, unless some mighty pilot had steered it by shedding his own blood." Then the Christian feels that God having seen it all, is justified when he speaks, and clear when he condemns. I should feel a solemn responsibility, if I were a judge, in putting on the black cap, to condemn a man to death; because, however carefully I may have weighed the evidence, and however clear the guilt of the prisoner may have seemed, there is possibility of mistake, and it seems a solemn thing to have consigned a fellow-creature's soul to a future world, even with a possibility of an error in that judgment; but if I had myself beheld the bloody act, with what ease of mind might I then put on the black cap, and condemn the man as being guilty, for I should know, and the world would know, that having been a witness I should be just when I spake, and clear when I condemned. Now, that is just what the Christian feels when God condemns him in his conscience, he puts his hand upon his mouth, and yields without a word to the justness of the sentence. Conscience tells him he was guilty, because God himself was a witness.

3. The other question which I hinted at as being on the public mind, *is the severity of the punishment*. In the case of a believer, when he is condemned, there is no doubt about the justice of the punishment. When God the Holy Ghost in the soul passes sentence on the old man, and condemns it for its sins, there is felt most solemnly in the heart the great truth, that hell itself is but a rightful punishment for sin. I have heard some men dispute whether the torments of hell were not too great for the sins which men can commit. We have heard men say that hell was not a right place to send such sinners to as they were; but we have always found that such men found fault with hell because they knew right well they were going

there. As every man finds fault with the gallows who is going to be hung, so do many men find fault with hell because they fear that they are in danger of it. The opinion of a man about to be executed must not be taken with regard to the propriety of capital punishment, nor must we take the opinion of a man who is himself marching to hell concerning the justice of hell, for he is not an impartial judge. But the convinced sinner is a fair witness; God has made him so, for he feels in his soul that there will be pardon given to him, and that God, by grace, will never condemn him there; but at the same time he feels that he deserves it, and he confesses that hell is not too great a punishment, and that the eternity of it is not too long a duration of punishment for the sin which he has committed. I appeal to you, my beloved brethren and sisters. You may have had doubts as to the propriety of your being sent to hell before you knew your sins; but I ask you, when you were convinced of God, whether you did not solemnly feel that he would be unjust if he did not damn your soul for ever. Did you not say in your prayer, "Lord, if thou shouldst now command the earth to open and swallow me up quick, I could not lift up my finger to murmur against thee; and if thou wert now to roll o'er my head the billows of eternal fire, I could not, in the midst of my howlings in misery, utter one single word of complaint about thy justice?" And did you not feel that if you were to be ten thousand, thousand years in perdition, you would not have been there long enough? You felt you deserved it all; and if you had been asked what was the right punishment for sin, you dare not, even if your own soul had been at stake, have written anything except that sentence, "everlasting fire." You would have been obliged to have written that, for you felt it was but deserved doom. Now, was not God just then when he condemned, and clear when he judged? and did he not come off clear from the judgment seat? because you, yourself, said the sentence would not have been one whit too severe if it had been fulfilled instead of being simply recorded, and then you, yourself, set at liberty. Ah! my dear friends, there may be some who rail at God's justice; but no convinced sinner ever will. He sees God's law in all its glorious holiness, and he smites his hand upon his breast, and he says, "O sinner that I am! that I ever could have sinned against such a reasonable law and such perfect commandments!" He sees God's love towards him, and that cuts him to the very quick. He says, "Oh! that I should ever have spit on the face of that Christ who died for me! Wretch that I am, that I could ever have crowned that bleeding head with the thorns of my sins, which gave itself to slumber in the grave for my redemption!" Nothing cuts the sinner to the quick more than the fact, that he has sinned against a great amount of mercy. This indeed, makes him weep; and he says, "O Lord, seeing I have been so ungrateful, the direst doom thou canst ever sentence me to, or the fiercest punishment thou canst ever execute upon my head, would not be too heavy for the sins I have committed against thee."

And then the Christian feels too, what a deal of mischief he has done in the world by sin. Ah! if he has been spared to middle age before he is converted, he looks back and says,

"Ah! I cannot tell how many have been damned by my sins; I cannot tell how many have been sent down to perdition by words which I have used, or deeds which I have committed." I confess, before you all, that one of the greatest sorrows I had, when first I knew the Lord, was to think about certain persons with whom I knew right well that I had held ungodly conversations, and sundry others that I had tempted to sin; and one of the prayers that I always offered, when I prayed for myself, was that such an one might not be damned through sins to which I had tempted him. And I dare say this will be the case with some of you when you look back. Your dear child has been a sad reprobate; and you think, "Did not I teach him very much that was wrong?" and you hear your neighbours swear, and you think, "I cannot tell how many I taught to blaspheme." Then you will recollect your boon companions, those you used to play cards or dance with, and you will think, "Ah! poor souls, I have damned them." And then you will say, "Lord, thou art just, if thou damnest me." When you reflect what a deal of mischief you have done by your sin, you will then say, "Lord, thou art clear when thou judgest; thou art justified when thou condemnest." I warn you who are going on in your sins, that one of the most fearful things you have to expect is, to meet those in another world who perished through being led astray by you. Think of that, O man! thou who hast been an universal tempter! There is a man now in perdition, who was taught to drink his first glass through you. There lies a soul on his death-bed, and he says, "Ah! John, I had not been here, as I now am, if you had not led me into evil courses which have weakened my body, and brought me to death's door." Oh! what a horrible fate will yours be, when, as you walk into the mouth of hell, you will see eyes staring at you, and hear a voice saying, "Here he comes! here comes the man that helped to damn my soul!" And what must be your fate, when you must lie for ever tossed on the bed of pain with that man whom you were the means of damning? As those who are saved will make jewels in the crowns of glory to the righteous, sure those whom you helped to damn will forge fresh fetters for you and furnish fearful faggots, to increase the flames of torment which shall blaze around your spirits. Mark that, and be you warned. The Christian feels this terrible fact, when he is convinced of sin, and that makes him feel that God would be clear if he judged him, and would be justified if he condemned him. So much concerning this first condemnation.

II. But now a little concerning THE SECOND CONDEMNATION, which is the more fearful of the two. Some of you have never been condemned by God's law in your conscience. Now, as I stated at first, that every man must be condemned once, so I beg to repeat it. You must either have the sentence of condemnation passed on you by the law in your conscience, and then find mercy in Christ Jesus, or else you must be condemned to another world, when you shall stand with all the human race before God's throne. The first condemnation to the Christian, though exceedingly merciful, is terrible to bear. It is a wounded spirit, which none can endure. But, as for the second condemnation, if I could preach with sighs and tears, I could not tell you how horrible that must be. Ah, my friends, could some sheeted ghost start

from its tomb, and be re-united to the spirit which has been for years in perdition, possibly such a man might preach to you, and let you know what a fearful thing it will be to be condemned at last. But as for my poor words, they are but air; for I have not heard the *miserere* of the condemned, nor have I listened to the sighs, and groans, and moans of lost spirits. If I had ever been permitted to gaze within the sheet of fire which walls the Gulf of Despair—if I had ever been allowed to walk for one moment o'er that burning marl whereon is built the dreadful dungeon of eternal vengeance, then I might tell you somewhat of its misery; but I cannot now, for I have not seen those doleful sights which might fright out eyes from their sockets, and make each individual hair stand upon your heads. I have not seen such things; yet, though I have not seen them, nor you either, we know sufficient of them to understand that God will be just when he condemns, and that he will be clear when he judges. And, now, I must go over the three points again; but I must be very brief about them.

1. God will be clear when he condemns a sinner, from this fact, that the sinner when he stands before God's bar, will either have made a *confession*, or else such will be his terror, that he will scarce be able to brazen it out before the Almighty. Look at Judas. When he comes before God's bar, will not God be clear in condemning him? for he himself confessed, "I have sinned against innocent blood," and he cast down the money in the temple. And few men are so hardened as to restrain themselves from acknowledging their guilt. How many of you, when you thought you were dying, made a confession upon your death-beds to you God! And mark you, there will be many of you, who, when you come to die, though you have never confessed, yet will lie there, and confess before God in your moments of wakefulness during the night, the sins of your youth, and your former transgressions; and it may be, that when you are laying there, God's vengeance will be heavy on your conscience, that you will be obliged to tell those who stand about your bed, that you have been guilty of notorious sins. Ah! will not God be just when you shall go straight from your death-bed to his bar, and he shall say, "Sinner, thou art condemned on thine own confession; there is no need for me to open the book, no need for me to pronounce the sentence; thou hast thyself pronounced thine own guilt; ere thou didst die, thou didst stamp thyself with condemnation; 'depart ye cursed!'" And though there will be many die who never made a confession in this world, and perhaps there will be some professors so brazen-faced that they will even stand before God's throne, and say, "When saw we thee a hungered, and fed thee not? When saw we thee naked, and clothed thee not?" yet I cannot believe that most of them will be able to plead any excuse. I find Christ saying of one that he stood speechless when he was asked how he got in, not having on a wedding garment; and so it may be with you, sirs. You may brazen it out when here, you may scorn the law and despise the thunders of Sinai; but it will be different with you then. You may sit up in your bed, and rail against Christ, even when death is staring you in the face; but you will not do it then. Those bones of yours which you thought were of iron, will suddenly be melted; that heart of yours, which

was like steel or the nether millstone, will be dissolved like wax in the midst of your bowels; you will begin to cry before God, and weep, and howl: you yourself will testify to your own guilt, when you say, "Rocks! hide me; mountains! on me fall;" for you would need no mountains and no rocks to fall upon you, if you were not guilty. You will be justly condemned, for you will make your own confession when you stand before God's bar. Ah! if you could see the criminal then, what a difference there is in him! Where now are those eyes that stared so impiously at the Bible? Where now are those lips which said, "I curse God and die!" Where now is that heart which once so stout, that spirit once so valiant, as to laugh at hell and talk familiarly with death? Ah! where is it? Is that the selfsame creature—he whose knees are knocking together, whose hair is standing up on end, whose blanched cheek displays the terror of his soul? Is that the selfsame man who just now was burning with impudent rage against his Maker? Yes, it is he; hear what he has to say, "O God, I hate thee; I confess it; I was unjust in the world tat has gone by, and I am unjust now; wreck thy vengeance on me; I dare ask no mercy, and no pardon, for fixed is my heart still to rebel against thee; indissoluble are the bonds of my guilt: I am damned, I am damned, and I ought to be." Such will be the confession of every man, when he shall stand before his God at last, if he is out of Christ, and unwashed in the Saviour's blood. Sinners! can ye hear that and not tremble? Then I have a wonder before me this day—a wonder of conscience, a wonder of hardness of heart, a wonder of impenitency.

2. But in the second place, God will be just, because *there will be witnesses* there to prove it. There will be none of you my dear friends, if you are ever condemned, who will be condemned on circumstantial evidence: there will be no necessity for the deliberation of a jury; there will be no conflicting evidence concerning your crimes; there will be no doubts to testify in your favour. In fact, if God himself should ask for witnesses in your case, all the witnesses would be against you. But there will be no need of witnesses; God himself will open his Book; and how astonished will you be, when all your crimes are announced, with every individual circumstance connected with them—all the minuteness of your motives, and an exact description of your designs! Suppose I should be allowed to open one of the books of God, and read that description, how astonished you would be! But what will be your astonishment, when God shall open his great book and say, "Sinner, here is thy case," and begin to read! Ah! mark how the tears run down the sinner's cheek; the sweat of blood comes from every pore; and the loud thundering voice still reads on, while the righteous execrate the man who could commit such acts as are recorded in that book. There may be no murder staining the page, but there may be the filthy imagination, and God reads what a man imagines; for to imagine sin is vile, though to do it is viler still. I know I should not like to have my thoughts read over for a single day. Oh! when you stand before God's bar, and hear all this, wilt thou not say, "Lord, thou wilt condemn me, but I cannot help saying

thou art just when thou condemnest, and clear when thou judgest." There will be eye-witnesses there.

3. But lastly, in the sinner's heart there will be no doubt at last as to *the righteousness of his punishment*. The sinner may in this world think that he can never by his sins by any possibility deserve hell; but he will not indulge that thought when he gets there. One of the miseries of hell will be that the sinner will feel that he deserves it all. Tossed on a wave of fire he will see written in every spark that emanates therefrom, "Thou knewest thy duty, and thou didst it not." Tossed back again by another wave of flame, he hears a voice saying, "Remember, you were warned!" He is hurled upon a rock, and whilst he is being wrecked there, a voice says, "I told thee it would be better for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for thee." Again he plunged under another wave of brimstone, and a voice says, "He that believeth not shall be damned;' thou didst not believe, and thou art here." And when again he is hurled up and down on some wave of torture, each wave shall bear to him some dreadful sentence, which he read in God's Word, in a tract, or in a sermon. Yes, it may be, my friends, that I shall be one of your tormentors in hell, if you should be damned. I trust in God that I myself shall be in heaven; and perhaps, if ye are lost, one of the most powerful things that shall tend to increase your misery will be the fact that I have always tried to warn you, and warn you as earnestly as possible; and when you lift up your eyes to heaven, you will shriek, and say, "O God! there is my minister looking down reprovingly on me, and saying, 'Sinner, I warned thee.'" If thou art lost, it is not for want of preaching; if thou art damned, it is not because I did not tell thee how thou mightest be saved; if thou art in hell, it is not because I did not weep over thee, and urge thee to flee from the wrath to come, for I did warn thee, and that will be the terror of thy doom—that thou hast despised warnings and invitations, and hast destroyed thyself. God is not accountable for thy damnation, and man is not accountable for it; but thou thyself hast done it. And thou wilt say, "O Lord, it is true I am now tossed in fire, but I myself lit the flame; it is true that I am tormented, but I forged the irons which now confine my limbs; I burned the brick that hath built my dungeon; I myself didst bring myself here; I walked to hell, even as a fool goeth to the stocks, or an ox to the slaughter; I sharpened the knife which is now cutting my vitals; I nursed the viper which is now devouring my heart; I sinned, which is the same as saying that I damned myself; for to sin is to damn myself—the two words are synonymous." Sin is damnation's sire; it is the root, and damnation is the horrible flower which must inevitably spring from it. Ay, my dear friends, I tell you yet again, there will be nothing more patent before the throne of God than the fact, that God will be just when he sends you to hell. You will feel that then, even though you do not feel it now.

I thought within myself just this minute, that I heard the whisper of some one saying, "Well, sir, I feel that such men as Palmer, a murderer, will feel that God is just in damning them; but I have not sinned as they have done." It is true; but if thy sins be less, remember

that thy conscience is more tender, for according to the amount of guilt, men's consciences generally begin to get harder, and because thy conscience is more tender, thy little sin is a great sin, because it is committed against greater light and greater tenderness of heart; and I tell you—that a little sin against great light may be greater than a great sin against little light. You must measure your sins not by their apparent heinousness, but by the light against which you sinned. No crime could be much worse than the crime of Sodom; but even Sodom, filthy Sodom, shall not have so hot a place as a moral young lady, one who has fed the poor and clothed the naked, and done all she could, except loving Christ. What say you to that? Is it unjust? No. If I be a less sinner than another, I all the more deserve to be damned, if I do not come to Christ for mercy. Oh! my dear hearers, my beloved hearers, I cannot bring you to Christ. Christ has brought some of you himself, but I cannot bring you to Christ. How often have I tried to do it! I have tried to preach my Saviour's love, and this day I have preached my Father's wrath; but I feel I cannot bring you to Christ. I may preach God's law; but that will not affright you, unless God sends it home to your heart; I may preach my Saviour's love, but that will not woo you, unless my Father draw you. I am sometimes tempted to wish that I could draw you myself—that I could save you. Sure, if I could, ye should soon be saved! But ah! remember, your minister can do but little; he can do nothing else but preach to you. Do pray that God would bless that little, I beseech you, ye who can pray. If I could do more, I would do it; but it is very little I can do for a sinner's salvation. Do, I beseech you, my dear people, pray to God to bless the feeble means that I use. It is his work and his salvation; but he *can* do it. O poor trembling sinner, dost thou now weep? Then come to Christ! O poor haggard sinner, haggard in thy soul! come to Christ! O poor sin-bitten sinner! look to Christ! O poor worthless sinner! come to Christ! O poor trembling, fearing, hungering, thirsting sinner! come to Christ! "Ho! everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy wine and milk; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price." Come! Come! Come! God help you to come! for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

The Majestic Voice

A Sermon
(No. 87)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, June 22, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"The voice of the Lord is full of majesty."—Psalm 29:4.

All God's works praise him, whether they be magnificent or minute, they all discover the wisdom, the power, and the benevolence of their Creator. "All thy works praise thee, O God." But there are some of his more majestic works which sing the song of praise louder than others. There are some of his doings, upon which there seems to be graven in larger letters than usual the name of God. Such are the lofty mountains, which worship God with uncovered heads both night and day; such are the rolling seas, too mighty to be managed by man, but held in check by God, and such, especially, are the thunders and the lightnings. The lightnings are the glances of the eyes of God, and the thunders are the utterings of his voice. The thunder has been usually attributed to God more especially, though philosophers assure us that it is to be accounted for by natural causes. We believe them, but we prefer, ourselves, to look to the first great cause, and we are content with that old and universal belief, that the thunder is the voice of God. It is marvellous what effect the thunder has had upon all kinds of men. In reading an ode of Horace the other day, I found him in the first two verses, singing like a true Ithurean, that he despised God, and intended to live merrily; but by-and-bye he hears the thunder, and acknowledging that there is a Jehovah, who lives on high, he trembles before him. The most wicked of men have been obliged to acknowledge that there must be a Creator, when they have heard that marvellous voice of his sounding through the sky. Men of the stoutest nerve and the boldest blasphemy have become the weakest of all creatures, when God has in some degree manifested himself in the mighty whirlwind, or in the storm. "He breaketh the cedars of Lebanon;" he bringeth down the stout hearts; he layeth down the mighty, and he obliges those who never acknowledged him to reverence him when they hear his voice. The Christian will acknowledge the thunder to be the voice of God, from the fact, that if he be in the right frame of mind, it always suggest to him holy thoughts. I do not know how it may be with you, but I scarce ever hear the rolling thunder, but I begin to forget earth and look upwards to my God. I am unconscious of any feeling of terror or pain; it is rather a feeling of delight that I experience, for I like to sing that verse—

"The God that rules on high,
And thunders when he please,
That rides upon the stormy sky

And manages the seas;
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love,
He shall send down his heavenly powers
To carry us above."

He is our God, and I like to sing that, and think of it: but there is something so terrible in the tone of that voice when God is speaking, something so terrific to other men, and humbling to the Christian, that he is obliged to sink very low in his own estimation; then he looks up to God, and cries, "infinite Jehovah, spare a worm, crush not an unworthy wretch. I know it is thy voice; I reverence thee with solemn awe; I prostrate myself before thy throne; thou art my God, and beside thee there is none else." It might well have occurred to a Jewish mind to have called the thunder the voice of God, when he considered the loudness of it, when all other voices are hushed; even if they be the loudest voices mortals can utter, or the most mighty sounds; yet are they but indistinct whispers, compared with the voice of God in the thunder; and indeed, they are entirely lost when God speaks from his throne, and makes even the deaf hear, and those who are unwilling to acknowledge him hear his voice.

But we need not stop to prove, that the thunder is the voice of God, from any natural feeling of man; we have Scripture to back us up, and therefore we shall do our best to appeal to that. In the first place, there is a passage in the book of Exodus where I would refer you; where, in the margin, we are told that the thunder is the voice of God. In the 9th chapter and the 28th verse, Pharaoh says, "Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail." The original Hebrew has it, and my margin has it, and the margin of all you who are wise enough to have marginal Bibles—"Voices of God." "Let there be no more voices of God and hail." So that it is not a mere illusion, but we are really warranted by Scripture, in saying, that "the thunder is the voice of God lifted up in the sky." Now, for another proof; to what shall we refer you unless we send you to the book of Job? In his 37th chapter, 3rd verse, he says, "he directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency: and he will not stay them when his voice is heard. God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend." And so he says in the 40th chapter, at the 9th verse, "Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?" I am glad, in this age, when men are seeking to forget God, and put him entirely out of the creation, and trying to put laws in the place of God, as if laws could govern a universe without some one to execute those laws, and put power and force into them—I am glad, I say, to be able to bear testimony to something which men cannot deny to be caused immediately by God the mighty One himself.

There is one striking proof I would offer to you, that the thunder is the voice of God; and that is the fact, that when God spake on Sinai, and gave forth his law, his voice is then described, if not in the first passage, yet in the reference to it, as being great thunders. "There were thunders and lightnings, exceedingly loud and long." God spoke then, and he spoke so terribly in thunder, that the people requested that they might hear that voice no more. And I must refer you to one passage in the New Testament, which will bear me out thoroughly in describing the thunder to be, indeed, the voice of God; and that is in the 11th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John, where Jesus lifted up his voice to heaven at the tomb of Lazarus, and asked his Father to answer him; and then a voice came from heaven, and they that stood by said, "that it thundered;" it was the voice of God which was then heard, and they ascribed it to the thunder. Here is a remarkable proof when God's voice has been heard on any remarkable occasion, it has always been accompanied by the sound of thunder, or, rather, has been the sound of thunder itself.

Well, now, leaving these considerations altogether, we come to make some remarks, not upon the voice of God in the thunder, but upon the voice of God as elsewhere heard; for it is not only heard there naturally, but there are spiritual voices and other voices of the Most High. "The voice of the Lord is full of majesty." God has spoken in various ways to man, in order that man might not think him a God so engrossed with himself that he does not observe his creatures. It has graciously pleased the Divine Being, sometimes to look upon man, at other times to stretch out his hand to man, sometimes to reveal himself in mortal appearance to man, and frequently to speak to man. At sundry times he has spoken absolutely without the use of means—by his own voice, as for instance, when he spoke from Sinai's blazing mountain-top, or when he spoke to Samuel in his bed, and said unto him several times, "Samuel, Samuel;" or when he spoke to Elijah, and Elijah said, "he heard the whirlwind, and he saw the fire;" and after that there was "a still small voice." He has spoken immediately from heaven by his own lips on one or two occasions in the life of Christ. He spoke to him at the waters of Jordan, when he said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He spoke to him on another occasion, to which we have already referred. He spoke—it was God that spoke, though it was Jesus Christ—he spoke to Saul, when on his way to Damascus, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" He has spoken several times immediately by his own voice, without the intervention of means at all; at other seasons, God has been pleased to speak to men by angels. He has, as it were, written the message, and sent it down by his messenger from on high: he hath told to man many wonders and secrets by the lips of those glorious beings, who are flaming spirits of his, that do his pleasure. As frequently, perhaps, God has spoken to men in dreams, in visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon them. Then, when the natural ear hath been closed, he hath opened the ear of the spirit, and he hath taught truths which, otherwise, men could never have known. More frequently still, God hath spoken to men by men. From the days of Noah even until now,

God has raised up his prophets, by whose lips he hath spoken. It was not Jeremiah who uttered that lament which we read, but it was Jehovah, the God in Jeremiah, speaking through the natural organs of his voice. It was not Isaiah who foresaw the future, and foretold the doom of nations, it was God in Isaiah thus speaking. And so with every prophet of the Lord now living, and every minister whom God hath raised up to speak: when we speak with power and efficacy, and unction, it is not we that speak, but it is the Spirit of our Father who dwelleth in us. God speaks through men; and now also, we know that God speaks through his own written Word of Inspiration. When we turn to the page of Scripture, we must not look upon these words as being in any degree the words of men, but as being the words of God. And though they be silent, yet do they speak; and though they cause no noise, yet, verily, "their sound hath gone forth throughout all the world, and their noise unto the ends of the earth." And yet, again, God even now speaks himself by the use of means; he does not make man speak, he does not make the Bible speak merely of itself, but he speaks through the Bible, and through the man, and there be times when the Spirit of God speaks in the heart of man without the use of means. I believe there be many secret impulses, many solemn thoughts, many mysterious directions given to us without a single word having been uttered, but by the simple motions of God's Spirit in the heart. This thing I know, that when I have neither heard nor read, I have yet felt the voice of God within me, and the Spirit hath, himself, revealed some dark mystery, opened some secret, guided me into some truth, given me some direction, led me in some path, or in some other way hath immediately spoken to me himself; and I believe it is so with every man at conversion; with every Christian, as he is carried on through his daily life, and especially as he nears the shores of the grave—that God, the Everlasting One, speaks himself to his soul, with a voice that he cannot resist, although he may have resisted the mere voice of man. The voice of the Lord is still heard, even as it was heard aforetime. Glory be to his name!

And now, my beloved, I come to the doctrine, "The voice of the Lord is full of majesty." First of all, *essentially*, "The voice of the Lord" *must* be "full of majesty;" secondly, *constantly*, "the voice of the Lord is full of majesty;" thirdly, *efficaciously*, in all it does, "The voice of the Lord is full of majesty."

I. First, then, "THE VOICE OF THE LORD IS FULL OF MAJESTY." Ay, and so it should be. Should not that voice be full of majesty which comes from Majesty? Is not God the King of kings, and the Ruler of the whole earth? Should he, then, speak with a voice below his own dignity? Should not the king speak with the voice of a king? Should not a mighty monarch speak with a monarch's tongue? And surely, if God be God, and if he be the Master of all worlds, and the Emperor of the universe, he must, when he speaks, speak with the monarch's tongue and with a majestic voice. The very nature of God requires that all he does should be God-like. His looks are looks divine; his thoughts are thoughts divine; and

should not his words be words divine, since they come from him? Verily, from the very essence of God, we might infer that his voice would be full of majesty.

But what do we mean by a voice having majesty? I take it that no man's voice can have majesty in it unless it is true; a lie, if it should be spoken in the noblest language, would never be majestic; a falsehood, if it be uttered by the most eloquent lips, would be a mean and paltry thing, however it might be spoken; and an untruth, wherever uttered, and by whomsoever, is not majestic; it never can be truth, and truth only can ever have majesty about it; and because God's word are pure truth, unalloyed with the least degree of error, therefore does it come to pass that his words are full of majesty. Whatever I hear my Father say in Scripture, whatever he speaks to me by the ministry, or by his Spirit, if he speaks it, there is not the slightest alloy of untruth about it. I may receive it just as it is.

"My faith may on his promise live,
May on his promise die."

I need not reason about it; it is enough for me to take it and believe it, because he has said it. I need not try to prove it to the worldling: if I were to prove it, he would believe it none the better; if the voice of God's majesty doth not convince him, sure the voice of my reasoning never can. I need not stand and cut and divide between the voice of God and the other; I know it must be true, if he has said it; and therefore I will believe all that I believe God has said, believing that his voice is full of majesty.

Then, again, when we speak of a majestical voice, we mean by it, that it is a *commanding voice*. A man may speak truth, and yet there may be but little majesty in what he says, because he speaks it in a tone that never can command attention and catch the ear of his fellow creatures. in fact, there are some men, expounders of truth, who had better hold their tongues, for they do truth an injury. We know full many who affect to preach God's truth, who go out to battle, who take the lance in their hands to defend the honor of Christ, but who wield the lance so ill, and who have so little of God's Spirit, that they do but disgrace his holy name, and it would have been better had they remained at home. Oh! beloved, God's voice, when he speaks, is always a commanding voice. Let the monarch arise in the midst of his creatures; they may have been conversing with each other before; but hush! his majesty is about to speak. It is so with the majesty of God; if he should speak in heaven the angels would hush their hallelujahs, and suspend the notes of their golden harps, to hear him; and when he speaks on earth, it is at all times becoming in all his creatures to hush their rebellious passions, and make the voice of their reason be silent. When God speaks, either from the pulpit or from his Word, I hold it to be my duty to keep silence. Even while we sing the glories of our God, our soul stands trembling; but when he speaks forth his own glories, who is he that dares to reply? Who is he that shall life up his voice against the majesty of heaven? There is something so majestic in the voice of God, that when he speaks, it commands silence everywhere, and bids men hear.

But there is something *very powerful* in the voice of God, and that is the reason why it has majesty in it. When God speaks, he speaks not weakly, but with a voice full of power. We poor creatures, at times, are clothed by God with that might, and when we speak grace comes pouring from our lips; but there are oftentimes seasons when we meet with small success; we talk and talk, and have not our Master's feet behind us, nor our Master's spirit within us, and therefore but little is done. It is not so with God: he never wasted a word yet; never spoke a solitary word in vain. Whatever he intended he had but to speak and it was accomplished. Once he said, "Let there be light," and instantly light was. So he said in past eternity that Christ should be his first elect, and Christ was his first elect. He decreed out salvation; he spake the word, and it was done. He sent his Son to redeem, and proclaimed to his elect justification in him. And his voice was a powerful voice, for it did justify us. Any other man's voice could not pardon sin; none but the voice of the monarch can speak pardon to the subject; and God's is a majestic voice, for he has only to speak, and our pardon is at once signed, sealed, and ratified. God is not magniloquent in his words; he does not speak big, sounding words, without meaning. The simplest word he utters may have little meaning to man, but it has a power and meaning in it equal to the omnipotence of God. There is a majesty about the voice of God which might suffice to nerve my soul to fight the dragon; to say, "Where is thy boasted victory, death? Where is the monster's sting?" That one promise hath majesty enough in it to make the dwarf a giant, and the weakling one of the mighties of the Most High. It has might enough in it to feed a whole host in the wilderness; to guide a whole company through the mazes of mortal life; majesty enough to divide the Jordan, to open the gates of heaven, and admit the ransomed in. Beloved, I cannot tell you how it is that God's voice is so majestic, except from the fact, that he is so mighty himself, and that his words are like him.

But just one thought more concerning the voice of God being essentially majestic; and I must trouble you to remember that, if you forget everything else that I have said. In some sense Jesus Christ may be called the voice of God, for you know he is called the Word of God frequently in Scripture; and I am sure this Word of God "is full of majesty." The voice and the word are very much the same thing. God speaks: it is his Son. His Son is the Word; the Word is his Son, and the voice is his Son. Ah! truly the voice, the Word of God, "is full of majesty." Angels! ye can tell what majesty sublime invested his blest person when he reigned at his Father's right hand; ye can tell what were the brightnesses which he laid aside to become incarnate; ye can tell how sparkling was that crown, how mighty was that sceptre, how glorious were those robes bedecked with stars. Spirits! ye who saw him when he stripped himself of all his glories, ye can tell what was his majesty. And oh! ye glorified, ye who saw him ascend up on high, leading captivity captive—ye beloved songsters, who bow before him, and unceasingly sing his love! ye can tell how full of majesty he is. High above all principalities and powers ye see him sit; angels are but servants at his feet; and the mightiest

monarchs like creeping worms beneath his throne. High there, where God alone reigns, beyond the ken of angels or the gaze of immortal spirits—there he sits, not majestic merely, but full of majesty. Christian! adore your Saviour; adore the Son of God; reverence him, and remember at all seasons and times, how little so ever you may be, your Saviour, with whom you are allied, the Word of God, is essentially full of majesty.

II. Now the second point, IT IS CONSTANTLY FULL OF MAJESTY. God's voice, like man's voice, has its various tones and degrees of loudness; but it is full of majesty, constantly so—whatever *tone* he uses, it is always full of majesty. Sometimes God speaks to man with a harsh voice, threatening him for sin; and then there is majesty in that harshness. When man is angry with his fellows, and he speaks harshly and severely, there is little majesty in that; but when the just God is angry with sinful mortals, and he says, "I will by no means spare the guilty;" "I, the Lord, am a jealous God;" when he declares himself to be exceedingly wroth, and asks who can stand before the fury of his countenance—when the rocks are cast down by him—there is a majesty in that terrific voice of his. Then he adopts another voice. Sometimes it is a gentle didactic voice, teaching us what he would have us learn. And then how full of majesty it is! He explains, he expounds, he declares: he tells us what we are to believe; and what a majesty there is in his voice then! Men may explain God's Word, and have no majesty in what they say; but when God teaches what his people are to hold to be truth, what majesty there is in it! So much majesty, that if any man take away from the words that are written in this Book, God shall take away his name out of the book of life and out of the holy city—so much majesty, that to seek to mend the Bible is a proof of a blasphemous heart, that to seek to alter one word of Scripture is a proof of alienation from the God of Israel. At another time God uses another voice—a sweet consoling voice. And oh! ye mourners that have ever heard God's comforting voice, is not that full of majesty! There is nothing of the mere trifling that sometimes we employ to comfort poor sick souls. Mothers will often talk to those who are sick in some gentle strain; but somehow it appears to be affected, and is, therefore, not full of majesty; but when God speaks to comfort, he uses his majestic words. "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." Oh! is there not majesty in this sweet voice? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I never forget thee." How sweet, but yet how majestic! We cannot avoid being comforted by it if God speaks it to our souls. Sometimes God's voice is a reproving voice; and then it is full of majesty. "The ox knoweth his owner," he says, "and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider;" and he speaks reprovingly, as if he had a controversy with them, and calls the mountains and the hills to hear his reproof of them on account of sin; "I have nourished and brought up children, but they have rebelled against me." But God's reproving voice is always full of majesty. At other

times it is a voice of command to his children, when he appears to them and says, "Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward," And how majestic are God's commands, how mighty is his voice, when he tells us what to do! Some of you have a very poor estimation of what God's voice is. God tells you to be baptized in honor of your Lord and Master; he speaks to you, and he tells you to come round his table, and to remember his dying sufferings; but you do not think much of it: it seems to be lost upon you. But let me tell you, that God's voice of command is as full of majesty, and ought to be as much regarded by his people as his word of promise or his word of doctrine. Whenever he speaks there is a majesty about his voice, whatever tone he may adopt. Ah! beloved, and there are times coming when God will speak words which will be evidently full of majesty—when he will speak and say, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment." There will be majesty in that voice; for Hades shall then be unlocked, and the gates of the grave sawn in twain; the spirits of the dead shall again be clothed with flesh, and the dry bones shall be made alive once more. And he will speak by-and-bye, and summon all men to stand before his bar; and there will be majesty in his voice then, when he shall say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you;" and oh! dread thought, there will be tremendous majesty in his voice, when he shall exclaim, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Again. God's voice is full of majesty *in all the different degrees of its loudness*. Even in calling there is a difference in the loudness of God's voice; many of you were called gently to Christ, and you did not seem to hear the thunders of Sinai, like many of God's people; but whether the voice be loud or soft, it is always full of majesty.

And *in all its mediums* it is full of majesty. God has sometimes chosen the poor to speak his wisdom by. If I go and hear a countryman or an untaught man preach, who makes many mistakes in grammar, yet if it is God's word that he preaches, it "is full of majesty." And sometimes, when a little child has repeated a text, we have not noticed the child, by reason of the majesty of the voice. In fact, the meaner the instrument employed, the greater the majesty in the voice itself. I have noticed a tendency in many to despise their poorer brethren, members of smaller churches, where there is a more humble minister than one they are in the habit of hearing; but this is all wrong, for God's voice is full of majesty; and he can as well speak by one as the other.

III. In the last place, I must briefly refer to the majesty of God's voice WHEN IT IS REVEALED IN ITS EFFECTS—when it is spoken home to the heart of man. Just look at the Psalm, and let me briefly refer to the facts here mentioned. I shall not understand them naturally, though, doubtless, they were so intended by David, but I shall understand them spiritually. As Dr. Hawker remarks, "Doubtless they were intended to set out gracious operations, as well as natural ones."

First, the voice if the Lord is a *breaking* voice. "The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars." The proudest and most stubborn sinner is broken before him when he speaks. I believe that

even the spirit of Voltaire, stubborn as that spirit was, and hard as a millstone, would have been broken in a single instant, if God had but spoken to him; the hardest heart I have here needs only one syllable from God to break it in a moment. I might hammer away to all eternity, but I could not do it; but "the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon."

In the next place it is a *moving* voice, an overcoming voice. "He maketh them also to skip like a calf; Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn." Who would ever think of a mountain moving? It stands so fast and firm. But God's voice, like his voice in Zerubbabel, speaks to that mountain, and says, "Who art thou, great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." There is not a mountain standing in this world that God cannot move away by his voice, whether it be the mountains of Rome, or the mountain of the false prophet, or the mountains of colossal systems of heresy, or infidelity, or idolatry. God has only to speak the word, and the idols shall fall from their thrones, and the firm mountains of priest-craft shall skip like a calf.

In the next place, the voice of God is a *dividing* voice. "The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire;" or, as it should be, "The voice of the Lord cutteth out with flames of fire." You saw the lightning on Friday, and you remarked then, when God's voice was heard, that the flash seemed to part the cloud and divide the sky. Just so with God's word. Where God's word is faithfully preached, and his voice is spiritually heard, it is always a dividing voice. You bring all kinds of different characters into a chapel, and God's word splits them all in twain. It is in this place God divides you. The son of God holds his throne, and sits in judgment here. It divides men from men; it divides sinners from their sins; it divides sinners from their righteousness; it splits through clouds and darkness; it divides our troubles, breaks a way for us to heaven. In fact, there is nothing that the voice of God cannot divide. It is a dividing voice.

And then, again, the voice of the Lord is such a loud voice, that it is said to shake the wilderness. "The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh." Stand in the middle of a wilderness or a desert, and conceive if you would make anything hear; but when God speaks, his voice ringeth through the wilderness, and startleth the desert itself. Minister of God! you have only to speak God's voice, and you will be heard; if you have only half-a-dozen to hear you, you will be heard further than you know of. None of us can preach a gospel sermon, but it is heard and talked of more than we imagine. Yea, there is not a pious conversation with a poor woman but may be carried all over the world, and produce the most wonderful effects. Nobody can tell how loud is God's voice, and how far it may be heard. "Lift up thy voice; lift it up; be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God." And your voice may be ever so weak, and your ability ever so little: only lift it up, and God Almighty, by his grace, may make the very wilderness to shake, yea, he may make the very wilderness of Kadesh to tremble.

And then in the 9th verse there is another idea, which I must not pass over, although I might have preferred to do so, possibly. "The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve." By this I understand what the ancients believed—that so affrighted were the hinds by the noise of the thunder, that the period of calving was often hastened on, and frequently prematurely. It is just so with God's voice. If a man has in him a desire towards Christ, the voice of God makes him bring forth that desire, to the joy and rejoicing of his soul. And very frequently, when a man has a bad design towards God, God has only to speak, and his design becomes abortive. It is brought forth, as it were, before its time, and falls like an untimely fruit to the ground. Whatever man has within him, God can make it come out of him in a single moment: if he has a desire towards God, God can bring forth that desire, and he can bring forth the soul, and make it alive; and if it be a desire against God, God can frustrate that desire, kill it, overwhelm it, and overthrow it; for "the voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve."

And in the next place, the voice of God is *a discovering voice*. It "discovereth the forests." The trees were your former hiding-place; but in the forest, however thick it may be, there doth the lightning gleam; and under the mighty trees, however thick their covering, the voice of the Lord is heard. God's voice is a discovering voice. You hypocrites! you get hiding yourselves under the trees of the forest; but God's voice thundereth after you when it speaks. Some of you get hiding under ceremonies, good lives, resolutions, and hopes; but God's voice will discover the forests; and recollect, there will be a day with some of you, when you will hide yourselves, or seek to do it, under rocks and mountains, or in the deepest parts of the forests; but when he sits upon his throne, the voice of the Lord will discover the forests. Ye may stand under the old oak, or creep within its trunk, and feel that there you are hidden; but his eyes like balls of fire, shall see you through and through, and his voice, like a voice of thunder, shall say, "Come forth, culprit; come forth, man; I can see thee;

'Mine eye can pierce the shades, and find thy soul as soon
In midnight's darkness as in blazing noon.'

Come forth, come forth!" And vain then will be thy disguises, vain thy subterfuges. "The voice of the Lord discovereth the forests." Oh! I would to God that he would speak to some of you this morning, and discover your souls! I wish he would discover to you your lost and hopeless condition; that you are damned without Christ, every one of you! Oh that he would discover to you how horrible is your position, considered apart from the Saviour; discover to you the fallacy of all your legal hope, and of all your experiences, if they are not experiences allied to Christ! I pray that he would discover to you that all your good works will come tumbling on your head at last, if you build them for a house, and that you must stand surrounded by no covering, but unveiled before the God who discovers the forests.

I would have preached to you this morning; but I cannot. Yet, perhaps, amidst the multitude of my words there may be some still small voice of God, which shall reach your

heart. And if the rest of you should despise it, what of that? The voice of God will be as full of majesty in the reprobate as in the elect; and if ye be cast away into hell, God shall get as much glory from the voice which ye heard and which ye despised, as he does from his voice which the elect heard, and at which they trembled and fled to God. Do not think that your damnation will rob God of any of his honor. Why, sirs, he can be as much glorified in your destruction as in your salvation. You are but little creatures in the account of his glory. He can magnify himself anyhow. Oh! humble yourselves, therefore, before God; bow down yourselves before his love and his mercy; and hear now what the plan of salvation is, whereby God brings out his elect. It is this: "He that believeth," in that voice, that Word, that Son of his; "He that believeth,"—not merely he that hopeth; "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Ah! hearers, if I could leap out of my body, and could lay aside the infirmities of my spirit, methinks that then I might preach to you; but I know right well that even then it must be God that speaks; and therefore I leave the words. My God! My God! Save these my people; for Jesus' precious name's sake. Amen and Amen.

The Plea of Faith

A Sermon
(No. 88)
Delivered on Sabbath Evening, June 22, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"Do as thou hast said.'—2 Samuel 7:25.

NATHAN had been giving to David, on God's behalf, sundry exceeding great and precious promises. David expresses his gratitude to God for having so promised, and he says, "Now, O Lord God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.'

It is a prayer to God. Those words naturally flowed from his lips: after hearing such precious promises, he was anxious for their fulfilment. Such words will be equally in place, if they shall be adopted by us in these modern times, and if, after reading a promise, on turning to God's Word, we should finish by saying, "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope," it will be a practical application of the text, "Do as thou hast said."

I shall not commence my sermon to-night by endeavoring to prove that this Bible is what God has said; I do not come here to give you arguments to prove the inspiration of Scripture; I assume that I speak to a Christian congregation, and I assume, therefore, at starting, that this is God's word and none other. Leaving that matter, then, altogether, permit me to proceed at once to the text, understanding by what God has said, the Scriptures of his truth; and I trust there are some here who will be led, to-night, to cry to God in behalf of some promise made to their souls, "O Lord, do as thou hast said."

I. Our first remark shall be HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO KNOW WHAT GOD HAS SAID, for unless we know what God has said, it will be folly to say, "*do* as thou hast said." Perhaps there is no book more neglected in these days than the Bible. I do verily believe there are more mouldy Bibles in this world than there are of any sort of neglected books. We have stillborn books in abundance; we have innumerable books which never see any circulation except the circulation of the butter shop, but we have no book that is so much bought, and then so speedily laid aside, and so little used, as the Bible. If we buy a newspaper, it is generally handed from one person to another, or we take care to peruse it pretty well; indeed some go so far as to read advertisements and all. If a person purchases a novel, it is well known how he will sit and read it all the way through, till the midnight candle is burnt out; the book must be finished in one day, because it is so admirable and interesting; but the Bible, of course, in the estimation of many, is not an interesting book; and the subjects it treats of are not of any very great importance. So most men think; they think it is a very

good book to carry out on a Sunday, but never meant to be used as a book of pleasure, or a book to which one could turn with delight. Such is the opinion of many; but no opinion can be more apart from the truth; for what book can treat of truths one-half so important as those that concern the soul. What book can so well deserve my attention as that which is written by the greatest of all authors, God himself? If I must read a valuable book with attention, how much more ought I to give my mind to the study of that book which is invaluable, and which contains truth without the slightest admixture of error? And if books upon my health, or books which only concern the doings of my fellow creatures occupy some of my time, and deservedly so, how much more time should I spend in reading that which concerns my everlasting destiny; which reveals to me worlds hitherto unknown; which tells me how I may escape from hell and fly to heaven? But I must remark, that even among Christian people, the Bible is one of the least read books that they have in their house. What with our innumerable magazines, our religious newspapers, and our perpetual controversies about the Bible, it is too seldom that people read the Bible. There certainly is not that reading of it that there used to be. Our predecessors, the ancient Puritans, would scarcely read any book but that; and if a book was not concerning the Bible, they did not care about reading it at all. Perhaps therein they may have been too strait and narrow, and may somewhat have cramped their minds; but I would rather have a little truth, and have a mind filled with that, though that mind should only be as large as a nutshell, than have the most gigantic intellect, and have that crammed with error. It is not the greatness of our intellect, it is the rightness of it, that makes us men in this world, and right men before God. I beseech you, therefore, you who are members of Christian churches, if you have but little time, do not expend it in reading ephemeral books, but take your Bible and read it constantly; and I promise you one thing, that if you are already Christians, the more you read the Bible the more you will love it. You may find it hard, perhaps, at present, to read a short passage and meditate upon it all day; but as you proceed you will see such depths unfathomable, such heights beyond your ken; and you will discover such unutterable sweetness in this precious honey-comb dropping with drops of honey, that you will say, "I must have more of it," and your spirit will always cry, "Give, give;" nor will it be content until you can have God's statutes upon your mind daily, to be your songs in the house of your pilgrimage.

The errors of this present age have sprung from a non-reading of the Bible. Do you think, my brethren, that if we all read the Scriptures with judgment, and desired to know them rightly, there would be so many sects as there are? Heresies and schisms have sprung from this; one man has gone a little astray upon a point; another man, without referring to Scripture, has endorsed all he has said; another one has added something else to it; and then another one, being cunning, full of subtlety of the devil, has twisted passages of Scripture, and has woven them into a system, which has been fashioned in the first place by mistake,

has accumulated and become more colossal by sundry other mistakes which naturally accrued to it, and at last has been perfected by the craft of designing heretics.

And, again: *bigotry, ill feeling, and uncharitableness, must all be traced, in a large degree, to our want of reading the Bible*. What is the reason why yon man hates me, because I preach what I believe to be right? If I do speak the truth am I responsible for his hating me? Not in the least degree. I am sometimes told by my people that I attack certain parties very hard. Well, I cannot help it; if they are not right, it is not my fault—if they come in my way, that I am compelled to run over them. Suppose two of you should be driving in the road to-morrow, and one of you should be on the right side of the road, and some accident should occur, you would say, "Sir, the other man ought to have pulled up, he must pay the damages, for he had no business there at all on his wrong side." And it will be the same with us if we preach God's truth; we must go straight on; if the greatest ill-feeling in the world rise up we have nothing to do with it. God's truth will sometimes bring about warfare; Jesus Christ, you know, said himself that he came to put warfare between man and man; to set the mother-in-law against the daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against mother-in-law; and that a man's foes should be those of his own household. But if there be ill-feeling, if there be clamouring of sects, to whom is it due? Who is responsible for it? Why, the man who makes the new sects, not the man who abides fast and firm by the old one. If I am safely moored by a good strong anchor of fundamental truth, and some other shall strike my vessel and sink himself, I will not pay the damages. I stand firm: if others chose to go away from the truth, to cut their cables and slip their moorings; then let them. God grant that we may not do the same. Hold the truth, my friends, and hold it as the easiest method of sweeping away heresies and false doctrines. But now-a-days, you know, you are told, "Oh, it does not matter what you believe; doctrines are nothing;" ad they have tried lately to make a very happy family of us, like the happy family near Waterloo Bridge, where all kinds of creatures are shut up together; but they are only kept in order by a lath which the man, when we turn our heads, applies between the bars of the cage. Just so with denominations; they want to amalgamate us all. We differ in various doctrines, and therefore some of us must be wrong, if we hold doctrines which are directly hostile to each other. But we are told, "It does not signify; doubtless, you are all right." Now, I cannot see that. If I say one thing, and another man says another, how, by all that is holy, can both speak the truth? Shall black and white be the same colour? Shall falsehood and truth be the same? When they shall be, and fire shall sleep in the same cradle with the waves of the ocean, then shall we agree to amalgamate ourselves with those who deny our doctrines, or speak evil of what we believe to be the gospel. My brethren, no man has any right to absolve your judgment from allegiance to God; there is liberty of conscience between man and man, but there is none between God and man. No man has a right to believe what he likes; he is to believe what God tells him; and if he does not believe that though he is not responsible to man, or to any set of men, or

to any government, yet mark you, he is responsible to God. I beseech you, therefore, if you would avoid heresies, and bring the church to a glorious union, read the Scriptures. Read not so much man's comments, or man's books, but read the Scriptures, and keep your faith on this,—"God has said it." If you cannot make all God's truths agree, yet remember God has not made two sets of truth opposite to each other; that were an impossibility which even God himself could not accomplish mighty though he be. My brethren, always stand by what God has said, and do not be turned aside from it by all the arguments that can be brought to bear against you. "Search the Scriptures, for they testify of Christ."

II. And now for our second point, ALL THAT FAITH WANTS TO BUILD UPON IS WHAT GOD HAS SAID. "Do as thou hast said." The only solid foothold that faith has is, "*It is written*, God hath said it." When a sinner comes to God he must have nothing else to rely upon except this, "Do as thou hast said." There is a tendency in most men's minds to bring before God something which he did not say. Many of you, I dare say, will go and ask God in prayer for something for which you cannot prove a positive promise that he will ever give it to you. You go to God and say, "Lord, do as John Bunyan said, do as Whitfield said, let me have an experience like theirs." Now, that is all wrong. We must, when we come to God, say only, "Lord, do as *thou* hast said." And then, again, I do believe that many of those who are members of our churches have not put their faith simply in what God has said. If I were to go round to some of you and ask you why you believe yourselves to be Christians, it is marvellous what strange reasons many of you would bring. It is very singular what strange views persons often have as to the way of salvation. It is hard to bring a sinner to God simply with this,—"Lord, do as thou hast said."

I know some who think themselves to be God's children, because they dreamed they were. They had a very remarkable dream one night, and if you were to laugh at them they would be unutterably indignant; they would cut you at once out of the family of God, and call you an "accuser of the brethren." They do not rely upon what God has said in the Bible; but they had some singular vision, when deep sleep had fallen upon them, and because of that vision, they reckon they are children of God. In the course of my seeing persons who come to me, I hear every now and then a story like this, "Sir, I was in such-and-such a room, and suddenly I thought I saw Jesus Christ, and heard a voice saying such-and-such a thing to me, and that is the reason why I hope I am saved." Now, that is not God's way of salvation; the sinner is not to say, "Lord, do as I dreamed, do as I fancy;" but "Do as thou hast said." And if I have any one here who has never had a dream, or vision, he does not want to have, if he goes to God with this, "Lord, thou hast said Christ died to save sinners, I am a sinner, save me," that is faith, "Do as thou hast said." But there are other persons far more rational, who if they were asked the reason for their supposing that they are saved, would speak of some remarkable rhapsody which, on a particular occasion they had when hearing a certain minister; or of a particular text which struck them suddenly, and transported them to the

seventh heaven, and they had such thoughts as they never had before. "Oh! sir," they say, "it is marvellous, I thought my heart would break, it was so full of joy and gladness; I never felt so before in all my life; and when I went out of the house, I felt so light and so ready to run home, I thought I should sing al the way; so I know I must be a child of God." Well, *you* may know it, but *I* don't, because there are many persons who have been deluded by the devil in that fashion, who never had faith in Christ. Faith in Christ never rests in rhapsody; it rests on a "thou hast said it." Ask faith whether it will ever take its standing on anything but a "thou hast said," and faith will answer, "No; I cannot climb to heaven on a ladder made of dreams, they are too flimsy to bear my feet." Faith, why dost thou not march on? Why dost thou not cross that bridge? "No," says faith, "I cannot; it is made up of rhapsodies, and rhapsodies are intoxicating things, and I cannot place my feet upon them." Faith will stand on a promise, though it be no bigger than grain of mustard seed; but it could not stand on a rhapsody if it was as large as the everlasting mountains. Faith can build on a "thou hast said it;" but it cannot build on frames and feelings, on dreams and experiences—it only relies on this—"Thou hast said it." Let me caution my hearers against suppositions, which some of them have as to salvation. Some persons think that the Holy Spirit is a kind of electric shock working in the heart; that there is some mysterious and terrible thing they cannot understand, which they must feel, not only very different from what they ever felt before, but even superior to anything described in God's Word. Now, I beg to tell you, that so far from the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit being a dark thing in its manifestation, it is, because it is the Holy Spirit, a thing of simplicity and light. The way of salvation is no great mystery, it is very plain; it is "believe and live." And faith needs no mysteries to hang itself upon; it catches hold of the bare naked promise, and it says, "Lord, do as thou hast said."

My faith can on this promise live; I know that on this promise it never can die. But faith wants neither testimonies of man, nor learning of philosophers, nor eloquence of orators, nor rhapsodies, nor visions, nor revelations. It wants nothing else but what God has said applied to the heart; and it goes to God, and says, "Lord, do as thou hast said."

III. And now for the third remark. We see that faith is a very bold thing; when God says a thing it goes to God, and says, "Lord, do as thou hast said."

My third remark is, that FAITH IS QUITE RIGHT IN SO DOING. The Lord always meant, when he said a thing, that we should remind him of it. God's promises were never meant to be waste paper; he meant that they should be used. Whenever God gives a promise, if a man does not use that promise, the promise fails in effect to that man, and God's great intention therein is in some measure frustrated. God sent the promise on purpose to be used. If I see a Bank of England note, it is a promise for a certain amount of money, and I take it and use it. But oh! my friend, do try and use God's promises; nothing pleases God better than to see his promises put in circulation; he loves to see his children bring them up to him, and say, "Lord, do as thou hast said." And let me tell you that it glorifies God to use

his promises. Do you think that God will be any the poorer for giving you the riches he has promised? Do you think he will be any the less holy for giving holiness to you? Do you think he will be any the less pure for washing you from your sins? And he has said, "Come now, let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red, they shall be whiter than snow." Faith gets hold of that promise, and it does not stand saying, "this is a precious promise, I will look at it;" it goes right up to the throne, and says, "Lord, here is the promise, do as thou hast said." And God says, "Oh! faith, I am as glad to see the promise brought to me, as thou art to bring it; I meant my promise to be used, and the using of it glorifies me." Why, if any one gave us a cheque, and we did not go to have it cashed, though we might want the money badly enough, suppose we said, "I don't like to go," there would be some slur cast upon the character of the man whose signature had made it valid. And so when a Christian gets a promise, if he does not take it to God, he dishonors him. But when faith in all its raggedness and poverty, and sickness about it, goes to God and says, "Lord, I have nothing to recommend me but this, 'thou hast said it:' there is the promise, Lord, give me the fulfilment." God smiles, and says, "Ay, my child, I love to see thee trust me; there, take back the fulfilment, and go on thy way rejoicing." Never think that God will be troubled by your asking him about his promises so much. God likes to be troubled, if I may use such an expression; he likes you to go to his door, and say, "Great Banker, cash this note; great Promiser, fulfil this promise; great covenant God, fulfil thy covenant, and send me not empty away." "Do as thou hast said," is a legitimate request; we ought to say it; it honors God, and God meant that we should so use his promises, "Do as thou hast said."

Another remark. *Faith has very good reasons for appealing to God to do as he has said.* If you should say to faith, "Faith, why do you expect God to do as he has said it, why do you expect it?" Faith would answer, "I have a whole bundle of reasons that justify the act. And in the first place, I have a right to expect him to do as he has said, because he is a true God; I know he cannot lie. He has said he will give me such-and-such a thing; if he was not a truthful God, I would not say, 'do as thou hast said!' but since he is a *true* God, and never was known to break his promise, and since, moreover, by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie—his oath and his promise—he has made the thing secure; and since I know that in Christ all the promises are yea and amen, I think I have good reason enough for going to him and saying, 'do as thou hast said.' If he were some fallible being who promised and would not perform, I might hesitate somewhat; but since he is always true and constantly precious, I will go and say to him, 'Lord, do as thou hast said.'" Poor sinner! God has said, "He that confesseth his sin shall find mercy." Now, if you go to God, you want no other plea than this,—"Lord, do as thou hast said;' 'I have confessed my sins;' 'do as thou hast said.'" "But, sinner, why should I do as I have said? you do not deserve it." "Lord, thou art a true God."

"Thou hast promised to forgive,
All who on thy Son believe;
Lord I know thou canst not lie,
Give me Christ or else I die."

Go, poor sinner, tell the Lord that, and as truly as he is God, he will never send you empty away. Faith has good reasons to feel that God is true, and therefore he will do as he has said. And not only so, but he is *able* to do it; his ability is infinite. His intentions also are the *same*, his promises never get worn out by being circulated, and they become all the more sure for being tried. Poor sinner, here again is a joyful thought: thou canst go to God, and say, "Lord thou hast promised to wash away all our iniquities, and cast them into the depths of the sea. Lord, if thou hadst been a changeable God, I might have thought thou wouldst not wash away mine, but thou didst wash Manasseh, and thou didst wash Paul; now, Lord, because thou art unchangeable, 'do as thou hast said.' For thou art just the same now, just as merciful, just as powerful, and just as kind as ever thou wert. What, wilt thou break thy promise, Lord? 'Do as thou hast said.'"

But faith puts it on stronger ground than this: it says, "Lord, if thou dost not do as thou hast said, thou wilt be dishonored, thou wilt be disgraced." If a man does not carry out his promise, he is cashiered; men care not to associate with on who breaks his promise; and what would become of God's great name if he were to break his promise? Poor black sinner! thou art coming to the fountain; God has given the promise that he will wash every sinner that comes to the fountain. Now, with reverence, let me speak it poor sinner; if Christ did not wash you, it would be a dishonor to his truth. If you were to go to Christ, and he were to cast you out, surely the devils in hell would despise the name of him who breaks his promise. Beloved, to suppose that God could violate his promise, is to suppose him divested of his Godhead. Take away God's honour from him, and he becomes less than man. Take away the honour which even man holds dear, and what do you make of God? "Oh! sir," you say, "but I do not deserve it; I am such a poor worthless creature, he will not keep his promise to me." I tell you that does not make a whit difference in God's promise; if he has promised, he is divinely bound to perform his promise, in whatever state you may be. Though you have slandered God, though you may have hated him and despised him, and run away from him, and in every way ill-treated him—if he has made a promise to you here, I will be bound for my God. He would keep a promise to the devil if he had made one; and if he has made a promise to you who are ever so vile, he will keep that promise to you. Hear the promise, then, once more, Are you a sinner? "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinner, even the chief." And, again: "He is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him." And, again: "Come unto me, all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And let me say again, with the profoundest reverence, that if Christ did not give rest to every weary heavy laden sinner

that came to him, he would be un-Christed, he would lose his truthfulness, he would be undeified, he would lose his veracity, and the loss of one poor believing sinner would be the loss of God's own godhead; it would be the dethroning of the immortal; it would be the pulling down of heaven, the breaking asunder of the universe, and the dissolution of creation's own earth, and of creation's self. Faith may well go to God, and say, "Lord, do as thou hast said; for if thou dost not, it will be a dishonor to thyself."

And now let us conclude by asking, *what has God said*? I cannot tell you all that he has said to you, because I cannot mark out all the different characters here. But, my dear friends, whatever may be your character, from the earliest stage of religion up to the last, there is always some special promise to you; and you have only to turn your Bible over and find it out, and then go to God with "Do as thou hast said." Let me just select a few characters. There is one here, exceeding faint in the ways of the Lord. "Oh!" he says, "I am faint, though I hope I am pursuing." Now, here is the promise,—"He giveth power unto the faint;" When you get such a promise, stick hard and fast to it; do not let the devil cheat you out of it, but keep on saying, "Lord, thou hast said, He giveth power unto the faint." "Do as thou hast said." Let it ring and ring again in the ears of the promiser, and he will be a performer yet. "Ah!" says another, "I am not faint; I am afraid I scarcely have life at all; I am a hungry and thirsty soul; I want Christ, but I cannot get at him." Hear this: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Take that promise to God, and keep to it: do not plead anything else, but go to God over and over again with this,—"Lord, thou hast said it; do as thou hast said." Are you covered all over with sin, and under a deep sense of your iniquities? Go and tell him this: "Thou hast said, 'I will cast their iniquities into the depths of the sea.' Lord, I know I have these sins; I do not deny it; but thou hast said, 'I will pardon them.' I have no reason why thou shouldst pardon them; I cannot promise that I shall be better; but, Lord, thou hast said it, and that is enough; 'Do as thou hast said.'" Another one here is afraid lest he should not be able to hold on to the end, and lest after having been a child of God he should be a cast-away. Then, if that be thy state, go and take this to God: "The mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed, but the covenant of my love shall not depart from you;" and when you are thinking that Saviour is going away, catch hold of his skirts, and say, "Jesus, do as thou hast said. Thou hast said, 'I will never leave thee;' 'do as thou hast said.'" Or, if thou hast lost his presence, remember the promise, "I will come again to you." Go and say, "Lord, I have lost the sweet comfort of thy presence in my heart, but thou hast said, 'I will come again to you.'" And if Satan says, "He is gone away, and will never come back again," tell Satan he has nothing to do with it; God has said it, and keep to this, "Do as thou hast said." If you do that, you will want no other argument and no other reason.

Let us suppose a case, and having tried to illustrate the truth by it, we will have done. There is a desperate ruffian; he has been concerned in twenty burglaries; it is said he has

committed several murders; the police are on his track, they are hunting after him; he cannot be discovered. The principal point is to discover him, for it is hoped that by his discovery and his pardon more good might be done than even by his execution. Persons come to this desperately bad fellow, and they tell him, "If you give yourself up, I dare say you will get a free pardon." "I do not give myself up on daresays," he says. Another comes, and says, "If you were to give yourself up, I would intercede for you; I know my lord so-and-so, and such a man, member of parliament, would intercede for you." "No," he would say, "let well alone. I am pretty safe now; I am not going to give myself up on the mere speculation that some one will intercede for me." But by-and-bye there comes out a huge placard, "V.R. Free pardon to such a man if he surrenders himself." He walks straight up to the place. Some one says to him, "Stop, my dear fellow; they will hang you, perhaps." "No," says he, "they won't." Some one says, "They have been many years looking after you; you do not think that if you get into the fangs of the law now the Queen will pardon you?" "Yes," he says, "I can trust her? she has never given a free pardon, and then executed anyone." He goes to the office, and they say, "We are astonished to see this fellow; he might have kept away; he had no necessity to give himself up." "See," says one, "there is a policeman, are you not afraid? There are the handcuffs; are you not afraid that they will be put on your wrists and that you will be put into jail?" "No," he says, "I will walk all through the prison, but there is not a cell in which I may be locked up. The Queen has said she will pardon me, and I do not want any thing else." "But look at your conduct; you know you deserve to be hanged." "I know I do, but I have received a free pardon, and I will surrender myself." "But who can tell how many buglaries you will commit if you are allowed to go free." "Never mind," she has promised to pardon me, and I know well that her word will not be violated. Sure the majesty of England will not lie against such an offender as I am." Now, you would not wonder at that, would you? It would be no very marvellous thing, because we can trust her Majesty pretty fairly. But it is the hardest thing to get sinners to come to God. "No," says one, "I have been a drunkard, God will not forgive me." My dear fellow, it is said, "All manner of sin and iniquity shall be forgiven to man." "Oh," says another, "I have been a swearer, I have been an infidel, I have blasphemed God, and broken all his statutes." My dear fellow-creature, it is said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," Cannot you believe it? God means what he says; and can you not come to God, trembling, though you be, and cast yourself before his feet, and say, "Lord, if thou dost damn me, I deserve it; if thou shouldst cast me down to hell, I know thou wouldst be just: but then Lord thou hast said, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" I tell you God will do as he has said. If you have but faith to believe that promise, you never need fear.

Worthless, vilest of the vile, sweepings of the universe, the very offal of creation, if you come to God he will take you in, for his promise is not to be broken by reason of your vileness; he will receive you, if you can but plead a promise of your own case, and say to him, "Do as

thou hast said." Now, then, I will say in conclusion, it will be easy enough for every poor sinner, for every penitent sinner, for every weak saint, to go home, and turn his Bible over; and by a little diligence he will be able to find out a promise that will exactly suit his case; and if he does not find such a promise, it will be because he did not look long enough, for there is one that just fits, and when he has got hold of it let him go to God, and say, "Lord, do as thou hast said," and let him keep to that; and the heavens would sooner fall than one of God's promises should be broken. Oh! trust my Master! oh! trust my Master; trust your souls to him! trust your bodies to him, I beseech you; do it, for his own name's sake! Amen and Amen.

Hatred Without Cause

A Sermon
(No. 89)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, June 29, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"They hated me without a cause."—John 15:25.

IT IS usually understood, that the quotation our Saviour here refers to is to be found in the 35th Psalm, at the 19th verse, where David says, speaking of himself immediately and of the Saviour prophetically, "Let not them who are mine enemies rejoice over me, neither let them wink with the eye that hate me without a cause." Our Saviour refers to that as being applicable to himself, and thus he really tells us, in effect, that many of the Psalms are Messianic, or refer to the Messiah; and, therefore, Dr. Hawker did not err, when he said he believed the Psalms referred to the Saviour, though he may have carried the truth too far. But it will be a good plan, in reading the Psalms, if we continually look at them as alluding not so much to David, as to the man of whom Dave was the type, Jesus Christ, David's Lord.

No being was ever more lovely than the Saviour; it would seem almost impossible not to have affection for him. Certainly at first sight it would seem far more difficult to hate him than to love him. And yet, loveable as he was, yea, "altogether lovely," no being so early met with hatred, and no creature ever endured such a continual persecution as he had to suffer. He is no sooner ushered into the world, than the sword of Herod is ready to cut him off, and the innocents of Bethlehem, by their dreadful massacre, gave a sad foretaste of the sufferings which Christ would endure, and of the hatred that men would pour upon his devoted head. From his first moment to the cross, save the temporary lull while he was a child, it seemed as if all the world were in league against him, and all men sought to destroy him. In different ways that hatred displayed itself, sometimes in overt deed, as when they took him to the brow of the hill, and would have cast him down headlong, or when they took up stones again to stone him, because he said that Abraham desired to see his day, and saw it, and was glad. At other times that hatred showed itself in words of slander, such as these,—"He is a drunken man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;" or in looks of contempt, as when they looked suspiciously at him, because he did eat with publicans and sinners, and sat down to table with unwashed hands. At other times that hatred dwelt entirely in their thoughts, and they thought within themselves, "This man blasphemeth," because he said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." But at almost every time there was a hatred towards Christ; and when they took him, and would have made him king, and a shallow fleeting flood of popular applause would have watted him on to an unsteady throne, even then there was a latent hatred towards him, only kept under by loaves and fishes, which only wanted an equal

quantity of loaves and fishes offered by the priests, to develop it itself in the cry of "Crucify him, crucify him," instead of the shout of "Hosannah! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." All grades of men hated him. Most men have to meet with some opposition; but then it is frequently a class opposition, and there are other classes who look at them with respect. The demagogue, who is admired by the poor, must expect to be despised by the rich; and he who labours for the aristocracy, of course meets with the contempt of the many. But here was a man who walked among the people, who loved them, who spoke to rich and poor as though they were (as indeed they are) on one level in his blessed sight: and yet all classes conspired to hate him; the priests cried him down because he spoiled their dogmas; the nobles would put him to death because he spoke of being a king; while the poor, for some reasons best known to themselves, though they admired his eloquence, and frequently would have fallen prostrate in worship before him, on account of the wondrous deeds he did, even these, led by men who ought to have guided them better, conspired to put him to death, and to consummate their guilt by nailing him to the tree, and then wagging their heads, bade him, if he could build a temple in three days, to save himself and come down from the cross. Christ was the hated one, the slandered and scorned; he was "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Now, we shall try this morning, first, *to justify the Saviour's remarks, that he was hated without a cause*; and secondly, to dwell *upon the sin of men—that men hated him without a cause*; in the third place, *to give a lesson or two to Christ's own people*, which they may well learn from the fact, that their Saviour was hated without a cause.

I. First, then, beloved, let us JUSTIFY WHAT THE SAVIOUR SAID,—"They hated me without a cause." And we remark, that, apart from the consideration of man's sinfulness, and Christ's purity, there certainly is not cause, whatever to be discovered why the world should have hated him.

First let us regard Christ *in his person*. Was there anything in Christ's person as a man, when he lived in this world, which had a natural tendency to make any person hate him? Let us remark, that there was an absence of almost everything which excites hatred between man and man. In the first place there was *no great rank* in Christ to excite envy. It is a well known fact that let a man be ever so good, if he be at all lifted above his fellow-creatures by riches, or by title, though one by one men will respect him, yet the many often speak against him, not so much for what he is, as for his rank and his title. It seems to be natural to men in the mass to despise nobles; each man, individually, thinks it a wonderful fine thing to know a lord; but put men together, and they will despise lords and bishops, and speak very lightly of principalities and powers. Now Christ had none of the outward circumstances of rank, he had no chariot, no long sleeves, no elevation above his fellows; when he walked abroad there were no heralds to attend him, there was no pomp to do him honor. In fact, one would think that Christ's appearance would naturally have engendered pity. Instead of

being lifted above men, he did, in some sense, seem to be below them, for foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head. Many a democrat has railed against the archbishop when he has gone by Lambeth palace; but would he curse or despise him if he were told, the archbishop had not where to lay his head, but simply toiled for the truth's sake, and had no reward? The envy naturally excited by rank, station, and such-like, could not have operated in Christ's case; there was nothing in his garb to attract attention; it was the garb of the peasant of Galilee-"of one piece, woven from the top throughout." Nor was there anything in his rank. He might have been the son of an ancient royal family, but its royalty was apparently extinct, and he was only known as the Son of the carpenter. The hated him, then, in that sense, "without a cause."

Many persons seem to have envy excited in them against those who *exercise rule* or government over them. The very fact of a man having authority over me stirs up my evil passions, and I begin to look at him with suspicion, because he is invested with that authority. Some men naturally fall into the groove, and obey simply because the ruled is made; principalities and powers are established, and they submit themselves for the Lord's sake; but the many, especially in these republican times, seem to have a natural tendency to kick against authority, simply because it is authority. But if authorities and governments were changed every month, I believe that in some countries, in France for instance, there would be revolutions as much under one government as under another; in fact, they hate all government there, and wish to be without law, that each man may do what is right in his own eyes. But this did not operate in Christ's case, he was not a king; he did not assume sway over the multitude. It is true he was Lord over tempests and seas; it is true he could command demons, and, if he pleased, men must have been his obedient servants; but he did not assume power over them. He marshalled no armies, he promulgated no laws, he made himself no great one in the land; the people did just as they liked, for all the authority he exercised over them. In fact, instead of binding laws upon them which were severe, he seemed to have loosened the rigidity of their system; for when the adulterous woman, who, otherwise, would have been put to death, was brought before him, he said, "Neither do I condemn thee." And he relaxed, to a certain extent, the rigidity of the Sabbatical ordinance, which was in some respects too burthensome, saying, "The Sabbath was made for man." Surely, then, they hated him "without a cause."

Some men make others dislike them because they are *proud*. I know some men that I should have liked very well if the starch had been left out of them; I should really sympathize with them and admire them if they had the least degree of condescension, but they seem to walk about the world with such a style of pride! They may not be proud—very likely they are not; but, as an old divine said, "When we see a fox's tail sticking out of a hole, we naturally expect the fox is there." And, somehow or other, the human mind cannot bear pride; we always kick against it. But there was nothing of that in our Saviour. How humble he was!

Why he stooped to anything. He would wash his disciples' feet; and when he walked about among men, there was no parade about him, as if he would say to them, "See my talent, see my power, see my rank, see my dignity, stand by, I am greater than you." No, he takes his seat there. There is Matthew, the publican, sitting beside him, and he does not think he is hurt by the publican, although he is the worst of sinners; and there is a harlot, he speaks to her; there is another with seven devils, and he casts the devils out of her, and another, who has the leprosy, and he even touches the leper, to show how humble he was, and that there was nothing of pride about him. Oh! could you have seen the Saviour; he was the very paragon of humility! There were none of your forms of etiquette and politeness about him; he had that true politeness which makes itself affable to all men, because it is kind and loving to all. There was no pride in the Saviour, and consequently there was nothing to excite men's anger on that account. Therefore, they hated him "without a cause."

There are others that you cannot help disliking, because they are so snappish, and waspish, and *angry*; they look as if they were born on some terribly dark stormy day, and as if, in the mixture of their body, no small quantity of vinegar was employed. You could not sit long with them, without feeling that you have to keep your tongue in pretty tight chain; you must not talk freely, or there would be a quarrel, for they would make you an offender for a word. You may say, "Such an one is, no doubt a good man; but really, that temper of his I cannot bear it. And when a man stands prominently before the public, with a nasty sour disposition, one feels inclined to dislike him. But there was nothing of this about our Saviour. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again;" if men spat in his face he said nothing to them; and when they smote him, he did not curse them; he sat still and bore their scorn. He walked through the world, with contempt and infamy constantly poured upon him; but "he answered not a word;" he was never angry. You cannot find, in reading the Saviour's life, that he spake one angry word, save those words of holy wrath which he poured, like scalding oil, upon the head of Pharisaic pride; then, indeed, his wrath did boil, but it was holy wrath. With such a loving, kind, gentle spirit, one would have thought that he would have gone through the world as easily as possible. But, notwithstanding all that, they hated him. Truly, we can say, "they hated him without a cause."

There is another set of people you can scarcely help disliking; they are *selfish* people. Now, we know some persons who are very excellent in temper, who are extremely honest and upright, but they are so selfish! When you are with them, you feel that they are just friends to you for what they can get out of you; and when you have served their turn, they will just lay you aside, and endeavour to find another. In trying to do good, their good deed has an ulterior object, but, somehow or other, they are always found out; and no man in the world gets a greater share of public odium than the man who lives a selfish life. Among the most miserable men in the universe, kicked about the world like a football, is the selfish miser. But in Christ there was nothing selfish; whatever he did, he did for others. He had a

marvellous power of working miracles, but he would not even change a stone into bread for himself; he reserved his miraculous power for others; he did not seem to have a particle of self in his whole nature. In fact, the description of his life might be written very briefly: "he saved others, himself he did not save." He walked about; he touched the poorest, the meanest, and those who were the most sick; he cared not what men might say of him; he seemed to have no regard for fame, or dignity, or ease, or honor. Neither his bodily nor his mental comforts were in the least regarded by him. Self-sacrifice was the life of Christ; but he did it with such an ease that it seemed no sacrifice. Ah! beloved, in that sense certainly they hated Christ without a cause; for there was nothing in Christ to excite their hatred—in fact, there was everything, on the other hand, to bind the whole world to love and reverence a character so eminently unselfish.

Another sort of people there are that I do not like, viz., the *hypocritical*; nay, I think I could even live with the selfish man, if I knew him to be selfish; but the hypocrite, do not let him come anywhere near where I am. Let a public man be a hypocrite once, and the world will scarcely trust him again; they will hate him. But Christ was, in this particular, free from any blame; and if they hated him, they hated him not for that, for there never was a more unvarnished man than Christ. He was called, you know, the child Jesus; because as a child speaks itself out, and has no reserve, and no craftiness, even so was it with Jesus; he had no affectation, no deceit. There was no change about him; he was "without variableness or shadow of turning." Whatever the world may say of Christ, they never said they believed he was a hypocrite; and among all the slanders they brought against him, they never disputed his sincerity. Had they been able to show that he really had been imposing upon them, they might have had some grounds for hating him; but he lived in the sunlight of sincerity and walked on the very mountain-top of continual observation. He could not be a hypocrite, and men knew he could not; and yet men hated him. Verily, my friends, if you survey the character of Christ, in all its loveliness, in all its benevolence, in all its sincerity, in all its self-devotion, in all intense eagerness to benefit man, you must say, indeed, "They hated him without a cause." there was nothing in Christ's person to lead men to hate him.

In the next place, *was there anything in Christ's errand* which could make people hate him? If they had asked him, for what reason have you come from heaven? would there have been anything in his answer likely to excite their indignation and hatred? I trow not. For what purpose did he come? He came, first of all, to explain mysteries—to tell them what was meant by the sacrificial lamb, what was the significance of the scape-goat, what was intended by the ark, the brazen serpent, and the pot of manna; he came to rend the veil of the holy of holies, and to show men secrets they had never seen before. Should they have hated one who lifted the veil of mystery, and made dark things light, and expounded riddles? Should they have hated him who taught them what Abraham desired to see, and what prophets and kings had longed to know, but died without a knowledge of? Was there anything

in that to make them hate him? What else did he come for? He came on earth to reclaim the wanderer; and is there anything in that that should make men hate Christ? If he came to reform the drunkard, to reclaim the harlot, and gather in the publicans and sinners, and bring prodigals to their father's house again, sure that is an object with which every philanthropist should agree; it is that for which our governments are formed and fashioned, to bring men to a better state; and if Christ came for that purpose, was there anything in that to make men hate him? For what else did he come? He came to heal the diseases of the body; is that a legitimate object of hatred? Shall I hate the physician who goes about gratuitously healing all manner of diseases? Are deaf ears unstopped, are mouths opened, are the dead raised, are the blind made to see, and widows blest with their sons? Are these causes why a man should be obnoxious? Surely, he might well say, "For which of these works do ye stone me? If I have done good works wherefore speak ye against me?" But none of these works were the cause of men's hatred; they hated him without a cause. And he came on earth to die, that sinners might not die? Was that a cause of hatred? Ought I to hate the Saviour, because he came to quench the flames of hell for me? Should I despise him who allowed his father's flaming sword to be quenched in his own vital blood? Shall I look with indignation upon the substitute who takes my sin and griefs upon him, and carries my sorrows? Shall I hate and despise the man who loved me better than he loved himself—who loved me so much that he visited the gloomy grave for my salvation? Are these the causes of hatred? Surely his errand was one that ought to have made us sing his praise for ever, and join the harps of angels in their rapturous songs. "They hated me without a cause."

But once more: *was there anything in Christ's doctrine* that should have made us hate him? No, we answer; there was nothing in his doctrine that should have excited men's hatred. Take his preceptive doctrines. Did he not teach us to do to others as we would they should to us? Was he not also the exponent of everything lovely and honorable, and of good report? And was not his teaching the very essence of virtue, so that if virtue's self had written it, it could not have written such a perfect code of lovely morals, and excellent virtues. Was it the ethical part of his doctrines that men hated? He taught that rich and poor must stand on one level; he taught that his gospel was not to be confined to one particular nation, but was to be gloriously expansive, so as to cover the world? This perhaps, was one principal reason of their hating him; but surely there was no justifiable cause for their indignation in this. There was nothing in Christ to lead men to hate him. "They hated him without a cause."

II. And now, in the second place, I come to dwell on MAN'S SIN, that he should have hated the Saviour without a cause. Ah! beloved, I will not tell you of man's adulteries, and fornications, and murders, and poisonings, and sodomies. I will not tell you of man's wars, and bloodsheds, and cruelties, and rebellions; If I want to tell you man's sin, I must tell you that man is a decide—that he put to death his God, and slew his Saviour; and when I have told you that, I have given you the essence of all sin, the master-piece of crime, the very

pinnacle and climax of the terrific pyramid of mortal guilt. Man outdid himself when he put his Saviour to death, and sin did out-Herod Herod when it slew the Lord of the universe, the lover of the race of man, who came on earth to die. Never does sin appear so exceedingly sinful as when we see it pointed at the person of Christ, whom it hated without a cause. In every other case, when man has hated goodness, there have always been some extenuating circumstances. We never do see goodness in this world without alloy; however great may be any man's goodness, there is always some peg whereon we may hang a censure; however excellent a man may be, there is always some fault which may diminish our admiration of our love. But in the Saviour there was nothing of this. There was nothing that could blot the picture; holiness stood out to the very life; there was holiness—only holiness. Let a man hate Whitfield, one of the holiest men that ever lived, he would tell you, he did not hate his goodness, but he hated his ranting preaching, and the extraordinary anecdotes he told; or he would pull out something that dropped from his lips, and hold it up to derision. But in Christ's case men could not do that; for though they sought for false witnesses, yet their witnesses agreed not together. There was nothing in him but holiness: and any person with half an eye can see, that the thing men hated was simply that Christ was perfect; they could not have hated him for anything else. And thus you see the abominable, detestable evil of the human heart—that man hates goodness simply because it is such. It is not true that we Christian people are hated because of our infirmities; men make our infirmities a nail whereon to hang their laughter; but if we were not Christians they would not hate our infirmities. They hold our inconsistencies up to ridicule; but I do not believe our inconsistencies are what they care about; we might be as inconsistent as all the rest of the world if we did not profess religion, of if they did not think we had any. But because the Saviour had no inconsistencies or infirmities, men were stripped of all their excuses for hating him, and it came out that man naturally hates goodness, because he is so evil that he cannot but detest it.

And now let me appeal to every sinner present, and ask him whether he ever had any cause for hating Christ. But some one says, "I do not hate him; if he were to come to my house I would love him very much." But it is very remarkable that Christ lives next door to you, in the person of poor Betty there. She goes to such-and-such a chapel, and you say she is nothing but a poor canting Methodist. Why don't you like Betty? She is one of Christ's members, and "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me." You say you do not hate Christ. Now, look across the chapel. Don't you know a man, a member of this place, a very holy man, but somehow or other you cannot bear him, because he told you of your faults once. Ah! sir, if you loved Christ you would love his members. What! tell me you love my head, but you do not love my hands? My dear fellow, you cannot cut my head off and let me be the same person. If you love Christ the head, you must love his members. But you say, "I do love his people." Very well, then you have passed

from death unto life, if you love the brethren. But you say, "I am not sure that I am a changed character, still, I am not aware that there is any opposition in my heart to Christ and his gospel." You may not be aware of it, but it is your not being aware of it that makes you case all the more sad. Perhaps if you knew it, and wept over it, you would come to Christ; but since you do not know it and do not feel it, that is a proof of your hostility. Now come! I must suppose you to be hostile to Christ, unless you love him; for I know there are only two opinions of him. You must either hate him or love him. As for indifference with regard to Christ, it is just a clear impossibility. A man might as well say, "I am indifferent towards honesty." Why, then he is dishonest, is he not? You are indifferent to Christ? Then you hate him. And why is it that you hate him? Many a time you have been wooed by the gospel; you have resisted appeals, many of them; come, now, for which of Christ's works do you hate him? Have I a persecutor here? Sinner! for what dost thou hate Christ? Dost thou curse him? Tell me what he has done, that thou shouldst be angry with him. Point to a single fault of his in his carriage towards thee. has Christ ever hurt thee? "Oh!" says one, "he has taken my wife and made her one of his children, and she has been baptized and comes to chapel, and I cannot bear that." Ah! sinner, is that why thou hatest Christ? Wouldst thou have hated Christ if he had snatched thy wife from the flames, if he had saved her from going down to death. No, thou wouldst love him. And he has saved thy wife's soul. Ah! if he never saves thee; if thou lovest thy wife, thou wilt have enough cause to love him, to think he has been so good to thee. I tell thee, if thou hatest Christ, thou not only hatest him without a cause, but thou hatest him when thou hast simple cause to love him. Come, poor sinner, what hast thou got by hating Christ? Thou hast stings of conscience. Many a sinner, by hating Christ, has been locked up in jail, has a ragged coat, a diseased body, a nasty filthy house, with broken windows, a poor wife, nearly beaten to death, and children that scamper out of the way as soon as father comes home. What hast thou got by hating Christ? Oh! if thou wert to estimate thy gains, thou wouldst find that getting Christ would be a gain, but that hating him is a dead loss to thee. Now, if you hate Christ and Christ's religion, I tell you that you hate Christ without a cause; and let me give you one solemn warning, which is this, that if you keep on hating Christ till you die, you will not hurt Christ by it, but you will hurt yourself most awfully. Oh! may God deliver you from being haters of Christ! There is nothing to get by it, but everything to lose by it. For what cause do you hate Christ, sinner? For what cause do you hate Christ, persecutor? For what cause do you hate Christ, ye carnal, ungodly men? What do you hate Christ's gospel for? His ministers—what hurt have they done you? What hurt can they do you, when they long to do you all the good in the world? Why is it you hate Christ? AH! it is only because you are so desperately set on mischief—because the poison of asps is under your lips, and your throat is an open sepulchre. Otherwise, ye would love Christ. They hated him "without a cause."

And now, Christian men, I must preach at you for just a moment. Sure ye have great reason to love Christ now, for ye once hated him without a cause. Did ye ever treat a friend ill, and did not know it? It has been the misfortune of most of us to do it sometimes. We had some suspicion that a friend had done us an injury; we quarrelled with him for weeks, and he had not done it at all. What he had done was only to warn us. AH! there are never tears like those we shed when we have injured a friend. And should we not weep when we have injured the Saviour? Did he not come to my door one cold damp night, and I shut my door against him? Oh! I have done what I cannot undo; I have slighted my Lord, I have insulted my friend, I have thrown dishonors upon him whom I admire. Shall I not weep for him? Oh! shall I not spend my very life for him? for my sins, my own treachery spilled his blood. Monuments, ah! monuments I will build; where'er I live, where'er I go. I'll pile up monuments of praise, that his name may be spread; and where'er I wander, I'll tell what he did, with many a tear, that I so long have ill-treated him and so fearfully misunderstood him. We hated him without a cause; therefore, let us love him.

III. TWO LESSONS TO THE SAINTS.

In the first place, *if your Master was hated without a cause, do not you expect to get off very easily in this world*. If your Master was subject to all this contempt and all this pain, do you suppose you will always ride through this world in a chariot? If you do, you will be marvellously mistaken. As your Master was persecuted, you must expect to be the same. Some of you pity us when we are persecuted and despised. Ah! save your pity, keep it for those of whom the world speaks well; keep it for those against whom the woe is pronounced. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you." Save your pity for earth's favorites; save your pity for this world's lords, that are applauded by all men. We ask not for your pity; nay, sirs, in all these things we rejoice, and "glory in tribulations also, knowing that the things which happen unto us, happen for the furtherance of the gospel;" and we count it all joy when we fall into manifold temptations, for we rejoice that the name of Christ is known and his kingdom extended.

The other lesson is, *take care, if the world does hate you, that it hates you without a cause*. If the world is to oppose you, it is of no use making the world oppose you. This world is bitter enough, without my putting vinegar in it. Some people seem to fancy the world will persecute them; therefore, they put themselves into a fighting posture, as if they invited persecutions. Now, I do not see any good in doing that. Do not try and make other people dislike you. Really, the opposition some people meet with is not for righteousness' sake, but for their own sin's sake, or their own nasty temper's sake. Many a Christian lives in a house—a Christian servant girl perhaps; she says she is persecuted for righteousness' sake. But she is of a bad disposition; she sometimes speaks sharp, and then her mistress reproves her. That is not being persecuted for righteousness' sake. There is another, a merchant in the city, perhaps; he is not looked upon with much esteem. He says he is persecuted for righteousness'

sake; whereas, it is because he did not keep a bargain sometime ago. Another man says he is persecuted for righteousness' sake; but he goes about assuming authority over everybody, and now and then persons turn round and upbraid him. Look to it, Christian people, that if you are persecuted, it is for righteousness' sake; for if you get any persecution yourself you must keep it yourself. The persecutions you bring on yourself for your own sins, Christ has nothing to do with them; they are chastisements on you. They hated Christ without a cause; then fear not to be hated. They hated Christ without a cause; then court not to be hated, and give the world no cause for it.

And now may you who hate Christ love him; Oh! that he would bring himself to you now! Oh! that he would show himself to you! And then sure you must love him at once. He that believeth on the Lord Jesus will be sure to love him and he that loveth him shall be saved. Oh! that God would give you faith, and give you love, for Christ Jesus' sake! Amen.

Men Chosen—Fallen Angels Rejected

A Sermon
(No. 90)
Delivered on Sabbath Evening, June 29, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."—Hebrews 2:16.

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

But now we wish to draw your attention to two instances of God's doing as he pleases in the fashioning of the works of his hands—the case of angels, and in the case of men. Angels were the elder born. God created them, and it pleased him to give unto them a free will to

do as they pleased; to choose the good or to prefer the evil, even as he did to man: he gave them this stipulation—that if they should prefer the good, then their station in heaven should be for ever fixed and firm; but if they sinned, they should be punished for their guilt, and cast out from the presence of his glory into flames of fire. In an evil hour, Satan, one of the chiefs of the angels, rebelled; he tempted others, and he led astray a part of the stars of heaven. God, in his divine vengeance, smote those rebel angels, drove them from their heavenly seats, banished them from their abodes of happiness and glory, and sent them down to dwell for ever in the abyss of hell; the rest he confirmed, calling them the elect angels; he made their thrones eternally secure, and gave them an entail of those crowns which, sustained by his grace, they had preserved by the rectitude of their holy conduct. After that it pleased him to make another race of beings, called men. He did not make them all at once; he made but two of them, Adam and Eve, and he committed to their keeping the safety of their entire progeny throughout all generations; he said to Adam, as he had said to the angels, "I give unto thee free-will; thou mayest obey or disobey, as thou pleasest. There is my law; thou art not to touch yon tree. The command is by no means irksome. To keep that command will not be difficult to thee, for I have given thee free-will to choose the good." However, so it happened, much to the misery of man, that Adam broke the covenant of works; he touched the accursed fruit, and in that day he fell. Ah! what a fall was there! Then you, and I, and all of us fell down, while cursed sin did triumph over us; there were no men that stood; there were some angels that stood, but no men, for the fall of Adam was the fall of our entire race. After one portion of the angels had fallen, it pleased God to stamp their doom, and make it fast and firm; but when man had fallen, it did not so please God; he had threatened to punish him, but in his infinite mercy he selected the major portion of the human race, whom he made the objects of his special affection, for whom he provided a precious remedy, to whom he covenanted salvation, and secured it by the blood of his everlasting Son. These are the persons whom we call the elect; and those whom he has left to perish, perish on account of their own sins, most justly, to the praise of his glorious justice. Now, here you notice divine sovereignty; sovereignty, that God chose to put both men and angels on the footing of their free-will; sovereignty, in that he chose to punish all the fallen angels with utter destruction; sovereignty, in that he chose to reprieve the whole human race, and to grant an eternal pardon to a number, whom no man can number, selected out of men, who shall infallibly be found before his right hand above. My text mentions this great fact, for when properly translated it reads thus:—"He took not up angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." As this text has two translations, I shall give you the two meanings as briefly as I can.

I. In the first place, the translation of our authorised version runs thus:—"*He took not on him the nature of angels*." Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, when he came from heaven to die, did not take upon himself the nature of angels. It would have been a stoop, more

immense than if a seraph should have changed himself into an emmet, for the Almighty Son of God to have been clothed in the garb of even the archangel Gabriel; but his condescension dictated to him, that if he did stoop, he would descend to the very lowest degree; that if he did become a creature, he would become, not the noblest creature, but one of the most ignoble of rational beings, that is to say, man; therefore, *he did not stoop to the intermediate step of angelship, but he stooped right down and became a man*. "He took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Let us notice the wisdom and the love of this, and I think there will be something to cause us to glorify God for so doing.

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

2. Had our Saviour become an angel, we must note, in the next place, that *he would never have been a fitting example for us*. I cannot imitate an angelic example in all points, it may be very good, so far as I can imitate, but it cannot, in all points, be my pattern. If you would give me something to imitate, give me a man like myself; then I may attempt to follow him. An angel could not have set us the same holy and pious example that our Saviour did. Had he descended from on high in the garb of one of those bright spirits, he might have been a fine example for those brilliant cherubs who surround his throne; but we, poor mortal men, condemned to drag the chain of mortality along this earthly existence, would have turned aside and said, "Ah! such a thing is too high for us, we cannot attain unto it;" and we, therefore, should have stopped short. If I am to carve marble, give me a marble statue which I am to copy; and if this mortal clay is to be cut out into the very model of

perfection, as it is to be by God's Spirit, then give me man for my example; for a man I am, and as a man, I am to be made perfect. Not only could not Christ have been a Redeemer, but he could not have been our exemplar, if he had taken upon himself the nature of angels.

2. Sweetly, also, let us remember that if Christ had been an angel, *he could not have sympathised with us*. In order to sympathise with our fellow-creatures we must be something like them. Suppose a man made of iron, or of brass; could be told of sickness or of illness: could he understand it? I would not have him for a nurse; I would not care to have such a being for my physician; he could not feel for me; he could not sympathise with me. No, even our own fellow-creatures cannot sympathise with us unless they have suffered as we have done. I have heard of a lady who never knew poverty in all her life, and consequently she could not sympathise with the poor. She heard the complaint that bread was extremely dear, when it was running up to fourteen-pence a loaf. "Oh!" she said, "I have no patience with the poor people, grumbling about the dearness of bread. If bread is so dear, let them live on penny buns; they are always cheap enough." She had not been in the position of the poor, and, therefore, she could not sympathise with them; and no man can sympathise with another, to any great extent, unless he has been in some measure in the same position, and endured the same trouble. "It behooved him, therefore, that he should be made in all points like unto his brethren, that he might be a faithful high priest;" "for we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, for he was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." But if he had been an angel, what sympathy could he have had for me? Suppose I should tell an angel that I could scarcely resist my corruptions: the angel would look at me, and wonder what I meant. If I should tell him that I find this world a vast howling wilderness: how could he believe me, for he has never heard howlings, his ears have only been saluted by golden harps and sweet choral symphonies of praise. If I should tell him that I found it hard work to hold on my way, and keep close to my Saviour, the angel could only say, "I cannot sympathise with you, for I am not tempted as you are; I have no clogging nature to abate my ardent zeal, but day without night, with unflagging wing, I circle his throne rejoicing; nor have I a wish nor will to depart from my great Maker." There you see the Saviour's wisdom. He would become a man and not an angel.

4. Once more, Christ became a man, and not an angel, *because he desired to be one with his dear church*. Christ was betrothed to his church ere time began; and when he came into the world he virtually said, "I will go with thee, my bride, and I will delight myself in thy company. Angels' garments were not a fitting wedding dress for me to wear, if I am to be bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh. I am allied to thee by a union firm and strong. I have called thee Hephzibah, my delight is in thee; and I have said, thy land shall be called Beulah, that is, married. Well, if I am married to thee, I will live in the same condition with thee; it were not fit that husband should live in palace, and that wife would live in cottage; it were not meet that husband should be arrayed in gorgeous robes, and wife in meaner

garments." "No," said he to his church, "if thou dwellest upon earth, I will; if thou dwellest in a tabernacle of clay, I will do the same;

"Yea, said the Lord, with her I'll go,
Through all the depths of care and woe,
And on the cross will even dare
The bitter pangs of death to bear."

Christ cannot bear to be different from his church. You know, he would not be in heaven without her, therefore, did he make that long, long journey, to redeem her and visit her, and when he came on this good errand, he would not that she should be made of clay, and he should not be made of clay too; he was the head, and it would have been out of order that the head should have been of gold, and the body of clay; it would have been like Nebuchadnezzar's image, that must be broken. "Since the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he must also take part in the same," for he became "perfect through suffering," since he was "the captain of our salvation." Thus, again, you see his love and his wisdom, that he "took not on him the nature of angels, but took upon him the seed of Abraham."

5. Again, if Christ had not taken upon him the nature of man, *then manhood would not have been so honorable or so comfortable as it is*. I consider that to be a Christian man is to be the greatest thing that God has made. Little as I am, I can say of myself, if I am a child of God, I am next to my Maker. There is an infinite, an awful, an immeasurable distance; but, save Jesus Christ himself, there is no being between man and God. As for an angel, he is less than redeemed man. "Are they not ministering spirits, sent forth to be ministers unto us who are heirs of salvation?" Without controversy, the less is minister unto the greater, and the greater shall not attend the less; therefore, the angels are less than men, for they minister to us. Manhood is a noble thing, for God worse manhood once; manhood is a glorious thing, for it was the robe of the eternal; "God was made flesh and dwelt among us;" therefore, flesh is dignified and glorified. As I said, it would not be so comfortable to be a man, if Christ had not been a man. For I know that I must die; now, my comfort is, that I shall rise again; but I should not have had that comfort if Christ had not been a man, and if he had not died and risen again. Oh! death, I have often seen thy dungeon, and I have thought, how can it be that any should escape therefrom; the walls thereof are thick, and against the door is a ponderous stone; it is sealed fast, and watchers guard it. Oh! death, where is the man that can rend thy sepulchre, or open thy door? Thine iron bars, O death, cannot be filed by mortal, and thy chains are too heavy to be snapped by the finite; but I take comfort, for there was *a man* who broke the bonds of death; there was one who snapped the fetter, cut the bars of brass, unlocked the gates, and made his way triumphant through the sky; in that man I see an instance of what I, too, shall do; when the loud trump of the archangel shall startle my sleeping atoms, I, too, shall find it easy to rise, for as the Lord my Saviour rose, so all his followers must; and therefore, death, I look upon thy dungeon as one that must

be opened again, for it has been opened once; I look upon thy worm as but a little thing that must yield up its prey, and give back the flesh whereon it fed; I look upon the stone of thy sepulchre as but some pebble of oceans' shingly beach, which I shall cast away with eager hand, when I shall burst the cerements of the grave, and mount to immortality. It is a comfortable thing to be a man, because Christ died and rose again; but had he been an angel, the resurrection would not have had that great and glorious proof, nor should we have been so content to be human, seeing there would be death, but no immortality and life.

II. Thus I have tried to explain the first part of the subject; and now for the second. The literal translation, according to the marginal reading, is, "*He took not up angels, but he took up the seed of Abraham*," by which is meant, that Christ did not die to save angels, though many of them needed salvation, but he died to save fallen man. Now, I like every now and then to give the opponents of the great doctrines of grace something hard to put between their teeth. I have often been told, that election is a most dreadful doctrine and to teach that God saves some, and lets other perish, is to make God unjust. Sometimes I have asked how that was; and the usual answer I have got is this: Suppose a father should have a certain number of children, and he were to put some of his children into a terrible dungeon, and make the rest of them happy, would you think that father was just? Well, I reply, you have supposed a case, and I will answer you. Of course I should not: the child has a claim upon his father, and the father is bound to give him his claim; but I want to know what you mean by asking that question. How does that apply to the case of God? I did not know that all men were God's children; I knew that they were God's rebellious subjects, but I did not know that they were his children. I thought they did not become his children till they were born again, and that when they were his children, he did treat them all alike, and did carry them all to heaven, and give them all a mansion; and I never did hear that he sent any of his children to hell; true, I have heard *you* say so; I have heard *you* say that some of his children fall from grace, and he therefore sends them to hell, and I leave you to solve the problem how that is just; but, sir, I do not allow that all God's creatures are his children, and I have got a small question for you. How do you explain this—that the devils and fallen angels are all lost, and yet, according to your own showing, fallen men have all a chance of being saved? How do you make that out? "Oh!" say you, "that is a different matter; I was not calculating about fallen angels." But if you were to ask the devil about it, he would not tell you it was a different matter; he would say, "Sir, if all men are God's children, all devils are quite as much so. I am sure they ought to stand on the same footing as men, and a fallen angel has as much right to call himself one of God's children as a fallen man." And I should like you to answer that devil on that subject on your own hypothesis. Let Satan, for once, ask you a question, "You say it is unfair of God to send one of his children to hell, and take another to heaven. Now, you have said all creatures are his children. Well, I am a creature, and, therefore, I am his child. I want to know, my friend," says Satan, "how you make it just that my Father

should send me to hell, and let you go to heaven?" Now, you must settle that question with the devil; I will not answer for you. I never supposed such a case; my views never bring me into such a dilemma, but you are in for the trouble, and you may get out of it the best way you can. On my principle, the deed is just enough; men and devils have both sinned and have both deserved to be damned for their sins; God, if he shall so resolve, can justly destroy them all, or he may save them all, if he can do it with justice; or, he may save one of them if he pleases, and let the others perish; and if as he has done, he chooses to save a remnant, and that remnant shall be men, and if he allows all the fallen angels to sink to hell, all that we can answer is, that God is just, and he has a right to do as he pleases with his creatures. You know, you give to the queen the right to pardon a rebel when she sees fit, and will you not give that right to God? "No," say you, "not unless he pardons all." Well, sir, then there were no right at all in that; the queen would not thank you if you gave her liberty to pardon all; she would say, "No, there are instances where it is to my honor and to the honor of my laws not to pardon, and, therefore, I will not do it; there are other instances where it is to the honor of my clemency, and not hurtful to my laws, and, therefore, these I pardon, and I uphold my right to do it." Now, what you will give to a king or an emperor you will deny to God; but I stand here to claim this right for him, and deny it, if you please; you will have to deny it in the teeth of the Scriptures, for they do authoritatively declare, that God is a Sovereign; that he "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens."

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

1. In the first place, *I do not think it is because of any difference in the sin*. When two criminals are brought before a judge, if one of them is to be saved, and the other punished, very likely the judge will say, "Who is the greatest offender? Let the greatest offender die, and let the less offender be saved." Now, I do not know that Satan was a greater offender than man; I am not sure that the fallen angels sinned more than man did. "Why, sir," you say, "man's sin was a very little one; he only stole some of his Master's fruit." Ay, but if it was such a thing to do, what a little thing it would have been not to do it! If it were so little a thing, how easily he might have avoided it! and, therefore, because he did it, it became all the greater sin. "Oh!" you say, "but Satan was proud, and the fallen angels were proud." And are not *you* pretty tolerably in the same direction my friend? at any rate, Adam was. "But," you say, "Satan was rebellious." Well if *you* were not a rebel, you would not talk so; if you had not rebelled against God, you would not set yourself up to deny his sovereignty. "But," you say, "the devil was a liar from the beginning." I wonder how long it is since *you* have spoken the truth, sir; you know how to lie as well as he, and though you may not have developed your sin as much as the fallen angels have done, if God were to let you alone, and take the curb off, I wonder that would be the difference between you and the devil. I believe, that if men were allowed to do just as they liked, and there were no government over them,

they would almost go beyond Satan. Look at Robespierre, in France; look at the doings of the Reign of Terror; turn to heathen countries; I dare not tell you what abominable vices, what lascivious sins are committed there in public; I point you to Sodom and Gomorrah, and I ask you what man may become; and I say that I do not know but that a man might become as vile as a devil, if God's restraining mercy were taken from him; at any rate I do not say but that Adam's sin was as great as Satan's. "Ah!" you say, "but Adam was tempted to do it." Yes, that was some excuse; but so were the greater part of the devils. It is true, Satan was not tempted; he did it of his own free will; but he tempted the other spirits, and therefore, the excuse which will do for man will do for the great mass of fallen spirits; and why did not God, therefore, select a portion of the fallen spirits to be saved? I answer, that you can never find any reason except this, "Shall I not do what I will with mine own;" and we must fall down, and breathlessly admire the infinite sovereignty that passed by angels, and saved man.

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

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

4. And yet one more consideration here, to show you still further how sovereign is the divine will in this matter. Perhaps it would be said, if one is to be saved, let that one be saved who would take the least trouble to saved. Now, which could be saved with the greatest ease, should you suppose a fallen angel, or a fallen man? For my part, I can see no difference; but if there be any, it strikes me that a restoration does not put things one-half so much out of order as a revolution; and to have restored the angels to the place from which they had fallen, speaking as a man must speak, would not have been so hard as to have taken fallen man out of the place from which he had fallen, and placed him where fallen angels had once stood.

If Satan had entered heaven, it would have been like a restoration—an old king come back to his ancient throne; but when man goes there, it is like a king going to a new dynasty—a new kingdom; it is man entering into the angel's place; and for that you know, there must be sanctifying grace and purchasing love. That might have been needed for fallen angels, but certainly not more for them than for fallen man. Here, then, we are brought back to the one only answer, that God saves men, and not angels, just because he chooses to do it; and he says to angels who have perished, "nay, but O! Satan, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?"

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

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

And now I have closed this subject; and I must just make a practical reflection or so, and then I shall have done. Some may rail at this doctrinal preaching, and they will go out and call me an Antinomian. I will not be at all particular about that, so long as I can make them angry; for if a man hates the truth, I shall never be backward in stirring up his wrath; and if any man offends my God then let him be offended. Far better for him to show his opposition; for then, perhaps, he may know that it is in him, and repent of it before God. But I will show you that this is a practical subject. It is practical in this way: that if any man does not submit to God's right to do with him as he pleases, he has very grave reason to doubt his own piety. "Ay," you say, "too cutting by half." Now, I do not mean to say anything harsh or bigoted; but I do mean to say that again. I do not assert that if you doctrinally deny it, but if you in your hearts hate the doctrine, that God has a right to save or to destroy you, you give me very grave cause to suspect whether you ever knew your own position in the sight of God; for I am quite sure that no humble sinner will doubt God's right to destroy him, and I believe that no man who has any love to his fellow-creatures, believing that God has a right to destroy him will ever quarrel with God, if he chose to save another who is only as bad as himself. I tell you, it is your unhumbled pride that kicks against these doctrines; it is your infernal self-conceit, born of hell, that makes you hate this truth. Men have always kicked at it, and they always will. When Christ preached it once, they would have dragged him out to the brow of the hill, and cast him down headlong; and I expect always to meet with opposition, if I speak out broadly and plainly; but let me tell you solemnly, if you do not believe God's right over you, I am afraid your heart has never been right before God.

But another practical conclusion. If you do feel this to be true, that God has a right to send you soul to hell, and that if he saves another, and not you, he will be just, but if he save you it will be an act of free distinguishing love, you show a spirit which is very near to the kingdom of heaven. I do not think a man will admit this truth unless he has a change of heart: he may admit it in his mind, but he will not feel it to be true, unless he has got a new heart and a right spirit. I will not go so far as to say that a man who believes divine sovereignty must be a Christian; that were to stretch the truth; but I do say, that if a man is humble enough, meek enough, contrite enough, to lay himself down at the Saviour's feet with this,

"Nothing in my hands I bring;"

"I have no righteousness, no claims; if thou shouldst damn me, thou wouldst be just; if thou savest me I will thank thee for ever;" such a man must have had a work of grace in his heart to bring him to such a conclusion. If thou canst say that, then, poor sinner, come to Jesus, come to Jesus; for he will never cast you out. Let me tell you a story about the prodigal, and then I have done. The prodigal set out one morning, and he had a long, long journey to go; he had a high hill to climb, called the hill of his own sins and follies. He had scarcely got to the top of it, and was getting near the tower, called the tower of true repentance, when his father, who was sitting on the top of the house, saw him; and when he saw him, he ran

out immediately, and ere his son had got to the door, he had fallen on his neck and kissed him. He took his son into his house, and a feast was prepared, and they sat down to it; but after the son had sat down, the farther turned his eye to him, and he was not eating, but the tears were rolling down his cheeks. "My son," said the father, "why don't you eat? Why dost thou weep, my son? The feast is all prepared for thee." Bursting into tears, the son said, "Father, dost thou forgive me all?" "Yes," says the father, "I do. Eat my son. Do not weep." The prodigal went on. The father turned his eye to the other guests, and by-and-bye, looking on his son, he saw that he was weeping again, and not eating. Said the father, "Son, why don't you eat? The feast is all for you. Why do you weep, my son?" "Father," said he, with the tears rolling down his cheeks again, "will you let me stay here?" "Oh, yes, my son," said the father, "eat; do not weep; you shall stay here; you are my beloved son." Well, the prodigal went on, and the father looked at the other guests; but by-and-bye he turned his eyes again, and there was his son weeping once more. "My dear son," he asks, "why do you weep?" "Oh, father," said he, "will you *keep* me here? for if you do not, I know I shall run away. Father, will you *make* me stop here?" "yes, my son," said he, "that I will."

"My grace shall like a fetter bind
That wandering heart to me."

The son wiped his eyes, went on with his meal, and never wept again. There, poor prodigal, there is something for thee; if thou wilt come to Christ, thou shalt always stay there; and over and above that, he will keep thee there. Therefore rejoice; for though he has a right to destroy thee, recollect, he will not; for his heart is full of love and pity towards thee. Only come to him, and thou shalt be saved.

Christ Exalted

A Sermon
(No. 91)
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, July 6th, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"This man, after he had offered on sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."—Hebrews 10:12-13.

AT THE LORD'S table we wish to have no subject for contemplation but our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, and we have been wont generally to consider him as the crucified One, "the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," while we have had before us the emblems of his broken body, and of his blood shed for many for the remission of sins; but I am not quite sure that the crucified Saviour is the only appropriate theme, although, perhaps, the most so. It is well to remember how our Saviour left us—by what road he travelled through the shadows of death; but I think it is quite as well to recollect what he is doing while he is away from us—to remember the high glories to which the crucified Saviour has attained; and it is, perhaps, as much calculated to cheer our spirits to behold him on his throne as to consider him on his cross. We have seen him one his cross, in some sense; that is to say, the eyes of men on earth did see the crucified Saviour; but we have no idea of what his glories are above; they surpass our highest thought. Yet faith can see the Saviour exalted on his throne, and surely there is no subject that can keep our expectations alive, or cheer our drooping faith better than to consider, that while our Saviour is absent, he is absent on his throne, and that when he has left his Church to sorrow for him, he has not left us comfortless—he has promised to come to us—that while he tarries he is reigning, and that while he is absent he is sitting high on his father's throne.

The Apostle shews here the superiority of Christ's sacrifice over that of every other priest. "Every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man," or priest—for the word "man" is not in the original "after he had offered one sacrifice for sins," had finished his work, and for ever, he "sat down." You see the superiority of Christ's sacrifice rests in this, that the priest offered continually, and after he had slaughtered one lamb, another was needed; after one scape-goat was driven into the wilderness, a scape-goat was needed the next year, "but this man, when he had offered only one sacrifice for sins," did what thousands of scape-goats never did, and what hundreds of thousands of lambs never could effect. He perfected our salvation, and worked out an entire atonement for the sins of all his chosen ones.

We shall notice, in the first place, this morning, *the completeness of the Saviour's work of atonement*—he has done it: we shall gather that from the context: secondly, *the glory which the Saviour has assumed*; and thirdly, the triumph which he expects. We shall dwell very briefly on each point, and endeavour to pack our thoughts as closely together as we can.

I. We are taught here in the first place, THE COMPLETENESS OF THE SAVIOUR'S WORK. He has done all that was necessary to be done, to make an atonement and an end of sin. He has done so much, that it will never be needful for him again to be crucified. His side, once opened, has sent forth a stream deep, deep enough, and precious enough, to wash away all sin; and he needs not again that his side should be opened, or, that any more his hands should be nailed to the cross. I infer that his work is finished, from the fact that he is described here as sitting down. Christ would not sit down in heaven if he had more work to do. Sitting down is the posture of rest. Seldom he sat down on earth; he said, "I must be about my Father's business." Journey after journey, labour after labour, preaching after preaching, followed each other in quick succession. His was a life of incessant toil. Rest was a word which Jesus never spelled. he may sit for a moment on the well; but even there he preaches to the woman of Samaria. He goes into the wilderness, but not to sleep; he goes there to pray. His midnights are spent in labours as hard as those of the day—labours of agonising prayer, wrestling with his Father for the souls of men. His was a life of continual bodily, mental, and spiritual labour; his whole man was exercised. But now he rests; there is no more toil for him now; here is no more sweat of blood, no more the weary foot, no more the aching head. No more has he to do. He sits still. But do you think my Saviour would sit still if he had not done all his work? Oh! no beloved; he said once, "For Zion's sake I will not rest until her glory goeth forth like a lamp that burneth." And sure I am he would not rest, or be sitting still, unless the great work of our atonement were fully accomplished. Sit still, blessed Jesus, while there is a fear of thy people being lost? Sit still, while their salvation is at hazard? No; alike thy truthfulness and thy compassion tell us, that thou wouldst still labour if the work were still undone. Oh! if the last thread had not been woven in the great garment of our righteousness, he would be spinning it now; if the last particle of our debt had not been paid, he would be counting it down now; and if all were not finished and complete, he would never rest, until, like a wise builder, he had laid the top-stone of the temple of our salvation. No; the very fact that he sits still, and rests, and is at ease, proves that his work is finished and is complete.

And then note again, that his sitting at the right hand of God implies, *that he enjoys pleasure*; for at God's right hand "there are pleasures for evermore." Now, I think, that the fact that Christ enjoys infinite pleasure has in it some degree of proof that he must have finished his work. It is true, he had pleasure with his Father ere that work was begun; but I cannot conceive that if, after having been incarnate, his work was still unfinished, he would

rest. He might rest before he began the work, but as soon as ever he had begun it, you will remember, he said he had a baptism wherewith he must be baptised, and he appeared to be hastening to receive the whole of the direful baptism of agony. He never rested on earth till the whole work was finished; scarcely a smile passed his brow till the whole work was done. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," until he could say, "it is finished;" and I could scarcely conceive the Saviour happy on his throne if there were any more to do. Surely, living as he was on that great throne of his, there would be anxiety in his breast if he had not secured the meanest lamb of his fold, and if he had not rendered the eternal salvation of every blood-bought one as sacred as his own throne. The highest pleasure of Christ is derived from the fact, that he has become the "head over all things to his Church," and has saved that Church. He has joys as God; but as the man-God, his joys spring from the salvation of the souls of men. That is his joy, which is full, in the thought that he has finished his work and has cut it short in righteousness. I think there is some degree of proof, although not perhaps positive proof there, that Jesus must have finished his work.

But now, something else. *The fact that it is said he has sat down for ever proves that he must have done it*. Christ has undertaken to save all the souls of the elect. If he has not already saved them, he is bound to do something that will save them, fir he has given solemn oath and promise to his Father, that he will bring many souls unto glory, and that he will make them perfect through his own righteousness. He has promised to present our souls unblemished and complete,—

"Before the glory of his face
With joys divinely great."

Well, if he has not done enough to do that, then he must come again to do it; but from the fact that he is to sit there for ever, that he is to wear no more the thorny crown, that he is never again to leave his throne, to cease to be king any more, that he is still to be girded by his grandeur and his glory, and sit for ever there, is proof that he has accomplished the great work of propitiation. It is certain that he must have done all, from the fact that he is to sit there for ever, to sit on his throne throughout all ages, more visibly in the ages to come, but never to leave it, again to suffer and again to die.

Yet, the best proof is, *that Christ sits at his Father's right hand at all*. For the very fact that Christ is in heaven, accepted by his Father proves that his work must be done. Why, beloved, as long as an ambassador from our country is at a foreign court, there must be peace; and as long as Jesus Christ our Saviour is at his Father's court, it shows that there is real peace between his people and his Father. Well, as he will be there for ever, that shows that our peace must be continual, and like the waves of the sea, shall never cease. But that peace could not have been continual, unless the atonement had been wholly made, unless justice had been entirely satisfied; and, therefore, from that very fact it becomes certain that the work of Christ must be done. What! Christ enter heaven—Christ sit on his Father's right

hand before all the guilt of his people was rolled away? AH! no; he was the sinner's substitute; and unless he paid the sinner's doom, and died the sinner's death, there was no heaven in view for me. He stood in the sinner's place, and the guilt of all his elect was imputed to him. God accounted him as a sinner, and as a sinner, he could not enter heaven until he had washed all that sin away in a crimson flood of his own gore—unless his own righteousness had covered up the sins which he had taken on himself, and unless his own atonement had taken away those sins which had become his by imputation; and the fact that the Father allowed him to ascend up on high—that he gave him leave, as it were, to enter heaven, and that he said, "Sit thou on my right hand," proves that he must have perfected his Father's work, and that his Father must have accepted his sacrifice. But he could not have accepted it if it had been imperfect. Thus, therefore, we prove that the work must have been finished, since God the Father accepted it. Oh! glorious doctrine! This Man has done it; this Man has finished it: this Man has completed it. He was the Author, he is the Finisher; he was the Alpha, he is the Omega. Salvation is finished, complete; otherwise, he would not has ascended up on high, nor would he also sit at the right hand of God. Christian! rejoice! Thy salvation is a finished salvation; atonement is wholly made; neither stick nor stone of thine is wanted; not one stitch is required to that glorious garment of his—not one patch to that glorious robe that he has finished. 'Tis done—'tis done perfectly; thou art accepted perfectly in his righteousness; thou art purged in his blood. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

II. And now, our second point—THE GLORY WHICH HE HAS ASSUMED. "After he has offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God"—the glory which Christ has assumed.

Now, by this you are to understand the complex person of Christ; for Christ, as God, always was on his Father's throne; he always was God; and even when on earth he was still in heaven. The Son of God did not cease to be omnipotent and omnipresent, when he came wrapped in the garments of clay. He was still on his Father's throne; he never left it, never came down from heaven in that sense; he was still there, "God over all, blessed for ever." As he has said, "The Son of Man who came down from heaven, who, also," at that very moment, was "in heaven." But Jesus Christ, as the Man-God, has assumed glories and honors which once he had not; for as man, he did not at one time sit on his Father's throne; he was a man, a suffering man, a man full of pains and groans, more than mortals have ever known: but as God-man, he has assumed a dignity next to God; he sits at the right hand of God: at the right hand of the glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, sits the person of the man Jesus Christ, exalted at the right hand of the Majesty on High. From this we gather, that the dignity which Christ now enjoys is *surpassing* dignity. There is no honor, there is no dignity to be compared to that of Christ. No angel flies higher than he does. Save only the great Three-One God, there is none to be found in heaven who can be called superior to the person

of the man Christ Jesus. He sits on the right hand of God, "Far above all angels, and principalities, and powers, and every name that is named." His Father "hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and of things on earth, and of things under the earth." No dignity can shine like his. The sons of righteousness that have turned many to God, are but as stars compared with him, the brightest of the suns there. As for angels, they are but flashes of his own brightness, emanations from his own glorious self. He sits there, the great masterpiece of Deity.

"God, in the person of his Son,
Hath all his mightiest works outdone."

That glorious man, taken into union with Deity, that mighty Man-God, surpasses everything in the glory of his majestic person. Christian! remember, thy Master has unsurpassed dignity.

In the next place, Christ has *real* dignity. Some persons have mere empty titles, which confer but little power and little authority. But the Man-Christ Jesus, while he has many crowns and many titles, has not one tinsel crown or one empty title. While he sits there he sits not there *pro forma*; he does not sit there to have nominal honor done to him; but he has real honor and real glory. That Man-Christ, who once walked the streets of Jerusalem, now sits in heaven, and angels bow before him. That Man-Christ, who once hung on Calvary, and there expired in agonies the most acute, now, on his Father's throne exalted sins, and sways the sceptre of heaven—nay, devils at his presence tremble, the whole earth owns the sway of his providence, and on his shoulders the pillars of the universe rest. "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." He overruleth all mortal things, making the evil work a good, and the good produce a better, and a better still, in infinite progression. The power of the God-Man Christ is infinite; you cannot tell how great it is. He is "able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him." He is "able to keep us from falling, and to present us spotless before his presence." He is able to make "all things work together for good." He is "able to subdue all things unto himself." He is able to conquer even death, for he hath the power of death, and he hath the power of Satan, who once had power over death; yea, he is Lord over all things, for his Father hath made him so. The glorious dignity of our Saviour! I cannot talk of it in words, beloved: all I can say to you must be simple repetition. I can only repeat the statements of Scripture. There is no room for flights; we must just keep where we ever have been, telling out the story that his Father hath exalted him to real honors and real dignities.

And once more: this honor that Christ hath now received (I mean the Man-God Christ, not the God-Christ, for he already had that, and never lost it, and therefore could never obtain it; he was Man-God, and as such he was exalted;) was *deserved* honor; that dignity which his Father gave him he well deserved. I have sometimes thought, if all the holy spirits

in the universe had been asked what should be done for the man whom the King delighteth to honor, they would have said, Christ must be the man whom God delighteth to honor, and he must sit on his Father's right hand. Why, if I might use such a phrase, I can almost suppose his mighty Father putting it to the vote of heaven as to whether Christ should be exalted, and that they carried it by acclamation, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honor and glory for ever and ever." His Father gave him that; but still the suffrages of all the saints, and of all the holy angels, said to it, amen; and this thing I am certain of, that every heart here—every Christian heart, says amen to it. Ah, beloved, we would exalt him, we would crown him, "crown him Lord of all;" not only will his Father crown him, but we, ourselves, would exalt him if we had the power; and when we shall have power to do it, we will cast our crowns beneath his feet, and crown him Lord of all. It is deserved honor. No other being in heaven deserves to be there; even the angels are kept there, and God "chargeth his angels with folly," and gives them grace, whereby he keeps them; and none of his saints deserve it; they feel that hell was their desert. But Christ's exaltation was a deserved exaltation. His father might say to him, "Well done, my Son, well done; thou hast finished the work which I had given thee to do; sit thou for ever first of all men, glorified by union with the person of the Son. My glorious co-equal Son, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool."

One more illustration, and we have done with this. We must consider the exaltation of Christ in heaven as being in some degree a representative exaltation. Christ Jesus exalted at the Father's right hand, though he has eminent glories, in which the saints must not expect to share, essentially he is the express image of the person of God, and the brightness of his Father's glory, yet, to a very great degree, the honors which Christ has in heaven he has as our representative there. Ah! brethren it is sweet to reflect, how blessedly Christ lives with his people. Ye all know that we were

"One, when he died, one, when he rose,
One, when he triumphed o'er his foes;
One, when in heaven he took his seat,
And angels sang all hell's defeat."

To-day you know that you are one with him, now, in his presence. We are at this moment "raised up together," and may, afterwards, "sit together in heavenly places, even in him." As I am represented in parliament, and as you are, so is ever child of God represented in heaven; but as we are not one with our parliamentary representatives, that figure fails to set forth the glorious representation of us which our forerunner, Christ, carries on in heaven, for we are actually one with him; we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, and his exaltation is our exaltation. He will give us to sit upon his throne, for as he has overcome, and is set down with his Father on his throne; he has a crown, and he will not wear his crown, unless he gives us crowns too; he has a throne, but he is not content with

having a throne to himself; on his right hand there must be his bride in gold of Ophir. And he cannot be there without his bride; the Saviour cannot be content to be in heaven unless he has his Church with him, which is "the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Beloved, look up to Christ now; let the eye of your faith catch a sight of him; behold him there, with many crowns upon his head. Remember, as ye see him there, ye will one day be like him, and when ye shall see him as he is; ye shall not be as great as he is, ye shall not be as glorious in degree, but still ye shall, in a measure, share the same honors, and enjoy the same happiness and the same dignity which he possesses. Be then, content to live unknown for a little while; be content to bear the sneer, the jest, the joke, the ribald song; be content to walk your weary way, through the fields of poverty, or up the hills of affliction; by-and-bye ye shall reign with Christ, for he has "made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever." By-and-bye we shall share the glories of the Head; the oil has been poured on his head; it has not trickled down to us yet, save only in that faithful fellowship which we have; but by-and-bye that oil shall flow to the very skirts of the garments, and we, the meanest of his people, shall share a part in the glories of his house by being made kings with him, to sit on his throne, even as he sit on his Father's throne.

III. And now, in the last place, WHAT ARE CHRIST'S EXPECTATIONS? We are told, *he expects that his enemies shall be made his footstool*. In some sense that is already done; the foes of Christ are, in some sense, his footstool now. What is the devil but the very slave of Christ? for he doth no more than he is permitted against God's children. What is the devil, but the servant of Christ, to fetch his children to his loving arms? What are wicked men, but the servants of God's providence unwittingly to themselves? Christ has even now "power over all flesh that he may give eternal life to as many as God has given him," in order that the purposes of Christ might be carried out. Christ died for all, and all are now Christ's property. There is not a man in this world who does not belong to Christ in that sense, for he is God over him and Lord over him.

He is either Christ's brother, or else Christ's slave, his unwilling vassal, that must be dragged out in triumph, if he follow him not willingly. In that sense all things are now Christ's.

Be we expect greater things than these, beloved, at his coming, *when all enemies shall be beneath Christ's feet upon earth*. We are, therefore, many of us, "looking for that blessed hope; that glorious appearing of the kingdom of our Saviour Jesus Christ;" many of us are expecting that Christ will come; we cannot tell you when, we believe it to be folly to pretend to guess the time, but we are expecting that even in our life the Son of God will appear, and we know that when he shall appear he will tread his foes beneath his feet, and reign from pole to pole, and from the river even to the ends of the earth. Not long shall anti-christ sit on her seven hills; not long shall the false prophet delude his millions; not long shall idol

gods mock their worshippers with eyes that cannot see, and hands that cannot handle, and ears that cannot hear—

"Lo! he comes, with clouds descending;"

In the winds I see his chariot wheels; I know that he approaches and when he approaches he "breaks the bow and cuts the spear in sunder, and burns the chariot in the fire;" and Christ Jesus shall then be king over the whole world. He is king now, virtually; but he is to have another kingdom; I cannot see how it is to be a spiritual one, for that is come already; he is as much king spiritually now as he ever will be in his Church, although his kingdom will assuredly be very extensive; but the kingdom that is to come, I take it, will be something even greater than the spiritual kingdom; it will be a visible kingdom of Christ on earth. Then kings must bow their necks before his feet; then at his throne the tribes of earth shall bend; then the rich and mighty, the merchants of Tyre, and the travellers where gold is found, shall bring their spices and myrrh before him, and lay their gold and gems at his feet;

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more."

Once more, beloved; *Christ will have all his enemies put beneath his feet, in that great day of judgment*. Oh! that will be a terrible putting of his foes beneath his feet, when at that second resurrection the wicked dead shall rise; when the ungodly shall stand before his throne, and his voice shall say, "Depart, ye cursed." Oh! rebel, thou that hast despised Christ, it will be a horrible thing for thee, that that man, that gibbeted, crucified man, whom thou hast often despised, will have power enough to speak thee into hell; that the man whom thou hast scoffed and laughed at, and of whom thou hast virtually said, "If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross," will have power enough, in two or three short words, to damn thy soul to all eternity: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Oh! what a triumph that will be, when men, wicked men, persecutors, and all those who opposed Christ, are all cast into the lake that burneth! But, if possible, it will be a greater triumph, when he who led men astray shall be dragged forth.

"Shall lift his brazen front, with thunder scarred,
Receive the sentence, and begin anew his hell."

Oh! when Satan shall be condemned, and when the saints shall judge angels, and the fallen spirits shall all be under the feet of Christ, "then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, he hath put all things under him." And when death, too, shall come forth, and the "death of death and hell's destruction" shall grind his iron limbs to powder, then shall it be said, "Death is swallowed up in victory," for the great shout of "Victory, victory, victory," shall drown the shrieks of the past; shall put out the sound of the howlings of death;

and hell shall be swallowed up in victory. He is exalted on high—he sitteth on his Father's right hand, "from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool."

Profit and Loss

A Sermon
No. 92
Delivered on Sunday Evening, July 6th, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole word, and lose his own soul?"—Mark 8:36.

Many men have been made bankrupts through inattention to their books. No man ever loses anything by counting the cost, knowing his own expenditure, and keeping his debtor and creditor pretty closely up; but many men have been ruined by attempts which have been suggested by a spirit of speculation, and fostered by a negligence of their own concerns, combined with absolute ignorance of their real financial position. Spiritually man is a great trader—he is trading for his own welfare; he is trading for time and for eternity; he keeps two shops: one shop is kept by an apprentice of his, a rough unseemly hand, of clayey mould, called the body; the other business, which is an infinitely more vast concern, is kept by one that is called "the soul" a spiritual being, who does not traffic upon little things, but who deals with hell or heaven, and trades with the mighty realities of eternity. Now, a merchant would be very unwise who should pay all attention to some small off-hand shop of his, and take no account whatever of a large establishment. And he would, indeed, be negligent, who should very carefully jot down every trifle of the expenditure of his own household, but should never think of reckoning the expenses of some vast concern that may be hanging on his hands. But the most of men are just as foolish—they estimate the profits (as they conceive them to be) which are gained in that small corner shop called the body, but they too seldom reckon up the awful loss which is brought about by a negligence of the soul's concerns in the great matters of eternity. Let me beseech you, my brethren, while you are not careless of the body, as, indeed, you ought not to be, seeing that it is, in the case of believers, the temple of the Holy Ghost, to take more especial care of your souls. Decorate the tenement, but suffer not the inhabitant to die of starvation; paint not the ship while you are letting the crew perish for want of stores on board. Look to your soul, as well as to your body; to the life, as well as to that by which you live. Oh that men would take account of the soul's vast concerns, and know their own standing before God. Oh that ye would examine yourselves. It men would do so, if all of you would now search within, how many of you would be bankrupts? You are making a pretty little fortune with regard to the body; you are doing tolerably well and comfortable; you are providing for yourselves things as you would desire them. Your mortal body, perhaps, if even pampered, and has no fault to find with its owner; but as your poor soul how that is getting on, and you will find it not a gainer, but in many

instances, I fear, a loser. Let me solemnly tell you, that if your soul be a loser, however much your body may be a gainer, you have not profited in the least degree. Let me ask you all this question in the name of Jesus Christ, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

We shall divide our text, and consider, in the first place, *the gain a man would get* if he gained the whole world; in the second place, *the fearful loss* if a man should lose his soul; and then, afterwards, we will try to finish up by some *practical lesson*.

1. In the first place, WHAT IS A MAN PROFITED IF HE SHOULD GAIN THE WHOLE WORD? Many Christian people, who do not exactly talk common sense, sum this all up by saying, that to gain the whole world is to gain nothing at all. Perhaps they are right, but I question if they believe what they assert. They sing just as we have been singing—

"Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,
And gold is sordid dust."

And so they are compared with Christ; but there are some who find unnecessary and absurd fault with the things of this world, and call jewels "gaudy toys," and gold "sordid dust." I have often admired some of my friends, when I have heard them talking about gold as sordid dust; for I wonder why they did not give it to the dustman the next time he came round. If they were to do that, I would not mind going round myself for once with the bell, particularly as it might be rather convenient to us, seeing that we want some of that sordid dust to erect a tabernacle for the Most High. Many who affect to despise wealth are the greatest hoarders of it. I suppose they are afraid it might injure other people's hearts, and, therefore, they put it away very carefully, so that others may not touch the dangerous thing. That may be all very kind of them; but we do not exactly appreciate their benevolent intention, and should think it fully as kind if they were every now and then to distribute some of it. You hear them saying, very often, that "money is the root of all evil." Now, I should like to find that text. But it is not to be found anywhere, from Genesis to Revelation. I found a text once, which said, "*The love of* money is the root of all evil;" but as for the money itself, I can see very little evil in it. If a man will but rightly use it, I conceive that it is a talent sent from heaven, bestowed by God for holy purposes, and I am quite sure God's talents are not bad ones. My brethren, it is all cant for a man to say that he does not really care for these things, because every one does in some degree; every one wishes to have some of this world; and there really is, in possessing a competency in this world, something considerable with regard to profit; and I am not going to deceive you, by striking off all the profits, and saying you are losers on every point. No, I will go the whole length which any of you like to go, with regard to the profit of this world; if it be considerable. I will admit its greatness; if you think it possible to make a fine thing of this world, I will grant it, if you like; and after having admitted that, I will ask you. "Will it answer your purpose to gain the whole world, in the largest sense of that word, and yet lose your own soul?"

Now, I will try, if I can, to add your bills up for you, and strike a balance. We will suppose a case which must very seldom occur, in fact, which never has occurred. There never was a man who gained the whole world. Some have been monarchs of almost all the known globe; but it is remarkable, if you look at a map of the ancient world, how little their territories were, compared with the whole globe, indeed they have not much greater than those of modern monarchs. It is but a small portion of the world that was known to the ancients; and even then no man possessed it all. But to put this question somewhat in a point of view, wherein the thing might be possible; I think there are three or four cases in which a man may be said, with some reservation, to have gained the whole world.

1. In the first place, a man who has *power over extensive empires* may be supposed, in some measure, to have gained the whole world. Take, for instance, ALEXANDER; I cannot bring you a fairer specimen of a man having possession of the whole world than he. He could say of his dominions, that although they had their limits, he did not know the nations who were able to bound his territories. He could travel thousands of miles without arriving at the boundaries; he had at his foot millions of armed men, ready to avenge his quarrels, and uphold his banner; when he rose to fight, he was invincible; when he stood in his council chamber, his will was law; in his service thousands were slain, but at his summons, an equal number gathered round his standard. Alexander, I summon thee! What thinkest thou: is it worth much to gain the world? Is its sceptre the wand of happiness? Is its crown the security of joy? See Alexander's tears! he weeps! Yes, he weeps for another world to conquer! Ambition is insatiable! the gain of the whole world is not enough. Surely to become a universal monarch, is to make one's self universally miserable.

Perhaps you think there is very much pleasure in having power. I believe there is. I do not think any man who has any power over his fellow-creatures will deny that it is gratifying to his fallen nature; or else, why is it that the politician seeks for it so continually, and toils for it days without number, and wastes the sap of his life in midnight debate? There is a pleasure in it. But mark you, that pleasure is counter-balanced by its anxiety. Popularity has its head in the clouds, but its feet are in the sands; and while the man's head is among the stars he trembles for his feet. There is an anxiety to increase his power, or else to maintain it; and that anxiety takes away much of the enjoyment of it. Lord Bacon has justly compared those who move in higher spheres to those heavenly bodies in the firmament which have much admiration but little rest. And it is not necessary to invest a wise man with power, to convince him that it is a garment bedizened with gold, which dazzles the beholder with its splendour, but oppresses the wearer with its weight. I do verily believe, that the winning of the whole world of power, is in itself so slight a gain, that it were fair to strike the balance, and say there is little left; for even Alexander, himself, envied the peasant in his cottage, and thought there was more happiness on the plains among the shepherds, than in his palace amongst his gold and silver. Oh! my friends, if I were to compare all this with the loss of the

soul, indeed you might be startled. But I leave it to strike its own balance. I say, that to gain the whole world is but little, and especially when we are sinners against God. And, moreover, if an empire over the world entails that fearful responsibility which will not allow the eyes to slumber, or the heart to cease its throbbings; if it puts into the hand the power of committing gigantic crimes, and if those gigantic crimes like ghosts haunt men's midnight slumbers, the gaining of power over the whole world is a loss instead of a gain, even considered in itself.

2. There is another way of gaining the whole world, not so much by power, but by something next door to it, namely—*riches*. CROESUS shall be my specimen here. He amassed a world of riches, for his wealth was beyond estimation. As for his gold and his silver, he kept little account of them, and his precious stones were without number. He was rich, immensely rich; he could buy an empire, and after that, could spend another empire's worth. Perhaps you think that to be immensely rich is a great gain; but I believe that to be enormously rich is in itself far from desirable. Ask CROESUS. Dying, he exclaimed, "O! Solon, Solon." And when they asked him what he meant, he replied, that Solon had once told him that no man could be pronounced happy until death; and, therefore, he cried "O! Solon, Solon," for the misery of his death had swept away the joys of his life. Such is the slavery of great riches; such are its anxieties; and such, too often, is that miserly avarice which wealth doth beget, that the rich man is often a loser by his wealth, even apart from the loss of his soul. Many a man would be happier if he had walked the pavement in rags, than if he rode through the streets in his chariot. "Many a heavy heart rides in a carriage," is an old saying, but a marvellously true one. Well said the poet,

"If thou art rich, thou art poor;
For like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee."

Suppose a man's wealth to have been gained dishonestly, then I pronounce it a terrible and infallible curse to him; in itself it constitutes a plague apart from a world to come. My friends, estimate that gold at what price you like, I say, if you were to put the soul as a debt against it, you would find that there would be a fearful loss. But even apart from that, I believe that to gain a world of riches would be a loss in itself, at least to most men; there would be few men living who would be able to steer the boat of pleasure through a sea so thick with weeds. The less a man has the better, so that he comes within the moderate competence which every man may desire. Agur was right, when he said, "Give me neither poverty nor riches." Great wealth is certainly no great gain.

3. But there was another man who gained the world in a higher sense; his name was SOLOMON. His treasures were not so much those of wealth or power, (though he had both,) as the treaures of wisdom and the pleasures of the body. Solomon had all things that could delight the mind, please the eye, and charm the body; he had but to speak, and music

chanted the sweetest air that Israel's psalmody could give; he had but to lift his finger, and noble armies followed him, and treasures were spread beneath his feet. The wines of every vintage were quaffed from his bowl, and maidens gathered from every clime awaited his command; he was master over men—he was lord. He enjoyed all kinds of delight, every sort of pleasure; he mingled in his cup all that flesh calls paradise, all that men dream of happiness. There was nothing which Solomon did not try; he ransacked the world to find joys. He was a wise man: he knew where to search for earth's happiness, and he found it. Solomon, what didst thou find? O! thou preacher, open thy lips, and tell us. "*Vanity of vanities, all is vanity*;" thus saith the preacher. Oh! my friends, if we could have all the pleasures of the flesh we desire, I question whether they would be, in themselves, a profit; but of this I am certain, that compared with the loss of our soul, it would, indeed, be a dreadful loss. I think that if many of us could indulge all the pleasure of the body we desire, we should destroy our bodies, and actually waste our happiness. Many a man has hunted his pleasures too fast to win them; many a racer has lost the prize by overstraining in the contest; and many a man might have had more pleasure, even to the body, if he had been more moderate in seeking it. He is a fool who grills a pound of butter; the rake does that; he grills himself away by too fast pleasures, and wastes his life till it is gone, and there is nothing left of it. Ah! if ye could have all the world of sensual delights, and if ye had all the wisdom of men, apart from the grace of God to restrain your pleasures, I believe you would find it then to be a dead loss. And I will affirm the words of the text, "It would not profit you if you had the whole world, and should lose your own soul."

Even in this world, you see, these great winnings are but little gains. They are great to look at, but they are very small when you get hold of them. This world is like the boy's butterfly—it is pretty sport to chase it; but bruise its wings by an over-earnest grasp, and it is nothing but a disappointment.

But, my friends, if there is little profit in this world by these magnificent gains I have mentioned, and in these extreme cases, what shall it profit a man, if he does *not* gain the world, and should lose his soul? Put the question in this way:—What shall it profit a man, if he lose this present world, and the next too? What shall it profit a man, if he gain but a small portion of this world—and this is the most that we may expect—and yet loses his soul? I have sometimes thought, with regard to the rich man, "Well, such a man has a portion in this life; but with regard to the poor man, I cannot see what there is to make him happy if he has not something better to look to when he dies." I have seen the weary horny-handed sons of toil, often oppressed and down trodden as they are by their masters, and I have thought, "Oh! poor souls, if you cannot look to another world, you are of all men most miserable; for you do not get either world; you go fagging along, just like a pack-horse, without the hope of a secure place in which you may rest at last." The rich man, at least, makes as much as can be made of this world, little as that is, apart from grace; but the poor

man makes the least of this world, and then he goes from poverty to damnation, from his squalor to perdition, and from his poorhouse and his rags to the flames of hell. What a horrid state to have such an existence; to live in this world a life of misery, and to find a starving existence to be only the preface and the prelude of a more doleful and fearful life hereafter. Oh, what shall it profit you, if you gain a little of this world, and lose your own soul?

Now, I have only cast up accounts for this life; but what will it profit a man, *when he comes to die*, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? There he lies dying: he has no God to console him. Bring to him his heaps of gold. What! do they not still the throbbings of thy heart? What! cannot thy bags of gold ferry thee across the Jordan? What, man! thou hast lived for thy heaps of glittering wealth; will they not live with thee? Wilt thou not take them with thee to heaven? No, he shakes his head; for hoarded wealth is but of little use to help a man to die. You have heard of a sailor, who, when the ship was sinking, rushed into the cabin, broke open the captain's chest, extracted all the money he could—tied it in a belt round his waist—leaped into the sea, and sank, thus hurrying himself before his Creator with the witness of his sins about his loins. Oh! it were a bad thing to die with gold so gained. And do you think gold will do you much good, however you may have come by it, when you lie on your last couch? No; you must bow to inevitable death, in spite of all your riches; and if you gain the whole world's applause or fame, can that help you on your dying bed?

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

But how little will the applause of man seem, when you come to die? Oh! I sometimes think, what poor fools we are to value ourselves by what our fellow-creatures think of us; but oh! when we come to die, we shall not care about the din and noise which have followed us all our lives. What will fame and honour be, when we are in the last article? Bubbles! Can souls feed on bubbles? No, we shall then despise such vanities. We shall say, "Fame! cease thy trump; let me die alone; for alone must I hear the trump of the archangel. Thou babbling fame, I hate thee, for thou dost but disturb my slumbers, and wake me in my bed." Oh! there will be no gain in wealth, or power, or pomp, or fame, when we come to die, they will profit a man nothing, if he lose his own soul.

And what will it profit a man in *the day of judgment*, if he has gained the whole world? Suppose he comes before God's bar clothed in purple, with a crown upon his brow, for there the diadem attracts no attention. I see whole hosts of men gathered before God's white throne; but monarchs and their slaves are mixed indiscriminately; princes and peasants stand upon a level there, and I see no distinction. God says, "Depart, ye cursed," and the monarch is damned; or he pronounces, "Come, ye blessed," and the monarch is saved. But the same voice speaks to each alike. If they be saints, there is a voice of joy, lifting them to their home; and if they be lost, the voice of denunciation sending them to their appointed

doom. Ah! there will be no profit to man, in all he has achieved, when he comes before God's judgment bar. Suppose him standing up to tell his Maker, "Lord, I had a deal of fame on earth, they stuck me up on the top of a column, to bear all weathers, and they called that glory, to be gazed at by fools, or to be admired by the populace; and, O Lord, wilt thou send such a man as I am to perdition?" "Oh," says Justice, "what care I for thy statute? what care I for thy fame? If thy soul be not saved, if thou art not in Christ—with all thy statues and all thy fame—thou shalt sink to perdition." For these things avail not in the day of judgment; men shall stand alike there; all shall be on a level. If Christ hath saved us, we shall be saved; but if we are out of Christ, great and mighty may we be, but the sentence shall be as impartial to the rich as to the poor.

Once more: what will it profit a man, *when he gets to hell*, if he has gained the whole world? Profit him, sir! profit him! It will be the other way. In ages long ago a monarch went to hell; whenever he had entered a city, nobles saluted him, and monarchs did him reverence; when he went to hell, it was known he was come; there, in their dungeons, lay the monarchs whom he had chained and dragged at his chariot wheels; there were the men whom he had slaughtered, and whose nations he had cut up, root and branch; and when he entered into hell, lying on their beds of fire, and looking on him with scorn, a thousand voices shouted, "Aha! aha! art thou become like one of us?" Then he found that by so much the more glory he had on earth, by so much the more hot was hell; and while, as a common sinner, he had received a hell, he found that as an extraordinary sinner, and a great one, hells rolled on hells, like waves of the ocean o'er his guilty head. He found himself the worse for all his greatness. Go, wicked, rich man; heap up thy gold; mayhap it shall be turned to brimstone one day, and thou shalt swallow it. Go, man of fame; blow the trump, or bid others blow it; the breath of fame shall fan the coals of God Almighty's vengeance. Go, thou man of power, and get to thy dignity: the higher thy flight, the greater thy fall, when thou shalt be cast down from thy loftiness, and shalt lie for ever to howl in perdition; because having gained all this, thou hast gained nothing at all.

II. We have summed up, then, the first point: it is but little to gain the whole world; apart from religion there is very little in it. But now we come to the contrast: that is, THE LOSING THE SOUL.

I shall request your attention for a brief period, while I endeavour to dilate on that. To lose the soul, my friends, to lose the soul! how shall we tell what it is to lose the soul? You can conceive how fearful is the loss of the soul in three ways. First, from its intrinsic value; secondly, from its capabilities; and thirdly, from its doom, if it be lost.

1. You may tell how serious it is to lose the soul, from *its intrinsic value*. The soul is a thing worth ten thousand worlds; in fact, a thing which worlds on worlds heaped together, like sand upon the sea shore, could not buy. It is more precious than if the ocean had each drop of itself turned into a golden globe, for all that wealth could not buy a soul. Consider!

The soul is made in the image of its Maker; "God made man," it is said, "in his own image." The soul is an everlasting thing like God; God has gifted it with immortality; and hence it is precious. To lose it, then, how fearful! Consider how precious a soul must be, when both God and the devil are after it. You never heard that the devil was after a kingdom, did you? No, he is not so foolish; he knows it would not be worth his winning; he is never after that; but he is always after souls. You never heard that God was seeking after a crown, did you! No, he thinketh little of dominions; but he is after souls every day; his Holy Spirit is seeking his children; and Christ came to save souls. Do you think that which hell craves for, and that which God seeks for, is not precious?

The soul is precious again, we know, by the price Christ paid for it. "Not with silver and gold," but with his own flesh and blood did he redeem it. Ah! it must be precious, if he gave his heart's core to purchase it. What must it be to lose your soul?

2. But it is precious, because it is everlasting; and that brings me to note—(I am running over these points; you can enlarge upon them at home)—that the soul is precious, on account of *its capabilities*. Do you see, up there, yon starry crown? Do you mark there that throne, with the palm branch at its foot? Do you see that pearly-gated city, with its light brighter than the sun? Do you mark its golden streets, and its thrice happy inhabitants? There is a paradise which eye has not seen, which outvieth dreams, and which imagination could not picture; but if the soul be lost, that is lost. We see many lost things advertised. Now, if a man's soul be lost, let me advertise what he has lost. He has lost a crown, he has lost a harp, he has lost a throne, he has lost a heaven, he has lost an eternity. When I consider how happy a soul may be, it appears to me to be a tremendous thing for it to be lost, even thou it should gain the world; in fact, I cannot set the world in contrast; it is as though I should measure the Alps by a mole-hill. I cannot tell you what size the world is, if you give me for its standard a grain of dust; nor can I tell you heaven's worth, if you only allow me to value it by a world. Oh! sirs, because the soul is capable of heaven, its loss is a dreadful and terrific thing.

3. But consider, lastly, *where the soul must go to that is lost*. There is a place, as much beneath imagination as heaven is above it; a place of murky darkness, where only lurid flames make darkness visible; a place where beds of flame are the fearful couches upon which spirits groan; a place where God Almighty from his mouth pours a stream of brimstone, kindling that "pile of fire and of much wood," which God has prepared of old as a Tophet for the lost and ruined. There is a spot, whose only sights are scenes are fearful woe; there is a place—I do not know where it is; it is somewhere, not in the bowels of this earth, I trust, for that were a sad thing for this world to have hell within its bowels—but somewhere, in a far-off world there is a place where the only music is the mournful symphony of damned spirits; where howling, groaning, moaning, wailing and gnashing of teeth, make up the horrid concert. There is a place where demons fly, swift as air, with whips of knotted burning wire, torturing poor souls; where tongues, on fire with agony, burn the roofs of mouths that

shriek for drops of water—that water all denied. There is a place where soul and body endure as much of infinite wrath as the finite can bear; where the inflictions of justice crush the soul, where the continual flagellations of vengeance beat the flesh; where the perpetual pourings out of the vials of eternal wrath scald the spirit, and where the cuttings of the sword strike deep into the inner man. AH! sirs, I cannot picture this; within an hour some of you may know it. If you curtain of life be rent in twain, some of you may soon find yourselves face to face with lost souls. Then, sirs, you will know what it is to lose your souls; but you will never know it till then, nor can I hope to set it forth to you. Vain are these words; light are the things I utter. They are but the daubings of a painter who cannot pourtray a scene so dreadful, for earth hath not colours black enough or fiery enough to depict it. Ah! sinners, if you knew what hell meant, then might ye tell what it is to lose your own souls.

III. What, then, is THE PRACTICAL LESSON with which we finish? If, as most certainly is the case in the most favorable circumstances, a sinner loses fearfully by the gain of the world—if he loses his soul—then how absurd it is for a man at any time to sell his soul for a little! *There* is a man who has sold his soul for half-a-sovereign. "Where?" say you. Ah! let him answer himself; many a man has done that. Says one, "I think I should earn two shillings on Sunday by keeping one of my shutters down in my shop and selling a little." Ay, fine pay that, to damn your souls for two shillings a week! Another man says, "I think I should get a good situation if I was not one of those Calvinists;" and he leaves off going to the house of God, and begins to be a more fashionable religionist. A fine thing that—to ruin your everlasting interest for a good situation! It will bring you into a bad situation one day. It is astonishing for how little a man will sell his soul. I remember an anecdote—I believe it is true; I had almost said I hope it is. A minister, going across some fields, met a countryman, and said to him. "Well, friend, it is a most delightful day." "Yes, sir, it is." And having spoken to him about the beauties of the scenery, and so forth, he said, "How thankful we ought to be for our mercies! I hope you never come out without praying." "Pray, sir!" said he, "why, I never pray; I have got nothing to pray for." "What a strange man," said the minister; "don't your wife pray?" "If she likes," "Don't your children pray?" "If they like, they do." "Well, you mean to say you do not pray," said the minister, (as I think, not very rightly; no doubt he saw that the man was superstitious,) "now, I will give you half-a-crown if you will promise me not to pray as long as you live." "Very well," said the man, "I don't see what I have got to pray for;" and he took the half-crown. When he went home, the thought struck him, "What have I done?" And something said to him, "Well, John, you will die soon, and you will want to pray then; you will have to stand before your Judge, and it will be a sad thing not to have prayed." Thoughts of this kind came over him, and he felt dreadfully miserable; and the more he thought the more miserable he felt. His wife asked him what was the matter; he could hardly tell her for some time; and last he confessed he had taken half-a-crown never to pray again, and that was preying on his mind. The poor ignorant soul

thought it was the evil one that had appeared to him. "Ay, John," said she, "sure enough it was the devil, and you have sold your sold to him for that half-crown." The poor creature could not work for several days, and he became perfectly miserable, from the conviction that he had sold himself to the evil one. However, the minister knew what he was about, and there was a barn close by, and he was going to preach there; he guessed the man would be there to ease his terror of mind, and sure enough he was there one Sabbath evening, and he heard the same man who gave him the half-crown take for his text these words, "What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "Ay," said he, "what will it profit a man, who sold his soul for half-a-crown?" Up gets the man, crying out, "Sir, take it back! take it back!" "Why," said the minister, "you want the half-crown, and you said you did not need to pray." "But, sir," he said, "I must pray; if I do not pray, I am lost;" and after some testing by parleying, the half-crown was returned, and the man was on his knees, praying to God. And it came to pass that that very circumstance was the means of saving his soul, and making him a changed man. Now, I cannot do anything so eccentric as that; but I send some of you away with this in your mind, that though you think you could not do so, yet actually, there are many of those whom I have here who have sold themselves to Satan, by doing something for their worldly profit, which, in the end, must lead to the loss of their souls. Do any of you desire to know how your souls may be saved? Here is the answer; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and ye shall be saved." And whosoever among you knoweth himself to be a sinner, let him take this for his consolation,—"Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." Go away with that, thou chief of sinners, and rejoice, for Jesus Christ came to save thee. May God add his blessing for Christ's sake! Amen.

God in the Covenant

A Sermon
No. 93
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, August 3rd, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"I will be their God."—Jeremiah 31:33.

WHAT A glorious covenant the second covenant is! Well might it be called "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Heb. viii. 6. It is so glorious that the very thought of it is enough to overwhelm the soul, when it discerns the amazing condescension and infinite love of God, in having framed a covenant for such unworthy creatures, for such glorious purposes, with such disinterested motives. It is better than the other covenant, the covenant of works, which was made with Adam; or that covenant which is said to have been made with Israel, on the day when they came out of Egypt. It is better, for it is founded upon a *better principle*. The old covenant was founded on the principle of merit; it was, "Serve God and thou shalt be rewarded for it; if thou walkest perfectly in the fear of the Lord, God will walk well towards thee, and all the blessings of Mount Gerizim shall come upon thee, and thou shalt be exceedingly blessed in this world, and the world which is to come." But that covenant fell to the ground, because, although it was just that man should be rewarded for his good works, or punished for his evil ones, yet man being sure to sin, and since the fall infallibly tending towards iniquity, the covenant was not suitable for his happiness, nor could it promote his eternal welfare. But the new covenant, is not founded on works at all, it is a covenant of pure unmingled grace; you may read it from its first word to its last, and there is not a solitary syllable as to anything to be done by us. The whole covenant is a covenant, not so much between man and his Maker as between Jehovah and man's representative, the Lord Jesus Christ. The human side of the covenant has been already fulfilled by Jesus, and there remains nothing now but the covenant of giving, not the covenant of requirements. The whole covenant with regard to us, the people of God, now stands thus: "I will give this, I will bestow that; I will fulfill this promise; I will grant that favour." But there is nothing for us to do; he will work all our works in us; and the very graces that are sometimes represented as being stipulations of the covenant, are promised to us. He gives us faith; he promises to give us the law in our inward parts, and to write it on our hearts. It is a glorious covenant, I say, because it is founded on simple mercy and unmixed grace; quite irrespective of creature-doings, or anything that is to be performed by man; and hence this covenant surpasses the other in *stability*. Where there is anything of man, there is always a degree of mutability; for creatures, and change, and uncertainty always go together. But since this new covenant hath now nothing whatever to do with the

creature, so far as the creature has to do anything, but only so far he is to receive: the idea of change is utterly and entirely gone. It is God's covenant, and therefore it is an unchanging covenant. If there be something which I am to do in the covenant, then is the covenant insecure; and although happy as Adam, I may yet become miserable as Satan. But if the covenant be all on God's part, then if my name be in that covenant, my soul is as secure as if I were now walking the golden streets; and if any blessing be in the covenant, I am as certain to receive that blessing as if I already grasped it in my hands; for the promise of God is sure to be followed by fulfilment; the promise never faileth; it always bringeth with it the whole of that which it is intended to convey, and the moment I receive it by faith, I am sure of the blessing itself. Oh! how infinitely superior is this covenant to the other in its manifest security! It is beyond the risk or hazard of the least uncertainty.

But I have been thinking for the last two or three days, that the covenant of grace excels the other covenant most marvelously in the *mighty blessings* which it confers. What does the covenant of grace convey? I had thought this morning of preaching a sermon upon "The covenant of grace; what are the blessings it gives to God's children?" But when I began to think of it, there was so much in the covenant, that if I had only read a catalogue of the great and glorious blessings, wrapped up within its folds, I should have needed to occupy nearly the whole of the day in making a few simple observations upon each of them. Consider the great things God has given in the covenant. He sums them up by saying he hath given "all things." He has given you eternal life in Christ Jesus; yea, he has given Christ Jesus to be yours; he has made Christ heir of all things, and he has made you joint-heir with him; and hence he has given you everything. Were I to sum up that mighty masks of unutterable treasure which God has conveyed to every elect soul by that glorious covenant, time would fail me. I therefore commence with one great blessing conveyed to us by the covenant, and then on other Sabbaths I will, by Divine permission, consider separately, one by one, sundry other things which the covenant conveys.

We commence then by the first thing, which is enough to startle us by its immense value; in fact, unless it had been written in God's Word, we never could have dreamed that such a blessing could have been ours. God himself, by the covenant becomes the believer's own portion and inheritance. "I will be their God."

And now we shall begin with this subject in this way. We shall show you first that this is a *special blessing*. God is the special possession of the elect, whose names are in the covenant. Secondly, for a moment or two we shall speak of this as being an *exceedingly precious blessing*, "I will be their God." Thirdly, we shall dwell upon *the security of this blessing*, "I *will* be their God." And fourthly we shall endeavour to stir you up to *make good use of this blessing*, so freely and liberally conveyed to you by the eternal covenant of grace; "I will be their God."

Stop just one moment and think it over before we start. In the covenant of grace God himself conveys himself to you and becomes yours. Understand it: *God*—all that is meant by that word—eternity, infinity, omnipotence, omniscience, perfect justice, infallible rectitude, immutable love—all that is meant by God—Creator, Guardian, Preserver, Governor, Judge,—all that that great word "GOD" can mean, all of goodness and of love, all of bounty and of grace—all that, this covenant gives you, to be your absolute property as much as anything you can call your own. "I will be their God." We say, pause over that thought. If I should not preach at all, there is enough in that, if opened up and applied by the all-glorious Spirit, to excite your you during the whole of the Sabbath-day. "I will be their God."

"My God!—how cheerful is the sound!
How pleasant to repeat!
Well may that heart with pleasure bound,
Where God hath fixed his seat."

I. How is GOD ESPECIALLY THE GOD OF HIS OWN CHILDREN? For God is the God of all men, of all creatures; he is the God of the worm, of the flying eagle, of the star, and of the cloud; he is God everywhere. How then is he more my God and your God than he is God of all created things? We answer, that in some things God is the God of all his creatures; but even there, there is a special relationship existing between himself and his chosen creatures, whom he has loved with an everlasting love. And in the next place, there are certain relationships in which God does not exist towards the rest of his creatures, but only towards his own children.

I. First then, God is the God of all his creatures, seeing that *he has the right to decree* to do with them as he pleases. He is the Creator of us all: he is the potter, and hath power over the clay, to make of the same lump, one vessel to honor and another to dishonor. However men may sin against God, he is still their God in that sense—that their destiny is immovably in his hand; that he can do with them exactly as he chooses; however they may resent his will, or spurn his good pleasure, yet he can make the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath he can restrain. He is the God of all creatures, absolutely so in the matter of predestination, seeing that he is their Creator, and has an absolute right to do with them as he wills. But here again he has a special regard to his children, and he is *their* God even in that sense; for to them, while he exercises the same sovereignty, he exercises it in the way of grace and grace only. He makes them the vessels of mercy, who shall be to his honor for ever; he chooses them out of the ruins of the fall, and makes them heirs of everlasting life, while he suffers the rest of the world to continue in sin, and to consummate their guilt by well-deserved punishment, and thus, while his relationship is the same, so far as his sovereignty is concerned and his right of decree, there is something special in its loving aspect towards his people; and in that sense he is *their* God.

Again: he is the God of all his creatures, in the sense that *he has a right to command obedience of all*. He is the God of every man that was ever born into this earth, in the sense that they are bound to obey him. God can command the homage of all his creatures, because he is their Creator, Governor, and Preserver; and all men are, by the fact of their creation, so placed in subjection to him, that they cannot escape the obligation of submission to his laws. But even here there is something special in regard to the child of God. Though God is the ruler of all men, yet his rule is special towards his children; for he lays aside the sword of his rulership, and in his hand he grasps the rod for his child, not the sword of punitive vengeance. While he gives the world a law upon stone, he gives to his child a law in his heart. God is my governor and yours, but if you are unregenerate, he is your governor in a different sense from what he is mine. He has ten times as much claim to my obedience as he has to yours. Seeing that he has done more for me, I am bound to do more for him; seeing that he has loved me more, I am bound to love him more. But should I disobey, the vengeance on my head shall not fall so heavily as on yours, if you are out of Christ; for that vengeance incurred by me has already fallen upon Christ, my substitute, and only the chastisement shall remain for me; so that there again you see where the relationship to all men is universal, there is something special in it in reference to God's children.

Again: God has a universal power over all his creatures *in the character of a Judge*. He will "judge the world in righteousness *and his people with equity*." He will judge all men with equity it is true; but, as if his people were not of the world, it is added afterwards, "his people with equity." God is the God of all creatures, we repeat, in the sense that he is their Judge; he will summon them all before his bar, and condemn or acquit them all, but even there, there is something peculiar with regard to his children, for to them the condemnation sentence shall never come, but only the acquittal. While he is Judge of all, he especially is *their* judge; because he is the judge whom they love to reverence, the judge whom they long to approach, because they know his lips will confirm that which their hearts have already felt—the sentence of their full acquittal through the merits of their glorious Saviour. Our loving God is the Judge who shall acquit our souls, and in that respect we can say he is *our* God. So, then, whether as Sovereign, or as Governor enforcing law, or as Judge punishing sin; although God is in some sense the God of all men, yet in this matter there is something special towards his people, so that they can say, "He is our God, even in those relationships."

2. But now, beloved, there are points to which the rest of God's creatures cannot come; and here the great pith of the matter lies; here the very soul of this glorious promise dwells. God is our God in a sense, with which the unregenerate, the unconverted, the unholy, can have no acquaintance, in which they have no share whatever. We have just considered other points with regards to what God is to man generally; let us now consider what he is to us, as he is to none other.

First, then, God is my God, seeing that he is *the God of my election*. If I be his child, then has he loved me from before all worlds, and his infinite mind has been exercised with plans for my salvation. If he be my God, he has seen me when I have wandered far from him, and when I have rebelled, his mind has determined when I shall be arrested—when I shall be turned from the error of my ways. He has been providing for me the means of grace, he has applied those means of grace in due time, but his everlasting purpose has been the basis and the foundation of it all; and thus he is my God, as he is the God of none else beside his own children. My glorious, gracious God in eternal election; for he thought of me and chose me from before the foundation of the world, that I should be without blame before him in love. Looking back, then, I see election's God, and election's God is my God if I be in election. But if I fear not God, neither regard him, then he is another man's God and not mine. If I have no claim and participation in election, then I am compelled to look upon him as being in that sense the God of a great body of men whom he has chosen, but not my God. If I can look back and see my name in life's fair book set down, then indeed he is my God in election.

Furthermore, the Christian can call God his God, from the fact of his *justification*. A sinner can call God—God, but he must always put in an adjective, and speak of God as an angry God, an incensed God, or an offended God. But the Christian can say, "my God," without putting in any adjective except it be a sweet one wherewithal to extol him; for now we who were sometime afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ; we who were enemies to God by wicked works are his friends; and looking up to him, we can say, "my God;" for he is my friend, and I am his friend. Enoch could say, "my God," for he walked with him. Adam could not say, "my God," when he hid himself beneath the trees of the garden. So that while I, a sinner, run from God, I cannot call him mine; but when I have peace with God, and am brought nigh to him, then indeed is he my God and my friend.

Again: he is the believer's God by *adoption*, and in that the sinner hath no part. I have heard people represent God as the Father of the whole universe. It surprises me that any reader of the Bible should so talk. Paul once quoted a heathen poet, who said that we are his offspring; and it is true in some sense that we are, as having been created by him. But in the high sense in which the term "childhood" is used in the Scripture to express the holy relationship of a regenerate child towards his Father, in that sense none can say, "Our father," but those who have the "Abba Father" printed on their hearts by the spirit of adoption. Well, by the spirit of adoption, God becomes my God, as he is not the God of others. The Christian has a special claim to God, because God is his Father, as he is not the Father of any else save his brethren. Ay, beloved, these three things are quite enough to show you, that God is in a special sense the God of his own people; but I must leave that to your own thoughts, which will suggest twenty different ways in which God is special the God of his own children, more than he is of the rest of his creatures. "God," say the wicked; but "*my* God," say God's children. If then God be so specially your God, let your clothing be according to your feeding.

Be clothed with the sun; put on the Lord Jesus. The king's daughter is (and so let all the king's sons be) all glorious within; let their clothing be of wrought gold. Be clothed with humility, put on love, bowels of compassion, gentleness, meekness; put on the garments of salvation. Let your company and converse be according to your clothing. Live amongst the excellent, amongst the generation of the just; get you up to the general assembly and church of the first-born, to that innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of the just men made perfect. Live in the courts of the great King; behold his face, wait at his throne, bear his name, shew forth his virtues, set forth his praises, advance his honour, uphold his interest; let vile persons and vile ways be contemned in your eyes: be of more noble spirits than to be companions with them. Regard not their societies, nor their scorns; their flatteries or their frowns; rejoice not with their joys, fear not their fear, care not their care, feed not on their danties; get you up from among them, to your country, your city, where no unclean thing can enter or annoy. Live by faith in the power of the Spirit, in the beauty of holiness, in the hope of the Gospel, in the joy of your God, in the magnificence, and yet the humility of the children of the great King.

II. Now, for a moment, let us consider THE EXCEEDING PRECIOUSNESS OF THIS GREAT MERCY, "I will be their God." I conceive that God, himself, could say no more than that. I do not think if the Infinite were to stretch his powers, and magnify his grace by some stupendous promise which could outdo every other, I do not believe that it could exceed in glory this promise, "I will be their God." Oh! Christian, do but consider what it is to have God to be thine own; consider what it is, compared with anything else.

"Jacob's portion is the Lord;
What can Jacob more require?
What can heaven more afford—
Or a creature more desire?"

Compare this portion with the lot of thy fellow-men! Some of them have their portion in the field, they are rich and increased in goods, and their yellow harvests are even now ripening in the sun; but what are harvests compared with thy God, the God of harvests? Or, what are granaries compared with him who is thy husbandman, and feeds thee with the bread of heaven? Some have their portion in the city; their wealth is superabundant, and in constant streams it flows to them, until they become a very reservoir of gold; but what is gold compared with thy God? Thou couldst not live on it; thy spiritual life could not be sustained by it. Apply it to thy aching head, and would it afford thee any ease? Put it on a troubled conscience, and could thy gold allay its pangs? Put it on thy desponding heart, and see if it could stay a solitary groan, or give thee one grief the less? But thou hast God, and in Him thou hast more than gold or riches e'er could buy, more than heaps of brilliant ore could ever purchase thee. Some have their portion in this world, in that which most men love, applause and fame; but ask thyself, is not thy God more to thee than that? What, if a

thousand trumpets should blow thy praise, and if a myriad clarions should be loud with thine applause; what would it all be to thee if thou hadst lost thy God? Would this allay the turmoils of a soul ill at ease with itself? Would this prepare thee to pass the Jordan, and to breast those stormy waves which ere long must be forded by every man, when he is called from this world to lands unknown? Would a puff of wind serve thee then, or the clapping of the hands of thy fellow-creatures bless thee on thy dying bed? No, there are griefs here with which men cannot intermeddle, and there are griefs to come with which men cannot interfere to alleviate the pangs, and pains, and agonies, and dying strife. But when thou hast this—"I will be thy God"—thou hast as much as all other men can have put together; for this is all they have, and more. How little ought we to estimate the treasures of this world compared with God, when we consider that God frequently gives the most riches to the worst of his creatures! As Luther said, God gives food to his children, and husks to his swine; and who are the swine that get the husks? It is not often that God's people get the riches of this world, and that does but prove that riches are little worth, else God would give them to us. Abraham gave the sons of Keturah a portion and sent them away; let me be Isaac and have my Father, and the world may take all the rest. Oh! Christian, ask for nothing in this world, but that thou mayest live on this, and that thou mayest die on this, "I will be their God." This exceedeth all the world besides.

But *compare this with what thou requirest, Christian*. What does thou require? Is there not here all that thou dost require? To make thee happy thou wantest something that shall satisfy thee; and come I ask thee, is not this enough? Will not this fill thy pitcher to its very brim, aye, till it runs over? If thou canst put this promise inside thy cup, will not thou be forced to say, with David, "My cup runneth over; I have more than heart can wish?" When this is fulfilled, "I am thy God," let thy cup be ever so empty of earthly things, suppose thou hast not one solitary drop of creature joy, yet is not this enough to fill it until thy unsteady hand cannot hold the cup by reason of its fulness? I ask thee if thou art not complete when God is thine. Dost thou want anything but God? If thou thinkest thou dost, it were well for thee still to want; for all thou wantest save God, is but to gratify thy lust. Oh! Christian, is not this enough to satisfy thee if all else should fail?

But thou wantest more than quiet satisfaction; thou desirest, sometimes, rapturous delight. Come, soul, is there not enough here to delight thee? Put this promise to thy lips; didst e'er drink wine one-half so sweet as this, "I will be their God?" Didst ever harp or viol sound half so sweetly as this, "I will be their God?" Not all the music blown from sweet instruments, or drawn from living strings, could ever give such melody as this sweet promise, "I will be their God." Oh! here is a very sea of bliss, a very ocean of delight; come, bathe thy spirit in it; thou mayest swim, ay, to eternity, and never find a shore; thou may'st dive to the very infinite and never find the bottom, "*I will be their God*." Oh! if this does not make thine eyes

sparkle, if this make not thy foot dance for joy, and thy heart beat high with bliss, then assuredly thy soul is not in a healthy state.

But then thou wantest something more than present delights, something concerning which thou mayest exercise hope; and what more dost thou ever hope to get than the fulfilment of this great promise, "I will be their God?" Oh! hope, thou art a great-handed thing; thou layest hold of mighty things, which even faith hath not power to grasp; but though large thine hand may be, this fills it, so that thou canst carry nothing else. I protest, before God, I have not a hope beyond this promise. "O," say you, "you have a hope of heaven." Ay, I have a hope of heaven, but this is heaven—"I will be their God." What is heaven, but to be with God, to dwell with him, to realize that God is mine, and I am his? I say I have not a hope beyond that; there is not a promise beyond that; for all promises are couched in this, all hopes are included in this, "I will be their God." This is the master-piece of all promises; it is the top-stone of all the great and precious things, which God has provided for his children, "I will be their God." If we could really grasp it, if it could be applied to our soul and we could understand it, we might clap our hands and say, "Oh! the glory, oh! the glory, oh! the glory of that promise!" it makes a heaven below, and it must make a heaven above, for nothing else will be wanted but that, "I will be their God."

III. Now, for a moment, dwell on the CERTAINTY OF THIS PROMISE; it does not say, "I *may* be their God;" but "I *will* be their God." There is a sinner who says he won't have God for his God. He will have God to be his preserver, to take care of him, and keep him from accident. He does not object to having God to feed him, to give him his bread, and water, and raiment; nor does he mind making God somewhat of a showthing, that he may take out on Sunday, and bow before it, but he will not have God for his *God*; he will not take him to be his all. He makes his belly his God, gold his God, the world his God. How then is this promise to be fulfilled? There is one of God's chosen people there; he does not know that he is chosen yet, and he says he will not have God; how then is this promise to be carried out? "Oh!" say some, "if the man wont have God, then, of course, God cannot get him;" and we have heard it preached, and we read it frequently, that salvation entirely depends upon man's will—that if man stands out and resists God's Holy Spirit, the creature can be the conqueror of the Creator, and finite power can overcome the infinite. Frequently I take up a book and I read, "Oh! sinner, be willing, for unless thou art, God cannot save thee;" and sometimes we are asked, "How is it that such an one is not saved?" And the answer is, "He is not willing to be; God strove with him, but he would not be saved." Ay, but suppose he had striven with him, as he did with those who *are* saved, would he have been saved then? "No, he would have resisted." Nay, we answer, it is not in man's will, it is not of the will of the flesh, nor of blood, but of the power of God; and we never can entertain such an absurd idea as, that man can conquer Omnipotence, that the might of man is greater than the might of God. We believe, indeed, that certain usual influences of the Holy Spirit may be overcome;

we believe that there are general operations of the Spirit in many men's hearts which are resisted and rejected, but the effectual working of the Holy Ghost with the determination to save, could not be resisted, unless you suppose God overcome by his creatures, and the purpose of Deity frustrated by the will of man, which were to suppose something akin to blasphemy. Beloved, God has power to fulfil the promise, "I will be their God." "Oh!" cries the sinner, "I will not have thee for a God." "Wilt thou not?" says he, and he gives him over to the hand of Moses; Moses takes him a little and applies the club of the law, drags him to Sinai, where the mountain totters over his head, the lightnings flash, and thunders bellow, and then the sinner cries, "O God, save me!" "Ah! I thought thou wouldst not have me for a God?" "O Lord, thou shalt be my God." says the poor trembling sinner, "I have put away my ornaments from me; O Lord, what wilt thou do unto me? Save me! I will give myself to thee. Oh! take me!" "Ay," says the Lord, "I knew it; I said that I will be their God; and I have made thee willing in the day of my power." "I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

IV. Now, lastly, I said we would conclude, by URGING YOU TO MAKE USE OF GOD, if he be yours. It is strange that spiritual blessings are our only possessions that we do not employ. We get a great spiritual blessing, and we let the rust get on it for many a day. There is the mercy seat, for instance. Ah, my friends, if you had the cash box as full of riches as that mercy seat is, you would go often to it; as often as your necessities require. But you do not go to the mercy seat half so often as you need to go. Most precious things God has given to us, but we never over-use them. The truth is, they cannot be over-used; we cannot wear a promise thread-bare; we can never burn out the incense of grace; we can never use up the infinite treasures of God's loving kindness. But if *the blessings* God gives us are not used, perhaps *God* is the least used of all. Though he is our God, we apply ourselves less to him, than to any of his creatures, or any of his mercies, which he bestows upon us. Look at the poor heathen; they use their gods, though they be no gods. They put up a piece of wood or stone, and call it God; and how they use it! They want rain: the people assemble and ask for rain, in the firm but foolish hope that their god can give it. There is a battle, and their god is lifted up; he is brought out from the house, where he usually dwells, that he may go before them, and lead them on to victory. But how seldom do we ask counsel at the hands of the Lord! How often do we go about our business without asking his guidance! In our troubles how constantly do we strive to bear our burdens, instead of casting them upon the Lord, that he may sustain us! And this is not because we may not, for the Lord seems to say, "I am thine, soul, come and make use of me as thou wilt; thou mayest freely come to my store, and the oftener the better welcome." Have thou not a God lying by thee to no purpose; let not thy God be as other gods, serving only for a show: have not a name only that thou hast a God. Since he allows thee, having such a friend, use him daily. My God shall supply all your wants: never want whilst thou hast a God, never fear or faint whilst thou hast a God; go to thy treasure and take whatever thou needest; there is bread, and clothes, and health,

and life, and all that thou needest. O Christian, learn the divine skill to make God all things, to make bread of thy God, and water, and health, and friends, and ease; he can supply thee with all these; or what is better, he can be instead of all these, thy food, thy clothing, thy friend, thy life of thee. All this he hath said to thee in this one word, I am thy God; and hereupon thou mayest say, as a heaven-born saint once did, "I have no husband, and yet I am no widow, my Maker is my husband. I have no father or friend, and yet I am neither fatherless nor friendless; my God is both my father and my friend. I have no child, but is not he better to me than ten children? I have no house, but yet I have a home, I have made the Most High my habitation. I am left alone, but yet I am not alone, my God is good company for me; with him I can walk, with him I can take sweet counsel, find sweet repose; at my lying down, at my rising up, whilst I am in the house, or as I walk by the way, my God is ever with me; with him I ravel, I dwell, I lodge, I live, and shall live for ever." Oh! child of God, let me urge thee to make use of thy God. Make use of him in prayer; I beseech thee, go to him often, because he is *thy* God. If he were another man's God, thou mightest weary him; but he is *thy* God. If he were my God and not thine, thou wouldst have no right to approach him, but he is *thy* God; he has made himself over to thee, if we may use such an expression, (and we think we may) he has become the positive property of all his children, so that all he has, and all he is, is theirs. O child, wilt thou let thy treasury lie idle, when thou wantest it? No; go and draw from it by prayer.

"To him in every trouble flee,
Thy best, thy only friend."

Fly to him, tell him all thy wants. Use him constantly by faith, at all times. Oh! I beseech thee, if some dark providence has come over thee, use thy God as a sun, for he is a sun. If some strong enemy has come out against thee, use thy God for a shield, for he is a shield to protect thee. If thou hast lost thy way in the mazes of life, use him as a guide, for the great Jehovah will direct thee. If thou art in storms, use him for the God who stilleth the raging of the sea, and saith unto the waves, "Be still." If thou art a poor thing, knowing not which way to turn, use him for a shepherd, for the Lord is thy Shepherd, and thou shalt not want. Whate'er thou art, where'er thou art, remember God is just what thou wantest, and he is just where thou wantest. I beseech thee, then, make use of thy God; do not forget him in thy trouble, but flee to him in the midst of thy distresses, and cry,

"When all created streams are dried,
Thy fulness is the same;
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in thy name!
No good in creatures can be found
But may be found in thee;
I must have all things and abound,

While God is God to me."

Lastly, Christian, let me urge thee again to use God to be thy delight this day. If thou hast trial, or if thou art free from it, I beseech thee make God thy delight; go from this house of prayer and be happy this day in the Lord. Remember it is a commandment, "Rejoice in the Lord, always, and again I say, rejoice." Do not be content to be moderately happy; seek to soar to the heights of bliss and to enjoy a heaven below; get near to God, and you will get near to heaven. It is not as it is with the sun here, the higher you go the colder you find it, because on the mountain there is nothing to reflect the rays of the sun; but with God, the nearer you go to him the brighter he will shine upon you, and when there are no other creatures to reflect his goodness, his light will be all the brighter. Go to God continually, importunately, confidently; "delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall bring it to pass;" "commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall "guide thee by his counsel, and afterwards receive thee to glory."

Here is the first thing of the covenant; the second is like unto it. We will consider that another Sabbath-day. And now may God dismiss you with his blessing. Amen.

To-morrow

A Sermon
No. 94
Delivered on Monday Afternoon, August 25, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Maberley Chapel, Kingsland,
On Behalf of the Metropolitan Benefit Societies' Asylum, Ball's Pond Road, Islington.

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—Proverbs 27:1.

GOD'S MOST holy Word was principally written to inform us of the way to heaven, and to guide us in our path through this world, to the realms of eternal life and light. But as if to teach us that God is not careless concerning our doings in the present scene, and that our benevolent Father is not inattentive to our happiness even in this state, he has furnished us with some excellent and wise maxims, which we may put in practice, not only in spiritual matters, but in temporal affairs also. I have always looked upon the book of Proverbs with pleasure, as being a book not only teaching us the highest spiritual wisdom, but as also more especially speaking on the "now"—the time that is present with us—giving us maxims that will make us wise for this world, and that will instruct us in conducting our affairs whilst we are here amongst our fellow-men. We need some temporal wisdom as well as spiritual illumination; it need not always be that the children of the kingdom should be more foolish than the children of darkness. It is well that we should be wise to order our common affairs aright, as well as to set out house in order for the grave; and hence we find in Scripture maxims and teachings for them both. Since God has been pleased thus to instruct us in the avocations of life, I shall not, then, be out of place, if I use my text, in some degree, in a merely temporal manner, and endeavour to give advice to my friends concerning the business of this life. Afterwards, I shall dwell upon it more spiritually. There is first, *the abuse of to-morrow* forbidden in the text; in the second place, I shall mention *the right use of to-morrow*.

I. First, then, there is THE ABUSE OF TO-MORROW mentioned in the text; and we shall look upon it first in a worldly point of view, and yet, I trust, in a way of wisdom. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." Oh! my brethren, whoso'er ye be, whether ye be Christians or no, this passage hath a depth of wisdom in it for you. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," and this, for many very wise reasons.

First of all, *because it is extremely foolish to boast at all*. Boasting never makes a man any the greater in the esteem of others, nor does it improve the real estate either of his body or soul. Let a man brag as he will, he is none the greater for his bragging; nay, he is the less, for men invariably think the worse of him. Let him boast as much as he pleases of anything that he possesses, he shall not increase its value by his glorying. He cannot multiply his

wealth by boasting of it; he cannot increase his pleasures by glorying in them. True, to be content with those pleasures, and feel a complacency in them, may render them very sweet; but not so with such a treasure as this, for it is a treasure which he has not yet, and, therefore, how foolish is he to glory in it! There is an old, old proverb, which I dare not quote here; it is something to do with chickens. Perhaps you can recollect it; it bears very well upon this text, for to-morrow is a thing that we have not yet obtained, and, therefore, not only if we had it would it be foolish to boast of it, but because we have it not, and may never have it, it becomes the very extremity of foolishness to glory in it. Glory, O man, in the harvest that may come to thee next year when thy seed is sown; but glory not in to-morrow, for thou canst sow no seeds of morrows. Morrows come from God; thou hast no right to glory in them. Glory if thou wilt, O fowler, that the birds have once flown to thy net, for they may come again; but glory not too soon, for they my find another decoy that shall be better to their taste than thine, or they may rove far off from thy snare. Though many a day has come to thee, think not that another will certainly arrive. Days are not like links of a chain; one does not ensure the other. We have one, but we may never see its fellow; each may be the last of its kind. Each springs of a separate birth. There are no twin days. To-day hath no brother, it stands alone, and to-morrow must come alone, and the next and the next, also, must be born into this world without a brother. We must never look upon two days at once, nor expect that a whole herd of days shall be brought forth at one time.

We need not boast of to-morrow, for *it is one of the frailest things in all creation*, and, therefore, the least to be boasted of. Boast of the bubbles on the breaker, boast of the foam upon the sea, boast of the clouds that skim the sky, boast of what thou wilt, O man, but boast not of to-morrow, for it is too unsubstantial. To-morrow, it is a fleeting thing. Thou hast not seen it; why dost thou boast of it? To-morrow, it is a fleeting thing. Thou hast not seen it; why dost thou boast of it? To-morrow, it is the cup which the idiot dreams lieth at the foot of the rainbow. It is not there, nor hath he found it. To-morrow—it is the floating island of Loch Lomond; many have talked of it, but none have seen it. To-morrow—it is the wrecker's beacon, enticing men to the rock of destruction. Boast not thyself of to-morrow; it is the frailest and most brittle thing thou canst imagine. Not glass were half so easily broken as thy to-morrow's joys and thy to-morrow's hopes; a puff of wind shall crush them, while yet they seem not to be full blown. He said, good easy man, full surely my greatness is a ripening, but there came a frost—a killing, frost which nipped his shoot and then he fell. Boast not of to-morrow; thou hast it not. Boast not of to-morrow; thou mayest never have it. Boast not of to-morrow; if thou hadst it, it would deceive thee. Boast not of to-morrow, for to-morrow thou mayest where morrows will be dreadful things to tremble at.

Boast not thyself of to-morrow, not only because it is extremely foolish, but *because it is exceedingly hurtful*. Boasting of to-morrow is hurtful to us every way. It is hurtful to us *now*. I never knew a man who was always hoping to do great things in the future, that ever

did much in the present. I never knew a man who intended to make a fortune by-and-bye, who ever saved sixpence a week now. I never knew a man who had a very great and grand hopes on the death of some old grandmother, or the coming-in of some property from chancery, or the falling to him of something because his name was Jenyns, I never saw him very prosperous in the mean time. I have heard of a man going to be rich to-morrow, and boasting of it; but I never knew him do much. Such men spend so much time in building castles in the air, that they have no stones left wherewith to build so much as a cottage on the ground. They were wasting all their energies on to-morrow, consequently they had no time to reap the fields of the present, for they were waiting for the heavy harvests of the future. The heavily laden boats of to-day come in with abundance of fish from the depths of time; but they said of them, "They are nothing; there will be heavier draughts to-morrow; there will be greater abundance then. Go away, little ships; an argosy shall come home to-morrow—a very fleet of wealth;" and so they let to-day's wealth go by because they expected the greater wealth of to-morrow; therefore, they were hurt even for the present.

And worse than that. *Some men were led into extraordinary extravagance* from their hopes of the future. They spend what they are going to have, or rather what they never will have. Many have been ruined by the idle dream of speculation; and what is that but boasting of to-morrow? They have said, "True, I cannot pay for this which I now purchase; but I shall to-morrow, for to-morrow I shall roll in wealth, to-morrow, perhaps, I shall be the richest of men. A lucky turn of business (as they term it) will lift me off this shoal." So they keep still, and not only do they refuse to toil, to push themselves off the sand, but worse than that, they are throwing themselves away and wasting what they have, in the hope of better times coming in the future. Many a man has been made halt, and lame, and blind, and dumb, in the present, because he hoped to be greater than a man in the future. I always laugh at those who say to me, "Sir, rest a while; you will work all the longer of it. Stay while, lest you wast your strength, for you may work to-morrow." I bid them remember that such is not the teaching of Scripture, for that says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" and I would count myself worse than a fool, if I should throw away my to-days in the expectation of to-morrows, and rest upon the couch of idleness to-day, because I thought the chariot of to-morrow would make up for all my sloth. No, beloved, if we love our God, we shall find enough to do, if we have all our to-morrows, and use all our to-days too. If we serve our God as we ought to serve him, considering what he has done for us, we shall find that we shall have more than our handsfull, let our life be spared as long as Methuselah's—enough for every moment, enough for every hour, long as life may be. But hoping to do things in the future takes away our strength in the present, unnerves our resolution, and unstrings our diligence. Let us take care that we are not hurt in the present by boasting of to-morrow.

And, remember, that if you boast of to-morrow, it will not only hurt you to-day, but *hurt you to-morrow also*. Do you know why? because, as sure as you are alive, you will be disappointed with to-morrow, if you boast of it before it comes. To-morrows would be very good things if you did not give them such a very good character. I believe one of the very worst things a minister can possess is to have anybody to recommend him; for the people say, "Here comes a man, how he will preach, how eloquent he will be!" The poor creature cannot come up to their expectations, and so they are disappointed. So with to-morrow; you give him such flattering enconiums; "Oh! he is everything; he is perfection." To-days—they are nothing; they are the very sweepings of the floors; but to-morrows—they are the solid gold. Todays—they are exhausted mines, and we get little from them; but to-morrows—they are the very mines of wealth. We have only to get them, and we are rich, immensely rich. The to-morrows are everything; and then the to-morrows come laden with mercy and big with blessings of God; but, notwithstanding, we are disappointed, because to-morrow is not what we expected it to be, even when to-morrow is marvellously abundant. But sometimes to-morrow comes with storms, and clouds, and darkness, when we expected it to be full of light and sunshine, and oh, how terrible is our feeling then, from the very reason that we expected something different. It is not at all a bad beatitude, "Blessed is the man that expecteth nothing, for he shall never be disappointed."

If we know how to practise that, and expect nothing, we shall not be disappointed, it is certain; and the less we expect, and the less we boast of our expectations, the more happy will the future be; because we shall have far less likelihood of being disappointed. Let us recollect, then, that if we would kill the future, if we would ruin the to-morrows, if we would blast their hopes, if we would take away their honey, we must press them in the hand of boasting, and then we shall have done it. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow;" for thou spoilest the to-morrow by boasting of it.

And then, remember, *what disastrous circumstances have occurred to men in this life* after to-morrow had gone, from boasting of to-morrows. Ay, there is many a man that set all his hope upon one single thing; and the to-morrow came which he did not expect—perhaps a black and dark to-morrow, and it crushed his hopes to ashes; and how sad he felt afterwards! He was in his nest; he said, "Peace, peace, peace;" and sudden destruction came upon his happiness and his joy. He had boasted of his to-morrow by over security, and see him there, what a very wreck of a man he is, because he had set his hope on that; now his joy is blasted. Oh! my friends, never boast too much of the to-morrows, because if you do, your disappointment will be tremendous, when you shall find your joys have failed you, and your hopes have passed away. See there that rich man; he has piled heaps on heaps of gold; but now for a desperate venture, he is about to have more than he ever possessed before, and he reckons on that to-morrow. Nothingness is his; and what is his disappointment? because he boasted of imagined wealth. See that man! his ambition is to raise his house, and

perpetuate his name; see that heir of his—his joy, his life, his fulness of happiness. A handful of ashes and a coffin are left to the weeping father. Oh! if he had not boasted too much of the certainty of that son's life, he had not wept so bitterly, after the to-morrow had swept over him, with all its blast and mildew of his expectations. See yonder, another; he is famous, he is great; to-morrow comes a slander, and his fame is gone, and his name disgraced. Oh! had he not set his love on that, he had not cared whether men cried, "crucify," or "hallelujah;" he had disregarded both alike. But believing that fame was a stable thing, whereas its foot is on the sand, he reckoned on to-morrows; and mark how sad he walks the earth, because to-morrow has brought him nothing but grief. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow."

And I would have you remember just one fact; and that I think to be a very important one; that very often when men boast of to-morrow, and are over confident that they shall live, *they not only entail great sorrow upon themselves, but upon others also*. I have, when preaching, frequently begged of my friends to be quite sure to make their wills, and see to their family affairs. Many are the solemn instances which should urge you to do so. One night a minister happened to say, in the course of his sermon, that he held it to be a Christian duty for every man to have his house set in order, so that if he were taken away, he would know, that as far as possible, everything would be right. And there was one member of his church there, who said to himself, "What my minister has said is true. I should not like to see my babes and my wife left with nothing, as they must be if I were to die." So he went home. That night he made his will and cleared up his accounts. That night he died! It must have been a joyful thing for the widow, in the midst of her sadness, to find herself amply provided for, and everything in order for her comfort. Good Whitfield said he could not lie down in bed of a night, if he did not know that even his gloves were in their place; for he said he should not like to die with anything in his house out of order. And I would have every Christian very careful, to be so living one day, that if he were never to see another, he might feel that he had done the utmost that he could, not only to provide for himself, but also for those who inherit his name and are dear to him. Perhaps you call this only worldly teaching; very good; you will find it very much like heavenly teaching one of these dark days, if you do not practise it. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow."

II. But now I come to dwell upon this *in a spiritual manner*, for a moment or two. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." Oh! my beloved friends, never boast of to-morrow with regard to your soul's salvation.

They do so in the first place, *who think that it will be easier for them to repent to-morrow than it is to-day*. Felix said there would be a more convenient season, and then he would again send for Paul, that he might hear him seriously. And many a sinner thinks that just now it is not easy to turn and to repent, but that by-and-bye it will be. Now, is not that a very string of falsehoods? In the first place, is it ever easy for a sinner to turn to God? Must not that be done, at any time, by divine power? And again, if that be not easy for him *now*,

how will it be easier in after life? Will not his sins bind fresh fetters to his soul, so that it will be even more impossible for him to escape from his iron bondage? If he be dead now, will he not be corrupt before he reaches to-morrow? And when to-morrow comes, to which he looks forward as being easier for a resurrection, will not his soul be yet more corrupt, and, therefore, if we may so speak, even further from the possibility of being raised? Oh! sirs, ye say it is easy for ye to repent to-morrow; why, then, not to-day? Ye would find the difficulty of it, if you should try it; yea, you would find your own helplessness in that matter. Possibly you dream that on a future day repentance will be more agreeable to your feelings. But how can you suppose that a few hours will make it more pleasant? If it be vinegar to your taste now, it shall be so then; and if ye love your sins now, ye will love them better then; for the force of habit will have confirmed you in your course. Every moment of your lives is driving in another rivet to your eternal state. So far as we can see, it becomes less and less likely (speaking after the manner of men) that the sinner should burst his chains each sin that he commits; for habit has bound him yet faster to his guilt, and his iniquity has got another hold upon him. Let us take care, then, that we do not boast of to-morrow, by a pretence that it will be so much easier to repent to-morrow; whereas, it is one of Satan's lies, for it will only be the more difficult.

He boasts of to-morrow, again, *who supposes that he shall have plenty of time to repent and to return to God*. Oh! there are many who say, "When I come to die, I shall be on my death-bed, and then I shall say, 'Lord, have mercy upon me a sinner.'" I remember an aged minister telling me a story of a man whom he often warned, but who always said to him, "Sir, when I am dying, I shall say 'Lord, have mercy on me;' and I shall go to heaven as well as anybody else." Returning home from market one night, rather "fou" with liquor, he guided his horse with a leap right over the parapet of a bridge into the river; the last words he was heard to utter, were a most fearful imprecation; and in the bed of the river he was found dead, killed by the fall. So it may be with you. You think you will have space for repentance, and it may be that sudden doom will devour you: or, perhaps, even while you are sitting there in the pew, your last moment is running out. There is your hour-glass. See! it is running. I marked another grain just then, and then another fell; it fell so noiselessly, yet methought I heard it fall. Yes! there it is! The clock's tick is the fall of that grain of dust down from your hour-glass. Life is getting shorter every moment with all of you; but with some the sand is almost out; there is not a handful left. A few more grains. See, now they are less, two or three. Oh! in a moment it may be said, "The is not one left." Sinner! never think that thou hast time to spare! thou never hadst; man never had. God says, "Haste thee," when he bids men flee from Sodom. Lot had to haste; and depend upon it, when the Spirit speaks in a man's heart, he doth always bid him haste. Under natural convictions, men are very prone to tarry; but the Spirit of God, when he speaks in the heart of man, always says, "to-day." I never knew a truly anxious soul yet, who was willing to put off till to-morrow. When God

the Holy Ghost has dealings with a man, they are always immediate dealings. The sinner is impatient to get deliverance; he must have pardon now; he must have present mercy, or else he fears that mercy will come too late to him. Let me beseech you, then, (and may God the Holy Spirit grant that my entreaty may become successful in your case) let me beseech every one of you to take this into consideration—that there is never time to spare, and that your thought that there is time to spare, is an insinuation of Satan; for when the Spirit pleads with man, he pleads with him with demands of immediate attention. "*To-day*, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation."

"Boast not thyself of to-morrow," O sinner, as I doubt not thou art doing in another fashion. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow," *in the shape of resolves to do better*. I think I have given up resolutions now; I have enough of the *debris* and the rubbish of my resolutions to build a cathedral with, if they could but be turned into stone. Oh! the broken resolutions, the broken vows, all of us have had! Oh! we have raised castles of resolutions, structures of enormous size, that outvied Babylon itself, in all its majesty. Says one, "I know I shall be better to-morrow; I shall renounce this vice and the other; I shall forsake this lust; I shall give up that darling sin; true, I shall not do so now—a little more sleep and a little more slumber; but I know I shall do it to-morrow." Fool! thou knowest not that thou shalt see to-morrow. Oh! greater fool! thou oughtest to know, that what thou art not willing to do to-day, thou wilt not be willing to do to-morrow. I believe there are many souls that have been lost by good intentions, which were never carried out. Resolutions strangled at their birth brought on men the guilt of spiritual infanticide; and they have been lost, with resolutions sticking in their mouths. Many a man has gone down to hell with good resolution on his lip, with a pious resolve on his tongue. Oh! if he had lived another day, he said he would have been so much better; if he had lived another week, oh, then he thought he would begin to pray. Poor soul! if he had been spared another week, he would only have sunk the deeper into sin! But he did not think so, and he went to hell with a choice morsel rolling under his tongue—that he should do better directly, and that meant to amend by-and-bye. There are many of you present, I dare say, who are making good resolutions. You are apprentices: well, you are not going to carry them out till you get to be journeymen. You have been breaking the Sabbath: but you intend to leave it off when you are in another situation. You have been accustomed to swear: you say, "I shall not swear any more when I get out of this company, they try my temper so." You have committed this or that petty theft: to-morrow you will renounce it, because to-morrow you will have enough, and you can afford to do it. But of all the lying things—and there are many things that are deceptive—resolutions for to-morrow are the worst of all. I would not trust one of them; there is nothing stable in them; you might sooner sail to America across the Atlantic on a sere leaf, than float to heaven on a resolution.

It is the frailest thing in the world, tossed about by every circumstance, and wrecked with all its precious freight—wrecked to the dismay of the man who ventured his soul in it—wrecked, and wrecked for aye. Take care, my dear hearers, that none of you are reckoning on to-morrows. I remember the strong but solemn words of Jonathan Edwards, where he says, "Sinner, remember, thou art at this moment standing over the mouth of hell upon a single plank, and that plank is rotten; thou art hanging over the jaws of perdition by a solitary rope, and lo! the strands of that rope are creaking—breaking now, and yet thou talkest of to-morrows!" If thou wert sick, man, wouldst thou send for thy physician to-morrow? If thine house were on fire, wouldst thou call "fire" to-morrow? If thou wert robbed in the street on thy road home, wouldst thou cry "stop thief" to-morrow? No, surely; but thou art wiser than that in natural concerns. But man is foolish, oh! too foolish in the things that concern his soul; unless divine and infinite love shall teach him to number his days, that he may apply his heart unto true wisdom, he will still go on boasting of to-morrows, until his soul has been destroyed by them.

Just one hint to the child of God. Ah! my beloved brother or sister, do not, I beseech thee, boast of to-morrow thyself. David did it once: he said, "My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved." Do not boast of your to-morrows. You have feathered your nest pretty well; ay, but you may have a thorn in it before the sun has gone down, and you will be glad enough to fly aloft. You are very happy and joyful, but do not say you will always have as much faith as you have now—do not be sure you will always be as blessed. The next cloud that sweeps the skies may drive many of your joys away. Do not say you have been kept hitherto, and you are quite sure you will be preserved from sin to-morrow. Take care of to-morrows. Many Christians go tumbling on without a bit of thought; and then, on a sudden, they tumble down and make a mighty mess of their profession. If they would only look sharp after the to-morrows—if they would only watch their paths instead of star-gazing and boasting about them, their feet would be a great deal surer. True, God's child need not think of to-morrow as regards his soul's eternal security, for that is in the hand of Christ and safe for ever; but as far as his profession, and comfort, and happiness are concerned, it will well become him to take care of his feet every day. Do not get boasting; if you get boasting of to-morrow, you know the Lord's rule is always to send a canker where we put our pride. And so if you boast of to-morrow, you will have a moth in it before long. As sure as ever we glory in our wealth, it becomes cankered, or it takes to itself wings and flies away; and as certainly as we boast of to-morrow, the worm will gnaw its root, as it did Jonah's gourd, and the to-morrow under which we rested shall, with dropping leaves, only stand a monument to our disappointment. Let us take care, Christian brethren, that we do not waste the present time with hopes of to-morrow—that we do not get proud, and so off our guard, by boasting of what we most assuredly shall be then, as we imagine.

III. And now, in the last place, if to-morrows are not to be boasted of, are they good for nothing? No, blessed be God! There are great many things we may do with to-morrows. We may not boast of them, but I will tell you what we may do with them if we are the children of God. We may always look forward to them with *patience and confidence*, that they will work together for our good. We may say of the to-morrows, "I do not boast of them, but I am not frightened at them; I would not glory in them, but I will not tremble about them."

"What may be my future lot,
Well I know concerns me not;
This doth set my heart at rest,
What my God appoints is best."

We may be very easy and very comfortable about to-morrow; we may remember that all our times are in his hands, that all events are at his command; and though we know not all the windings of the path of providence, yet *He* knows them all. They are all settled in his book, and our times are all ordered by his wisdom; whether they be

"Times of trial and of grief;
Times of triumph and relief;
Times the tempter's power to prove,
Times to taste a Saviour's love:
All must come, and last, and end,
As shall please my heavenly Friend."

And, therefore, we may look upon the to-morrows as we see them in the rough bullion of time, about to be minted into every day's expenditure, and we may say of them all, "They shall all be gold; they shall all be stamped with the King's impress, and, therefore, let them come; they will not make me worse—they will work together for my good."

Yea, more, a Christian may rightly look forwards to his to-morrows, not simply with resignation, but also with *joy*. To-morrow to a Christian is a happy thing, it is one stage nearer glory. To-morrow! It is one step nearer heaven to a believer; it is just one knot more that he has sailed across the dangerous sea of life, and he is so much the nearer to his eternal port—his blissful heaven. To-morrow, it is a fresh lamp of fulfilled promise that God has placed in his firmament, that the Christian may hail it as a guiding star, in the future, or at least as a light to cheer his path. To-morrow, the Christian may rejoice at it; he may say of to-day, "O day, thou mayest be black, but I shall bid thee good-bye, for lo, I see the morrow coming, and I shall mount upon its wings, and shall flee away and leave thee and thy sorrows far behind me."

And, moreover, the Christian may await to-morrow with even more than simple hope and joy; he may look forward to it with *ecstacy* in some measure, for he does not know but that to-morrow his Lord may come. To-morrow Christ may be upon this earth, "for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh." To-morrow, all the glories of millennial

splendour may be revealed; to-morrow, the thrones of judgment may be set, and the King may summon the people to judgment. To-morrow, we may be in heaven; to-morrow, we may be on the breast of Christ; to-morrow, ay, before then, this head may wear a crown, this hand may wave the palm, this lip may sing the son, this foot may tread the streets of gold, this heart may be full of bliss, immortal, everlasting, eternal. Be of good cheer, oh, fellow-Christian; to-morrow can have nothing black in it to thee, for it must work for thy good, but it may have in it a precious, precious jewel. It is an earthen pitcher, and it may have in it some dark black waters, but their bitterness is taken away by the cross. But mayhap, also, it may have in it the precious jewel of eternity; for wrapt up within to-morrow may be all the glories of immortality. Anoint thine head with fresh oil of gladness at the prospect of each coming day. Boast not of to-morrow, but often comfort thyself with it. Thou hast a right to do so; it cannot be a bad tomorrow to thee; it may be the best day of thy life, for it may be thy last.

And yet, another hint. To-morrow ought to be observed by Christians in the way of providence. Though we may not boast of to-morrow, yet we may seek to provide for the morrow. On one occasion I pleaded for a benefit society, and not knowing a more appropriate text, I selected this, "Take no thought for the morrow, for to-morrow shall take thought for the things of itself." Some of my hearers, when I announced my text, feared the principle of it was altogether hostile to anything like an insurance, or providing for the future, but I just showed them that it was not, as I looked upon it. It is a positive command that we are to take no anxious thought concerning to-morrow. No, how can I do that? How can I put myself into such a position that I can carry out this command of taking no thought for the morrow! If I were a man struggling in life, and had it in my power to insure for something which would take care of wife and family in after days, if I did not do it, you might preach to me all eternity about not taking thought for the morrow; but I could not help doing it, when I saw those I loved around me unprovided for. Let it be in God's word, I could not practise it; I should still be at some time or other taking thought for the morrow. But let me go to one of the many of the excellent institutions which exist, and let me see that all is provided for, I come home and say, "Now, I know how to practise Christ's command of taking no thought for the morrow; I pay the policy-money once a year, and I take no further thought about it, for I have no occasion to do so now, and have obeyed the very spirit and letter of Christ's command." Our Lord meant that we were to get rid of cares; now it is apparent that those distressing cares are removed, and we are able to live above anxiety by that single process.

Now, if that is so, if there is anything that enables us to carry out Christ's commands, is it not in the very bowels of the commandments to do that? If God has pleased to put into the hearts of wise men to devise something that should in some way ameliorate the misfortunes of their kind, and relieve them from the distresses and casualties of God's providence,

how can it but be our duty to avail ourselves of that wisdom which, doubtless, God gave to men, that we might thereby in these times be enable to carry out in the fullest extent the meaning of that passage, "Take no thought for the morrow." Why, if a man says, "I shall take no thought for the morrow, I will just spend all I get, and not think of doing anything or taking any thought for the morrow," how is he going to pay his rent? Why, the text could not be carried out, if it meant what some people think. It cannot mean that we should carelessly live by the day, or else a man would spend all his money on Monday, and have nothing left for the rest of the week; but that would be simple folly. It means that we should have no anxious, distressing thought about it. I am preaching about benefit societies; I would not attempt to recommend many of them, and I do not believe in the principles of half of them; I believe a great deal of mischief is done by their gatherings in alehouses and pothouses; but wherever there is a Christian society, I must endeavour to promote its welfare, for I look on the principle as the best means of carrying out the command of Christ, "Take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for itself." Allow me to recommend this Asylum to your liberality as a refuge in adversity for those who were careful in prosperity. It is a quiet retreat for decayed members of Benefit Societies, and I am sorry to inform you that many of its rooms are vacant, not from want of candidates, but from a lack of funds. It is a pity that so much public property should lie unemployed. Help the committee then to use the houses.

And, now, in concluding, let me remind the Christian that there is one thing he has not do, and that is, he has not to provide salvation, nor grace, nor sustenance, nor promises for the morrow. No, beloved; but we often talk as if we had. We say, "How shall I persevere through such and such a trial?" "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." You must not boast of to-day's grace, as though it were enough for to-morrow. But you need not be afraid. With to-morrow's difficulties there will be to-morrow's help; with to-morrow's foes, to-morrow's friends; with to-morrow's dangers, to-morrow preservations. Let us look forward, then, to to-morrow as a thing we have not to provide for in spiritual matters, for the atonement is finished, the covenant ratified, and therefore every promise shall be fulfilled, and be "yea and amen" to us, not only in one to-morrow, but in fifty thousand to-morrows, if so many could run over our heads.

And now just let us utter the words of the text again, very solemnly and earnestly. O young men in all your glory! O maidens in all your beauty! "Boast not yourselves of to-morrow." The worm may be at your cheeks very soon. O strong men, whose bones are full of marrow! O ye mighty men, whose nerves seem of brass, and your sinews of steel! "Boast not of to-morrow." "How, fir tree," for cedars have fallen ere now; and though you think yourselves great, God can pull you down. Above all, ye grey heads, "Boast not yourselves of to-morrow," with one foot hanging over the unfathomable gulf of eternity, and the other just tottering on the edge of time! I beseech you do not boast yourselves of to-morrow. In

truth I do believe that grey heads are not less foolish on this point than very childhood. I remember reading a story of a man who wanted to buy his neighbour's farm next to him, and he went to him and asked him whether he would sell it. He said, "No; I will not;" so he went home, and said, "Never mind, Farmer So-and-so is an old man; when he is dead, I shall buy it." The man was seventy, and his neighbour sixty-eight; he thought the other would be sure to die before him. It is often so with men. They are making schemes that will only walk over their graves, when they will not feel them. The winds shall soon howl across the green sward that covers their tomb, but they shall not hear its wailing. Take care of the "to-days." Look not through the glass of futurity; but look at the things of to-day. "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

The Day of Atonement

A Sermon
No. 95
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, August 10, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"This shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year."—Leviticus 16:34.

The Jews had many striking ceremonies which marvellously set forth the death of Jesus Christ as the great expiation of our guilt and the salvation of our souls. One of the chief of these was the day of atonement, which I believe was pre-eminently intended to typify that great day of vengeance of our God, which was also the great day of acceptance of our souls, when Jesus Christ "died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." That day of atonement happened only *once a year*, to teach us that only once should Jesus Christ die; and that though he would come a second time, yet it would be without a sin offering unto salvation. The lambs were perpetually slaughtered; morning and evening they offered sacrifice to God, to remind the people that they always needed a sacrifice; but the day of atonement being the type of the one great propitiation, it was but once a year that the high priest entered within the vail with blood as the atonement for the sins of the people. And this was on a certain set and *appointed time*; it was not left to the choice of Moses, or to the convenience of Aaron, or to any other circumstance which might affect the date; it was appointed to be on a peculiar set day, as you find at the 29th verse: "In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month;" and at no other time was the day of atonement to be, to show us that God's great day of atonement was appointed and predestinated by himself. Christ's expiation occurred but once, and then not by any chance; God had settled it from before the foundation of the world; and at that hour when God had predestinated, on that very day that God had decreed that Christ should die, was he led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers he was dumb. It was but once a year, because the sacrifice should be once; it was at an appointed time in the year, because in the fulness of time Jesus Christ should come into the world to die for us.

Now, I shall invite your attention to the ceremonies of this solemn day, taking the different parts in detail. First, we shall consider the *person who made the atonement*; secondly, *the sacrifice whereby the atonement was typically made*; thirdly, *the effects of the atonement*; and fourthly, *our behaviour on the recollection of the atonement*, as well set forth by the conduct prescribed to the Israelites on that day.

I. First, THE PERSON WHO WAS TO MAKE THE ATONEMENT. And at the outset, we remark that *Aaron, the high priest*, did it. "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place;

with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering." Inferior priests slaughtered lambs; other priests at other times did almost all the work of the sanctuary; but on this day nothing was done by any one, as a part of the business of the great day of atonement, except by the high priest. Old rabbinical traditions tell us that everything on that day was done by him, even the lighting of the candles, and the fires, and the incense, and all the offices that were required, and that, for a fortnight beforehand, he was obliged to go into the tabernacle to slaughter the bullocks and assist in the work of the priests and Levites, that he might be prepared to do the work which was unusual to him. All the labour was left to him. So, beloved, Jesus Christ, the High Priest, and he only, works the atonement. There are other priests, for "he hath made *us* priests and kings unto God." Every Christian is a priest to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God, but none save the High Priest must offer atonement; he, and he alone, must go within the vail; he must slaughter the goat and sprinkle the blood; for though thanksgiving is shared in by all Christ's elect body, atonement remains alone to him, the High Priest.

Then it is interesting to notice, that the high priest on this day was *a humbled priest*. You read in the 4th verse, "He shall put on the holy *linen* coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen girdle, and with linen mitre shall he be attired: these are holy garments." On other days he wore what the people were accustomed to call the golden garments; he had the mitre with a plate of pure gold around his brow, tied with brilliant blue; the splendid breastplate, studded with gems, adorned with pure gold and set with precious stones; the glorious ephod, the tinkling bells, and all the other ornaments, wherewith he came before the people as the accepted high priest. But on this day he had none of them. The golden mitre was laid aside, the embroidered vest was put away, the breastplate was taken off, and he came out simply with the holy linen coat, the linen breeches, the linen mitre, and girded with a linen girdle. On that day he humbled himself just as the people humbled themselves. Now, that is a notable circumstance. You will see sundry other passages in the references which will bear this out, that the priest's dress on this day was different. As Mayer tells us, he wore garments, and glorious ones, on other days, but on this day he wore four humble ones. Jesus Christ, then, when he made atonement, was a humbled priest. He did not make atonement arrayed in all the glories of his ancient throne in heaven. Upon his brow there was no diadem, save the crown of thorns; around him was cast no purple robe, save that which he wore for a time in mockery; on his head was no sceptre, save the reed which they thrust in cruel contempt upon him; he had no sandals of pure gold, neither was he dressed as king; he had none of those splendours about him which should make him mighty and distinguished among men; he came out in his simple body, ay, in his naked body, for they stripped off even the common robe from him, and made him hang before God's sun and God's universe, naked, to his shame, and to the disgrace of those who chose to do so cruel and dastardly a deed. Oh! my soul, adore

thy Jesus, who when he made atonement, humbled himself and wrapped around him a garb of thine inferior clay. Oh! angels, ye can understand what were the glories that he laid aside. Oh! thrones, and principalities, and powers, ye can tell what was the diadem with which he dispensed, and what, the robes he laid aside to wrap himself in earthly garbs. But, men, ye can scarce tell how glorious is your High Priest now, and ye can scarce tell how glorious he was before. But oh! adore him, for on that day it was the simple clean linen of his own body, of his own humanity, in which he made atonement for your sins.

In the next place, the high priest who offered the atonement must be a *spotless high priest*; and because there were none such to be found, Aaron being a sinner himself as well as the people, you will remark that Aaron had to sanctify himself and make atonement for his own sin before he could go in to make an atonement for the sins of the people. In the 3rd verse you read, "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering." These were for himself. In the 6th verse it is said, "And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house." Yea, more, before he went within the vail with the blood of the goat which was the atonement for the people, he had to go within the vail to make atonement there for himself. In the 11th, 12th, and 13th verses, it is said, "And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself. And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the vail. And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not." "And he shall take of the blood of the bullock (that is, the bullock that he killed for himself), and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward; and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his finger seven times." This was before he killed the goat, for it says, "Then shall he kill the goat." Before he took the blood which was a type of Christ within the vail, he took the blood (which was a type of Christ in another sense), wherewith he purified himself. Aaron must not go within the vail until by the bullock his sins had been typically expiated, nor even then without the burning smoking incense before his face, lest God should look on him, and he should die, being an impure mortal. Moreover, the Jews tell us that Aaron had to wash himself, I think, five times in the day; and it is said in this chapter that he had to wash himself many times. We read in the 4th verse, "These are holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and so put them on." And at the 24th verse, "He shall wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments." So you see it was strictly provided for that Aaron on that day should be a spotless priest. He could not be so as to nature, but, ceremonially, care was taken that he should be clean. He was washed over and over again in the sacred bath. And besides that, there was the blood of the bullock and the

smoke of the incense, that he might be acceptable before God. Ah! beloved, and we have a spotless High Priest; we have one who needed no washing, for he had no filth to wash away; we have one who needed no atonement for himself, for he, for ever, might have sat down at the right hand of God, and ne'er have come on earth at all. He was pure and spotless; he needed no incense to wave before the mercy seat to hide the angry face of justice; he needed nothing to hide and shelter him; he was all pure and clean. Oh! bow down and adore him, for if he had not been a holy High Priest, he could never have taken thy sins upon himself, and never have made intercession for thee. Oh! reverence him, that, spotless as he was, he should come into this world and say, "For this cause I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth." Adore and love him, the spotless High Priest, who, on the day of atonement took away thy guilt.

Again, the atonement was made by a *solitary high priest*—alone and unassisted. You read in the 17th verse, "And there shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." No other man was to be present, so that the people might be quite certain that everything was done by the high priest alone. It is remarkable, as Matthew Henry observes, that no disciple died with Christ. When he was put to death, his disciples forsook him and fled; they crucified none of his followers with him, lest any should suppose that the disciple shared the honor of atonement. Thieves were crucified with him because none would suspect that they could assist him; but if a disciple had died, it might have been imagined that he had shared the atonement. God kept that holy circle of Calvary select to Christ, and none of his disciples must go to die there with him. O glorious High Priest, thou hast done it all alone. O, glorious antitype of Aaron, no son of thine stood with thee; no Eliezer, no Phineas, burned incense; there was no priest, no Levite save himself. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." Then give all the glory unto his holy name, for alone and unassisted he made atonement for your guilt. The bath of his blood is your only washing; the stream of water from his side is your perfect purification. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, has wrought out the work of our salvation.

Again, it was a *laborious high priest* who did the work on that day. It is astonishing how, after comparative rest, he should be so accustomed to his work as to be able to perform all that he had to do on that day. I have endeavoured to count up how many creatures he had to kill, and I find that there were fifteen beasts which he slaughtered at different times, besides the other offices, which were all left to him. In the first place, there were the two lambs, one offered in the morning, and the other in the evening; they were never omitted, being a perpetual ordinance. On this day the high priest killed those two lambs. Further, if you will turn to Numbers xxix. 7-11, "And ye shall have on the tenth day of this seventh month an holy convocation; and ye shall afflict your souls: ye shall not do any work therein: But ye

shall offer a burnt unto the Lord for a sweet savour; one young bullock, one ram, and seven lambs of the first year; they shall be unto you without blemish: And their meat offering shall be of flour mingled with oil, three tenth deals to a bullock, and two tenth deals to one ram. A several tenth deal for one lamb, throughout the seven lambs: One kid of the goats for a sin offering: besides the sin offering of atonement, and the continual burnt offering, and the meat offering of it, and their drink offerings." Here, then, was one bullock, a ram, seven lambs, and a kid of the goats; making ten. The two lambs made twelve. And in the chapter we have been studying, it is said in the 3rd verse: "Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering, and a ram for a burnt offering;" which makes the number fourteen. Then, after that, we find there were two goats, but only one of them was killed, the other being allowed to go away. Thus, then, there were fifteen beasts to be slaughtered, besides the burnt offerings of thanksgiving which were offered by way of showing that the people now desired to dedicate themselves to the Lord from gratitude, that the atonement of sin offering had been accepted. He who was ordained priest in Jeshurun, for that day, toiled like a common Levite, worked as laboriously as priest could do, and far more so than on any ordinary day. Just so with our Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, what a labour the atonement was to him! It was a work that all the hands of the universe could not have accomplished; yet he completed it alone. It was a work more laborious than the treading of the wine-press, and his frame, unless sustained by the divinity within, could scarce have borne such stupendous labour. There was the bloody sweat in Gethsemane; there was the watching all night, just as the high priest did for fear that uncleanness might touch him; there was the hooting and the scorn which he suffered every day before—something like the continual offering of the Lamb; then there came the shame, the spitting, the cruel flagellations in Pilate's hall; then there was the *via dolorosa* through Jerusalem's sad streets; then came the hanging on the cross, with the weight of his people's sins on his shoulders. Ay, it was a Divine labour that our great High Priest did on that day—a labour mightier than the making of the world: it was the new making of a world, the taking of its sins upon his Almighty shoulders and casting them into the depths of the sea. The atonement was made by a toilsome laborious High Priest, who worked, indeed, that day; and Jesus, thought he had toiled before, yet never worked as he did on that wondrous day of atonement.

II. Thus have I led you to consider the person who made the atonement: let us now consider for a moment or two THE MEANS WHEREBY THIS ATONEMENT WAS MADE. You read at the 5th verse, "And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering." And at the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th verses, "And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the Lord at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the Lord's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which

the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the Lord, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness." The first goat I considered to be the great type of Jesus Christ the atonement: *such I do not consider the scapegoat to be*. The first is a type of the means whereby the atonement was made, and we shall keep to that first.

Notice that this goat, of course, answered all the pre-requisites of every other thing that was sacrificed; it must be *a perfect, unblemished goat of the first year*. Even so was our Lord a perfect man, in the prime and vigour of his manhood. And further, this goat was an eminent type of Christ from the fact that *it was taken of the congregation of the children of Israel*, as we are told at the 5th verse. The public treasury furnished the goat. So, beloved, Jesus Christ was, first of all, purchased by the public treasury of the Jewish people before he died. Thirty pieces of silver they had valued him at, a goodly price; and as they had been accustomed to bring the goat, so they brought him to be offered: not, indeed, with the intention that he should be their sacrifice, but unwittingly they fulfilled this when they brought him to Pilate, and cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Oh, beloved! Indeed, Jesus Christ came out from the midst of the people, and the people brought him. Strange that it should be so! "He came unto his own, and his own received him not;" his own led him forth to slaughter; his own dragged him before the mercy seat.

Note, again, that though this goat, like the scapegoat, was brought by the people, *God's decision was in it still*. Mark, it is said, "Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats: one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." I conceive this mention of lots is to teach that although the Jews brought Jesus Christ of their own will to die, yet, Christ had been appointed to die; and even the very man who sold him was appointed to it—so saith the Scripture. Christ's death was fore-ordained, and there was not only man's hand in it, but God's. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." So it is true that man put Christ to death, but it was of the Lord's disposal that Jesus Christ was slaughtered, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

Next, behold the goat that destiny has marked out to make the atonement. Come and *see it die*. The priest stabs it. Mark it in its agonies; behold it struggling for a moment; observe the blood as it gushes forth. Christians, ye have here your Saviour. See his Father's vengeful sword sheathed in his heart; behold his death agonies; see the clammy sweat upon his brow; mark his tongue cleaving to the roof of his mouth; hear his sighs and groans upon the cross; hark to his shriek, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," and you have more now to think of than you could have if you only stood to see the death of a goat for your atonement. Mark the blood as from his wounded hands it flows, and from his feet it finds a channel to the earth; from his open side in one great river see it gush. As the blood of the goat made the atonement typically, so, Christian, thy Saviour dying for thee, made the great atonement for thy sins, and thou mayest go free.

But mark, this goat's blood was not only shed for many for the remission of sins as a type of Christ, but that blood was *taken within the vail*, and there it was sprinkled. So with Jesus's blood, "Sprinkled now with blood the throne." The blood of other beasts (save only of the bullock) was offered before the Lord, and was not brought into the most holy place; but this goat's blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat, to make an atonement. So, O child of God, thy Saviour's blood has made atonement within the vail; he has taken it there himself; his own merits and his own agonies are now within the vail of glory, sprinkled now before the throne. O glorious sacrifice, as well as High Priest, we would adore thee, for by thy one offering hot hast made atonement for ever, even as this one slaughtered goat made atonement once in a year for the sins of all the people.

III. We now come to the EFFECTS.

One of the first effects of the death of this goat was *sanctification of the holy things which had been made unholy*. You read at the end of the 15th verse, "He shall sprinkle it upon the mercy seat: and he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness." The holy place was made unholy by the people. Where God dwelt should be holy, but where man comes there must be some degree of unholiness. This blood of the goat made the unholy place holy. It was a sweet reflection to me as I came here this morning. I thought, "I am going to the house of God, and that house is a holy place;" but when I thought how many sinners had trodden its floors, how many unholy ones had joined in its songs, I thought, "Ah! it has been made defiled; but oh! there is no fear, for the blood of Jesus has made it holy again." "Ah!" I thought, "there is our poor prayer that we shall offer: it is a holy prayer, for God the Holy Spirit dictates it, but then it is an unholy prayer, for *we* have uttered it, and that which cometh out of unholy lips like ours, must be tainted." "But ah!" I thought again, "it is a prayer that has been sprinkled with blood, and therefore it must be a holy prayer." And as I looked on all the harps of this sanctuary, typical of your praises, and on all the censers of this tabernacle, typical of your prayers, I thought within myself, "There is blood on them all; our holy service this day has been sprinkled with the blood of the great Jesus, and as such it will be accepted through him." Oh! beloved, it is not sweet to reflect that our holy things are now really holy; that through sin is mixed with them all, and we think them defiled, yet they are not, for the blood has washed out every stain; and the service this day is as holy in God's sight as the service of the cherubim, and is acceptable as the psalms of the glorified; we have washed our worship in the blood of the Lamb, and it is accepted through him.

But observe, the second great fact was that *their sins were taken away*. This was set forth by the scapegoat. You read at the 20th, "And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat:

And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited, and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness." When that was done, you see, the great and wonderful atonement was finished, and the effects of it were set forth to the people. Now, I do not know how many opinions there are about this scapegoat. One of the most strange opinions to me is that which is held by a very large portion of learned men, and I see it is put in the margin of my Bible. Many learned men thing that this word scapegoat, Azazel, was the name of the devil who was worshipped by the heathen in the form of a goat; and they tell us that the first goat was offered to God as an atonement for sin, and the other went away to be tormented by the devil, and was called *Azazel*, just as Jesus was tormented by Satan in the wilderness. To this opinion, it is enough to object that it is difficult to conceive when the other goat was offered to God, this should be sent among demons. Indeed, the opinion is too gross for belief. It needs only to be mentioned to be refuted. Now the first goat is the Lord Jesus Christ making atonement by his death for the sins of the people; the second is sent away into the wilderness, and nothing is heard of it any more for ever; and here a difficulty suggests itself—"Did Jesus Christ go where he was never heard of any more for ever?" That is what we have not to consider al all. The first goat was a type of the atonement; the second is the type of the effect of the atonement. The second goat went away, after the first was slaughtered, carrying the sins of the people on its head, and so it sets froth, as a scapegoat, how our sins are carried away into the depth of the wilderness. There was this year exhibited in the Art Union a fine picture of the scapegoat dying in the wilderness: it was represented with a burning sky above it, its feet sticking in the mire, surrounded by hundreds of skeletons, and there dying a doleful and miserable death. Now, that was just a piece of gratuitous nonsense, for there is nothing the Scripture that warrants it in the least degree. The rabbis tell us that this goat was taken by a man into the wilderness and here tumbled down a high rock to die; but, as an excellent commentator says, if the man did push it down the rock he more than God ever told him to do. God told him to take a goat and let it go: as to what became of it neither you nor I know anything; that is purposely left. Our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins upon his head, just as the scapegoat, and he is gone from us—that is all: the goat was not a type in its dying, or in regard to its subsequent fate. God has only told us that it should be taken by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The most correct account seems to be that of one Rabbi Jarchi, who says that they generally took the goat twelve miles out of Jerusalem, and at each mile there was a booth provided where the man who took it might refresh himself till he came to the tenth mile, when there was no more rest for him till he had seen the goat go. When he had come to the last mile he stood and looked at the goat till it was gone, and he could see it no more. Then the people's

sins were all gone too. Now, what a fine type that is if you do not enquire any further! But if you will get meddling where God intended you to be in ignorance, you will get nothing by it. This scapegoat was not designed to show us the victim or the sacrifice, but simply what became of the sins. The sins of the people are confessed upon that head; the goat is going; the people lose sight of it; a fit man goes with it; the sins are going from them, and now the man has arrived at his destination; the man sees the goat in the distance skipping here and there overt the mountains, glad of its liberty; it is not quite gone; a little farther, and now it is lost to sight. The man returns, and says he can no longer see it; then the people clap their hands, for their sins are all gone too. Oh! soul; canst thou see thy sins all gone? We may have to take a long journey, and carry our sins with us; but oh! how we watch and watch till they are utterly cast into the depths of the wilderness of forgetfulness, where they shall never be found any more against us for ever. But mark, this goat did not sacrificially make the atonement; it was a type of the sins going away, and so it was a type of the atonement; for you know, since our sins are thereby lost, it is the fruit of the atonement; but the sacrifice is the means of making it. So we have this great and glorious thought before us, that by the death of Christ there was full, free, perfect remission for all those whose sins are laid upon his head. For I would have you notice that on this day all sins were laid on the scapegoat's head—sins of presumption, sins of ignorance, sins of uncleanness, sins little and sins great, sins few and sins many, sins against the law, sins against morality, sins against ceremonies, sins of all kinds were taken away on that great day of atonement. Sinner, oh, that thou hadst a share in my Master's atonement! Oh! that thou couldst see him slaughtered on the cross! Then mightest thou see him go away leading captivity captive, and taking thy sins where they might ne'er be found.

I have now an interesting fact to tell you, and I am sure you will think it worth mentioning. Turn to Leviticus xxv. 9, and you will read: "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of *the jubilee* to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall yet make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." So that one of the effects of the atonement was set forth to us in the fact that when the year of jubilee came, it was not on the first day of the year that it was proclaimed, but "on the tenth day of the seventh month." Ay, methinks, that was the best part of it. The scapegoat is gone, and the sins are gone, and no sooner are they gone than the silver trumpet sounds,

"The year of jubilee is to come,
Return, ye ransomed sinners, home."

On that day sinners go free; on that day our poor mortgaged lands are liberated, and our poor estates which have been forfeited by our spiritual bankruptcy are all returned to us. So when Jesus dies, slaves win their liberty, and lost ones receive spiritual life again; when he dies, heaven, the long lost inheritance is ours. Blessed day! Atonement and jubilee ought

to go together. Have you ever had a jubilee, my friends, in your hearts? If you have not, I can tell you it is because you have not had a day of atonement.

One more thought concerning the effects of this great day of atonement, and you will observe that it runs throughout the whole of the chapter—*entrance within the vail*. Only on one day in the year might the high priest enter within the vail, and then it must be for the great purposes of the atonement. Now, beloved, the atonement is finished, and you may enter within the vail: "Having boldness, therefore, to enter into the holiest, let us come with boldness into the throne of the heavenly grace." The vail of the temple is rent by the atonement of Christ, and access to the throne is now ours. O child of God, I know not of any privilege which thou hast, save fellowship with Christ, which is more valuable than access to the throne. Access to the mercy seat is one of the greatest blessings mortals can enjoy. Precious throne of grace! I never should have had any right to come there if it had not been for the day of atonement; I never should have been able to come there if the throne had not been sprinkled with the blood.

IV. Now we come to notice, in the fourth place, what is our PROPER BEHAVIOUR WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. You read at the 29th verse, "And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall *afflict your souls*." That is one thing that we ought to do when we remember the atonement. Sure, sinner, there is nothing that move thee to repentance like the thought of that great sacrifice of Christ which is necessary to wash away thy guilt. "Law and terrors do but harden." but methinks, the thought that Jesus died is enough to make us melt. It is well, when we hear the name of Calvary, always to shed a tear, for there is nothing that ought to make a sinner weep like the mention of the death of Jesus. On that day "ye shall afflict your souls." And even you, ye Christians, when ye think that your Saviour died, should afflict your souls: ye should say,

"Alas! and did my Saviour bleed?
And did my Sov'reign die?
Would he devote that sacred head
For such a worm as I?"

Drops of grief ought to flow, ay, streams of undissembled sympathy with him; to show our grief for what we did to pierce the Saviour. "Afflict your souls," O ye children of Israel, for the day of atonement is come. Weep o'er your Jesus; weep for him that died; weep for him who was murdered by your sins, and "afflict your souls."

Then, better still, we are to "*do not work at all*," as ye find the same verse, 29th. When we consider the atonement, we should rest, and "do no work at all." Rest from your works as God did from his on the great Sabbath of the world; rest from your own righteousness; rest from your toilsome duties: rest in him. "We that believe do enter into rest." As soon as

thou seest the atonement finished, say, "it is done, it is done? Now will I serve my God with zeal, but now I will no longer seek to save myself, it is done, it is done for aye."

Then there was another thing which always happened. When the priest had made the atonement, it was usual for him, after he had washed himself, to *come out again in his glorious garments*. When the people saw him they attended him to his house with joy, and they offered burnt offerings of praise on that day: he being thankful that his life was spared, (having been allowed to go into the holy place and to come out of it) and they being thankful that the atonement was accepted; both of them offering burnt offerings as a type that they desired now to be "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." Beloved, let us go into our houses with joy; let us go into our gates with praise. The atonement is finished; the High Priest is gone within the vail; salvation is now complete. He has laid aside the linen garments, and he stands before you with his breastplate, and his mitre, and his embroidered vest, in all his glory. Hear how he rejoices over us, for he hath redeemed his people, and ransomed them out of the hands of his enemies. Come, let us go home with the High Priest; let us clap our hands with joy, for he liveth, he liveth; the atonement is accepted, and we are accepted too; the scapegoat is gone, our sins are gone with it. Let us then go to our houses with thankfulness, and let us come up to his gates with praise, for he hath loved his people, he hath blessed his children, and given unto us a day of atonement, and a day of acceptance, and a year of jubilee. Praise ye the Lord? Praise ye the Lord!

The Christian—A Debtor

A Sermon
No. 96
Delivered on Sabbath Evening, August 10, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors."—Romans 8:12.

OBSERVE the title whereby he addressed the Church—"Brethren." It was the gospel which taught Paul how to say *brother*. If he had not been a Christian, his Jewish dignity would never have condescended to call a Roman—"brother;" for a Jew sneered at the Gentile, and called him "dog." But now in the breast of this "Hebrew of Hebrews," there is the holy recognition of Christian fraternity without reserve or hypocrisy. The gospel softened the breast of Paul, and made him forget all national animosities, otherwise, one of the down-trodden race would not have called his oppressor, "brother." The Roman had his iron foot on the Jew; yet Paul addresses those, who subjugated his race, as "brethren." We repeat, a third time, it was the gospel which implanted in the soul of Paul the feeling of brotherhood, and removed every wall of partition which divided him from any of the Lord's elect. "So then," he said, "we are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." He proclaimed the doctrine of the "one blood," and gloried in the fact of "one family" in Christ. He felt within him affinities with all the blood-bought race, and loved them all. He had not seen many of those whom he addressed; yet they were known to him, in the Spirit, as partakers of one glorious and blessed hope, and, therefore, he called them "brethren." My friends, there is a cementing power in the grace of God which can scarcely be over estimated. It resets the dislocated bones of society, rivets the bonds of friendship, and welds the broken metal of manhood into one united mass. It makes all brethren who feel its power. Grace links mankind in a common brotherhood; grace makes the great man give his hand to the poor, and confess a heavenly relationship; grace constrains the intellectual, the learned, the polite, to stoop from their dignity to take hold of the ignorant and unlettered, and call them friends; grace weaves the threads of our separate individualities into one undivided unity. Let the gospel be really felt in the mind and it will toll the knell of selfishness, it will bring down the proud from their elevated solitude, and it will restore the down-trodden to the rights of our common manhood. We need only the gospel thoroughly preached to bring about "liberty, equality, and fraternity," in the highest and best sense of these words. Not the "liberty, equality and fraternity," which the democrat seeks for, which is frequently another name for *his own* superiority, but that which is true and real—that which will make us all free in the Spirit, make us all equal in the person of Christ Jesus, and give us all the fraternity of brethren, seeing that we are all one with our Lord, in

the common bond of gospel relationship. Let the truths of Christianity work out their perfect work: and pride, bitterness, wrath, envy, and malice, must see their graves. This and this alone can restore the peace of divided families, and unite disputing relatives. Only let the gospel be preached, and there shall be an end of war; let it thoroughly pervade all ranks of society, and saturate the mind of nations, and there shall be no more lifting of the spears, they shall be used for pruning hooks; no bathing of swords in blood, for they shall be turned into the peaceful ploughshares of the soil; we shall then have no hosts encountering hosts; we shall have no millions slain for widows to deplore; but every man shall meet every other man, and call him "brother." And men of every kindred, and of every tribe, shall see in the face of every man, a relative allied to them by ties of blood. I am sure I feel, myself, the force of this word "brother," with regard to many of you. If ye be partakers of that glorious hope, if ye be believers in our glorious Redeemer, if ye have put your trust under the shadow of his wings, my hand and my heart with it, there is that word "brother" for you. And so addressing you, who love the Lord, under that title; I come at one to the text, "Brethren, *we are debtors*." We are all of us under obligations; let us consider the fact in the following manner:—First, *how are we to understand this*? and secondly, *how ought it to affect us*?

I. HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND THIS, "Brethren, we are debtors"? We may understand it in a thousand sense, for indeed we are debtors. Brethren, we who know and love the Lord, are debtors, not to one creditor, but to many.

We are debtors *to the past*. Methinks I see the fathers at their midnight lamps, the ancient saints in their much-frequented closets, the thrice brave preachers in their pulpits denouncing error, and the faithful pastors reproving wrong. To such who have preceded us we owe the purity of the Church, and to them we are debtors. methinks I see the martyrs and confessors rising from their tombs—I mark their hands still stained with blood, and their bodies scarred with the wound of persecution. They tell me, that they of old maintained the truth, and preached it, in the midst of fire and sword—that they bore death in defence of the cause of God, that they might hand down his holy word inviolate to us! I look on them, and see among their glorious ranks, some whose names are celebrated in every Christian land as the bold "lions of God," the immovable pillars of truth; men of whom the world was not worthy, whose praise is in all the churches, and who are now nearest the eternal throne. And as I look on them, and they on me, I turn to you all and say, "Brethren, we are debtors." We are debtors to the men who crossed the sea, and laughed at the fury of the storm, who risked the journeying, and the weariness, and all the various perils to which they were exposed, by reason of robbers and false brethren; we are debtors to each stake at Smithfield; we are debtors to the sacred ashes of the thousands who have there followed Jesus even unto death; we are debtors to the headless bodies of those who were beheaded for Christ Jesus; we are debtors to those who dared the lions in the amphitheatre and fought with wild beasts at Ephesus; we are debtors to the massacred thousands of the bloody church of Rome,

and the murdered myriads of her pagan predecessors; we are debtors to them all. Remember the bloody day of St. Bartholomew, the valleys of Piedmont, and the mountains of Switzerland. Let the sacred mounds of our fathers' sepulchres speak to us. Is not this Bible opened and read by us all, the gift of their self-denying faithfulness? Is not the free air we breathe the purchase of their death? Did not they, by bitter suffering, achieve our liberty for us? And are we not debtors to them? Shall we not, in some degree, repay the immense debt of our obligation by seeking to make the future also debtors to us, that our descendants may look back and acknowledge that they owe us thank for preserving the Scriptures, for maintaining liberty, for glorifying God? Brethren, we are debtors to the past.

And I am quite sure we are debtors *to the present*. Wherever we go, we gather fresh proofs of the common observation, that we are living in a most marvellous age. It is an oft-repeated truth, and one which, perhaps, has almost lost its meaning from being so oft repeated, that this is the very crisis. The world has always been in a crisis, but this seems to use to be a peculiar one. We have around us appliances for doing good, such as men never possessed before; we behold around us machinery for doing evil, such as never was at work even in earth's worst days. Good men are labouring, at least with usual zeal, and bad men are strenuously plying their craft of evil. Infidelity, popery, and every other phase of anti-Christ are now straining every nerve. The tug of war is now with us. Look around you and learn your duty. The work is not yet done, the time of folding of hands has not yet arrived; our swords must not yet see their scabbards, for the foe is not yet slain. We see, in many a land, the proudest dynasties and tyrannies still crushing, with their mountain-weight, every free motion of the consciences and hearts of men. We see, on the other hand, the truest heroism for the right, and the greatest devotion to the truth in hearts that God has touched. We have a work to do, as great as our forefathers, and, perhaps, far greater. The enemies of truth are more numerous and subtle than ever, and the needs of the Church are greater than at any preceding time. If we be not debtors to the present, then men were never debtors to their age and their time. Brethren, we are debtors to the hour in which we live. Oh! that we might stamp it with truth, and that God might help us to impress upon its wings some proof that it has not flown by neglected and unheeded.

And, brethren, we are debtors *to the future*. If we, the children of God, are not valiant for truth now, if we maintain not the great standard of God's omnipotent truth, we shall be traitors to our liege Lord. Who can tell the fearful consequences to future generations if we now betray our trust. If we suffer orthodoxy to fail, or God's truth to be dishonored, future generations will despise and execrate our name. If we now suffer the good vessel of gospel truth to be drifted by adverse winds upon the rock, if we keep not good watch to her helm, and cry not well to her great Master that she may led to a prosperous end, surely those who are to succeed us will look on us with scorn, and say, "Shame on the men, who had so great and glorious a mission, and neglected it, and handed down to us a beclouded gospel and an

impure Church." Stand up ye warriors of the truth, stand up firmly, for ye are debtors to the future, even as ye are debtors to the past. Sow well, for others must reap. You are fountains for coming generations; O, be careful that your streams are pure. May the Spirit of God enable you so to live, that you can bequeath your example as a legacy to the future.

And as we are debtors to all times, so we are all debtors *to all classes*. But there are some that always get well paid for what they do, and, therefore, I shall not mention them, since I am not aware that their claims need my advocacy. We may be remarkably indebted to members of parliament, but for the little they do they are tolerably well rewarded; at least, we take it that the place is more an honour to some of them than they are to their place. It may be true that we owe a great deal to the higher ranks of society; we may possibly, in some mysterious way, be much under obligation to the sacred personages who are styled lords and bishops, but it is not necessary that I should stand up for their claims, for I have no doubt they will take good care of themselves; at any rate they have usually done so, and have not allowed themselves to be robbed of much of their deservings. (Who would wish that they should? but it is possible to pay too dear, especially when you could get on as well without them as with them.) I shall not refer to any class of society, and say of them, we are debtors, except to one, and that is *the poor*. My brethren, we are debtors to the poor. "What!" says some one, "I, debtor to the poor?" Yes, my lady, thou art a debtor to the poorest man that ever walked the earth. The beggar shivering in his rags, may owe thee something, if thou givest him alms; but thou owest him something more. Charity to the poor is a debt. We are not at liberty to give or to refuse. God requires us to remember the poor, and their poverty is a claim upon our generosity. But in the case of the *believing poor*, their claim upon us is far more binding, and I beseech you do not neglect it. O how much we owe them. When I think how the poor toil day after day and receive barely enough to keep their souls within their bodies: when I think how frequently they serve their Church, unhonored and unrewarded, when I know some of them who perform the hardest deeds of service for our common Christianity, and are yet passed by with neglect and scorn; when I remember how many of them are toiling in the Sabbath-school, having neither emolument nor reward; when I consider how many of the lower classes are as prayerful, as careful, as honest, as upright, as devout, as spiritual as others are, and frequently more so, I cannot but say that we are debtors to all God's poor in a very large degree. We little know how many a blessing the poor man's prayer brings down upon us. I beseech you then, beloved, wherever you see a poor saint, wherever you behold an aged Christian, recollect he cannot be so much in debt to you as you are to him, for you have much, and he has but little, and he cannot be in debt for what he has not. Many of you will not feel the force of Christian reasons, let me remind you, that even you are obliged to the laboring poor. The rich man hoards wealth, the poor man makes it. Great men get the blessing, but poor men bring it down from heaven. Some men are the cisterns that hold God's rain; but other men are those who pray the rain from

heaven, like very Elijahs, and many of these are to be found in the lower ranks of society. "Brethren, we are debtors;" what I have is not my own, but God's; and if it be God's, then it belongs to God's poor. What the wealthiest man has is not his own, but God's, and if it be God's then it is Christ's, and if Christ's, then his children's; and Christ's children are often those who are hungry, and thirsty, and destitute, and afflicted, and tormented. Take care then of that class, brethren, for we are debtors to them.

But while I have thus mentioned some of the different classes to whom we are debtors, I have not yet come to the point on which I desire to press your attention. Brethren, we are debtors *to our covenant God*; that is the point which swallows up all. I owe nothing to the past, I owe nothing to the future, I owe nothing to the rich, and nothing to the poor, compared with what I owe to my God. I am mainly indebted to these because I owe so much to my God. Now, Christian, consider how thou art a debtor to thy God. Remember thou art now a debtor to God in a legal sense, as thou art in Adam, thou art no longer a debtor to God's justice as thou once wast. We are all born God's creatures, and as such we are debtors to him; to obey him with all our body, and soul, and strength. When we have broken his commandments, as we all of us have, we are debtors to his justice, and we owe to him a vast amount of punishment, which we are not able to pay. But of the Christian, it can be said, that he does not owe God's *justice* a solitary farthing; for Christ has paid the debt his people owed. I am a debtor to God's love, I am a debtor to God's grace, I am a debtor to God's power, I am a debtor to God's forgiving mercy; but I am no debtor to his justice—for he, himself, will never accuse me of a debt once paid. It was said, "It is finished!" and by that was meant, that what'er his people owed was wiped away for ever from the book of remembrance. Christ, to the uttermost, has satisfied divine justice; the debt is paid, the hand-writing is nailed to the cross, the receipt is given, and we are debtors to God's justice no longer. But then because we are not debtors to God in that sense, we become ten times more debtors to God than we should have been otherwise. Because he has remitted all our debt of sin, we are all the more indebted to him in another sense. Oh! Christian, stop and ponder for a moment! What a debtor thou art to Divine *Sovereignty*! Thou art not as some, who say, that thou didst choose thyself to be saved; but thou believest that God could have destroyed thee, if he had pleased and that it is entirely of his own good pleasure that thou art made one of his, while others are suffered to perish. Consider, then, how much thou owest to his Sovereignty! If he had willed it, thou wouldst have been among the damned; if he had not willed thy salvation, all thou couldst do would have been utterly powerless to deliver thee from perdition. Remember how much thou owest to his disinterested *love*, which rent his own Son from his bosom that he might die for thee! let the cross and bloody sweat remind thee of thine obligation. Consider how much you owe to his forgiving *grace*, that after ten thousand affronts he loves you as infinitely as ever; and after a myriad of sins, his Spirit still resides within you. Consider what you owe to his *power*; how he has raised you from your

death in sin, and how he has preserved your spiritual life, how he has kept you from falling, and how, though a thousand enemies have beset your path, you have been able to hold on your way! Consider what thou owest to his *immutability*. Though thou hast changed a thousand times, he has not changed once; though thou hast shifted thy intentions, and thy will, yet he has not once swerved from his eternal purpose, but still has held thee fast. Consider thou art as deep in debt as thou canst be to every attribute of God. To God thou owest thyself, and all thou hast. "Brethren, we are debtors."

We are not only debtors to God in the light of gratitude for all these things; but because of *our relationship to him*. Are we not his *sons*, and is there not a debt the son owes to the father which a lifetime of obedience can never remove? I feel that to the knee that dandled me and the breast that gave me sustenance, I owe more than I can ever pay; and to him who taught me, and led me in the paths of truth I owe so much, that I dare not speak of the tremendous weight of obligation due to him. Beloved, if God be a father, where is honor? And if we be his sons, are we not thereby bound to love, serve, and obey him? Sonship towards an earthly parent brings with it a host of duties, and shall the Everlasting Father be unregarded? No. The true son of God will never blush to acknowledge that he is in subjection to the Father of spirits. He will rather glory in his high connection, and with reverence obey the commands of his Heavenly Parent. Remember again, we are Christ's *brethren*, and there is a debt in brotherhood. Brother owes to brother what he cannot pay until he dies. It is more than some men think to have been rocked in the same cradle and dandled on the same knee. Some esteem it nothing. Alas! it is a well-known truth, that if you want help you must go anywhere for it, save to your brother's house. Go not into thy brother's house in the day of thine adversity. Go to the greatest stranger, and he shall help thee; go to thy brother, and he shall oft upbraid thee. But this should not be so. Brotherhood has its ties of debt, and to my brother I owe what I shall not yet pay him. Beloved, are ye brothers of Christ, and do ye think that ye owe him no love? Are ye brothers and sisters of the saints, and think ye that ye ought not to love and serve them, even to the washing of their feet? Oh, yes, I am sure ye ought. I am afraid none of us feel enough how much we are debtors to God. Yea, I am certain that we do not. It is astonishing how much gratitude a man will feel to you if you have been only the instrument of doing him good; but how little gratitude he feels to God, the first cause of all! There have been many who have been won from drunkenness by hearing the preaching of God's Word even under myself, and those persons have been ready to carry me on their shoulders, from very gratitude, for joy; but I would be bound to say they make a far more feeble display of their thankfulness to my Master. At least, they seem to have lost their first love to him far sooner than they did to his servant. We remember to be grateful to all except our God. Our little debts we can pay. Debts of honor, as we call them—which are no debts in some men's eyes—we can discharge; but the great and solemn debt we owe to God is ofttimes passed by, neglected and forgotten. "Brethren, we are debtors."

II. In the second place, very briefly, WHAT OUGHT WE TO DRAW FROM THIS DOCTRINE, that we are debtors?

First, we think we should learn *a lesson of humility*. If we be debtors we never ought to be proud. All we can do for God is but a trifling acknowledgment of an infinite obligation; yea, more, our good works are gifts of his grace, and do but put us under greater debt to the author of them. Stay, then, ye who are puffed up by your achievements, consider ye have but poorly performed, not a deed of supererogation, but of ordinary duty. How much have you done after all, young man? I thought I saw you the other day looking amazingly great, because on such an occasion you really had done some little service to Christ's Church; and you looked astonishingly proud about it. Young man, didst thou do more than thou oughtest to have done? "No, I did not," you say; "I was a debtor." Then who should be proud of having paid only a part of his debt, when, after all, he owes a great deal more than he is worth? Is there anything to be proud of in having paid a farthing in the pound? I take it there is not. Let us do what we may, it is but a farthing in the pound that we shall ever be able to pay of the debt of gratitude we owe to God. It is curious to see how some men are proud of being greater debtors than others. One man has ten talents, and oh how proud he is, and how he looks down upon another who has but one, and says: "Ah, you are a mean man; I have ten talents." Well, then, thou owest ten talents, and thy brother owes only one; why should you be proud that you owe more than he does? It would be a foolish pride indeed, if two prisoners in the Queen's Bench were to boast, one saying, "I owe a hundred pounds," and the other replying, "I am a greater gentleman than you are, for I owe a thousand." I have heard that in the Marshalsea of old they did take rank according to the greatness of their debts. It is often so on earth: we take rank at times according to the greatness of our talents. But the greatness of our talents is only the amount of our debt; for, the more we have, the more we owe. If a man walks the streets, sticking his bill upon his breast, and proclaiming with pride that he is a debtor, you would say, "Sure he must be a madman; lock him up." And so if a man walk through the earth and lift up his head because of what God has given him, and say, "I am not to notice the poor, I am not to shake hands with the ignorant, because I am so great and mighty," you may with equal reason say, "Take away that poor creature, his pride is his insanity; put him in safe custody, and let him learn that all he has is his debt, and that he has no cause for pride."

Then again, *how zealous we should be for our Master*! Though we cannot pay all, we can at least acknowledge the debt. It is something on the part of a debtor if he will but acknowledge the claim of his creditor. Oh! how ought we day by day to seek, by living unto God, to acknowledge the debt we owe to him; and, if we cannot pay him the principal, yet to give him some little interest upon the talent which he has lent to us, and upon those stupendous mercies which he has granted to us. I beseech you, my dear friends, take this thought with

you wherever you go: "I am a debtor, I must serve my God. It is not left to my pleasure whether I will do it or no; but I am a debtor, and I *must* serve him."

If we all believed this, how much easier it would be to get our churches into good order! I go to one brother, and I say, "Brother, there is such-and-such an office in the Sabbath-school; will you take it?" "Well, sir, you know how much I love the cause, and how earnest I am in doing everything that I can to serve my Maker; but (now comes the end of it all) I really work so hard all the week that I cannot afford to go out on the Sabbath to Sunday-schools." There you see, that man does not know that he is a debtor. I take him a bill to-morrow morning, and he says, "Do you coming begging?" I say, "No; I have brought a bill; look at it." "Oh, yes," he says, "I see; there is the cash." Now that is the way to act; to feel and acknowledge that you are a debtor; when there is a thing to be done, to do it, and to say, "Do not thank me for it, I have only done what I ought to have done; I have only paid the debt that I owed."

Then let me give you just one piece of homely advice before I send you away. Be just before you are generous, and especially before you are generous to yourselves. Take care that you pay your debts before you spend money upon your pleasures. I would recommend that to many Christians. Now, there are some of you here incommoding us to-night, and making us very hot. You have been very generous to yourselves by coming here, but not very just to your ministers in neglecting the places of worship where you ought to have gone. You said to yourselves, "We have no doubt we ought to be there; that is our debt; nevertheless we should like to gratify our curiosity for once, by hearing this singular preacher, who will be sure to say something extravagant that will furnish the occasion for a joke for the next fortnight." Now, why did you come here till you had paid your debt? You should have rallied round your own minister and strengthened his hands in the work of the Lord. Again; how many a man is there who says, "I want such-and-such a luxury; I know the cause of God demands of me more than I give it, but I *must* have that luxury, that shilling shall go to myself, and not to God." Now if you had a debtor who owed you more than he could pay, and you saw him going off on pleasure in a horse and gig to-morrow, you would say, "It is all very well his having that fine horse and gig, and going down to Greenwich; but I would rather that he should pay me the ten pound note I lent him the other day. If he cannot afford to pay, he ought to keep at home till he can." So in regard to God. We come and spend our time and our money upon our pleasures before we pay our just and fair debts. Now, what is not right towards man is not right towards God. If it is robbing man to spend the money in pleasure wherewith we ought to pay our debts; it is robbing God if we employ our time, our talents, or our money, in anything but his service, until we feel we have done our share in that service. I beseech you, members of churches, deacons, or whatever you may be, lay this to heart. To God's cause you are debtors. Do not expect to get thanked at last for doing much, for after all you have done, you will only have done what is your duty.

Now, farewell to such of you as are debtors in that sense; but just one word to those who are debtors in the other sense; Sinner, thou who owest to God's justice, thou who hast never been pardoned; what wilt thou do when pay-day comes/ My friend over there, you who have run up a score of black sins, what will you do when pay-day comes, and no Christ to pay your debts for you? What will you do if you are out of God and out of Christ at the last pay-day, when the whole roll of your debts to God shall be opened, and you have no Christ to give you a discharge? I beseech thee, "Agree with thy creditor quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest he deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer to cast thee into prison: verily I say unto thee, thou shall not come out till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." But if thou agreest with thy creditor, he will, for Jesus' sake, blot out all thy debts, and set thee at liberty, so that thou shalt never be amenable for thine iniquities.

Pride and Humility

A Sermon
No. 97
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, August 17, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honor is humility."—Proverbs 18:12.

ALMOST every event has its prophetic prelude. It is an old and common saying, that "coming events cast their shadows before them;" the wise man teaches us the same lesson in the verse before us. When destruction walks through the land, it casts its shadow; it is in the shape of pride. When honor visits a man's house, it casts its shadow before it; it is in the fashion of humility. "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty;" pride is as surely the sign of destruction as the change of mercury in the weather-glass is the sign of rain, and far more infallibly so than that. "Before honor is humility," even as before the summer, sweet birds return to sing in our land. Everything hath its prelude. The prelude of destruction is pride, and of honor, humility. There is nothing into which the heart of man so easily falls as pride, and yet there is no vice which is more frequently, more emphatically, and more eloquently condemned in Scripture. Against pride, prophets have lifted up their voices, evangelists have spoken and teachers have discoursed. Yea, more; the everlasting God has mounted to the very heights of eloquence when he would condemn the pride of man; and the full gushing of the Eternal's mighty language has been most gloriously displayed in the condemnation of the pride of human nature. Perhaps the most eloquent passage of God's Word is to be found toward the conclusion of the book of Job, where, in most splendid strains of unanswerable eloquence, God hides pride from many by utterly confounding him; and there is another very eloquent passage in the 14th chapter of Isaiah, where the Lord's holy choler seems to have risen up, and his anger to have waxed hot against the pride of man, when he would utterly and effectually condemn it. He says concerning the great and mighty king of Babylon, "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even al the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations? For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I

will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms." Mark how God addresses him, describing hell itself as being astonished at his fall, seeing that he had mounted so high; and yet declaring, assuredly, that his height and greatness were nothing to the Almighty, that he would pull him down, even though, like an eagle, he had built his nest among the stars. I say there is nothing more eloquently condemned in Scripture than pride, and yet there is no trap into which we poor silly birds so easily flee, no pitfall into which, like foolish beasts of the earth, we so continually run. On the other hand, humility is a grace that hath many promises given to it in the Scripture. Perhaps most promises are given to faith, and love is often considered to be the brightest of the train of virtues; yet humility holds by no means an inferior place in God's word, and there are hundreds of promises linked to it. Every grace seems to be like a nail on which precious blessings hang, and humility hath many a mercy suspended from it. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" "Blessed are the poor in spirit;" and in multitudes of other passages, we are reminded that God loveth the humble, but that he "bringeth down the mighty from their seats, and exalteth the humble and meek." Now, this morning, we shall have a word to say concerning *pride* and *humility*. May the Holy Spirit preserve us from the one, and produce in our hearts the other.

I. In the first place, we shall have something to say concerning the vice of PRIDE. "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty." Pride, *what is it?* Pride, *where is its seat?* The heart of man. And pride, *what is its consequence?* Destruction.

1. In the first place, I must try to *describe pride* to you. I might paint it as being the worst malformation of all the monstrous things in creation; it hath nothing lovely in it, nothing in proportion, but everything in disorder. It is altogether the very reverse of the creatures which God hath made, which are pure and holy. Pride, the first-born son of hell, is indeed like its parent, all unclean and vile, and in it there is neither form, fashion, nor comeliness.

In the first place, pride is a *groundless thing*. It standeth on the sands; or worse than that, it puts its foot on the billows which yield beneath its tread; or worse still, it stands on bubbles, which soon must burst beneath its feet. Of all things pride has the worst foothold; it has no solid rock on earth whereon to place itself. We have reasons for almost everything, but we have no reasons for pride. Pride is a thing which should be unnatural to us, for we have nothing to be proud of. What is there in man of which he should glory? Our very creation is enough to humble us; what are we but creatures of to-day? Our frailty should be sufficient to lay us low, for we shall be gone to-morrow. Our ignorance should tend to keep pride from our lips. What are we, but like the wild ass's colt which knoweth nothing? And our sins ought effectually to stop our mouths, and lay us in the dust. Of all things in the world, pride towards God, is that which hath the very least excuse; it hath neither stick nor

stone whereon to build. Yet like the spider, it carrieth its own web in its bowels, and can, of itself, spin that wherewith to catch its prey. It seems to stand upon itself, for it hath nothing besides whereon it can rest. Oh! man, learn to reject pride, seeing that thou hast no reason for it; whatever thou art, thou hast nothing to make thee proud. The more thou hast, the more thou art in debt to God; and thou shouldst not be proud of that which renders thee a debtor. Consider thine origin; look back to the hole of the pit whence thou wast digged. Consider what thou wouldst have been, even now, if it were not for Divine grace. And, consider, that thou will yet be lost in hell if grace does not hold thee up. Consider that amongst the damned, there are none that would have been more damned than thyself, if grace had not kept thee from destruction. Let this consideration humble thee, that thou hast nought whereon to ground thy pride.

Again, it is a *brainless thing* as well as a groundless thing; for it brings no profit with it. There is no wisdom in a self-exaltation. Other vices have some excuse, for men seem to gain by them; avarice, pleasure, lust, have some plea; but the man who is proud sells his soul cheaply. he opens wide the flood-gates of his heart, to let men see how deep is the flood within his soul; then suddenly it floweth out, and all is gone—and all is nothing, for one puff of empty wind, one word of sweet applause—the soul is gone, and not a drop is left. In almost every other sin, we gather up the ashes when the fire is gone; but here, what is left? The covetous man hath his shining gold, but what hath the proud man? He has less than he would have had without his pride, and is no gainer whatever. Oh! man, if thou wert as mighty as Gabriel, and had all his holiness, still thou wouldst be an arrant fool to be proud, for pride would sink thee from thine angel station to the rank of devils, and bring thee from the place where Lucifer, son of the morning, once dwelt, to take up thine abode with hideous fiends in perdition. Pride exalts it head, and seeks to honor itself; but it is of all things most despised. It sought to plant crowns upon its brow, and so it hath done, but its head was hot, and it put an ice crown there, and it melted all away. Poor pride has decked itself out finely sometimes; it hath put on its most gaudy apparel, and said to others, "how brilliant I appear!" but, ah! pride, like a harlequin, dressed in thy gay colours, thou art all the more fool for that; thou art but a gazing stock for fools less foolish than thyself. Thou hast no crown, as thou thinkest thou hast, nothing solid and real, all is empty and vain. If thou, O man, desirest shame, be proud. A monarch has waded through slaughter to a throne, and shut the gates of mercy on mankind to win a little glory; but when he has exalted himself, and has been proud, worms have devoured him, like Herod, or have devoured his empire, till it passed away, and with it his pride and glory. Pride wins no crown; men never honor it, not even the menial slaves of earth; for all men look down on the proud man, and think him less than themselves.

Again, pride is *the maddest thing* that can exist; it feeds upon its own vitals; it will take away its own life, that with its blood may make a purple for its shoulders: it sappeth, and

undermineth its own house that it may build its pinnacles a little higher, and then the whole structure tumbleth down. Nothing proves men so made as pride. For this they have given up rest, and ease, and repose, to find rank and power among men: for this they have dared to risk their hope of salvation, to leave the gentle yoke of Jesus, and go toiling wearily along the way of life, seeking to save themselves by their own works, and at last to stagger into the mire of fell despair. Oh! man, hate pride, flee from it, abhor it, let it not dwell with thee. If thou wantest to have a madman in thy heart, embrace pride, for thou shalt never find one more mad than he.

Then pride is a *protean thing*; it changes its shape; it is all forms in the world; you may find it in any fashion you may choose, you may see it in the beggar's rags as well as in the rich man's garment. It dwells with the rich, and with the poor. The man without a shoe to his foot may be as proud as if he were riding in a chariot. Pride can be found in every rank of society—among all classes of men. Sometimes it is an Arminian, and talks about the power of the creature; then it turns Calvinist, and boasts of its fancied security—forgetful of the Maker, who alone can keep our faith alive. Pride can profess any form of religion; it may be a Quaker, and wear no collar to its coat; it may be a Churchman, and worship God in splendid cathedrals; it may be a Dissenter, and go to the common meeting-house; it is one of the most Catholic things in the world, it attends all kinds of chapels and churches; go where you will, you will see pride. It cometh up with us to the house of God; it goeth with us to our houses; it is found on the mart, and the exchange, in the streets, and everywhere. Let me hint at one or two of the forms which it assumes. Sometimes pride takes the doctrinal shape; it teaches the doctrine of self-sufficiency; it tells us what man *can* do, and will not allow that we are lost, fallen, debased, and ruined creatures, as we are. It hates divine sovereignty, and rails at election. Then if it is driver from that, it takes another form; it allows that the doctrine of free grace is true but does not feel it. It acknowledges that salvation is of the Lord alone, but still it prompts men to seek heaven by their own works, even by the deeds of the law. And when driven from that, it will persuade men to join something with Christ in the matter of salvation; and when that is all rent up, and the poor rag of our righteousness is all burned, pride will get into the Christian's heart as well as the sinner's—it will flourish under the name of self-sufficiency, teaching the Christian that he is "rich and increased in goods, having need of nothing." It will tell him that he does not need daily grace, that past experience will do for to-morrow—that he knows enough, toils enough, prays enough. It will make him forget that he has "not yet attained;" it will not allow him to press forward to the things that are before, forgetting the things that are behind. It enters into his heart, and tempts the believer to set up an independent business for himself, and until the Lord brings about a spiritual bankruptcy, pride will keep him from going to God. Pride has ten thousand shapes; it is not always that stiff and starched gentleman that you picture it; it is a vile, creeping, insinuating thing, that will twist itself like a serpent into our

hearts. It will talk of humility, and prate about being dust and ashes. I have known men talk about their corruption most marvellously, pretending to be all humility, while at the same time they were the proudest wretches that could be found this side the gulf of separation. Oh! my friends, ye cannot tell how many shapes pride will assume; look sharp about you, or you will be deceived by it, and when you think you are entertaining angels, you will find you have been receiving devils unawares.

2. Now, I have to speak of *the seat of pride*—the heart. The true throne of pride everywhere, is the heart of man. If, my dear friends, we desire, by God's grace, to put down pride, the only way is to begin with the heart. Now let me tell you a parable, in the form of an eastern story, which will set this truth in its proper light. A wise man in the east, called a dervish, in his wanderings, came suddenly upon a mountain, and he saw beneath his feet a smiling valley, in the midst of which there flowed a river. The sun was shining on the stream, and the water as it reflected the sunlight, looked pure and beautiful. When he descended, he found it was muddy, and the water utterly unfit for drinking. Hard by he saw a young man, in the dress of a shepherd, who was with much diligence filtering the water for his flocks. At one moment he placed some water into a pitcher, and then allowing it to stand, after it had settled, he poured the clean fluid into a cistern. Then, in another place, he would be seen turning aside the current for a little, and letting it ripple over the sand and stones, that it might be filtered, and the impurities removed. The dervish watched the young man endeavouring to fill a large cistern with clear water; and he said to him, "My son, why all this toil?—what purpose dost thou answer by it?" The young man replied, "Father, I am a shepherd; this water is so filthy that my flock will not drink of it, and, therefore, I am obliged to purify it little by little, so I collect enough in this way that they may drink, but it is hard work." So saying, he wiped the sweat from his brow, for he was exhausted with his toil. "Right well hast thou laboured," said the wise man, "but dost thou know thy toil is not well applied? With half the labour thou mightest attain a better end. I should conceive that the source of this stream must be impure and polluted; let us take a pilgrimage together and see." They then walked some miles, climbing their way over many a rock, until they came to a spot where the stream took its rise. When they came near to it, they saw flocks of wild fowls flying away, and wild beasts of the earth rushing into the forest; these had come to drink, and had soiled the water with their feet. They found an open well, which kept continually flowing, but by reason of these creatures, which perpetually disturbed it, the stream was always turbid and muddy. "My son," said the wise man, "set to work now to protect the fountain and guard the well, which is the source of this stream; and when thou hast done that, if thou canst keep these wild beasts and fowls away, the stream will flow of itself, all pure and clear, and thou wilt have no longer need for thy toil." The young man did it, and as he labored, the wise man said to him, "My son, hear the word of wisdom; if thou art wrong, seek not to correct thine outward life, but seek first to get thy heart correct, for out

of it are the issues of life, and thy life shall be pure when once thy heart is so." So if we would get rid of pride, we should not proceed to arrange our dress by adopting some special costume, or to qualify our language, by using an outlandish tongue, but let us seek of God that he would purify our hearts from pride, and then assuredly if pride is purged from the heart, our life also shall be humble. Make the tree good, and then the fruit shall be good; make the fountain pure, and the stream shall be sweet. Oh! that God might grant us all, by his grace, that our hearts may be kept with diligence, so that pride may never enter there lest we be haughty in our hearts, and find that afterwards cometh wrath.

3. This brings me to the other point, which is, *the consequence of price*—destruction, a fact which we can prove by hundreds of instances in Scripture. When men have become proud, destruction has come upon them. See you yon bright angel chanting the loud anthem of praise before his Maker's throne? Can anything tarnish that angel's glory, rob him of his harp, despoil him of his crown? Yes, see there enters a destroyer whose name is pride. He assaults the angel, and his harp-strings are snapped in twain. His crown is taken from his brow, and his glory is departed, and yon falling spirit descending into hell is he who once was Lucifer, son of the morning. He has now become Father of nights, even the Lord of Darkness, Satan, the Fallen one. See you again that happy pair walking in the midst of luscious fruits, and flowery walks and bowers of Paradise? Can aught spoil Eden, and ruin those happy beings? Yes, pride comes in the shape of a serpent, and asks them to seek to be as gods. They eat of the forbidden fruit, and pride withers their paradise and blasts their Eden. out they go to till the ground, whence they were taken, to beget and to bring forth us who are their children—sons of toil and sorrow. Do you see that man after God's own heart, continually singing his Maker's praise? Can aught make him sad? Can you suppose that he shall ever be laid prostrate on the earth, groaning, and crying, and asking "that the bones which God hath broken may rejoice?" Yes, pride can do that. it will put into his heart that he will number his people, that he will count the tribes of Israel, to show how great and mighty is his empire. It is done, and a terrible pestilence sweeps o'er his land on account of his pride. Let David's aching heart show how destruction comes to a man's glory when he once begins to make a god of it. See that other good and holy man who, like David, was much after God's own heart. He is rich and increased in goods. The Babylonian ambassadors are come, and he shows them all he has. Do you not hear that threatening, "Thy treasures shall be carried away, and thy sons and thy daughters shall be servants to the king of Babylon?" The destruction of Hezekiah's wealth must come, because he is proud thereof. But for the most notable instance of all, let me show you yonder palace, perhaps the most magnificent which has even yet been built. In it there walks one who, lifting up his head on high, as if he were more than mortal man, exclaims, "See ye this great Babylon that I have builded?" Oh! pride, what hast thou done? thou hast more power than a wizard's wand! Mark the mighty builder of Babylon creeping on the earth. Like oxen he is devouring grass;

his nails have grown like birds' claws, his hair like eagles' feathers, and his heart has gone from him. Pride did all that, that it might be fulfilled which God hath written, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty."

Is thine heart haughty, *sinner*, this morning? Dost thou despise God's sovereignty? Wilt thou not submit thyself to Christ's yoke? Dost thou seek to weave a righteousness of thine own? Art thou seeking to be or to do something? Art thou desirous of being great and mighty in thine own esteem? Hear me then, sinner, destruction is coming upon thee. As truly as ever thou exaltest thyself, thou shalt be abased; thy *destruction*, in the fullest and blackest sense of the word, is hurrying on to overwhelm thee. And oh! Christian, is thine heart haughty this morning? Art thou come here glorying in thy graces? Art thou proud of thyself, that thou hast had such high frames and such sweet experiences? Mark thee, brother, there is a destruction coming to thee also. Some of thy proud things will be pulled up by the roots, some of thy graces will be shattered, and thy good works, perhaps, will become loathsome to thee, and thou wilt abhor thyself in dust and ashes. As truly as ever thou exaltest thyself, there will be a destruction come to thee, O saint—the destruction of thy joys and of thy comforts, though there can be no destruction of thy soul.

Pride, you know, is most likely to meet with destruction, because it is too tall to walk upright. It is most likely to tumble down, because it is always looking upward in its ambition, and never looks to its feet. There only needs to be a pitfall in the way, or even a stone, and down it goes. It is sure to tumble, because it is never contented with being where it is. It is always seeking to be climbing, and boys that will climb must expect to fall. Pride is foolhardy, and will venture upon scaling any rock. Sometimes it holds on by a brier, and that pricks it; sometimes by a flint, and that cuts it. There it goes, toiling and laboring on, till it gets as high as it can, and then, from its very height, it is likely to fall. Nature itself tells us to avoid high things. Who is he that can stand upon an eminence without a reeling brain, and without a temptation to cast himself down? Pride, when most successful, stands in slippery places. Who would choose to dwell on a pinnacle of the temple? That is where pride has built its house, and verily it seems but natural that pride should down if pride will up. God will carry out this saying, "Before destruction, the heart of man is haughty." Yet beloved, I am persuaded that all I can say to you, or to myself, can never keep pride from us. The Lord alone can bolt the door of the heart against pride. Pride is like the flies of Egypt; all Pharaoh's soldiers could not keep them out; and I am sure all the strong resolutions and devout aspirations we may have cannot keep pride out unless the Lord God Almighty sends a strong wind of his Holy Spirit to sweep it away.

II. Now, let us consider briefly the last part of the text, "BEFORE HONOR IS HUMILITY." So then, you see our heavenly Father does not say that we are not to have honor. He has not forbidden it; he has only forbidden us to be proud of it. A good man may have honor in this life. Daniel had honor before the people; Joseph rode in the second chariot,

and the people bowed the knee before him. God often clothes his children with honor in the face of their adversaries, and makes the wicked confess that the Lord is with them in deed and in truth. But God forbids our making that honor a cloak for pride, and bids us seek humility which always accompanies as well as precedes true honor.

1. Now let us briefly enquire, in the first place, *what is humility?* The best definition I have ever met with is, "to think rightly of ourselves." Humility is to make a right estimate of one's-self. It is no humility for a man to think less of himself than he ought, though it might rather puzzle him to do that. Some persons, when they know they can do a thing, tell you they cannot; but you do not call that humility? A man is asked to take part in some meeting. "No," he says, "I have no ability;" yet, if you were to say so yourself, he would be offended at you. It is not humility for a man to stand up and depreciate himself and say he cannot do this, that, or the other, when he knows that he is lying. If God gives a man a talent, do you think the man does not know it? If a man has ten talents he has no right to be dishonest to his Maker, and to say, "Lord, thou hast only give me five." It is not humility to underrate yourself, Humility is to think of yourself, if you can, as God thinks of you. It is to feel that if we have talents, God has given them to us, and let it be seen that, like freight in a vessel, they tend to sink us low. The more we have, the lower we ought to lie. Humility is not to say, "I have not this gift," but it is to say, "I have the gift, and I must use it for my Master's glory. I must never seek any honor for myself, for what have I that I have not received?" But, beloved, humility is to feel ourselves lost, ruined, and undone. To be killed by the same hand which, afterwards, makes us alive, to be ground to pieces as to our own doings and willings, to know and trust in none but Jesus, to be brought to feel and sing—

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling."

Humility is to feel that we have no power of ourselves, but that it all cometh from God. Humility is to lean on our beloved, to believe that he has trodden the winepress alone, to lie on his bosom and slumber sweetly there, to exalt him, and think less than nothing of ourselves. It is in fact, to annihilate self, and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as all in all.

2. Now, what is *the seat or throne of humility?* The throne of humility must be the heart. I do hate, of all things, that humility which lives in the face. There are some persons who always seem to be so very humble when you are with them, but you can discover there is something underneath it all, and when they are in some other society, they will brag and say how you told them your whole heart. Take heed of the men who allow you to lay your head in their lap and betray you into the hands of the Philistines. I have met with such persons. I remember a man who used to pray with great apparent humility, and then would go and abuse the servants, and make a noise with all his farming men. He was the stiffest and proudest man in the church, yet he invariably used to tell the Lord, in prayer, that he was nothing but dust and ashes, that he laid his hand on his lip, and his mouth in the dust, and

cried, "Unclean, unclean." Indeed he talked of himself in the most despairing way, but I am sure if God had spoken to him, he must have said, "O, thou that liest before my throne, thou sayest this, but thou dost not feel it; for thou wilt go thy way and take thy brother by the throat, exalt thyself above all thy fellow-creatures, and be a very Diotrephes in the church, and a Herod in the world." I dislike that humility which rests in outward things. There is a kind of oil, sanctimonious, proud humility, which is not the genuine article, though it is sometimes extremely like it. You may be deceived by it once or twice, but by-and-bye you discover that is a wolf dexterously covered with sheep's clothing. It arrayeth itself in the simplest dress in the world; it talks in the gentlest and humblest style; it says, "We must not intrude our own peculiar sentiments, but must always walk in love and charity." But after all, what is it? It is charitable to all except those who hold God's truth, and it is humble to all when it is forced to humble. It is like one of whom, I dare say, you have read in your childish books,—

"So, stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot stand upright."

True humility does not continually talk about "dust and ashes," and prate about its infirmities, but *it feels* all that which others say, for it possesses an inwrought feeling of its own nothingness.

Very likely the most humble man in the world won't bend to anybody. John Knox was a truly humble man, yet if you had seen him march before Queen Mary with the Bible in his hand, to reprove her, you would have rashly said, "What a proud man!"

Cringing men that bow before everybody, are truly proud men; but humble men are those who think themselves so little, they do not think it worth while to stoop to serve themselves. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were humble men, for they did not think their lives were worth enough to save them by a sin. Daniel was a humble man; he did not think his place, his station, his whole self, worth enough to save them by leaving off prayer. Humility is a thing which must be genuine; the imitation of it is the nearest thing in the world to pride. Seek of God, dear friends, the gift of true humility. Seek to have that breaking in pieces by the Holy Spirit, that breaking in the mortar with the pestle which God himself gives to his children. Seek that every twig of his rod may drive pride out of you, so that by the blueness of your wound, your soul may be made better. Seek of him, if he does not show you the chambers of imagery within your own heart, that he may take you to Calvary, and that he may show you his brightness and his glory, that you may be humble before him. Never ask to be a mean, cringing, fawning thing: ask God to make you a man—those are scarce things now-a-days—a man who only fears God, who knows no fear of any other kind. Do not give yourselves up to any man's power, or guidance, or rule, but ask of God that you may have that humility towards him, which gives you the noble bearing of a Christian before others. Some think that minister are proud when they resent any interference with their

ministry. I consider they would be proud if they allowed it for the sake of peace, which is only another word for their own self-seeking. It is a great mercy when God gives a man to be free from everybody, when he can go into his pulpit, careless of what others may think of him. I conceive that a minister should be like a lighthouse-keeper; he is out at sea, and nobody can suggest to him that he had better light his candles a little later, or anything of the kind. He knows his duty, and he keeps his lamps burning; if he were to follow the opinions of the people on shore, his light might be extinguished altogether. It is a merciful providence that they cannot get to him, so he goes on easily, obeys his regulations as he reds them, and cares little for other people's interpretation. So a minister should not be a weathercock, that is turned by the wind, but he should be one who turns the wind; not one who is ruled by others, but one who knows how to stand firm and fast, and keep his light burning, trusting always in God; believing, that if God has raised him up, he will not desert him, but will teach him by his Holy Spirit, without the ever-changing advice of men.

3. Now, in the last place, *what comes of humility?* "Before honor is humility." Humility is the herald which ushers in the great king; it walks before honor; and e who has humility, will have honor afterwards. I will only apply this spiritually. Have you been brought to-day to feel, that in yourself you are less than nothing, and vanity? Art thou humbled in the sight of God, to know thine own unworthiness, thy fallen estate in Adam, and the ruin thou hast brought upon thyself by thine own sins? Hast thou been brought to feel thyself incapable of working out thy own salvation, unless God shall work in thee, to will and to do of his own good pleasure? Hast thou been brought to say, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner?" Well, then, as true as the text is in the Bible, thou shalt have honor by-and-bye. "Such honor have all the saints." Thou shalt have honor soon to be washed from all thy guilt; thou shalt have honor soon to be clothed in the robes of Jesus, in the royal garments of the King; thou shalt have honor soon to be adopted into his family, to be received amongst the blood-washed ones who have been justified by faith. Thou shalt have honor to be borne, as on eagles' wings, to be carried across the river, and at last to sing his praise, who has been the "Death of deaths, and hell's destruction." Thou shalt have honor to wear the crown, and wave the palm one day, for thou hast now that humility which comes from God. You may fear that because you are now humbled by God, you must perish. I beseech you do not think so; as truly as ever the Lord has humbled you, he will exalt you. And the more you are brought low, the less hope you have of mercy; the more you are in the dust, so much the more reason you have to hope. So far from the bottom of the sea being a place over which we cannot be carried to heaven, it is one of the nearest places to heaven's gate. And if thou art brought to the very lowest place to which even Jonah descended, thou art so much the nearer being accepted. The more thou knowest thy vileness; remember the blacker, the more filthy, the more unworthy thou art in thine own esteem, so much the more right hast thou to expect that thou wilt be saved. Verily, honor shall come after humility. Humble souls,

rejoice; proud souls, go on in your proud ways, but know that they end in destruction. Climb up the ladder of your pride, you shall fall over on the other side and be dashed to pieces. Ascend the steep hill of your glory; the higher you climb the more terrible will be your fall. For know you this, that against none hath the Lord Almighty bent his bow more often, and against none has he shot his arrows more furiously than against the proud and mighty man that exalteth himself. Bow down, O man, bow down; "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

Making Light of Christ

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At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise."—Matthew 22:5.

MAN is not much changed since the days of Adam. In his bodily frame he appears to be exactly similar, for skeletons many hundred years' old are the exact counterparts of ours; and sure enough that which was recorded in history as having been done by man centuries ago, might be written again, for "there is nothing new under the sun." The same class of men is still to be discovered (although, perhaps, differently dressed) as that which existed ages long gone by. There are still men who answer the character given to others, in his day, by the Saviour, "They go their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise,: making light of the glorious things of the gospel. I am certain I have many such characters here to-night, and I pray the Lord that I may be enabled to discourse to them very solemnly and very pointedly. And I must ask all you who understand the heavenly art of prayer, to pray that God would be pleased to send home every thought into the breast where he intends it to lodge, that it may bring forth the comfortable fruit of righteousness in the salvation of many souls. "They made light of it;" so do too many in this day; and so will a large portion of my hearers to-night. I believe that to think lightly of Christ is a sin; and at all risks of being falsely called legalist, or free-willer, by those who are wise above what is written, I shall charge it upon you as such, for I hope I shall never belong to that class of Calvinists who do the devil's work by excusing sinners in their sins.

In the first place, we shall have a few words with you, concerning *what it is that the sinner makes light of*; secondly, *how it is that he makes light of it*; and thirdly, *why it is that he makes light of it*. Then a general observation or two, and we shall not weary you.

In the first place, WHAT IS IT THAT THE SINNER MAKES LIGHT OF? According to the parable, the person alluded to made light of a marriage banquet which a king had provided, with all kinds of dainties, to which they were freely invited, and from which they willfully absented themselves. The spiritual meaning of this is easy to discover. Sinners who make light of Christ express their contempt of a glorious banquet which God has provided at the marriage of His Son. This is solemn ground to tread upon. Oh! for the teachings of the Holy Spirit.

Taking this parable as the basis of our remarks, we may observe, first, that the sinner makes light of *the messenger who brings him the news that the marriage supper is prepared.*

These men refused to come; they went—"One to his farm, another to his merchandise," and so made light of the messenger; and every sinner who neglects the great salvation of Jesus Christ, makes light of the gospel minister, which is no little insult in God's esteem. It is never reckoned a small offence by our great nation, if our ambassador is treated with indifference; and take it for a truth, it is no light thing with God if you despise the ambassadors he sends to you. But this is comparatively little; the ambassadors are men like yourselves, who can well afford to be contemned, if that were all. In fact, we should be glad enough to forgive you if it were in our power to do so, and if this were all your guilt.

But these people *despised the feast*. Some of them fancies that the fatlings, and other provisions that would be upon the table, would be no better than what they had at home. They thought that the royal banquet would be no very great thing for which to give up their merchandise for a day, or to renounce their farming even for an hour. Oh! sinner, when thou neglectest the great salvation, remember what thou dost despise; when thou makest light of God's gospel, thou makest light of justification by faith; thou makest light of washing in the blood of Jesus; thou makest light of the Holy Spirit; thou makest light of the road to heaven; and then thou makest light of faith, and hope, and love; thou makest light of all the promises of the eternal covenant, of all the glorious things that God has laid up for them that love him, and of everything which he hath revealed in his Word as being the promised gift to those who come unto him. It is a solemn thing to make light of the gospel, for in that Word, God's-spell—good tidings, is summed up all that human nature can require, and all that even the saints in bliss can receive. Oh! to despise the gospel of the blessed God, how mad! how worse than folly! Despise the stars, and thou art a fool; despise God's earth, with its glorious mountains, with its flowing rivers, and its fair meads, and thou art a maniac; but despise God's gospel, and thou art ten thousand maniacs in one. Make light of that, and thou art far more foolish than he who sees no light in the sun, who beholds no fairness in the moon, and no brilliancy in the starry firmament. Trample, if you please, his lower works; but oh! remember, when you make light of the gospel, you are making light of the masterpiece of your great Creator—that which cost him more than to create a myriad of worlds—the bloody purchase of our Saviour's agonies.

And, again, these people *made light of the King's Son*. In was *his* marriage, and inasmuch as they absented themselves, they did dishonour to that glorious One in whose honour the supper was prepared. They slighted him whom his Father loved. Ah! sinner, when thou makest light of the gospel, thou makest light of Christ—of that Christ before whom glorious cherubs bow themselves—of that Christ at whose feet the high archangel thinks it happiness to cast his crown; thou makest light of him with whose praise the vault of heaven rings; thou makest light of him whom God makes much of, for he has called him, "God over all, blessed for ever." Ah! it is a solemn thing to make light of Christ. Despise a prince, and ye shall have little honour at the king's hand for it; but despise the Son of God, and the Father will have

vengeance on you for his slighted Son. Oh! my dear friends, it seems to me to be a sin, not unpardonable, I know, but still most heinous, that men should ever despise my blessed Lord Jesus Christ and treat him with cruel scorn. Make light of thee, sweet Jesus! Oh! when I see thee with thy shirt of gore, wrestling in Gethsemane, I bow myself o'er thee, and I say, "O, Redeemer, bleeding for sin, can any sinner make light of thee?" When I behold him with a river of blood rolling down his shoulder, beneath the cursed flagellation of Pilate's whip, I ask, "Can a sinner make light of such a Saviour as this?" And when I see him yonder, covered with his blood, nailed to a tree, expiring in torture, shrieking, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," I ask myself, "Can any make light of this?" Ay, if they do, then, indeed, it were sin enough to damn them, if they have no other sin—that they have lightly esteemed the Prince of Peace, who is glorious and altogether lovely. Oh! my friend, if thou makest light of Christ, thou hast insulted the only one who can save thee—the only one who can bear thee across the Jordan—the only one who can unbolt the gates of heaven, and give thee welcome. Let no preacher of smooth things persuade thee that this is not crime. O, sinner, think of thy sin, if thou art making light of him, for then art thou making light of the King's only Son.

And yet again, these people *made light also of the King* who had prepared the banquet, Ah! little dost thou know, O sinner, when thou dost trifle with the gospel, that thou art insulting God. I have heard some say, "Sir, I do not believe in Christ, but still I am sure I try to reverence God; I do not care about the gospel, I do not wish to be washed in Jesu's blood, nor to be saved in free grace fashion; but I do not despise God; I am a natural religionist!" Nay, sir, but thou dost insult the Almighty, inasmuch as thou dost deny his Son. Despise a man's offspring, and thou hast insulted the man himself; reject the only begotten Son of God, and thou hast rejected the eternal one himself. There is no such thing as true natural religion apart from Christ; it is a lie and a falsehood, it is the refuge of a man who is not brave enough to say he hates God, but it is only a refuge of lies; for he who denieth Christ in that act offendeth God, and shutteth up heaven's gates against himself. There is no loving the Father except through the Son; and there is no acceptable worship of the Father, except through the Great High Priest the Mediator, Jesus Christ. Oh! my friend, remember thou hast not merely despised the gospel, but thou hast despised the gospel's God. In laughing at the doctrines of revelation, thou hast laughed at God; in reviling the truth of the gospel, thou hast reviled God himself, thou hast bent thy fist in the face of the Eternal; thine oaths have not fallen upon the church, they have fallen upon God himself. Oh! remember, ye that mock at the message of Christ! Oh! remember, ye that turn away from the ministry of truth! God is a mighty one; how severely *can* he punish! God is a jealous God; oh! how severely *will* he punish! Make light of God, sinner? Why, this above all things is a damning sin, and in committing it, it may be thou wilt one day sign thine own death-warrant; for making light of God, of Christ, and of his holy gospel, is destroying one's own soul, and rushing headlong to perdition. Ah! unhappy souls, most unhappy must ye be, if ye live and die

making light of Christ, and preferring your farms and your merchandise to the treasures of the gospel.

Again: bethink thee, my poor, pitiable friend, in that thou makest light of all the things I have mentioned, *thou art making light of the great solemnities of eternity*. The Man who lightly esteems the gospel makes light of hell; he thinks its fires are not hot, and its flames not such as Christ has described them; he makes light of the burning tears that scald despairing cheeks for ever; he makes light of the yells and shrieks that must be the doleful songs and terrible music of perishing souls. Ah! it is no wise thing to make light of hell.

Consider again: thou makest light of heaven—that place to which the blest ones long to go, where glory reigns without a cloud, and bliss without a sigh. Thou puttest the crown of everlasting life beneath thy feet; thou treadest the palm-branch beneath thine unhallowed foot and thou thinkest it little to be saved, and little to be glorified. "Ah! poor soul, when thou art once in hell, and when the iron key is turned for ever in the lock of inevitable destiny, thou wilt find hell to be a something not so easy to despise; and when thou hast lost heaven and all its bliss, and canst only hear the song of the blessed, sounding faintly in the distance, increasing thy misery by contrast with their joy, then thou wilt find it no little thing to have made light of heaven. Every man who makes light of religion makes light of these things. He misjudges the value of his own soul, and the importance of its eternal state.

This is what men make light of, "Oh! sir," says one, "I never indulge in any words hostile to God's truth, I never laugh at the minister, nor do I despise the Sabbath." Stop, my friend, I will acquit thee of all that; and yet I will solemnly lay to thy charge this great sin of making light of the gospel. Hear me then!

II. HOW IS IT THAT MEN MAKE LIGHT OF IT?

In the first, it is making light of the gospel and of the whole of God's glorious things, *when men go to hear and yet do not attend*. How many frequent churches and chapels to indulge in a comfortable nap! Think what a fearful insult that is to the King of heaven. Would they enter into Her Majesty's palace, ask an audience, and then go to sleep before her face? And yet the sin of sleeping in Her Majesty's presence, would not be so great, even against her laws, as the sin of wilfully slumbering in God's sanctuary. How many go to our houses of worship who do not sleep, but who sit with vacant stare, listening as they would to a man would could not play a lively tune upon a good instrument. What goeth in at one earth goeth out at another. Whatever entereth the brain goeth out without ever affecting the heart. Ah, my hearers, you are guilty of making light of God's gospel, when you sit under a sermon without attending to it! Oh! what would lost souls give to the hear another sermon! What would yonder dying wretch who is just now nearing the grave, give for another Sabbath! And what will you give, one of these days, when you shall be hard by Jordan's brink, that you might have one more warning, and listen once more to the wooing voice of God's

minister! We make light of the gospel when we hear it, without solemn and awful attention to it.

But some say they *do* attend. Well, it is possible to attend to the gospel, and yet to make light of it. I have seen some men weep beneath a powerful sermon; I have marked the tears chase each other—tears, blessed tell-tales of emotions within. I have sometimes said to myself, it is marvellous to see these people weep under some telling word from God, which is alarming them, as if Sinai itself were thundering in their ears. But there is something more marvellous than men's weeping under the word. It is the fact that they soon, too soon, wipe all their tears away. But ah! my dear hearer, recollect that if thou hearest of these things and shakest off a solemn impression, thou art, in doing that, slighting God and making light of his truth; and take heed how you do that, lest your own garments be red with the blood of your soul, and it be said, "Oh, Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself."

But there are others who make light of it in a different fashion. They hear the word and attend to it; but, alas! *they attend to something else with it*.

Oh! my hearer, thou makest light of Christ, if thou puttest him anywhere save in the centre of thine heart. He who gives Christ a little of his affections, makes light of Christ; for Christ will have the whole heart or none at all. He who gives Christ a portion, and the world a portion, despises Christ, for he seems to think that Christ does not deserve to have the whole. And inasmuch as he says that, or thinks that, he hath mean and unholy thoughts of Christ. Oh! carnal man, thou who art half religious, and half profane; thou who art sometimes serious, but as often frivolous; sometimes apparently pious, but yet so often unholy, thou makest light of Christ. And ye who weep on the Sunday, and then go back to your sins on the Monday; ye who set the world and its pleasures before Christ, ye think less of him than he deserves; and what is that but to make light of him? Oh! I charge you, ask yourself, my hearer this night, art not thou the man? dost thou not thou thyself make light of Christ? The self-righteous man who sets himself up as a partner with Christ in the matter of salvation, notwithstanding all his trumpery good works, is such a ringleader among despisers, that I would gibbet him in the very middle of them, and bid all like him tremble, lest they also be found slighters of Jesus.

He makes light of Christ, again, *who makes a profession of religion, and yet does not live up to it*. Ah! church members, ye want a great deal of sifting; we have an immense quantity of chaff now mixed with the wheat; and sometimes I think we have something worse than that. We have some in our churches that are not so good as chaff, for they do not seem to have been near the wheat at all; they are nothing better than tares. They have come into our churches, just as they would into a trade-association, because they think it will improve their business. It gives respectability to their name to take the sacrament; it makes them esteemed to have been baptized, or to be a member of a Christian church; and so they come in by shoals after the loaves and fishes, but not after Jesus Christ. Ah! hypocrite, thou makest

light of Christ if thou thinkest that he is a stalkinghorse to get thee wealth. If thou dreamest that thou art to saddle and bridle Christ, and ride to wealth upon him, thou makest a grand mistake, for he was never meant to carry men anywhere except to heaven. If you suppose that religion was intended to gild your homes, to carpet your floors, and line your purses, you have greatly erred. It was intended to be profitable to the soul; and he who thinks to use religion to his own personal advantage thinks lightly of Christ: and at the last day this crime shall be laid to his charge—that he has made light of it;" and the King shall send his armies to cut him in pieces, among those who have despised his Majesty, and would not obey his laws.

III. And now, in the third place, I will tell you WHY THEY MADE LIGHT OF IT. They did so from different reasons.

Some of them made light of it *because they were ignorant*; they did not know how good the feast was; they did not know how gracious the king was; they did not know how fair the Prince was, or else they might have thought differently. Now, there are many present to-night, I dare say, who think lightly of the gospel, because they do not understand it. I have often heard people laugh at religion; but ask them what it is, and they know no more about religion than a horse, and worse than that, for they believe untruths about it, and a horse does not do that. They laugh at it, simply because they do not comprehend it; it is a thing beyond them. We have heard of a foolish man who, whenever he heard a piece of Latin mentioned, laughed at it, because he thought it was a joke, at any rate it was a very outlandish way of talking—and so he laughed. So it is with many when they hear the gospel; they do not know what it is, and so they laugh at it. "Oh!" they say, "the man is mad." But why is he mad? Because you do not understand him. Are you so conceited as to suppose that all wisdom and all learning must rest with you? I would hint to you that the madness is on the other side. And though you may say of him, "Much learning hath made thee mad;" we would reply, "It is quite as easy to be made mad with none at all." And those who have none, and especially those who have no knowledge of Christ, are the most likely to despise him. Well did Watts say—

"His worth, if all the nations knew,
Sure, the whole earth would love him too."

Oh! dear friends, if you once knew what a blessed master Christ is, if you once knew what a blessed thing the gospel is, if you could once be brought to believe what a blessed God our God is, if you could only have one hour's enjoyment such as the Christian experiences, if you could only have one promise applied to your heart, you would never make light of the gospel again. Oh! you say you do not like it! Why, you have never tried it? Should a man despise the wine of which he has never sipped. It may be sweeter than he dreams? Oh! taste and see that the Lord is good, and so sure as ever you taste, you will see his goodness. I will venture to say, again, that there are many who make light of the gospel, simply through

ignorance; and if that is so, I am somewhat in hopes that when they are a little enlightened by sitting under the Word, the Lord may be pleased graciously to bring them to himself; and then I know they will never make light of Christ again. Oh! do not be ignorant, "for that the soul be without knowledge is not good." Seek to know him whom to know aright is life eternal; and when you know him you will never make light of him.

Other people make light of it *because of pride*. "What is the good," said one, "of bringing me that invitation? Step into my house, my man, I will show you a feast quite as good as any you can tell me of. Look here! there is good cheer for you; my table is as well spread as any man's; begging his Majesty's pardon, the King cannot give a better feast than I; and I do not see why I should drag my bones about to get nothing better than I can get at home." So he would not go, out of pride. And so with some of you. *You* want to be washed! No, you were never filthy; were you? *You* need to be forgiven! Oh no! you are rather too good for that. Why, you are so awfully pious in your own conceit, that if it were all true, you would make even the angel Gabriel blush to think of you. You do not think even an angel capable of holding a candle to you. What! you seek for mercy? It is an insult to you. "Go and tell the drunkard," you say, "go and fetch the harlot; but I am a respectable man; I always go to church or chapel; I am a very good sort of fellow; I may frolic now and then, but I make it up some other day; I am sometimes a little slack, but then I rein the horses in, and make up the distance afterwards; and I dare say I shall get to heaven as soon as anybody else. I am a very good sort." Well, my friend, I do not wonder that you despise the gospel, for the gospel just tells you that you are entirely lost. It tells you that your very righteousness is full of sin. That, as for any hope of your being saved by it, you might as well try to sail across the Atlantic on a sere leaf as try to get to heaven by your righteousness. And as for it being a garment fit to cover you, you might as well get a spider's web to go to court in, and think it a dress fit to appear in before her Majesty. Ah! my hearer, I know why thou despisest Christ; it is because of thy Satanic pride. May the Lord pull the pride out of thee; for if he do not, it will be the faggot that shall roast thy soul for ever. Take heed of pride; by pride fell the angels—how can men, then, though the image of their Maker, hope to win by it? Shun it, flee from it; for so sure as thou art proud, wilt thou incur the guilt of making light of Christ.

Perhaps quite as many made light of the good news, because *they did not believe the messenger*. "Oh!" said they, "stop a moment. What! a dinner to be given away? I do not believe it. What! the young Prince going to be married? Tell that to fools, we do not believe any such thing. What! we all invited? We do not believe it; the story is incredible." The poor messenger went home and told his Master that they would not believe him. That is just another reason why many men make light of the gospel, because they do not believe it. "What!" they say, "Jesus Christ died to wash men from their sins? We do not believe it. What! A heaven. Who ever saw it? A hell! Who ever heard its groans? What! Eternity. Who ever returned from that last hope of every spirit. What! Blessedness in religion? We do not believe

it—it is a moping, miserable thing. What! Sweetness in the promises? No there is not; we believe there is sweetness in the world, but we do not believe there is any in the wells the Lord has digged." And so they despise the gospel, because they do not believe it. But, I am sure, that when a man once believes it, he never thinks lightly of it. Once let me have the solemn conviction in my heart by the Holy Spirit, that if unsaved, there is a gaping gulf that shall devour me; do you think I can go to rest till I have trembled from head to foot? Once let me heartily believe that there is a heaven provided for those who believe on Christ, do you think I could give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, till I have wept because it is not mine? I believe not. But damnable unbelief thrusts his hand into the mouth of an, and plucks up his heart, and so destroys him, for it will not let him believe, and, therefore, he cannot feel, because he believeth not. Oh! my friends, it is unbelief that makes men think lightly of Christ; but unbelief will not do so by-and-bye. There are no infidels in hell; they are all believers there. There are many that were infidels here, but they are not so now; the flames are too hot to make them doubt their existence. It is hard for a man, tormented in the flame, to doubt the existence of the fire. It would be difficult for a man, standing before the burning eyes of God, to doubt the existence of a God after that. Ah! unbelievers, turn ye, or rather, may the Lord turn you from your unbelief, for this makes you think lightly of Christ; and this is it that is taking away your life, and destroying your souls.

Another set of people thought lightly of this feast *because they were so worldly*; they had so much to do. I have heard of a rich merchant who was waited on one day by a godly man, and when he stopped him, he said to him, "Well, sir, what is the state of your soul?" "Soul!" he said, "bother you, I have no time to take care of my soul; I have enough to do to take care of my ships." About a week after, it so happened that he had to find time to die, for God took him away. We fear he said to him, "Thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast hoarded up for thyself?" Ye merchants of London, there are many of you who read your ledgers more than your Bibles. Perhaps you must, but ye do not read your Bibles at all, while ye read your ledgers every day. In America, it is said, they worship the almighty dollar; I believe that in London many men worship the almighty sovereign; they have the greatest possible respect for an almighty bank note; that is the god which many men are always adoring. The prayer-book they carry so religiously in their hands is their cash-book. Even on Sunday, there is a gentleman over there, he does not think his foreman knows it, but he was sitting in doors all this morning, because it was wet, casting up his accounts; and now he comes here in the evening, because he is a very pious man—extraordinarily so. He would shut the parks up on a Sunday, he would—he would not let a soul get a breath of fresh air, because he is so pious, but he himself may sit for half-a-day in the counting-house and yet think it no sin. But many are too busy to think of these things. "Pray!" they say, "I have no time for that; I have to pay. What! read the Bible? No I cannot; I have to be looking over this thing and that thing, and seeing how

the markets go. I find time to read the *Times*, but I could not think of reading the Bible." It will be marvellously unfortunate for some of you, that you will find the lease of your lives rather shorter than you expected. If you had taken a lease of your lives for eighty-eight years from this date, you would be foolish enough, perhaps, to spend forty-four in sin. But considering that you are a tenant at will, and liable to be turned out any day, it is the height of folly, the very climax of absurdity, excelling all that the fool, with his cap and bells, ever did, to be living just to gather up the pelf of this world, and not for things to come. Worldliness is a demon that hath wrung the neck of many souls; God grant that we may not perish through our worldliness!

There is another class of people that I can only characterize in this way: *they are altogether thoughtless*. If you ask them concerning religion, they have no opinion at all about it. They do not positively detest it, they do not mock at it; but they have not a thought about it. The fact of it is, they intend thinking about it by-and-bye. Theirs is a kind of butterfly existence; they are always moving about, never doing anything, neither for others or themselves. And these are very amiable people, who are always ready to give a guinea for a charity; they never refuse anybody, and they would give their guinea all the same, whether it was for a cricket match or a church. Now, if I were forced to go back to the world, and had to chose the character I would wish to be, the last position I would wish to occupy would be that of the thoughtless man. I believe thoughtless persons are in the most danger of being lost of any class I know. I like, sometimes to get under the word a thoroughly stout, stiff, hater of the gospel, for his heart is like a flint, and when it is struck with the hammer of the gospel the flint goes to pieces in a moment. But these thoughtless people have india-rubber hearts—you hit them, and they give way; you strike them again, and they give way. If they are sick, and you visit them, they say "yes." You talk to them about the importance of religion; they say "yes." You talk to them about escaping from hell and entering heaven, they say "Yes." You preach a sermon to them when they are better, and remind them of the vows they made in their sickness; "it is quite right, sir," they say. And they say the same whatever you may tell them. They are always very polite to you; but whatever you say to them is put aside. If you begin talking to them about drunkards; oh! they are not drunkards; they may have accidently got drunk once, but that was a little thing out of the usual way. And bring whatever sin you like to them, you may hit them, and hit them, but it is no good, for they are not half so easily broken (speaking after the manner of men) as the real stout-hearted hater of the gospel. Why, there is a sailor comes rolling home from sea, swearing, blaspheming, cursing; he comes into the house of God, and almost the first word is applied by the Spirit for the breaking of Jack's heart. Another young man says, "I know as much as any minister can tell me; for my own mother taught me, and my old father used to read the Bible to me till, I believe, I have got every bit of it in my head. I go to chapel out of respect to his memory, but I really don't care at all about it; it is very good for old people, it is quite right

for old women, and those who are dying, and in time of cholera. It is a very good thing, but I don't care anything about it just now." Now, I tell you, careless people, most solemnly, that you are the very devil's lifeguards; you are his reserve; he keeps you away from the battle, he does not send you out like he does a blasphemer, for he fears that a shot may haply light upon you, and you may be saved. But he says, "Stand by here, and if you have to go out I will give you an inpenetrable coat of mail." The arrows go rattling against you; they all hit you; but alas! there is not one of them that penetrates your heart, for that is left elsewhere. You are only an empty chrysalis, and when you come to God's house, and his word is preached, you make light of it, because it is your habit to be thoughtless about everything.

Very briefly I must touch another case, and then I must dismiss you. You may make light of the gospel *out of sheer presumption*. They are like the foolish man who goes on, and is punished; not like the prudent man, who "forseeth the evil, and hideth himself." They go on; that step is safe—they take it; the next step is safe—they take it; their foot hangs over a gulf of darkness; but they will try one step, and as that is safe, they think they will try the next; and as the last has been safe, and as for many years they have been safe, they suppose they always shall be; and because they have not died yet, they think they will never die. And so out of sheer presumption, thinking "all men mortal but themselves," they go on making light of Christ. Tremble, ye presumptuous, you will not always be able to do that.

And, lastly, I fear there are a great many who make light of Christ *because of the commonness of the gospel*. It is preached everywhere, and that is why you make light of it. You can hear it at the corner of every street; you can read it in this widely circulated Bible; and because the gospel is so common, therefore, you don't care for it. Ah! my dear friends, if there were only one gospel minister in London that could tell you the truth; if there were only one Bible in London, I believe you would be rushing to hear that Bible read; and the man who had the message would have no sinecure of it, he would be obliged to work from morning to night, to tell it out to you. But now, because you have so many Bibles you forget to read them; because you have so many tracts you pack up any article in them; because you have so many sermons you do not think anything at all of them. But what is that? Dost thou think the less of the sun because he scatters his beams abroad? Dost thou think the less of bread because it is the food which God gives to all his children? Dost thou think the less of water, when thou art thirsty, because every rill will afford it to thee? No. If thou wert athirst after Christ, thou wouldst love him all the better, because he is preached everywhere; and thou wouldst not think lightly of him because of that.

"They made light of it." How many of my hearers to-night, I ask again, are making light of Christ? Many of you are, no doubt. I will give you, then, just one warning, and then farewell. Make light of Christ, sinner! let me say, again, to thee, and thou wilt rue the day, when thou comest on thy death-bed. It will go hard with thee when the bony monster has got the grip of thee, and when he is bringing thee down to the river, to steep thee in the lake

of death. It will go hard with thee, when thy eye-strings break, and when thy death-sweat stands upon the brow. Remember, last time thou hadst a fever; ah! how thou didst shake. Remember, last night, how thou didst quake in thy bed, when flash after flash of lightning came through thy window; and how thou didst tremble when the deep-mouthed thunder spake out the voice of God. Ah! sinner, thou wilt tremble worse then when thou shalt see death for thyself, and when the bony rider, on his white horse, shall grasp his dart and plunge it in thy bowels. It will go hard with thee if thou hast despised Christ, and shalt die a despiser. See that flying angel? his wings are made of flame, and in his hand he grasps a sharp two-edged sword. O angel, wherefore dost thou wing thy speedy flight? "Hark!" says he, "this trump shall tell you." And he puts a trumpet to his lips, and

"Blows a blast so loud and dread,

Ne'er were prophetic sounds so full of woe."

Look! the sheeted dead have started from their graves. Behold, the cloudy chariot of wheeled along by cherub's hand. Mark! there upon the throne there sits the King—the Prince. O angel, what in this terrible day must become of the man that has thought lightly of Christ? See there, he unleashes his sword. "This blade," says he, "shall find and pierce him through. This blade, like a sickle, shall reap each tare from the wheat, and this strong arm shall bind him up in his bundle to be burned; and this great arm of mine shall grasp him, and hurl him down, down, down, where flames for ever burn, and hell for ever howls." It will go hard with you then. Mark this man's word to-night; go away and laugh at it; but remember, I say to you again, it will be a solemn thing for you when Christ shall come to judgment, if you have made light of him, and worse than all, if you should ever be locked up in the caverns of despair, if you should ever hear it said, "Depart ye cursed," if you should ever mingle your awful shrieks with the doleful howls of lost myriads, if you should see the pit that is bottomless, and the gulf that has walls of fire. It will be a fearful thing to find thyself in there, and to know that thou canst ne'er get out again! Sinner, this night I preach the gospel to thee. E'er thou goest, hear it, and believe it; may God grant thee grace to receive it, so thou shalt be saved. "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved. He that believeth not," so saith the Scripture, "shall be damned." To believe, is to put your trust in Christ; to be baptized, is to be plunged in water in the name of the Lord Jesus, as a profession that you are already saved, and that you love Christ. "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." O may you never know the meaning of that last word. Farewell!

The Duty of Remembering the Poor

A Sermon
No. 99
Delivered on Thursday Evening, September 25th, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.
Preached on behalf of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society.

"Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do."—Galatians 2:10.

POVERTY is no virtue; wealth is no sin. On the other hand, wealth is not morally good, and poverty is not morally evil. A man may be a good man and a rich man; it is quite certain that very frequently good men are poor men. Virtue is a plant which depends not upon the atmosphere which surrounds it, but upon the hand which waters it, and upon the grace which sustains it. We draw no support for grace from our circumstances whether they be good or evil. Our circumstances may sometimes militate against the gracious work in our breast, but it is quite certain that no position in life is a sustaining cause of the life of grace in the soul. That must always be maintained by divine power, which can work as well in poverty as in riches; for we see some of the finest specimens of the full development of Christianity in those who are the very meanest in temporal circumstances; far outshining those whom we should have imagined, from their position in society, would have had many things to assist their virtues and sustain their graces. Grace is a plant which draws no nourishment from the wilderness in which it grows; it finds nothing to feed upon in the heart of man; all it lives upon it receives supernaturally. It sends all its roots upwards, none downwards; it draws no support from poverty, and none from riches. Gold cannot sustain grace; on the other hand, rags cannot make it flourish. Grace is a plant which derives the whole of its support from God the Holy Spirit, and is therefore entirely independent of the circumstances of man. But yet, mark you, it is an undeniable fact, that God hath been pleased for the most part to plant his grace in the soil of poverty. He has not chosen many great, nor many mighty men of this world, but he hath "chosen the poor of this world—rich in faith—to be heirs of the kingdom of God." We should wonder why, were we not quite sure that God is wise in his choice. We cannot dispute a fact which Scripture teaches, and which our own observation supports, that the Lord's people are, to a very large extent, the poor of this world. Very few of them wear crowns; very few ride in carriages; only a proportion of them have a competence; a very large multitude of his family are destitute, afflicted, tormented, and are kept leaning, day by day, upon the daily provisions of God, and trusting him from meal to meal, believing that he will supply their wants out of the riches of his fullness.

Now, to-night, we shall first of all mention *the fact* that *God has a poor people;* secondly, *the duty—we should remember the poor;* and then, thirdly, *the obligation for us to perform this duty;* for there are sundry reasons why we ought to be specially mindful of the poor of the Lord's flock.

I. First, then, THE LORD HAS A POOR PEOPLE—a fact notorious to us all, which daily observation confirms. Why does the Lord have a poor people? This is a question that might suggest itself to us, and we might not at all times find it easy to answer it, if we were poor ourselves. God could make them all rich if he pleased; he could lay hags of gold at their doors, he could send whole rivers of supplies, where now it is a desert, he could scatter round their houses abundance of provisions; as once he made the quails lie in very heaps round the camp of Israel, so now he could rain bread out of heaven to feed them. There is no necessity that they should be poor, only as it pleases his own sovereign will. "The cattle upon a thousand hills are his," he could supply them; he could make the rich men of this world give up all their wealth, if he so pleased to turn their minds; he could make the richest, the greatest, and the mightiest, bring all their power and riches to the feet of his children, for the hearts of all men are in his control. But he does not choose to do so; he allows them to suffer want, he allows them to pine in penury and obscurity. Why is this? I believe that is a question we should not find it easy to answer, if we were in the circumstances, but seeing that many of us are out of the affliction, we may perhaps hint at one or two reasons why the Lord God has had, has, and always will have, a poor people in this world.

I. I think one reason is, to teach us *how grateful we should be for all the comforts he bestows on many of us.* One of the sweetest meals I think I have ever eaten was after beholding a spectacle of penury which had made me weep. When we see others wanting daily bread, does not our loaf at once taste very sweet? It may have been very dry; but we saw some one begging for bread in the streets, and we thanked God for what we had that day, when we knew that others wanted. When we take our walks abroad and see the poor, he must be but a very poor Christian who does not lift up his eyes to heaven and thank his God thus—

"Not more than others I deserve,
But God has given me more."

If we were all made rich alike, if God had given us all abundance, we should never know the value of his mercies, but he puts the poor side by side with us, to make their trials, like a dark shadow, set forth the brightness which he is pleased to give to us in temporal matters. Oh! ye would never thank God half so much if ye did not see your cause for thankfulness by marking the needs of others. Oh! ye dainty ones, that can scarcely eat the food that is put before you, it would do you good it you could sit down at the table of the poor. Oh! ye discontented ones, who are always murmuring at your households, because all kinds of delicacies are not provided for you, it would do you good if you could sit down for a while to workhouse fare, and sometimes eat a little less than that, and fast a day or two, to find your appetites.

Ay, ye who never sing a song of praise to God, it would be no small benefit to you, if you were for mice made to want his bounties, then you might be led to thank God for all his abundant supplies. Even Christian men want a spur to their thankfulness. God gives us a great many mercies we never thank him for Day by day his mercies come, but day by day we forget them. His mercies lie

"Forgotten in unthankfulness,
And without praises die."

Put you out in the cold some winter's night, and would you not thank God for the fire afterwards? Make you thirst for a little while, and how grateful would be the crop of water! Now, if God has not exposed us in this way, it is at least an instance of his wisdom, that he has placed others in that position, to teach those of his family who are more highly favored in temporal matters, how thankful they ought to be for the gifts of his providence.

2. That, however, I take it, is but a very low view of the matter. There are other and higher, and better reasons. God is pleased always to have a poor people, *that he may display his sovereignty* in all he does. If there were no poor saints, we should not so strongly believe the doctrine of the sovereignty of God, or, at least, if the saints believed it, as they always must and will, yet the wicked, and those who despise it, would not have so clear an evidence of it, and would not sin against such great light, which shines upon their poor dark, blind eyeballs from evident displays of sovereignty in salvation. Those who deny divine sovereignty, deny it in the face of all testimony certainly in the teeth of Scripture, for it is there positively affirmed, and God, in order that there may be something besides Scripture, has made his providence bear out the written word, and has caused many of his children to be the despised among the people. "I take whom I please," save God. "Ye would have me choose kings and queens first; I choose their humble servants in their kitchens before I choose their masters and mistresses in their banqueting halls. Ye would have me take the counsellor and the wise man; I take the fool first, that I may teach you to despise the wisdom of man. I take the poor before the rich, that I may humble all your pride, and teach you there is nothing in man that makes me choose him, but that it is the sovereign will of God alone which creates men heirs of grace." I bless God that there are poor saints, for they teach me this lesson, that God will do as he pleases with his own. They show me manifestly, that however much men may deny the sovereignty of God, they cannot rob him of it, that he will still exert it to the very last, long as this earth shall stand, and mayhap find ways of exerting it, even in future ages. Certainly the existence of a poor people in the world is proof positive in the mind of the saint, and a plain and bold affirmation to the most obtuse intellect of the sinner, that there is a sovereignty of God in the choice of men.

3. Again: God has a poor people, I take it, *that he may display more the power of his comforting promises, and the supports of the gospel.* If all God's saints were well-to-do in this world, and never lacked, we should scarcely realize the value of the gospel half so much,

Oh! my brethren, when we find some that have not where to day their heads, who yet can say, "Still will I trust in the Lord;" when we see some who have nothing but bread and water who still glory in Jesus; when we see them "wondering where the scene shall end," seeing that "every day new straits attend," and yet having faith in Christ, oh, what honor it reflects on the gospel! Let my rich friend there stand up and say, "I have faith in God for to-morrow with regard to my daily bread;" you would say, "My dear friend, I do not at all wonder at it, for you have plenty of money at home to buy your bread with, and a salary coming in on such a day; there is not much opportunity for faith in your case." But when some poor habakkuk rises and exclaims "although the fig-tree shall not blossom neither shall there be fruit in the vine," and so on, "Yet will I trust in the Lord." Ah! then that shows the power of all-supporting grace. You know we hear of a great many different inventions that will never stand a trial. One man advertises a swimining belt; a fine thing it would be for dry land, but when it is tried at sea, I fear it will not exactly answer the purpose, and really we cannot know the value of an invention unless we test it, and put it through all the trials when it is supposed to be able to endure. Now, grace is tested in the poverty of believers—that they are still in a great degree an uncomplaining and unmurmuring race—that they bear up under every discouragement, believing that all things work together for their good, and that out of all their apparent evils some good shall ultimately spring—that their God will either work a deliverance for them speedily, or most assuredly support them in the trouble, as long as he is pleased to keep them there beloved, this is no doubt one reason why God puts his people in poor circumstances. "There," says the architect, "this building is strong." Ay, sir, but it must be tester!: let the wind blow against it. There is a lighthouse out at sea: it is a calm night—I cannot tell whether the edifice is firm; the tempest must howl about it, and then I shall know whether it will stand. So with religion, if it were not on many occasions surrounded with tempestuous waters, we should not know that the ship was staunch and strong, if the winds did not blow upon it, as they do on our poor tried brethren, we should not know bow firm and secure it is. The master-works of God are those that stand in the midst of difficulties—when all things oppose them, yet maintain their stand; these are his all-glorious works, and so his best children, those who honor him most, are those who have grace to sustain them amidst the heaviest load of tribulations and trials. God puts his people into such circumstances, then, to show us the power of his grace.

4. Then, again: God often allows his people to be a tried and a poor people, just *to plague the devil.* The devil was never more plagued in his life, I think, than he was with Job. As long as Job was rich, Job caused much envy in Satan, but he never made him so angry as when he was poor. It was then that Satan was the most incensed against him because, after all his trials, he would not curse God and die. You know, if a man thinks he can do a thing, he will always wrap himself up in his self-complacency, till he tries to do it and then fails. So Satan thinks he may overthrow one or other of God's children. "Now, Satan," says God, "I will

give thee an opportunity of trying thy skill: one of my children is very poor; I will cut off his bread and water, I will give him the water of affliction to drink, and the bread of bitterness to eat; he shall be exceedingly tried; take him, Satan, drag him through fire and water, and see what thou canst do with him." So Satan tries to starve out the divine life from his soul; but he cannot do it, and he finds, after all he has done, that he is defeated, and he goes away plagued and vexed, and feeling another hell within himself, though miserable enough before, because he was foiled in all his attempts to tread out the spark of life in the heart of God's child. God often allows Satan to test the Lord's work. It is marvellous that the crafty devil should continue to work when it all tends to the glory of God after all, but he is a devil all over, and will ever continue so. He always will keep on meddling with God's children; he will persevere even to the last moment; till every saint is safe across the Jordan, he will still be plaguing and vexing God's beloved. Ah! then let us rejoice, God will deliver us, and bring us off safe at last, yea, "more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

5. Furthermore, the design of our heavenly Father in allowing a poor people in this world, and keeping his people poor, when he might make them rich, is possibly *to give us some living glimpse of Christ.* A poor man is the image of Jesus Christ, if he be a Christian. All Christians are the image of Jesus Christ, for the sanctifying influence of Christ exerted on them has made them in some degree like their Master. But the poor man is like his Master, not only in his character, but in his circumstances too. When you look on a poor saint, you have a better picture of Jesus than you have in a rich saint. The rich saint is a member of Christ; he has the image of his Master stamped upon him, and that image shall be perfected when he shall arrive in heaven; but the poor saint has something else; he has not only the most prominent feature, but the back-ground, and the fore-ground, and all in the picture. He has the circumstances of it. Look at his brown hands, hardened by toil; such were his Saviour's once; look at his weary feet, blistered with his journeyings; such were his Saviour's many a time. He sits upon a well from weariness, as did his Lord once; he hath nowhere to rest, nor had his Master; foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but he had not where to lay his head He is fed by charity, so was his Master; others supplied his wants. See! he sits down at an invited table, so did his Master; he had not one of his own. Thou seest Christ, then; thou seest as much of Christ as thou wilt see just yet, until thou art taken up where thou shalt be like him, and see him as he is. He would have us always remember the Saviour's poverty: "How he was rich, and yet for our sakes became poor." And just as, on some memorable day, they strike medals which bear the impress of its hero, so I look upon every poor saint as being a medal struck from the mint divine, to be a memento of the existence of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is to make me remember my Lord, to bid me meditate upon that wondrous depth of poverty into which he stooped, that he might lift me up to light and glory. Oh! blessed Jesus, this is wise, for we oft forget thee—wise that thou hast given us some opportunity to remember thee.

6. But now one more reason, and I have done with this part of the subject. The Lord, has a poor people in the midst of us, for this reason, that *he determines to give us opportunities of showing our love to him.* Now, we show our love to Christ when we sing of him and when we pray to him; but if there were no poor people in the world we should often say within ourselves, "Oh I how I wish there were one of Christ's brethren that I could help; I should like to give Christ something; I should like to show my Master that I loved him, not by words only but by deeds too." And if all the poor saints were taken clean away, and we were all well-to-do, and had abundance, there would be none to require any assistance, and I think we might begin to weep, because there were no poor saints to help. It is one of the most healthy things in the world to help a saint; it is a great blessing to our own souls; it is a healthy exercise of the mind to visit the poor of the Lord's flock, and distribute as we are able of our substance to their necessities. Let us look upon it, not as a mere duty, but as a delight and privilege; for if we were not able to give something of our substance to Christ, we should have to go down on our knees to ask him to give us some opportunity of showing our love to him. Take away the saints, and one channel wherein our love might flow is withdrawn at once. But that shall never be, for the poor we always shall have with us, and there are some reasons why we always shall have them.

II. The second thing we shall endeavor to speak of is THE DUTY here alluded to: *"They would that we should remember the poor."* "Remember the poor;" that word "remember" is a very comprehensive word.

We ought to remember the poor in our *prayers.* I need not remind you to offer supplication for the rich, but remember the poor; remember them and pray that God would comfort and cheer them in all the trials of their penury, that he would supply their wants out of the riches of his fullness. Let the angel touch you on the arm, when you have nearly finished your prayer, and say, "Remember the poor; remember the poor of the flock." Let your prayers always go up to heaven for them.

Remember the poor, too, in your *conversation.* It is remarkable that all of us remember the rich. We talk about all men being equal, but I do not believe there is an Englishman who is not silly enough to boast, if he has happened to be with a lord in his lifetime. To have seen a live lord is a most marvellous thing, and there is scarcely one of us that could resist the temptation of talking about it. We may say what we like about believing in the equality of mankind; so we do, till we happen to get a little elevated, then we don't believe it any longer. We are all ready enough to pull others down when we are in humble circumstances; but when we get a little elevated, we foolishly think it only a child's fancy that we indulged in, and that after all there are more differences than we imagined. We always remember the rich. You see a man respectable in church; you always know him, don't you? You are on the exchange, or walking down the street; you never find any difficulty in recognising him. Somehow or other, your memory is very treacherous in remembering the poor, but very

strong in remembering a rich man. Let me remind you to "Remember the poor." It is singular enough that there, is no command to remember the rich; I suppose because there is no necessity for it, for we usually remember them. But there is a command for us to remember the poor. Now, the next time you see a poor brother coal-heaver, bricklayer, hodsman, or whatever he may be, do know him, if you please; and if you see him in all his dirty garments still know him; do not forget him; try and recolleet him. Next sacrament Sunday look him if the face as though you remembered him; for the last twenty times you have seen him you have appeared as if you did not remember him, and the poor man's mind has been hurt as much as if it were same slight on your part, because he was a poor brother. I will not say that it was so, but I am rather afraid it was in some degree. Now, when you see him in the street, say, "Well, brother, I know you," and if he comes up to speak to you, do not think it will lower you to be seen speaking to him in the street. If he is your brother, acknowledge him; if he is not tell no lie about it, but leave the church, and make no false professions. But if you believe it, carry it out.

Now, often, when you are walking home from the house of God, you do not remember the poor, do you. If they should require to speak to you, however important their errand, they would not get attended to very frequently. If Mr. So-and-so, who is a respectable gentleman, wanted you, "Oh! yes, sir, I can stop a moment and have a little conversation with you;" but if a poor person wants you, "Oh! I am in such a hurry; I must go home;" and you are sure to go off directly. Now, for the future, just reverse your habit. When you see a rich man, do just what you like about attending to him; I know what you will like to do; but when you see a poor man, just make it a point of conscience that you attend to him. I was very much pleased with the conduct of a brother who is here present. He may remember the circumstance, and bless God that he gave him grace to act as he did. A short time ago there stood in the aisle near his pew door, a gentleman and a poor fellow in a smock frock. I thought to myself, "He will let one in I know, I wonder which it will be." I did not wait long, before out he came, and in went the smock frock. He thought very rightly, that the gentlemen would stand a chance of getting a seat out of some of you, but he thought it best to remember the poor; and it was likely that the poorman was the most tired, for he had no doubt had a hard week's work, and probably a long walk, for there are not many smock frocks near London. Therefore he gave in reality to the most necessitous. I say, again, "Remember the poor." There is no necessity to tell you to remember the rich—to be very respectful, and to speak very kindly and lovingly to those who are above you; you will take care of yourselves on that point; but it is the poor you are disposed not to attend to, and therefore I will press on you this commandment, that you remember the poor.

But this especially means, I think, that *in the provision for their necessities,* we ought to remember the poor. Some of us have pretty good need to remember the poor. I am sure I have, for I have about ten times as many poor people come to me every day as I can possibly

relieve. If I were as rich as the Mayor of London, or Her Majesty the Queen, I could scarcely accede to the immense requests sometimes made to me. There is scarcely a poor man that is hard run by his creditors, or a poor woman that cannot make up her rent, but they write to the minister. All the poor souls come to him; and I think to myself, "What can I do with you? I have really done as much as I can, and here are three or four more coming." So I am obliged to send them away, and can only pity, but cannot assist; and this must be the case, unless some one shot a waggon load of gold before my door. Still, we must "remember the poor." Some think it very hard to have so many calls on them; I do not; I only think it hard when I cannot help them; if I could, I would think it a great blessing to assist them all. If I were put in possession of great wealth, I do not say what I would do, for very frequently people's hearts get smaller when their means get greater; but where God has given us wealth, I am sure where there are necessitous children of God, we ought to remember them directly. How much of the superfluities might be given to their necessities! How many of our lavished luxuries might be bestowed on that which they crave for their very existence. Ye know not how poor this world is. You ride through one part of this magnificent city, and you say, "Talk of poverty! There is no such thing." You ride through another part, and you say, Talk of riches! There is no such thing. The world is poor." Some of you should, now and then, go and search out poverty. Place you above it, and your movements in life seldom bring you into contact with it. If you would have your hearts enlarged, visit the poor; follow them into their dens, for they are but little better in some cases; go up their creaking staircases; see the straw in the corner of the room where they sleep, ay, see worse than that—see a chair whereon a man has been for the last five years, not able to sit without being propped, obliged to be fed by others, and yet living on four or five shillings a week, with nothing to support him properly, or give him sufficient bodily nutriment. Go and see such cases, and if you do not put your hands in your pockets, and help the aged pilgrims, I am afraid there is not much Christianity in you, or if you do not help the one that you see has the greatest need, I am afraid the love of God dwelleth not in you. It is a duty we owe to the poor of the Lord's flock, and we reap many advantages we should not have if we had not to remember the poor.

III. Now, allow me to press home THIS OBLIGATION: *why should we remember poor?* I shall not urge it upon the ground of common philanthropy and charity, that were a too mean and low way of addressing Christian men, although even they perhaps might be benefited by it. I shall urge it in another way.

"Remember the poor," because they are your Lord's brethren. What! do you not feel, like David, that you would do anything for Jonathan's sake? and if he hath some poor sick son, some Mephibosheth, lame in his feet, wilt thou not seat him at thy table, or give him a maintenance, if thou canst, seeing that Jonathan's blood is in his veins? Remember, beloved, the blood of Jesus runs in the veins of poor saints they are his relatives, they are his friends,

and if that move thee not, remember they are thy friends too. They are thy brethren if thou art a child of God; they are allied to thee; if they are sons of God, so art thou, and they are brethren of thine. What! let thy brother starve? If thou canst, wilt thou not relieve thy brother's necessity, not shield him from the cold, not ward off hunger, not provide for his needs? Oh! I know thou lovest Jesus I know thou lovest the friends of Jesus and I know thou lovest thine own family and, therefore, thou wilt love thy poor brethren, wilt thou not? I know thou writ, thou wilt relieve them. Remember, too, that thou thyself mayst be like thy poor brother ere long, therefore, take heed that thou despise him not, for some one will despise thee. Oh! think thee that all thou hast God has lent thee, he may take it all from thee if he pleases, and if he seeth that thou makest an ill use of it, perhaps he will take it from thee now. Full many a man has lost his wealth by God's righteous judgment for his misuse of it. Thou art God's steward, wilt thou cheat him? He has given thee his wealth to distribute to the poor; wilt thou not supply their needs out of what he hath given thee? Yes, surely thou wilt; I cannot believe thou wilt turn them away, so long as thou hast aught wherewith to relieve them, but wilt share what thou hast with them. Remember, if thou dost not relieve them, thou givest great and grave suspicion that thou lovest not Christ, for if ye love not Christ's people, how can it be that ye are his disciples, since it is the mark, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another;" and how can ye love, where ye have, and give not where God hath made you rich, and yet you do not bestow? Gravely ye give cause to doubt that the love of God is in you, if the love of the brethren is not in you also. Oh! remember, when thou givest, God can give thee more. Thou hast lost nothing! thou hast put it in another purse, and God may hand it back to thee in larger measure yet. Men lose nothing by what they give to God's saints. It would often be a heavenly investment if they bestowed it upon God's family; but if they retain it, God hath other means to make them poor, if they will not give to his cause. John Bunyan tells of a man who had a roll of cloth, and the more he cut from it, the more he had; and he says, in his rhyming way,—

"A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he cast away, the more he had."

He was not much of a madman, after all, if he had more the more he gave away. But that is a very selfish view; remember, it thou never hast it back again, it is no small honor to give it to Christ; and remember, what thou givest to his children thou puttest into his palm; and if Christ should stand at the door as thou passeth the plate, how wouldst thou put thy money in to please him! Remember, his poor believing family are his hand; give into his hand, then, as ye can at all times and seasons. Remember the poor; ye shall always have the poor to remember.

Well, now, I beg leave to commend to your attention and notice to-night, the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society, as being an especially excellent institution, because it will enable you to remember the poor. Those who are relieved by it are, in the first place, all Christians,

as far as man can judge; they are all examined beforehand as to their experience of a change of heart, and the existence of a divine life within them, and none are received into the society but those who are really the members of Christ's mystical body, and give evidence of the work of grace in their hearts. In the next place, the funds which are given to them are distributed by Christian men, who visit them once a month; and when they visit them, I do not suppose they leave them without praying with them and endeavoring to cheer their hearts. I know they do not. They often spend a season of prayer, and have a kind conversation with them concerning their souls. And, last of all, they are all over sixty. They have a double claim on us, because they are the Lord's aged people, as well as the Lord's poor people; and none of them have anything without they absolutely and really require it. I will just read you this very short paper to tell you what they have done:—

"The Society was established in 1807 for the relief of the aged Christian pool, above sixty years, irrespective of denominational distinction, both male and female in town and country; it has extended its valuable aid to 1650 aged disciples of the Lord Jesus, among whom have been distributed upwards of 50,000.

"The following is a brief account of its present state, in reference both to the number relieved, and the amount of income and expenditure. There are—

45 Pensioners who receive 10 guineas per annum, or 17s. 6d. per month. 245
ditto
5
ditto
or 8s. 9d.
ditto.
130 Approved Candidates who receive 4s. Per month.
———
Total 420 Amongst whom are distributed, monthly, at their own habitations, 172.
———

"The income arising from Annual Subscriptions, etc., does not exceed 1550 while the expenditure is upwards of 2000, leaving a deficiency, annually of 450 and upwards, which the Committee have to make up by obtaining collections in various churches and chapels, wherever they can. Donations and Annual Subscriptions will be thankfully received by the Treasurers or Secretaries at any time. Every department is filled *gratuitously.* Also, legacies will, at any time, be very thankfully received."

Our friends had no business to have said anything about legacies, for we do not wish you to die just yet; we always wish to have your subscriptions. We are very thankful to receive legacies, but do not keep the money to leave us in the shape of legacies. We would rather have your annual subscriptions for ten years; for then we should have your living prayers, your living sympathy, and your living help. Well, if you do not think this a good society, do

not give anything; but if you do, just put it on its merits. People very often give to an object just what others give, because there is a collection: but just put this upon its own merits and your ability, and give as you think the society deserves to receive, and as you believe yourselves able to bestow. May God give a blessing to you in remembering the poor.

The Comer's Conflict with Satan

A Sermon
No. 100
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, August 24, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father."—Luke 9:42.

THIS child possessed with an evil spirit, is a most fitting emblem of every ungodly and unconverted man. Though we be not possessed with devils, yet by nature we are possessed with devilish vices and lusts, which if they do not distress and vex our bodies, will most certainly destroy our souls. Never creature possessed with evil spirit was in a worse plight than the man who is without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world. The casting out of the unclean spirit was moreover a thing that was impossible to man and only possible to God; and so is the conversion of an ungodly sinner a thing beyond the reach of human ability, and only to be accomplished by the might of the Most High. The dreadful bellowings, foamings, and tearings caused in this unhappy child by the unclean spirit, are a picture of the sins, iniquities, and vices into which ungodly men are continually and impetuously hurried; and a type of that sad and terrible suffering which remorse will by-and-bye bring to their conscience, and which the vengeance of God will soon cause to occupy their hearts. The bringing of this child to the Saviour by his parents teaches us a lesson, that those of us to whom the care of youth is entrusted, either as parents or teachers, should be anxious to bring our children to Jesus Christ, that he may graciously save them. The devout desire and compassion of the father for his child is but a pattern of what every parent ought to feel for his offspring. Like Abraham, he should pray, "O that Ishmael might live before thee;" and not only put up the prayer, but also strive in the use of the means to bring his child to the Pool of Siloam that haply the angel may stir the stream, and his son may step into the water and be made whole. The parent should place his offspring where the Saviour walks, that he may look upon him and heal him. The coming of the child to Christ is a picture of saving faith, for faith is coming to Christ, simply believing in the power of his atonement. And lastly, the casting down and tearing which is mentioned in my text is a picture of the comer's conflict with the enemy of souls. "As he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down and tare him." Our subject this morning will be the well known fact, that coming sinners, when they approach the Saviour, are often thrown down by Satan and torn, so that they suffer exceedingly in their minds, and are well nigh ready to give up in despair.

There are four points for our consideration this morning. That you may easily remember them I have made them alliterative: the devil's *doings, designs, discovery, and defeat*.

I. First, THE DEVIL'S DOINGS. When this child came to Christ to be healed, the devil threw him down and tare him. Now this is an illustration of what Satan does with most, if not all sinners, when they come to Jesus to seek light and life through him; he throws them down and tears them. Allow me to point out how it is that the devil causes those extraordinary pangs and agonies which attend conversion. He has a multitude of devices, for he is cunning and crafty, and he has divers ways of accomplishing that end.

1. First of all he does this by *perverting the truth of God* for the destruction of the soul's hope and comfort. The devil is very sound in divinity. I never suspected him of heterodoxy yet. I believe him to be one of the most orthodox individuals in creation. Other people may disbelieve the doctrines of revelation, but the devil cannot, for he knows the truth, and though he will belie it often, he is so crafty that he understand that with the soul convinced of sin his best method is not to contradict the truth, but to pervert it. Now I will mention the five great doctrines which we hold to be most prominent in Scripture, by the perversion of each of which the devil tries to keep the soul in bondage, darkness, and despair.

First, there is the great doctrine of *election*—that God hath chosen to himself a number that no man can number, who shall be holy, since they are ordained to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Now the devil agitates the coming soul upon that doctrine. "Oh," saith he, "perhaps you are not elect. It is of no use your coming, and struggling, and striving; you may sit still and do nothing, and yet be saved, if you are to be saved; but if your name is written among the lost, all your praying, seeking, and believing cannot save you." Thus the devil begins preaching sovereignty in the sinner's ear, to make him believe that the Lord will assuredly cut him off. He asks, "How can you suppose that such a wretch as you can be elected? You deserve to be damned, and you know it. Your brother is a good moral man, but as for you, you are the chief of sinners; do you think God would choose you?" Then if the tempted one is instructed that election is not according to merit, but of God's free will, Satan opens another battery, and insinuates, "You would not feel like this if you were one of God's elect; you would not be allowed to come into all this suffering, and pray so long in vain." And again he whispers, 'You are not one of his;" and thus attempts to throw the soul down and tear it in pieces. I would just like to have a blow at his schemes this morning by reminding our friends that when they come to Christ they never need puzzle themselves about the doctrine of election. No one, in teaching a child the alphabet, makes him learn Z before he has learned A; so a sinner must not expect to learn election until he knows faith. The text with which he has to do is this: "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus shall be saved;" and when the Lord has enabled him to learn and believe that, he may go on to this: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." But if he cannot shake off the subject from his mind, he needs not do it, for he may remember that every penitent is elect, every believer is elect. However great the sinner, if he does but repent, that is a proof that he is

elect; if he does but believe on Christ, he is as certainly elected as his faith is genuine. I cannot tell that I am elected before I know whether I believe in God. I cannot tell a thing unless I see its effects. I cannot tell whether there is a seed in the ground unless you enable me to stir up the soil, or to wait till I see the blade shooting from under the earth; so I cannot tell whether you name is written in the Lamb's book of life until I see God's love manifested in you in the stretching out of your hearts toward God. I cannot disembowel the deep rocks of obscurity to find out that hidden thing, unless evidences and effects furnish me with spade and mattock. There is a newspaper in Glasgow called the *Christian News*, alias, the *Un-Christian News*, or *Christian Wasp*, and the editor says of me, that I am not fit to preach God's word because I do not know (can you guess what it is?) who God's elect are. He writes words to this effect,—"According to his own confession, the young man does not know who God's elect are until he has asked them questions, and knows their character." Well, if I did, I should be marvelously wise indeed. Who does know them apart from those signs, and marks, and evidences, in the heart and life which God always vouchsafes to his elect in due time? Shall I unlock the archives of heaven and read the rolls, or, with presumptuous hand unfold the Lamb's book of life, to know who are God's elect? No; I leave that for the editor of the *Christian News* to do, and when he publishes a full and correct list of the elect, no doubt it will be bought up tremendously, and the printer will speedily make a fortune by it. Let not the soul be distressed about election, for all who repent and believe do so, as the effect of their election.

The next doctrine is that of *our depravity*—that all men are fallen in Adam, that they are all gone aside from the truth, and that moreover by their practice they have become full of sin; that in them dwelleth no good thing, and that if any good thing shall ever come there, it shall be put there by God; for there is not even the seed of goodness in the heart, much less the flower of it. The devil torments the soul with that doctrine, and he says, "See what a depraved creature you are; you know how dreadfully you have sinned against God; you have gone astray ten thousand times. See," he says, "there are your old sins still crying after you;" and he waves his wand, and gives a resurrection to past iniquities, which rise up like ghosts and terrify the soul. "There, look at that midnight scene; remember the deed if ingratitude; hark! do you not hear that oath echoed back from the walls of the past. Look at your heart; can that ever be washed? Why, it is full of blackness. You know you tried to pray yesterday, and your mind roved to your business before you were half through your prayer; and since you have been seeking God you have only been half in earnest, knocking at the door sometimes, and then afterwards giving it up. It is impossible you should ever be forgiven; you have gone too far astray for the shepherd to find you; you are altogether become filthy; your heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and you cannot be saved." Many a poor soul has had a most terrible tearing with that doctrine. I have felt something of it myself, when I have verily thought that I must be rent in pieces by the dread remem-

brance of what I had been. The devil throws the sinner down and pulls him almost limb from limb, by persuading him that his guilt is heinous beyond parallel, and his iniquities are far beyond the reach of mercy, and his death-warrant is signed. Ah! poor soul, get up again; the devil has no right to throw you down. Your sin cannot be too great for God's mercy. It is not the greatness of sin that can cause any man to be damned, if there be not a want of faith. If a man has faith, notwithstanding all the sins he ever may have committed, he shall be saved; but if he have but one sin without faith, that one sin shall utterly destroy him. Faith in the blood of Christ destroys the sting of sin. One drop of the Saviour's precious blood could extinguish a thousand flaming words if God should will it, much more put out the burning fears of your poor heart. If thou believest in Christ, thou shalt say to the mountain of thy guilt, "Be thou removed far hence, and cast into the depths of the sea."

Then, there is the doctrine of *effectual calling*, that God calls his children effectually; that it is not the power of man which brings us to God, but that it is the work of God to bring man to grace; that he calls those whom he would save with an effectual and special call which he vouchsafes only to his children. "There now," says the evil one, "the minister said there must be an effectual call; depend upon it yours is not such a call; it never came from God; it is only a few heated feelings; you were excited a little under the sermon, and it will all be gone directly, like the morning cloud or the early dew. You have strong desires sometimes, but at other seasons they are not half so vehement; if the Lord drew you, you would be always drawn with the same power; it will be over soon, and you will be all the worse for having been inclined to go to God under these legal convictions, and then, afterwards, running away from him." Well, beloved, tell Satan that you don't know whether it is an effectual call, but you know this, that if you perish you will go to Christ and perish only there; tell him you know it is so effectual that you cannot help going to Christ; that whether it is to last or not you cannot say, *that* you will let him know by-and-bye; but that you are resolved (for this is your last defence), if you perish, to perish at the cross of Christ; and so by the help of God you may by such means overcome him when he throws you down on that doctrine.

The devil will also pervert the doctrine of *final perseverance*. "Look," says Satan, "the children of God always hold on their way: they never leave off being holy; they persevere; their faith is like the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day; and so would ours be if you were one of the Lord's. But you will never be able to persevere. Don't you remember—six months ago, when you were lying on a sick bed you resolved to serve God, and it all broke down? You have vowed many times that you would be a Christian, and it has not lasted a fortnight. It will never do; you are too fickle; you will never keep fast hold on Christ; you will go with him a little while, but you will be sure to turn back; therefore, you cannot be one of the Lord's, for they never do turn back." So he tries to pull and tear the poor soul on that great and comforting doctrine. The same nail on which a sinner must

hang his hope the devil tries to drive into the very temples of his faith, that he may die like Sisera in the tent of Jael. Oh, poor soul, tell Satan that thy perseverance is not thine, but that God is the author of it; that however weak thou art thou knowest thy weakness, but that if God begins a good work he will never leave it unfinished. And repelling him thus, thou mayest rise up from that throwing down and tearing which he has given to thee.

Then there is the doctrine of *redemption*; with which the unclean spirit will assault the soul. "Oh," says Satan, "it is true Christ died, but not for you; you are a peculiar character." I remember the devil once made me believe that I was one alone, without a companion. I thought there was no one like myself. I saw that others had sinned as I had done, and had gone as far as I had, but I fancied what there was something peculiar about my sin. Thus the devil tried to set me apart as if I did not belong to the rest of mankind, I thought that if I had been anybody else I might have been saved. How often I wished I had been a poor swearing drunken man in the streets, and then I thought I might have a better chance; but as it was, I thought I was to die alone, like the deer in the shade of the forest. But well do I remember my friends singing that sweet hymn,—

"His grace is sov'reign, rich and free,

And why, my soul, why not for thee?"

One of the hymns in Denham's selection, and it ought to have been in Rippon's, as well as I can remember, ends thus,—

"He shed his blood so rich and free,

And why, my soul, why not for thee?"

That is just the question we never put to ourselves. We say, "Sure, my soul, why not for anybody else but thee." Up, poor soul! If Satan is trying to tear thee, tell him it is written, "He is able to save to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him;" that "whosoever cometh he will in no wise cast out;" and it may be that thus God will deliver thee from that desperate conflict into which, as a coming sinner, thou hast been cast.

2. But Satan is not very scrupulous, and he sometimes throws the coming sinner down and tears him by *telling horrible falsehoods*. Some of you may not have known this, and I thank God if you do not understand some of the things of which I am about to speak. Many a time when the soul is coming to Christ, Satan violently injects infidel thoughts. I have never been thoroughly an unbeliever but once, and that was not before I knew the need of a Saviour, but after it. It was just when I wanted Christ and panted after him, that on a sudden the thought crossed my mind, which I abhorred but could not conquer, that there was no God, no Christ, no heaven, no hell; that all my prayers were but a farce, and that I might as well have whistled to the winds or spoken to the howling waves. Ah! I remember how my ship drifted along through that sea of fire, loosened from the anchor of my faith which I had received from my fathers. I doubted everything, until at last the devil defeated himself by making me doubt my own existence, and I thought I was an idea floating in the

nothingness of acuity; then startled with that thought, and feeling that I was substantial flesh and blood after all, I saw that God was, and Christ was, and heaven was, and hell was, and that all these things were very truths. I should not be astonished if many here have been upon the very verge of infidelity, and have doubted almost everything. It is when Satan finds the heart tender that he tries to stamp his own impress of infidelity upon the soul; but, blessed be God, he never accomplishes it in the truly coming sinner. He labours also to inject blasphemous thoughts, and then tells us they are ours. Has he not sometimes poured in most vehement torrents of blasphemy and evil imaginations into our hearts, which we ignorantly thought must be our own? Yet not one of them perhaps belonged to us. I remember I had once been alone musing on God, when on a sudden it seemed as if the floodgates of hell had been loosened; my head became a very pandemonium; ten thousand evil spirits seemed to be holding carnival within my brain; and I held my mouth lest I should give utterance to the words of blasphemy that were poured into my ears. Things I had never heard or thought of before came rushing impetuously into my mind, and I could scarce withstand their influence. It was the devil throwing me down and tearing me. Ah! poor soul, thou wilt have that perhaps; but remember it is only one of the tricks of the arch-enemy. he drives his unclean beasts into your field and then calls them yours. Now, in old time, when tramps and vagrants troubled a parish, they whipped them and then sent them on to the next parish. So when you get these evil thoughts, give them a sound whipping and send them away; they do not belong to you if you do not indulge them. But if you fear that these thoughts are your own, you may say, "I will go to Christ, and even if these blasphemies are mine I will confess them to the great High Priest, for I know that all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men."

3. Then if the devil cannot overcome you there, he tries another method; he takes all the threatening passages out of God's Word, and says they all apply to you. He reads you this passage, "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that ye should pray for it." "There," says the devil, "the apostle did not say he could even pray for the man who had committed certain sins." Then he reads, that "sin against the Holy Ghost shall never be forgiven." "There," he says, "is your character: you have committed sin against the Holy Ghost, and you will never be pardoned." Then he brings another passage: "Let him alone; Ephraim is joined unto idols." "There," says Satan, "you have had no liberty in prayer lately; God has let you alone; you are given unto idols; you are entirely destroyed;" and the cruel fiend is to be lost. But do not believe him my dear friends. No man has committed the sin against the Holy Ghost as long as he has grace to repent; it is certain that no man can have committed that sin if he flies to Christ and believes on him. No believing soul can commit it; no penitent sinner ever has committed it. If a man be careless and thoughtless—if he can hear a terrible sermon and laughed it off, and put away his convictions—if he never feels ay strivings of conscience, there is a fear that he may have committed that sin. But as long as you have any

desires for Christ, you have no more committed that sin than you have flown up to the stars and swept cobwebs from the skies. As long as you have any sense of your guilt, any desire to be redeemed, you cannot have fallen into that sin; as a penitent you may still be saved, but if you had committed it, you could not be penitent.

II. Let me dwell for a moment or two upon the second point—the DEVIL'S DESIGN. Why does he throw the coming soul down and tear it?

First, because *he does not like to lose it*. "No king will willingly lose his subjects," said Apollyon to Christian when he stretched himself across the road, "and I swear thou shalt go no farther; here will I spill thy soul." There he stood vowing vengeance at him because he had escaped from his dominion. Do you suppose that Satan would lose his subjects one by one, and not be wroth? Assuredly not. As soon as he sees a soul hurrying off to the wicket gate, with his eyes fixed on the light, away go all hell's dogs after him. "There is another of my subjects going; my empire is being thinned; my family is being diminished:" and he tries with his might and main to bring the poor soul back again. Ah! soul, don't be deceived by him; his design is to throw you down; he does not tell thee these things to do thee good, or to humble thee, but in order to keep thee from coming to Christ, and decoy thee into his net, where he may utterly destroy thee.

Sometimes, I believe, he has the vile design of *inducing poor souls to make away with themselves* before they have faith in Christ. This is an extreme case, but I have met with not a few who have been thus tempted to take away their lives, and rush before their Maker with their hands red with their own blood; for Satan knows full well that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. But he never accomplished his design in the soul of one elect sinner yet.

Then Satan has another motive. *When the soul is coming to Christ he tries, out of spite, to worry that soul*. Satan's heart is made up of that which is just the opposite of benevolence—malevolence; he hates everything, and loves nothing; he hates to see any creature happy, any soul glad; and when he sees a soul coming to Christ, he says, "Ah! I have nearly lost him; I shall never have an opportunity of bringing thundering condemnation into his ears, and dragging him about in the flames of hell as I thought; and now before he is gone I will do something; the last grip shall be a hard one; the last blow shall be dealt with all my power;" and down he comes upon the poor soul, who falls wallowing upon the earth in despair and doubt; then he tears him, and will not leave him until he has worked as much of his way with him as the Lord will let him. Don't be afraid, child of God. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you;" and even though he may cast you to the ground, remember that the righteous falleth many times, but he riseth up again; and so shalt thou, and the designs of the enemy shall be frustrated, as it is written, "Thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee."

III. In the third place, there is the DEVIL'S DISCOVERY. I do not think the devil would be able to throw one poor sinner to the ground if he came as the devil; but it is seldom he does that. He presents himself as an angel of light, or even as the Holy Spirit. He knows that the Holy Spirit does all the work of salvation, and therefore he tries to counterfeit the operations of the Holy Ghost. He knows it is the Holy Spirit's work to take away pride from man, and to humble the soul. Well, Satan counterfeits that blessed work, and takes away *hope* from man as well as pride. Under the pretence of humbling the poor sinner, and telling him that he ought to lie lower in the dust, he not only humbles the poor soul, but puts it down so low that he dishonors God too in the sinner's estimation, by telling him that God himself cannot save him. Satan will try, if he can, to mar God's work, while it is yet upon the potter's wheel, by putting on his own instrument while the clay is whirling round upon the wheel, that it may not assume the Holy Ghost's shape, but that there may be some marks of the devil's workmanship in the article. Sometimes you ask God that you may be able to agonize in prayer. "That is right," says Satan, "agonize in prayer; but remember you must *now* receive the mercy, or you are lost." So he glides in and adds a little piece to the truth, making you believe it is an impulse of the Holy Spirit, while it is, after all, a deception of the Father of Lies. The Holy Ghost tells you that you are a lost sinner, and undone; "Ah!" says the devil, "you are, and you cannot be saved;" and thus again under the very garb of the Spirit's operations he deceives the soul. It is my firm belief that very much of the experience of a Christian is not Christian experience. Many Christians experience things that have nothing to do with Christianity, but more to do with demonology. When you read the convictions of John Bunyan, you may think that all that terror was the fruit of the Holy Spirit; but be assured it was the fruit of Satanic influence. You may think it is God's Holy Spirit that drives sinners to despair and keeps them shut up in the iron cage so long. Not at all. There was God's Holy Spirit, and then Satan came in to mar the work if he could.

Now I will give the poor sinner a means of detecting Satan, so that he may know whether his convictions are from the Holy Spirit, or merely the bellowing of hell in his ears. In the first, place, *you may be always sure that that which comes from the devil will make you look at yourselves and not at Christ*. The Holy Spirit's work is to turn our eyes from ourselves to Jesus Christ, but the enemy's work is the very opposite. Nine out of ten of the insinuations of the devil have to do with ourselves. "You are guilty," says the devil—*that is self*. "You have not faith"—*that is self*. "You do not repent enough"—that is self. "You have got such a wavering hold of Christ"—that is self. "You have none of the joy of the spirit, and therefore cannot be one of his"—that is self. Thus the devil begins picking holes in us; whereas the Holy Spirit takes self entirely away, and tells us that we are "nothing at all," but that

"Jesus Christ is all in all."

Satan brings the carcass of self and pulls it about, and because that is corrupt, tells us that most assuredly we cannot be saved. But remember, sinner, it is not *thy hold* of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that is the instrument—it is Christ's blood and merits; therefore, look not so much to thy hand with which thou art grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to thy hope, but to Christ, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Christ, the author and finisher of thy faith; and if thou dost that, ten thousand devils cannot throw thee down, but as long as thou lookest at thyself, the meanest of those evil spirits may tread thee beneath his feet.

You may discern the devil's insinuations in another way, *they generally reflect upon some attribute of God*. Sometimes they reflect upon his love, and tell you that God will not save you; sometimes upon his long suffering, and they tell you you are too old, and that God won't save you; sometimes upon his sovereignty, and they tell you that God does not choose as he wills, but that he has respect to characters, and takes men according to their merits; sometimes they reflect upon God's truth, and they tell you that he will not keep his promise; ay, and sometimes they reflect upon the very being of God, and tell you that there is not such a one. But O poor trembling soul, Satan shall not get an advantage over thee; but take care—detect him; and when thou hast found out the devil, thou hast frustrated his aims as far as thou art thyself concerned.

IV. Now, in the last place, we have to consider the DEVIL'S DEFEAT. How was he defeated? Jesus rebuked him. Beloved, there is no other way for us to be saved from the castings down of Satan but the rebuke of Jesus. "Oh," says one poor soul, "many months and years have I been distressed for fear I should not be saved; I have gone from place to place in hopes that some minister might say something which should rebuke the evil spirit." Sister, or beloved brother, have you not been doing wrong? Is it not Jesus who rebukes the evil spirit? Or perhaps you have been trying to rebuke the evil spirit yourself; you have tried to argue and dispute with him; you have said that you are not so vile as he described you to be. Beloved, have you not been doing wrong. It is not your business to rebuke Satan "The Lord rebuke thee," that is what thou shouldst say. Oh! if you had looked to Jesus and said, "Lord, rebuke him," he had only need say, "Hush!" and the demon would have been still in a moment, for he knows how omnipotent Jesus is, since he feels his power. But you get striving to pacify your own heart when you are under these temptations, instead of remembering that it is Jesus only who can remove the affliction. If I had one here who suffered the most from this ailment—the possession of Satan, I would say to him, beloved, sit down; remember Jesus; go to Gethsemane, and depend upon it the devil will never stay there with you; think on the agonies of your Saviour covered with his blood; the devil cannot bear Christ's blood—he goes howling away at the very thought of it. Go to the pavement where Christ

endured the accursed flagellation; the devil will not stay long there with you; and if you sit at the foot of his cross and say—

"Oh! how sweet to view the flowing,
Of his ever precious blood,"

you will not long find the devil vexing you. It is no use to get praying simply. Prayer is good in itself, but that is not the way to get rid of Satan—it is thinking of Christ. We get saying, "Oh, that I had stronger faith! Oh, that I had love to Jesus!" It is good for a Christian to say that, but it is not enough, the way to overcome Satan, and to have peace with God is through Christ, "I am the way;" if thou wouldst know the way, come to Christ. "I am the truth:" if thou wouldst refute the devil's lies come to the truth. "I am the life:" if thou wouldst be spared from Satan's killing, come to Jesus. There is one thing which we all of us too much becloud in our preaching, though I believe we do it very unintentionally—namely, the great truth that it is not prayer, it is not faith, it is not our doings, it is not our feelings upon which we must rest, but upon Christ, and on Christ alone. We are apt to think that we are not in a right state, that we do not feel enough, instead of remembering that our business is not with self, but Christ. Our business is only with Christ. O soul, if thou couldst fix thy soul on Jesus, and neglect everything else—if thou couldst but despise good works, and aught else, so far as they relate to thy salvation, and look wholly, simply on Christ, I tell thee Satan would soon give up throwing thee down, he would find it would not answer his purpose, for thou wouldst fall on Christ, and like the giant who fell upon his mother, the earth, thou wouldst rise up each time stronger than before. Have I then within hearing one poor tried, tempted, devil-dragged soul? Has Satan been pulling you through the thorns, and briers, and thickets, until you are scarred and bruised? Come now, I have tried to preach a rough sermon to you because I knew I had rough work to do with roughly used souls. Is there nothing here, poor sinner, that thou canst lay hold upon? Art thou so locked up that not one ray of light comes through the iron bars? What! art thou so chained that thou canst not move hand or foot? Why, man, I have brought thee a pitcher and a piece of bread to-day even in thy dungeon. Though thou art cast down, there is a little here to comfort thee in what I have said: but oh! if my Master would come he would bring more than that, for he would rebuke the unclean spirit, and it would immediately depart from thee. Let me beseech thee, look only to Christ; never expect deliverance from self, from Satan, from ministers, or from means of any kind apart from Christ; keep thine eye simply on him; let his death, his agonies, his groans, his sufferings, his merits, his glories, his intercession, be fresh upon thy mind; when thou wakest in the morning look for him; when thou liest down at night look for him. Oh! let not thy hopes or fears come between thee and Christ; seek only Christ; let the hymn we sang be thy hymn and thy prayer,—

"Lord, deny me what thou wilt,
Only ease me of my guilt,

Prostrate at thy feet I lie,
Give me Christ, or else I die."

And then, even though the devil throw thee down and tear thee, it were better he should do so now than that he should tear thee for ever.

I have some here, however, who will laugh at what I have been preaching this morning. Ah! sirs, you may do so; but bitter though my text may be, I wish you had it in your mouths. Though sad be the experience of being torn when coming to Christ, I had rather see you so than see you whole, away from Christ. It is better to be rent in pieces coming to the Saviour, than to have a sound, whole heart away from him. Tremble, sinner, tremble, for if thou comest not to Christ, he shall rend thee at last; his eye shall not pity, neither shall his hand spare thee. He hath said, "Beware ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver." Sirs, within another hour, and some of you may know this; certainly, before long there are some who will be torn in pieces by the wrath of God. Why will ye die? *Why* will ye die? You cannot answer the question, I think; but let it rest upon your hearts. What profit will you have in your own blood? What will you profit if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul? Remember, Jesus Christ can save even you. Believe on his name, ye convinced sinners, believe on Christ. The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

The Exaltation of Christ

A Sermon
No. 98
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, November 2, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

NOTE: This sermon was Spurgeon's first message following the disaster at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens—in which seven people lost their lives when some miscreants purposely started a panic while Mr. Spurgeon was preaching.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Philippians 2:9-11.

I ALMOST regret this morning that I have ventured to occupy this pulpit, because I feel utterly unable to preach to you for your profit. I had thought that the quiet and repose of the last fortnight had removed the effects of that terrible catastrophe; but on coming back to the same spot again, and more especially, standing here to address you, I feel somewhat of those same painful emotions which well-nigh prostrated me before. You will therefore excuse me this morning, if I make no allusion to that solemn event, or scarcely any. I could not preach to you upon a subject that should be in the least allied to it. I should be obliged to be silent if I should bring to my remembrance that terrific scene in the midst of which it was my solemn lot to stand. God shall overrule it doubtless. It may not have been so much by *the malice* of men, as some have asserted; it was perhaps simple wickedness—an intention to disturb a congregation; but certainly with no thought of committing so terrible a crime as that of the murder of those unhappy creatures. God forgive those who were the instigators of that horrid act! They have my forgiveness from the depths of my soul. *It shall not stop us, however*; we are not in the least degree daunted by it. I shall preach there again yet; ay, and God shall give us souls there, and Satan's empire shall tremble more than ever. "God is with us; who is he that shall be against us?" The text I have selected is one that has comforted me, and in a great measure, enabled me to come here to-day—the single reflection upon it had such a power of comfort on my depressed spirit. It is this:—"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—Philippians 2:9-11.

I shall not attempt to preach upon this text; I shall only make a few remarks that have occurred to my own mind; for I could not preach to-day; I have been utterly unable to study,

but I thought that even a few words might be acceptable to you this morning, and I trust to your loving hearts to excuse them. Oh, Spirit of God, magnify thy strength in thy servant's weakness, and enable him to honour his Lord, even when his soul is cast down within him.

WHEN the mind is intensely set upon one object, however much it may by divers calamities be tossed to and fro, it invariably returns to the place which it had chosen to be its dwelling place. Ye have noticed in the case of David. When the battle had been won by his warriors, they returned flushed with victory. David's mind had doubtless suffered much perturbation in the mean time; he had dreaded alike the effects of victory and defeat; but have you not noticed how his mind in one moment returned to the darling object of his affections? "Is the young man Absalom safe?" said he, as if it mattered not what else had occurred, it his beloved son were but secure! So, beloved, it is with the Christian. In the midst of calamities, whether they be the wreck of nations, the crash of empires, the heaving of revolutions, or the scourge of war, the great question which he asks himself, and asks of others too, is this—Is Christ's kingdom safe? In his own personal afflictions his chief anxiety is,—Will God be glorified, and will his honour be increased by it? If it be so, says he, although I be but as smoking flax, yet if the sun is not dimmed I will rejoice; and though I be a bruised reed, if the pillars of the temple are unbroken, what matters it that my reed is bruised? He finds it sufficient consolation, in the midst of all the breaking in pieces which he endures, to think that Christ's throne stands fast and firm, and that though the earth hath rocked beneath *his* feet, yet Christ standeth on a rock which never can be moved. Some of these feelings, I think, have crossed our minds. Amidst much tumult and divers rushings to and fro of troublous thoughts our souls have returned to the darling object of our desires, and we have found it no small consolation after all to say, "It matters not what shall become of us: God hath highly exalted *him*, and given *him* a name which is above every name: That at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow."

This text has afforded sweet consolation to every heir of heaven. Allow me, very briefly, to give you the consolations of it. *To the true Christian there is much comfort in the very fact of Christ's exaltation*. In the second place, *there is no small degree of consolation in the reason of it*. "*Wherefore*, also, God hath highly exalted him;" that is because of his previous humiliation. And thirdly, there is no small amount of really divine solace in the thought of *the person who has exalted Christ*. Wherefore *God* also"—although men despise him and cast him down—"God also hath highly exalted him."

I. First, then, IN THE VERY FACT OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION THERE IS TO EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN A VERY LARGE DEGREE OF COMFORT. Many of you who have no part nor lot in spiritual things, not having love to Christ, nor any desire for his glory, will but laugh when I say that this is a very bottle of cordial to the lip of the weary Christian, that Christ, after all, is glorified. To you it is no consolation, because you lack that condition of heart which makes this text sweet to the soul. To you there is nothing of joy in it; it does

not stir your bosom; it gives no sweetness to your life; for this very reason, that you are not joined to Christ's cause, nor do you devoutly seek to honour him. But the true Christian's heart leapeth for joy, even when cast down by divers sorrows and temptations, at the remembrance that Christ is exalted, for in that he finds enough to cheer his own heart. Note here, beloved, that the Christian has certain features in his character which make the exaltation of Christ a matter of great joy to him. First, he has in his own opinion, and not in his own opinion only, but in reality, a *relationship to Christ*, and therefore he feels an interest in the success of his kinsman. Ye have watched the father's joy, when step by step his boy has climbed to opulence or fame; ye have marked the mother's eye, as it sparkled with delight when her daughter grew up to womanhood, and burst forth in all the grandeur of beauty. Ye have asked why they should feel such interest; and ye have been told, because the boy was his, or the girl was hers. They delighted in the advancement of their little ones, because of their relationship. Had there been no relationship, they might have been advanced to kings, emperors, or queens, and they would have felt but little delight. But from the fact of kindred, each step was invested with a deep and stirring interest. Now, it is so with this Christian. He feels that Jesus Christ, the glorified "Prince of the kings of the earth." is his brother. While he reverences him as God, he admires him as the man-Christ, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and he delights, in his calm and placid moments of communion with Jesus, to say to him, "O Lord, thou art my brother." His song is, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." It is his joy to sing—

"In the blood with sinners one,"

Christ Jesus is; for he is a man, even as we are: and he is no less and no more man than we are, save only sin. Surely, when we feel we are related to Christ, his exaltation is the source of the greatest joy to our spirits; we take a delight in it, seeing it is one of our family that is exalted. It is the Elder Brother of the great one family of God in heaven and earth; it is the Brother to whom all of us are related.

There is also in the Christian not only the feeling of relationship merely, but there is a feeling of *unity in the cause*. He feels that when Christ is exalted, it is himself exalted in some degree, seeing he has sympathy with his desire of promoting the great cause and honour of God in the world. I have no doubt that every common soldier who stood by the side of the Duke of Wellington felt honoured when the commander was applauded for the victory; for, said he, "I helped him, I assisted him; it was but a mean part that I played; I did but maintain my rank; I did but sustain the enemy's fire; but now the victory is gained. I feel an honour in it, for I helped, in some degree, to gain it." So the Christian, when he sees his Lord exalted, says, "It is the Captain that is exalted, and in his exaltation all his soldiers share. Have I not stood by his side? Little was the work I did, and poor the strength which I possessed to serve him; but still I aided in the labour;" and the commonest soldier in the spiritual ranks feels that he himself is in some degree exalted when he reads this—"Wherefore God also hath

highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:" a renown above every name—"that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

Moreover, the Christian knows not only that there is this unity in design, but that there is *a real union* between Christ and all his people. It is a doctrine of revelation seldom descanted upon, but never too much thought of—the doctrine that Christ and his members are all one. Know ye not, beloved, that every member of Christ's church is a member of Christ himself? We are "of his flesh and of his bones," parts of his great mystical body; and when we read that our head is crowned, O rejoice, ye members of his, his feet or his hands, though the crown is not on you, yet being on your Head, you share the glory, for you are one with him. See Christ yonder, sitting at his Father's right hand! Believer! he is the pledge of thy glorification; he is the surety of thine acceptance; and, moreover, he is thy representative. The seat which Christ possesses in heaven he has not only by his own right, as a person of the Deity, but he has it also as the representative of the whole church, for he is their forerunner, and he sits in glory as the representative of every one of them. O rejoice, believer, when thou seest thy Master exalted from the tomb, when thou beholdest him exalted up to heaven. Then, when thou seest him climb the steps of light, and sit upon his lofty throne, where angels' ken can scarcely reach him—when thou hearest the acclamations of a thousand seraphs—when thou dost note the loud pealing choral symphony of millions of the redeemed; think, when thou seest him crowned with light—think that thou art exalted too in him, seeing that thou art a part of himself. Happy art thou if thou knowest this, not only in doctrine, but in sweet experience too. Knit to Christ, wedded to him, grown into him, parts and portions of his very self, we throb with the heart of the body; when the head itself is glorified we share in the praise; we felt that his glorification bestows an honour upon us. Ah! beloved, have you ever felt that unity to Christ? Have you ever felt a unity of desire with him? If so, you will find this rich with comfort; but if not—if you know not Christ—it will be a source of grief rather than a pleasure to you that he is exalted, for you will have to reflect that he is exalted to crush you, exalted to judge you and condemn you, exalted to sweep this earth of its sins, and cut the curse up by the roots, and you with it, unless you repent and turn unto God with full purpose of heart.

There is yet another feeling, which I think is extremely necessary to any very great enjoyment of this truth, that Christ is exalted. It is a feeling of *entire surrender of one's whole being to the great work of seeking to honour him*. Oh! I have striven for that: would to God I might attain unto it! I have now concentrated all my prayers into one, and that one prayer is this, that I may die to self, and live wholly to him. It seems to me to be the highest stage of man—to have no wish, no thought, no desire but Christ—to feel that to die were bliss, if it were for Christ—that to live in penury and woe, and scorn, and contempt, and misery, were sweet for Christ—to feel that it did not matter what became of one's self, so that one's Master was but exalted—to feel that though, like a sear leaf, you are blown in the blast, you

are quite careless whither you are going, so long as you feel that the Master's hand is guiding you according to his will. Or rather to feel that though like the diamond you must be cut, that you care not how sharply you may be cut, so that you may be made fit to be a brilliant in *his* crown; that you care little what may be done to you, if you may but honour *him*. If any of you have attained to that sweet feeling of self-annihilation, you will look up to Christ as if he were the sun, and you will say of yourself, "O Lord, I see thy beams; I feel myself to be not a beam from thee—but darkness, swallowed up in thy light. The most I ask is, that thou wouldst live in me, that the life I live in the flesh may not be my life, but thy life in me, that I may say with emphasis, as Paul did, 'For me to live is Christ.'" A man that has attained to this, never need care what is the opinion of this world. He may say, "Do you praise me? Do you flatter me? Take back your flatteries: I ask them not at your hands; I sought to praise my Master; ye have laid the praises at my door; go, lay them at *his*, and not at mine. Do ye scorn me? Do ye despise me? Thrice happy am I to bear it. If ye will not scorn and despise *him*!" And if ye will, yet know this, that he is beyond your scorn; and, therefore, smite the soldier for his Captain's sake; ay, strike, strike; but the King ye cannot touch—he is highly exalted—and thou ye think ye have gotten the victory, ye may have routed one soldier of the army, but the main body is triumphant. One soldier seems to be smitten to the dust, but the Captain is coming on with his victorious cohorts, and shall trample you, flushed with your false victory, beneath his conquering feet. As long as there is a particle of selfishness remaining in us, it will mar our sweet rejoicing in Christ; till we get rid of it, we shall never feel constant joy. I do think that the root of sorrow is self. If we once got rid of that, sorrow would be sweet, sickness would be health, sadness would be joy, penury would be wealth, so far as our feelings with regard to them are concerned. *They* might not be changed, but *our feelings* under them would be vastly different. If you would seek happiness, seek it at the roots of your selfishness; cut up your selfishness, and you will be happy. I have found that whenever I have yielded to the least joy when I have been prepared to feel acutely the arrows of the enemy; but when I have said of the praises of men, "Yes, what are ye? worthless things!"—then I could also say of their contempt—"Come on! come on! I'll send you all where I sent the praises; you may go together, and fight your battles with one another; but as for me, let your arrows rattle on my mail—they must not, and they shall not, reach my flesh." But if you give way to one you will to another. You must seek and learn to live wholly in Christ—to sorrow when you see *Christ* maligned and dishonoured, to rejoice when you see *him* exalted, and then you will have constant cause for joy. Sit down now, O reviled one, poor, despised, and tempted one; sit down, lift up thine eyes, see him on his throne, and say within thyself, "Little though I be, I know I am united to him; he is my love, my life, my joy; I care not what happens so long as it is written, 'The Lord reigneth.'"

II. Now, briefly upon the second point. Here also is the very fountain and well-spring of joy, in THE REASON OF CHRIST'S EXALTATION. "Wherefore God also hath highly

exalted him." Why? Because, "he being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and because obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him." This of course relates to the manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. As God, Christ needed no exaltation; he was higher than the highest, "God over all, blessed for ever." But the symbols of his glory having been for a while obscured, having wrapped his Godhead in mortal flesh, his flesh with his Godhead ascended up on high, and the man-God, Christ Jesus, who had stooped to shame, and sorrow, and degradation, was highly exalted, "far above all principalities and powers," that he might reign Prince-regent over all worlds, yea, over heaven itself. Let us consider, for a moment, that depth of degradation to which Christ descended; and then, my beloved, it will give you joy to think, that for that very reason his manhood was highly exalted. Do you see that man—

"The humble Man before his foes,
The weary Man and full of woes?"

Do you mark him as he speaks? Note the marvellous eloquence which pours from his lips, and see how the crowds attend him? But do you hear, in the distance, the growling of the thunders of calumny and scorn? Listen to the words of his accusers. They say he is "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;" "he has a devil, and is mad." All the whole vocabulary of abuse is exhausted by vituperation upon him. He is slandered, abused, persecuted! Stop! Do you think that he is by this cast down, by this degraded? No, for this very reason: "*God hath highly exalted him*." Mark the shame and spitting that have come upon the cheek of yonder man of sorrows! See his hair plucked with cruel hands; mark ye how they torture him and how they mock him. Do you think that this is all dishonourable to Christ? It is apparently so; but list to this: "He became obedient," and therefore "*God hath highly exalted him*." Ah! there is a marvellous connection between that shame, and spitting, and the bending of the knee of seraphs; there is a strange yet mystic link which unites the calumny and the slander with the choral sympathies of adoring angels. The one was, as it were, the seed of the other. Strange that it should be, but the black, the bitter seed brought forth a sweet and glorious flower which blooms for ever. He suffered and he reigned; he stopped to conquer, and he conquered for he stooped, and was exalted for he conquered.

Consider him further still. Do you mark him in your imagination nailed to yonder cross! O eyes! ye are full of pity, with tears standing thick! Oh! how I mark the floods gushing down his checks! Do you see his hands bleeding, and his feet too, gushing gore? Behold him! The bulls of Bashan gird him round, and the dogs are hounding him to death! Hear him! "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" The earth startles with affright. A God is groaning on a cross! What! Does not this dishonour Christ? No; it honours him! Each of the thorns be-

comes a brilliant in his diadem of glory; the nails are forged into his sceptre, and his wounds do clothe him with the purple of empire. The treading of the wine-press hath stained his garments, but not with stains of scorn and dishonour. The stains are embroideries upon his royal robes for ever. The treading of that wine-press hath made his garments purple with the empire of a world; and he is the Master of a universe for ever. O Christian! sit down and consider that thy Master did not mount from earth's mountains into heaven, but from her valleys. It was not from heights of bliss on earth that he strode to bliss eternal, but from depths of woe he mounted up to glory. Oh! what a stride was that, when, at one mighty step from the grave to the throne of The Highest, the man Christ, the God, did gloriously ascend. And yet reflect! He in some way, mysterious yet true, was exalted because he suffered. "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." Believer, there is comfort for thee here, if thou wilt take it. If Christ was exalted through his degradation, so shalt thou be. Count not thy steps to triumph by thy steps upward, but by those which are seemingly downward. The way to heaven is down-hill. he who would be honoured for ever must sink in his own esteem, and often in that of his fellow-men. Oh! think not of yon fool who is mounting to heaven by his own light opinions of himself and by the flatteries of his fellows, that he shall safely reach Paradise; nay, that shall burst on which he rests, and he shall fall and be broken in pieces. But he who descends into the mines of suffering, shall find unbounded riches there; and he who dives into the depths of grief, shall find the pearl of everlasting life within tis caverns. Recollect, Christian, that thou art exalted when thou art disgraced; read the slanders of thine enemies as the plaudits of the just; count that the scoff and jeer of wicked men are equal to the praise and honour of the godly; their blame is censure, and their censure praise. Reckon too, if thy body should ever be exposed to persecution, that it is no shame to thee, but the reverse; and if thou shouldst be privileged, (and thou mayest) to wear the blood-red crown of martyrdom, count it no disgrace to die. Remember, the most honourable in the church are "the noble army of martyrs." Reckon that the greater the sufferings they endured, so much the greater is their "eternal weight of glory;" and so do thou, if thou standest in the brunt and thick of the fight, remember that thou shalt stand in the midst of glory. If thou hast the hardest to bear, thou shalt have the sweetest to enjoy. On with thee, then—through floods, through fire, through death, through hell, if it should lie in thy path. Fear not. He who glorified Christ because he stooped shall glorify thee; for after he has caused thee to endure awhile, he will give thee "a crown of life which fadeth now away."

III. And now, in the last place, beloved, here is yet another comfort for you. THE PERSON who exalted Christ is to be noticed. "GOD also hath highly exalted him." The emperor of all the Russians crowns himself: he is an autocrat, and puts the crown upon his own head: but Christ hath no such foolish pride. Christ did not crown himself. "GOD also hath highly

exalted him." The crown was put upon the head of Christ by God; and there is to me a very sweet reflection in this,—that the hand that put the crown on Christ's head, will one day put the crown on ours;—that the same Mighty One who crowned Christ, "King of kings, and Lord of lords," will crown us, when he shall make us "Kings and priests unto him for ever." "I know," said Paul, "there is laid up for me a crown of glory which fadeth not away, which God, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day."

Now, just pause over this thought—that Christ did not crown himself, but that his Father crowned him; that he did not elevate himself to the throne of majesty, but that his Father lifted him there, and placed him on his throne. Why, reflect thus: Man never highly exalted Christ. Put this then in opposition to it—"*God* also hath highly exalted him." Man hissed him, mocked him, hooted him. Words were not hard enough—they would use stones. "They took up stones again to stone him." And stones failed; nails must be used, and he must be crucified. And then there comes the taunt, the jeer, the mockery, whilst he hangs languishing on the death-cross. Man did not exalt him. Set the black picture there. Now put this, with this glorious, this bright scene, side by side with it, and one shall be a foil to the other. *Man* dishonoured him; "*God* also exalted him." Believer, if all men speak ill of thee, lift up thy head, and say, "Man exalted not my Master; I thank him that he exalts not me. The servant should not be above his master, nor the servant above his lord, nor he that is sent greater than he that sent him."

"If on my face for his dear name,
Shame and reproach shall be;
I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,
For he'll remember me."

God will remember me, and highly exalt me after all, though man casts me down.

Put it, again, in opposition to the fact, that Christ did not exalt himself. Poor Christian! *you* feel that you cannot exalt yourself. Sometimes you cannot raise your poor depressed spirits. Some say to you, "Oh! you should not feel like this." They tell you, "Oh! you should not speak such words, nor think such thoughts." Ah! "the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith,"—ay, and I will improve upon it, "nor a friend either." It is not easy to tell how another ought to feel and how another ought to act. Our minds are differently made, each in its own mould, which mould is broken afterwards, and there shall never be another like it. We are all different, each one of us; but I am sure there is one thing in which we are all brought to unite in times of deep sorrow, namely, in a sense of helplessness. We feel that we cannot exalt ourselves. Now remember, our Master felt just like it. In the 22nd Psalm, which, if I read it rightly, is a beautiful soliloquy of Christ upon the cross, he says to himself, "I am a worm, and no man." As if he felt himself so broken, so cast down, that instead of being more than a man, as he was, he felt for awhile less than man. And yet, when he could not lift finger to crown himself, when he could scarce heave

a thought of victory, when his eye could not flash with even a distant glimpse of triumph,—then his God was crowning him. Art thou so broken in pieces, Christian? Think not that thou art cast away for ever; for "God also hath highly exalted him" who did not exalt himself; and this is a picture and prophecy of what he will do for thee.

And now, beloved, I can say little more upon this text, save that I bid you now for a minutes meditate and think upon it. Oh! let your eyes be lifted up; bid heaven's blue veil divide; ask power of God—I mean spiritual power from on high, to look within the veil. I bid you not look to the streets of gold, nor to the walls of jasper, nor to the pearly-gated city. I do not ask you to turn your eyes to the white-robed hosts, who for ever sing loud hallelujahs; but yonder, my friends, turn your eyes,

"There, like a man, the Saviour sits;
The God, how bright he shines;
And scatters infinite delight
On all the happy minds."

Do you see him?

"The head that once was crowned with thorns,
Is crowned with glory now;
A royal diadem adorns
That mighty Victor's brow.
No more the bloody crown,
The cross and nails no more:
For hell itself shakes at his frown,
And all the heavens adore."

Look at him! Can your imagination picture him? Behold his transcendent glory! The majesty of kings is swallowed up; the pomp of empires dissolves like the white mist of the morning before the sun; the brightness of assembled armies is eclipsed. He in himself is brighter than the sun, more terrible than armies with banners. See him! See him! O! hide your heads, ye monarchs; put away your gaudy pageantry, ye lords of this poor narrow earth! His kingdom knows no bounds; without a limit his vast empire stretches out itself. Above him all is his; beneath him many a step are angels, and they are his; and they cast their crowns before his feet. With them stand his elect and ransomed, and *their* crowns too are his. And here upon this lower earth stand his saints, and they are his, and they adore him; and under the earth, among the infernals, where devils growl their malice, even there is trembling and adoration; and where lost spirits, with wailing and gnashing of teeth for ever lament their being, even there, there is the acknowledgment of his Godhead, even though the confession helps to make the fire of their torments. In heaven, in earth, in hell, all knees bend before him, and every tongue confesses that he is God. If not now, yet in the time that is to come this shall be carried out, that ever creature of God's making shall ac-

knowledge his Son to be "God over all, blessed for ever. Amen." Oh! my soul anticipates that blessed day, when this whole earth shall bend its knee before its God willingly! I do believe there is a happy era coming, when there shall not be one knee unbent before my Lord and Master. I look for that time, that latter-day glory, when kings shall bring presents, when queens shall be the nursing mothers of the church, when the gold of Sheba and the ships of Tarshish, and the dromedaries of Arabia shall alike be his, when nations and tribes of every tongue shall

"Dwell on his name with sweetest song,
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on his name."

Sometimes I hope to live to see that all-auspicious era—that halcyon age of this world, so much oppressed with grief and sorrow by the tyranny of its own habitants. I hope to see the time, when it shall be said, "Shout, for the great Shepherd reigns, and his unsuffering kingdom now is come"—when earth shall be one great orchestra of praise, and every man shall sing the glorious hallelujah anthem of the King of kings. But even now, while waiting for that era, my soul rejoices in the fact, that every knee does virtually bow, though not willingly, yet really. Does the scoffer, when he mouths high heaven, think that he insults God? He thinks so, but his insult dies long ere it reaches half-way to the stars. Does he conceive, when in his malice he forges a sword against Christ, that his weapon shall prosper? If he does, I can well conceive the derision of God, when he sees the wildest rebel, the most abandoned despiser, still working out his great decrees, still doing that which God hath eternally ordained, and in the midst of his wild rebellion still running in the very track which in some mysterious way before all eternity had been marked as the track in which that being should certainly move. "The wild steeds of earth have broken their bridles, the reins are out of the hands of the charioteer"—so some say; but they are not, or if they are, the steeds run the same round as they would have done had the Almighty grasped the reins still. The world has not gone to confusion; chance is not God; God is still Master, and let men do what they will, and hate the truth we now prize, they shall after all do what God wills, and their direst rebellion shall prove but a species of obedience, though they know it not.

But thou wilt say, "Why dost thou yet find fault; for who hath resisted such a will as that?" "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Who is he that shall blame him? Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! He is God—know that, ye inhabitants of the land; and all things, after all, shall serve his will. I like what Luther says

in his bold hymn, where, notwithstanding all that those who are haters of predestination choose to affirm, he knew and boldly declared, "He everywhere hath sway, and all things serve his might." Notwithstanding all they do, there is God's sway, after all. Go on, reviler! God knoweth how to make all thy revilings into songs! Go on, thou warrior against God, if thou wilt; know this, thy sword shall help to magnify God, and carve out glory for Christ, when thou thoughtest the slaughter of his church. It shall come to pass that all thou dost shall be frustrated; for God maketh the diviners mad, and saith, "Where is the wisdom of the scribe? Where is the wisdom of the wise?" Surely, "Him hath God exalted, and given him a name which is above every name."

And now, lastly, beloved, if it be true, as it is, that Christ is so exalted that he is to have a name above every name, and every knee is to bow to him, will we not bow our knees this morning before his Majesty? You must, whether you will or no, one day bow your knee. O iron-sinewed sinner, bow thy knee now! Thou wilt have to bow it, man, in that day when the lightnings shall be loosed, and the thunders shall roll in wild fury: thou wilt have to bow thy knee then. Oh! bow it now! "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." O Lord of hosts! bend the knees of men! Make us all the willing subjects of thy grace, lest afterward, we should be the unwilling slaves of thy terror; dragged with chains of vengeance down to hell. O that now those that are on earth might willingly bend their knees lest in hell it should be fulfilled, "Things under the earth shall bow the knee before him."

God bless you, my friends, I can say no more but that. God bless you, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

False Professors Solemnly Warned

A Sermon
No. 102
Delivered on Sabbath Evening, August 24, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At Exeter Hall, Strand.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things."—Philippians 3:18-19.

PAUL was the very model of what a Christian minister should be. He was a *watchful* shepherd over the flock; he did not simply preach to them, and consider that he had done all his duty when he had delivered his message; but his eyes were always upon the Churches, marking their spiritual welfare, their growth in grace, or their declension in godliness. He was the unsleeping guardian of their spiritual welfare. When he was called away to other lands to proclaim the everlasting gospel, he seems always to have kept an eye upon those Christian colonies which he had founded in the midst of heathen darkness. While lighting up other lamps with the torch of truth, he did not fail to trim the lamps already burning. Here you observe he was not indifferent to the character of the little church at Philippi, for he speaks to them and warns them.

Note, too, that the apostle was a very *honest* pastor—when he marked anything amiss in his people, he did not blush to tell them; he was not like your modern minister, whose pride is that he never was personal in his life, and who thus glories in his shame, for had he been honest, *he would have been personal*, for he would have dealt out the truth of God without deceitfulness, and would have reproved men sharply, that they might be sound in the faith. "I tell *you*," says Paul, "because it concerns you." Paul was very honest; he did not flinch from telling the whole truth, and telling it often too, though some might think that once from the lip of Paul would be of more effect than a hundred times from any one else. "I have told you often," says he, "and I tell you yet again there are some who are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

And while faithful, you will notice that the apostle was, as every true minister should be, extremely *affectionate*. He could not bear to think that any of the members of the churches under his care should swerve from the truth, he wept while he denounced them; he knew not how to wield the thunderbolt with a tearless eye; he did not know how to pronounce the threatening of God with a dry and husky voice. No; while he spoke terrible things the tear was in his eye, and when he reproved sharply, his heart beat so high with love, that those who heard him denounce so solemnly, were yet convinced that his harshest words

were dictated by affection. "I have told you often, and I tell you, *even weeping*, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."

Beloved, I have a message to deliver to-night which is to the same effect as that of the Apostle Paul, and I am afraid it is as necessary now as it was in his time. There are many now among us, as there were then, who walk in such a manner that we recognise them at once as the "enemies of the cross of Christ." I do fear that the evil, instead of having decreased, has multiplied and grown in danger. We have more profession now than there was in the age of Paul, and consequently we have more hypocrisy. It is a crying sin with our churches that there are many in their midst who never ought to be there, who would be fit members of an ale-house or any favourite resort of the gay and frivolous, but who never ought to sip the sacramental wine or eat the holy bread, the emblems of the sufferings of our Lord. We have—O Paul, how wouldst thou have said it to-night, and how wouldst thou have wept while saying it!—we have many in our midst who are the "enemies of the cross of Christ," because "their God is their belly, they mind earthly things," and their life is not consistent with the great things of God.

I shall endeavour, for a short time to-night, to tell you the reason of the apostle's extraordinary sorrow. I never read that the apostle wept when he was persecuted. Though they ploughed his back with furrows, I do believe that never a tear was seen to gush from his eye while the soldiers scourged him. Though he was cast into prison, we read of his singing, never of his groaning. I do not believe he ever wept on account of any sufferings or dangers to which he himself was exposed for Christ's sake. I call this an extraordinary sorrow, because the man who wept was no soft piece of sentiment, and seldom shed a tear even under grievous trials. He wept for three things: he wept on account of *their guilt*; on account of *the ill effects of their conduct*; and on account of *their doom*.

I. First, Paul wept on account of the GUILT of those persons who, having a name to live, were dead, and while uniting themselves with a Christian church, were not walking as they should do among men and before God. Notice the sin with which he charges them. He says, "Their God was their belly;" by this I understand that *they were sensual persons*. There were those in the early church who, after they sat at God's table, would go away and sit at the feasts of the heathen, and there indulge in gluttony and drunkenness; others indulged in lusts of the flesh, enjoying those pleasures (so miscalled) which, afterwards, bring unutterable pain even to the body itself, and are disgraceful to men, much more to professors of religion. Their God was their belly. They care more about the dress of their body than the dress of their soul; they regarded more the food of the outward carcass than the life of the inner man. Ah! my hearers; are there not many everywhere in our churches who still bow before their belly-god, and make themselves their own idols? Is it not notorious, in almost every society, that professing men can pamper themselves as much as others?—I mean not all, but some. Ay, I have heard of drunken professors; not men who positively reel through

the street, who are drunken in mid-day or intoxicated before their fellow-men, but men who go to the very verge of drunkenness in their social parties; men who take so much, that while it would be an insult to their respectability to call them intoxicated, it would be equally an insult to the truth to call them sober. Have we not some men in our churches (it is idle to deny it) who are as fond of the excesses of the table and surfeit in the good things of this life as any other class of men? Have we not persons who spend a very fortune upon the dress of their bodies, adorning themselves far more than they adorn the doctrine of their Saviour; men whose perpetual business it is to take good care of their bodies, against whom flesh and blood never had any cause to complain, for they not only serve the flesh, but make a god of it? Ah! sirs, the church is not pure; the church is not perfect; we have scabbed sheep in the flock. In our own little communion, now and then, we find them out, and then comes the dread sentence of excommunication, by which they are cut off from our fellowship; but there are many of whom we are not aware, who creep like snakes along the grass, and are not discovered till they inflict a grievous wound upon religion, and do damage to our great and glorious cause. Brethren, there are some in the church (both established and dissenting)—let us say it with the deepest sorrow—"whose god is their belly."

Another of their sins was that *they did mind earthly things*. Beloved, the last sentence may not have touched your consciences, but this is a very sweeping assertion, and I am afraid that a very large proportion of Christ's church are verily guilty here. It is an anomaly, but it is a fact, that we hear of ambitious Christians, although Christ has told us that he who would be exalted must humble himself. There are among the professed followers of the humble Man of Galilee, men who strive to gain the topmost round of the ladder of this world; whose aim is, not to magnify Christ, but to magnify themselves at any hazard. It had been thought at one time that a Christian would be a holy, a humble, and contented man; but it is not so now-a-days. We have (Oh, shame, ye churches!) mere professors; men who are as worldly as the worldliest, and have no more of Christ's Holy Spirit in them than the most carnal who never made a profession of the truth. Again, it is a paradox, but it stares us in the face every day, that we have covetous Christians. It is an inconsistency. We might as well talk of unholy seraphim, of perfect beings subject to sin, as of covetous Christians; yet there are such men, whose purse strings were never intended to slide, at least at the cry of the poor; who call it *prudence* to amass wealth, and never use it in any degree in the cause of Christ. If you want men that are hard in business, that are grasping after wealth, that seize upon the poor debtor and suck the last particle of his blood; if you want the men who are grasping and grinding, that will skin the flint, and take away the very life from the orphan, you must come—I blush to say it, but it is a solemn truth—you must come sometimes to our churches to find them. Some such there are amongst the highest of her officers, who "mind earthly things," and have none of that devotion to Christ which is the mark of pure godliness. These evils are not the fruits of religion, they are the diseases of mere profession.

I rejoice that the remnant of the elect are kept pure from these, but the "mixed multitude" are sadly possessed therewith.

Another character which the Apostle gives of these men is that they *gloried in their shame*. A professing sinner generally glories in his shame more than any one else. In fact, he miscalls it. He labels the devil's poisons with the names of Christ's medicines. Things that he would reckon vices in any other man are virtues with himself. If he could see in another man the selfsame action which he has just performed—if another could be the looking-glass of himself, oh! how he would thunder at him! He is the very first man to notice a little inconsistency. He is the very strictest of Sabbatarians; he is the most upright of thieves; he is the most tremendously generous of misers; he is the most marvellously holy of profane men. While he can indulge in his favourite sin, he is for ever putting up his glass to his eye to magnify the faults of others. *He* may do as he pleases; *he* may sin with impunity; and if his minister should hint to him that his conduct is inconsistent, he will make a storm in the church, and say the minister was personal, and insulted him. Reproof is thrown away on him. Is he not a member of the church? Has he not been so for years? Who shall dare to say that he is unholy? O sirs, there are some of your members of churches who will one day be members of the pit. We have some united with our churches who has passed through baptism and sit at our sacramental tables, who, while they have a name to live, are dead as corpses in their graves as to anything spiritual. It is an easy thing to palm yourself off for a godly man now-a-days. There is little self-denial, little mortification of the flesh, little love to Christ wanted. Oh, no. Learn a few religious hymns; get a few cant phrases, and you will deceive the very elect; enter into the church, be called respectable, and if you cannot make all believe you, you will yet smooth your path to destruction by quieting an uneasy conscience. I am saying hard things, but I am saying true things; for my blood boils sometimes when I meet with men whom I would not own, whom I would not sit with anywhere, and who yet call me "brother." They can live in sin, and yet call a Christian "brother." God forgive them! We can feel no brotherhood with them; nor do we wish to do so until their lives are changed, and their conduct is made more consistent.

You see, then, in the Apostle's days there were some who were a disgrace to godliness, and the Apostle wept over them because he knew their guilt. Why, it is guilt enough for a man to make a God of his belly without being a professor; but how much worse for a man who knows better, who even sets up to teach other people better, still to go on and sin against God and against his conscience, by making a solemn profession, which is found in his case to be a lie. Oh! how dreadful is such a man's guilt! For him to stand up and say,

"'Tis done; the great transaction's done.

I am the Lord's, and he is mine,"

and yet to go and sin like others; to use the same conversation, to practise the same chicanery, to walk in as ungodly a manner as those who have never named the name of

Christ—ah! what guilt is here! It is enough to make us weep if we have been guilty ourselves; ay, to weep tears of blood that we should so have sinned against God.

II. But the Apostle did not so much weep for them as for THE MISCHIEF THEY WERE DOING, for he says, emphatically, that they are, "The enemies of the cross of Christ." "*The* enemies;" as much as to say, the infidel is *an* enemy; the curser, the swearer, the profane man, is *an* enemy; Herod, yonder, the persecutor, is *an* enemy; but these men are the chief soldiers—the life-guards in Satan's army. "*The* enemies of the cross of Christ" are Pharisaic professors, bright with the whitewash of outside godliness, whilst they are rotten within. Oh! methinks there is nothing that should grieve a Christian more than to know that Christ has been wounded in the house of his friends. See, there comes my Saviour with bleeding hands and feet. O my Jesus, my Jesus, who shed that blood? Whence comes that wound? Why lookest thou so sad? He replies, "I have been wounded, but guess where I received the blow?" Why, Lord, sure thou wast wounded in the gin-palace; thou wast wounded where sinners meet, in the seat of the scornful; thou wast wounded in the infidel hall. "No, I was not," saith Christ; "I was wounded in the house of my friends; these scars were made by those who sat at my table and bore my name, and talked my language; *they* pierced me and crucified me afresh, and put me to an open shame." Far worst of sinners they that pierce Christ thus whilst professing to be friends. Caesar wept not until Brutus stabbed him; then it was that he was overcome, and exclaimed, "*Et tu, Brute!*" And thou, "Hast *thou* stabbed me?" So, my hearers, might Christ say to some of you. "What! thou, and thou, and thou, a professor, hast stabbed me?" Well might our Saviour muffle up his face in grief, or rather bind it in clouds of wrath, and drive the wretch away that has so injured his cause.

If I must be defeated in battle, let me be defeated by mine enemies, but let me not be betrayed by my friends. If I must yield the citadel which I am willing to defend even to the death, then let me yield it, and let my foes walk over my body; but oh! let not my friends betray me; let not the warrior who stands by my side unbar the gate and admit the foemen. That were enough to break one's heart twice—once for the defeat, and the second time at the thought of treachery.

When a small band of Protestants were striving for their liberties in Switzerland, they bravely defended a pass against an immense host. Though their dearest friends were slain, and they themselves were weary, and ready to drop with fatigue, they stood firm in the defence of the cause they had espoused. On a sudden, however, a cry was heard—a dread and terrible shriek. The enemy was winding up a steep acclivity, and when the commander turned his eye thither, O how his brow gathered with storm! He ground his teeth and stamped his foot, for he knew that some caitiff Protestant had led the blood-thirsty foe up the goat track to slay his friends. Then turning to his friends, he said "On!" and like a lion on his prey, they rushed upon their enemies, ready now to die, for a friend had betrayed them. So feels the bold-hearted Christian, when he sees his fellow-member betraying Christ, when

he beholds the citadel of Christianity given up to its foes by those who pretended to be its friends. Beloved, I would rather have a thousand devils out of the church, than have one in it. I do not care about all the adversaries outside; our greatest cause of fear is from the crafty "wolves in sheep's clothing," that devour the flock. It is against such that we would denounce in holy wrath the solemn sentence of divine indignation, and for such we would shed our bitterest tears of sorrow. They are "the enemies of the cross of Christ."

Now, for a moment, let me show you how it is that the wicked professor is the greatest enemy to Christ's church.

In the first place, *he grieves the church more than any one else*. It any man in the street were to pelt me with mud, I believe I should thank him for the honor, if I knew him to be a bad character, and knew that he hated me for righteousness sake. But if one who called himself a Christian should injure the cause with the filthiness of his own licentious behaviour: ah! that were more injurious than the stakes of Smithfield, or the racks of the Tower. The deepest sighs the Christian has ever heaved, have been fetched from him by carnal professors. I would not weep a tear if every man should curse me who was a hater of Christ; but when the professor forsakes Christ, and betrays his cause: ah! that indeed is grievous; and who is he that can keep back the tear on account of so vile a deed?

Again: *nothing divides the church more*. I have seen many divisions in journeying through the country, and I believe almost every division may be traced to a deficiency of piety on the part of some of the members. We should be more one, if it were not for cants that creep into our midst. We should be more loving to each other, more tender-hearted, more kind, but that these men, so deceptive, coming into our midst, render us suspicious. Moreover, they themselves find fault with those who walk worthily, in order to hide their own faults against God, and against justice. The greatest sorrows of the church have been brought upon her, not by the arrows shot by her foes, not by the discharge of the artillery of hell, but by fires lit in her own midst, by those who have crept into her in the guise of good men and true, but who were spies in the camp, and traitors to the cause.

Yet again: *nothing has ever hurt poor sinners more than this*. Many sinners coming to Christ would get relief far more quickly, if it were not for the ill lives of false professors. Now let me tell you a story, which I remember telling once before: it is a very solemn one; I hope to feel its power myself, and I pray that all of you may do the same. A young minister had been preaching in a country village, and the sermon apparently took deep effect on the minds of the hearers. In the congregation there was a young man who felt acutely the truth of the solemn words to which the preacher had given utterance. He sought the preacher after the service, and walked with him. On the road, the minister talked of every subject except the one that had occupied his attention in the pulpit. The poor soul was under great distress, and he asked the minister a question or two, but they were put off very coolly, as if the matter was of no great importance. Arriving at the house, several friends were gathered

together, and the preached commenced very freely to crack his jokes, to utter his funny expressions, and to set the company in a roar of laughter. That, perhaps, might not have been so bad, had he not gone even farther, and uttered words which were utterly false, and verged upon the licentious. The young man suddenly rose from the table; and though he had wept under the sermon, and had been under the deepest apparent conviction, he rose up, went outside the door, and stamping his foot, said, "Religion is a lie! From this moment I abjure God, I abjure Christ; and if I am damned I will be damned, but I will lay the charge at that man's door, for he preached just now and made me weep, but now see what he is! He is a liar, and I will never hear him again." He carried out his threat; and some time afterwards, as he lay dying, he sent word to the minister that he wanted to see him. The minister had removed to a distant part, but had been brought there by providence, I believe, purposely to chasten him for the great sin he had committed. The minister stepped into the room with the Bible in his hand to do as he was accustomed—to read a chapter and to pray with the poor man. Turning his eyes on him, the man said, "Sir, I remember hearing you preach once." "Blessed be God," said the minister, "I thank God for it," thinking, no doubt, that he was a convert, and rejoicing over him. "Stop," said the man, "I do not know that there is much reason for thanking God, at any rate, on my part. Sir, do you remember preaching from such-and-such a text on such-and-such an evening?" "Yes, I do." "I trembled then, sir; I shook from head to foot; I left with the intention of bending the knee in prayer, and seeking God in Christ; but do you remember going to such-and-such a house, and what you said there!" "No," said the minister, "I cannot." "Well, then, I can tell you, and mark you! through what you said that night my soul is damned, and as true as I am a living man I will meet you at God's bar and lay it to your charge." The man then shut his eyes and died. I think you can scarcely imagine what must have been the feeling of that preacher as he retired from the bedside. He must carry with him always that horrid, that terrible incubus, that there was a soul in hell who laid his blood to his charge.

I am afraid there are some in the ranks of the church who have much guilt at their doors on this account. Many a young man has been driven from a solemn consideration of the truth by the harsh and censorious remarks of Scribes and Pharisees. Many a careful seeker has been prejudiced against sound doctrine by the evil lives of its professors. Ah! ye Scribes and Pharisees, ye enter not in yourselves, and them that would enter in ye hinder. Ye take the key of knowledge, lock up the door by your inconsistencies, and drive men away by your unholy living.

Again, they are "the enemies of the cross of Christ," because *they give the devil more theme for laughter*, and the enemy more cause for joy, than any other class of Christians. I do not care what all the infidel lecturers in the world like to say. They are very clever fellows, no doubt, and good need they have to be so, to prove an absurdity, and "make the worse appear the better reason;" but we care little what they say; they may say what they like against

us that is false, but it is when they can say anything that is true about us that we do not like it. It is when they can find a real inconsistency in us, and then bring it to our charge, that they have got stuff to make lectures of. If a man be an upright Christian, he never need fear what others say of him; they will get but little fun out of him if he leads a holy, blameless life; but let him be sometimes godly, and at other times ungodly, then he may grieve, for he has given the enemy cause to blaspheme by his unholy living. The devil gets much advantage over the church by the inconsistency of professors. It is when Satan makes hypocrites that he brings the great battering ram against the wall. "Your lives are not consistent"—ah! that is the greatest battering ram that Satan can use against the cause of Christ. Be particular, my dear friends, be very particular that you do not dishonour the cause you profess to love, by living in sin and walking in iniquity. And let me say a word to those of you who, like myself, are strong Calvinists. No class of persons are more maligned than we. It is commonly said that our doctrine is licentious; we are called Antinomians; we are cried down as *hypers*; we are reckoned the scum of creation; scarcely a minister looks on us or speaks favourably of us, because we hold strong views upon the divine sovereignty of God, and his divine electings and special love towards his own people. In many towns the legal ministers will tell you that there is a nasty nest of people there, who they say are Antinomians—such a queer set of creatures. Very likely, if a good minister enters the pulpit, when he has done his sermon, up comes some man and grasps his hand, and says, "Ah! brother, I am glad to see you down here; sixteen ounces to the pound to-day; our minister gives us nothing but milk and water." "Where do you go?" he asks. "Oh, I attend a little room where we labour to exalt free-grace alone." "Ah! then you belong to that nasty set of Antinomians your minister was telling me of just now." Then you begin to talk with him, and you find that if he is an Antinomian you should very much like to be one yourself. Very possibly he is one of the most spiritual men in the village; he knows so much of God that he really cannot sit down under a legal ministry; he understands so much of free-grace that he is obliged to turn out or else he would be starved to death. It is common to cry down those who love God, or rather, who not only love God, but love all that God has said, and who hold the truth firmly. Let *us* then, not as Christians only, but as being a peculiar class of Christians, take care that we give no handle to the enemy, but that our lives are so consistent, that we do nothing to disgrace that cause which is dear to us as our lives, and which we hope to maintain faithfully unto death.

III. Lastly, Paul wept, BECAUSE HE KNEW THEIR DOOM: "Their end is destruction." Mark you, the end of a professing man who has been a hypocrite will be *emphatically destruction*. If there be chains in hell more heavy than others—if there be dungeons in hell more dark than others—if there be racks that shall more fearfully torment the frame—if there be fires that shall more tremendously scorch the body—if there be pangs that shall more effectually twist the soul in agonies, professing Christians must have them if they be

found rotten at last, I had rather die a profligate than die a lying professor. I think I had rather die the veriest sweeping of the street than die a hypocrite. Oh, to have had a name to live, and yet to have proved insincere. The higher the soar the greater the fall. This man has soared high; how low must he tumble when he finds himself mistaken! He who thought to put to his mouth the nectared cup of heaven, finds when he quaffs the bowl, that is the very draught of hell. He who hoped to enter through the gates into the city finds the gates shut, and he himself bidden to depart as an unknown stranger. Oh! how thrilling is that sentence, "Depart from me, I never knew you!" I think I had rather hear it said to me, "Depart, accursed, among the rest of the wicked," than to be singled out, and to have it said, after exclaiming, "Lord, Lord," "Depart from me; I know you not; though you ate and drank in my courts; though you came to my sanctuary, you are a stranger to me, and I am a stranger to you." Such a doom, more horrible than hell, more direful than fate, more desperate than despair, must be the inevitable lot of those "whose god is their belly," who have "gloried in their shame," and "minded earthly things."

Now I dare say most of you will say, "Well, he has stirred the churches up to-night; if he has not spoken earnestly, he has spoken harshly, at any rate." "Ah!" says one, "I dare say it is very true; they are all a set of cants and hypocrites; I always thought so; I shall not go amongst them; none of them are genuine." Stop a bit, my friend, I did not say they were all so; I should be very wicked if I did. The very fact that there are hypocrites proves that all are not so. "How is that?" say you. Do you think there would be any bad bank notes in the world if there were no good ones? Do you think anyone would try and circulate bad sovereigns if there were no really good ones? No, I think not. It is the good bank note that makes the bad one, by prompting the wicked man to imitate it and produce a forgery. It is the very fact that there is gold in the world that makes another try to imitate the metal and so to cheat his neighbour. If there were no true Christians, there would be no hypocrites. It is the excellence of the Christian character which makes men seek after it, and because they have not the real heart of oak, they try to grain their lives to look like it. Because they have not the real solid metal, they try to gild themselves to imitate it. You must have a few brains left, and those are enough to tell you that if there be hypocrites, there must be some who are genuine. "Ah!" says another, "quite right; there are many genuine ones, and I can tell you, whatever you may think, I am genuine enough. I never had a doubt or fear. I know I was chosen of God; and though I do not exactly live as I could wish, I know if I do not go to heaven, very few will ever have a chance. Why, sir, I have been a deacon the last ten years, and a member twenty; and I am not to be shaken by anything you say. As for my neighbour there, who sits near me, I do not think he ought to be so sure; but I have never had a doubt for thirty years." Oh my dear friend, can you excuse me? *I will doubt for you*. If you had not doubt yourself, I begin to doubt. If you are quite so sure, I really must suspect you; for I have noticed that true Christians are the most suspicious in the world; they are always afraid

of themselves. I never met with a truly good man but he always felt he was not good enough; and as you are so particularly good, you must excuse me if I cannot quite endorse your security. You may be very good, but if you will take a trifle of my advice, I recommend you to "examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith," lest, being puffed up by your carnal fleshly mind, you fall into the snare of the wicked one. "Not too sure," is a very good motto for the Christian. "Make your calling and election sure," if you like; but do not make your opinion of yourself so sure. Take care of presumption. Many a good man in his own esteem has been a very devil in God's eyes; many a pious soul in the esteem of the church has been nothing but rottenness in the esteem of God. Let us then try ourselves. Let us say, "Search us, O God, and try our hearts; see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting." If you shall be sent home with such a thought, I shall bless God that the sermon was not altogether in vain. But there are some here who say that it does not matter whether they are in Christ or no. They intend to go on trifling still, despising God, and laughing at his name. Mark this, sinner: The cry that does for one day won't do for ever; and thou you talk of religion now as if it were a mere trifle, mark ye men, you will want it by-and-bye. You are on board ship, and you laugh at the life-boat, because there is no storm; you will be glad enough to leap into it if you are able when the storm shall come. Now you say Christ is nothing, because you do not want him, but when the storm of vengeance comes, and death lays hold upon you, mark me, you will howl after Christ, though you will not pray for him now; you will shriek after him then, though you will not call for him now. "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel." The Lord bring you to himself, and make you his true and genuine children, that you may not know destruction, but that you may be saved now, and saved for ever!

The tongue of the wicked has assailed Mr. SPURGEON *with the most virulent abuse and lying detraction. His sentiments have been misrepresented, and his words perverted. His doctrines have been impugned as "blasphemous," "profane," and "diabolical." Nevertheless, the good hand of the Lord has been upon him, and he has not heeded the falsehoods of the ungodly.*

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Christ in the Covenant

A Sermon
No. 103
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, August 31, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"I will give thee for a covenant of the people."—Isaiah 49:8.

WE all believe that our Saviour has very much to do with the covenant of eternal salvation. We have been accustomed to regard him as the Mediator of the covenant, as the surety of the covenant, and as the scope or substance of the covenant. We have considered him to be the *Mediator* of the covenant, for we were certain that God could make no covenant with man unless there were a mediator—a days-man, who should stand between the both. And we have hailed him as the Mediator, who, with mercy in his hands, came down to tell to sinful man the news that grace was promised in the eternal counsel of the Most High. We have also loved our Saviour as the *Surety* of the covenant, who, on our behalf, undertook to pay our debts; and on his Father's behalf, undertook, also, to see that all our souls should be secure and safe, and ultimately presented unblemished and complete before him. And I doubt not, we have also rejoiced in the thought that Christ is the *sum and substance* of the covenant; we believe that if we would sum up all spiritual blessings, we must say, "Christ is all." He is the matter, he is the substance of it; and although much might be said concerning the glories of the covenant, yet nothing could be said which is not to be found in that one word, "Christ." But this morning I shall dwell on Christ, not as the Mediator, nor as the surety, nor as the scope of the covenant, but as one great and glorious article of the covenant which God has given to his children. It is our firm belief that Christ is ours, and is given to us of God; we know that "he freely delivered him up for us all," and we, therefore, believe that he will, "with him, freely give us all things." We can say, with the spouse, "My beloved is mine." We feel that we have a personal property in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and it will therefore delight us for a while, this morning, in the simplest manner possible, without the garnishings of eloquence or the trappings of oratory, just to mediate upon this great thought, that Jesus Christ in the covenant is the property of every believer.

First, we shall *examine this property*; secondly, we shall notice the purpose for which it was conveyed to us; and thirdly, we shall give *one precept*, which may well be affixed upon so great a blessing as this, and is indeed an inference from it.

I. In the first place, then, here is a GREAT POSSESSION—Jesus Christ by the covenant is the property of every believer. By this we must understand Jesus Christ in many different senses; and we will begin, first of all, by declaring that Jesus Christ is ours, *in all his attributes*. He has a double set of attributes, seeing that there are two natures joined in glorious union

in one person. He has the attributes of very God, and he has the attributes of perfect man; and whatever these may be, they are each one of them the perpetual property of every believing child of God. I need not dwell on his attributes as God; you all know how infinite is his love, how vast his grace, how firm his faithfulness, how unswerving his veracity; you know that he is omniscient; you know that he is omnipresent; you know that he is omnipotent, and it will console you if you will but think that all these great and glorious attributes which belong to God are all yours. Has he power? That power is yours—yours to support and strengthen you; yours to overcome your enemies, yours to keep you immutably secure. Has he love? Well, there is not a particle of his love in his great heart, which is not yours; all his love belongs to you; you may dive into the immense, bottomless ocean of his love, and you may say of it all, "it is mine." Hath he justice? It may seem a stern attribute; but even that is yours, for he will by his justice see to it, that all which is covenanted to you by the oath and promise of God shall be most certainly secured to you. Mention whatever you please which is a characteristic of Christ as the ever glorious Son of God, and O faithful one, thou mayest put thine hand upon it and say, "it is mine." Thine arm, O Jesus, upon which the pillars of the earth do hang, is mine. Those eyes, O Jesus, which pierce through the thick darkness and behold futurity—thine eyes are mine, to look on me with love. Those lips, O Christ, which sometimes speak words louder than ten thousand thunders, or whisper syllables sweeter than the music of the harps of the glorified—those lips are mine. And that great heart which beateth high with such disinterested, pure, and unaffected love—that heart is mine. The whole of Christ, in all his glorious nature as the Son of God, as God over all, blessed for ever, is yours, positively, actually, without metaphor, in reality yours.

Consider him as man too. All that he has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man he stood before his Father, "full of grace and truth," full of favour; and accepted by God as a perfect being. O believer, God's acceptance of Christ is thine acceptance; for knowest thou not, that that love which the Father set on a perfect Christ, he sets on thee now? For all that Christ did is thine. That perfect righteousness which Jesus wrought out, when through his stainless life he kept the law and made it honorable, is thine. There is not a virtue which Christ ever had, that is not thine; there is not a holy deed which he ever did which is not thine; there is not a prayer he ever sent to heaven that is not thine; there is not one solitary thought towards God which it was his duty to think, and which he thought as man serving his God, which is not thine. All his righteousness, in its vast extent, and in all the perfection of his character, is imputed to thee. Oh! canst thou think what thou hast gotten in the word "Christ?" Come, believer, consider that word "God," and think how mighty it is; and then meditate upon that word "perfect man," for all that the Man-God, Christ, and the glorious God-man, Christ, ever had, or ever can have as the characteristic of either of his natures, all that is thine. It all belongs to thee; it is out of pure free favour, beyond the fear of revocation, passed over to thee to be thine actual property—and that for ever.

2. Then, consider believer, that not only is Christ thine in all his attributes, but he is thine *in all his offices*. Great and glorious these offices are; we have scarce time to mention them all. Is he a prophet? Then he is *thy* prophet. Is he a priest? Then he is *thy* priest. Is he a king? Then he is *thy* king. Is he a redeemer? Then he is *thy* redeemer. Is he an advocate? Then he is *thy* advocate. Is he a forerunner? Then he is *thy* forerunner. Is he a surety of the covenant? The he is *thy* surety. In every name he bears, in every crown he wears, in every vestment in which he is arrayed, he is the believer's own. Oh! child of God, if thou hadst grace to gather up this thought into thy soul it would comfort thee marvellously, to think that in all Christ is in office, he is most assuredly thine. Dost thou see him yonder, interceding before his Father, with outstretched arms? Dost thou mark his ephod—his golden mitre on his brow, inscribed with "holiness unto the Lord?" Dost see him as he lifts up his hands to pray? Hearest thou not that marvellous intercession such as man never prayed on earth; that authoritative intercession such as he himself could not use in the agonies of the garden? For

"With sighs and groans, he offered up
His humble suit below;
But with authority he pleads,
Enthroned I glory now."

Dost see how he asks, and how he received, as soon as his petition is put up? And canst thou, darest thou believe that that intercession is all thine own, that on his breast thy name is written, that in his heart thy name is stamped in marks of indellible grace, and that all the majesty of that marvellous, that surpassing intercession is thine own, and would all be expended for thee if thou didst require it; that he has not any authority with his Father, that he will not use on thy behalf, if thou dost need it; that he has no power to intercede that he would not employ for thee in all times of necessity? Come now, words cannot set this forth; it is only your thoughts that can teach you this; it is only God the Holy Spirit bringing home the truth that can set this ravishing, this transporting thought in its proper position in your heart; that Christ is yours in all he is and has. Seest thou him on earth? There he stands, the priest offering his bloody sacrifice; see him on the tree, his hands are pierced, his feet are gushing gore! Oh! dost thou see that pallid countenance, and those languid eyes flowing with compassion? Dost thou mark that crown of thorns? Dost thou behold that mightiest of sacrifices, the sum and substance of them all? Believer, that is *thine*, those precious drops plead and claim *thy* peace with God; that open side is *thy* refuge, those pierced hands are thy redemption; that groan he groans for thee; that cry of a forsaken heart he utters for thee; that death he dies for thee. Come, I beseech thee, consider Christ in any one of his various offices; but when thou dost consider him lay hold of this thought, that in all these things he is THY Christ, given unto thee to be one article in the eternal covenant—thy possession for ever.

3. Then mark next, Christ is the believer's in every one of his *works*. Whether they be works of suffering or of duty, they are the property of the believer. As a child, he was circumcised, and is that bloody rite mine? Ay, "Circumcised in Christ." As a believer he is buried, and is that watery sign of baptism mine? Yes; "Buried with Christ in baptism unto death." Jesus' baptism I share when I lie interred with my best friend in the selfsame watery tomb. See there, he dies, and it is a master work to die. But is his death mine? Yes, I die in Christ. He rises. Mark him startling his guards, and rising from the tomb! And is that resurrection mine? Yes, we are "risen together with Christ." Mark again, he ascends up on high, and leads captivity captive. Is that ascension mine? Yes, for he hath "raised us up together." And see, he sits on his Father's throne; is that deed mine? Yes, he hath made us, "sit together in heavenly places." All he did is ours. By divine decree, there existed such an union between Christ and his people, that all Christ did his people did: and all Christ has performed, his people did perform in him, for they were in his loins when he descended to the tomb, and in his loins they have ascended up on high; with him they entered into bliss; and with him they sit in heavenly places. Represented by him, their Head, all his people even now are glorified in him—even in him who is the head over all things to his church. In all the deeds of Christ, either in his humiliation or his exaltation, recollect, O believer, thou hast a covenant interest, and all those things are thine.

4. I would for one moment hint at a sweet thought, which is this, you know that in the person of Christ "dwelleth *all the fulness of the Godhead* bodily." AH! believer, "and of his fulness have we received, and grace for grace." *All the fulness of Christ*! do you know what that is? Do you understand that phrase? I warrant you, you do not know it, and shall not do just yet. But all that fulness of Christ, the abundance of which you may guess of by your own emptiness—all that fulness is thine to supply thy multiplied necessities. All the fulness of Christ to restrain thee, to keep thee and preserve thee; all that fulness of power, of love, of purity, which is stored up in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is thine. Do treasure up that thought, for then thine emptiness need never be a cause of fear; how canst thou be lost whilst thou hast all fulness to fly to?

5. But I come to something sweeter than this; *the very life of Christ* is the property of the believer. Ah! this is a thought into which I cannot dive, and I feel I have outdone myself in only mentioning it. The life of Christ is the property of every believer. Canst thou conceive what Christ's life is? "Sure," you say, "he poured it out upon the tree." He did, and it was his life that he gave to thee then. But he took that life again; even the life of his body was restored; and the life of his great and glorious Godhead had never undergone any change, even at that time. But now, you know he has immortality: "he only hath immortality." Can you conceive what kind of life that is which Christ possesses? Can he ever die? No; far sooner may the harps of heaven be stopped, and the chorus of the redeemed cease for ever; far sooner may the glorious walls of paradise be shaken, and the foundations thereof be re-

moved; than that Christ, the Son of God, should ever die. Immortal as his Father, now he sits, the Great Eternal One. Christian, that life of Christ is thine. Hear what he says: "Because I live ye shall live also." "Ye are dead; and your life"—where is it? It is "hid with Christ in God." The same blow which smites us dead, spiritually, must slay Christ too; the same sword which can take away the spiritual life of a regenerate man, must take away the life of the Redeemer also; for they are linked together—they are not two lives, but one. We are but the rays of the great Sun of Righteousness, our Redeemer,—sparks which must return to the great orb again. If we are indeed the true heirs of heaven, we cannot die until he from whom we take our rise dieth also. We are the stream that cannot stop till the fountain be dry; we are the rays that cannot cease until the sun doth cease to shine. We are the branches, and we cannot wither until the trunk itself shall die. "Because I live, ye shall live also." The very life of Christ is the property of every one of his brethren.

6. And best of all, *the person of Jesus Christ* is the property of the Christian. I am persuaded, beloved, we think a great deal more of God's gifts than we do of God; and we preach a great deal more about the Holy Spirit's influence than we do about the Holy Spirit. And I am also assured that we talk a great deal more about the offices, and works, and attributes of Christ than we do about the person of Christ. Hence it is that there are few of us who can often understand the figures that are used in Solomon's Song, concerning the person of Christ, because we have seldom sought to see him or desired to know him. But, O believer, thou hast sometimes been able to behold thy Lord. Hast thou not seen *him*, who is white and ruddy, "the chief amongst ten thousand, and the altogether lovely?" Hast thou not been sometimes lost in pleasure when thou hast seen his feet, which are like much fine gold, as if they burned in a furnace? Hast thou not beheld him in the double character, the white and the red, the lily and the rose, the God yet the man, the dying yet the living; the perfect, and yet bearing about with him a body of death? Hast thou ever beheld that Lord with the nail-print in his hands, and the mark still on his side? And hast thou ever been ravished at his loving smile, and been delighted at his voice? Hast thou never had love visits from him? Has he never put his banner over thee? hast thou never walked with him to the villages and the garden of nuts? Hast thou never sat under his shadow? hast thou never found his fruit sweet unto thy taste? Yes, thou hast. His *person* then is thine. The wife loveth her husband; she loveth his house and his property; she loveth him for all that he giveth her, for all the bounty he confers, and all the love he bestows; but his person is the object of her affections. So with the believer: he blesses Christ for all he does and all he is. But oh! it is Christ that is everything. He does not care so much about his office, as he does about *the Man* Christ. See the child on his father's knee—the father is a professor in the university; he is a great man with many titles, and perhaps the child knows that these are honourable titles, and esteems him for them; but he does not care so much about the professors and his dignity, as about the person of his father. It is not the college square cap, or the gown that the child loves; ay,

and if it be a loving child it will not be so much the meal the father provides, or the house in which it lives, as the father which it loves; it is his dear person that has become the object of true and hearty affection. I am sure it is so with you, if you know your Saviour; you love his mercies, you love his offices, you love his deeds, but oh! you love his person best. Reflect, then that the person of Christ is in the covenant conveyed to you: "I will give thee to be a covenant for the people."

II. Now we come to the second: FOR WHAT PURPOSE DOES GOD PUT CHRIST IN THE COVENANT?

1. Well, in the first place, Christ is in the covenant in order *to comfort every coming sinner*. "Oh," says the sinner who is coming to God, "I cannot lay hold on such a great covenant as that, I cannot believe that heaven is provided for me, I cannot conceive that the robe of righteousness and all these wondrous things can be intended for such a wretch as I am." Here comes in the thought that Christ is in the covenant. Sinner, canst thou lay hold on Christ? Canst thou say,

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling?"

Well, if thou hast got that, it was put in on purpose for thee to hold fast by God's covenant mercies all go together, and if thou hast laid hold on Christ, thou hast gained every blessing in the covenant. That is one reason why Christ was put there. Why, if Christ were not there, the poor sinner would say, "I dare not lay hold on that mercy. It is a God-like and a divine one, but I dare not grasp it; it is too good for me. I cannot receive it, it staggers my faith." But he sees Christ with all his great atonement in the covenant; and Christ looks so lovingly at him, and opens his arms so wide, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," that the sinner comes and throws his arms around Christ, and then Christ whispers, "Sinner, in laying hold of me, thou hast laid hold of all." Why, Lord, I dare not think I could have the other mercies. I dare trust thee, but I dare not take the others. Ah, sinner, but in that thou hast taken me thou hast taken all, for the mercies of the covenant are like links in the chain. This one link is an enticing one. The sinner lays hold of it; and God has purposely put it there to entice the sinner to come and receive the mercies of the covenant. For when he has once got hold of Christ—here is the comfort—he has everything that the covenant can give.

2. Christ is put also *to confirm the doubting saint*. Sometimes he cannot read his interest in the covenant. He cannot see his portion among them that are sanctified. He is afraid that God is not *his* God, that the Spirit hath no dealings with *his* soul; but then,

"Amid temptations, sharp and strong,
His soul to *that dear refuge flies;*
Hope is his anchor, firm and strong,
When tempests blow and billows rise."

So he lays hold of Christ, and were it not for that, even the believer dare not come at all. he could not lay hold on any other mercy than that with which Christ is connected. "Ah," saith he, "I know I am a sinner, and Christ came to save sinners." So he holds fast to Christ. "I can hold fast here," he says, "my black hands will not black Christ, my filthiness will not make him unclean." So the saint holds hard by Christ, as hard as if it were the death-clutch of a drowning man. And what then? Why, he has got every mercy of the covenant in his hand. It is the wisdom of God that he has put Christ in, so that a poor sinner, who might be afraid to lay hold of another, knowing the gracious nature of Christ, is not afraid to lay hold of him, and therein he grasps the whole, but ofttimes unconsciously to himself.

4. Again, it was necessary that Christ should be in the covenant, because *there are many things there that would be nought without him*. Our great redemption is in the covenant, but we have no redemption except through *his* blood. It is true that my righteousness is in the covenant, but I can have no righteousness apart from that which Christ has wrought out, and which is imputed to me by God. It is very true that my eternal perfection is in the covenant, but the elect are only perfect in Christ. They are not perfect in themselves, nor will they ever be, until they have been washed, and sanctified, and perfected by the Holy Ghost. And even in heaven their perfection consists not so much in their sanctification, as in their justification in Christ.

"Their beauty this, their glorious dress,
Jesus the Lord their righteousness."

In fact, if you take Christ out of the covenant, you have just done the same as if you should break the string of a necklace: all the jewels, or beads, or corals, drop off and separate from each other. Christ is the golden string whereon the mercies of the covenant are threaded, and when you lay hold of him, you have obtained the whole string of pearls. But if Christ be taken out, true there will be the pearls, but we cannot wear them, we cannot grasp them; they are separated, and poor faith can never know how to get hold of them. Oh! it is a mercy worth worlds, that Christ is in the covenant.

4. But mark once more, as I told you when preaching concerning God in the covenant, Christ is in the covenant *to be used*. There are some promises in the Bible which I have never yet used; but I am well assured that there will come times of trial and trouble when I shall find that that poor despised promise, which I thought was never meant for me, will be the only one on which I can float. I know that the time is coming when every believer shall know the worth of every promise in the covenant. God has not given him any part of an inheritance which he did not mean him to till. Christ is given us to use. Believer, use him! I tell thee again, as I told thee before, that thou dost not use thy Christ as thou oughtest to do. Why, man, when thou art in trouble, why dost thou not go and tell him? Has he not a sympathising heart, and can he not comfort and relieve thee? No, thou art gadding about to all thy friends save thy best friend, and telling thy tale everywhere except into the bosom

of thy Lord. Oh, use him, use him. Art thou black with yesterday's sins? Here is a fountain filled with blood; use it, saint, use it. Has thy guilt returned again? Well, his power has been proved again and again; come use him! use him! Dost thou feel naked? Come hither, soul, put on the robe. Stand not staring at it; put it on. Strip, sir, strip thine own righteousness off, and thine own fears too. Put this on, and wear it, for it was meant to *wear*. Dost thou feel thyself sick? What, wilt thou not go and pull the night-bell of prayer, and wake up thy physician? I beseech thee go and stir him up betimes, and he will give the cordial that will revive thee. What! art thou sick, with such a physician next door to thee, a present help in time of trouble, and wilt thou not go to him? Oh, remember thou art poor, but then thou hast "a kinsman, a mighty man of wealth." What! wilt thou not go to him and ask him to give thee of his abundance, when he has given thee this promise, that as long as he has anything thou shalt go shares with him, for all he is and all he has is thine? Oh, believer, do use Christ, I beseech thee. There is nothing Christ dislikes more than for his people to make a show-thing of him and not to use him. he loves to be worked. He is a great labourer; he always was for his Father, and now he loves to be a great labourer for his brethren. The more burdens you put on his shoulders the better he will love you. Cast your burden on him. You will never know the sympathy of Christ's heart and the love of his soul so well as when you have heaved a very mountain of trouble from yourself to his shoulders, and have found that he does not stagger under the weight. Are your troubles like huge mountains of snow upon your spirit? Bid them rumble like an avalanche upon the shoulders of the Almighty Christ. He can bear them all away, and carry them into the depths of the sea. Do use thy Master, for for this very purpose he was put into the covenant, that thou mightest use him whenever thou needest him.

III. Now, lastly, here is A PRECEPT, and what shall the precept be? Christ is ours; then *be ye Christ's*, beloved. Ye *are* Christ's, ye know right well. Ye are his by your Father's donation when he gave you to the Son. You are his by his bloody purchase, when he counted down the price for your redemption. You are his by dedication, for you have dedicated yourselves to him. You are his by adoption, for you are brought to him and made one of his brethren and joint-heirs with him. I beseech you, labour, dear brethren, to show the world that you are his in practice. When tempted to sin, reply, "I cannot do this great wickedness. I cannot, for I am one of Christ's." When wealth is before thee to be won by sin, touch it not; say that thou art Christ's, else thou wouldst take it; but now thou canst not. Tell Satan that you would not gain the world if you had to love Christ less. Are you exposed in the world to difficulties and dangers? Stand fast in the evil day, remembering that you are one of Christ's. Are you in a field where much is to be done, and others are sitting down idly and lazily, doing nothing? Go at your work, and when the sweat stands upon your brow and you are bidden to stay, say, "No, I cannot stop; I am one of Christ's. He had a baptism to be baptised with, an so have I, and I am straitened until it be accomplished. I am one of

Christ's. If I were not one of his, and purchased by blood, I might be like Issachar, crouching between two burdens; but I am one of Christ's." When the syren song of pleasure would tempt thee from the path of right, reply, "Hush your strains, O temptress; I am one of Christ's. Thy music cannot affect me; I am not my own, I am bought with a price. When the cause of God needs thee, give thyself to it, for thou art Christ's. When the poor need thee, give thyself away, for thou art one of Christ's. When, at any time there is ought to be done for his church and for his cross, do it, remembering that thou art one of Christ's. I beseech thee, never belie thy profession. Go not where others could say of thee, "He cannot be Christ's;" but be thou ever one of those whose brogue is Christian, whose very idiom is Christ-like, whose conduct and conversation are so redolent of heaven, that all who see thee may know that thou art one of the Saviour's and may recognise in thee his features and his lovely countenance.

And now, dearly beloved hearers. I must say one word to those of you to whom I have not preached, for there are some of you who have never laid hold of the covenant. I sometimes hear it whispered, and sometimes read it, that there are men who trust to the uncovenanted mercies of God. Let me solemnly assure you that there is *now* no such thing in heaven as uncovenanted mercy; there is no such thing beneath God's sky or above it, as uncovenanted grace towards men. All ye can receive, and all you ever ought to hope for, must be through the covenant of free grace, and that alone.

Mayhap, poor convinced sinner thou darest not take hold of the covenant to-day. Thou canst not say the covenant is thine. Thou art afraid it never can be thine; thou art such an unworthy wretch. Hark thee; canst thou lay hold on Christ? Darest thou do that? "Oh," sayest thou, "I am too unworthy." Nay, soul, darest thou touch the hem of his garment to-day? Darest thou come up to him just so much as to touch the very skirt that is trailing on the ground? "No," sayest thou "I dare not," Why not, poor soul, why not? Canst thou not trust to Christ?

"Are not his mercies rich and free?

Then say, poor soul, why not for thee."

"*I dare not come; I am so unworthy*," you say. Hear, then; my Master bids you come, and will you be afraid after that? "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Why dare you not come to Christ? Oh, you are afraid he will turn you away! Hark ye, then, what he saith; "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out." Thou sayest, "*I know he would cast me out*." Come, then, and see if thou canst prove him a liar. I know thou canst not, but come and try. He has said "whosoever." "*But I am the blackest*." Nevertheless, he has said "whosoever:" come along, blackest of the black. "*Oh, but I am filthy*." Come along, filthy one, come and try him, come and prove him; recollect he has said he will cast out none that come to him by faith. Come and

try him. I do not ask thee to lay hold on the whole covenant, thou shalt do that by-and-bye; but lay hold on Christ, and if thou wilt do that, then thou hast the covenant." "*Oh, I cannot lay hold of him*," saith one poor soul. Well, then, lie prostrate at his feet, and beg of him to lay hold of *thee*. Do groan one groan, and say, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner!" Do sigh one sigh, and say, "Lord, save, or I perish." Do let thy heart say it, if thy lips cannot. If grief, long smothered, burns like a flame within thy bones, at least let one spark out. Now prayer one prayer, and verily I say unto thee, one sincere prayer shall most assuredly prove that he will save thee. One true groan, where God has put it in the heart, is an earnest of his love; one true wish after Christ, if it be followed by sincere and earnest seeking of him, shall be accepted of God, and thou shalt be saved. Come, soul, once more. Lay hold on Christ. "*Oh, but I dare not do it*." Now I was about to say a foolish thing; I was going to say that *I wish* I was a sinner like thyself this moment, and I think I would run before, and lay hold on Christ, and then say to you, "Take hold too." But *I am* a sinner like thyself, and no better than thyself; I have no merits, no righteousness, no works; I shall be damned in hell unless Christ have mercy on me, and should have been there now if I had had my deserts. Here am I a sinner once as black as thou art; and yet, O Christ, these arms embrace thee. Sinner, come and take thy turn after me. Have not I embraced him? Am I not as vile as thou art? Come and let my case assure thee. How did he treat me when I first laid hold of him? Why he said to me, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Come, sinner, come and try, If Christ did not drive me away, he will never spurn you. Come along, poor soul, come along—

"Venture on him, (tis no venture,) venture wholly,
Let no other trust intrude;
None but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good."

He can do thee all the good thou wantest: oh! trust my Master, oh! trust my Master; he is a precious Lord Jesus, he is a sweet Lord Jesus, he is a loving Saviour, he is a kind and condescending forgiver of sin. Come, ye black; come, ye filthy; come, ye poor; come, ye dying; come, ye lost—ye who have been taught to feel your need of Christ, come all of you—come now for Jesus bids you come; come quickly. Lord Jesus, draw them, draw them by this Spirit! Amen.

Love's Commendation

A Sermon
No. 104
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, November 23, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."—Romans 5:8.

I shall have nothing new to tell you; it will be as old as the everlasting hills, and so simple that a child may understand it. Love's commendation. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God's commendation of himself and of his love is not in words, but in deeds. When the Almighty God would commend his love to poor man, it is not written, "God commendeth his love towards us in an eloquent oration"; it is not written that he commendeth his love by winning professions; but he commendeth his love toward us by an act, by a deed; a surprising deed, the unutterable grace of which eternity itself shall scarce discover. He "commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Let us learn, then upon the threshold of our text, that if we would commend ourselves it must be by deeds, and not by words. Men may talk fairly, and think that thus they shall win esteem; they may order their words aright, and think that so they shall command respect; but let them remember, it is not the wordy oratory of the tongue, but the more powerful eloquence of the hand which wins the affection of "the world's great heart." If thou wouldst commend thyself to thy fellows, go and *do*—not go and *say*; if thou wouldst win honour from the excellent, talk not, but *act*; and if before God thou wouldst show that thy faith is sincere, and thy love to him real: remember, it is no fawning words, uttered either in prayer or praise, but it is the pious deed, the holy act, which is the justification of thy faith, and the proof that it is the faith of God's elect. Doing, not saying—acting, not talking—these are the things which commend a man.

"No big words of ready talkers,
No fine boastings will suffice;
Broken hearts and humble walkers,
These are dear in Jesus' eyes."

Let us imitate God, then, in this. If we would commend our religion to mankind, we cannot do it by mere formalities, but by gracious acts of integrity, charity and forgiveness, which are the proper discoveries of grace within. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." "Let your conversation be such as becometh the gospel of Christ;" and so shall you honour him, and "adorn the doctrine" which you profess.

But now for this mighty deed whereby God commended his love. We think that it is twofold. We believe the apostle has given us a double commendation of love. The first is, "*God commendeth his love toward us, in that, Christ died for us";* the second commendation arises from our condition, *"In that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."*

I. The first commendation of love, then, is this—that "CHRIST DIED FOR US"; and as the whole text is double, so this sentence also contains a twofold commendation There is a commendation of love in the person who died—*Christ;* and then in the act which he performed—"Christ *died for us."*

First, then, it is the highest commendation of love, *that it was* CHRIST who died for us. When sinful man erred from his Maker, it was necessary that God should punish his sin. He had sworn by himself, "The soul that sinneth it shall die;" and God—with reverence to his all-holy name be it spoken—could not swerve from what he had said. He had declared on Sinai that he would by no means clear the guilty; but inasmuch as he desired to pardon the offending, it was necessary that some one else should bear the sufferings which the guilty ought to have endured, that so by the vicarious substitution of another, God might be "just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly." Now, the question might have arisen, "Who is he that shall be the scapegoat for man's offence? Who is he that shall bear his transgressions and take away his sins?" If I might be allowed to picture in my imagination (and mark, it is nothing more than imagination), I could almost conceive a parliament in heaven. The angels are assembled; the question is proposed to them:—"Cherubim and seraphim, cohorts of the glorified, ye spirits that like flames of fire, swift at my bidding fly; ye happy beings, whom I have created for my honour! here is a question which I condescend to offer for your consideration:—Man has sinned; there is no way for his pardon but by some one suffering and paying blood for blood. Who shall it be?" I can conceive that there was silence throughout the august assembly. Gabriel spoke not: he would have stretched his wings and flapped the ether in a moment, if the deed had been possible; but he felt that he could never bear the guilt of a world upon his shoulders, and, therefore, still he sat. And there the mightiest of the mighty, those who could shake a world if God should will it, sat still, because they felt all powerless to accomplish redemption. I do not conceive that one of them would have ventured to hope that *God himself* would assume flesh and die. I do not think it could have entered even into angelic thought to conceive that the mighty Maker of the skies should bow his awful head and sink into a grave. I cannot imagine that the brightest and most seraphic of these glorified ones would for an instant have suffered such a thought to abide with him. And when the Son of God, upstarting from his throne, spoke to them and said, "Principalities and powers! I will become flesh, I will veil this Godhead of mine in robes of mortal clay, I will die!"—I think I see the angels for once astonished. They had seen worlds created; they had beheld the earth, like a spark from the incandescent mass of unformed matter, hammered from the anvil of Omnipotence, and smitten off into space; and yet they had not

wondered. But on this occasion I conceive that they ceased not to marvel. "What! wilt thou die, O Word! Creator! Master! Infinite! Almighty! wilt thou become a man and die?" "Yes," saith the Saviour, "I will." And are you not astonished, mortal men? Do you not wonder? What, will *you* not marvel? The hosts of heaven still are wondering. Though it is many an age since they heard it, they have not yet ceased to admire; and do not you *begin* to marvel yet? Shall the theme which stirs the marvel of the seraph not move your hearts? That God himself should become man, and then should die for you! "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, *Christ* should die. Roll that thought over in your mind; ponder it in your meditations; weigh it in your hearts. If ye have right ideas of Godhead, if ye know what Christ is, if ye can conceive him who is the everlasting God, and yet the man—if ye can picture him, the pure, holy, perfect creature, and yet the everlasting Creator—if ye can conceive of him as the man who was wounded, and yet the God who was exalted for ever—if ye can picture him as the Maker of all worlds, as the Lord of providence, by whom all things exist and consist—if ye can conceive of him now, as robed in splendor, surrounded with the choral symphonies of myriads of angels, then perhaps ye may guess how deep was that stride of condescension, when he stepped from heaven to earth, from earth into the grave, from the grave down, it is said, into the lowest *"sheol,"* that he might make his condescension perfect and complete. "He hath commended his love" to you, my brethren, in that it was Christ, the Son of God, who died for us.

The second part of the first commendation lieth here, that Christ *died for us.* It was much love when Christ became man for us, when he stripped himself of the glories of his Godhead for awhile, to become an infant of a span long, slumbering in the manger of Bethlehem. It was no little condescension when he divested himself of all his glories, hung his mantle on the sky, gave up his diadem and the pleasures of his throne, and stooped to become flesh. It was moreover, no small love when he lived a holy and a suffering life for us; it was love amazing, when God with feet of flesh did tread the earth, and teach his own creatures how to live, all the while bearing their scoffs and jests with cool unangered endurance. It was no little favour of him that he should condescend to give us a perfect example by his spotless life; but the commendation of love lieth here—not that Christ *lived* for us, but that Christ *died for us*.

Come, dear hearers, for a moment weigh those words. "Christ *died* for us!" Oh, how we love those brave defenders of our nation who but lately died for us in a far-off land! Some of us showed our sympathy to their sons and daughters, their wives and children, by contributing to support them, when the fathers were laid low. We feel that the wounded soldier is a friend to us, and that we are his debtors for ever. We may not love war; we may not, some of us, think it a Christian act to wield the sword; but, nevertheless, I am sure we love the men who sought to defend our country with their lives, and who died in our cause. We would drop a tear over the silent graves of Balaclava, if we were there now. And, if it should

ever come to pass that any one of them should be called to die for us, should we not henceforth love them? Do any of us know what is contained in that great word "die?" Can we measure it? Can we tell its depths of suffering or its heights of agony? "Died for us!" Some of you have seen death; you know how great and dread is its power; you have seen the strong man bowing down, his knees quivering; you have beheld the eyestrings break, and seen the eyeballs glazed in death; you have marked the torture and the agonies which appal men in their dying hours; and you have said, "Ah! it is a solemn and an awful thing to die." But, my hearers, "Christ *died for us.*" All that death could mean Christ endured; he yielded up the ghost, he resigned his breath; he became a lifeless corpse, and his body was interred, even like the bodies of the rest that died. "Christ died for us."

Consider the circumstances which attended his death. It was no common death he died; it was a death of ignominy, for he was put to death by a legal slaughter; it was a death of unutterable pain, for he was crucified; and what more painful fate than to die nailed to a cross? It was a long protracted death, for he hung for hours, with only his hands and his feet pierced—parts which are far away from the seat of life, but in which are situated the most tender nerves, full of sensibility. He suffered a death which for its circumstances still remain unparalleled. It was no speedy blow which crushed the life out of the body, and ended it; but it was a lingering, long, and doleful death, attended with no comforts and no sympathy, but surrounded with scorn and contempt. Picture him! They have hurled him on his back; they have driven nails through his hands and his feet; they have lifted him up. See! They have dashed the cross into its place. It is fixed. And now behold him! Mark his eyes, all full of tears; behold his head, hanging on his breast. Ah! mark him, he seems all silently to say, "I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; I am brought into the dust of death." Hear him, when he groans, "I thirst." Above all, listen to him, whilst he cries, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" My words cannot picture him; my thoughts fail to express it. No painter ever accomplished it, nor shall any speaker be able to perform it. Yet I beseech you regard the Royal Sufferer. See him, with the eye of your faith, hanging on the bloody tree. Hear him cry, before he dies, "It is finished!"

"See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"

Oh! how i wish I could stir you! If I should tell you some silly story of a love-sick maid, ye would weep; if I should turn novelist, and give you some sad account of a fabled hero who had died in pain—if it were a fiction, I should have your hearts; but this is a dread and solemn reality, and one with which you are intimately connected, for all this was done for as many of you as sincerely repent of your sins.

"All ye that pass by,

to Jesus draw nigh:

To you is it nothing that Jesus should die?"

Bethink you, that if you are saved, it *is* something to you, for the blood which trickles from his hands, distils for *you*. That frame which writhes in torture writhes for *you*; those knees, so weak with pain, are weak for you; those eyes, dripping with showers of tears, do drop for you. Ah! think of him, then, ye who have faith in him; look to him, and as many of you as have not yet believed, I will pray for you, that ye may now behold him as the expiation of your guilt; as the key which opens heaven to all believers.

Our second point was this: "God commendeth his love towards us," not only because Christ died for us, but that CHRIST DIED FOR US WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS."

Let us for a moment consider what sort of sinners many of us have been, and then we shall see it was marvellous grace that Christ should die for men—not as penitents"but as sinners. Consider how many of us have been *continual* sinners. We have not sinned once, nor twice, but ten thousand times. Our life, however upright and moral it has been, is stained by a succession of sins. If we have not revolted against God in the outward acts which proclaim the profligate to be a great sinner, yet the thoughts of our heart and the words of our lips are swift witnesses against us that we have continually transgressed. And oh! my brethren, who is there among us who will not likewise confess to sins of act? Who among us has not broken the Sabbath-day? Who among us has not taken God's name in vain? Who of us shall dare to say that we have loved the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength? Have we never by any act whatsoever showed that we have coveted our neighbour's goods? Verily, I know we have; we have broken his commands, and it is well for us to join in that general confession—"We have done those things which we ought not to have done; we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us." Now, the sweet thought is, that Christ died for us, whilst he knew that we should be continual transgressors. Men, brethren, and fathers, he did not die for you as those who have committed but one fault, but as those who were emphatically "sinners;" sinners of years' standing; some of you sinners with grey heads; sinners who have persevered in a constant course of iniquity. As sinners we are redeemed, and by it we become saints. Does not this commend Christ's love to us, that he should die for sinners, who have dyed themselves with sin as with crimson and with scarlet; great and continual sinners.

Note again, he has died for us, although our sins were *aggravated.* Oh! there are some of us here who are great sinners—not so much in the acts we have performed, as in the aggravation of our guilt. I reckon that when I sin, I sin worse than many of you, because I sin against better training than many of my hearers received in their youth. Many of you, when you sin, sin against faithful ministers, and against the most earnest warnings. It has been your wont to sit under truthful pastors; you have often been told of your sins. Remember, sirs, when you sin you do not sin so cheap as others: when you sin against the convictions

of your consciences, against the solemn monitions of your pastors, you sin more grossly than others do. The Hottentot sinneth not as the Briton doth. He who has been brought up in this land may be openly more righteous, but he may be inwardly more wicked, for he sins against more knowledge. But even for such Christ died—for men who have sinned against the wooings of his love, against the strivings of their consciences, against the invitations of his Word, against the warnings of his providence—even for such Christ died, and therein he commendeth his love towards us, that he died for sinners. My hearer, if thou hast so sinned, do not therefore despair, it may be he will yet make thee rejoice in his redemption.

Reflect again, When we were sinners, *we were sinners against the very person who died for us.* "Tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful," that the very Christ against whom we have sinned died for us. If a man should be injured in the street, if a punishment should be demanded of the person who attacked him, it would be passing strange if the injured man should for love's sake bear the penalty, that the other might go free; but 'twas so with Christ. He had been injured, yet he suffers for the very injury that others did to him. He dies for his enemies—dies for the men that hate and scorn him. There is an old tradition, that the very man who pierced Christ's side was converted; and I sometimes think that peradventure in heaven we shall meet with those very men who drove the nails into his hands and pierced his side. Love is a mighty thing; it can forgive great transgressors. I know my Master said, "Begin at Jerusalem," and I think he said that because there lived the men who had crucified him, and he wanted them to be saved. My hearer, hast thou ever blasphemed Christ? Hast thou ever mocked him, and scoffed at his people? Hast thou done all thou couldst to emulate the example of those who spat in his holy face? Dost thou repent of it? Dost thou feel thou needst a Saviour? Then I tell thee, in Christ's name, he is *thy* Saviour; yes, thy Saviour, though thus hast insulted him—*thy* Saviour, though thou hast trampled on him—*thy* Saviour though thou hast spoken evil of his people, his day, his Word, and his gospel.

Once more, let us remember, that many of us as sinners have been persons who for a long time have heard this good news, and yet *have despised it.* Perhaps there is nothing more wonderful in the depravity of man than that it is able to forget the love of Christ. If we were not so sinful as we are, there is not one of us here this morning who would not weep at the thought of the Saviour's love, and I believe there is not a solitary man, woman, or child here, who would not say, "I love thee, O my God! because thou hast done so much for me." It is the highest proof of our depravity that we do not at once love the Christ who died for us. There is a story told of the convenanters—of one named Patrick Welwood—whose house was surrounded at a time when a minister had for security been hidden there. Claverhouse's dragoons were at the door, and the minister had fled. The master of the house was summoned, and it was demanded of him, "Where is the minister?" "He is gone; I cannot tell whither, for I know not." But they were not satisfied with that; they tortured him, and

since he could not tell them where he was (for in reality he did not know), they left him, after inflicting upon him the torture of the thumbscrew; and they took his sister, a young girl who was living in the house. I believe she did know where the minister was concealed; but on taking her they asked her, and she said, "No, I can die myself, but I can never betray God's servant, and never will, as he may help me." They dragged her to the water's edge, and making her kneel down, they determined to put her to death. But the captain said, "Not yet; we will try to frighten her"; and sending a soldier to her, he knelt down, and applying a pistol to her ear, she was bidden to betray the minister or die. The click of the pistol was heard in her ear, but the pistol was not loaded. She slightly shivered, and the question was again asked of her. "Tell us now," said they, "where he is, or we will have your life." "Never, never," said she. A second time the endeavour was made; this time a couple of carabines were discharged, but into the air, in order to terrify her. At last they resolved upon really putting her to death, when Trail, the minister, who was hidden somewhere near, being aroused by the discharge of guns, and seeing the poor girl about to die for him, sprang forward, and cried, "Spare that maiden's blood, and take mine; this poor innocent girl, what hath she done?" The poor girl was dead even there with the fright, but the minister had come prepared to die himself, to save her life. Oh, my friends, I have sometimes thought that her heroic martyrdom was somewhat like the blessed Jesus. He comes to us, and says, "Poor sinner, wilt thou be my friend?" We answer, "No," He comes to us, and says, "Ah, I will make thee so," saith he, "I will die for thee"; and he goes to die on the cross. Oh! methinks I could spring forward and say, "Nay, Lord Jesus, nay, thou must not die for such a worm." Surely such a sacrifice is a price too large to pay for poor sinful worms! And yet, my hearers, to return again to what I have uttered before, you will hear all this, and nine out of ten will retire from this place, and say, "It was an old, old story"; and while ye can drop a tear for aught else, ye will not weep one tear for Jesus, nor sigh one sigh for him, nor will ye afford him even a faint emotion of love. Would it were different! Would to God he would change your hearts, that so ye might be brought to love him.

Further, to illustrate my text, let me remark again, that inasmuch as Christ died for sinners, it is a special commendation of his love for the following reasons:—It is quite certain that God did not consider *man's merit* when Christ died; in fact, no merit could have deserved the death of Jesus. Though we had been holy as Adam, we could never have deserved a sacrifice like that of Jesus for us. But inasmuch as it says, "He died for sinners," we are thereby taught that God considered our sin, and not our righteousness. When Christ died, he died for men as black, as wicked, as abominable, not as good and excellent. Christ did not shed his blood for us as saints, but as sinners. He considered us in our loathsomeness, in our low estate and misery—not in that high estate to which grace afterwards elevates us, but in all the decay into which we had fallen by our sin. There could have been no merit in us; and therefore, God commendeth his love by our ill desert.

Again: it is quite certain, because Christ died for us as sinners, that God had *no interest* to serve by sending his Son to die. How could sinners serve him? Oh! if God had pleased, he might have crushed this nest of rebels, and have made another world all holy. If God had chosen, the moment that man sinned he might have said unto the world, "Thou shalt be burned"; and like as a few years ago astronomers told us that they saw the light of a far-off world burning, myriads of miles away, this world might have been consumed with burning heat, and sin scorched out of its clay. But no. Whilst God could have made another race of beings, and could have either annihilated us, or consigned us to eternal torment, he was pleased to veil himself in flesh, and die for us. Surely then it could not have been from any motive of self-interest. God had nothing to get by man's salvation. What are the attractions of human voices in Paradise. What are the feeble symphonies which mortal lips can sing on earth, compared with the death of our Lord? He had angels enough. Do they not day without night circle his throne rejoicing? Are not their golden harps sufficient? Is not the orchestra of heaven large enough? Must our glorious Lord give up his blood to buy poor worms, that they may join their little notes with the great swell of a choral universe? Yes, he must; and inasmuch as we are sinners, and could by no possibility repay him for his kindness, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

But there is another commendation of love. Christ died for us "unasked." Christ did not consider me as an awakened heir of heaven, but as a dead, corrupt, lost, and ruined heir of hell. If he had died for me as an awakened heir of heaven, then I could have prayed for him to die, for then I have power to pray, and will to pray; but Christ died for me when I had no power nor will to lift my voice in prayer to him. It was entirely unasked. Where did ye ever hear that man was first in mercy? Did man ask God to redeem? Nay, rather, it is almost the other way; it is as if God did entreat man to be redeemed. Man never asked that he might be pardoned, but God pardons him, and then turns round and cries, "Return unto me, backsliding children of men, and I will have mercy upon you." Sinners! if you should go down on your knees, and were for months to cry for mercy, it would be great mercy if mercy should look upon you; but without asking, when we are hardened and rebellious, when we will not turn to Christ, he still comes to die for us. Tell it in heaven; tell it in the lower world! God's amazing work surpasses thought; for love itself did die for hatred—holiness did crucify itself to save poor sinful men, and unasked for and unsought, like a fountain in the desert sparkling spontaneously with its native waters, Jesus Christ came to die for man, who would not seek his grace. "God commendeth his love towards us."

And now, my dear hearers, I want to close up, if the Spirit of God will help me, by endeavouring to commend God's love to you, as much as ever I can, and inviting as many of you as feel your need of a Saviour, to lay hold of him and embrace him now as your all-

sufficient sacrifice. Sinner! I can commend Christ to thee for this reason: *I know that thou needest him.* Thou mayest be ignorant of it thyself, but thou dost need him. Thou hast a leprosy within thine heart—thou needest a physician; thou sayest, "I am rich;" but sinner, thou art not—thou art naked, and poor, and miserable. Thou sayest, "I shall stand before God accepted at last"; but, sinner, without Christ thou wilt not; for whosoever believeth not on Christ "hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Hear that, my dear hearers: "The wrath of God abideth on him." Oh! that wrath of God! Sinner, thou needest Christ, even though thou dost not think so. Oh, that the Lord would impress this upon thee! Again, a day is coming when *thou wilt feel thy need* of Christ if thou dost not now. Within a few short years, perhaps months or days, thou wilt lie upon the last bed that shall ever bear thy weight; soon thou shalt be stayed up by soft pillows; thy frame will be weak, and thy soul full of sorrow. Thou mayest *live* without Christ now, but it will be hard work to *die* without him. Thou mayest do without this bridge here; but when thou gettest to the river thou wilt think thyself a fool to have laughed at the only bridge which can carry thee safely over. Thou mayest despise Christ now, but what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan. Canst thou face death, and not be afraid? Nay, man, thou art affrighted now if the cholera is in the city; or if some little sickness is about thee thou shakest for fear; what wilt thou do when thou art in the jaws of death, when his bony hand is squeezing thee, and when his dart is in thy vitals? What wilt thou do then without a Saviour? Ah! thou wilt want him then. And what wilt thou do when thou hast passed that black stream, when thou findest thyself in the realm of spirits—in that day of judgment, when the thunders shall be loosed, and the wings of the lightning shall be unbound—when tempests shall herald with trumpet voice the arrival of the great Assize? What wilt thou do when thou shalt stand before *his* bar before whom, in astonishment, the stars shall flee, the mountains quake, and the sea be licked up with tongues of forked flame? What wilt thou do, when from his throne he shall exclaim, "Come hither, sinner," and thou shalt stand there alone, to be judged for every deed done in the body? Thou wilt turn thine head, and say, "Oh! for an advocate!" And he shall look on thee, and say, "I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand and no man regarded; I also will now laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh." Ah! what wilt thou do then sinner, when the judgment-seat is set? Oh! there will be weeping—there will be weeping at the judgment-seat of Christ. And what wilt thou do in that day when he shall say, "Depart, ye cursed;" and when the black angel, with a countenance more fierce than lightening, and with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, shall cry, "Depart!" and smite thee down where lie for ever those accursed spirits, bound in fetters of iron, who, long long ago, were cast into perdition? Say not, I tell thee terrible things: if it be terrible to speak of, how terrible it must be to bear! If you believe not what I say, I shall not wonder if you laugh at me; but as the most of you believe this, I claim your most solemn attention to this subject.

Sirs! Do ye believe there is a hell, *and that you are going there?* And yet do you still march heedless on? Do you believe that beyond you, when the stream of life is ended, there is a black gulf of misery? and do you still sail downwards to it, quaffing still your glass of happiness, still merry as the live-long day? O stay, poor sinner, stay! Stay! It may be the last moment thou wilt ever have the opportunity to stay in. Therefore stay now I beseech thee. And if thou knowest thyself to be lost and ruined, if the Holy Spirit has humbled thee and made thee feel thy sin, let me tell thee how thou shalt be saved. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ and is baptized, shall be saved. "He that believeth not," saith the Scripture "shall be *damned.*" Do you not like that message? Ought I to have said another word instead of that? If you wish it, I shall not; what God says I will say; far be it from me to alter the messages from the Most High; I will, if he help me, declare his truth without altering. He saith "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." What is it to believe? To tell you as simply as possible: to believe is to give up trusting in yourself and to trust in Jesus Christ as your Saviour. The negro said, you know, "Massa dis here is how I believe—when I see a promise, I do not stand on de promise; but I say, dat promise firm and strong; I fall flat on it; if de promise will not bear me, den it is de promise fault; but I fall flat on it." Now, that is faith. Christ says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Faith is to say, "Well, then, sink or swim, that is my only hope; lost or saved, that is my only refuge. I am resolved, for this my last defence,

'If I perish there and die,
At his cross I still will lie'."

"What!" says one, *"no good works?"* Good works will come afterwards, but they do not go with it. You must come to Christ, not with your good works, but with your sins; and coming with your sins, he will take them away, and give you good works afterwards. After you believe, there will be good works as the effect of your faith; but if you think faith will be the effect of good works, you are mistaken. It is "believe and live." Cowper calls them the soul-quickening words, "*believe and live.*" This is the sum and substance of the gospel.

Now, do any of you say this is not the gospel? I shall ask you one day what it is. Is not this the doctrine Whitfield preached? Pray what else did Luther thunder, when he shook the Vatican? what else was proclaimed by Augustine and Chrysostom, but this one doctrine of salvation in Christ by faith alone? And what did Paul write? Turn ye to his epistles. And what did our Saviour himself say, when he left these words on record—"Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?" And what did he command his disciples to teach them? To teach them this. The very words I have now repeated to you were his last commission. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

But again you say, "How can I believe that Christ died for me?" Why, thus,—He says he died for sinners: canst thou say thou art a sinner? I do not mean with that fine complimentary phrase which many of you use, when you say, *"Yes, I am a sinner;"* and if I sit down to ask you, "Did you break that commandment?" "*Oh, no,*" you will say: "Did you commit that offence?" *"Oh, no;"* you never did anything wrong. And yet you are sinners. Now that is the sort of sinners I do not think I shall preach to. The sort of sinners I would call to repentance are those whom Christ invited—those who know that they have been guilty, vile, and lost. If thou knowest thy sinnership, so truly Christ died for thee. Remember that striking saying of Luther. Luther says, Satan once came to him and said, "Martin Luther, thou art lost, for thou art a sinner." Said I to him, "Satan, I thank thee for saying I am a sinner, for inasmuch as thou sayest I am a sinner, I answer thee thus—Christ died for sinners; and if Martin Luther is a sinner, Christ died for him." Now, canst thou lay hold on that, my hearer? It is not on my authority, but on God's authority. Go away and rejoice; for if thou be the chief of sinners thou shalt be saved, if thou believest.

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.
Bold shall I stand in that great day.
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
While, thro' thy blood, absolv'd I am
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

Sing that, poor soul, and thou hast begun to sing the song of Paradise. May the Lord, the Holy Spirit, apply these simple statements of truth to the salvation of your souls.

Manasseh

A Sermon
No. 105
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, November 30, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God."—2 Chron. 33:13.

MANASSEH is one of the most remarkable characters whose history is written in the sacred pages. We are accustomed to mention his name in the list of those who greatly sinned, and yet found great mercy. Side by side with Saul of Tarsus, with that great sinner who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and with the thief that died upon the cross—a forgiven sinner at the eleventh hour—we are wont to write the name of Manasseh, who "shed innocent blood very much," and notwithstanding that, was forgiven and pardoned, finding mercy through the blood of a Saviour who had not then died, but whom God foresaw should die, and the merits of whose sacrifice he therefore imputed to so great a transgressor as Manasseh.

Without preface we shall enter on the history of Manasseh this morning, and consider him in a threefold light: first, as *a sinner,* then as *an unbeliever,* and thirdly, as a convert. It may be there shall be some Manasseh within these walls now; and if in describing the case of this ancient king of Israel I shall in some degree describe him, I trust he will take to himself the same consoling truths which were the means of the comfort of Manasseh when in the dungeon of repentance.

I. First, then, we shall consider MANASSEH IN HIS SIN.

1. And we note, first, that he belonged to that class of sinners who stand first in the phalanx of evil—namely, those *who sin against great light, against a pious education and early training.* Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah, a man who had some faults, but of whom it is nevertheless said, "He did right in the sight of the Lord." To a great degree he walked before God with a perfect heart, even as did David his father. We can not suppose that he neglected the education of his son Manasseh. He was the son of his old age. You will remember that at a time of heavy sickness God promised him that he should have his life prolonged fifteen years. Three years after that event Manasseh was born, and he was, therefore, only twelve years old when his father died; still he was old enough to remember the pious prayers of a father and a mother, and had arrived at sufficient maturity to understand right from wrong, and to have received those early impressions which we believe are, in most cases, eminently useful for after life. And yet Manasseh pulled down what his father had built up, and built up the idol temples which his father had pulled down. Now, it is a notorious fact, that men who do go wrong after a good training, are the worst men in the world. You may

not know, but it is a fact, that the late lamented murder of Williams at Erromanga, was brought about by the evil doings of a trader who bad gone to the island, and who was also the son of a missionary. He had become reckless in his habits, and treated the islanders with such barbarity and cruelty, that they revenged his conduct upon the next white man who put his foot on their shore; and the beloved Williams, one of the last of the martyrs, died a victim of the guilt of those who had gone before him. The worst of men are those who, having much light, still run astray. You shall find among the greatest champions of the camp of hell, men who were brought up and educated in our very ranks. It is not necessary that I should mention names; but any of you that are acquainted with those who are the leaders of infidelity at the present time will at once recognize the fact. And such men actually make the very worst of infidels; while the best of Christians often come from the very worst of sinners. Our John Bunyans have come from the pot-house and the taproom, from the bowling-alley, or places lower in the scale; our best of men have come from the very worst of places, and have been the best adapted to reclaim sinners, because they themselves had stepped into the kennel, and had nevertheless been washed in a Saviour's cleansing blood. And so it is true that the worst of the enemies of Christ are those who are nourished in our midst, and like the viper of old, which the husbandman nursed in his bosom, turn round to sting the bosom which has nurtured them. Such a one was Manasseh.

2. In the next place, *Manasseh as a sinner was a very bold one.* He was one of those men who do not sin covertly, but who, when they transgress, do not seem to be at all ashamed, who are born with brazen foreheads, and lift their faces to heaven with insolence and impudence. He was a man who, if he would set up an idol, as you would see by reading this chapter, did not set it up in an obscure part of the land, but put it in the very temple of God; and when he would desecrate the name of the Most High, he did not privily go to his chapel, where he might worship some evil deity, but he put the deity into the very temple itself, as if to insult God to his very face. He was a desperado in sin, and went to the utmost limit of it, being very bold, and desperately set on mischief. Now, whether it be for right or wrong, boldness is always sure to win the day. Give me a coward—you give me nothing; give me a bold man, and you give me one that can do something, whether for Christ's cause or for the devil's. Manasseh was a man of this kind. If he cursed God, it was with a loud voice; it was not in hole or corner, but upon his throne, that he issued proclamations against the Most High, and in the most daring manner insulted the Lord God of Israel. And yet, dear friends, this man was saved, notwithstanding all this. This greatest sinner, this man who had trampled on his father's prayers, who had wiped from his brow the tears which bad been shed there by an anxious parent, who had stifled the convictions of his conscience, and had gone to an extremity of guilt, in bold, open, and desperate sin, yet this man was at last, by divine grace, humbled and brought on his knees to acknowledge that God was God alone. Let no man, therefore, despair of his fellow. I never do, since I think and hope that God has saved me. I

am persuaded that, live as long as I may, I shall never see the individual of whom I can say "That man is a hopeless case" I may peradventure meet with the person who has been so exhorted and so warned, and has so put off all the sweet wooings of his conscience, that he has become seared and hardened, and consequently apparently hopeless; but I shall never meet a man who has sinned so desperately that I can say of him he never can be saved. Ah! no; that arm of mercy which was long enough to save me is long enough to save you; and if he could redeem you from your transgression, assuredly there are none sunk lower than you were, and therefore you may believe that his arm of mercy can reach them. Above all, let no man despair of himself. Whilst there is life there is hope. Give not up yourselves into Satan's arms. He tells you that your death-warrant is sealed, that your doom is cast, and that you never can be saved. Tell him to his face that he is a liar, for that Jesus Christ "is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

3. Again, Manasseh was a sinner of that peculiar caste which we suspect is not to be found very frequently. He was one of those who *had the power of leading others* to a very large extent astray from the truth and religion of God. He was a king, and had, therefore, great influence; what he commanded was done. Among the rank of idolaters Manasseh stood first, and it was the song and glory of the false priests that the king of Judah was on the side of the gods of the heathen. He was the leader—the first man in the battle. When the troops of the ungodly went to war against the God of the whole earth, Manasseh led the vanguard and cheered them on. He was their great Goliath, challenging all the armies of the living God. Many among the wicked stood back and feared the conflict; but be never feared. "He spake and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast;" and therefore he was bold and arrogant in leading others astray. There are some such still alive—men not content with treading the broad road themselves, but seeking to entice others into it. And O, how active they are in their efforts! They will go from house to house, and distribute those publications which are impure and polluting; they will stand in our streets and endeavor to draw around them the young, ay, men and women just fresh come from the house of God, or going to God's sanctuary, to tell them that dreary story that there is no God, or the dismal falsehood that there is no future, but that we must all die like dogs and suffer annihilation. There are some such who never seem to be happy unless when they are leading others astray. It is not enough for them to go alone against God, but they must sin in company. Like the woman in the Proverbs, they hunt for precious life, and like hounds thirsting for blood, they are seeking after men to destroy them. Society now is like Prometheus: it is, to a great extent, bound hand and foot by the very customs that surround it, and like Prometheus, we have upon us the winged hound of hell perpetually tapping at our heart and swallowing the life-blood of our spirit. I mean we have that accursed infidelity which seeks to lead men from God and drive them from their Maker. But, nevertheless, leaders among them have yet been

saved. Manasseh, the leader of those who hated God, was yet humbled, and made to love the Most High.

Do you ask me whether such cases ever occur now? I answer, yes they do; too rarely, but they do happen. Yesterday I received something which cheered my heart very much, and made me bless my God, that notwithstanding all opposition, he had still made me of some little use in the world. I received a long letter from a certain city, from one who has been one of the leaders of the secular society in that place. The writer says, "I purchased one of the pamphlets entitled 'Who is this Spurgeon?' and also your portrait (or a portrait sold as yours) for 3d. I brought these home, and exhibited them in my shop window. I was induced to do so from a feeling of derisive pleasure. The title of the pamphlet is, naturally, suggestive of caricature, and it was especially to incite that impression that I attached it to your portrait and placed it in my window. But I also had another object in view. I thought by its attraction to improve my trade. I am not at all in the book or paper business, which rendered its exposure and my motive the more conspicuous. I have taken it down now: *I am taken down too.* * * * I had bought one of your sermons of an old infidel a day or two previous. In that sermon I read these words:—'They go on; that step is safe—they take it; the next is safe—they take it; their foot hangs over a gulf of darkness.' I read on, but the word darkness staggered me. It was all dark with, me. 'True, the way has been safe so far, but I am lost in bewilderment. No, no, no, I will not risk it.' I left the apartment in which I had been musing, and as I did so, the three words, 'Who can tell?' seemed to be whispered at my heart. I determined not to let another Sunday pass without visiting a place of worship. How soon my soul might be required of me I knew not, but felt that it would be mean, base, cowardly, not to give it a chance. Ay, my associates may laugh, scoff, deride, call me coward, turncoat, I will do an act of justice to my soul. I went to the chapel; I was just stupefied with awe. What could I want there? The door keeper opened his eyes wider, and involuntarily demanded, 'It's Mr.—isn't it ?' 'Yes,' I said, 'it is.' He conducted me to a seat, and afterward brought me a hymn-book. I was fit to burst with anguish. 'Now,' I thought, 'I am here, if it be the house of God, heaven grant me an audience, and I will make full surrender. O God, show me some token by which I may know that thou art, and that thou wilt in no wise cast out the vile deserter who has ventured to seek thy face and thy pardoning mercy.' I opened the hymn-book to divert my mind from feelings that were rending me, and the first words that caught my eyes were

"'Dark, dark indeed the grave would be,
Had we no light O God, from thee.'"

After giving some things which he looks upon as evidences that he is a true convert of religion, he closes up by saying, "O sir, tell this to the poor wretch whose pride, like mine, has made him league with hell; tell it to the hesitating and to the timid; tell it to the cooling Christian, that God is a very present help to all that are in need. Think of the poor sinner

who may never look upon you in this world, but who will live to bless and pray for you here, and long to meet you in the world exempt from sinful doubts, from human pride, and backsliding hearts." Ah, he need not ask my forgiveness; I am happy, too happy, in the hope of calling him " brother" in the Christian church. This letter is from a place many miles from this city and from a man who had no small standing among the ranks of those who hate Christ. Ah! there have been Manassehs saved, and there shall be yet. There have been men who hated God, who have leaped for joy, and said—

"I'm forgiven, I'm forgiven,
I'm a miracle of grace,"

and have kissed the very feet which once they scorned and scoffed, and could not bear to hear the mention of.

There is one fact concerning Manasseh which stamps him as being a very prince of sinners, namely this : "He caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom," and dedicated his sons unto Tophet. This was a dreadful sin; for though Manasseh repented, we find that his son Amon followed in the steps of his father in his wickedness but not in his righteousness. Listen! "Amon was two-and-twenty years old when be began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem. But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them; and humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more." Children will imitate their fathers in their vices, seldom in their repentance; if parents sin, their children will follow them, without much doubt; but when they repent and turn to God, it is not easy to lead a child back in the way which it has once forsaken. Are there any here, who, like that ancient Carthaginian, have dedicated their sons to the opposition of their enemy. You remember one who dedicated his son Hannibal from his very birth to be the everlasting enemy of the Romans. There may be such a man here, who has dedicated his offspring to Satan, to be the everlasting enemy of Christ's gospel, and is trying to train up and tutor him in a way which is contrary to the fear of the Lord. Is such a man hopeless? His sin is dreadful, his state is dreary, his sin without repentance will assuredly damn him; but so long as he is here, we still will preach repentance to him, knowing that Manasseh was brought to know God, and was forgiven all his manifold sins.

II. The second aspect in which we are to regard Manasseh is as an UNBELIEVER; for it appears that Manasseh did not believe that Jehovah was God alone; he was, therefore, a believer in false gods, but an unbeliever, so far as the *truth* is concerned. Now, does it not strike you at the outset, that while Manasseh was an unbeliever in the truth, he must have been a very credulous person to believe in the all imaginary deities of the heathen? In fact, the most credulous persons in the world are unbelievers. It takes ten thousand times more faith to be an unbeliever than to be a believer in revelation. One man comes to me and tells

me I am credulous, because I believe in a great First Cause who created the heavens and the earth, and that God became man and died for sin. I tell him I may be, and no doubt am very credulous, as he conceives credulity, but I conceive that which I believe is in perfect consistency with my reason, and I therefore receive it. "But," saith he, *"I* am not credulous—not at all." Sir, I say, I should like to ask you one thing. You do not believe the world was created by God? "No." You must be amazingly credulous, then, I am sure. Do you think this Bible exists without being made? If you should say I am credulous because I believe it had a printer and a binder, I should say you were infinitely more credulous, if you assured me that it was made at all. And should you begin to tell me one of your theories about creation—that atoms floated through space, and came to a certain shape, I should resign the palm of credulity to you. You believe, perhaps, moreover, that man came to be in this world through the improvement of certain creatures. I have read, you say, that there were certain monads—that these monads improved themselves until they came to be small animalculae—that afterward they grew into fishes—that these fishes wanted to fly, and then wings grow—that by-and-by they wanted to crawl, and then legs came, and they became lizards, and by divers steps they then became monkeys, and then the monkeys became men, and you believe yourself to be cousin-german to an ourang-outang. Now, I may be very credulous, but really not so credulous as you are. I may believe very strange things; I may believe that, with the jaw-bone of an ass, Samson slew a thousand men; I may believe that that the earth was drowned with water, and many other strange things, as you call them; but as for your creed, your non-creed, "'tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful," and it as much outvies mine in credulity, if I be credulous, as an ocean outvies a drop. It requires the hardest faith in the world to deny the Scriptures, because the man, in his secret heart, knows they are true, and, go where he will, something whispers to him, "You may be wrong—perhaps you are," and it is as much as he can do, to say, "Lie down, conscience! down with you; I must not let you speak, or I could not deliver my lecture to-morrow, I could not go among my friends, I could not go to such-and-such a club; for I can not afford to keep a conscience, if I can not afford to keep a God."

And now let me tell you what I conceive to be the reasons why Manasseh was an unbeliever. In the first place, I conceive that the *unlimited power* which Manasseh possessed had a very great tendency to make him a disbeliever in God. I should not wonder if an autocrats man with absolute dominion, should deny God; I should think it only natural. You remember that memorable speech of Napoleon's. He was told that man proposed, but that God disposed. "Ah!" said Napoleon, "I propose and dispose too;" and therein he arrogated to himself the very supremacy of God. We do not wonder at it, because his victories had so speedily succeeded each other, his prowess had been so complete, his fame so great, and his power over his subjects so absolute. Power al—ways, as I believe, except in the heart which is rightly governed by grace, has a tendency to lead us to deny God. It is that noble intellect of such-

and-such a man which has led him into discussion; he has twice, thrice, four, five, six, seven times, come off more than conqueror in the field of controversy; he looks round and says, "I am, there is none beside me; let me sake up whatever I please, I can defend it; there is no man can stand against the blade of my intellect; I can give him such a home thrust as will assuredly overcome him;" and then, like Dr. Johnson, who often took up the side of the question he did not believe, just because he liked to get a victory that was hard to win, so do these men espouse what they believe to be wrong, because they conceive it gives them the finest opportunity of displaying their abilities. "Let me," says some mighty intellect, "fight with a Christian; I shall have hard enough work to prove my thesis, I know I shall have a great difficulty to undermine the bastions of truth which he opposes to bear against me; so much the better; it were worth while to be conquered by so stout an opposition and if I can overcome my antagonist, if I can prove myself to have more logic than he has, then I can say, 'tis glorious; 'tis glorious to have fought against an opponent with so much on his side, and yet to have come off more than conqueror." I do believe the best man in the world is very hard to be trusted with power; he will, unless grace keeps him, make a wrong use of it before long. Hence it is that the most influential of God's servants are almost invariably the most tried ones, because our heavenly Father knows that if it were not for great trials and afflictions we should begin to set ourselves up against him, and arrogate to ourselves a glory which we had no right to claim.

But another reason why Manasseh was an unbeliever, I take it, was *because he was proud.* Pride lieth at the root of infidelity; pride is the very germ of opposition to God. The man saith, " Why should I believe? The Sunday-school child reads his Bible, and says it is true. Am I, a man of intellect, to sit side by side with him, and receive a thing as true simply at the dictum of God's Word? No, I will not; I will find it out for myself, and I will not believe simply because it is revealed to me, for that were to make myself a child." And when he turns to the page of revelation, and reads thus, " Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye can in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven," he says, " Pshaw! I shall not be converted then; I am not going to be a child; I am a man, and a man I will be, and I would rather be lost a man than saved a child. What I am I to surrender my judgment, and sit down tacitly to believe in God's Word?" " Yes," says God's Word, "thou art; thou art to become as a child, and meekly to receive my Word." "Then," says he, in his arrogance and pride, "I will not," and like Satan, he declares it were better to rule in hell than serve in heaven, and he goes away an unbeliever, because to believe is too humbling a thing.

But perhaps the most potent reason for Manasseh's unbelief lies here; *that he loved sin too well.* When Manasseh built the altars for his false gods, he could sin easily, and keep his conscience; but he felt Jehovah's laws so stringent, that if he once believed in the one God he could not sin as he did. He read it thus: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal;" and so on. Manasseh wanted to do all these things, and

therefore he would not believe because he could not believe and keep his sin. The very reason why we have much unbelief is because we have much love of sin. Men will have no God, because God interferes with their lusts. They could not go on in their sins, if they once believed there was an everlasting God above them, or professed to believe it, for all do believe it, whether they say so or not; and because the thought of God checks them in their impiety and their lust, therefore they cry out, "There is no God," and say it with their lips as well as in their hearts. I believe it was this that led Manasseh to persecute the saints of God; for among his sins it is written, " he shed innocent blood very much." It is a tradition among the Jews that the prophet Isaiah was sawn in sunder by Manasseh, on account of a rebuke which he gave him for his sin. Isaiah was not wont to be very timid, and he told the king of his lusts, and therefore placing him between two planks, he cut him in sunder from head to foot. It is just the reason why men hate God, and bate his servants, because the truth is too hot for them. Send you a preacher who would not tell you of your sins and you would hear him peaceably; but when the gospel comes with power, then it is that men can not bear it; when it trenches upon that pleasure, that sin, or that lust, then they will not believe it. Ye would believe the gospel if ye could believe it and live in your sins too. O! how many a drunken reprobate would be a Christian, if he might be a drunkard and a Christian too! How many a wicked wretch would turn believer, if he might believe and yet go on in his sins! But because faith in the everlasting God can never stand side by side with sin, and because the gospel cries, "Down with it! down with it! down with your sin," therefore it is that men turn round and say, "Down with the gospel." It is too hot for you, O ye sinful generation; therefore ye turn aside from it, because it will not tolerate your lusts, nor indulge your iniquity.

III. We look, then, at Manasseh as an unbeliever, and now we have our last most pleasing task of looking at Manasseh as A CONVERT. Hear it, O heavens, and listen, O earth! The Lord God hath said it. Manasseh shall be saved. He on his throne of cruelty has just appended his name to another murderous edict against the saints of God; yet he shall be humbled; he shall ask for mercy and shall be saved. Manasseh hears the decree of God; he laughs. "What! I play the hypocrite, and bend my knee? Never! It is not possible; and when the godly hear of it, they all say, 'It is not possible.' What! Saul among the prophets? Manasseh regenerated ? Manasseh made to bow before the Most High? The thing is impossible." Ah! it is impossible with man, but it is possible with God; God knows how to do it. The enemy is at the gates of the city; a hostile king has just besieged the walls of Jerusalem; Manasseh flees from his palace and hides himself among the thorns; he is there taken, carried captive to Babylon, and shut up in prison. And now we see what God can do. The proud king is proud no longer, for he has lost his power; the mighty man is mighty no more, for his might is taken from him; and now in a low dungeon listen to him. It is no more the blasphemer, no more the hater of God; but see him cold on the floor! Manasseh bows his knee, and with the tears

rolling down his cheeks, he cries, "O God! my father's God! an outcast comes to thee; a hell-hound stained with blood throws himself at thy feet; I, a very demon, full of filthiness, now prostrate myself before thee! O my God, canst thou, wilt thou have mercy on such a wretch as I?" Hear it, ye heavens! Listen yet again. See, from the skies the angel flies with mercy in his hand. Ah! whither speeds he? It is to the dungeon of Babylon. The proud king is on his knee, and mercy comes and whispers in his ear—"Hope!" He starts from his knees, and cries, "Is there hope?" And down he falls again. Once more he pleads, and mercy whispers that sweet promise, uttered once by the murdered Isaiah—"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." O! do you see him? His very heart is running over in his eyes. O! how he weeps for joy, and yet for sorrow that he ever could have sinned against a God so kind. A moment more, and the dungeon is opened; the king of Babylon, moved by God, bids him go free, and he returns to his kingdom and throne, a happier and a better man than he had ever been before. I think I see him coming into Jerusalem. There are his statesmen and favorites, crying to him, "Come in, Manasseh; the bowl shall be filled, and we will have a merry night to-night; we will bow before the shrine of Ashtaroth, and thank her that she has set thee at liberty; lo, the horses of the sun are ready; come and pay thy devotions to him that shines on the earth, and leads the host of heaven!" Methinks I see their astonishment when he cries, " Stand back! stand back! ye are my friends no longer, until ye become God's friends; I have dandled you on my knees, and, vipers, you have stung me with the poison of asps; I made you my friends, and you have led me down to the gulf of hell. But I know it now. Stand back till ye are better men; and I will find others to be my courtiers." And there the poor saints, hidden in the back streets of the city, so frightened because the king has come back, are holding meetings of solemn prayer, crying unto God that no more murderous, persecuting edicts might go forth. And lo, a messenger comes and says? "The king is returned;" and while they are looking at him, wondering what the messenger is about to say, he adds, "He has returned, not Manasseh as he went, but as a very angel. I saw him with his own hands dash Ashtaroth in pieces; I heard him cry, 'The horses of the sun shall be hoofed; sweep out the house of God; we will hold a passover there; the morning and evening lamb shall again burn on Jehovah's altars, for he is God, and beside him there is none else.'" O! can you conceive the joy of believers on that auspicious day? Can you think how they went up to God's house with joy and thanksgiving? And on the next Sabbath they sung, as they had—never sung before, "O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation," while they remembered that he who had persecuted the saints of God aforetime, now defended that very truth which once he abhorred. There was joy on earth, ay, and there was joy in heaven too; the bells of heaven rang merry peals the day Manasseh prayed; the angels of heaven flapped their wings with double alacrity the day Manasseh repented; earth and heaven were glad, and even the Almighty on his throne smiled gracious approbation,

while he again said, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins."

And now are you curious to know what were the bases of the faith of Manasseh—what were the rocks on which he built his trust in God? I think they were two. He believed in God, first, *because he had answered his prayer;* and secondly, *because he had forgiven his sin.* I have sometimes said, when I have become the prey of doubting thoughts, "Well, now I dare not doubt whether there be a God, for I can look back in my diary and say, on such a day in the depths of trouble I bent my knee to God, and or ever I had risen from my knees the answer was given me." And so can many of you say; and therefore whatever others may say, you know there is a God, because he answered your prayer. You heard of that holy man, Mr. Müller, of Bristol. If you were to tell George Müller there was not a God, he would weep over you. "Not a God?" he would say; "why, I have seen his hand. Whence came those answers to my prayers?" Ah! sirs, ye may laugh at us for credulity; but there are hundreds here who could most solemnly assert that they have asked of God for divers matters, and that God has not failed them, but granted their request. This was one reason why Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.

The other reason was, that *Manasseh had a sense of pardoned sin.* Ah! that is a delightful proof of the existence of a God. Here comes a poor miserable wretch: his knees are knocking together, his heart is sinking within him, be is giving himself up to despair. Bring the physicians to him! they cry, "We fear his mind is infirm. We believe he will at last have to be taken to some lunatic asylum;" and they apply their remedies, but he is none the better, but rather grows worse. On a sudden this poor creature, afflicted with a sense of sin, groaning on account of guilt, is brought within the sound of the sacred Word; he hears it—it increases his misery; he hears again—his pain becomes doubled; till at last every one says his case is utterly hopeless. Suddenly, on a happy morning which God had ordained, the minister is led to some sweet passage. Perhaps it is this: "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The Spirit applies it, and the poor man goes home light as air, and says to his wife and children, " Come rejoice with me." "Why ?" say they. "Because," says he, "my sins are forgiven.," "How do you know that?" "O!" says he, "I have a sense of pardoning love within my heart, which all the doubters in the world could not gainsay; and if all the earth should rise up against me and say I should be condemned, I could say, 'I know there is now no condemnation for me.'" Have you ever felt pardoning blood applied? You will never doubt God, I know, if you have. Why, dear friends, if the poorest old woman in the world should be brought before an infidel of the wisest order, having a mind of the greatest caliber, and he should endeavor to pervert her, I think I see her smile at him, and say, "My good man, it is of no use at all, for the Lord has appeared unto me of old, saying, 'Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love,' and so you may tell me what you please: I have had a sense

of blood-bought pardon shed abroad in my heart, and I know that he is God, and you can never beat it out of me." As good Watts says, when we have once such an assurance as that,

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

O! if you have a sense that sin is forgiven, you can never doubt the existence of a God; for it will be said of you, "Then he knew that the Lord he was God."

And now I gather up my strength for just one moment, to speak to those of you who desire to know what you must do to be saved. My hearer, no question can be more important than that; none is so requisite to ask. Alas! there are too many who never ask it, but who go sailing down to the gulf of black despair, listening to the syren song of procrastination and delay. But, if you have been brought to ask the question solemnly and seriously, " What must I do to be saved ?" I am happy, thrice happy to be able to tell you God's own word, "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ and is baptized, shall he saved; he that believeth not," the Scripture saith, "shall be damned." " Not of works, lest any man should boast." "But sir," you say, "I have many good works, and would trust in them." If you do, you are a lost man. As old Matthew Wilks most quaintly said once, speaking in his usual tone—" You might as well try to sail to America in a paper boat, as to go to heaven by your own works; you will be swamped on the passage if you attempt it." We can not spin a robe that is long enough to cover us; we can not make a righteousness that is good enough to satisfy God. If you would be saved, it must be through what Christ did, and not what you did. You can not be your own Saviour; Christ must save you, if you are saved at all. How then can you be saved by Christ? Here is the plan of salvation. It is written—" This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Do you feel that you are a sinner? Then believe that Jesus Christ came to save you; for so sure as ever you feel you are a sinner, it is a fact that Christ died for you; and if he died for you, you shall not perish, for I can not conceive that Christ would die in vain. If he did die for you, you shall most assuredly be pardoned and saved, and shall one day sing in heaven. The only question is, Did he die for you? He most certainly did if you are a sinner; for it is written—I will repeat it again—"It is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners." Poor sinner, believe! My dear friend, give me thine hand! I wish I could put it inside Christ's hand. O! embrace him! embrace him! lest haply the clouds of night should come upon thee, and the sun should set ere thou hast found him, O! lay hold on him, lest death and destruction should overtake thee; fly to this mountain, lest thou be consumed, and remember, once in Christ, thou art safe beyond hazard.

"Once in Christ in Christ for ever,
Nothing from his love can sever."

O! believe him! believe him, my dear, dear hearers for Jesus sake! Amen.

* See “The doings of God with regard to George Müller.”

Turn or Burn

A Sermon
No. 106
Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 7, 1856, by the
REV. C.H. SPURGEON
at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

"If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready."—Psalm 7:12.

IF THE SINNER turn not, God will whet his sword." So, then, God has a sword, and he will punish man on account of his iniquity. This evil generation hath laboured to take away from God the sword of his justice; they have endeavoured to prove themselves that God will "clear the guilty," and will by no means "punish iniquity, transgression and sin." Two hundred years ago the predominant strain of the pulpit was one of terror: it was like Mount Sinai, it thundered forth the dreadful wrath of God, and from the lips of a Baxter or a Bunyan, you heard most terrible sermons, full to the brim with warnings of judgment to come. Perhaps some of the Puritanic fathers may have gone too far, and have given too great a prominence to the terrors of the Lord in their ministry: but the age in which we live has sought to forget those terrors altogether, and if we dare to tell men that God will punish them for their sins, it is charged upon us that want to bully them into religion, and if we faithfully and honestly tell our hearers that sin must bring after it certain destruction, it is said that we are attempting to frighten them into goodness. Now we care not what men mockingly impute to us; we feel it our duty, when men sin, to tell them they shall be punished, and so long as the world will not give up its sin we feel we must not cease our warnings. But the cry of the age is, that God is merciful, that God is love. Ay; who said he was not? But remember, it is equally true, God is just, severely and inflexibly just. He were not God, if he were not just; he could not be merciful if he were not just, for punishment of the wicked is demanded by the highest mercy to the rest of mankind. Rest assured, however, that he is just, and that the words I am about to read you from God's Word are true—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;' "God is angry with the wicked every day;" "If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready. He hath also prepared for him the instruments of death; he ordaineth his arrows against the persecutors." Forsooth, because this age is wicked it is to have no hell; and because it is hypocritical it would have but feigned punishment. This doctrine is so prevalent as to make even the ministers of the gospel flinch from their duty in declaring the day of wrath. How few there are who will solemnly tell us of the judgment to come. They preach of God's love and mercy as they ought to do, and as God has commanded them; but of what avail is it to preach mercy unless they preach also the doom of the wicked? And how shall we hope to

effect the purpose of preaching unless we warn men that if they "turn not, he will whet his sword?" I fear that in too many places the doctrine of future punishment is rejected and laughed as a fancy and a chimera; but the day will come when it shall be known to be a reality. Ahab scoffed at Micaiah, when he said he should never come home alive; the men of Noah's generation laughed at the foolish old man, (as they thought him), who bid them take heed, for the world should be drowned; but when they were climbing to the tree-tops, and the floods were following them, did they then say that the prophecy was untrue: and when the arrow was sticking in the heart of Ahab, and he said, "Take me from the battle, for I must die;" did he then think that Micaiah spoke an untruth? And so it is now. Ye tell us we speak lies, when we warn you of judgment to come; but in that day when your mischief shall fall on yourselves, and when destruction shall overwhelm you, will you say we were liars then? Will ye then turn round and scoff, and say we spake not the truth? Rather, my hearers, the highest need of honour will then be given to him who was the most faithful in warning men concerning the wrath of God. I have often trembled at the thought that, here I am standing before you, and constantly engaged in the work of the ministry, and what if, when I die, I should be found unfaithful to your souls, how doleful will be our meeting in the world of spirits. It would be a dreadful thing if you were able to say to me in the world to come, "Sir, you flattered us; you did not tell us of the solemnities of eternity; you did not rightly dwell upon the awful wrath of God; you spoke to us feebly and faintly; you were somewhat afraid of us; you knew we could not bear to hear of eternal torment, and therefore you kept it back and never mentioned it!" Why, methinks you would look me in the face and curse me throughout eternity, if that should be my conduct. But by God's help it never shall be. Come fair or foul, when I die I shall, God helping me, be able to say, "I am clear of the blood of all men." So far as I know God's truth I will endeavour to speak it; and though on my head opprobrium and scandal be poured to a ten-fold greater extent than ever, I'll hail it and welcome it, if I may but be faithful to this unstable generation, faithful to God, and faithful to my own conscience. Let me, then, endeavour—and by God's help I will do it as solemnly and as tenderly as I can—to address such of you as have not yet repented, most affectionately reminding you of your future doom, if you should die impenitent. "If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

In the first place, *what is the turning here meant*? In the second place let us dwell on the *necessity there is for men's turning, otherwise God will punish them*; and then thirdly, let me remind you of the *means whereby men can be turned from the error of their ways, and the weakness and frailty of their nature amended by the power of divine grace*.

I. In the first place, my hearers, let me endeavour to explain to you the NATURE OF THE TURNING HERE MEANT. It says—"if he *turn* not he will whet his sword."

To commence then. The turning here meant is *actual*, not fictitious—not that which stops with promises and vows, but that which deals with the real acts life. Possible one of

you will say, this morning "Lo I turn to God; from this forth I will not sin, but I will endeavour to walk in holiness; my vices shall be abandoned, my crimes shall be thrown to the winds, and I will turn unto God with full purpose of heart;" but, mayhap, to-morrow you will have forgotten this; you will weep a tear or two under the preaching of God's word, but by to-morrow every tear shall have been dried, and you will utterly forget that you ever came to the house of God at all. How many of us are like men who see their faces in a glass, and straightway go away and forget what manner of men they are! Ah! my hearer, it is not thy promise of repentance that can save thee; it is not thy vow, it is not thy solemn declaration, it is not the tear that is dried more easily than the dew-drop by the sun, it is not the transient emotion of the heart which constitutes a real turning to God. There must be a true and actual abandonment of sin, and a turning unto righteousness in real act and deed in every-day life. Do you say you are sorry, and repent, and yet go on from day to day, just as you always went? Will your now bow your heads, and say, "Lord, I repent," and in a little while commit the same deeds again? If ye do, your repentance is worse than nothing, and shall but make your destruction yet more sure; for he that voweth to his Maker, and doth not pay, hath committed another sin, in that he hath attempted to deceive the Almighty, and lie against the God that made him. Repentance to be true, to be evangelical, must be a repentance which really affects our outward conduct.

In the next place, repentance to be sure *must be entire*. How many will say, "Sir, I will renounce this sin and the other; but there are certain darling lusts which I must keep and hold." O sirs, In God's name let me tell you, it is not the giving up of one sin, nor fifty sins, which is true repentance; it is the solemn renunciation of every sin. If thou dost harbour one of those accursed vipers in thy heart, thy repentance is but a sham. If thou dost indulge in but one lust, and dost give up every other, that one lust, like one leak in a ship, will sink thy soul. Think it not sufficient to give up thy outward vices; fancy it not enough to cut off the more corrupt sins of thy life; it is all or none which God demands. "Repent," says he; and when he bids you repent, he means repent for all thy sins, otherwise he never can accept thy repentance as being real and genuine. The true penitent hates sin in the race, not in the individual—in the mass, not in the particular. He says, "Gild thee as thou wilt, O sin, I abhor thee! Ay, cover thyself with pleasure, make thyself guady, like the snake with its azure scales—I hate thee still, for I know thy venom, and I flee from thee, even when thou comest to me in the most specious garb." All sin must be given up, or else you shall never have Christ: all transgression must be renounced, or else the gates of heaven must be barred against you. Let us remember, then, that for repentance to be sincere it must be entire repentance.

Again, when God says, "If he turn not, he will whet his sword," he means *immediate* repentance. Ye say, when we are nearing the last extremity of mortal life, and when we are entering the borders of the thick darkness of futurity, then we will change our ways. But,

my dear hearers, do not delude yourselves. It is few who have ever changed after a long life of sin. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" If so, let him that is accustomed to do evil learn to do well. Put no faith in the repentances which you promise yourselves on your death beds. There are ten thousand arguments against one, that if you repent not in health, you will never repent in sickness. Too many have promised themselves a quiet season before they leave the world, when they could turn their face to the wall and confess their sins; but how few have found that time of repose! Do not men drop down dead in the streets—ay, even in the house of God? Do they not expire in their business? And when death is gradual, it affords but an ill season for repentance. Many a saint has said on his death-bed, "Oh! if I had now to seek my God, if I had now to cry to him for mercy, what would become of me? These pangs are enough, without the pangs of repentance. It is enough to have the body tortured, without having the soul wrung with remorse." Sinner! God saith, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, when your fathers tempted me and proved me." When God the Holy Spirit convinces men of sin, they will never talk of delays. You may never have another to repent in. Therefore saith the voice of wisdom, "Repent now." The Jewish rabbis said, "Let every man repent one day before he dies, and since he may die to-morrow, let him take heed to turn from his evil ways to-day." Even so we say; immediate repentance is that which God demands, for he hath never promised thee that thou shalt have any hour to repent in, except the one that thou hast now.

Furthermore; the repentance here described as absolutely necessary is *hearty* repentance. It is not a mock tear; it is not hanging out the ensigns of grief, whilst you are keeping merriment in your hearts. It is not having an illumination within, and shutting up all the windows by a pretended repentance; it is the putting out of the candles of the heart; it is sorrow of soul which is true repentance. A man may renounce every outward sin, and yet not really repent. True repentance is a turning of the heart as well as of the life; it is the giving up of the whole soul to God, to be his for ever and ever; it is a renunciation of the sins of the heart, as well as the crimes of the life. Ah! dear hearers, let none of us fancy that we have repented when we have only a false and fictitious repentance; let none of us take that to be the work of the Spirit which is only the work of poor human nature; let us not dream that we have savingly turned to God, when, perhaps, we have only turned to ourselves. And let us not think it enough to have turned from one vice to another, or from vice to virtue; let us remember, it must be a turning of the whole soul, so that the old man is made anew in Christ Jesus; otherwise we have not answered the requirement of the text—we have not turned unto God.

And lastly, upon this point, this repentance must be *perpetual*. It is not my turning to God during to-day that will be a proof that I am a true convert; it is forsaking of my sin throughout the entire of my life, until I sleep in the grave. You need not fancy that to be upright for a week will be a proof that you are saved; it is a perpetual abhorrence of evil. The

change which God works is neither a transitory nor a superficial change; not a cutting off the top of the weed, but an away of that which is the cause of the defilement. In old times, when rich and generous monarchs came into their cities they made the fountains run milk and wine; but the fountain was not therefore a fountain of milk and wine always; one the morrow it ran with water as before. So you may to-day go home and pretend to pray; you may to-day be serious, to-morrow you may be honest, and the next day you may pretend to be devout, but yet if thou return, as Scripture has it, "like the dog to its vomit, and like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," your repentance shall but sink you deeper into hell, instead of being a proof of divine grace in your hearts.

It is very hard to distinguish between legal repentance and evangelical repentance; however, there are certain marks whereby they may be distinguished, and at the risk of tiring you, we will just notice one or two of them; and may God grant that you may find them in your own souls! Legal repentance is a fear of damning: evangelical repentance is a fear of sinning. Legal repentance makes us fear the wrath of God; evangelical repentance makes us fear the cause of that wrath, even sin. When a man repents with that grace of repentance which God the Spirits works in him, he repents not of the punishment which is to follow the deed, but of the deed itself; and he feels that if there were not pit digged for the wicked, if there were no ever-gnawing worm, and no fire unquenchable, he would still hate sin. It is such repentance as this which every one of you must have, or else you will be lost. It must be a hatred of sin. Do not suppose, that because when you come to die you will be afraid of eternal torment, therefore that will be repentance. Every thief is afraid of the prison; but he will steal to-morrow if you set him free. Most men who have committed murder tremble at the sight of the gallows-tree, but they would do the deed again could they live. It is not the hatred of the punishment that is repentance; it is the hatred of the deed itself. Do you feel that you have such a repentance as that? If not, these thundering words must be preached to you again,—"If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

But one more hint here. When a man is possessed of true and evangelical repentance—I mean the gospel repentance which saves the soul—he not only hates sin for its own sake, but loathes it so extremely and utterly that he feels that no repentance of his own can avail to wash it out, and he acknowledges that it is only by an act of sovereign grace that his sin can be washed away. Now, if any of you suppose that you repent of your sins, and yet imagine that by a course of holy living you can blot them out—if you suppose that by walking uprightly in future you can obliterate your past transgressions—you have not yet truly repented; for true repentance makes a man feel, that

"Could his zeal no respite know,
Could his tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Christ must save, and Christ alone."

And if it is so killed in thee that thou hatest as a corrupt and abominable thing, and wouldst bury it out of thy sight, but that thou feelest that it will never be entombed, unless Christ shall dig the grave, then thou hast repented of sin. We must humbly confess that we deserve God's wrath, and that we cannot avert it by any deeds of our own, and we must put our trust solely and entirely in the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. If ye have not so repented, again we exclaim in the words of David, "If you turn not, he will whet his sword."

II. And now the second point; it is a yet more terrible one to dwell upon, and if I consulted my own feelings I should not mention it; but we must not consider our feelings in the work of ministry, any more than we should if we were physicians of men's bodies. We must sometimes use the knife, where we feel that mortification would ensue without it. We must frequently make sharp gashes into men's consciences, in the hope that the Holy Spirit will bring them to life. We assert, then, that there is a NECESSITY that God should whet his sword and punish men, if they will not turn. Earnest Baxter used to say, "Sinner! turn or burn; it is thine only alternative: TURN OR BURN!" And it is so. We think we can show you why men must turn, or else they must burn.

1. First we cannot suppose the God of the Bible could suffer sin to be unpunished. Some may suppose it; they may dream their intellects into a state of intoxication, so as to suppose a God apart from justice; but no man whose reason is sound and whose mind is in a healthy condition can imagine a God without justice. Ye cannot suppose a king without it to be a good king; ye cannot dream of a good government that should exist without justice, much less of God, the Judge and King of all the earth, without justice in his bosom. To suppose him all love, and no justice, were to undeify him, and make him no longer God; he were not capable of ruling this world if he had not justice in his heart. There is in man a natural perception of the fact, that if there be a God, he must be just; and I can scarcely imagine that ye can believe in a God without believing also in the punishment of sin. It were difficult to suppose him elevated high above his creatures, beholding their disobedience, and yet looking with the same serenity upon the good and upon the evil; you cannot suppose him awarding the same need of praise to the wicked and to the righteous. The idea of God, suppose justice; and it is but to say justice when you say God.

2. But to imagine that there shall be no punishment for sin, and that man can be saved without repentance, is to fly in the face of all the Scriptures. What! Are the records of divine history nothing? And if they be anything must not God have mightily changed, if he doth not now punish sin? What! did he once blast Eden, and drive our parents out of that happy garden on account of a little theft, as man would style it? Did he drown a world with water, and inundate creation with the floods which he had buried in the bowels of this earth? And will he not punish sin? Let the burning hail which fell on Sodom tell you that God is just; let the open mouth of the earth which swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, warn you that he will not spare the guilty: let the mighty works of God which he did in the Red Sea,

the wonders which he wrought on Pharaoh, and the miraculous destruction which he brought on Sennacherib, tell you that God is just. And it were perhaps out of place for me in the same argument to mention the judgments of God even in our age; but have there never been such? This world is not the dungeon where God punishes sin, but still there are a few instances in which we cannot but believe that he actually did avenge it. I am no believer that every accident is a judgment; I am far from believing that the destruction of men and women in a theatre is a punishment upon them for their sin, since the same thing has occurred in divine service to our perpetual sorrow. I believe judgment is reserved for the next world; I could not account for providence if I believed that God punishes here. "Those men upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay." It has injured religion for men to take up every providence, and say, for instance, that because a boat was upset on the Sabbath-day it was a judgment on the persons that were in it. We assuredly believe that it was sinful to spend the day in pleasure, but we deny that it was a punishment from God. God usually reserves his punishment for a future state; but yet, we say, there have been a few instances in which we cannot but believe that men and women have been by Providence in this life punished for their guilt. I remember one which I scarcely dare relate to you. I saw the wretched creature myself. He had dared to imprecate on his head the most awful curses that man could utter. In his rage and fury he said he wished his head were twisted on one side, that his eyes were put out, and that his jaws were made fast: but a moment afterwards the lash of his whip—with which he had been cruelly treating his horse—entered his eye, brought on first inflammation, and then lock-jaw, and when I saw him he was just in the very position in which he had asked to be placed, for his head was twisted round, his eye-sight was gone, and he could not speak except through his closed teeth. You will remember a similar instance happening at Devizes, where a woman declared that she had paid her part of the price of a sack of meal, when she had it in her hand, and immediately dropped down dead on the spot. Some of these may have been singular coincidences; but I am not so credulous as to suppose that they were brought about by chance. I think the will of the Lord was in it. I believe they were some faint intimations that God was just, and that although the full shower of his wrath does not fall on men in this life, he does pour a drop or two on them, to let us see how he will one day chasten the world for its iniquity.

3. But why need I go far to bring arguments to bear on you, my hearers? Your own consciences tell you that God must punish sin. You may laugh at me, and say that you have no such *belief*. I do not say you have but I say that your conscience tells you so, and conscience has more power over men than what they think to be their belief. As John Bunyan said, Mr. Conscience had a very loud voice, and though Mr. Understanding shut himself up in a dark room, where he could not see, yet he used to thunder out so mightily in the streets, that Mr. Understanding used to shake in his house through what Mr. Conscience said. And it is often

so. You say in your understanding, I cannot believe God will punish sin;" but you know he will. You would not like to confess your secret fears, because that were to give up what you have so often most bravely asserted. But because you assert it with such boast and bombast, imagine you do not believe it, for if you did, you would not need look so big while saying it. I know that when you are dying you will believe in a hell. Conscience makes cowards of us all, and makes us believe, even when we say we do not, that God must punish sin.

Let me tell you a story; I have told it before, but it is a striking one, and sets out in a true light how easily men will be brought in times of danger to believe in God, and a God of justice too, though they have denied him before. In the backwoods of Canada there resided a good minister, who one evening, went out to meditate, as Isaac did, in the fields. He soon found himself on the borders of a forest, which he entered, and walked along a track which had been trodden before him; musing, musing still, until at last the shadows of twilight gathered around him, and he began to think how he should spend a night in the forest. He trembled at the idea of remaining there, with the poor shelter of a tree into which he would be compelled to climb. On a sudden he saw a light in the distance among the trees, and imagining that it might be from the window of some cottage where he could find a hospitable retreat, he hastened to it, and to his surprise, saw a space cleared and trees laid down to make a platform, and upon it a speaker addressing a multitude. He thought to himself, "I have stumbled on a company of people, who in this dark forest have assembled to worship God, and some minister is preaching to them, at this late hour of the evening, concerning the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;" but to his surprise and horror, when he came nearer, he found a young man declaiming against God, daring the Almighty to do his worst upon him, speaking terrible things in wrath against the justice of the Most High, and venturing most bold and awful assertions concerning his own disbelief in a future state. It was altogether a singular scene; it was lighted up by pine-knots, which cast a glare here and there, while the thick darkness in other places still reigned. The people were intent on listening to the orator, and when he sat down thunders of applause were given to him; each one seeming to emulate the other in his praise. Thought the minister, "I must not let this pass; I must rise and speak; the honour of my God, and his cause demands it." But he feared to speak, for he knew not what to say, having come there suddenly; but he would have ventured, had not something else occurred. A man of middle age, hale and strong, rose, and leaning on his staff he said, "My friends, I have a word to speak to you to-night. I am not about to refute any of the arguments of the orator; I shall not criticise his style; I shall say nothing concerning what I believe to be the blasphemies he has uttered; but I shall simply relate to you a fact, and after I have done that you shall draw your own conclusions. Yesterday, I walked by the side of yonder river; I saw on its floods a young man in a boat. The boat was unmanageable; it was going fast towards the rapids; he could not use the oars, and I saw that he was not capable of bringing the boat to the shore. I saw that young man wring his hands in agony;

by-and-bye he gave up the attempt to save his life, kneeled down and cried with desperate earnestness, "O God! save my soul! If my body cannot be saved, save my soul.' I heard him confess that he had been a blasphemer, I heard him vow that if his life were spared he would never be such again; I heard him implore the mercy of heaven for Jesus Christ's sake, and earnestly plead that he might be washed in his blood. These arms saved that young man from the flood; I plunged in, brought the boat to shore, and saved his life. That same young man has just now addressed you, and cursed his Maker. What say you to this, sirs!" The speaker sat down. You may guess what a shadow ran through the young man himself, and how the audience in one moment changed their notes, and saw that after all, whilst it was a fine thing to brag and bravado against Almighty God on dry land, and when danger was distant, it was not quite so grand to think ill of him when near the verge of the grave. We believe there is enough conscience in every man to convince him that God must punish him for his sin; therefore we think that our text will wake an echo in every heart—"If he turn not, he will whet his sword."

I am tired of this terrible work of endeavouring to show you that God must punish sin; let me just utter a few of the declarations of his Holy Word, and then let me tell you how repentance is to be obtained. O sirs! ye may think that the fire of hell is indeed a fiction, and that the flames of the nethermost pit are put popish dreams; but if ye are believers in the Bible ye must believe that it cannot be so. Did not our Master say, "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." You say it is metaphorical fire. But what meant he by this—"He is able to cast both body and soul into hell?" Is it not written, that there is reserved for the devil and his angels fearful torment? and do you not know that our Master said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment;" "Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?" "Yes," you say, "but it is not philosophical to believe that there is a hell; it does not consort with reason to believe there is." However, I should like to act as if there were, even if there is no such place; for as the poor and pious man once said, "Sir, I like to have two strings to my bow. If there should be no hell I shall be as well off as you will; but if there should, it will go hard with you." But why need I say "if?" You know there is. No man has been born and educated in this land without having his conscience so far enlightened as to know that to be a truth. All I need to do is to press upon your anxious consideration this thought:—Do you feel that you are a fit subject for heaven now? Do you feel that God has changed your heart and renewed your nature? If not, I beseech you lay hold of this thought, that unless you be renewed all that can be dreadful in the torments of the future world must inevitably be yours. Dear hearer, apply it to thyself, not to thy fellow-men, but to thine own conscience, and may God Almighty make use of it to bring thee to repentance.

III. Now briefly what are the MEANS of repentance? Most seriously I say, I do not believe any man can repent with evangelical repentance of himself. You ask me then to what purpose

is the sermon I have endeavoured to preach, proving the necessity of repentance? Allow me to make the sermon of some purpose, under God, by its conclusion. Sinner! thou art so desperately set on sin, that I have no hope thou wilt ever turn from it of thyself. But listen! He who died on Calvary is exalted on high "to give repentance and remission of sin." Dost thou this morning feel that thou art a sinner? If so, ask of Christ to give thee repentance, for he can work repentance in thine heart by his Spirit, though thou canst not work it there thyself. Is thy heart like iron? he can put it into the furnace of his love and make it melt. Is thy soul like the nether millstone? His grace is able to dissolve it like the ice is melted before the sun. He can make thee repent, though thou canst not make thyself repent. If thou feelest thy need of repentance, I will not now say to thee "repent," for I believe there are certain acts that must precede a sense of repentance. I should advise you to go to your houses, and if you feel that you have sinned, and yet cannot sufficiently repent of your transgressions, bow your knees before God and confess your sins: tell him you cannot repent as you would; tell him your heart is hard; tell him it is as cold as ice. You can do that if God has made you feel your need of a Saviour. Then if it should be laid to your heart to endeavour to seek after repentance, I will tell you the best way to find it. Spend an hour first in endeavouring to remember thy sins; and when conviction has gotten a firm hold on thee, then spend another hour—where? At Calvary, my hearer. Sit down and read that chapter which contains the history and mystery of the God that loved and died; sit down and think thou seest that glorious Man, with blood dropping from his hands, and his feet gushing rivers of gore; and if that does not make thee repent, with the help of God's Spirit, then I know of nothing that can. An old divine says, "If you feel you do not love God, love him till you feel you do: if you think you cannot believe, believe till you feel you believe." Many a man says he cannot repent, while he is repenting. Keep on with that repentance, till you feel you have repented. Only acknowledge thy transgressions; confess thy guiltiness; own that he were just if he should destroy thee; and say this, solemnly—

My faith doth lay its hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

Oh! what would I give if one of my hearers should be blessed by God to go home and repent! If I had worlds to buy one of your souls, I would readily give them, if I might but bring one of you to Christ. I shall never forget the hour when I hope God's mercy first looked on me. It was in a place very different from this, amongst a despised people, in an insignificant little chapel, of a peculiar sect. I went there bowed down with guilt; laden with transgression. The minister walked up the pulpit stairs, opened his Bible, and read that precious text, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and beside me there is none else;" and, as I thought, fixing his eyes on me, before he began to preach to others, he

said, "Young man! look! look! look! You are one of the ends of the earth; you feel you are; you know your need of a Saviour; you are trembling because you think he will never save you. He says this morning, 'Look!'" Oh, how my soul was shaken within me then! what! thought I, does that man know me, and all about me? He seemed as if he did. And it made me "look!" Well, I thought, lost or saved, I will try; sink or swim, I will run the risk of it; and in that moment I hope by his grace I looked upon Jesus, and though desponding, downcast, and ready to despair, and feeling that I could rather die than live as I had lived, at that very moment it seemed as if a young heaven had had its birth within my conscience. I went home, no more cast down; those about me, noticing the change, asked me why I was so glad, and I told them that I had believed in Jesus, and that it was written, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Oh! if one such should be here this morning! Where art thou, thou chief of sinners, thou vilest of the vile? My dear hearer, thou hast never been in the house of God perhaps these last twenty years; but here thou art, covered with thy sins, the blackest and vilest of all! Hear God's Word. "Come, now let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool, and though they be red like crimson, they shall be white than snow." And all this for Jesus' sake; all this for his blood's sake! "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved;" for his word and mandate is, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

SINNER! TURN OR BURN!

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