

SERMONS
OF
REVEREND
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Table of Contents

A Caution to the Presumptuous
All Joy in All Trials
An Earnest Warning about Lukewarmness
Christ Crucified
Christ in the Covenant
Christ is All
Children Brought to Christ
Christ Exalted
Christ Precious to Believers
Christ's First and Last Subject
Christ Our Passover
Christ the End of the Law
Christ's People-- Imitators of Him
Christ's Plea for Ignorant Sinners
Christ's Marvellous Giving
Christ's Hospital
Christian Conversation
Christ- The Power and Wisdom of God
Coming Judgment of the Secrets of Men
Coming to Christ
Compel Them to Come In
Confession of Sin
Consolation Proportionate to Spiritual Sufferings
David's Dying Song
Declension from First Love
Elijah's Appeal to the Undecided
Encouragement for the Depressed
False Professors Solemnly Warned
Final Perseverance
God's Word Not To Be Refused
The Bible
The Ark of His Covenant
The Bliss of the Glorified
The Blood-Shedding
The Character of Christ's People
The Christian--A Debtor
The Covenant Promise of the Spirit
The Comforter
The Death of Christ
The Death of Christ for His People
The Exaltation of Christ

A Caution to the Presumptuous

A Sermon (No. 22) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, May 13, 1855, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At Exeter Hall, Strand. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." —1 Corinthians 10:12

IT is a singular fact, but nevertheless most certain, that the vices are the counterfeits of virtues. Whenever God sends from the mint of heaven a precious coin of genuine metal, Satan will imitate the impress, and utter a vile production of no value. God gives love; it is his nature and his essence. Satan also fashioneth a thing which he calls love, but it is lust. God bestows courage; and it is a good thing to be able to look one's fellow in the face, fearless of all men in doing our duty. Satan inspires fool-hardiness, styles it courage, and bids the man rush to the cannon's mouth for "bubble reputation." God creates in man holy fear. Satan gives him unbelief, and we often mistake the one for the other. So with the best of virtues, the saving grace of faith, when it comes to its perfection it ripens into confidence, and there is nothing so comfortable and so desirable to the Christian, as the full assurance of faith. Hence, we find Satan, when he sees this good coin, at once takes the metal of the bottomless pit, imitates the heavenly image and superscription of assurance, and palms upon us the vice of presumption.

We are astonished, perhaps, as Calvinistic Christians, to find Paul saying, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall;" but we need not be astonished, for though we have a great right to believe that we stand, if we think we stand through the power of God—though we cannot be too confident of the might of the Most High, there is a thing so near akin to true confidence, that unless you use the greatest discernment you cannot tell the difference. Unholy presumption—it is against that which I am to speak this morning. Let me not be misunderstood. I shall not utter one word against the strongest faith. I wish all Little-Faiths were Strong-Faiths, that all Fearings were made Valiants-for-Truth, and the Ready-to-Halts Asahel's Nimble-of-Foot, that they might all run in their Master's work. I speak not against strong faith or full assurance; God giveth it to us; it is the holiest, happiest thing that a Christian can have, and there is no state so desirable as that of being able to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." It is not against that I speak, but I warn you against that evil thing, a false confidence and presumption which creepeth over a Christian, like the cold death-sleep on the mountain-top, from which, if he is not awakened, as God will see that he shall be, death will be the inevitable consequence. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

I shall this morning attempt first, *to find out the character*; secondly, *to show the danger*; and thirdly, *to give the counsel*. The character is, the man who thinks he stands; the danger is, that he may fall; and the counsel is, "let him take heed."

I. My first business shall be to FIND OUT THE CHARACTER intended by the presumptuous man, the man who thinks he stands. I could find a multitude of such if I might search the wide world o'er. I could find men in business filled with an arrogant hardihood, who, because they have in one speculation been successful will wade far out into the stormy sea of this contending life, risk their all—and lose it too. I might mention others who, presuming upon their health, are spending their years in sin and their lives in iniquity, because they think their bones iron and their nerves steel, and "all men mortal but themselves." I might speak of men who will venture into the midst of temptation, confident in their boasted power, exclaiming with self-complacency, "Do you think I am so weak as to sin? Oh! no; I shall stand. Give me the glass; I shall never be a drunkard. Give me the song; you will not find me a midnight reveller. I can drink a little and then I can stop." Such are presumptuous men. But I am not about to find them there; my business this morning is with God's church. The fanning must begin with the floor; the winnowing must try the wheat. So we are to winnow the church this morning to discover the presumptuous. We need not go far to find them. There are in every Christian church men who think they stand, men who vaunt themselves in fancied might and power, children of nature finely dressed, but not the living children of the living God; they have not been humbled or broken in spirit, or if they have, they have fostered carnal security until it has grown to a giant and trampled the sweet flower of humility under its foot. They think they stand. I speak now of real Christians, who, notwithstanding, have grown presumptuous, and indulge in a fleshly security. May my Master arouse such, while in preaching I endeavour to go to the core and root of the matter. For a little while I will expatiate upon the frequent causes of presumption in a Christian.

1. And first, a very common cause, is continued *worldly prosperity*. Moab is settled on his lees, he hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel. Give a man wealth; let his ships bring home continually rich freights; let the winds and waves appear to be his servants to bear his vessels across the bosom of the mighty deep; let his

lands yield abundantly; let the weather be propitious to his crops, and the skies smile pleasantly upon his enterprise; let the bands of Orion be loosed for him; let the sweet influence of the Pleiades descend upon him; let uninterrupted success attend him; let him stand among men as a successful merchant, as a princely Dives, as a man who is heaping up riches to a large extent, who is always prospering: or, if not wealth, let him enjoy continued health; let him know no sickness; allow him with braced nerve and brilliant eye, to march through the world, and live happily; give him the buoyant spirit; let him have the song perpetually on his lips, and his eye be ever sparkling with joy:—the happy, happy man who laughs at care, and cries, "Begone, dull care, I prithee begone from me." I say the consequence of such a state to a man, let him be the best Christian who ever breathed, will be presumption; and he will say, "I stand." "In my prosperity," says David, "I said, I shall never be moved." And we are not much better than David, nor half as good. If God should always rock us in the cradle of prosperity—if we were always dandled on the knees of fortune—if we had not some stain on the alabaster pillar, if there were not a few clouds in the sky, some specks in our sunshine—if we had not some bitter drops in the wine of this life, we should become intoxicated with pleasure, we should dream "we stand;" and stand we should, but it would be upon a pinnacle; stand we might, but hike the man asleep upon the mast, each moment we should be in jeopardy. We bless God, then, for our afflictions; we thank him for our depressions of spirit; we extol his name for the losses of our property; for we feel that had it not so happened to us, had he not chastened us every morning, and vexed us every evening, we might have become too secure. Continued worldly prosperity is a fiery trial. If it be so with any of you, apply this proverb to your own state, "As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold: so is a man to his praise."

2. Again, *light thoughts of sin* will engender presumption. When we are first converted, our conscience is so very tender, that we are afraid of the slightest sin. I have known young converts almost afraid to proceed a step, lest they should put their feet in the wrong direction. They will ask advice of their minister, and difficult cases of moral casuistry will they bring before us, such as we hardly know how to answer. They have a holy timidity, a godly fear, lest they should offend against God. But alas! very soon the fine bloom upon these first ripe fruits is removed by the rough handling of the surrounding world. The sensitive plant of young piety turns into a willow in after life, too pliant, too easily yielding. It is sadly true, that even a Christian will grow by degrees so callous, that the sin which once startled him and made his blood run cold, does not alarm him in the least. I can speak from my own experience. When first I heard an oath, I stood aghast, and knew not where to hide myself; yet now I can hear an imprecation or blasphemy against God, and though a shudder still runs through my veins, there is not that solemn feeling, that intense anguish, which I felt when first I heard such evil utterances. By degrees we get familiar with sin. The ear in which the cannon has been booming will not notice slight sounds. The men who work in those huge vessels, the hammering of which causes immense noise, cannot at first sleep, for the continual din in their ears; but by-and-by, they, when they are used to it, think nothing of it. So with sin. First, a little sin doth startle us. Soon we say, "Is it not a little one?" like Lot did of Zoar. Then there comes another, larger, and then another, until by degrees we begin to regard it as but a little ill; and then you know, there comes an unholy presumption, and we think we stand. "We have not fallen," say we, "we only did such a little thing; we have not gone astray. True, we tripped a little, but we stood upright in the main. We might have uttered one unholy word, but as for the most of our conversation, it was consistent." So we palliate sin; we throw a gloss over it, we try to hide it. Christian, beware! when thou thinkest lightly of sin, then thou hast become presumptuous. Take heed, lest thou shouldst fall. Sin—a little thing! Is it not a poison! Who knows its deadliness? Sin—a little thing! Do not the little foxes spoil the vines? Sin—a little thing! Doth not the tiny coral insect build a rock that wrecks a navy? Do not little strokes fell lofty oaks? Will not continual droppings wear away stones? Sin—a little thing! It girded *his* head with thorns that now is crowned with glory. Sin—a little thing! It made *him* suffer anguish, bitterness, and woe, till he endured "All that incarnate God could bear, with strength enough, and none to spare." It is not a little thing, sirs. Could you weigh it in the scales of eternity, you would fly from it as from a serpent, and abhor the least appearance of evil. But alas! loose thoughts of sin often beget a presumptuous spirit, and we think we stand.

3. A third reason often is, *low thoughts of the value of religion*. We none of us value religion enough. Religious furor, as it is called, is laughed at everywhere; but I do not believe there is such a thing as religious furor at all. If a man could be so enthusiastic as to give his body to be burned at the stake, could he pour out his drops of blood and turn each drop into a life, and then let that life be slaughtered in perpetual martyrdom, he would not love his God too much. Oh, no! when we think that this world is but a narrow space; that time will soon be gone, and we shall be in the for-ever of eternity; when we consider we must be either in hell or in heaven throughout a never-ending state of immortality, how sirs, can we love too much? how can we set too high a value on the immortal soul? Can we ask too great a price for heaven? Can we think we do too much to serve that God who gave himself for our sins? Ah! no; and yet my friends, most of us do not sufficiently regard the value of religion. We cannot any of us estimate the soul rightly; we have nothing with which to compare it. Gold is sordid dust; diamonds are but small lumps of congealed air that can be made to melt away. We have nought with which to compare the soul; therefore we cannot tell its value. It is because we do not

know this, that we presume. Doth the miser who loves his gold let it be scattered on the floor that his servant may steal it? Doth he not hide it in some secret place where no eye shall behold it? Day after day, night after night, he counteth out his treasure because he loves it. Doth the mother trust her babe by the river-side? Doth she not in her sleep think of it? and when it is sick, will she leave it to the care of some poor nurse, who may suffer it to die? Oh! no; what we love, we will not wantonly throw away; what we esteem most precious, we will guard with the most anxious care. So, if Christians knew the value of their souls, if they estimated religion at its proper rate, they never would presume; but low thoughts of Christ, low thoughts of God, mean thoughts of our souls' eternal state—these things tend to make us carelessly secure. Take heed, therefore, of low ideas of the gospel, lest ye be overtaken by the evil one.

4. But again, this presumption often springs from *ignorance of what we are, and where we stand*. Many Christians have not yet learned what they are. It is true, the first teaching of God is to shew us our own state, but we do not know that thoroughly till many years after we have known Jesus Christ. The fountains of the great deep within our hearts are not broken up all at once; the corruption of our soul is not developed in an hour. "Son of man," said the angel of Ezekiel, "I will show thee the abominations of Israel." He then took him in at one door, where he saw abominable things, and stood aghast. "Son of man, I will show thee greater abominations than these;" then he takes him into another chamber, and Ezekiel says, "Surely I have now seen the worst." "No," says the angel, "I will show thee greater things than these." So, all our life long the Holy Spirit reveals to us the horrid abomination of our hearts. I know there are some here who do not think anything about it; they think they are good-hearted creatures. Good hearts, have you? Good hearts! Jeremiah had a better heart than you, yet he said, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" No; the black lesson cannot be learned in a night. God alone knows the evil of the heart; and Young says, "God spares all eyes but his own that awful sight—the vision of a human heart." If we could but see it, we should stand aghast. Well, it is ignorance of this that makes us presume. We say, "I have a good nature, I have a noble disposition; I have none of those hot and angry passions that some have; I can stand secure; I have not that dry, tindery heart that is on fire in a moment; my passions are weakened; my powers for evil are somewhat taken down, and I may stand safely." Ah! ye little know that it is when ye talk like this, that ye presume. O worm of the dust, thou art not yet free from an evil nature, for sin and corruption remain in the heart even of the regenerate; and it is strangely true, though it appears a paradox, as Ralph Erskine said, that a Christian sometimes thinks himself "To good and evil equal bent And both a devil and a saint." There is such corruption in a Christian, that while he is a saint in his life, and justified through Christ, he seems a devil sometimes in imagination, and a demon in the wishes and corruptions of his soul. Take heed, Christian, thou hast need to be upon the watch tower; thou hast a heart of unbelief; therefore watch thou both night and day.

5. But to finish this delineation of a presumptuous man—*Pride* is the most pregnant cause of presumption. In all its various shapes it is the fountain of carnal security. Sometimes it is *pride of talent*. God has endowed a man with gifts; he is able to stand before the multitude, or to write for the many; he has a discerning mind, he has a judgment, and such like things. Then says he, "As for the ignorant, those who have no talent, they may fall; my brother ought to take care: but look at me. How am I wrapped in grandeur!" And thus in his self-complacency he thinks he stands. Ah! those are the men that fall. How many that flamed like comets in the sky of the religious world have rushed into space and been quenched in darkness! How many a man who has stood like a prophet before his fellows, and who would exclaim as he wrapped himself in his conceit, "I, only I am alive, I am the only prophet of God;" and yet that only prophet fell; his lamp was quenched, and his light put out in darkness. How many have boasted of their might and dignity, and have said, "I have built this mighty Babylon," but then they thought they stood, and they fell at once. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," with the proudest talents, "take heed lest he fall."

Others have the *pride of grace*. That is a curious fact; but there is such a thing as being proud of grace. A man says, "I have great faith, I shall not fall; poor little faith may, but I never shall." "I have fervent love," says another man, "I can stand, there is no danger of my going astray; as for my brother over there, he is so cold and slow, he will fall, I dare say." Says another, "I have a most burning hope of heaven, and that hope will triumph; it will purge my soul from sense and sin, as Christ the Lord is pure. I am safe." He who boasts of grace, has little grace to boast of. But there are some who do that, who think their graces can keep them, knowing not that the stream must flow constantly from the fountain head, else the bed of the brook shall soon be dry, and ye shall see the pebbles at the bottom. If a continuous stream of oil come not to the lamp, though it burn brightly to-day, it shall smoke to-morrow, and noxious will be the scent thereof. Take heed that thou neither gloriest in thy talents nor in thy graces.

Many are worse still; they think they shall not fall because of their *privileges*. "I take the sacrament, I have been baptized in an orthodox manner, as written in God's word; I attend such and such a ministry; I am well

fed; I am fat and flourishing in the courts of my God. If I were one of those starved creatures who hear a false gospel, possibly I might sin; but oh! our minister is the model of perfection; we are constantly fed and made fat; surely we shall stand." Thus in the complacency of their privileges they run down others, exclaiming, "My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved." Take heed, presumption, take heed. Pride cometh before a fall; and a haughty spirit is the usher of destruction. Take heed; watch thy footsteps; for where pride creepeth in, it is the worm at the root of the gourd, causing it to wither and die. "Let him that thinketh he standeth," because of pride of talent, or grace, or privilege, "take heed lest he fall."

I hope I have touched some here; I trust the lancet has been sharp; I have taken the scalpel, and I hope I have discovered something. O ye presumptuous ones, I speak to you; and I shall do so while next I warn you of your danger.

II. I shall be more brief on the second point—THE DANGER. He who thinks he stands is in danger of a fall. The true Christian cannot possibly suffer a final fall, but he is very much disposed to a foul fall. Though the Christian shall not stumble so as to destroy his life, he may break his limb. Though God has given his angels charge over him, to keep him in all his ways, yet there is no commission to keep him when he goes astray; and when he is astray he may thrust himself through with many sorrows.

1. I must now try and give you the reason why a man who thinks he stands is more exposed to the danger of falling than any other. First, because *such a man in the midst of temptation will be sure to be more or less careless*. Make a man believe he is very strong, and what will he do? The fight is thickening around him; yet he has his sword in his scabbard. "Oh," saith he, "my arm is nimble and strong; I can draw it out and strike home." So perhaps he lies down in the field, or sloth-fully sleeps in his tent; "for," saith he, "when I hear enemies approaching, such is my prowess and such my might, that I can mow them down by thousands. Ye sentinels watch the weak; go to the Ready-to-halts and the Fearings, and arouse them. But I am a giant; and let me once get this old Toledo blade in my hand, it will cut through body and soul. Whenever I meet my enemies I shall be more than conqueror." The man is careless in battle. He lifteth up his helmet, as it is said Goliath did, and then a stone pierceth his forehead; he throws away his shield, and then an arrow penetrateth his flesh; he will put his sword into his scabbard, then the enemy smiteth him, and he is ill prepared to resist. The man who thinks he is strong, is off his guard; he is not ready to parry the stroke of the evil one, and then the poignard entereth his soul.

2. Again, *the man who thinks he stands will not be careful to keep out of the way of temptation, but rather will run into it*. I remember seeing a man who was going to a place of worldly amusement—he was a professor of religion—and I called to him, "What doest thou there, Elijah?" "Why do you ask me such a question as that?" said he. I said, "What doest thou here, Elijah? Thou art going there." "Yes," he replied, with some sort of blush, "but I can do that with impunity." "I could not," said I; "if I were there I know I should commit sin. I should not care what people said about it; I always do as I like, so far as I believe it to be right; I leave the saying to anybody who likes to talk about me. But it is a place of danger, and I could not go there with impunity." "Ah!" said he, "I could; I have been before, and I have had some sweet thoughts there. I find it enlarges the intellect. You are narrow-minded; you do not get these good things. It is a rich treat I assure you. I would go if I were you." "No," I said, "it would be dangerous for me: from what I hear, the name of Jesus is profaned there; and there is much said that is altogether contrary to the religion we believe. The persons who attend there are none of the best, and it will surely be said that birds of a feather flock together." "Ah, well," he replied, "perhaps you young men had better keep away; I am a strong man, I can go;" and off he went to the place of amusement. That man, sirs, was an apple of Sodom. He was a professor of religion. I guessed there was something rotten at the core from that very fact; and I found it so by experience, for the man was a downright sensualist even then. He wore a mask, he was a hypocrite, and had none of the grace of God in his heart. Presumptuous men will say they can go into sin, they are so full of moral strength; but when a man tells you he is so good, always read his words backwards, and understand him to mean that he is as bad as he can be. The self-confident man is in danger of falling because he will even run into temptation in the confidence that he is strong, and able to make his escape.

3. Another reason is, that *these strong men sometimes will not use the means of grace*, and therefore they fall. There are some persons here, who never attend a place of worship very likely; they do not profess to be religious; but I am sure they would be astonished if I were to tell them, that I know some professedly religious people who are accepted in some churches as being true children of God, who yet make it a habit of stopping away from the house of God, because they conceive they are so advanced that they do not want it. You smile at such a thing as that. They boast such deep experience within; they have a volume of sweet sermons at home, and they will stop and read them; they need not go to the house of God, for they are fat and flourishing. They conceit themselves that they have received food enough seven years ago to last them the next

ten years. They imagine that old food will feed their souls now. These are your presumptuous men. They are not to be found at the Lord's table, eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ, in the holy emblems of bread and wine. You do not see them in their closets; you do not find them searching the Scriptures with holy curiosity. They think they stand—they shall never be moved; they fancy that means are intended for weaker Christians; and leaving those means, they fall. They will not have the shoe to put upon the foot, and therefore the flint cutteth them; they will not put on the armour, and therefore the enemy wounds them—sometimes well-nigh unto death. In this deep quagmire of neglect of the means, many a haughty professor has been smothered.

4. Once more, the man who is self-confident runs a fearful hazard, *because God's Spirit always leaves the proud*. The gracious Spirit delights to dwell in the low places. The holy dove came to Jordan; we read not that it ever rested on Bashan. The man upon the white horse rode among the myrtle trees, not among the cedars. The myrtle trees grew at the foot of the mountains; the cedars on the summit thereof. God loves humility. He who walks with fear and trembling, fearing lest he should go astray, that man the Spirit loves; but when once pride creeps in, and the man declares, "Now I am in no danger," away goes the dove; it flies to heaven and will have nought to do with him. Proud souls, ye quench the Spirit. Ye arrogant men, ye grieve the Holy Ghost. He leaves every heart where pride dwelleth; that evil spirit of Lucifer he abhors; he will not rest with it; he will not tarry in its company. Here is your greatest danger, ye proud ones—that the Spirit leaves those who deny their entire dependence on him.

III. The third point is THE COUNSEL. I have been expounding the text; now I want to enforce it. I would, if my Lord would allow me, speak home to your souls, and so picture the danger of a presumptuous man, that I would make you all cry out to heaven that sooner might you die than presume; that sooner might you be found amongst those who lie prostrate at the foot of Christ, trembling all their lives, than amongst those who think they stand, and therefore fall. Christian men, the counsel of Scripture is—"Take heed."

1. First, take heed, because so many have fallen. My brother, could I take thee into the wards of that hospital where lie sick and wounded Christians, I could make you tremble. I would show you one, who, by a sin that occupied him not a single moment, is so sore broken, that his life is one continued scene of misery. I could show you another one, a brilliant genius, who served his God with energy, who is now—not a priest of the devil it is true, but almost that—sitting down in despair, because of his sin. I could point you to another person, who once stood in the church, pious and consistent, but who now comes up to the same house of prayer as if he were ashamed of himself, sits in some remote corner, and is no longer treated with the kindness he formerly received, the brethren themselves being suspicious, because he so greatly deceived them, and brought such dishonor upon the cause of Christ. Oh! did ye know the sad pain which those endure who fall. Could ye tell how many have fallen, (and have not perished, it is true,) but still have dragged themselves along, in misery, throughout their entire existence, I am sure ye would take heed. Come with me to the foot of the mountain of presumption. See there the maimed and writhing forms of many who once soared with Icarian wings in the airy regions of self-confidence; yet there they lie with their bones broken, and their peace destroyed. There lies one who had immortal life within him; see how full of pain he appears, and he looks a mass of helpless matter. He is alive, it is true, but just alive. Ye know not how some of those enter heaven who are saved, "so as by fire." One man walks to heaven; he keeps consistent; God is with him, and he is happy all his journey through. Another says, "I am strong, I shall not fall." He runs aside to pluck a flower; he sees something which the devil has laid in his way; he is caught first in this gin, and then in that trap; and when he comes near the river, instead of finding before him that stream of nectar of which the dying Christian drinks, he sees fire through which he has to pass, blazing upon the surface of the water. The river is on fire, and as he enters it he is scorched and burned. The hand of God is lifted up saying, "Come on, come on;" but as he dips his foot in the stream, he finds the fire kindling around him, and though the hand clutches him by the hair of the head, and drags him through, he stands upon the shore of heaven, and cries, "I am a monument of divine mercy, for I have been saved so as by fire." Oh! do you want to be saved by fire, Christians? Would ye no rather enter heaven, singing songs of praises? Would ye not glorify him on earth, and then give your last testimony with, "Victory, victory, victory, unto him that loved us;" then shut your eyes on earth, and open them in heaven? If you would do so, presume not. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

2. Once more, my brother, take heed, because *a fall will so much damage the cause of Christ*. Nothing has hurt religion one-half, or one thousandth part, so much as the fall of God's people. Ah! when a true believer sins, how will the world point at him. "That man was a deacon, but he knows how to charge exorbitantly. That man was a professor, but he can cheat as well as his neighbours. That man is a minister, and he lives in sin." Oh! when the mighty fall—it is rejoice fir tree, for the cedar has fallen—how does the world exult! They chuckle over our sin; they rejoice over our faults; they fly around us, and if they can see one point where we are vulnerable, how will they say, "See these holy people are no better than they should be." Because there is

one hypocrite, men set down all the rest the same. I heard one man say, a little while ago, that he did not believe there was a true Christian living, because he had found out so many hypocrites. I reminded him that there could be no hypocrites if there were no genuine ones. No one would try to forge bank notes if there were no genuine ones. No one would think of passing a bad sovereign if there were no sterling coin. So the fact of their being some hypocrites proves that there are some genuine characters. But let those who are so, take heed; let them always, in their conduct, have the ring of true gold. Let your conversation be such as to become the gospel of Christ, lest by any means the enemy get the advantage over us, and slander the name of Jesus.

And especially is this incumbent upon the members of our own denomination, for it is often said that the doctrines we believe have a tendency to lead us to sin. I have heard it asserted most positively, that those high doctrines which we love and which we find in the Scriptures, are licentious ones. I do not know who has the hardihood to make that assertion, when they consider that the holiest of men have been believers in them. I ask the man who dares to say that Calvinism is a licentious religion, what he thinks of the character of Augustine, or Calvin, or Whitfield, who in successive ages were the great exponents of the system of grace; or what will he say of those Puritans, whose works are full of them? Had a man been an Arminian in those days, he would have been accounted the vilest heretic breathing; but now we are looked upon as the heretics, and they the orthodox. We have gone back to the old school; we can trace our descent from the Apostles. It is that vein of free grace running through the sermonising of Baptists, which has saved us as a denomination. Were it not for that, we should not stand where we are. We can run a golden link from hence up to Jesus Christ himself, through a holy succession of mighty fathers, who all held these glorious truths; and we can say of them, where will you find holier and better men in the world? We are not ashamed to say of ourselves, that however much we may be maligned and slandered, ye will not find a people who will live closer to God than those who believe that they are saved not by their works, but by free grace alone. But, oh! ye believers in free grace, be careful. Our enemies hate the doctrine; and if one falls, "Ah there," say they, "see the tendency of your principles." Nay, we might reply, see what is the tendency of *your doctrine*. The exception in our case proves the rule is true, that after all, our gospel does lead us to holiness. Of all men, those have the most disinterested piety, the sublimest reverence, the most ardent devotion, who believe that they are saved by grace, without works, through faith, and that not of themselves, it is the gift of God. Christian take heed, lest by any means Christ should be crucified afresh, and should be put unto an open shame.

And now what more can I say? Oh ye, my beloved, ye my brethren, think not that ye stand, lest ye should fall. Oh ye fellow heirs of everlasting life and glory, we are marching along through this weary pilgrimage; and I, whom God hath called to preach to you, would turn affectionately to you little ones, and say, take heed lest ye fall. My brother, stumble not. There lieth the gin, there the snare. I am come to gather the stones out of the road, and take away the stumbling blocks. But what can I do unless, with due care and caution, ye yourselves walk guardedly. Oh, my brethren; be much more in prayer than ever. Spend more time in pious adoration. Read the Scriptures more earnestly and constantly. Watch your lives more carefully. Live nearer to God. Take the best examples for your pattern. Let your conversation be redolent of heaven. Let your hearts be perfumed with affection for men's souls. So live that men may take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus, and have learned of him; and when that happy day shall come when he whom you love shall say, "Come up higher," let it be your happiness to hear him say, "Come my beloved, thou hast fought a good fight, thou hast finished thy course, and henceforth there is laid up for thee a crown of righteousness that fadeth not away". On, Christian, with care and caution! On, with holy fear and trembling! On yet, with faith and confidence, for thou shalt not fall. Read the next verse of this very chapter: "He will not suffer you to be tempted above that which ye are able to bear, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape."

But I have some here, perhaps, who may never hear my voice again; and I will not let my congregation go, God helping me, without telling them the way of salvation. Sirs, there are some of you who know ye have not believed in Christ. If ye were to die where ye now sit ye have no hope that ye would rise amongst the glorified in bliss. How many are there here who if their hearts could speak, must testify that they are without God, without Christ, and strangers from the common-wealth of Israel. Oh, let me tell you then, what ye must do to be saved. Does your heart beat high? Do ye grieve over your sins? Do ye repent of your iniquities? Will ye turn unto the living God? If so, this is the way of salvation; "Whosoever believeth and is baptised shall be saved." I cannot reverse my Master's order—he says, "believeth," and then "baptised;" and he tells me that "he that believeth not shall be damned." Oh, my hearers, your works cannot save you. Though I have spoken to Christians, and exhorted them to live in good works, I talk not so to you. I ask ye not to get the flower before ye have the seed. I will not bid you get the roof of your house before ye lay the foundation. Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and ye shall be saved. Whosoever here will now cast himself as a guilty worm flat on Jesus—whoever will throw himself into the arms of everlasting love, that man shall be accepted; he shall go from that door justified and forgiven, with his soul as safe as if he were in heaven, without the danger

of its ever being lost. All this is through belief in Christ.

Surely ye need no argument. If I thought ye did I would use it. I would stand and weep till ye came to Christ. If I thought I was strong enough to fetch a soul to Jesus, if I thought that moral suasion could win you, I would go round to each of your seats and beg of you in God's name to repent. But since I cannot do that, I have done my duty when I have prophesied to the dry bones. Remember we shall meet again. I boast of neither eloquence nor talent, and I cannot understand why ye come here; I only speak right on, and tell you what I feel; but mark me, when we meet before God's bar, however ill I may have spoken, I shall be able to say, that I said to you, "Believe on the name of Jesus, and ye shall be saved." Why will ye die, O house of Israel? Is hell so sweet, is everlasting torment so much to be desired, that therefore ye can let go the glories of heaven, the bliss of eternity? Men, are ye to live for ever? or, are ye to die like brutes? "Live !" say you, Well, then, are you not desirous to live in a state of bliss? Oh, may God grant you grace to turn to him with full purpose of heart! Come, guilty sinner, come! God help you to come, and I shall be well repaid, if but one soul be added to the visible fold of Jesus, through aught I may have said.

All Joy in All Trials

A Sermon (No. 1704) Delivered on Lord's Day Morning, February 4th, 1883, by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." –James 1:2-4.

James calls the converted among the twelve tribes his brethren. Christianity has a great uniting power: it both discovers and creates relationships among the sons of men. It reminds us of the ties of nature, and binds us with the bonds of grace. Every one that is born of the Spirit of God is brother to every other that is born of the same Spirit. Well may we be called brethren, for we are redeemed by one blood; we are partakers of the same life; we feed upon the same heavenly food; we are united to the same living head; we seek the same ends; we love the same Father: we are heirs of the same promises; and we shall dwell for ever together in the same heaven. Wherefore, let brotherly love continue; let us love one another with a pure heart fervently, and manifest that love, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. Whatever brotherhood may be a sham, let the brotherhood of believers be the most real thing beneath the stars.

Beginning with this word "brethren," James shows a true brotherly sympathy with believers in their trials, and this is a main part of Christian fellowship. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." If we are not tempted ourselves at this moment, others are: let us remember them in our prayers; for in due time our turn will come, and we shall be put into the crucible. As we would desire to receive sympathy and help in our hour of need, let us render it freely to those who are now enduring trial. Let us remember those that are in bonds, as bound with them, and those that suffer affliction as being ourselves in the body. Remembering the trials of his brethren, James tries to cheer them, and therefore he says, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials." It is a part of our high calling to rise ourselves into confidence; and it is also our duty to see that none of our brethren despond, much less despair. The whole tendency of our holy faith is to elevate and to encourage. Grace breeds no sorrow, except the healthy sorrow which comes with saving repentance and leads to the joy of pardon: it comes not to make men miserable, but to wipe all tears from their eyes. Our dream is not of devils descending a dreary staircase to hell, but of angels ascending and descending upon a ladder, the top of which leads to the shining throne of God. The message of the gospel is one of joy and gladness, and were it universally understood and received this world would be no longer a wilderness, but it would rejoice and blossom as the rose. Let grace reign in all hearts, and this earth will become a temple filled with perpetual song; and even the trials of life will become causes of the highest joy, so beautifully described by James as "all joy," as if every possible delight were crowded into it. Blessed be God, it is our work, not to upbraid, but to cheer all the brotherhood: we walk in a light which glorifies everything upon which it falls, and turns losses into gains. We are able in sober earnest to speak with the afflicted, and bid them be patient under the chastening hand of God; yea, to count it all joy when they fall into divers trials because those trials will work out for them such signal, such lasting good. They may be well content to sow in tears since they are sure to reap in joy.

Without further preface we will come at once to the text; and observe that in speaking about affliction, for that is the subject of the text, the apostle notes, first, *the essential point which is assailed by temptation*, namely, your faith. Your faith is the target that all the arrows are shot at; the furnace is kindled for the trial of your faith. Notice, secondly, *the invaluable blessing which is thus gained*, namely, the proving of your faith, discovering

whether it be the right faith or no. This proof of our faith is a blessing of which I cannot speak too highly. Then, thirdly, we may not overlook *the priceless virtue which is produced* by this process of testing, namely, patience; for the proving of your faith produces patience, and this is the soul's surest enrichment. Lastly, in connection with that patience we shall note *the spiritual completeness which is thus promoted*:—"That ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing." Perhaps you have noticed that little variations I have made in the text; but I am now following the Revised Version, which gives an admirable rendering. I will read it. "Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; knowing that the proof of your faith worketh patience. And let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing."

I. First, let us think a little upon THE ESSENTIAL POINT WHICH IS ASSAILED by temptation or trial. *It is your faith which is tried.* It is supposed that you have that faith. You are not the people of God, you are not truly brethren unless you are believers. It is this faith of yours which is peculiarly obnoxious to Satan and to the world which lieth in the wicked one. If you had not faith they would not be enemies of yours; but faith is the mark of the chosen of God, and therefore his foes become the foes of all the faithful, spitting their venom specially upon their faith. God Himself hath put enmity between the serpent and the woman, between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed; and that enmity must show itself. The serpent bites at the heel of the true seed: hence mockings, persecutions, temptations, and trials are sure to beset the pathway to faith. The hand of faith is against all evil, and all evil is against faith. Faith is that blessed grace which is most pleasing to God, and hence it is the most displeasing to the devil. By faith God is greatly glorified, and hence by faith Satan is greatly annoyed. He rages at faith because he sees therein his own defeat and the victory of grace.

Because the trial of your faith brings honour to the Lord, therefore the Lord Himself is sure to try it that out of its trial praise may come to his grace by which faith is sustained. Our chief end is to glorify God, and if our trials enable us more fully to answer the end of our being it is well that they should happen unto us. So early in our discourse we see reason to count it all joy when we fall into manifold trials.

It is by our faith that we are saved, justified, and brought near to God, and therefore it is no marvel that it is attacked. It is by believing in Christ that we are delivered from the reigning power of sin, and receive power to become the sons of God. Faith is as vital to salvation as the heart is vital to the body: hence the javelins of the enemy are mainly aimed at this essential grace. Faith is the standard bearer, and the object of the enemy is to strike him down that the battle may be gained. If the foundations be removed what can the righteous do? If the cable can be snapped whither will the vessel drift? All the powers of darkness which are opposed to right and truth are sure to fight against our faith, and manifold temptations will march in their legions against our confidence in God.

It is by our faith that we live; we began to live by it, and continue to live by it, for "the just shall live by faith." Once let faith go and our life is gone; and hence it is that the powers which war against us make their main assault upon this royal castle, this key of the whole position. Faith is your jewel, your joy, your glory; and the thieves who haunt the pilgrim way are all in league to tear it from you. Hold fast, therefore, this your choice treasure.

It is by faith, too, that Christians perform exploits. If men of old wrought daring and heroic deeds it was by faith. Faith is the fighting principle and the conquering principle: therefore it is Satan's policy to slay it even as Pharaoh sought to kill the male children when Israel dwelt in Egypt. Rob a Christian of his faith and he will be like Samson when his locks were cut away: the Philistines will be upon him and the Lord will have departed from him. Marvel not if the full force of the current shall beat upon your faith, for it is the foundation of your spiritual house. Oh that your faith may abide steadfast and unmovable in all present trials, that so it may be found true in the hour of death and in the day of judgment. Woe unto that man whose faith fails him in this land of peace, for what will he do in the swelling of Jordan?

Now, think of *how faith is tried*. According to the text we are said to fall into "manifold temptations" or into "divers temptations"—that is to say, we may expect very many and very different troubles. In any case these trials will be most real. The twelve tribes to whom this epistle was written were a specially tried people, for in the first place they were, as Jews, greatly persecuted by all other nations, and when they became Christians they were cruelly persecuted by their own people. A Gentile convert was somewhat less in peril than a Jewish Christian, for the latter was crushed between the upper and nether millstones of Paganism and Judaism. The Israelitish Christian was usually so persecuted by his own kith and kin that he had to flee from them, and whither could he go, for all other people abhorred the Jews? We are not in such a plight, but God's people even to this day will find that trial is no sham word. The rod in God's house is no toy to play with. The furnace, believe me, is no mere place of extra warmth to which you may soon accustom yourself: it is often heated seven times hotter, like the furnace of Nebuchadnezzar and God's children are made to know that the

fire burns and devours. Our temptations are no inventions of nervousness nor hobgoblins of dreamy fear. Ye have heard of the patience of Job—his was real patience, for his afflictions were real. Could each tried believer among us tell his own story I do not doubt we would convince all who heard us that the troubles and temptations which we have endured are no fictions of romance, but must be ranked among the stern realities of actual life.

Ay, and note too, that the trials of Christians are such as would in themselves lead us into sin, for I take it that our translators would not have placed the word "temptation" in the text, and the Revisionists would not have retained it, if they had not felt that there was a colouring of temptation in its meaning, and that "trial" was hardly the word. The natural tendency of trouble is not to sanctify, but to induce sin. A man is very apt to become unbelieving under affliction: that is a sin. He is apt to murmur against God under it: that is a sin. He is apt to put forth his hand to some ill way of escaping from his difficulty: and that would be sin. Hence we are taught to pray, "Lead us not into temptation; because trial has in itself a measure of temptation"; and if it were not neutralized by abundant grace it would bear us towards sin. I suppose that every test must have in it a measure of temptation. The Lord cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man; but this is to be understood of his end and design. He entices no man to do evil; but yet He tries the sincerity and faithfulness of men by placing them where sin comes in their way, and does its best or its worst to ensnare them: His design being that the uprightness of His servants may thus be proved, both to themselves and others. We are not taken out of this world of temptation, but we are kept in it for our good. Because our nature is depraved it makes occasions for sin, both out of our joys and our trials, but by grace we overcome the tendency of nature, and so derive benefit from tribulation. Do I not speak to many here who at times feel strong impulses towards evil, especially in the darksome hour when the spirit of evil walks abroad? Have you not been made to tremble for yourselves in season of fierce trial, for your feet were almost gone, your steps had well-nigh slipped. Is there any virtue that has not been weather-beaten? Is there any love that has not at times been so tried that it threatened to curdle into hate? Is there any good thing this side heaven which has marched all the way in silver slippers? Did ever a flower of grace blossom in this wretched clime without being tried with frost or blight? Our way is up the river; we have to stem the current, and struggle against a flood which would readily bear us to destruction. Thus, not only trials, but black temptations assail the Christian's faith.

As to what shape they take, we may say this much: the trial or temptation of each man is distinct from that of every other. When God did tempt Abraham he was bidden to take his son, his only son, and offer him upon a mountain for a sacrifice. Nobody here was ever tried in that way: nobody ever will be. We may have the trial of losing our child, but certainly not the trial of having a command to offer him in sacrifice. That was a trial peculiar to Abraham: necessary and useful to him, though never proposed to us. In the case of the young man in the gospels, our Lord Jesus tried him with, "If thou wouldest be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." Some have dreamed that it must therefore be the duty of everybody to part with their possessions: but this is idle. It would not be the duty of any man to offer up his only son; and it is not the duty of every man to part with all his goods. These were tests to particular persons; and others equally special and searching have been applied in other cases. We are not to try ourselves, nor to desire other men's trials; it will be well if we endure those which the Lord appoints for us, for they will be wisely chosen. That which would most severely test me would perhaps be no trial to you; and that which tries you might be no temptation to me. This is one reason why we often judge one another so severely, because feeling ourselves to be strong in that particular point we argue that the fallen one must have been strong in that point too, and therefore must have willfully and earnestly have determined to do wrong. This may be a cruel supposition. We hastily conclude that the temptation must have been as feeble in his case as it would have been in our own; which is a great mistake, for a temptation which to you or to me would be no temptation at all, may be to another individual, of a peculiar constitution and under singular circumstances, a most fierce and terrible blast from the adversary, before which he falls mournfully, but not with malice aforethought. Divers trials, says the apostle, and he knew what he said.

And, dear friends, sometimes these divers trials derive great force from their seemingly surrounding us, and cutting off escape: James says,—"*Ye fall into divers temptations*": like men who fall into a pit, and do not know how to get out; or like soldiers who fall into an ambuscade; or travellers in the good old times when two or three footpaths surrounded them and made them feel that they had fallen into bad hands. The tempted see not which way to turn; they appear to be hemmed in; they are as a bird that is taken in the fowler's snare. This it is that makes calamity of our manifold temptations, that they hedge up our way, and unless faith finds the clue we wander in a thorny maze.

At times temptation comes suddenly upon us, and so we fall into it. When we were at rest, and were quiet, suddenly the evil came, like a lion leaping from the thicket. When Job's children were eating and drinking in their elder brother's house, then suddenly a wind came from the wilderness, and the patriarch was bereaved:

the cattle were ploughing, the sheep were grazing, the camels were at their service, and in a moment, by fire from heaven, and by robber bands, the whole of these possessions vanished. One messenger had not told his story before another followed at his heels; Job had no breathing time, the blows fell thick and fast. The trial of our faith is most severe when divers trials happen to us when we look not for them. It is not strange in the light of these things that James should say, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials"?

Those were the days of tumults, imprisonment, crucifixion, sword, and fire. Then the amphitheatre devoured Christians by thousands. The general cry was "The Christians to the lions!" Do you wonder if sometimes the bravest were made to say, Is our faith really true? This faith which is abhorred of all mankind, can it be divine? Has it come from God? Why, then, does He not interpose and deliver His people? Shall we apostatise? Shall we deny Christ and live, or shall we go on with our confession through innumerable torments even to a bloody death? Will fidelity answer after all? Is there a crown of glory? is there an eternity of bliss? Is there in very deed a resurrection of the dead? These questions came into men's minds then, and were fairly faced: the faith of martyrs was not taken up at second hand, or borrowed from their parents; they believed for themselves in downright earnest. Men and women in those days believed in such a way that they never flinched nor started aside from fear of death; indeed, they pressed forward to confess their faith in Jesus in such crowds that at last the heathen cried, "There must be something in it: it must be a religion of God, or how could these men so gladly bear their troubles?" This was the faith of God's elect, the work of the Holy Ghost.

You see, then, the main point of attack is our faith, and happy is the man whose shield can catch and quench all the fiery darts of the enemy.

II. That we may make the text more clear we shall next notice THE INVALUABLE BLESSING WHICH IS GAINED BY THE TRIAL OF OUR FAITH. The blessing gained is this, that our faith is tried and proved. Two Sabbaths ago I addressed you upon the man whose bad foundations led to the overthrow of his house; and I know that many said after the sermon:—"God grant that we may not be like him: may we have a firm foundation for our soul to rest on." Then you went home, and you sat down and said, "Have I this sure foundation?" You began to question, argue, reason, and so on, and your design was a good one. But I do not reckon that much came of it; our own looking within seldom yields solid comfort. Actual trial is far more satisfactory; but you must not try yourself. The effectual proof is by trials of God's sending. The way of trying whether you are a good soldier is to go down to the battle: the way to try whether a ship is well built is, not merely to order the surveyor to examine her, but to send her to sea: a storm will be the best test of her staunchness. They have built a new lighthouse upon the Eddystone: how do we know that it will stand? We judge by certain laws and principles, and feel tolerably safe about the structure; but, after all, we shall know best if after-years when a thousand tempests have beaten upon the lighthouse in vain. We need trials as a test as much as we need divine truth as our food. Admire the ancient types placed in the ark of the covenant of old: two things were laid close together,—the pot of manna and the rod. See how heavenly food and heavenly rule go together: how our sustenance and our chastening are equally provided for! A Christian cannot live without the manna nor without the rod. The two must go together. I mean this, that it is as great a mercy to have your salvation proved to you under trial as it is to have it sustained in you by the consolations of the Spirit of God. Sanctified tribulations work the proof of our faith, and this is more precious than that of gold which perisheth, though it be tried by fire.

Now, when we are able to bear it without starting aside, *the trial proves our sincerity*. Coming out of a trouble the Christian says to himself, "Yes, I held fast mine integrity, and did not let it go. Blessed be God, I was not afraid of threatening; I was not crushed by losses; I was kept true to God under pressure. Now, I am sure that my religion is not a mere profession, but a real consecration to God. It has endured the fire, being kept by the power of God."

Next, it proves *the truthfulness of our doctrinal belief*. Oh, yes, you may say, "I have heard Mr. Spurgeon expound the doctrines, and I have believed them." This is poor work; but if you have been sick, and found a comfort in those doctrines, then you are assured of their truth. If you have been on the borders of the grave, and the gospel has given you joy and gladness, then you know how true it is. Experimental knowledge is the best and surest. If you have seen others pass through death itself triumphantly you have said, "This is proof to me: my faith is no guess-work: I have seen for myself." Is not this assurance cheaply purchased at any price? May we not count it all joy when the Lord puts us in the way of getting it? It seems to me that doubt is worse than trial. I had sooner suffer any affliction than be left to question the gospel or my own interest in it. Certainly it is a jewel worth purchasing even with our heart's blood.

Next, *your own faith in God* is proved when you can cling to Him under temptation. Not only your sincerity, but the divinity of your faith is proved; for a faith that is never tried, how can you depend upon it? But if in

the darkest hour you have still said, "I cast my burden upon the Lord, and He will sustain me," and you find He does sustain you, then is your faith that of God's elect. If in temptation you cry to God in prayer that you may keep your garment unspotted, and He helps you to do so, then also are you sure that yours is the faith which the Spirit begets in the soul. After a great fight of affliction, when I come forth a conqueror, I know that I do believe in God, and I know that this faith makes me a partaker of covenant blessings; from this I may fairly argue that my faith is of the right kind.

I find it especially sweet to learn *the great strength of the Lord* in my own weakness. We find out under trial where we are most weak, and just then in answer to prayer strength is given answerable to the need. The Lord suits the help to the hindrance, and puts the plaster on the wound. In the very hour when it is needed the needed grace is given. Does this not tend to breed assurance of faith?

It is a splendid thing to be able to prove even to Satan *the purity of your motives*. That was the great gain of Job. There was no question about his outward conduct, but the question was about his motive. "Ah," says the devil, "he serves God for what he gets out of Him. Hast Thou not set a hedge about him and all that he has? His is cupboard love: he cares nothing for God Himself, he only cares for the reward of his virtue." Well, he is tried, and everything is taken away, and when he cries, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," when he blesses the taking as well as the giving God, then the devil himself could not have the prudence to accuse him again. As to Job's own conscience, it would be quite settled and confirmed as to his pure love to God. My brethren, I reckon that the endurance of every imaginable suffering and trial would be a small price to pay for a settled assurance, which would for ever prevent the possibility of doubt. Never mind the waves if they wash you upon this rock. Therefore, when you are tempted, "Count it all joy" that you are tried, because you will thus receive a proof of your love, a proof of your faith, a proof of your being the true-born children of God.

James says, "*Count it.*" A man requires to be trained to be a good accountant; it is an art which needs to be learned. What muddles some of us would make if we had to settle accounts and manage disbursements and incomings without the aid of a clerk! How we should get entangled with balances and deficits! We could much easier spend money than count it. But when a man once knows the science of book-keeping, and gets into the way of it, he readily arrives at the true position of affairs. He has learned to count, and no error escapes his eye. James gives us a ready reckoner, and teaches us in our troubles how to count. He sets before us a different kind of measure from that which carnal reason would use: the shekel of the sanctuary was very different from the shekel in common commerce, and so is the counting of faith far other than that of human judgment. He bids us take our pen and sit down quickly and write at his correct dictation. You are going to write down, "Manifold temptations;" that would be so much on the wrong side: but instead thereof he bids you set down the proving of your faith, and this one asset transforms the transaction into a substantial gain. Trials are like a fire; they burn up nothing in us but the dross, and they make the gold all the purer. Put down the testing process as a clear gain, and, instead of being sorry about it, count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials, for this bestows upon you a proof of your faith. So far there is sufficient ground for counting all trials joy. Now, let us go a little further.

III. Let us think of THE PRICELESS VIRTUE WHICH IS PRODUCED BY TRIAL, namely, patience; for the proof of your "faith worketh patience." Patience! We all have a large stock of it—until we need it, and then we have none. The man who truly possesses patience is the man that has been tried. What kind of patience does he get by the grace of God? First, he obtains *a patience that accepts the trials as from God without a murmur*. Calm resignation does not come all at once; often long years of physical pain, or mental depression, or disappointment in business, or multiplied bereavements, are needed to bring the soul into full submission to the will of the Lord. After much crying the child is weaned; after much chastening the son is made obedient to his Father's will. By degrees we learn to end our quarrel with God, and to desire that there may not be two wills between God and ourselves, but that God's will may be our will. Oh, brother, if your troubles work you to that, you are a gainer, I am sure, and you may count them all joy.

The next kind of patience is when experience enables a man *to bear ill-treatment, slander, and injury without resentment*. He feels it keenly, but he bears it meekly. Like his Master, he opens not his mouth to reply, and refuses to return railing for railing. Contrariwise he gives blessing in return for cursing; like the sandal-wood tree which perfumes the axe which cuts it. Blessed is that holy charity which hopeth all things, endureth all things, and is not easily provoked. Ah, friend, if the grace of God by trial shall work in you the quiet patience which never grows angry, and never ceases to love, you may have lost a trifle of comfort, but you have gained a solid weight of character.

The patience which God works in us by tribulation also takes another form, namely, that *of acting without undue haste*. Before wisdom has balanced our zeal we are eager to serve God all in a hurry, with a rush and a

spurt, as if everything must be done within the hour or nothing would ever be accomplished. We set about holy service with somewhat more of preparedness of heart after we have been drilled in the school of trial. We go steadily and resolutely about work for Jesus, knowing what poor creatures we are, and what a glorious Master we serve. The Lord our God is in no hurry because He is strong and wise. In proportion as we grow like the Lord Jesus we shall cast aside disturbance of mind and fury of spirit. His was a grand life-work, but He never seemed to be confused, excited, worried, or hurried, as certain of His people are. He did not strive nor cry, nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets. He knew His hour was not yet come, and there were so many days in which He could work, and therefore He went steadily on till He had finished the work which His Father had given Him to do. That kind of patience is a jewel more to be desired than the gem which glitters on the imperial brow. Sometimes we blunder into a deal of mischief, making more haste than speed; and we are sure to do so when we forget to pray, and fail to commit our matters into the Divine hands. We may run with such vehemence that we may stumble, or lose our breath: there may be in our random efforts as much undoing as doing, for want of possessing our souls in patience.

That is a grand kind of patience, too, when *we can wait without unbelief*. Two little words are good for every Christian to learn and to practise—pray and stay. Waiting on the Lord implies both praying and staying. What if the world is not converted this year! What if the Lord Jesus does not come to-morrow! What if still our tribulations are lengthened out! What if the conflict is continued! He that has been tried and by grace has obtained the true profit of his trials, both quietly waits and joyfully hopes for the salvation of God. Patience, brother! Is this high virtue scarce with thee? The Holy Spirit shall bestow it upon thee through suffering.

This patience also takes the shape of *believing without wavering*, in the very teeth of strange providences and singular statements, and perhaps inward misgivings. The established Christian says, "I believe my God, and therefore if the vision tarry I will wait for it. My time is not yet come. I am to have my worst things first and my best things afterwards, and so I sit me down at Jesus' feet and tarry his leisure."

Brothers and sisters, if, in a word, we learn *endurance* we have taken a high degree. You look at the weather-beaten sailor, the man who is at home on the sea: he has a bronzed face and mahogany-coloured flesh, he looks as tough as heart of oak, and as hardy as if he were made of iron. How different from us poor landmen. How did the man become so inured to hardship, so able to breast the storm, so that he does not care whether the wind blows south-west or north-west? He can go out to sea in any kind of weather; he has his sea legs on: how did he come to this strength? By doing business in great waters. He could not have become a hardy seaman by tarrying on shore. Now, trial works in the saints that spiritual hardihood which cannot be learned in ease. You may go to school for ever, but you cannot learn endurance there: you may colour your cheek with paint, but you cannot give it that ingrained brown which comes of stormy seas and howling winds. Strong faith and brave patience come of trouble, and a few men in the church who have thus been prepared are worth anything in times of tempest. To reach that condition of firm endurance and sacred hardihood is worth all the expense of all the heaped-up troubles that ever come upon us from above or from beneath. When trial worketh patience we are incalculably enriched. The Lord give us more of this choice grace. As Peter's fish had the money in its mouth, so have sanctified trials spiritual riches for those who endure them graciously.

IV. Lastly, all this works something better still, and this is our fourth head: THE SPIRITUAL COMPLETENESS PROMOTED. "That ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." Brethren, the most valuable thing a man can get in this world is that which has most to do with his truest self. A man gets a good house; well, that is something: but suppose he is in bad health, what is the good of his fine mansion? A man is well clothed and well fed: that is something: but suppose he shivers with ague, and has no appetite through indigestion. That spoils it all. If a man is in robust health this is a far more valuable boon. Health is far more to be prized than wealth, or honour, or learning: we all allow that, but then suppose that a man's innermost self is diseased while his body is healthy, so that he is disgraced by vice or fevered with passion, he is in a poor plight, notwithstanding that he has such a robust frame? The very best thing is that which will make the man himself a better man; make him right, and true, and pure, and holy. When the man himself is better, he has made an unquestionable gain. So, if our afflictions tend, by trying our faith, to breed patience, and that patience tends to make us into perfect men in Christ Jesus, then we may be glad of trials. Afflictions by God's grace make us all-around men, developing every spiritual faculty, and therefore they are our friends, our helpers, and should be welcomed with "all joy."

Afflictions find out our weak points, and this makes us attend to them. Being tried, we discover our failures, and then going to God about those failures we are helped to be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

Moreover, our trials, when blessed of God to make us patient, ripen us. I do not know how to explain what I mean by ripening, but there is a sort of mellowness about believers who have endured a great deal of affliction

that you never meet in other people. It cannot be mistaken or imitated. A certain measure of sunlight is wanted to bring out the real flavour of fruits, and when a fruit has felt its measure of burning sun it develops a lusciousness which we all delight in. So is it in men and women: a certain amount of trouble appears to be needful to create a certain sugar of graciousness in them, so that they may contain the rich, ripe juice of a gracious character. You must have known such men and such women, and have said to yourselves, "I wish I could be like them, so calm, so quiet, so self-contained, so happy, and when not happy, yet so content not to be happy; so mature in judgment, so spiritual in conversation, so truly ripe." This only comes to those in whom the proof of their faith works experience, and then experience brings forth the fruits of the Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters, there is a certain all-roundness of spiritual manhood which never comes to us except by manifold temptations. Let me attempt to show you what I mean. Sanctified trials produce a *chastened* spirit. Some of us by nature are rough and untender; but after awhile friends notice that the roughness is departing, and they are quite glad to be more gently handled. Ah, that sick chamber did the polishing; under God's grace, that depression of spirit, that loss, that cross, that bereavement,—these softened the natural ruggedness, and made the man meek and lowly, like his Lord. Sanctified trouble has a great tendency to breed *sympathy*, and sympathy is to the church as oil to machinery. A man that has never suffered feels very awkward when he tries to sympathize with a tried child of God. He kindly does his best, but he does not know how to go to work at it; but those repeated blows from the rod make us feel for others who are smarting, and by degrees we are recognized as being the Lord's anointed comforters, made meet by temptation to succour those who are tempted.

Have you never noticed how tried men, too, when their trouble is thoroughly sanctified, become *cautious and humble*? They cannot speak quite so fast as they used to do: they do not talk of being absolutely perfect, though they are the very men who are Scripturally perfect; they say little about their doings, and much about the tender mercy of the Lord. They recollect the whipping they had behind the door from their Father's hands, and they speak gently to other erring ones. Affliction is the stone which our Lord Jesus throws at the brow of our giant pride, and patience is the sword which cuts off its head.

Those, too, are the kind of people who are most *grateful*. I have known what it is to praise God for the power to move one leg in bed. It may not seem much to you, but it was a great blessing to me. They that are heavily afflicted come to bless God for everything. I am sure that woman who took a piece of bread and a cup of water for her breakfast, and said, "What, all this, and Christ too!" must have been a tried woman, or she would not have exhibited so much gratitude. And that old Puritan minister was surely a tried man, for when his family had only a herring and a few potatoes for dinner, he said, "Lord, we bless Thee that Thou hast ransacked sea and land to find food for us this day." If he had not been a tried man, he might have turned up his nose at the meal, as many do at much more sumptuous fare. Troubled men get to be grateful men, and that is no small thing.

As a rule, where God's grace works, these come to be *hopeful* men. Where others think the storm will destroy the vessel, they can remember storms equally fierce which did not destroy it, and so they are so calm that their courage keeps others from despair.

These men, too, become *unworldly* men. They have had too much trouble to think that they can ever build their nest in this black forest. There are too many thorns in their nest for them to reckon that this can be their home. These birds of paradise take to their wings, and are ready to fly away to the land of unfading flowers.

And these much-tempted ones are frequently *the most spiritual men*, and out of this spirituality comes *usefulness*. Mr. Greatheart, who led the band of pilgrims up to the celestial city, was a man of many trials, or he would not have been fit to lead so many to their heavenly rest; and you, dear brother, if ever you are to be a leader and a helper, as you would wish to be, in the church of God, it must be by such means as this that you must be prepared for it. Do you not wish to have every virtue developed? Do you not wish to become a perfect man in Christ Jesus? If so, welcome with all joy divers trials and temptations; fly to God with them; bless Him for having sent them: ask Him to help you to bear them with patience, and then let that patience have its perfect work, and so by the Spirit of God you shall become "perfect and entire, lacking in nothing." May the Comforter bless this word to your hearts, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

An Earnest Warning about Lukewarmness

A Sermon (No. 1185) Delivered on Lord's-Day Morning, July 26th, 1874, by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington "Unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things

saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and [that] the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." —Revelation 3:14-21

No Scripture ever wears out. The epistle to the church of Laodicea is not an old letter which may be put into the waste basket and be forgotten; upon its page still glow the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." This Scripture was not meant to instruct the Laodiceans only, it has a wider aim. The actual church of Laodicea has passed away, but other Laodiceas still exist—indeed, they are sadly multiplied in our day, and it has ever been the tendency of human nature, however inflamed with the love of God, gradually to chill into lukewarmness. The letter to the Laodiceans is above all others the epistle for the present times.

I should judge that the church at Laodicea was once in a very fervent and healthy condition. Paul wrote a letter to it which did not claim inspiration, and therefore its loss does not render the Scriptures incomplete, for Paul may have written scores of other letters besides. Paul also mentions the church at Laodicea in his letter to the church at Colosse; he was, therefore, well acquainted with it, and as he does not utter a word of censure with regard to it, we may infer that the church was at that time in a sound state. In process of time it degenerated, and cooling down from its former ardour it became careless, lax, and indifferent. Perhaps its best men were dead, perhaps its wealth seduced it into worldliness, possibly its freedom from persecution engendered carnal ease, or neglect of prayer made it gradually backslide; but in any case it declined till it was neither cold nor hot. Lest we should ever get into such a state, and lest we should be in that state now, I pray that my discourse may come with power to the hearts of all present, but especially to the consciences of the members of my own church. May God grant that it may tend to the arousing of us all.

I. My first point will be THE STATE INTO WHICH CHURCHES ARE VERY APT TO FALL. *A church may fall into a condition far other than that for which it has a repute.* It may be famous for zeal and yet be lethargic. The address of our Lord begins, "I know thy works," as much as to say, "Nobody else knows you. Men think better of you than you deserve. You do not know yourselves, you think your works to be excellent; but I know them to be very different." Jesus views with searching eyes all the works of his church. The public can only read reports, but Jesus sees for himself. He knows what is done, and how it is done, and why it is done. He judges a church not merely by her external activities, but by her internal pieties; he searches the heart, and tries the reins of the children of men. He is not deceived by glitter; he tests all things, and values only that gold which will endure the fire. Our opinion of ourselves and Christ's opinion of us may be very different, and it is a very sad thing when it is so. It will be melancholy indeed if we stand out as a church notable for earnestness and distinguished for success, and yet are not really fervent in spirit, or eager in soul-winning. A lack of vital energy where there seems to be most strength put forth, a lack of real love to Jesus where apparently there is the greatest devotedness to him, are sad signs of fearful degeneracy. Churches are very apt to put the best goods into the window, very apt to make a fair show in the flesh, and like men of the world, they try to make a fine figure upon a very slender estate. Great reputations have often but slender foundations, and lovers of the truth lament that it should be so. Not only is it true of churches, but of every one of us as individuals, that often our reputation is in advance of our deserts. Men often live on their former credit, and trade upon their past characters, having still a name to live, though they are indeed dead. To be slandered is a dire affliction, but it is, upon the whole, a less evil than to be thought better than we are; in the one case we have a promise to comfort us, in the second we are in danger of self-conceit. I speak as unto wise men, judge ye how far this may apply to us.

The condition described in our text is, secondly, one of mournful indifference and carelessness. They were not cold, but they were not hot; they were not infidels, yet they were not earnest believers; they did not oppose the gospel, neither did they defend it; they were not working mischief, neither were they doing any great good; they were not disreputable in moral character, but they were not distinguished for holiness; they were not irreligious, but they were not enthusiastic in piety nor eminent for zeal: they were what the world calls "Moderates," they were of the Broad-church school, they were neither bigots nor Puritans, they were prudent and avoided fanaticism, respectable and averse to excitement. Good things were maintained among them, but they did not make too much of them; they had prayer-meetings, but there were few present, for they liked

quiet evenings at home: when more attended the meetings they were still very dull, for they did their praying very deliberately and were afraid of being too excited. They were content to have all things done decently and in order, but vigour and zeal they considered to be vulgar. Such churches have schools, Bible-classes, preaching rooms, and all sorts of agencies; but they might as well be without them, for no energy is displayed and no good comes of them. They have deacons and elders who are excellent pillars of the church, if the chief quality of pillars be to stand still, and exhibit no motion or emotion. They have ministers who may be the angels of the churches, but if so, they have their wings closely clipped, for they do not fly very far in preaching the everlasting gospel, and they certainly are not flames of fire: they may be shining lights of eloquence, but they certainly are not burning lights of grace, setting men's hearts on fire. In such communities everything is done in a half-hearted, listless, dead-and-alive way, as if it did not matter much whether it was done or not. It makes one's flesh creep to see how sluggishly they move: I long for a knife to cut their red tape to pieces, and for a whip to lay about their shoulders to make them bestir themselves. Things are respectably done, the rich families are not offended, the sceptical party is conciliated, and the good people are not quite alienated: things are made pleasant all round. The right things are done, but as to doing them with all your might, and soul, and strength, a Laodicean church has no notion of what that means. They are not so cold as to abandon their work, or to give up their meetings for prayer, or to reject the gospel; if they did so, then they could be convinced of their error and brought to repentance; but on the other hand they are neither hot for the truth, nor hot for conversions, nor hot for holiness, they are not fiery enough to burn the stubble of sin, nor zealous enough to make Satan angry, nor fervent enough to make a living sacrifice of themselves upon the altar of their God. They are "neither cold nor hot."

This is a horrible state, because it is one which in a church wearing a good repute renders that reputation a lie. When other churches are saying, "See how they prosper! see what they do for God!" Jesus sees that the church is doing his work in a slovenly, make-believe manner, and he considers justly that it is deceiving its friends. If the world recognizes such a people as being very distinctly an old-fashioned puritanic church, and yet there is unholy living among them, and careless walking, and a deficiency of real piety, prayer, liberality, and zeal, then the world itself is being deceived, and that too in the worst way, because it is led to judge falsely concerning Christianity, for it lays all these faults upon the back of religion, and cries out, "It is all a farce! The thing is a mere pretence! Christians are all hypocrites!" I fear there are churches of this sort. God grant we may not be numbered with them!

In this state of the church there is much self-glorification, for Laodicea said, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing." The members say, "Everything goes on well, what more do we want? All is right with us." This makes such a condition very hopeless, because reproofs and rebukes fall without power, where the party rebuked can reply, "We do not deserve your censures, such warnings are not meant for us." If you stand up in the pulpit and talk to sleepy churches, as I pretty frequently do, and speak very plainly, they often have the honesty to say, "There is a good deal of truth in what the man has said": but if I speak to another church, which really is half asleep, but which thinks itself to be quite a model of diligence, then the rebuke glides off like oil down a slab of marble, and no result comes of it. Men are less likely to repent when they are in the middle passage between hot and cold, than if they were in the worst extremes of sin. If they were like Saul of Tarsus, enemies of God, they might be converted; but if, like Gamaliel, they are neither opposed nor favouring, they will probably remain as they are till they die. The gospel converts a sincerely superstitious Luther, but Erasmus, with his pliant spirit, flippant, and full of levity, remains unmoved. There is more hope of warning the cold than the lukewarm.

When churches get into the condition of half-hearted faith, tolerating the gospel, but having a sweet tooth for error, they do far more mischief to their age than downright heretics.

It is harder a great deal to work for Jesus with a church which is lukewarm than it would be to begin without a church. Give me a dozen earnest spirits and put me down anywhere in London, and by God's good help we will soon cause the wilderness and the solitary place to rejoice; but give me the whole lot of you, half-hearted, undecided, and unconcerned, what can I do? You will only be a drag upon a man's zeal and earnestness. Five thousand members of a church all lukewarm will be five thousand impediments, but a dozen earnest, passionate spirits, determined that Christ shall be glorified and souls won, must be more than conquerors; in their very weakness and fewness will reside capacities for being the more largely blessed of God. Better nothing than lukewarmness.

Alas, this state of lukewarmness is so congenial with human nature that it is hard to fetch men from it. Cold makes us shiver, and great heat causes us pain, but a tepid bath is comfort itself. Such a temperature suits human nature. The world is always at peace with a lukewarm church, and such a church is always pleased with itself. Not too worldly,—no! We have our limits! There are certain amusements which of course a

Christian must give up, but we will go quite up to the line, for why are we to be miserable? We are not to be so greedy as to be called miserly, but we will give as little as we can to the cause. We will not be altogether absent from the house of God, but we will go as seldom as we can. We will not altogether forsake the poor people to whom we belong, but we will also go to the world's church, so as to get admission into better society, and find fashionable friends for our children. How much of this there is abroad! Compromise is the order of the day. Thousands try to hold with the hare and run with the hounds, they are for God and Mammon, Christ and Belial, truth and error, and so are "neither hot nor cold." Do I speak somewhat strongly? Not so strongly as my Master, for he says, "I will spue thee out of my mouth." He is nauseated with such conduct, it sickens him, and he will not endure it. In an earnest, honest, fervent heart nausea is created when we fall in with men who dare not give up their profession, and yet will not live up to it; who cannot altogether forsake the work of God, but yet do it in a sluggard's manner, trifling with that which ought to be done in the best style for so good a Lord and so gracious a Saviour. Many a church has fallen into a condition of indifference, and when it does so it generally becomes the haunt of worldly professors, a refuge for people who want an easy religion, which enables them to enjoy the pleasures of sin and the honours of piety at the same time; where things are free and easy, where you are not expected to do much, or give much, or pray much, or to be very religious; where the minister is not so precise as the old school divines, a more liberal people, of broad views, free-thinking and free-acting, where there is full tolerance for sin, and no demand for vital godliness. Such churches applaud cleverness in a preacher; as for his doctrine, that is of small consequence, and his love to Christ and zeal for souls are very secondary. He is a clever fellow, and can speak well, and that suffices. This style of things is all too common, yet we are expected to hold our tongue, for the people are very respectable. The Lord grant that we may be kept clear of such respectability!

We have already said that *this condition of indifference is attended with perfect self-complacency*. The people who ought to be mourning are rejoicing, and where they should hang out signals of distress they are flaunting the banners of triumph. "We are rich, we are adding to our numbers, enlarging our schools, and growing on all sides; we have need of nothing. What can a church require that we have not in abundance?" Yet their spiritual needs are terrible. This is a sad state for a church to be in. Spiritually poor and proud. A church crying out to God because it feels itself in a backsliding state; a church mourning its deficiency, a church pining and panting to do more for Christ, a church burning with zeal for God, and therefore quite discontented with what it has been able to do; this is the church which God will bless: but that which writes itself down as a model for others, is very probably grossly mistaken and is in a sad plight. This church, which was so rich in its own esteem, was utterly bankrupt in the sight of the Lord. It had no real joy in the Lord; it had mistaken its joy in itself for that. It had no real beauty of holiness upon it; it had mistaken its formal worship and fine building and harmonious singing for that. It had no deep understanding of the truth and no wealth of vital godliness, it had mistaken carnal wisdom and outward profession for those precious things. It was poor in secret prayer, which is the strength of any church; it was destitute of communion with Christ, which is the very life blood of religion; but it had the outward semblance of these blessings, and walked in a vain show. There are churches which are poor as Lazarus as to true religion, and yet are clothed in scarlet and fare sumptuously every day upon the mere form of godliness. Spiritual leanness exists side by side with vain-glory. Contentment as to worldly goods makes men rich, but contentment with our spiritual condition is the index of poverty.

Once more, this church of Laodicea had fallen into *a condition which had chased away its Lord*. The text tells us that Jesus said, "I stand at the door and knock." That is not the position which our Lord occupies in reference to a truly flourishing church. If we are walking aright with him, he is in the midst of the church, dwelling there, and revealing himself to his people. His presence makes our worship to be full of spirituality and life; he meets his servants at the table, and there spreads them a feast upon his body and his blood; it is he who puts power and energy into all our church-action, and causes the word to sound out from our midst. True saints abide in Jesus and he in them. Oh, brethren, when the Lord is in a church, it is a happy church, a holy church, a mighty church, and a triumphant church; but we may grieve him till he will say, "I will go and return to my place, until they acknowledge their offence and seek my face." Oh, you that know my Lord, and have power with him, entreat him not to go away from us. He can see much about us as a people which grieves his Holy Spirit, much about any one of us to provoke him to anger. Hold him, I pray you, and do not let him go, or if he be gone, bring him again to his mother's house, into the chamber of her that bare him, where, with holy violence, we will detain him and say, "Abide with us, for thou art life and joy, and all in all to us as a church. Ichabod is written across our house if thou be gone, for thy presence is our glory and thy absence will be our shame." Churches may become like the temple when the glory of the Lord had left the holy place, because the image of jealousy was set up and the house was defiled. What a solemn warning is that which is contained in Jeremiah 7:12-15, "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; therefore I will do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye

trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim."

II. Now let us consider, secondly, THE DANGER OF SUCH A STATE. The great danger is, first, *to be rejected of Christ*. He puts it, "I will spue thee out of my mouth,"—as disgusting him, and causing him nausea. Then the church must first be in his mouth, or else it could not be spued from it. What does this mean? Churches are in Christ's mouth in several ways, they are used by him as his testimony to the world; he speaks to the world through their lives and ministries. He does as good as say, "O sinners, if ye would see what my religion can do, see here a godly people banded together in my fear and love, walking in peace and holiness." He speaks powerfully by them, and makes the world see and know that there is a true power in the gospel of the grace of God. But when the church becomes neither cold nor hot he does not speak by her, she is no witness for him. When God is with a church the minister's words come out of Christ's mouth. "Out of his mouth went a two-edged sword," says John in the Revelation, and that "two-edged sword" is the gospel which we preach. When God is with a people they speak with divine power to the world, but if we grow lukewarm Christ says, "Their teachers shall not profit, for I have not sent them, neither am I with them. Their word shall be as water spilt on the ground, or as the whistling of the wind." This is a dreadful thing. Better far for me to die than to be spued out of Christ's mouth.

Then he also ceases to plead for such a church. Christ's special intercession is not for all men, for he says of his people, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me." I do not think Christ ever prays for the church of Rome—what would he pray for, but her total overthrow? Other churches are nearing the same fate; they are not clear in his truth or honest in obedience to his word: they follow their own devices, they are lukewarm. But there are churches for which he is pleading, for he has said, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." Mighty are his pleadings for those he really loves, and countless are the blessings which comes in consequence. It will be an evil day when he casts a church out of that interceding mouth, and leaves her unrepresented before the throne because he is none of his. Do you not tremble at such a prospect? Will you not ask for grace to return to your first love? I know that the Lord Jesus will never leave off praying for his own elect, but for churches as corporate bodies he may cease to pray, because they become anti-Christian, or are mere human gatherings, but not elect assemblies, such as the church of God ought to be. Now this is the danger of any church if it declines from its first ardour and becomes lukewarm. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

What is the other danger? This first comprehends all, but another evil is hinted at,—such a church will be *left to its fallen condition*, to become wretched,—that is to say, miserable, unhappy, divided, without the presence of God, and so without delight in the ways of God, lifeless, spiritless, dreary, desolate, full of schisms, devoid of grace, and I know not what beside, that may come under the term "wretched." Then the next word is "miserable," which might better be rendered "pitiable." Churches which once were a glory shall become a shame. Whereas men said, "The Lord has done great things for them," they shall now say, "see how low they have fallen! What a change has come over the place! What emptiness and wretchedness! What a blessing rested there for so many years, but what a contrast now!" Pity will take the place of congratulation, and scorn will follow upon admiration. Then it will be "poor" in membership, poor in effort, poor in prayer, poor in gifts and graces, poor in everything. Perhaps some rich people will be left to keep up the semblance of prosperity, but all will be empty, vain, void, Christless, lifeless. Philosophy will fill the pulpit with chaff, the church will be a mass of worldliness, the congregation an assembly of vanity. Next, they will become blind, they will not see themselves as they are, they will have no eye upon the neighborhood to do it good, no eye to the coming of Christ, no eye for his glory. They will say, "We see," and yet be blind as bats. Ultimately they will become "naked," their shame will be seen by all, they will be a proverb in everybody's mouth. "Call that a church!" says one. "Is that a church of Jesus Christ?" cries a second. Those dogs that dared not open their mouths against Israel when the Lord was there will begin to howl when he is gone, and everywhere will the sound be heard, "How are the mighty fallen, how are the weapons of war broken."

In such a case as that the church will *fail of overcoming*, for it is "to him that overcometh" that a seat upon Christ's throne is promised; but that church will come short of victory. It shall be written concerning it even as of the children of Ephraim, that being armed and carrying bows they turned their backs in the day of battle. "Ye did run well," says Paul to the Galatians, "what did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" Such a church had a grand opportunity, but it was not equal to the occasion, its members were born for a great work, but inasmuch as they were unfaithful, God put them aside and used other means. He raised up in their midst a flaming testimony for the gospel, and the light thereof was cast athwart the ocean, and gladdened the nations, but the people were not worthy of it, or true to it, and therefore he took the candlestick out of its place, and

left them in darkness. May God prevent such an evil from coming upon *us*: but such is the danger to all churches if they degenerate into listless indifference.

III. Thirdly, I have to speak of THE REMEDIES WHICH THE LORD EMPLOYS. I do earnestly pray that what I say may come home to all here, especially to every one of the members of this church, for it has come very much home to me, and caused great searching of heart in my own soul, and yet I do not think I am the least zealous among you. I beseech you to judge yourselves, that you be not judged. Do not ask me if I mean anything personal. I am personal in the most emphatic sense. I speak of *you* and to *you* in the plainest way. Some of you show plain symptoms of being lukewarm, and God forbid that I should flatter you, or be unfaithful to you. I am aiming at personality, and I earnestly want each beloved brother and sister here to take home each affectionate rebuke. And you who come from other churches, whether in America or elsewhere, you want arousing quite as much as we do, your churches are not better than ours, some of them are not so good, and I speak to you also, for you need to be stirred up to nobler things.

Note, then, the first remedy. Jesus gives a *clear discovery* as to the church's true state. He says to it—"Thou art lukewarm, thou art wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." I rejoice to see people willing to know the truth, but most men do not wish to know it, and this is an ill sign. When a man tells you that he has not looked at his ledger, or day-book, or held a stock-taking for this twelvemonths, you know whereabouts he is, and you say to your manager, "Have you an account with him? Then keep it as close as you can." When a man dares not know the worst about his case, it is certainly a bad one, but he that is right before God is thankful to be told what he is and where he is. Now, some of you know the faults of other people, and in watching this church you have observed weak points in many places,—have you wept over them? Have you prayed over them? If not, you have not watched as you should do for the good of your brethren and sisters, and, perhaps, have allowed evils to grow which ought to have been rooted up: you have been silent when you should have kindly and earnestly spoken to the offenders, or made your own example a warning to them. Do not judge your brother, but judge yourself: if you have any severity, use it on your own conduct and heart. We must pray the Lord to use this remedy, and make us know just where we are. We shall never get right as long as we are confident that we are so already. Self-complacency is the death of repentance.

Our Lord's next remedy is *gracious counsel*. He says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire." Does not that strike you as being very like the passage in Isaiah, "Come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price?" It is so, and it teaches us that one remedy for lukewarmness is to begin again just as we began at first. We were at a high temperature at our first conversion. What joy, what peace, what delight, what comfort, what enthusiasm we had when first we knew the Lord! We bought gold of him then for nothing, let us go and buy again at the same price.

If religion has not been genuine with us till now, or if we have been adding to it great lumps of shining stuff which we thought was gold and was not, let us now go to the heavenly mint and buy gold tried in the fire, that we may be really rich. Come, let us begin again, each one of us. Inasmuch as we may have thought we were clothed and yet we were naked, let us hasten to him again, and at his own price, which is no price, procure the robe which he has wrought of his own righteousness, and that goodly raiment of his Spirit, which will clothe us with the beauty of the Lord. If, moreover, we have come to be rather dim in the eye, and no longer look up to God and see his face, and have no bright vision of the glory to be revealed, and cannot look on sinners with weeping eyes, as we once did, let us go to Jesus for the eye-salve, just as we went when we were stone blind at first, and the Lord will open our eyes again, and we shall behold him in clear vision as in days gone by. The word from Jesus is, "Come near to me, I pray you, my brethren. If you have wandered from me, return; if you have been cold to me I am not cold to you, my heart is the same to you as ever, come back to me, my brethren. Confess your evil deeds, receive my forgiveness, and henceforth let your hearts burn towards me, for I love you still and will supply all your needs." That is good counsel, let us take it.

Now comes a third remedy, sharp and cutting, but sent in love, namely, *rebukes and chastenings*. Christ will have his favoured church walk with great care, and if she will not follow him fully by being shown wherein she has erred, and will not repent when kindly counselled, he then betakes himself to some sharper means. "As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." The word here used for "love" is a very choice one; it is one which signifies an intense personal affection. Now, there are some churches which Christ loves very specially, favouring them above others, doing more for them than for others, and giving them more prosperity; they are the darlings of his heart, his Benjamins. Now, it is a very solemn thing to be dearly loved by God. It is a privilege to be coveted, but mark you, the man who is so honoured occupies a position of great delicacy. The Lord thy God is a jealous God, and he is most jealous where he shows most love. The Lord lets some men escape scot free for awhile after doing many evil things, but if they had been his own elect he would have visited them with stripes long before. He is very jealous of those whom he has chosen to lean upon his bosom

and to be his familiar friends. Your servant may do many things which could not be thought of by your child or your wife; and so is it with many who profess to be servants of God—they live a very lax life, and they do not seem to be chastened for it, but if they were the Lord's own peculiarly beloved ones he would not endure such conduct from them. Now mark this, if the Lord exalts a church, and gives it a special blessing, he expects more of it, more care of his honour, and more zeal for his glory than he does of any other church; and when he does not find it, what will happen? Why, because of his very love he will rebuke it with hard sermons, sharp words, and sore smitings of conscience. If these do not arouse it he will take down the rod and deal out chastenings. Do you know how the Lord chastens churches? Paul says, "For this cause some are sickly among you, and many sleep." Bodily sickness is often sent in discipline upon churches, and losses, and crosses, and troubles are sent among the members, and sometimes leanness in the pulpit, breakings out of heresy and divisions in the pew, and lack of success in all church work. All these are smitings with the rod. It is very sad, but sometimes that rod does not fall on that part of the church which does the wrong. Sometimes God may take the best in the church, and chasten them for the wrong of others. You say, "How can that be right?" Why, because they are the kind of people who will be most benefited by it. If a vine wants the knife, it is not the branch that bears very little fruit which is trimmed, but the branch which bears much fruit is purged because it is worth purging. In their case the chastening is a blessing and a token of love. Sorrow is often brought upon Christians by the sins of their fellow-members, and many an aching heart there is in this world that I know of, of brethren and sisters who love the Lord and want to see souls converted, but they can only sigh and cry because nothing is done. Perhaps they have a minister who does not believe the gospel, and they have fellow-members who do not care whether the minister believes it or not, they are all asleep together except those few zealous souls who besiege the throne of grace day and night, and they are the ones who bear the burden of the lukewarm church. Oh, if the chastening comes here, whoever bears it, may the whole body be the better for it, and may we never rest till the church begins to glow with the sacred fire of God, and boil with enthusiastic desire for his glory.

The last remedy, however, is the best of all to my mind. I love it best and desire to make it my food when it is not my medicine. The best remedy for backsliding churches is *more communion with Christ*. "Behold," saith he, "I stand at the door and knock." I have known this text preached upon to sinners numbers of times as though Christ knocked at their door and they had to open it, and so on. The preacher has never managed to keep to free grace for this reason, that the text was not meant to be so used, and if men will ride a text the wrong way, it will not go. This text belongs to the church of God, not to the unconverted. It is addressed to the Laodicean church. There is Christ outside the church, driven there by her unkindness, but he has not gone far away, he loves his church too much to leave her altogether, he longs to come back, and therefore he waits at the doorpost. He knows that the church will never be restored till he comes back, and he desires to bless her, and so he stands waiting, knocking and knocking, again and again; he does not merely knock once, but he *stands* knocking by earnest sermons, by providences, by impressions upon the conscience, by the quickenings of his Holy Spirit; and while he knocks he speaks, he uses all means to awaken his church. Most condescendingly and graciously does he do this, for having threatened to spue her out of his mouth, he might have said, "I will get me gone; and I will never come back again to thee," that would have been natural and just; but how gracious he is when, having expressed his disgust he says, "Disgusted as I am with your condition, I do not wish to leave you; I have taken my presence from you, but I love you, and therefore I knock at your door, and wish to be received into your heart. I will not force myself upon you, I want you voluntarily to open the door to me." Christ's presence in a church is always a very tender thing. He never is there against the will of the church, it cannot be, for he lives in his people's wills and hearts, and "worketh in them to will and to do of his own good pleasure." He does not break bolt and bar and come in as he often does into a sinner's heart, carrying the soul by storm, because the man is dead in sin, and Christ must do it all, or the sinner will perish; but he is here speaking to living men and women, who ought also to be loving men and women, and he says, "I wish to be among you, open the door to me." We ought to open the door at once, and say, "Come in, good Lord, we grieve to think we should ever have put thee outside that door at all."

And then see what promises he gives. He says he will come and sup with us. Now, in the East, the supper was the best meal of the day, it was the same as our dinner; so that we may say that Christ will come and dine with us. He will give us a rich feast, for he himself is the daintiest and most plenteous of all feasts for perishing souls. He will come and sup with us, that is, we shall be the host and entertain him: but then he adds, "and he with me," that is, he will be the host and guest by turns. We will give him of our best, but poor fare is that, too poor for him, and yet he will partake of it. Then he shall be host, and we will be guest, and oh, how we will feast on what he gives! Christ comes, and brings the supper with him, and all we do is to find the room. The Master says to us, "Where is the guest chamber?" and then he makes ready and spreads his royal table. Now, if these be the terms on which we are to have a feast together, we will most willingly fling open the doors of our hearts and say, "Come in, good Lord." He says to you, "Children, have you any meat?" and if you are obliged to say, "No, Lord," he will come in unto you none the less readily, for there are the fish, the net is

ready to break, it is so full, and here are more upon the coals ready. I warrant you, if we sup with him, we shall be lukewarm no longer. The men who live where Jesus is soon feel their hearts burning. It is said of a piece of scented clay by the old Persian moralist that the clay was taken up and questioned. "How camest thou to smell so sweetly, being nothing but common clay?" and it replied, "I laid for many a year in the sweet society of a rose, until at last I drank in its perfume"; and we may say to every warm-hearted Christian, "How camest thou so warm?" and his answer will be, "My heart bubbleth up with a good matter, for I speak of the things which I have made touching the King. I have been with Jesus, and I have learned of him."

Now, brethren and sisters, what can I say to move you to take this last medicine? I can only say, take it, not only because of the good it will do you, but because of the sweetness of it. I have heard say of some persons that they were pledged not to take wine except as a medicine, but then they were very pleased when they were ill: and so if this be the medicine, "I will come and sup with him, and he with me," we may willingly confess our need of so delicious a remedy. Need I press it on you? May I not rather urge each brother as soon as he gets home today to see whether he cannot enter into fellowship with Jesus? and may the Spirit of God help him!

This is my closing word, there is something for us to do in this matter. We must examine ourselves, and we must confess the fault if we have declined in grace. And then we must not talk about setting the church right, we must pray for grace each one for himself, for the text does not say, "If the church will open the door," but "If *any man* hear my voice and open the door." It must be done by individuals: the church will only get right by each man getting right. Oh, that we might get back into an earnest zeal for our Lord's love and service, and we shall only do so by listening to his rebukes, and then falling into his arms, clasping him once again, and saying, "My Lord and my God." That healed Thomas, did it not? Putting his fingers into the print of the nails, putting his hand into the side, that cured him. Poor, unbelieving, staggering Thomas only had to do that and he became one of the strongest of believers, and said, "My Lord and my God." You will love your Lord till your soul is as coals of juniper if you will daily commune with him. Come close to him, and once getting close to him, never go away from him any more. The Lord bless you, dear brethren, the Lord bless you in this thing. PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Revelation 3. HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—184, 787, 992.

Christ Is All

A Sermon (No. 3446) Published on Thursday, February 18th, 1915. Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington "Christ is all"—Colossians 3:11.

MY text is so very short that you cannot forget it; and, I am quite certain, if you are Christians at all, you will be sure to agree with it. What a multitude of religions there is in this poor wicked world of ours! Men have taken it into their heads to invent various systems of religion and if you look round the world, you will see scores of different sects; but it is a great fact that, while there is a multitude of false religions, there is but one that is true. While there are many falsehoods, there can be but one truth; real religion is, therefore, one. There is but one gospel—the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful thing it is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, should be born of humble parents, and live as a poor man in this world, for the purpose of our salvation! He lived a life of suffering and trial, and at length, through the malignity of his enemies, was crucified on Calvary as an outcast of society. "Now," said they, "there is an end of his religion; now it will be such a contemptible thing, that nobody will ever call himself a Christian; it will be discreditable to have anything to do with the name of the man Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth." But it is a wonderful fact that this religion has not only lived, but is at this hour as strong as ever. Yes! the religion he founded still exists, and is still powerful, and constantly extending. While other religions have sunk into the darkness of the past, and the idols have been cast to the moles and to the bats, the name of Jesus is still mighty; and it shall continue to be a blessed power so long as the universe shall endure.

The religion of Jesus is the religion of God; hence, notwithstanding all the obloquy and persecution which it has had to encounter, it still exists, and still flourishes. It is this religion which I shall attempt to preach to you—the one gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ—and the text embraces it all in the most comprehensive manner, "Christ is all."

I shall use it, first as *a test to try you*, and, afterwards, *as a motive to encourage you*. I want, first, to sift you, to see how many of you are the people of God, and how many are not. I shall make my text a great sieve, and put you in it to see which is wheat and which is chaff. We must consider this passage in two or three senses in

order, first, to use it as:—

I. A TEST TO TRY YOU.

Christ must be all, as your Great Master and Teacher. There are some who set up a certain man as their authority; they regard him as their master, they look up to him as their teacher, and whatever he says is right; it is the truth, and is not to be disputed. Or, perhaps, they have taken a certain book, other than the Bible, and say, "We will judge all things by this book"; and if the preacher does not teach exactly the creed written in that book, he is set down as not sound in the faith, and this they do not hesitate to say at once, because he does not come up to the standard of their little book! We meet with many people in this world who make their creed, their one little narrow creed, everything, and they measure everything and everybody by that. But, my friends, I must have you say that "*Christ is all*," and not any man, however good or great, before I can allow that you are Christians. We have not to follow men. Our faith stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. We are to follow no man, except so far as he follows Christ, who alone is our Master. Be not deceived; submit not yourselves to creeds, to books, or to men; give yourselves to the study of God's Word, derive your creed and the doctrines of your faith from it alone, and then you will be able to say:—

"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."

Let Christ be your only Master, and say, in the words of our text, "Christ is all." Now can you say this, or are you boasting, "The Baptists are all"—"The Wesleyans are all"—"The Church of England is all"? As the Lord lives, if you are saying that, you do not know his truth; because you are not testifying that "Christ is all," but simply uttering the Shibboleth of your little party. I should like to see the word *party* blotted out from the vocabulary of the Christian Church. I thank God that I have no sympathy whatever with that which is merely sectarian, and have grace given me to protest against it, and to exclaim:—

"Let party names no more
The Christian world o'erspread";

since:—

"Gentile and Jew, and bond and free,
Are one in Christ, their Head."

If "Christ is all" to you, you are Christians; and I, for one, am ready to give you the right hand of brotherhood. I do not mind what place of worship you attend, or by what distinctive name you may call yourselves, we are brethren; and I think, therefore, that we should love one another. If, my friends, you cannot embrace all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, no matter to what denomination they may belong, and as belonging to the universal Church, you have not hearts large enough to go to heaven; because, if such be your contracted views, you cannot possibly say, "Christ is all."

Next, Christ must be all, as your principal object in life—your chief good. Your great aim must be to glorify Christ on the earth, in the hope and expectation of enjoying him for ever above. But as it regards some of you, Christ is not your all. You think more of your shop than you do of him. You are up early in the morning looking at your ledgers, and all day long toiling at your business. Do not mistake me: I dislike lazy people, who let the grass grow over their shoes; and God disapproves of them too. We want no lazy gospellers. The true Christian will say, "I know that I am bound to be diligent in business; but I want to work for eternity as well as for time. I need something besides earthly riches; I want an inheritance not made with hands, a mansion not built by man, a possession in the skies." Are you making this world you all? Poor souls, if you are, the world and the fashion thereof are passing away; your all will soon be gone. I fancy I see a rich man, one whose gold is his all, when he gets into the next world, looking for his gold, and wondering where it is, and being at length compelled to exclaim, in despair, "Oh! my all is gone!" But if you can say that Christ is your all, then your treasure will never be gone; for he will never leave you, nor forsake you. Not only in this

world, but also in that which is to come, you shall be happy and blessed, for you shall be crowned with glory, and made to sit with Christ on his throne for ever.

"Well," says some easy-going gentleman, "I do not make business my all, I assure you; not I: my maxim is, let us enjoy this life, let us fill the glass to the brim, and live in pleasure while we may." I have a word also for you. Do you think that such a course of conduct will fit you for heaven, for the enjoyments of eternity? Do you imagine that, when you come to die, it will be any pleasure for you to think of your drunkenness? When you are lying on a sick bed, will your oaths bring you any peace, as they reverberate upon your conscience, just as I hear my voice, at this moment, echoing back to my ears the words I am saying? I think I see you starting up as you hear your blasphemies against God thus returning upon you, while, with a mind oppressed with anguish, and eyes starting from their sockets, you exclaim in your terror, "I hear my own oaths again! God is coming to call me to judgment; to demand of me why I dare blaspheme his name!" and the Judge will say, "You, with oaths and curses, profaned my holy name; you asked me to curse your soul, and now I will do it; you prayed in your profane moments that you might be lost, and now you shall be." How horrible that would be! You who say pleasure is all, let me warn you that you will have to drink the bitter dregs of the cup of pleasure to all eternity, no matter how sweet the draught may now be to your taste.

But there are some more moderate people, who are by no means extravagant in their pleasures, and are great sticklers for religion; they go to church or chapel every Sunday, and believe themselves to be very good sort of people, and such as will be accepted at the last day, and placed on the right hand of the throne. Again I put the question, can you say, "Christ is all"? No; you cannot say that. Many of you make the externals of religion your all, resting in the letter, but knowing or caring nothing for the spirit. This will not do; and you are not such Christians as Christ will own if you are making anything your all but himself. Religion is not to be stowed away in the dark garret of the brain. Christianity is a heart religion, and if you cannot say, from the very depths of your being, "Christ is all," you have neither part nor lot in the blessings and privileges of the gospel, and your end will be destruction, everlasting banishment from the presence of the Lord. God grant it may not be so; but that in both *your* lives and *mine* we may each be enabled to say of a truth, "Christ is all"; and that we may meet again around the eternal throne!

Next, *Christ will be all, as the source of your joy*. Some people seem to think that Christians are a very melancholy sort of folk, that they have no real happiness. I know something about religion, and I will not admit that I stand second to any man in respect of being happy. So far as I know religion, I have found it to be a very happy thing. "I would not change my blest estate, For all that earth calls good or great."

I used to think that a religious man must never smile; but, on the contrary, I find that religion will make a man's eye bright, and cover his face with smiles, and impart comfort and consolation to his soul, even in the deepest of his earthly tribulations. In illustration of this, I might tell you the story of a poor man who lives in one of the courts in Holborn, who experiences great joy in religion, even in the midst of the deepest poverty. A Christian visitor, going up into the poor man's room at the top of the house, said, "My friend, how long have you been in this place?"

"I have not been downstairs, nor walked across the room, these twelve months."

"Have you anything to depend upon?"

"Nothing," he replied; but recollecting himself, he added, "I have a good Father up in heaven, and I depend upon him entirely, and he never lets me want. Some kind Christian friends are sure to call, and they never go away without leaving me something; and I get enough to live on and pay my rent, and I am very happy. I would not change places with anybody in the world, for I have Jesus Christ with me, and my heavenly Father will take me home by-and-bye, and then I shall be as rich as any of them—shall I not, sir? Sometimes I get very low, and Satan tells me that I am not a child of God, and that I had better give up all as lost; but I tell him that he is a great coward to come and meddle with a poor weak creature like me; and I show him the blood, sir; and I tell him the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin; and when I show Satan the precious blood, sir, he leaves off tempting me, and flees directly, for he cannot bear the sight of the Saviour's blood."

Thus we see that true religion can cheer the sick man's couch, can make the poor man feel that he is rich, and bid him be joyful in the Lord. Well did the old man say that the devil cannot bear the sight of the Saviour's blood; and if, beloved friends, you can take Christ's blood, and put it on your conscience, however sinful you may have been, you will be able to sing of Christ as all your hope, all your joy, and all your support. I ask you who love Jesus, does religion ever make you unhappy? Does love to Jesus distress you, and make you miserable? It may bring you into trouble sometimes, and cause you to endure persecution for his name's sake.

If you are a child of God, you will have to suffer tribulation; but all the afflictions which you may be called upon to endure for him will work for your good, and are not worthy to be compared with the glory which is to be revealed hereafter.

Now, then, let me ask, could you go with me while I have been speaking? Can you now say that Christ is your only Master, your chief good, your only joy? "Oh! yes; I do love Jesus, because he first loved me." Then, welcome, brother; you are one with Jesus, and we are one with each other. But if you cannot say it, how terrible it shall be with some of you, when you shall find your gourds wither, the props whereon you now lean struck down at a blow, your false refuges swept away, and, deprived of all your feathers and finery, your soul will appear before God in its true character! May it not be so with any of you, but may you be united to Christ by living faith, which works by love, and purifies the heart! Secondly, I shall now consider the text as:—

II. A MOTIVE TO ENCOURAGE YOU.

"Christ is all." My beloved friends, in what is he all? *Christ is all in the entire work of salvation.* Let me just take you back to the period before this world was made. There was a time when this great world, the sun, the moon, the stars, and all which now exist throughout the whole of the vast universe, lay in the mind of God, like unborn forests in an acorn cup. There was a time when the Great Creator lived alone, and yet he could foresee that he would make a world, and that men would be born to people it; and in that vast eternity a great scheme was devised, whereby he might save a fallen race. Do you know who devised it? God planned it from first to last. Neither Gabriel nor any of the holy angels had anything to do with it. I question whether they were even told how God might be just, and yet save the transgressors. God was all in the drawing up of the scheme, and Christ was all in carrying it out. There was a dark and doleful night! Jesus was in the garden, sweating great drops of blood, which fell to the ground; nobody then came to bear the load that had been laid upon him. An angel stood there to strengthen him, but not to bear the sentence. The cup was put into his hands, and Jesus said, "Father, must I drink it?" and his Father replied, "If thou dost not drink, sinners cannot be saved"; and he took the cup and drained it to its very dregs. No man helped him. And when he hung upon that accursed tree of Calvary, when his precious hands were pierced, when:—

"From his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flowed mingled down,"

there was nobody to help him. He was "all" in the work of salvation.

And, my friends, if *any of you shall be saved, it must be by Christ alone.* There must be no patchwork; Christ did it all, and will not be helped in the matter. Christ will not allow you, as some say, to do what you can, and leave him to make up the rest. What can you do that is not sinful? Christ has done all for us; the work of redemption is all finished. Christ planned it all, and worked out all; and we, therefore, preach a full salvation through Jesus Christ.

What could we poor mortals do towards saving ourselves? Our best works are but mean and worthless to that great end; I am sure I could not do it. My preaching—I am ashamed of that, and there are a thousand faults in my prayers. God wants nothing of us by way of "making up" Christ's work; but he cancels all the sins, and blots out all the transgressions of everyone who trusts to his Son's death.

If I have found Christ, I have found all. "I have not strong faith," say you. Never mind; Christ is all. "I do not feel my sins sufficiently"; but Christ is all. Many people think they must feel a load of repentance before they may hope Christ will receive them. I know every child of God will repent; but we are not all brought to the cross by the terrors of the law. It is not your feelings, my friends, that will save you; but Christ only, Christ standing in your stead, Christ being your Substitute. If, feeling your need of his grace to pardon you, and his righteousness to justify you before God, you can but just look to Christ, though you have nothing good about you, you will have done all that is necessary to carry you to heaven; because it is not your act that can save you, but the act of Christ alone. A little while ago, I had a conversation with an Irishman, who had been to hear me preach. He had come to ask me, he said, the way of salvation. "What troubles me," said he, "is this: God says that he will condemn the sinner, and punish him; then how can God forgive, because he must punish if he would keep his word?" I placed before him the Scriptural view of the atonement, in the substitution of Christ for the sinner; and the poor man was astonished and delighted beyond measure, never having understood the beauty and simplicity of the gospel way of salvation before. "Is it really so?" said he. "It is in the Bible," I replied. "Then the Bible must be true," said he, "for nobody but God could have thought it."

If Jesus Christ is our Surety, friends, we are safe from the demands of the law. If Christ is our Substitute, we shall not suffer the penalty due to sin; for God will never punish the same sin twice. If I have nothing but Christ, I do not want anything else, for Christ is all. If Christ is your all, you will not want anything to help you, either in living or in dying. Now for two thoughts before I close.

1.*If a man has Christ, then what does he want else?* If a man has Christ, he has everything. If I want perfection, and I have Christ, I have absolute perfection in him. If I want righteousness, I shall find in him my beauty and my glorious dress. I want pardon, and if I have Christ, I am pardoned. I want heaven, and if I have Christ, I have the Prince of heaven, and shall be there by-and-bye, to live with Christ, and to dwell in his blessed embrace for ever. If you have Christ, you have all. Do not be desponding, do not give ear to the whisperings of Satan that you are not the children of God; for if you have Christ, you are his people, and other things will come by-and-bye. Christ makes you complete in himself; as the apostle says, "Ye are complete in him." I think of poor Mary Magdalene; she would have nothing to bring of her own; she would remember that she had been a harlot; but when she comes to heaven's gates, she will say, "I have Christ," and the command will go forth, "Let her in, Gabriel; let her in." Here comes a poor squalid wretch, what has he been doing? He has never learned to write, he scarcely went even to a Ragged-school, but he has Christ in his heart. "Gabriel, let him in." Next comes a rich bad man, with rings on his fingers, and fine clothes upon his person; but the command is, "Shut the gates, Gabriel; he has no business here." Then comes a fine flaming professor of the gospel; but he never knew Christ in his heart. "Shut the gate, Gabriel." If a man has Christ, he has all for eternity; and if he has not Christ, he is poor, and blind, and naked, and will be miserable for ever. Will not you, then, who are listening to me now, resolve, in the strength of the Lord, to seek him at once, and make him your Friend? No matter what may be your state or condition, you are invited to come to him.

Ye blind, ye lame, who are far from Christ, come to him, and receive your sight, and obtain strength! He is made your all; you need bring nothing in your hand to come to him. "Ah!" says one, "I am not good enough yet." Beggars do not talk thus: they consider that, the more needy they are, the more likely are they to obtain that for which they ask. The worse the dress, the better for begging. It is the same with respect to the gospel; and you are invited to come to Christ just as you are, naked and miserable, that he may clothe and comfort you.

2. My last thought is this: *How poor is that man who is destitute of Christ!* If I were to say to some one of you that you are poor, you would reply, "I am not poor; I have 250 pounds a year coming in, a decent house, and an excellent situation." And yet, if you have not Christ, you are a poor man indeed. Look at that poor worldling with a load of 10,000 pounds upon his back, a quantity of stocks and annuities in one hand, policies and railway scrip in the other; but he is wretched with all his wealth, though he can hardly carry it. There is a poor beggar-woman, who says to him, "Let me take a part of your burden"; but the miserable man refuses all assistance, and resolves to carry all his load himself. But by-and-bye he comes to a great gulf, and, instead of finding these riches help him, they hang around his neck like millstones, and weigh him down. Yet there are some who would do anything for gold. If there be one man more miserable than another in hell, it must be the man who robbed his neighbours to feather his own nest; such feathers will help the flight of the arrows which shall pierce his soul to all eternity. No matter what your wealth, if you have not Christ, you are miserably poor; but with Christ, you are rich to all eternity.

Methinks I see one of you ungodly ones in your last moments; someone stands by your bedside, and watches your face; the death-sweat comes over you, and the big drops stand on your brow; the strong man is bowed down, and the mighty one falls; and now the eye closes, and the hand falls powerless—life is fled. Ah! but the soul never dies! Up it flies to appear at God's bar. How will it appear there? Oh! the poor soul without Christ! It will be a naked soul; it will have no garment to cover it—it will be a perishing soul, no salvation for it. Mercy cannot be secured then; it will be in vain to pray then, because the lamp will be put out in eternal darkness. And the Judge will say, in tones that will pierce you to the quick, "Depart from me, ye cursed."

May God give all of you grace to repent, and to embrace the salvation which is revealed in the gospel! Every sin-sick soul may have Christ; but as for you who are Pharisees, and trusting in yourselves that you are righteous, if you know nothing about sin, you can know nothing about Christ. The way to be saved is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. "But what is it to believe?" you say. I have heard of a captain who had a little son, and this little boy was very fond of climbing aloft. One day he climbed to the mast-head, and the father saw that, if the boy attempted to return, he would be dashed to pieces; he, therefore, shouted to him not to look down, but to drop into the sea. The poor boy kept fast hold of the mast; but the father saw it was his only chance of safety, and he shouted once more, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, drop, or I will shoot you." The boy is gone; he drops into the sea, and is saved. Had he not dropped, he must have perished. This is just your condition: so long as you cling to works and ceremonies, you are in the utmost peril; but when you give

yourselves up entirely to the mercy of Christ, you are safe. Try it, sinner; try it, that is all. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," is Christ's promise, and it shall never fail you. The invitation is to all who thirst. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come, and take the water of life freely." I have heard that, in the deserts where they can only get water at long intervals, they send a man on a camel in search of it; when he sees a pool, he springs off his beast, and before he himself drinks he calls out, "Come," and there is another man at a little distance, and he shouts, "Come," and one further away still repeats the word, "Come," until the whole desert resounds with the cry, "Come," and they come rushing to the water to drink. Now I do not make the gospel invitation wider than the declaration of the Word of God, "*Whosoever will*, let him take the water of life freely." Whosoever you are, and whatsoever you may have been, if you feel your need of Christ, "Come," and he will receive you, and give you to drink of the water of life freely.

Colossians 3; 4:1-4. Psalm 28:1-6.

Verse 1. *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.* Oh! how often we need to be called to this, for the flesh is grovelling, and it holds down the spirit; and very often we are seeking the things below as if we had not yet attained to the new life, and did not know anything about the resurrection power of Christ within the soul. Now, if it be that you, believers, have risen with Christ, do not live as if you had never done so, but "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

2. Set your affection.

Not "*your affections*." Tie them up into one bundle. Make one of them.

2. *On things above, not on things on the earth.* You say that you were dead with Christ, and that you have risen with Christ. Live, then, the risen life, and not the life of those who have never undergone this matchless process. Live above.

3. *For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.* The old life is dead. You are dead to it. You will not be consumed by it: you cannot be controlled by it. You have a newer and higher life. Let it have full scope.

4. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* Christ was hidden while he was here. The world knew him not. So is your life. But there is to be a glorious manifestation. When Christ is made manifest, so shall you be. Wait for him.

5. *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:* Since you are dead, let all the lusts of the flesh be put to death. Kill those. They were once a part of you. Your nature lusted this way. Mortify them. Do not merely restrain them and try to keep them under. These things you are to have nothing to do with.

6, 7. *For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.* "**When ye lived in them**" But now you do **not** live in them. You are dead to them. If it should ever come to pass that you fall into any of these things, you will loathe yourself with bitterest repentance that you could find comfort, satisfaction, life in them. You are dead to them.

8-10. *But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds: And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:* No lies. Such communications are filthy. But you put these things away through your union with Christ in his risen life. Therefore, abhor them. Avoid the very appearance of them, and cry for grace to be kept from them, for you have been "renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him."

11. *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.* In the new life there is no distinction of race and nationality. We are born into one family; we become members of Christ's body; and this is the one thing we have got to keep up—separation from all the world beside: no separations in the church, no disunion, nothing that would cause it, for we are one in Christ, and Christ is all. Now, as we have to put off these things, that is the negative side: that is the law's side, for the law says, "Thou shalt not"—"Thou shalt not." But now look at the positive side.

12. *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering:* This is what you have got to wear, even on the outside—to put it on; not to have a

latent kindness in your heart, and a degree of humbleness deep down in your soul if you could get at it; but you are to put it on. It is to be the very dress you wear. These are the sacred vestments of your daily priesthood. Put them on.

13. *Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.* Just as readily, just as freely, just as heartily, just as completely.

14-15 *And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.* For that is the great foundation of every godly fruit. We are in such a hurry, in such dreadful haste, so selfish, so discontented, so impetuous, and the major part of our sins spring from that condition of mind. But if we were godly, restful, peaceful, how many sins we should avoid! "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts."

15. *To the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.* It looks like a very small virtue to be thankful. Yet, dear friends, the absence of it is one of the grossest of vices. To be ungrateful is a mean thing: to be ungrateful to God is a base thing. And yet how many may accuse themselves of it! Who among us is as grateful as he should be? Be thankful.

16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you.*

Alexander had a casket of gold studded with gems to carry Homer's works. Let your own heart be a casket for the command of Christ. **"Let the word of Christ dwell in you."**

16-18 *Richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.* See how our being Christians does not relax the bonds of our Christian relationship, but it calls us to the higher exercise of the responsibilities and duties connected therewith.

19. *Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them.* Oh! there are some spirits that are very bitter. A little thing puts them out, and they would take delight in a taunt which grieves the Spirit. I pity the poor woman who has such bitterness where she ought to have sweetness: yet there be some such husbands.

20-21 *Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.* The duties are mutual. Scripture maintains an equilibrium. It does not lay down commands for one class, and then leave the other to exercise whatever tyrannical oppression it may please. The child is to obey, but the father must not provoke.

22. *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; How much there is of that! How quickly the hands go when the master's eye looks on! But the Christian servant remembers God's eye, and is diligent always. "Not with eye service as men-pleasers."*

22. Chap. 4:2 *But in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; and there is no respect of persons. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.* See how he keeps putting that in—"Be ye thankful"—"with thanksgiving." Why, that is the oil that makes the machinery go round without its causing obstruction. May we have much of that thanksgiving.

3, 4. *Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.* So the preacher of the gospel asks your prayers: and it is a part of the duties arising out of the relationship between Christian men that those who are taught should pray for those who teach God's Word.

Christ Precious to Believers

A Sermon (No. 242) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 13th, 1859, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." —1 Peter 2:7.

THIS TEXT CALLS to my recollection the opening of my ministry. It is about eight years since as a lad of sixteen, I stood up for the first time in my life to preach the gospel in a cottage to a handful of poor people, who had come together for worship. I felt my own inability to preach, but I ventured to take this text, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." I do not think I could have said anything upon any other text, but Christ was precious to my soul and I was in the flush of my youthful love, and I could not be silent when a precious Jesus was the subject. I had but just escaped from the bondage of Egypt, I had not forgotten the broken fetter; still did I recollect those flames which seemed to burn about my path, and that devouring gulf which opened its mouth as if ready to devour me. With all these things fresh in my youthful heart, I could speak of *his* preciousness who had been my Saviour, and had plucked me as a brand from the burning, and set me upon a rock, and put a new song in my mouth, and established my goings. And now, at this time what shall I say? "What hath God wrought?" How hath the little one become a thousand, and the small one a great people? And what shall I say concerning this text, but that if the Lord Jesus was precious then, he is as precious now? And if I could declare then, that Jesus was the object of my soul's desire, that for him I hoped to live, and for him I would be prepared to die, can I not say, God being my witness, that he is more precious to me this day than ever he was? In the recollection of his unparalleled mercy towards the chief of sinners, I must anew devote myself to him, and afresh surrender my heart to him who is Lord and King.

This remark is uttered by way of introduction, it may seem egotistical, but that I cannot help. I must give glory to God in the midst of the great congregation, and pay my vows to the Lord now in the midst of all his saints, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.

My text states a positive fact, namely, that *Christ is precious to believers*. This shall be the first part of our discourse; then in the second we will try to answer the question, *why is Jesus Christ so precious to his believing people?* And conclude by declaring the test whereby you may try yourselves whether you are believers or not; for if you be believers in Christ, then Christ is precious to you, and if you think little of him, then rest assured you have not a true and saving faith in him.

I. First, this is a positive fact, that UNTO BELIEVERS JESUS CHRIST IS PRECIOUS. In himself he is of inestimable preciousness, for he is the very God of very God. He is moreover, perfect man without sin. The precious gopher wood of his humanity is overlaid with the pure gold of his divinity. He is a mine of jewels, and a mountain of gems. He is altogether lovely, but, alas! this blind world seeth not his beauty. The painted harlotries of that which, Madam Bubble, the world *can* see, and all men wonder after her. This life, its joy, its lust, its gains, its honours,—these have beauty in the eye of the unregenerate man, but in Christ he sees nothing which he can admire. He hears his name as a common word, and looks upon his cross as a thing in which he has no interest, neglects his gospel, despises his Word, and, perhaps, vents fierce spite upon his people. But not so the believer. The man who has been brought to know that Christ is the only foundation upon which the soul can build its eternal home, he who has been taught that Jesus Christ is the first and the last, the Alpha and the Omega, the author and the finisher of faith, thinks not lightly of Christ. He calls him all his salvation and all his desire; the only glorious and lovely one.

Now, this is a fact which has been proved in all ages of the world. Look at the beginning of Christ's appearance upon earth. Nay, we might go farther back and mark how Christ was precious in prospect to those who lived before his incarnation; but, I say, since he has come into the world, what abundant proofs have we that he is precious to his people! There were men found who were not unwilling to part with houses, and lands, and wife, and children, and country, and reputation, and honour, and wealth, nay, with life itself, for Christ's sake. Such was the charm that Christ had for ancient Christians, that if they must renounce their patrimony and their earthly wealth for his sake, they did it cheerfully and without a murmur. Nay, they could say, that what things were gain they counted but loss for Christ's sake, and did esteem them but as dross and dung if they could win Christ and be found in him.

We talk lightly of these things, but these were no mean sacrifices. For a man to leave the partner of his bosom, to be despised by her who ought to honour him, to be spit upon by his own children, to be driven out by his countrymen, and have his name mentioned as a hissing, and a reproach, and a bye-word; this is no easy matter to bear; and yet the Christians in the first ages took up this cross, and not only carried it patiently, but carried it joyfully; rejoicing in tribulations, if those tribulations fell upon them for Christ's sake and the gospel. Nay, more than this, Satan has been permitted to put forth his hand and touch Christ's people, not only in their goods and in their families, but in their bone and in their flesh. And mark how Christ's disciples have reckoned nothing to be a loss, so that they might win Christ. Stretched upon the rack, their strained nerves have only made them sing the louder, as though they were harp strings, only put in tune when they were drawn out to their extreme length. They have been tortured with hot irons and with the pincers; their backs have been ploughed with scourges, but when have you found any of the true followers of Christ flinch in the

hour of pain? They have borne all this, and challenged their persecutors to do more, and invent fresh arts and devices, fresh cruelties, and try them. Christ was so precious, that all the pain of the body could not make them deny him, and when at last they have been taken forth to a shameful death—let the axe and the block, let the cross of crucifixion, let the spear, let the fire and the stake, let the wild horse and the desert testify that the believer has always been a man, who would suffer all this, and vastly more, but who would never renounce his confidence in Christ. Look at Polycarp before the lions, when he is brought into the midst of the assembly, and it is demanded of him that he will deny his God. Thousands of savage eyes look down upon him, and there he stands, a feeble man, alone in the arena, but he tells them that "he has known his Lord these many years and he never did him a displeasure, and he will not deny him at the last." "To the lions!" they cry, "To the lions!" and the lions rush upon him, and he is speedily devoured; but all this he would have borne at the mouths of a thousand lions, if he had a thousand lives, rather than he would have thought anything amiss against the Majesty of Jesus of Nazareth. The whole history of the ancient church of Christ, proves that Jesus has been an object of his peoples' highest veneration; that they set nothing in rivalry with him, but cheerfully and readily, without a murmur, or a thought, gave up all for Jesus Christ, and rejoiced to do so.

And this is just as true to-day as it was then. If to-morrow the stake could be set in Smithfield, Christian people are prepared to be fuel for the flame. If once more the block fixed on Tower hill, and the axe were brought forth from its hiding place, the heads of Christ's people would be cheerfully given, if they might but crown the head of Jesus and vindicate his cause. Those who declare that the ancient valour of the church is departed, know not what they say. The professing church may have lost its masculine vigour; the professors of this day may be but effeminate dwarfs, the offspring of glorious fathers; but the true church, the elect out of the professing church, the remnant whom God hath chosen, are as much in love with Jesus as his saints of yore, and are as ready to suffer and to die. We challenge hell and its incarnate representative, old Rome herself; let her build her dungeons, let her revive her inquisitions, let her once more get power in the state to cut, and mangle, and burn; we are still able to possess our souls in patience. We sometimes feel it were a good thing if persecuting days should come again, to try the church once more, and drive away the chaff, and make her like a goodly heap of wheat, all pure and clean. The rotten branches of the forest may tremble at the hurricane, for they shall be swept away, but those that have sap within them tremble not. Our roots are intertwined with the Rock of Ages, and the sap of Christ flows within us and we are branches of the living vine, and nothing shall sever us from him. We know that not persecution, nor famine, nor nakedness, nor peril, nor sword, shall divide us from the love of Christ, for in all these things we shall be as the church has been, more than conquerors through him that loved us.

Does any one think that I exaggerate? Mark, then, if what I have said be not true, then Christ has no church at all; for the church that is not prepared to suffer, and bleed and die for Christ, is not Christ's church. For what does he say? "He that loveth father and mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."—Matthew, 10:37-38. Albeit that Christ may not put us fully to the test, yet, if we be true, we must be ready for the ordeal; and if we be sincere, though we may tremble at the thought of it, we shall not tremble in the endurance of it. Many a man who says in his heart, "I have not a martyr's faith," has really that noble virtue; and let him but once come to the push, and the world shall see the grace that has been hidden, rising a giant from his slumbers. The faith which endures the relaxing of the world's sunshine, would endure the cutting frost of the world's persecution. We need not fear; if we be true to-day, we shall be true always.

This is not mere fiction, many are the proofs that Christ is still precious. Shall I tell you of the silent sufferers for Christ, who at this day suffer a martyrdom of which we hear not, but which is true and real? How many a young girl there is who follows Christ in the midst of an ungodly family; her father upbraids her, laughs at her, makes a scoff of her holiness, and pierces her through the heart with his sarcasm! Her brothers and her sisters call her "Puritan," "Methodist," and the like, and she is annoyed day by day with what the apostle calls, "Trial of cruel mockings." But she bears all this, and though the tear is sometimes forced by it from her eye, yet though she should weep blood she would "resist unto blood, striving against sin." These sufferers are unrecorded, they are not put into a Book of Martyrs. We have no Fox to write their martyrology, they have not the flesh-contenting knowledge that they shall be publicly honoured; but they suffer alone and unheard of, still praying for those who laugh at them: bowing themselves before God on their knees in agony, not on account of the persecution, but in agony of soul for the persecutors themselves, that they may be saved. How many there are of such young men in workshops, employed in large establishments, who bend their knee at night by the bed-side, in a large room where there are many scoffers. Some of us have known this in our youthful days, and have had to endure it; but Christ is precious to the silent sufferings of his people; these unhonoured martyrdoms prove that his church has not ceased to love him, not to esteem him precious.

How many there are, too—how many thousands of unseen and unknown labourers for Christ, whose names

cannot be here declared. They toil from morning till night all through the week, and the Sabbath day should be a day of rest to them; but they work more on the Sabbath day than on any other day. They are visiting the beds of the sick; their feet are weary, and nature says rest, but they go into the lowest dens and haunts of the city to speak to the ignorant, and endeavour to spread the name and honour of Jesus where it has not been known. There are many such who are working hard for Christ, though the church scarce knows of it. And how many, too, there are who prove that they love Christ by the continual liberality of their offerings. Many are the poor people I have discovered, who have denied themselves of this and that, because they would serve Christ's cause. And many there are, too—every now and then we find them out—in the middle ranks of society, who give a hundred times as much to the cause of Christ as many of the rich and wealthy; and if you knew to what little trials they are put, to what shifts they are driven in order to serve Christ, you would say, "The man that can do this proves clearly that Christ is precious to him." And mark this, the reason why the church is not more laborious, not more generous in its gifts to the offertory of the Saviour, is just this, because the church of the day is not the church of Christ in its mass and bulk. There is a church of Christ within it, but the visible church, as it stands before you, is not to be considered the church of Christ; we must pass it through the fire, and bring the third part through the flame; for this is the day when the dross is mingled with gold. How hath the much fine gold become dim; how hath the glory departed. Zion is under a cloud. But mark, though you see it not, there is a church, a hidden church; an unmoving centre amidst the growing of profession, there is a life within this outward fungus of a growing Christianity; there is a life that is within, and to that hidden host, that chosen company, Christ is precious—they are proving it every day by their patient sufferings, by their laborious efforts, by their constant offerings to the church of Christ. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."

I will tell you one thing that proves—proves to a demonstration, that Christ is still precious to his people, and it is this:—send one of Christ's people to hear the most noted preacher of the age, whoever that may be; he preaches a very learned sermon, very fine and magnificent, but there is not a word about Christ in that sermon. Suppose that to be the case, and the Christian man will go out and say, "I did not care a farthing for that man's discourse." Why? "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. I heard nothing about Christ." Send that man on the Sabbath morning to hear some hedge and ditch preacher, some one who cuts the king's English about never so badly, but who preaches Jesus Christ—you will see the tears rolling down that man's face, and when he comes out he will say, "I do not like that man's bad grammar; I do not like the many mistakes he has made, but oh! it has done my heart good, for he spoke about Christ." That, after all, is the main thing for the Christian; he wants to hear about his Lord, and if he hears him magnified he will overlook a hundred faults. In fact, you will find that Christians are all agreed, that the best sermon is that which is fullest of Christ. They never like to hear a sermon unless there is something of Christ in it. A Welsh minister who was preaching last Sabbath at the chapel of my dear brother, Jonathan George, was saying, that Christ was the sum and substance of the gospel, and he broke out into this story:—A young man had been preaching in the presence of a venerable divine, and after he had done he went to the old minister, and said, "What do you think of my sermon?" "A very poor sermon indeed," said he. "A poor sermon?" said the young man, "it took me a long time to study it." "Ay, no doubt of it." "Why, did you not think my explanation of the text a very good one?" "Oh, yes," said the old preacher, "very good indeed." "Well, then, why do you say it is a poor sermon? Didn't you think the metaphors were appropriate and the arguments conclusive?" "Yes, they were very good as far as that goes, but still it was a very poor sermon." "Will you tell me why you think it a poor sermon?" "Because," said he, "there was no Christ in it." "Well," said the young man, "Christ was not in the text; we are not to be preaching Christ always, we must preach what is in the text." So the old man said, "Don't you know young man that from every town, and every village, and every little hamlet in England, wherever it may be, there is a road to London?" "Yes," said the young man. "Ah!" said the old divine "and so form every text in Scripture, there is a road to the metropolis of the Scriptures, that is Christ. And my dear brother, your business in when you get to a text, to say, 'Now what is the road to Christ?' and then preach a sermon, running along the road towards the great metropolis—Christ. And," said he, "I have never yet found a text that had not got a road to Christ in it, and if I ever do find one that has not a road to Christ in it, I will make one; I will go over hedge and ditch but I would get at my Master, for the sermon cannot do any good unless there is a savour of Christ in it." Now since you say amen to that, and declare that what you want to hear is Jesus Christ, the text is proved—"Unto you therefore which believe he is precious."

But if you want to try this again and prove it, go and see some of our sick and dying friends; go and talk to them about the Reform Bill, and they will look you in the face and say, "Oh, I am going from this time-state: it is a very small matter to me whether the Reform Bill will be carried or not." You will not find them much interested in that matter. Well, then, sit down and talk to them about the weather, and how the crops are getting on—"Well, it is a good prospect for wheat this year." They will say, "Ah, my harvest is ripening in glory." Introduce the most interesting topic you can, and a believer, who is lying on the verge of eternity, will find nothing precious in it; but sit down by the bedside of this man, and he may be very near gone, almost

unconscious, and begin to talk about Jesus—mention that precious soul-reviving, soul-strengthening name Jesus, and you will see his eye glisten, and the blanched cheek will be flushed once more—"Ah," he will say, "Precious Jesus, that is the name which calms my fears, and bids my sorrows cease." You will see that you have given the man a strong tonic, and that his whole frame is braced up for the moment. Even when he dies, the thought of Jesus Christ and the prospect of seeing him shall make him living in the midst of death, strong in the midst of weakness, and fearless in the midst of trembling. And this proves, by the experience of God's people, that with those who believe in him, Christ is and ever must be a precious Christ.

II. The second thing is, WHY IS CHRIST PRECIOUS TO THE BELIEVER? I observe—and I shall run over those particulars very briefly, though they would be worthy of a long, long sermon—Jesus Christ is precious to the believer, because he is intrinsically precious. But here let me take you through an exercise in grammar; here is an adjective, let us go through it. He is precious *positively*; he is more precious than anything *comparatively*; he is most precious of all things, and most precious even if all things were rolled into one and put into competition with him; he is thus precious *superlatively*. Now, there are few things you can thus deal with. You say, a man is a good man, he is good positively, and you say he is a great deal better than many other people; he is good comparatively: but you can never truly say to any man that he is good superlatively, because there he would still be found short of perfection. But Christ is good positively, comparatively, and superlatively.

Is he good *positively*? Election is a good thing; to be chosen of God, and precious; but we are elect in Christ Jesus. Adoption is a good thing; to be adopted into the family of God is a good thing—ah, but we are adopted in Christ Jesus and made joint-heirs with him. Pardon is a good thing—who will not say so?—ay, but we are pardoned through the precious blood of Jesus. Justification—is not that a noble thing, to be robed about with a perfect righteousness?—ay, but we are justified in Jesus. To be preserved—is not that a precious thing?—ay; but we are preserved in Christ Jesus, and kept by his power even to the end. Perfection—who shall say that this is not precious? Well, but we are perfect in Christ Jesus. Resurrection, is not that glorious? We are risen with him. To ascend up on high, is not that precious? But he hath raised us up and made us sit together with him in heavenly places in Christ—so that Christ must be good positively, for he is all the best things in one. And if all these be good, surely *he* must be good in whom, and by whom, and to whom, and through are all these precious things.

But Christ is good *comparatively*. Bring anything here and compare with him. One of the brightest jewels we can have is liberty. If I be not free, let me die. Put the halter to my neck but put not the fetter to my wrist—a free man I must be while I live. Will not the patriot say that he would give his blood to buy liberty, and think it a cheap price? Ay, but put liberty side by side with Christ, and I would wear the fetter for Christ and rejoice in the chain. The apostle Paul himself could say, "I would that ye were altogether such I am,"—and he might add, "except these bonds," but though he excepted bonds for others, he did not except them for himself, for he rejoiced in the chain and counted it as a mark of honor. Besides liberty, what a precious thing is life! "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life." But let a Christian—a true Christian, once have the choice between life and Christ,—"No," says he, "I can die, but I cannot deny; I can burn, but I cannot turn. I confess Christ and perish in the flame; but I cannot deny Christ, even though you exalt me to a throne." There would be no choice between the two. And then whatever earthly good there may be in comparison with Christ, the believer's testimony goes to prove that Christ is precious comparatively, for there is nothing that can match with him.

And then to go higher still—Christ is good *superlatively*. The superlative of all things is heaven, and if it could be possible to put Christ in competition with heaven, the Christian would not stop a moment in his choice; he would sooner be on earth with Christ than be in heaven without him. Nay, I do not know whether he would not go almost as far as Rutherford, who said, "Lord, I would sooner be in hell with thee than in heaven without thee; for if I were in heaven without thee it would be a hell to me, and if I were in hell with thee it would be a heaven to me." We may put it so, and every Christian will subscribe to it. Now, come ye messengers of the world and take on your shoulders all its treasures. Cæsar, pour out thy gold in one glittering pile; Cæsar, lay down thine honours here in one gaudy heap; here, Tiberius, bring all the joys of Capri's lust and vice; Solomon, bring here all the treasures of wisdom; Alexander, bring all thy triumphs; Napoleon, bring thy wide-spread empire and thy fame, put them all here, all that earth calls good; and now come, thou bleeding Lamb of God, thou marred and matchless Saviour, come here and tread these beneath thy feet, for what are all these compared with thee? I pour contempt on them all. Now am I dead to all the world, and all the world is dead to me. The whole realm of nature is small in comparison with thee, as a drop in the bucket when compared with a boundless ocean. Jesus Christ, then, is precious *superlatively*.

2. What more can we say? Still to answer this question again: Why is Christ precious to the believer more

than to any other man? Why it is the believer's *want* that makes Christ precious to him. That is one answer. We have been having a small shower of rain lately, and I dare say there are very few of you who felt grateful for it; since it gave you a little wetting coming here. But suppose that shower of rain could have fallen on the desert of Arabia, what a precious thing it would have been. Yea, every rain drop would have been worth a pearl; and as for the shower, though it had rained gold dust, the rich deposit would not have been comparable to the flood when it descended from on high. But what is the reason that water is so precious there? Simply because it is so rare. Suppose I am in England; there is abundance of water and I cannot sell it; water is so common, and therefore so cheap. But put a man in the desert and let the water-skin be dried up, let him come to the well wherein he expected to find water, and it has failed him; can you not conceive that that small drop of water might be worth a king's ransom? Nay, that a man might hoard it up, and conceal it from all his comrades, because on that small drop of water depended his life? The way to prize water is to value it with a tongue like a firebrand, and with a mouth like an oven. Then can I estimate its value when I know its want. So with Christ. The worldling does not care for Christ, because he has never hungered and thirsted after him; but the Christian is athirst for Christ; he is in a dry and thirsty land, where not water is, and his heart and his flesh pant after God, yea for the living God; and as the thirsty soul dying, cries out water, water, water, so the Christian cries out Christ, Christ, Christ! This is the one thing needful for me, and if I have it not, this thirst must destroy me.

Mark, too, that the believer may be found in many aspects, and you will always find that his needs will endear Christ to him. Here is a man about to be tried for his life. Before he had committed the wrong, he used to say, "Lawyers, attornies, pleaders, away with them, what is the good of them?" Now he has got into prison he thinks very differently. He says, "I wish I could get a good special pleader to plead my cause;" and he runs over the roll to see the best man to plead for him. At last he says, "Here is a man, if he could plead my cause I might hope to escape, but I have no money with which to engage him;" and he says to his wife—"Wife, we must sell our house;" or, "We must get money somehow, for I am on trial for my life, and I must have an advocate." And what will not a woman do to get an advocate for her husband? Why, she will pledge the last rag she has to get one. Now, does not the believer feel himself to be in just such a position? He is a poor sinner on trial for his life, and he wants an advocate; and every time he looks on Christ pleading his cause before the Father's throne, he says, "O what a precious Christ he is to a poor sin-destroyed sinner, for he pleads his cause before the throne."

But suppose another case; that of a man drawn for a soldier. In such times men always look out for substitutes. I remember when the ballot was coming for the militia, how every man joined a substitute club in order that if he were drawn he might not go himself. Now suppose a man had been drawn, how valuable would a substitute have been—for no man in his senses likes to be food for powder—he would rather a man without brains go and do such work as that, but as for him he estimates himself at too high a price. But suppose he is not only drawn for a soldier, but condemned to die. See yon poor wretch coming up the gallows stairs; some one whispers to him, "What would you give for a substitute now? What would you give for some one to come and bear this punishment?" See his eye rolls madness at the thought. "A substitute," says he, "I could not buy one for the whole world. Who would be a substitute for me, to swing into eternity amidst the yellings of a crowd?" But suppose—and we are only supposing what has actually occurred—suppose this man saw not only the gallows and the drop, but hell fire before him, and it were said to him, "You must burn in that for ever unless you find a substitute," would not that be a precious one? Now, mark, that is just our position. The Christian feels that hell is before him, if it were not that he has a glorious substitute. Jesus came forward, and said, "I will bear that punishment; pour hell on me, my Father let me drink damnation dry;" and he did it; he endured all those pains, or an equivalent for them; he suffered in the rebel's stead; and now, through him the substitute, we are absolved and free. Oh, must not he be a precious Christ?

But think of Christ again, and then think of the believer's wants. I will try and run over a number of them. The believer is a silly sheep. What a precious thing is a shepherd, and how precious are green pastures and still waters. The believer is like a desolate woman. What a precious thing is a husband who shall provide for her, and shall console and cherish her. The believer is a pilgrim, and the hot sun beats on him. What a precious thing is the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The believer is a bond-slave by nature. What a precious thing is the trump of jubilee, and the ransom-price that sets him free. The believer, by nature, is a sinking, drowning man. How precious to him is that plank of free-grace, the cross of Christ, on which he puts his poor trembling hand and secures glory. But what more shall I say? Time would fail me to tell of all the wants of the believer, and of the all-abounding and ever-flowing streams of love that flow from Christ, the fountain that fills the believer to the brim. O say, ye children of God, is he not while ye are in these lowlands of want and suffering, inconceivably, unutterably, superlatively precious to you?

3. But once more. Look at the believer not only in his wants, but in his highest earthly state. The believer is a

man that was once blind and now sees. And what a precious thing is light to a man that sees. If I, as a believer, have an eye, how much I need the sun to shine. If I have no light my eye becomes a torture, and I might as well have been blind. And when Christ gives sight to the blind he makes his people a seeing people. It is then that they find what a precious thing is the sight, and how pleasant a thing it is for a man to behold the sun. The believer is a man that is quickened. A dead corpse wants no clothing, for it feels no cold. Let a man once be quickened and he finds himself naked, and wants clothing. From the very fact that the Christian is a quickened man, he values the robe of righteousness that is put about him. Christ touches his people's ears and opens them; but it were better for man to be deaf than to hear for ever doleful groans and hissings. But such must he have been, ever hearing it if it were not for Christ playing sweet music to him every day, and pouring streams of melody into his ears through his promises. Yes, I say, the very new-born powers of the Christian would be very channels for misery if it were not for Christ. Even in his highest estate the Christian must feel that Christ is necessary unto him, and then he must conclude that Christ is precious to him.

But believer, how precious is Christ to thee in the hour of conviction of sin, when he says, "Thy sins which are many, are all forgiven thee." How precious to thee in the hour of sickness, when he comes to thee and says, "I will make all thy bed in thy sickness." How precious to thee in the day of trial, when he says, "All things work together for thy good." How precious when friends are buried, for he says, "I am the resurrection and the life." How precious in thy grey old age, "even in old age I am with thee, and to hoary hairs will I carry you." How precious in the lone chamber of death, for "I will fear no evil, thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me." But, last of all, how precious will Christ be when we see him as he is. All we know of Christ here is as nothing compared with what we shall know hereafter. Believer, when thou seest Christ's face now, thou only seest it through a veil—Christ is so glorious, that like Moses he is compelled to put a veil upon his face, for his poor people while they are here are so feeble that they could not behold him face to face. And if he be lovely here, when he is marred and spit upon, how lovely must he be when he is adored and worshipped. If he is precious on his cross, how much more precious when he sits on his throne. If I can weep before him, and love him, and live to him, when I see him as the despised man of Nazareth; Oh, how shall my spirit be knit to him, how shall my heart be absorbed with love to him, when I see his face and behold his crown of glory, when I mark the harpings of the never-ceasing harpers who harp his praise. Wait awhile, Christian. If he is precious to the believer now, when faith is turned to sight he will be more precious still. Go out of this hall, and cry, "O Lord Jesus, I must love thee, I must serve thee better, I must live for thee; I must be ready to die for thee—for 'Thou art precious to my soul, My transport and my trust.'" This brings me to conclude—and here I want your solemn and earnest attention while each one for himself shall answer this question—my hearer, is Christ precious to you? My young brother, you of the same age as myself, is Jesus precious to you in your youth? Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? only by taking heed thereto according to Christ's word, and by walking in his footsteps. Ye men and women of middle age, is Christ precious to you? Remember that this world is but a dream, and if you have not something more satisfactory than that, you will be disappointed, even though you succeed beyond your highest wishes. And ye grey headed men, who are going tottering to your graves, whose life is like a candle-snuff, almost expiring, like a lamp whose oil is spent. Is Christ precious to you, ye with the bald head, and with the hoary lock, is Jesus precious to your soul? Remember, on your answer to this question depends your condition. *You* believe, if he is precious to you, but if he is not precious, then you are not believers, and you are condemned already because you believe not on the Son of God. Now, which is it? Oh, methinks some of you feel as if you could spring from your seats, and say, "Yes, he is precious to me, I cannot deny it." Once there was a good minister who was catechising his class, and he said to the young people, "The question which I am about to ask is such that I want none of you to answer but those who can answer from your heart." The congregation was gathered together, and he put this question to them concerning Christ—"Suppose Christ was here, and should say, 'Lovest thou me?' what would be your reply?" He looked around, and glanced upon all the young men and the young women, and said, "Jesus speaks to you the first time, and says, 'Lovest thou me?' He speaks a second time, and he says, 'Lovest thou me?'" There was a solemn pause and no one answered; and the congregation looked at the class, and at last the minister said once more, "Jesus speaks by me a third time, and says, 'Lovest thou me?'" Up rose a young woman, who could keep her seat no longer, and, bursting into tears, said, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Now, how many are there here who could say that? Could not you now, if this were the time—although you might be bashful in the midst of so many—could you not, if Christ asked you the question, boldly say, though in the midst of enemies—"Yea, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." Well, if you can give such an answer as that, go home and pray that others may be brought to love him, for you yourselves are saved; but if you are compelled to be silent to such a question as that, O may God lead you to seek Christ, may you too be driven to the cross, may you there see his dear bleeding wounds, may you behold his open side, and falling at his feet, may you say, "I trust thee, I rely upon thee, I depend upon thee," and he will say, "I have saved thee;" and then will you spring to your feet, and say, "Lord I love thee, because thou hast first loved me." May such be the end of this sermon, and to God be all the glory.

Christ Crucified

A Sermon (No. 7-8) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, February 11, 1855, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At Exeter Hall, Strand. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." —1 Corinthians 1:23-24.

What contempt hath God poured upon the wisdom of this world! How hath he brought it to nought, and made it appear as nothing. He has allowed it to word out its own conclusions, and prove its own folly. Men boasted that they were wise; they said that they could find out God to perfection; and in order that their folly might be refuted once and forever, God gave them the opportunity of so doing. He said, "Worldly wisdom, I will try thee. Thou sayest that thou art mighty, that thine intellect is vast and comprehensive, that thine eye is keen, and thou canst find all secrets; now, behold, I try thee; I give thee one great problem to solve. Here is the universe; stars make its canopy, fields and flowers adorn it, and the floods roll o'er its surface; my name is written therein; the invisible things of God may be clearly seen in the things which are made. Philosophy, I give thee this problem—find me out. Here are my works—find me out. Discover in the wondrous world which I have made, the way to worship me acceptably. I give thee space enough to do it—there are data enough. Behold the clouds, the earth, and the stars. I give thee time enough; I will give thee four thousand years, and I will not interfere; but thou shalt do as thou wilt with thine own world. I will give thee men enough; for I will make great minds and vast, whom thou shalt call lords of earth; thou shalt have orators, thou shalt have philosophers. Find me out, O reason; find me out, O wisdom; find me out, if thou canst; find me out unto perfection; and if thou canst not, then shut thy mouth forever, and then will I teach thee that the wisdom of God is wiser than the wisdom of man; yea, that the foolishness of God is wiser than men." And how did the wisdom of man work out the problem? How did wisdom perform her feat? Look upon the heathen nations; there you see the result of wisdom's researches. In the time of Jesus Christ, you might have beheld the earth covered with the slime of pollution, a Sodom on a large scale—corrupt, filthy, depraved; indulging in vices which we dare not mention; revelling in lust too abominable even for our imagination to dwell upon for a moment. We find the men prostrating themselves before blocks of wood and stone, adoring ten thousand gods more vicious than themselves. We find, in fact, that reason wrote out her lines with a finger covered with blood and filth, and that she forever cut herself out from all her glory by the vile deeds she did. She would not worship God. She would not bow down to him who is "clearly seen," but she worshipped any creature—the reptile that crawled, the viper—everything might be a god; but not, forsooth, the God of heaven. Vice might be made into a ceremony, the greatest crime might be exalted into a religion; but true worship she knew nothing of. Poor reason! poor wisdom! how art thou fallen from heaven; like Lucifer—thou son of the morning—thou art lost; thou hast written out thy conclusion, but a conclusion of consummate folly. "After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Wisdom had had its time, and time enough; it had done its all, and that was little enough; it had made the world worse than it was before it stepped upon it, and "now," says God, "Foolishness shall overcome wisdom; now ignorance, as ye call it, shall sweep away science; now, humble, child-like faith shall crumble to the dust all the colossal systems your hands have piled." He calls his armies. Christ puts his trumpet to his mouth, and up come the warriors, clad in fishermen's garb, with the brogue of the lake of Galilee—poor humble mariners. Here are the warriors, O wisdom, that are to confound thee; these are the heroes who shall overcome thy proud philosophers; these men are to plant their standard upon thy ruined walls, and bid them to fall forever; these men and their successors are to exalt a gospel in the world which ye may laugh at as absurd, which ye may sneer at as folly, but which shall be exalted above the hills, and shall be glorious even to the highest heavens. Since that day, God has always raised up successors of the apostles; not by any lineal descent, but because I have the same roll and charter as any apostle, and am as much called to preach the gospel as Paul himself; if not as much owned by the conversion of sinners, yet, in a measure, blessed of God; and, therefore, here I stand, foolish as Paul might be, foolish as Peter, or any of those fishermen; but still with the might of God I grasp the sword of truth, coming here to "preach Christ and him crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Before I enter upon our text, let me very briefly tell you what I believe preaching Christ and him crucified is. My friends, I do not believe it is preaching Christ and him crucified, to give people a batch of philosophy every Sunday morning and evening, and neglect the truths of this Holy Book. I do not believe it is preaching

Christ and him crucified, to leave out the main cardinal doctrines of the Word of God, and preach a religion which is all a mist and a haze, without any definite truths whatever. I take it *that* man does not preach Christ and him crucified, who can get through a sermon without mentioning Christ's name once; nor does that man preach Christ and him crucified, who leaves out the Holy Spirit's work, who never says a word about the Holy Ghost, so that indeed the hearers might say, "We do not so much as know whether there be a Holy Ghost." And I have my own private opinion, that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and him crucified, unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism. I have my own ideas, and those I always state boldly. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism. Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith without works; not unless we preach the sovereignty of God in his dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor, I think, can we preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the peculiar redemption which Christ made for his elect and chosen people; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation, after having believed. Such a gospel I abhor. The gospel of the Bible is not such a gospel as that. We preach Christ and him crucified in a different fashion, and to all gainsayers we reply, "We have not so learned Christ."

There are three things in the text: first, a gospel rejected, "Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks foolishness"; secondly, a gospel triumphant, "unto those who are called, both Jews and Greeks"; and thirdly, a gospel admired; it is to them who are called "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

I. First, we have here A GOSPEL REJECTED. One would have imagined that, when God sent his gospel to men, all men would meekly listen, and humbly receive its truths. We should have thought that God's ministers had but to proclaim that life is brought to light by the gospel, and that Christ is come to save sinners, and every ear would be attentive, every eye would be fixed, and every heart would be wide open to receive the truth. We should have said, judging favorably of our fellow-creatures, that there would not exist in the world a monster so vile, so depraved, so polluted, as to put so much as a stone in the way of the progress of truth; we could not have conceived such a thing; yet that conception is the truth. When the gospel was preached, instead of being accepted and admired, one universal hiss went up to heaven; men could not bear it; its first preacher they dragged to the brow of the hill, and would have sent him down headlong; yea, they did more—they nailed him to the cross, and there they let him languish out his dying life in agony such as no man hath borne since. All his chosen ministers have been hated and abhorred by worldlings; instead of being listened to they have been scoffed at; treated as if they were the offscouring of all things, and the very scum of mankind. Look at the holy men in the old times, how they were driven from city to city, persecuted, afflicted, tormented, stoned to death, wherever the enemy had power to do so. Those friends of men, those real philanthropists, who came with hearts big with love, and hands full of mercy, and lips pregnant with celestial fire, and souls that burned with holy influence; those men were treated as if they were spies in the camp, as if they were deserters from the common cause of mankind; as if they were enemies, and not, as they truly were, the best of friends. Do not suppose, my friends, that men like the gospel any better now than they did then. There is an idea that you are growing better. I do not believe it. You are growing worse. In many respects men may be better—outwardly better; the heart within is still the same. The human heart of today dissected, would be like the human heart a thousand years ago; the gall of bitterness within that breast of yours, is just as bitter as the gall of bitterness in that of Simon of old. We have in our hearts the same latent opposition to the truth of God; and hence we find men, even as of old, who scorn the gospel.

I shall, in speaking of the gospel rejected, endeavour to point out the two classes of persons who equally despise truth. The Jews make it a stumblingblock, and the Greeks account it foolishness. Now these two very respectable gentlemen—the Jew and the Greek—I am not going to make these ancient individuals the object of my condemnation, but I look upon them as members of a great parliament, representatives of a great constituency, and I shall attempt to show that, if all the race of Jews were cut off, there would be still a great number in the world who would answer to the name of Jews, to whom Christ is a stumblingblock; and that if Greece were swallowed up by some earthquake, and ceased to be a nation, there would still be the Greek unto whom the gospel would be foolishness. I shall simply introduce the Jew and the Greek, and let them speak a moment to you, in order that you may see the gentlemen who represent you; the representative men; the persons who stand for many of you, who as yet are not called by divine grace.

The first is a Jew; to him the gospel is a stumblingblock. A respectable man the Jew was in his day; all formal religion was concentrated in his person; he went up to the temple very devoutly; he tithed all he had, even to the mint and the cummin. You would see him fast twice in the week, with a face all marked with sadness and sorrow. If you looked at him, he had the law between his eyes; there was the phylactery, and the borders of his garments of amazing width, that he might never be supposed to be a Gentile dog; that no one might ever

conceive that he was not an Hebrew of pure descent. He had a holy ancestry; he came of a pious family; a right good man was he. He could not like those Sadducees at all, who had no religion. He was thoroughly a religious man; he stood up for his synagogue; he would not have that temple on Mount Gerizim; he could not bear the Samaritans, he had no dealings with them; he was a religionist of the first order, a man of the very finest kind; a specimen of a man who is a moralist, and who loves the ceremonies of the law. Accordingly, when he heard about Christ, he asked who Christ was. "The Son of a Carpenter." Ah! "The son of a carpenter, and his mother's name was Mary, and his father's name was Joseph." "That of itself is presumption enough," said he; "positive proof, in fact, that he cannot be the Messiah." And what does he say? Why, he says, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites." "That won't do." Moreover, he says, "It is not by the works of the flesh that any man can enter into the kingdom of heaven." The Jew tied a double knot in his phylactery at once; he thought he would have the borders of his garment made twice as broad. *He* bow to the Nazarene! No, no; and if so much as a disciple crossed the street, he thought the place polluted, and would not tread in his steps. Do you think he would give up his old father's religion, the religion which came from Mount Sinai, that old religion that lay in the ark and the overshadowing cherubim? He give that up! not he. A vile imposter—that is all Christ was in his eyes. He thought so. "A stumblingblock to me; I cannot hear about it; I will not listen to it." Accordingly, he turned a deaf ear to all the preacher's eloquence, and listened not at all. Farewell, old Jew! Thou sleepest with thy fathers, and thy generation is a wandering race, still walking the earth. Farewell! I have done with thee. Alas! poor wretch, that Christ, who was thy stumbling-block, shall be thy judge, and on thy head shall be that loud curse. "His blood be on us and on our children." But I am going to find out Mr. Jew here in Exeter Hall—persons who answer to his description—to whom Jesus Christ is a stumblingblock. Let me introduce you to yourselves, some of you. You were of a pious family too, were you not? Yes. And you have a religion which you love; you love it so far as the chrysalis of it goes, the outside, the covering, the husk. You would not have one rubric altered, nor one of those dear old arches taken down, nor the stained glass removed, for all the world; and any man who should say a word against such things, you would set down as a heretic at once. Or, perhaps, you do not go to such a place of worship, but you love some plain old meeting-house, where your forefathers worshipped, called a dissenting chapel. Ah! it is a beautiful plain place; you love it, you love its ordinances, you love its exterior; and if any one spoke against the place, how vexed you would feel. You think that what they do there, they ought to do everywhere; in fact, your church is a model one; the place where you go is exactly the sort of place for everybody; and if I were to ask you why you hope to go to heaven, you would perhaps say, "Because I am a Baptist," or, "Because I am an Episcopalian," or whatever other sect you belong to. There is yourself; I know Jesus Christ will be to you a stumblingblock. If I come and tell you, that all your going to the house of God is good for nothing; if I tell you that all those many times you have been singing and praying, all pass for nothing in the sight of God, because you are a hypocrite and a formalist. If I tell you that your heart is not right with God, and that unless it is so, all the external is good for nothing, I know what you will say,—"I shan't hear that young man again." It is a stumblingblock. If you had stepped in anywhere where you had heard formalism exalted: if you had been told "this must you do, and this other must you do, and then you will be saved," you would highly approve of it. But how many are there externally religious, with whose characters you could find no fault, but who have never had the regenerating influence of the Holy Ghost; who never were made to lie prostrate on their face before Calvary's cross; who never turned a wistful eye to yonder Saviour crucified; who never put their trust in him that was slain for the sons of men. They love a superficial religion, but when a man talks deeper than that, they set it down for cant. You may love all that is external about religion, just as you may love a man for his clothes—caring nothing for the man himself. If so, I know you are one of those who reject the gospel. You will hear me preach; and while I speak about the externals, you will hear me with attention; whilst I plead for morality, and argue against drunkenness, or show the heinousness of Sabbath-breaking, but if once I say, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye can in no wise enter into the kingdom of God"; if once I tell you that you must be elected of God: that you must be purchased with the Saviour's blood—that you must be converted by the Holy Ghost—you say, "He is a fanatic! Away with him, away with him! We do not want to hear that any more." Christ crucified, is to the Jew—the ceremonialist—a stumblingblock.

But there is another specimen of this Jew to be found. He is thoroughly orthodox in his sentiments. As for forms and ceremonies, he thinks nothing about them. He goes to a place of worship where he learns sound doctrine. He will hear nothing but what is true. He likes that we should have good works and morality. He is a good man, and no one can find fault with him. Here he is, regular in his Sunday pew. In the market he walks before men in all honesty—so you would imagine. Ask him about any doctrine, and he can give you a disquisition upon it. In fact, he could write a treatise upon anything in the Bible, and a great many things besides. He knows almost everything: and here, up in this dark attic of the head, his religion has taken up its abode; he has a best parlor down in his heart, but his religion never goes there—that is shut against it. He has money in there—Mammon, worldliness; or he has something else—self-love, pride. Perhaps he loves to hear experimental preaching; he admires it all; in fact, he loves anything that is sound. But then, he has not any sound in himself; or rather, it is all sound and there is no substance. He likes to hear true doctrine; but it never

penetrates his inner man. You never see him weep. Preach to him about Christ crucified, a glorious subject, and you never see a tear roll down his cheek; tell him of the mighty influence of the Holy Ghost—he admires you for it, but he never had the hand of the Holy Spirit on his soul; tell him about communion with God, plunging in Godhead's deepest sea, and being lost in its immensity—the man loves to hear, but he never experiences, he has never communed with Christ; and accordingly, when you once begin to strike home; when you lay him on the table, take out your dissecting knife, begin to cut him up, and show him his own heart, let him see what it is by nature, and what it must become by grace—the man starts, he cannot stand that; he wants none of that—Christ received in the heart, and accepted. Albeit that he loves it enough in the head, 'tis to him a stumblingblock, and he casts it away. Do you see yourselves here, my friends? See yourselves as God sees you? For so it is, here be many to whom Christ is as much a stumblingblock now as ever he was. O ye formalists! I speak to you; O ye who have the nutshell, but abhor the kernel; O ye who like the trappings and the dress, but care not for that fair virgin who is clothed therewith; O ye who like the paint and the tinsel, but abhor the solid gold, I speak to you; I ask you, does your religion give you solid comfort? Can you stare death in the face with it, and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth?" Can you close your eyes at night, singing as your vesper song—

"I to the end must endure
As sure as the earnest is given"?

Can you bless God for affliction? Can you plunge in, accounted as ye are, and swim through all the floods of trial? Can you march triumphant through the lion's den, laugh at affliction, and bid defiance to hell? Can you? No! Your gospel is an effeminate thing—a thing of words and sounds, and not of power. Cast it from you, I beseech you; it is not worth your keeping; and when you come before the throne of God, you will find it will fail you, and fail you so that you shall never find another; for lost, ruined, destroyed, ye shall find that Christ, who is now "a stumblingblock," will be your Judge.

I have found out the Jew, and I have now to discover the Greek. He is a person of quite a different exterior to the Jew. As to the phylactery, to him it is all rubbish; and as to the broad hemmed garment, he despises it. He does not care for the forms of religion; he has an intense aversion, in fact, to broad-brimmed hats, or to everything which looks like outward show. He likes eloquence; he admires a smart saying; he loves a quaint expression; he likes to read the last new book; he is a Greek, and to him the gospel is foolishness. The Greek is a gentleman found everywhere, now-a-days; manufactured sometimes in colleges, constantly made in schools, produced everywhere. He is on the exchange, in the market; he keeps a shop, rides in a carriage; he is noble, a gentleman; he is everywhere, even in court. He is thoroughly wise. Ask him anything, and he knows it. Ask for a quotation from any of the old poets, or any one else, and he can give it you. If you are a Mohammedan, and plead the claims of your religion, he will hear you very patiently. But if you are a Christian, and talk to him of Jesus Christ, "Stop your cant," he says, "I don't want to hear anything about that." This Grecian gentleman believes all philosophy except the true one; he studies all wisdom except the wisdom of God; he likes all learning except spiritual learning; he loves everything except that which God approves; he likes everything which man makes, and nothing which comes from God; it is foolishness to him, confounded foolishness. You have only to discourse about one doctrine in the Bible, and he shuts his ears; he wishes no longer for your company—it is foolishness. I have met this gentleman a great many times. Once, when I saw him, he told me he did not believe in any religion at all; and when I said I did, and had a hope that when I died I should go to heaven, he said he dared say it was very comfortable, but he did not believe in religion, and that he was sure it was best to live as nature dictated. Another time he spoke well of all religions, and believed they were very good in their place, and all true; and he had no doubt that, if a man were sincere in any kind of religion, he would be alright at last. I told him I did not think so, and that I believed there was but one religion revealed of God—the religion of God's elect, the religion which is the gift of Jesus. He then said I was a begot, and wished me good morning. It was to him foolishness. He had nothing to do with me at all. He either liked no religion, or every religion. Another time I held him by the coat button, and I discussed with him a little about faith. He said, "It is all very well, I believe that is true Protestant doctrine." But presently I said something about election, and he said, "I don't like that; many people have preached that and turned it to bad account." I then hinted something about free grace; but that he could not endure, it was to him foolishness. He was a polished Greek, and thought that if he were not chosen, he ought to be. He never liked that passage, "God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." He thought it was very discreditable to the Bible and when the book was revised, he had no doubt it would be cut out. To such a man—for he is here this morning, very likely come to hear this reed shaken of the wind—I have to say this: Ah! thou wise man, full of worldly wisdom; thy wisdom will stand thee here, but what wilt thou do in the swellings of Jordan? Philosophy may do well for thee to learn upon whilst thou walkest through this world; but the river is deep, and thou wilt want something more than

that. If thou hast not the arm of the Most High to hold thee up in the flood and cheer thee with promises, thou wilt sink, man; with all thy philosophy, thou wilt sink; with all thy learning, thou shalt sink, and be washed into that awful ocean of eternal torment, where thou shalt be forever. Ah! Greeks, it may be foolishness to you, but ye shall see the man your judge, and then shall ye rue the day that e'er ye said that God's gospel was foolishness.

II. Having spoken thus far upon the gospel rejected, I shall now briefly speak upon the GOSPEL TRIUMPHANT. "Unto us who are called, both Jews and Greeks, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Yonder man rejects the gospel, despises grace, and laughs at it as a delusion. Here is another man who laughed at it, too; but God will fetch him down upon his knees. Christ shall not die for nothing. The Holy Ghost shall not strive in vain. God hath said, "My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be abundantly satisfied." If one sinner is not saved, another shall be. The Jew and the Greek shall never depopulate heaven. The choirs of glory shall not lose a single songster by all the opposition of Jews and Greeks; for God hath said it; some shall be called; some shall be saved; some shall be rescued. "Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred, And the fool with it, who insults his Lord. The atonement a Redeemer's love has wrought Is not for you—the righteous need it not. See'st thou yon harlot wooing all she meets, The worn-out nuisance of the public streets Herself from morn till night, from night to morn, Her own abhorrence, and as much your scorn: The gracious shower, unlimited and free, Shall fall on her, when heaven denies it thee. Of all that wisdom dictates, this the drift, That man is dead in sin, and life a gift." If the righteous and good are not saved, if they reject the gospel, there are others who are to be called, others who shall be rescued; for Christ will not lose the merits of his agonies, or the purchase of his blood.

"Unto us who are called." I received a note this week asking me to explain that word *"called"*; because in one passage it says, "Many are called but few are chosen," while in another it appears that all who are called must be chosen. Now, let me observe that there are two calls. As my old friend, John Bunyan, says, the hen has two calls, the common cluck, which she gives daily and hourly, and the special one, which she means for her little chickens. So there is a general call, a call made to every man; every man hears it. Many are called by it; all you are called this morning in that sense, but very few are chosen. The other is a special call, the children's call. You know how the bell sounds over the workshop, to call the men to work—that is a general call. A father goes to the door and calls out, "John, it is dinner time"—that is the special call. Many are called with the general call, but they are not chosen; the special call is for the children only, and that is what is meant in the text, "Unto us who are called, both Jews and Greeks, the power of God and the wisdom of God." That call is always a special one. While I stand here and call men, nobody comes; while I preach to sinners universally, no good is done; it is like the sheet lightning you sometimes see on the summer's evening, beautiful, grand; but whoever heard of anything being struck by it? But the special call is the forked flash from heaven; it strikes somewhere; it is the arrow sent in between the joints of the harness. The call which saves is like that of Jesus, when he said "Mary," and she said unto him "Rabboni." Do you know anything about that special call, my beloved? Did Jesus ever call you by name? Canst thou recollect the hour when he whispered thy name in thine ear, when he said, "Come to me"? If so, you will grant the truth of what I am going to say next about it—that it is an effectual call; there is no resisting it. When God calls with his special call, there is no standing out. Ah! I know I laughed at religion; I despised, I abhorred it; but that call! Oh, I would not come. But God said, "Thou shalt come. All that the Father giveth to me shall come." "Lord, I will not." "But thou shalt," said God. And I have gone up to God's house sometimes almost with a resolution that I would not listen, but listen I must. Oh, how the word came into my soul! Was there a power of resistance? No; I was thrown down; each bone seemed to be broken; I was saved by effectual grace. I appeal to your experience, my friends. When God took you in hand, could you withstand him? You stood against your minister times enough. Sickness did not break you down; disease did not bring you to God's feet; eloquence did not convince you; but when God puts his hand to the work, ah! then what a change. Like Saul, with his horses going to Damascus, that voice from heaven said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" There was no going further then. That was an effectual call. Like that, again, which Jesus gave to Zaccheus, when he was up in the tree; stepping under the tree, he said, "Zaccheus, come down, today I must abide in thy house." Zaccheus was taken in the net; he heard his own name; the call sank into his soul; he could not stop up in the tree, for an almighty impulse drew him down. And I could tell you some singular instances of persons going to the house of God and having their characters described, limned out to perfection, so that they have said, "He is painting me, he is painting me." Just as I might say to that young man here, who stole his master's gloves yesterday, that Jesus calls him to repentance. It may be that there is such a person here; and when the call comes to a peculiar character, it generally comes with a special power. God gives his ministers a brush, and shows them how to use it in painting life-like portraits, and thus the sinner hears the special call. I cannot give the special call; God alone can give it, and I leave it with him. Some must be called. Jew and Greek may laugh, but still there are some who are called, both Jews and Greeks.

Then, to close up this second point, it is a great mercy that many a Jew has been made to drop his self righteousness; many a legalist has been made to drop his legalism, and come to Christ; and many a Greek has bowed his genius at the throne of God's gospel. We have a few such. As Cowper says: "We boast some rich ones whom the gospel sways, And one who wears a coronet, and prays; Like gleanings of an olive tree they show, Here and there one upon the topmost bough."

III. Now we come to our third point, A GOSPEL ADMIRER; unto us who are called of God, it is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Now, beloved, this must be a matter of pure experience between your souls and God. If you are called of God this morning, you will know it. I know there are times when a Christian has to say,

"Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought;
Do I love the Lord or no?
Am I his, or am I not?"

But if a man never in his life knew himself to be a Christian, he never was a Christian. If he never had a moment of confidence, when he could say, "Now I know in whom I have believed," I think I do not utter a harsh thing when I say, that that man could not have been born again; for I do not understand how a man can be killed and then made alive again, and not know it; how a man can pass from death unto life, and not know it; how a man can be brought out of darkness into marvellous liberty without knowing it. I am sure I know it when I shout out my old verse,

"Now free from sin, I walk at large,
My Saviour's blood's my full discharge;
At his dear feet content I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay."

There are moments when the eyes glisten with joy and we can say, "We are persuaded, confident, certain." I do not wish to distress any one who is under doubt. Often gloomy doubts will prevail; there are seasons when you fear you have not been called, when you doubt your interest in Christ. Ah! what a mercy it is that it is not your hold of Christ that saves you, but his hold of you! What a sweet fact that it is not how you grasp his hand, but his grasp of yours, that saves you. Yet I think you ought to know, sometime or other, whether you are called of God. If so, you will follow me in the next part of my discourse, which is a matter of pure experience; unto us who are saved, it is "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

The gospel is to the true believer a thing of power. It is Christ the power of God. Ay, there is a power in God's gospel beyond all description. Once, I, like Mazeppa, bound on the wild horse of my lust, bound hand and foot, incapable of resistance, was galloping on with hell's wolves behind me, howling for my body and my soul, as their just and lawful prey. There came a mighty hand which stopped that wild horse, cut my bands, set me down, and brought me into liberty. Is there power, sir? Ay, there is power, and he who has felt it must acknowledge it. There was a time when I lived in the strong old castle of my sins, and rested in my works. There came a trumpeter to the door, and bade me open it. I with anger chide him from the porch, and said he ne'er should enter. There came a goodly personage, with loving countenance; his hands were marked with scars, where nails were driven, and his feet had nail-prints too; he lifted up his cross, using it as a hammer; at the first blow the gate of my prejudice shook; at the second it trembled more; at the third down it fell, and in he came; and he said, "Arise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have loved thee with an everlasting love." A thing of power! Ah! it is a thing of power. I have felt it *here*, in this heart; I have the witness of the Spirit within, and know it is a thing of might, because it has conquered me; it has bowed me down. "His free grace alone, from the first to the last, Hath won my affection, and held my soul fast." The gospel to the Christian is a thing of power. What is it that makes the young man devote himself as a missionary to the cause of God, to leave father and mother, and go into distant lands? It is a thing of power that does it—it is the gospel. What is it that constrains yonder minister, in the midst of the cholera, to climb up that creaking staircase, and stand by the bed of some dying creature who has that dire disease? It must be a thing of power which leads him to venture his life; it is love of the cross of Christ which bids him do it. What is that which enables one man to stand up before a multitude of his fellows, all unprepared it may be, but determined that he will speak nothing but Christ and him crucified? What is it that enables him to cry, like the war-horse of Job in battle, Aha! and move glorious in might? It is a thing of power that does it—it is Christ crucified. And what emboldens that timid

female to walk down that dark lane in the wet evening, that she may go and sit beside the victim of a contagious fever? What strengthens her to go through that den of thieves, and pass by the profligate and profane? What influences her to enter into that charnel-house of death, and there sit down and whisper words of comfort? Does gold make her do it? They are too poor to give her gold. Does fame make her do it? She shall never be known, nor written among the mighty women of this earth. What makes her do it? Is it love of merit? No; she knows she has no desert before high heaven. What impels her to it? It is the power of the gospel on her heart; it is the cross of Christ; she loves it, and she therefore says—

"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

But I behold another scene. A martyr is going to the stake; the halberd men are around him; the crowds are mocking, but he is marching steadily on. See, they bind him, with a chain around his middle, to the stake; they heap faggots all about him; the flame is lighted up; listen to his words: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." The flames are kindling round his legs; the fire is burning him even to the bone; see him lift up his hands and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though the fire devour this body, yet in my flesh shall I see the Lord." Behold him clutch the stake and kiss it, as if he loved it, and hear him say, "For every chain of iron that man girdeth me with, God shall give me a chain of gold; for all these faggots, and this ignominy and shame, he shall increase the weight of my eternal glory." See all the under parts of his body are consumed; still he lives in the torture; at last he bows himself, and the upper part of his body falls over; and as he falls you hear him say, "Into thy hands I commend my Spirit." What wondrous magic was on him, sirs? What made that man strong? What helped him to bear that cruelty? What made him stand unmoved in the flames? It was the thing of power; it was the cross of Jesus crucified. For "unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

But behold another scene far different. There is no crowd there; it is a silent room. There is a poor pallet, a lonely bed: a physician standing by. There is a young girl: her face is blanched by consumption; long hath the worm eaten her cheek, and though sometimes the flush came, it was the death flush of the deceitful consumption. There she lieth, weak, pale, wan, worn, dying, yet behold a smile upon her face, as if she had seen an angel. She speaketh, and there is music in her voice. Joan of Arc of old was not half so mighty as that girl. She is wrestling with dragons on her death-bed; but see her composure, and hear her dying sonnet:

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past,
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last!"

And with a smile she shuts her eye on earth, and opens it in heaven. What enables her to die like that? It is the thing of power; it is the cross; it is Jesus crucified.

I have little time to discourse upon the other point, and it be far from me to weary you by a lengthened and prosy sermon, but we must glance at the other statement: Christ is, to the called ones, the wisdom of God as well as the power of God. To a believer, the gospel is the perfection of wisdom, and if it appear not so to the ungodly, it is because of the perversion of judgement consequent on their depravity.

An idea has long possessed the public mind, that a religious man can scarcely be a wise man. It has been the custom to talk of infidels, atheists, and deists, as men of deep thought and comprehensive intellect; and to tremble for the Christian controversialist, as if he must surely fall by the hand of his enemy. But this is purely a mistake; for the gospel is the sum of wisdom; an epitome of knowledge; a treasure-house of truth; and a revelation of mysterious secrets. In it we see how justice and mercy may be married; here we behold inexorable law entirely satisfied, and sovereign love bearing away the sinner in triumph. Our meditation upon it enlarges the mind; and as it opens to our soul in successive flashes of glory, we stand astonished at the profound wisdom manifest in it. Ah, dear friends! if ye seek wisdom, ye shall see it displayed in all its greatness; not in the balancing of the clouds, nor the firmness of earth's foundations; not in the measured

march of the armies of the sky, nor in the perpetual motions of the waves of the sea; not in vegetation with all its fairy forms of beauty; nor in the animal with its marvellous tissue of nerve, and vein, and sinew: nor even in man, that last and loftiest work of the Creator. But turn aside and see this great sight!—an incarnate God upon the cross; a substitute atoning for mortal guilt; a sacrifice satisfying the vengeance of Heaven, and delivering the rebellious sinner. Here is essential wisdom; enthroned, crowned, glorified. Admire, ye men of earth, if ye be not blind; and ye who glory in your learning bend your heads in reverence, and own that all your skill could not have devised a gospel at once so just to God, so safe to man.

Remember, my friends, that while the gospel is in itself wisdom, it also confers wisdom on its students; she teaches young men wisdom and discretion, and gives understanding to the simple. A man who is a believing admirer and a hearty lover of the truth as it is in Jesus, is in a right place to follow with advantage any other branch of science. I confess I have a shelf in my head for everything now. Whatever I read I know where to put it; whatever I learn I know where to stow it away. Once when I read books, I put all my knowledge together in glorious confusion; but ever since I have known Christ, I have put Christ in the centre as my sun, and each science revolves round it like a planet, while minor sciences are satellites to these planets. Christ is to me the wisdom of God. I can learn everything now. The science of Christ crucified is the most excellent of sciences, she is to me the wisdom of God. O, young man, build thy studio on Calvary! there raise thine observatory, and scan by faith the lofty things of nature. Take thee a hermit's cell in the garden of Gethsemane, and lave thy brow with the waters of Silo. Let the Bible be thy standard classic—thy last appeal in matters of contention. Let its light be thine illumination, and thou shalt become more wise than Plato, more truly learned than the seven sages of antiquity.

And now, my dear friends, solemnly and earnestly, as in the sight of God, I appeal to you. You are gathered here this morning, I know, from different motives; some of you have come from curiosity; others of you are my regular hearers; some have come from one place and some from another. What have you heard me say this morning? I have told you of two classes of persons who reject Christ; the religionist, who has a religion of form and nothing else; and the man of the world, who calls our gospel foolishness. Now, put your hand upon your heart, and ask yourself this morning, "Am I one of these?" If you are, then walk the earth in all your pride; then go as you came in: but know that for all this the Lord shall bring thee unto judgement; know thou that thy joys and delights shall vanish like a dream, "and, like the baseless fabric of a vision," be swept away forever. Know thou this, moreover, O man, that one day in the halls of Satan, down in hell, I perhaps may see thee amongst those myriad spirits who revolve forever in a perpetual circle with their hands upon their hearts. If thine hand be transparent, and thy flesh transparent, I shall look through thy hand and flesh, and see thy heart within. And how shall I see it? Set in a case of fire—in a case of fire! And there thou shalt revolve forever with the worm gnawing within thy heart, which ne'er shall die—a case of fire around thy never-dying, ever-tortured heart. Good God! let not these men still reject and despise Christ; but let this be the time when they shall be called.

To the rest of you who are called, I need say nothing. The longer you live, the more powerful will you find the gospel to be; the more deeply Christ-taught you are, the more you live under the constant influence of the Holy Spirit, the more you will know the gospel to be a thing of power, and the more also will you understand it to be a thing of wisdom. May every blessing rest upon you; and may God come up with us in the evening!

"Let men or angels dig the mines
Where nature's golden treasure shines;
Brought near the doctrine of the cross,
All nature's gold appears but dross.

Should vile blasphemers with disdain
Pronounce the truths of Jesus vain,
We'll meet the scandal and the shame,
And sing and triumph in his name."

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.

1. Consider him as man too. All that he has as perfect man is yours. As a perfect man he stood before his Father, "full of grace and truth," full of 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? Then 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 indelible 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 removed; 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 oftentimes unconsciously to himself.

3. 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, and 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 acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Why dare you not come to Christ? Oh, you are afraid he will turn you away! 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.

Children Brought to Christ

A Sermon Excerpt (**No. 581**) Delivered on Sunday Morning, July 24th, 1864, by the Rev. C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them" —Mark 10:13-16.

HOW can we bring children to Jesus Christ to be blessed? We cannot do it in a corporeal sense, for Jesus is not here, "he is risen;" but we can bring our children in a true, real, and spiritual sense. We take them up in the arms of our *prayer*. I hope many of us, so soon as our children saw the light, if not before, presented them to God with this anxious prayer, that they might sooner die than live to disgrace their father's God. We only desired children that we might in them live over again another life of service to God; and when we looked into their young faces, we never asked wealth for them, nor fame, nor anything else, but that they might be dear unto God, and that their names might be written in the Lamb's Book of Life. We did then bring our children to Christ as far as we could do it, by presenting them before God, by earnest prayer on their behalf. And have we ceased to bring them to Christ? Nay, I hope we seldom bow the knee without praying for our children. Our daily cry is, "O, that they might live before thee!" God knows that nothing would give us more joy than to see evidence of their conversion; our souls would almost leap out of our bodies with joy, if we should but know that they were the children of the living God. Nor has this privilege been denied to us, for there are some here who can rejoice in a converted household. Truly we can say with the apostle Paul, "I have no greater joy than this, that my children walk in the truth." We continue, therefore, to bring them to Christ by daily, constant, earnest prayer on their behalf. So soon as they become of years capable of understanding the things of God, we endeavour to bring them to Christ by *teaching them the truth*. Hence our Sabbath-schools, hence the use of the Bible and family prayer, and catechizing at home. Any person who shall forbid us to pray for our children, will incur Christ's high displeasure; and any who shall say, "Do not teach your children; they will be converted in God's own time if it be his purpose, therefore leave them to run wild in the streets," will certainly both "sin against the child" and the Lord Jesus. We might as well say, "If that piece of ground is to grow a harvest, it will do so if it be God's good pleasure; therefore leave it, and let the weeds spring up and cover it; do not endeavour for a moment to kill the weeds, or to sow the good seed." Why, such reasoning as this would be not only cruel to our children, but grievously displeasing to Christ. Parents! I do hope you are all endeavouring to bring your children to Christ by teaching them the things of God. Let them not be strangers to the plan of salvation. Never let it be said that a child of yours reached years in which his conscience could act, and he could judge between good and evil, without knowing the doctrine of the atonement, without understanding the great substitutionary work of Christ. Set before your child life and death, hell and heaven, judgment and mercy, his own sin, and Christ's most precious blood; and as you set these before him, labour with him, persuade him, as the apostle did his congregation, with tears and weeping, to turn unto the Lord; and your prayers and supplications shall be heard so that the Spirit of God shall bring them to Jesus...

I cannot tell you how much I owe to the solemn words of my good mother. It was the custom on Sunday

evenings, while we were yet little children, for her to stay at home with us, and then we sat round the table and read verse by verse, and she explained the Scripture to us. After that was done, then came the time of pleading; there was a little piece of "Alleyn's Alarm," or of Baxter's "Call to the Unconverted," and this was read with pointed observations made to each of us as we sat round the table; and the question was asked how long it would be before we would think about our state, how long before we would seek the Lord. Then came a mother's prayer, and some of the words of a mother's prayer we shall never forget, even when our hair is grey. I remember on one occasion her praying thus: "Now, Lord, if my children go on in their sins, it will not be from ignorance that they perish, and my soul must bear a swift witness against them at the day of judgment if they lay not hold of Christ." That thought of a mother's bearing swift witness against me, pierced my conscience and stirred my heart. This pleading with them for God and with God for them is the true way to bring children to Christ. Sunday-school teachers! you have a high and noble work, press forward in it. In our schools you do not try to bring children to the baptism for regeneration, you point them away from ceremonies; if I know the teachers of this school aright, I know you are trying to bring your classes to Christ. Let Christ be the sum and substance of your teaching in the school. Young men and young women, in your classes lift up Christ, lift him up on high; and if anybody shall say to you, "Why do you thus talk to the children?" you can say, "Because my soul yearns towards them, and I pant for their conversion;" and if any should afterwards object, you can remember that Jesus is greatly displeased with *them*, and not with you, for you only obey the injunction, "Feed my lambs."

Coming to Christ means laying hold upon Christ with the hand of faith; looking to him for my life, my pardon, my salvation, my everything. If there be a poor little child here who is saying in her little heart, or his little heart, "I would like to come to Christ, O that I might be pardoned while I am yet a little one"—come, little lamb; come, and welcome. Did I hear your cry? Was it this?

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to thee."

Dear little one, Jesus will not despise your lisps, nor will his servant keep you back. Jesus calls you, come and receive his blessing. If any of you say a word to keep the young heart back, Jesus will be displeased with you. Now I am afraid some do that; those, for instance, who think that the gospel is not for little children. Many of my brethren, I am sorry to say, preach in such a way that there is no hope of children ever getting any good by their preaching. I cannot glory in learning or eloquence, but in this one thing I may rejoice, that there is always a number of happy children here, who are quite as attentive as any of my audience. I do love to think that the gospel is suitable to little children. There are boys and girls in many of our Sabbath-school classes down below stairs who are as truly converted to God as any of us. Nay, and if you were to speak with them about the things of God, though you should get to the knotty points of election and predestination, you would find those boys and girls well taught in the things of the kingdom: they know free will from free grace, and you cannot puzzle them when you come to talk about the work of Jesus and the work of the Spirit, for they can discern between things which differ. But a minister who preaches as though he never wanted to bring children to Christ, and shoots right over the little one's heads, I do think Jesus is displeased with him.

Then there are others who doubt whether children ever will be converted. They do not look upon it as a thing likely to happen, and whenever they hear of a believing child, they hold up their hands at the prodigy, and say, "What a wonder of grace!" It ought to be, and in those Churches where the gospel is simply preached, it is as common a thing for children to be converted as for grown-up people to be brought to Christ. Others begin to doubt the truth of juvenile conversions. They say, "They are very young, can they understand the gospel? Is it not merely an infantile emotion, a mere profession?" My brethren, you have no more right to suspect the sincerity of the young, than to mistrust the grey-headed; you ought to receive them with the same open-breasted confidence with which you receive others when they profess to have found the Saviour. Do, I pray you, whenever you see the faintest desire in your children, go down on your knees, as your servant does, when the fire is almost out, and blow the spark with your own breath—seek by prayer to fan that spark to a flame. Do not despise any godly remark the child may make. Do not puff the child up on account of the goodness of the remark, lest you make him vain and so injure him, but do encourage him; let his first little prayers be noticed by you; though you may not like to teach him a form of prayer—I shall not care if you do not—yet teach him what prayer is; tell him to express his desires in his own words, and when he does so, join ye in it and plead with God on his behalf, that your little one may speedily find true peace in a Saviour's blood. You must not, unless you would displease my Master, keep back the smallest child that longs to come to Christ.

Here let us observe that the principle is of general application; you must not hinder any awakened soul from seeking the Saviour. O my brethren and sisters, I hope we have such a love for souls, such an instinct within us to desire to see the travail of Christ's soul, that instead of putting stumbling-blocks in the way, we would do the best we could to gather out the stones. On Sabbath days I have laboured to clear up the doubts and fears which afflict coming sinners; I have entreated God the Holy Spirit to enable me so to speak, that those things which hindered you from coming to the Saviour might be removed; but how sad must be the case of those who delight themselves in putting stumbling-blocks in men's way. The doctrine of election for instance, a great and glorious truth, full of comfort to God's people; how often is that made to frighten sinners from Jesus! There is a way of preaching that with a drawn sword, and say, "You must not come unless you know you are one of God's elect." That is not the way to preach the doctrine. The true way of preaching it is, "God has a chosen people, and I hope you are one of them; come, lay hold on Jesus, put your trust in him." Then there be others who preach up frames and feelings as a preparation for Christ. They do in effect say, "Unless you have felt so much depression of spirit, or experienced a certain quantity of brokenness of heart, you must not come to Christ," instead of declaring, that whosoever will is permitted to come, and that the true way of coming to Christ is not with a qualification of frames and feeling and mental depressions, but just as you are. Oh! it is my soul's delight to preach a gospel which has an open door to it, to preach a mercy-seat which has no veil before it; the veil is rent in twain, and now the biggest sinner out of hell who desires to come, is welcome. You who are eighty years of age, and have hated Christ all the time, if now the Spirit of God makes you willing to come, Christ seems to say, "Suffer the grey-headed to come unto me, and forbid them not:" while to you little children, he stretches out his arms in the same manner, "Suffer the little children to come unto me." O my beloved, see to it that your heart longs to come to Christ, and not to ceremonies! I stand here this day to cry, "Come ye to the cross, not to the font." When I forget to lift up the Lord Jesus, and to cast down the forms of man's devising, "let my right hand forget her cunning," and "let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth"—None but Jesus, none but Jesus, Can do helpless sinners good;" The font is a mockery and an imposition if it be put before Christ. If you have baptism after you have come to Christ, well and good, but to point you to it either as being Christ, or as being inevitably connected with Christ, or as being the place to find Christ, is nothing better than to go back to the beggarly elements of the old Romish harlot, instead of standing in the "liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and bidding the sinner to come as a sinner to Christ Jesus, and to Christ Jesus alone.

III. In the third and last place, let us also gather from our text, that WHEN WE DISCOURAGE ANY, WE ALWAYS GO UPON WRONG GROUNDS. Here was the case of children. I suppose that the grounds upon which the apostles kept back the children would be one of these—either that the children could not receive a blessing, or else that they could not receive it worthily.

Did they imagine that these little children could not receive the blessing? Perhaps so, for they thought them too young. Now, brethren, that was a wrong ground to go upon, for these children could receive the blessing and they did receive it, for Jesus took them in his arms and blessed them. If I keep back a child from coming to Christ on the ground that he is too young, I do it in the face of facts; because there have been children brought to Christ at an extremely early period. You who are acquainted with Janeway's "Tokens for Children," have noticed very many beautiful instances of early conversion. Our dear friend, Mrs. Rogers, in that book of hers, "The Folded Lamb," gave a very sweet picture of a little son of hers, soon folded in the Saviour's bosom above, who, as early as two or three years of age, rejoiced and knew the Saviour. I do not doubt at all, I cannot doubt it, because one has seen such cases, that children of two or three years of age may have precocity of knowledge, and of grace; a forwardness which in almost every case has betokened early death, but which has been perfectly marvellous to those who have talked with them. The fact is that we do not all at the same age arrive at that degree of mental stature which is necessary for understanding the things of God. Children have been reported as reading Latin, Greek, and other languages, at five or six years of age. I do not know that such early scholarship is any great blessing, it is better not to reach that point so soon; but some children are all that their minds ever will be at three or four, and then they go home to heaven; and so long as the mind has been brought up to such a condition that it is capable of understanding, it is also capable of faith, if the Holy Spirit shall implant it. To suppose that he ever did give faith to an unconscious babe is ridiculous; that there can be any faith in a child that knows nothing whatever I must always take ground to doubt, for "How shall they believe without a preacher?" And yet they are brought up to make a profession in their long-clothes, when they have never heard a sermon in their lives. But those dear children to whom I have before referred, have understood the preacher, have understood the truth, have rejoiced in the truth, and their first young lisplings have been as full of grace as those glorious expressions of aged saints in their triumphant departures. Children are capable, then, of receiving the grace of God. Do mark by the way, that all those champions who have come out against me so valiantly, have made a mistake; they have said that we deny that little infants may be regenerated; we do not deny that God can regenerate them if he pleases; we do not know anything

about what may or may not happen to unconscious babes; but we did say that little children were not regenerated by their godparents telling lies at a font—we did say that, and we say it again, that little children are not regenerated, nor made members of Christ, nor children of God, nor inheritors of the kingdom of heaven, by solemn mockery, in which godfathers and godmothers promise to do for them what they cannot do for themselves, much less for their children. That is the point; and if they will please to meet it, we will answer them again, but till such time as that, we shall probably let them talk on till God gives them grace to know better.

The other ground upon which the apostles put back the children would be, that although the children might receive the blessing, *they might not be able to receive it worthily*. The Lord Jesus in effect assures them that so far from the way in which a little child enters into the kingdom of heaven being exceptional, it is the rule; and the very way in which a child enters the kingdom, is the way in which everybody must enter it. How does a child enter the kingdom of heaven? Why, its faith is very simple; it does not understand mysteries and controversies, but it believes what it is told upon the authority of God's Word, and it comes to God's Word without previous prejudice. It has its natural sinfulness, but grace overcomes it, and the child receives the Word as it finds it. You will notice in boyish and girlish conversions, a peculiar simplicity of belief: they believe just what Christ says, exactly what he says. If they pray, they believe Christ will hear them: if they talk about Jesus, it is as of a person near at hand. They do not, as we do, get into the making of these things into mysteries and shadows, but little children have a realizing power. Then they have great rejoicing. The most cheerful Christians we have are young believers; and the most cheerful old Christians are those who were converted when they were young. Why, see the joy of a child that finds a Saviour! "Mother," he says, "I have sought Jesus Christ, and I have trusted him, and I am saved." He does not say, "I hope," and "I trust," but "I am;" and then he is ready to leap for joy because he is saved. Of the many boys and girls whom we have received into Church-fellowship, I can say of them all, they have all gladdened my heart, and I have never received any with greater confidence than I have these: this I have noticed about them, they have greater joy and rejoicing than any others; and I take it, it is because they do not ask so many questions as others do, but take Jesus Christ's word as they find it, and believe in it. Well now, just the very way in which a child receives Christ, is the way in which you must receive Christ if you would be saved. You who know so much that you know *too* much; you who have big brains; you who are always thinking, and have tendency to criticism, and perhaps to scepticism, you must come and receive the gospel as a little child. You will never get a hold of my Lord and Master while you are wearing that quizzing cap; no, you must take it off, and by the power of the Holy Spirit you must come trusting Jesus, simply trusting him, for this is the right way to receive the kingdom.

But here, let me say, the principle which holds good in little children holds good in all other cases as well. Take for instance the case of very great sinners, men who have been gross offenders against the laws of their country. Some would say they cannot be saved; they can be for some of them have been. Others would say they never receive the truth as it is in Jesus in the right manner; ay, but they do. How do great sinners receive Christ? There are some here who have been reclaimed from drunkenness, and I know not what. My brethren, how did you receive Christ? Why in this way. You said, "All unholy, all unclean, I am nothing else but sin; but if I am saved, it will be grace, grace, grace." Why, when you and I stood up, black, and foul, and filthy, and yet dared to believe in Christ, we said, "If we are saved, we shall be prodigies of divine mercy, and we will sing of his love for ever." Well but, my dear friends, you must all receive Jesus Christ in that very way. That which would raise an objection to the salvation of the big sinner is thrown back upon you, for Christ might well say, "Except ye receive these things as the chief of sinners, ye cannot enter the kingdom." I will prove my point by the instance of the apostle Paul. He has been held by some to be an exception to the rule, but Paul did not think so, for he says that God in him showed forth all longsuffering for a pattern to them that believe, and made him as it were a type of all conversions; so that instead of being an exception his was to be the rule. You see what I am driving at. The case of the children looks exceptional, but it is not; it has, on the contrary, all the features about it which must be found in every true conversion. It is of such that the kingdom of heaven is composed, and if we are not such we cannot enter it. Let this induce all of us who love the Lord, to pray for the conversion both of children and of all sorts of men. Let our compassion expand, let us shut out none from the plea of our heart; in prayer and in faith let us bring all who come under our range, hoping and believing that some of them will be found in the election of grace, that some of them will be washed in the Saviour's blood, and that some of them will shine as stars in the firmament of God for ever. Let us, on no consideration, believe that the salvation of any man or child is beyond the range of possibility, for the Lord saveth whom he wills. Let no difficulties which seem to surround the case hinder our efforts; let us, on the contrary, push with greater eagerness forward, believing that where there seems to be some special difficulty, there will be manifested, as in the children's case, some special privilege. O labour for souls, my dear friends! I beseech you live to win souls. This is the best rampart against error, a rampart built of living stones—converted men and women. This is the way to push back the advances of Popery, by imploring the Lord to work conversions.

I do not think that mere controversial preaching will do much, though it must be used; it is grace-work we want; it is bringing you to Christ, it is getting you to lay hold of him—it is this which shall put the devil to a nonplus and expand the kingdom of Christ. O that my God would bring some of you to Jesus! If he is displeased with those who would keep you back, then see how willing he is to receive you. Is there in your soul any desire towards him? Come and welcome, sinner, come. Do you feel now that you must have Christ or die? Come and have him, he is to be had for the asking. Has the Lord taught you your need of Jesus? Ye thirsty ones, come and drink; ye hungry ones, come and eat. Yea, this is the proclamation of the gospel to-day, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." I do trust there may be encouragement in this to some of you. I pray my Master make you feel it. If he be angry with those who keep you back, then he must be willing to receive you, glad to receive you; and if you come to him he will in no wise cast you out. May the Lord add his blessing on these words for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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, for 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 have 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."

Christ's First and Last Subject

A Sermon (No. 329) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, August 19th, 1860, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON at Exeter Hall, Strand. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—Matthew 4:17. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"—Luke 24:47.

IT SEEMS from these two texts that repentance was the first subject upon which the Redeemer dwelt, and that it was the last, which, with his departing breath, he commended to the earnestness of his disciples. He begins his mission crying, "Repent," he ends it by saying to his successors the apostles, "Preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." This seems to me to be a very interesting fact, and not simply interesting, but instructive. Jesus Christ opens his commission by preaching repentance. What then? Did he not by this act teach us how important repentance was—so important that the very first time he opens his mouth, he shall begin with, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Did he not feel that repentance was necessary to be preached before he preached faith in himself, because the soul must first repent of sin before it will seek a Saviour, or even care to know whether there is a Saviour at all? And did he not also indicate to us that as repentance was the opening lesson of the divine teaching, so, if we would be his disciples, we must begin by sitting on the stool of repentance, before we can possibly go upward to the higher forms of faith and of full assurance? Jesus at the first begins with repentance,—that repentance may be the Alpha, the first letter of the spiritual alphabet which all believers must learn; and when he concluded his divine commission with repentance, what did he say to us but this—that repentance was still of the very last importance? He preaches it with his first, he will utter it with his last breath; with this he begins, with this he will conclude. He knew that repentance was, to spiritual life, a sort of Alpha and Omega—it was the duty of the beginning, it was the duty of the end. He seemed to say to us, "Repentance, which I preached to you three years ago, when I first came into the world, as a public teacher, is as binding, as necessary for you who heard me then, and who then obeyed my voice, as it was at the very first instant, and it is equally needful that you who have been with me from the beginning, should not imagine that the theme is exhausted and out of date; you too must begin your ministry and conclude it with the same exhortation, 'Repent and be converted, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" It seems to me that nothing could set forth Jesus Christ's idea of the high value of repentance, more fully and effectually than the fact that he begins with it, and that he concludes with it—that he should say, "Repent," as the key-note of his ministry, preaching this duty before he fully develops all the mystery of godliness, and that he should close his life-song as a good composer must, with his first key-note, bidding his disciples still cry, "Repentance and remission of sins are preached in Jesus' name." I feel then that I need no further apology for introducing to your solemn and serious attention, the subject of saving repentance. And oh! while we are talking of it, may God the Holy Ghost breathe into all our spirits, and may we now repent before him, and now find those blessings which he hath promised to the penitent.

With regard to repentance, these four things:—first, *its origin*; secondly, *its essentials*; thirdly, *its companions*; and fourthly, *its excellencies*.

I. Repentance—ITS ORIGIN.

When we cry, "Repent and be converted," there are some foolish men who call us legal. Now we beg to state, at the opening of this first point, that *repentance is of gospel parentage*. It was not born near Mount Sinai. It never was brought forth anywhere but upon Mount Zion. Of course, repentance is *a duty*—a natural duty—because, when man hath sinned, who is there brazen enough to say that it is not man's bounden duty to repent of having done so? It is a duty which even nature itself would teach. But gospel repentance was never yet produced as a matter of duty. It was never brought forth in the soul by demands of law, nor indeed can the law, except as the instrument in the hand of grace, even assist the soul towards saving repentance. It is a remarkable fact that the law itself makes no provision for repentance. It says, "This do, and thou shalt live; break my command, and thou shalt die." There is nothing said about penitence; there is no offer of pardon made to those that repent. The law pronounces its deadly curse upon the man that sins but once, but it offers no way of escape, no door by which the man may be restored to favour. The barren sides of Sinai have no soil in which to nourish the lovely plant of penitence. Upon Sinai the dew of mercy never fell. Its lightnings and its thunders have frightened away the angel of Mercy once for all, and there Justice sits, with sword of flame, upon its majestic throne of rugged rock, never purposing for a moment to put up its sword into the scabbard, and to forgive the offender. Read attentively the twentieth chapter of Exodus. You have the commandments there all thundered forth with trumpet voice, but there is no pause between where Mercy with her silver voice may step in and say, "But if ye break this law, God will have mercy upon you, and will shew himself gracious if ye repent." No words of repentance, I say, were ever proclaimed by the law; no promise by it made to penitents; and no assistance is by the law ever offered to those who desire to be forgiven. Repentance is a gospel grace. Christ preached it, but not Moses. Moses neither can nor will assist a soul to repent, only Jesus can use the law as a means of conviction and an argument for repentance. Jesus gives pardon to those who seek it with weeping and with tears; but Moses knows of no such thing. If repentance is ever obtained by the poor sinner, it must be found at the foot of the cross, and not where the ten commandments lie shivered at Sinai's base.

And as repentance is of gospel parentage, I make a second remark, *it is also of gracious origin*. Repentance

was never yet produced in any man's heart apart from the grace of God. As soon may you expect the leopard to regret the blood with which its fangs are moistened,—as soon might you expect the lion of the wood to abjure his cruel tyranny over the feeble beasts of the plain, as expect the sinner to make any confession, or offer any repentance that shall be accepted of God, unless grace shall first renew the heart. Go and loose the bands of everlasting winter in the frozen north with your own feeble breath, and then hope to make tears of penitence bedew the cheek of the hardened sinner. Go ye and divide the earth, and pierce its bowels with an infant's finger, and then hope that your eloquent appeal, unassisted by divine grace, shall be able to penetrate the adamant heart of man. Man can sin, and he can continue in it, but to leave the hateful element is a work for which he needs a power divine. As the river rushes downward with increasing fury, leaping from crag to crag in ponderous cataracts of power, so is the sinner in his sin; onward and downward, onward, yet more swiftly, more mightily, more irresistibly, in his hellish course. Nothing but divine grace can bid that cataract leap upward, or make the floods retrace the pathway which they have worn for themselves down the rocks. Nothing, I say, but the power which made the world, and digged the foundations of the great deep, can ever make the heart of man a fountain of life from which the floods of repentance may gush forth. So then, soul, if thou shalt ever repent, it must be a repentance, not of nature, but of grace. Nature can imitate repentance; it can produce remorse; it can generate the feeble resolve; it can even lead to a partial, practical reform; but unaided nature cannot touch the vitals and new-create the soul. Nature may make the eyes weep, but it cannot make the heart bleed. Nature can bid you amend your ways, but it cannot renew your heart. No, you must look upward, sinner; you must look upward to him who is able to save unto the uttermost. You must at his hands receive the meek and tender spirit; from his finger must come the touch that shall dissolve the rock; and from his eye must dart the flash of love and light that can scatter the darkness of your impenitence. Remember, then, at the outset, that true repentance is of gospel origin, and is not the work of the law; and on the other hand, it is of gracious origin, and is not the work of the creature.

II. But to pass forward from this first point to our second head, let us notice the ESSENTIALS of true repentance. The old divines adopted various methods of explaining penitence. Some of them said it was a precious medicine, compounded of six things; but in looking over their divisions, I have felt that I might with equal success divide repentance into four different ingredients. This precious box of ointment which must be broken over the Saviour's head before the sweet perfume of peace can ever be smelt in the soul—this precious ointment is compounded of four most rare, most costly things. God give them to us and then give us the compound itself mixed by the Master's hand. True repentance consists of illumination, humiliation, detestation, and transformation.

To take them one by one. The first part of true repentance consists of *illumination*. Man by nature is impenitent, because he does not know himself to be guilty. There are many acts which he commits in which he sees no sin, and even in great and egregious faults, he often knows that he is not right, but he does not perceive the depth, the horrible enormity of the sin which is involved in them. Eye-salve is one of the first medicines which the Lord uses with the soul. Jesus touches the eye of the understanding, and the man becomes guilty in his own sight, as he always was guilty in the sight of God. Crimes long forgotten start up from the grave where his forgetfulness had buried them; sins, which he thought were no sins, suddenly rise up on their true character, and acts, which he thought were perfect, now discover themselves to have been so mixed with evil motive that they were far from being acceptable with God. The eye is no more blind, and therefore the heart is no more proud, for the seeing eye will make a humble heart. If I must paint a picture of penitence in this first stage, I should portray a man with his eyes bandaged walking through a path infested with the most venomous vipers; vipers which have formed a horrible girdle about his loins, and are hanging like bracelets from his wrists. The man is so blind that he knows not where he is, nor what it is which he fancies to be a jewelled belt upon his arm. I would then in the picture touch his eyes and bid you see his horror, and his astonishment, when he discovers where he is and what he is. He looks behind him, and he sees through what broods of vipers he has walked; he looks before him, and he sees how thickly his future path is strewn with these venomous beasts. He looks about him, and in his living bosom looking out from his guilty heart, he sees the head of a vile serpent, which has twisted its coils into his very vitals. I would try, if I could, to throw into that face, horror, dismay, dread, and sorrow, a longing to escape, an anxious desire to get rid of all these things which must destroy him unless he should escape from them. And now, my dear hearers, have you ever been the subject of this divine illumination? Has God, who said to an unformed world, "Let there be light," has he said, "Let there be light" in your poor benighted soul? Have you learned that your best deeds have been vile, and that as for your sinful acts they are ten thousand times more wicked than ever you believed them to be? I will not believe that you have ever repented unless you have first received divine illumination. I cannot expect a blind eye to see the filth upon a black hand, nor can I ever believe that the understanding which has never been enlightened can detect the sin which has stained your daily life.

Next to illumination, comes *humiliation*. The soul having seen itself, bows before God, strips itself of all its

vain boasting, and lays itself flat on its face before the throne of mercy. It could talk proudly once of merit, but now it dares not pronounce the word. Once it could boast itself before God, with "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are"; but now it stands in the distance, and smites upon its breast, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Now the haughty eye, the proud look, which God abhorreth, are cast away, and the eye, instead thereof, becomes a channel of tears—its floods are perpetual, it mourneth, it weepeth, and the soul crieth out both day and night before God, for it is vexed with itself, because it has vexed the Holy Spirit, and is grieved within itself because it hath grieved the Most High. Here if I had to depict penitence, I should borrow the picture of the men of Calais before our conquering king. There they kneel, with ropes about their necks, clad in garments of sackcloth, and ashes cast about their heads, confessing that they deserve to die; but stretching out their hands they implore mercy; and one who seems the personification of the angel of mercy—or rather, of Christ Jesus, the God of mercy—stands pleading with the king to spare their lives. Sinner, thou hast never repented unless that rope has been about thy neck after a spiritual fashion, if thou hast not felt that hell is thy just desert, and that if God banish thee for ever from himself, to the place where hope and peace can never come, he has only done with thee what thou hast richly earned. If thou hast not felt that the flames of hell are the ripe harvest which thy sins have sown, thou hast never yet repented at all. We must acknowledge the justice of the penalty as well as the guilt of the sin, or else it is but a mock repentance which we pretend to possess. Down on thy face, sinner, down on thy face; put away thine ornaments from thee, that he may know what to do with thee. No more anoint thine head and wash thy face, but fast and bow thy head and mourn. Thou hast made heaven mourn, thou hast made earth sad, thou hast digged hell for thyself. Confess thine iniquity with shame, and with confusion of face; bow down before the God of mercy and acknowledge that if he spare thee it will be his free mercy that shall do it; but if he destroy thee, thou shalt not have one word to say against the justice of the solemn sentence. Such a stripping does the Holy Spirit give, when he works this repentance, that men sometimes under it sink so low as even to long for death in order to escape from the burden which soul-humiliation has cast upon them. I do not desire that you should have that terror, but I do pray that you may have no boasting left, that you may stop your mouth and feel that if now the judgment hour were set, and the judgment day were come, you must stand speechless, even though God should say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire in hell." Without this I say there is no genuine evangelical repentance.

The third ingredient is *detestation*. The soul must go a step further than mere sorrow; it must come to hate sin, to hate the very shadow of it, to hate the house where once sin and it were boon companions, to hate the bed of pleasure and all its glittering tapestries, yea, to hate the very garments spotted with the flesh. There is no repentance where a man can talk lightly of sin, much less where he can speak tenderly and lovingly of it. When sin cometh to thee delicately, like Agag, saying, "Surely the bitterness of death is past," if thou hast true repentance it will rise like Samuel and hew thy Agag in pieces before the Lord. As long as thou harbourest one idol in thy heart, God will never dwell there. Thou must break not only the images of wood and of stone, but of silver and of gold; yea, the golden calf itself, which has been thy chief idolatry, must be ground in powder and mingled in the bitter water of penitence, and thou must be made to drink thereof. There is such a loathing of sin in the soul of the true penitent that he cannot bear its name. If you were to compel him to enter its palaces he would be wretched. A penitent cannot bear himself in the house of the profane. He feels as if the house must fall upon him. In the assembly of the wicked he would be like a dove in the midst of ravenous kites. As well may the sheep lick blood with the wolf, as well may the dove be comrade at the vulture's feast of carrion, as a penitent sinner revel in sin. Through infirmity he may slide into it, but through grace he will rise out of it and abhor even his clothes in which he has fallen into the ditch (Job 9:31). The sinner unrepentant, like the sow, wallows in the mire; but the penitent sinner, like the swallow, may sometimes dip his wings in the limpid pool of iniquity, but he is aloft again, twittering forth with the chattering of the swallow most pitiful words of penitence, for he grieves that he should have so debased himself and sinned against his God. My hearer, if thou dost not so hate thy sins as to be ready to give them all up—if thou art not willing now to hang them on Haman's gallows a hundred and twenty cubits high—if thou canst not shake them off from thee as Paul did the viper from his hand, and shake it into the fire with detestation, then, I say, thou knowest not the grace of God in truth; for if thou lovest sin thou lovest neither God nor thyself, but thou chooseth thine own damnation. Thou art in friendship with death and in league with hell; God deliver thee from this wretched state of heart, and bring thee to detest thy sin.

There lacks one more ingredient yet. We have had illumination, humiliation, and detestation. There must be another thing, namely, a thorough *transformation*, for—

"Repentance is to leave
The sins we loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve
By doing so no more."

The penitent man reforms his outward life. The reform is not partial, but in heart, it is universal and complete. Infirmity may mar it, but grace will always be striving against human infirmity, and the man will hate and abandon every false way. Tell me not, deceptive tradesman, that you have repented of your sin while lying placards are still upon your goods. Tell me not, thou who wast once a drunkard, that thou hast turned to God while yet the cup is dear to thee, and thou canst still wallow in it by excess. Come not to me and say I have repented, thou avaricious wretch, whilst thou art yet grinding thine almost cent, per cent, out of some helpless tradesman whom thou hast taken like a spider in thy net. Come not to me and say thou are forgiven, when thou still harboureth revenge and malice against thy brother, and speaketh against thine own mother's son. Thou liest to thine own confusion. Thy face is as the whore's forehead that is brazen, if thou darest to say "I have repented," when thine arms are up to the elbow in the filth of thine iniquity. Nay, man, God will not forgive your lusts while you are still revelling in the bed of your uncleanness. And do you imagine he will forgive your drunken feasts while you are still sitting at the glutton's table! Shall he forgive your profanity when your tongue is still quivering with an oath? Think you that God shall forgive your daily transgressions when you repeat them again, and again, and again, wilfully plunging into the mire? He will wash thee, man, but he will not wash thee for the sake of permitting thee to plunge in again and defile thyself once more. "Well," do I hear you say, "I do feel that such a change as that has taken place in me." I am glad to hear it, my dear sir; but I must ask you a further question. Divine transformation is not merely in act but in the very soul; the new man not only does not sin as he used to do, but he does not want to sin as he used to do. The flesh-pots of Egypt sometimes send up a sweet smell in his nostrils, and when he passes by another man's house, where the leek, and garlic, and onion are steaming in the air, he half wishes to go back again to his Egyptian bondage, but in a moment he checks himself, saying, "No, no; the heavenly manna is better than this; the water out of the rock is sweeter than the waters of the Nile, and I cannot return to my old slavery under my old tyrant." There may be insinuations of Satan, but his soul rejects them, and agonizes to cast them out. His very heart longs to be free from every sin, and if he could be perfect he would. There is not one sin he would spare. If you want to give him pleasure, you need not ask him to go to your haunt of debauchery; it would be the greatest pain to him you could imagine. It is not only his customs and manners, but his nature that is changed. You have not put new leaves on the tree, but there is a new root to it. It is not merely new branches, but there is a new trunk altogether, and new sap, and there will be new fruit as the result of this newness. A glorious transformation is wrought by a gracious God. His penitence has become so real and so complete that the man is not the man he used to be. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus. If you are renewed by grace, and were to meet your old self, I am sure you would be very anxious to get out of his company. "No," say you, "no, sir, I cannot accompany you." "Why, you used to swear!" "I cannot now." "Well, but," says he, "you and I are very near companions." "Yes, I know we are, and I wish we were not. You are a deal of trouble to me every day. I wish I could be rid of you for ever." "But," says Old Self, "you used to drink very well." "Yes, I know it. I know thou didst, indeed, Old Self. Thou couldst sing a song as merrily as any one. Thou wast ringleader in all sorts of vice, but I am no relation of thine now. Thou art of the old Adam, and I of the new Adam. Thou art of thine old father, the devil; but I have another—my Father, who is in heaven." I tell you, brethren, there is no man in the world you will hate so much as your old self, and there will be nothing you will so much long to get rid of as that old man who once was dragging you down to hell, and who will try his hand at it over and over again every day you live, and who will accomplish it yet, unless that divine grace which has made you a new man shall keep you a new man even to the end.

Good Rowland Hill, in his "Village Dialogues," gives the Christian, whom he describes in the first part of the book, the name of Thomas Newman. Ah! and everyman who goes to heaven must have the name of new-man. We must not expect to enter there unless we are created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. I have thus, as best I could, feeling many and very sad distractions in my own mind, endeavored to explain the essentials of true repentance—illumination, humiliation, detestation, transformation. The endings of the words, though they are long words may commend them to your attention and assist you to retain them.

III. And now, with all brevity, let me notice, in the third place, the COMPANIONS of true repentance.

Her first companion is *faith*. There was a question once asked by the old Puritan divines—Which was first in the soul, Faith or Repentance? Some said that a man could not truly repent of sin until he believed in God, and had some sense of a Saviour's love. Others said a man could not have faith till he had repented of sin; for he must hate sin before he could trust Christ. So a good old minister who was present made the following remark: "Brethren," said he, "I don't think you can ever settle this question. It would be something like asking whether, when an infant is born, the circulation of the blood, or the beating of the pulse can be first observed"? Said he, "It seems to me that faith and repentance are simultaneous. They come at the same moment. There could be no true repentance without faith. There never was yet true faith without sincere

repentance." We endorse that opinion. I believe they are like the Siamese twins; they are born together, and they could not live asunder, but must die if you attempt to separate them. Faith always walks side by side with his weeping sister, true Repentance. They are born in the same house at the same hour, and they will live in the same heart every day, and on your dying bed, while you will have faith on the one hand to draw the curtain of the next world, you will have repentance, with its tears, as it lets fall the curtain upon the world from which you are departing. You will have at the last moment to weep over your own sins, and yet you shall see through that tear the place where tears are washed away. Some say there is no faith in heaven. Perhaps there is not. If there be none, then there will be no repentance, but if there be faith there will be repentance, for where faith lives, repentance must live with it. They are so united, so married and allied together, that they never can be parted, in time or in eternity. Hast thou, then, faith in Jesus? Does thy soul look up and trust thyself in his hands? If so, then hast thou the repentance that needeth not to be repented of.

There is another sweet thing which always goes with repentance, just as Aaron went with Moses, to be spokesman for him, for you must know that Moses was slow of speech, and so is repentance. Repentance has fine eyes, but stammering lips. In fact, it usually happens that repentance speaks through her eyes and cannot speak with her lips at all, except her friend—who is a good spokesman—is near; he is called, *Mr. Confession*. This man is noted for his open breastedness. He knows something of himself, and he tells all that he knows before the throne of God. Confession keeps back no secrets. Repentance sighs over the sin—confession tells it out. Repentance feels the sin to be heavy within—confession plucks it forth and indicts it before the throne of God. Repentance is the soul in travail—confession delivers it. My heart is ready to burst, and there is a fire in my bones through repentance—confession gives the heavenly fire a vent, and my soul flames upward before God. Repentance, alone, hath groanings which cannot be uttered—confession is the voice which expresses the groans. Now then, hast thou made confession of thy sin—not to man, but to God? If thou hast, then believe that thy repentance cometh from him, and it is a godly sorrow that needeth not to be repented of.

Holiness is evermore the bosom friend of penitence. Fair angel, clad in pure white linen, she loves good company and will never stay in a heart where repentance is a stranger. Repentance must dig the foundations, but holiness shall erect the structure, and bring forth the top-stone. Repentance is the clearing away of the rubbish of the past temple of sin; holiness builds the new temple which the Lord our God shall inherit. Repentance and desires after holiness never can be separated.

Yet once more—wherever repentance is, there cometh also with it, *peace*. As Jesus walked upon the waters of Galilee, and said, "Peace, be still," so peace walks over the waters of repentance, and brings quiet and calm into the soul. If thou wouldst shake the thirst of thy soul, repentance must be the cup out of which thou shalt drink, and then sweet peace shall be the blessed effect. Sin is such a troublesome companion that it will always give thee the heartache till thou hast turned it out by repentance, and then thy heart shall rest and be still. Sin is the rough wind that tears through the forest, and sways every branch of the trees to and fro; but after penitence hath come into the soul the wind is hushed, and all is still, and the birds sing in the branches of the trees which just now creaked in the storm. Sweet peace repentance ever yields to the man who is the possessor of it. And now what sayest thou my hearer—to put each point personally to thee—hast thou had peace with God? If not, never rest till thou hast had it, and never believe thyself to be saved till thou feelest thyself to be reconciled. Be not content with the mere profession of the head, but ask that the peace of God which passeth all understanding, may keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

IV. And now I come to my fourth and last point, namely, the EXCELLENCIES of repentance.

I shall somewhat surprise you, perhaps, if I say that one of the excellencies of repentance lies in its *pleasantness*. "Oh"! you say, "but it is bitter"! Nay, say I, it is sweet. At least, it is bitter when it is alone, like the waters of Marah; but there is a tree called the cross, which if thou canst put into it, it will be sweet, and thou wilt love to drink of it. At a school of mutes who were both deaf and dumb, the teacher put the following question to her pupils—"What is the sweetest emotion"? As soon as the children comprehended the question, they took their slates and wrote their answers. One girl in a moment wrote down "Joy." As soon as the teacher saw it, she expected that all would write the same, but another girl, more thoughtful, put her hand to her brow, and she wrote "Hope." Verily, the girl was not far from the mark. But the next one, when she brought up her slate, had written "Gratitude," and this child was not wrong. Another one, when she brought up her slate, had written "Love," and I am sure she was right. But there was one other who had written in large characters,—and as she brought up her slate the tear was in her eye, showing she had written what she felt,—"*Repentance is the sweetest emotion.*" And I think *she* was right. Verily, in my own case, after that long drought, perhaps longer than Elisha's three years in which the heavens poured forth no rain, when I saw but one tear of penitence coming from my hard, hard soul—it was such a joy! There have been times when you know you have done wrong, but when you could cry over it you have felt happy. As one weeps for his firstborn, so have you wept

over your sin, and in that very weeping you have had your peace and your joy restored. I am a living witness that repentance is exceeding sweet when mixed with divine hope, but repentance without hope is hell. It is hell to grieve for sin with the pangs of bitter remorse, and yet to know that pardon can never come, and mercy never be vouchsafed. Repentance, with the cross before its eyes, is heaven itself; at least, if not heaven, it is so next door to it, that standing on the wet threshold I may see within the pearly portals, and sing the song of the angels who rejoice within. Repentance, then, has this excellency, that it is very sweet to the soul which is made to lie beneath its shadow.

Besides this excellency, it is *especially sweet to God as well as to men*. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." When St. Augustine lay a-dying, he had this verse always fixed upon the curtains, so that as often as he awoke, he might read it—"A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." When you despise yourselves, God honours you; but as long as you honour yourselves, God despises you. A whole heart is a scentless thing; but when it is broken and bruised, it is like that precious spice which was burned as holy incense in the ancient tabernacle. When the blood of Jesus is sprinkled on them, even the songs of the angels, and the vials full of odours sweet that smoke before the throne of the Most High, are not more agreeable to God than the sighs, and groans, and tears of the brokenhearted soul. So, then, if thou wouldest be pleasing with God, come before him with many and many a tear: "To humble souls and broken hearts God with his grace is ever nigh; Pardon and hope his love imparts, When men in deep contrition lie. He tells their tears, he counts their groans, His Son redeems their souls from death; His Spirit heals their broken bones, They in his praise employ their breath." John Bunyan, in his "Siege of Mansoul," when the defeated townsmen were seeking pardon, names Mr. Wet-eyes as the intercessor with the king. Mr. Wet-eyes—good Saxon word! I hope we know Mr. Wet-eyes, and have had him many times in our house, for if he cannot intercede with God, yet Mr. Wet-eyes is a great friend with the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ will undertake his case, and then we shall prevail. So have I set forth, then, some, but very few, of the excellencies of repentance. And now, my dear hearers, have you repented of Sin? Oh, impenitent soul, if thou dost not weep now, thou wilt have to weep for ever. The heart that is not broken now, must be broken for ever upon the wheel of divine vengeance. Thou must now repent, or else for ever smart for it. Turn or burn—it is the Bible's only alternative. If thou repentest, the gate of mercy stands wide open. Only the Spirit of God bring thee on thy knees in self-abasement, for Christ's cross stands before thee, and he who bled upon it bids thee look at him. Oh, sinner, obey the divine bidding. But, if your heart be hard, like that of the stubborn Jews in the days of Moses, take heed, lest,—

"The Lord in vengeance dressed,
Shall lift his head and swear,—
You that despised my promised rest,
Shall have no portion there."

At any rate, sinner, if thou wilt not repent, there is one here who will, and that is myself. I repent that I could not preach to you with more earnestness this morning, and throw my whole soul more thoroughly into my pleading with you. the Lord God, whom I serve, is my constant witness that there is nothing I desire so much as to see your hearts broken on account of sin; and nothing has gladdened my heart so much as the many instances lately vouchsafed of the wonders God is doing in this place. There have been men who have stepped into this Hall, who had never entered a place of worship for a score years, and here the Lord has met with them, and I believe, if I could speak the word, there are hundreds who would stand up now, and say, "'Twas here the Lord met with me. I was the chief of sinners; the hammer struck my heart and broke it, and now it has been bound up again by the finger of divine mercy, and I tell it unto sinners, and tell it to this assembled congregation, there have been depths of mercy found that have been deeper than the depths of my iniquity." This day there will be a soul delivered; this morning there will be, I do not doubt, despite my weakness, a display of the energy of God, and the power of the Spirit; some drunkard shall be turned from the error of his ways; some soul, who was trembling on the very jaws of hell, shall look to him who is the sinner's hope, and find peace and pardon—ay, at this very hour. So be it, O Lord, and thine shall be the glory, world without end.

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 portrayed 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 thought 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 husbandmen, who slew those who were sent to them; afterwards he gave the parable of the marriage of the king's son. Then comes his parable concerning the man who went unto the feast, not having on a wedding garment; and then also, the parable concerning the ten virgins, five of whom were 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 neck 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 *redemption*; secondly, by our eating his flesh for food, *regeneration and sanctification*. The first aspect in which a sinner views Jesus is that of a lamb slain, whose blood is sprinkled on the 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 Pharaoh is taken away unembalmed, to be buried in one of the pyramids. Presently they see one of their task-master's sons taken away. A happy night for them—when they escape! And do you see, my hearers, a glorious parallel? They had to sprinkle the blood, and also to eat the lamb. Ah! my soul, 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 unwashed 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 hear 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."

Christ the End of the Law

A Sermon (No. 1325) Delivered on Lord's-Day Morning, November 19th, 1876, by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." –Romans 10:4.

YOU REMEMBER we spoke last Sabbath morning of "the days of the Son of man." Oh that every Sabbath now might be a day of that kind in the most spiritual sense. I hope that we shall endeavour to make each Lord's Day as it comes round a day of the Lord, by thinking much of Jesus by rejoicing much in him, by labouring for him, and by our growingly importunate prayer, that to him may the gathering of the people be. We may not have very many Sabbaths together, death may soon part us; but while we are able to meet as a Christian assembly, let us never forget that Christ's presence is our main necessity, and let us pray for it and entreat the Lord to vouchsafe that presence always in displays of light, life and love! I become increasingly earnest that every preaching time should be a soul-saving time. I can deeply sympathize with Paul when he said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." We have had so much preaching, but, comparatively speaking, so little believing in Jesus; and if there be no believing in him, neither the law nor the gospel has answered its end, and our labour has been utterly in vain. Some of you have heard, and heard, and heard again, but you have not believed in Jesus. If the gospel had not come to your hearing you could not have been guilty of refusing it. "Have they not heard?" says the apostle. "Yes, verily:" but still "they have not all obeyed the gospel." Up to this very moment there has been no hearing with the inner ear, and no work of faith in the heart, in the case of many whom we love. Dear friends, is it always to be so? How long is it to be so? Shall there not soon come an end of this reception of the outward means and rejection of the inward grace? Will not your soul soon close in with Christ for present salvation? Break! Break, O heavenly day, upon the benighted ones, for our hearts are breaking over them.

The reason why many do not come to Christ is not because they are not earnest, after a fashion, and thoughtful and desirous to be saved, but because they cannot brook God's way of salvation. "They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge," We do get them by our exhortation so far on the way that they become desirous to obtain eternal life, but "they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Mark, "submitted themselves," for it needs submission. Proud man wants to save himself, he believes he can do it, and he will not give over the task till he finds out his own helplessness by unhappy failures. Salvation by grace, to be sued for *in forma pauperis*, to be asked for as an undeserved boon from free, unmerited grace, this it is which the carnal mind will not come to as long as it can help it: I beseech the Lord so to work that some of you may not be able to help it. And oh, I have been praying that, while this morning I am trying to set forth Christ as the end of the law, God may bless it to some hearts, that they may see what Christ did, and may perceive it to be a great deal better than anything they can do; may see what Christ finished, and may become weary of what they themselves have laboured at so long, and have not even well commenced at this day. Perhaps it may please the Lord to enchant them with the perfection of the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. As Bunyan would say, "It may, perhaps, set their mouths a watering after it," and when a sacred appetite begins it will not be long before the feast is enjoyed. It may be that when they see the raiment of wrought gold, which Jesus so freely bestows on naked souls, they will throw away their own filthy rags which now they hug so closely.

I am going to speak about two things, this morning, as the Spirit of God shall help me: and the first is, *Christ in connection with the law*—he is "the end of the law for righteousness"; and secondly, *ourselves in connection with Christ*—"to everyone that believeth Christ is the end of the law for righteousness."

I. First, then, CHRIST IN CONNECTION WITH THE LAW. The law is that which, as sinners, we have above all things cause to dread; for the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. Towards us the law darts forth devouring flames, for it condemns us, and in solemn terms appoints us a place among the accursed, as it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." Yet, strange infatuation! like the fascination which attracts the gnat to the candle which burns its wings, men by nature fly to the law for salvation, and cannot be driven from it. The law can do nothing else but reveal sin and pronounce condemnation upon the sinner, and yet we cannot get men away from it, even though we show them how sweetly Jesus stands between them and it. They are so enamoured of legal hope that they cling to it when there is nothing to cling to; they prefer Sinai to Calvary, though Sinai has nothing for them but thunders and trumpet warnings of coming judgment. O that for awhile you would listen anxiously while I set forth Jesus my Lord, that you may see the law in him.

Now, what has our Lord to do with the law? He has everything to do with it, for he is its end for the noblest object, namely, for righteousness. He is the "end of the law." What does this mean? I think it signifies three things: first, that Christ is *the purpose and object* of the law; secondly, that he is *the fulfillment* of it; and

thirdly, that he is *the termination* of it.

First, then, *our Lord Jesus Christ is the purpose and object of the law*. It was given to lead us too him. The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, or rather our attendant to conduct us to the school of Jesus. The law is the great net in which the fish are enclosed that they may be drawn out of the element of sin. The law is the stormy wind which drives souls into the harbour or refuge. The law is the sheriff's officer to shut men up in prison for their sin, concluding them all under condemnation in order that they may look to the free grace of God alone for deliverance. This is the object of the law: it empties that grace may fill, and wounds that mercy may heal. It has never been God's intention towards us, as fallen men, that the law should be regarded as a way to salvation to us, for a way of salvation it can never be. Had man never fallen, had his nature remained as God made it, the law would have been most helpful to him to show him the way in which he should walk; and by keeping it he would have lived, for "he that doeth these things shall live in them." But ever since man has fallen the Lord has not proposed to him a way of salvation by works, for he knows it to be impossible to a sinful creature. The law is already broken; and whatever man can do he cannot repair the damage he has already done: therefore he is out of court as to the hope of merit. The law demands perfection, but man has already fallen short of it; and therefore let him do his best. He cannot accomplish what is absolutely essential. The law is meant to lead the sinner to faith in Christ, by showing the impossibility of any other way. It is the black dog to fetch the sheep to the shepherd, the burning heat which drives the traveller to the shadow of the great rock in a weary land.

Look how the law is adapted to this; for, first of all, *it shows man his sin*. Read the ten commandments and tremble as you read them. Who can lay his own character down side by side with the two tablets of divine precept without at once being convinced that he has fallen far short of the standard? When the law comes home to the soul it is like light in a dark room revealing the dust and the dirt which else had been unperceived. It is the test which detects the presence of the poison of sin in the soul. "I was alive without the law once," said the apostle, "but when the commandment came sin revived and I died." Our comeliness utterly fades away when the law blows upon it. Look at the commandments, I say, and remember how sweeping they are, how spiritual, how far-reaching. They do not merely touch the outward act, but dive into the inner motive and deal with the heart, the mind, the soul. There is a deeper meaning in the commands than appears upon their surface. Gaze into their depths and see how terrible is the holiness which they require. As you understand what the law demands you will perceive how far you are from fulfilling it, and how sin abounds where you thought there was little or none of it. You thought yourself rich and increased in goods and in no need of anything, but when the broken law visits you, your spiritual bankruptcy and utter penury stare you in the face. A true balance discovers short weight, and such is the first effect of the law upon the conscience of man.

The law also shows *the result and mischief of sin*. Look at the types of the old Mosaic dispensation, and see how they were intended to lead men to Christ by making them see their unclean condition and their need of such cleansing as only he can give. Every type pointed to our Lord Jesus Christ. If men were put apart because of disease or uncleanness, they were made to see how sin separated them from God and from his people; and when they were brought back and purified with mystic rites in which were scarlet wool and hyssop and the like, they were made to see how they can only be restored by Jesus Christ, the great High Priest. When the bird was killed that the leper might be clean, the need of purification by the sacrifice of a life was set forth. Every morning and evening a lamb died to tell of daily need of pardon, if God is to dwell with us. We sometimes have fault found with us for speaking too much about *blood*; yet under the old testament the blood seemed to be everything, and was not only spoken of but actually presented to the eye. What does the apostle tell us in the Hebrews? "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people saying, this is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is not remission." The blood was on the veil, and on the altar, on the hangings, and on the floor of the tabernacle: no one could avoid seeing it. I resolve to make my ministry of the same character, and more and more sprinkle it with the blood of atonement. Now that abundance of the blood of old was meant to show clearly that sin has so polluted us that without an atonement God is not to be approached: we must come by the way of sacrifice or not at all. We are so unacceptable in ourselves that unless the Lord sees us with the blood of Jesus upon us he must away with us. The old law, with its emblems and figures, set forth many truths as to men's selves and the coming Saviour, intending by every one of them to preach Christ. If any stopped short of him, they missed the intent and design of the law. Moses leads up to Joshua, and the law ends at Jesus.

Turning our thoughts back again to the moral rather than the ceremonial law, it was intended to teach men

their utter helplessness. It shows them how short they fall of what they ought to be, and it also shows them, when they look at it carefully, how utterly impossible it is for them to come up to the standard. Such holiness as the law demands no man can reach of himself. "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." If a man says that he can keep the law, it is because he does not know what the law is. If he fancies that he can ever climb to heaven up the quivering sides of Sinai, surely he can never have seen that burning mount at all. Keep the law! Ah, my brethren, while we are yet talking about it we are breaking it; while we are pretending that we can fulfil its letter, we are violating its spirit, for pride as much breaks the law as lust or murder. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." "How can he be clean that is born of a woman?" No, soul, thou canst not help thyself in this thing, for since only by perfection thou canst live by the law, and since that perfection is impossible, thou canst not find help in the covenant of works. In grace there is hope, but as a matter of debt there is none, for we do not merit anything but wrath. The law tells us this, and the sooner we know it to be so the better, for the sooner we shall fly to Christ.

The law also shows us *our great need*—our need of cleansing, cleansing with the water and with the blood. It discovers to us our filthiness, and this naturally leads us to feel that we must be washed from it if we are ever to draw near to God. So the law drives us to accept of Christ as the one only person who can cleanse us, and make us fit to stand within the veil in the presence of the Most High. The law is the surgeon's knife which cuts out the proud flesh that the wound may heal. The law by itself only sweeps and raises the dust, but the gospel sprinkles clean water upon the dust, and all is well in the chamber of the soul. The law kills, the gospel makes alive; the law strips, and then Jesus Christ comes in and robes the soul in beauty and glory. All the commandments, and all the types direct us to Christ, if we will but heed their evident intent. They wean us from self, they put us off from the false basis of self-righteousness, and bring us to know that only in Christ can our help be found. So, first of all, Christ is the end of the law, in that he is its great purpose.

And now, secondly, he is *the law's fulfillment*. It is impossible for any of us to be saved without righteousness. The God of heaven and earth by immutable necessity demands righteousness of all his creatures. Now, Christ has come to give to us the righteousness which the law demands, but which it never bestows. In the chapter before us we read of "the righteousness which is of faith," which is also called "God's righteousness"; and we read of those who "shall not be ashamed" because they are righteous by believing unto righteousness." What the law could not do Jesus has done. He provides the righteousness which the law asks for but cannot produce. What an amazing righteousness it must be which is as broad and deep and long and high as the law itself. The commandment is exceeding broad, but the righteousness of Christ is as broad as the commandment, and goes to the end of it. Christ did not come to make the law milder, or to render it possible for our cracked and battered obedience to be accepted as a sort of compromise. The law is not compelled to lower its terms, as though it had originally asked too much; it is holy and just and good, and ought not to be altered in one jot or tittle, nor can it be. Our Lord gives the law all it requires, not a part, for that would be an admission that it might justly have been content with less at first. The law claims complete obedience without one spot or speck, failure, or flaw, and Christ has brought in such a righteousness as that, and gives it to his people. The law demands that the righteousness should be without omission of duty and without commission of sin, and the righteousness which Christ has brought is just such an one that for its sake the great God accepts his people and counts them to be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. The law will not be content without spiritual obedience, mere outward compliances will not satisfy. But our Lord's obedience was as deep as it was broad, for his zeal to do the will of him that sent him consumed him. He says himself, "I delight to do thy will, O my God, yea thy law is within my heart." Such righteousness he puts upon all believers. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous"; righteous to the full, perfect in Christ. We rejoice to wear the costly robe of fair white linen which Jesus has prepared, and we feel that we may stand arrayed in it before the majesty of heaven without a trembling thought. This is something to dwell upon, dear friends. Only as righteous ones can we be saved, but Jesus Christ makes us righteous, and therefore we are saved. He is righteous who believeth on him, even as Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. "There is therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," because they are made righteous in Christ. Yea, the Holy Spirit by the mouth of Paul challengeth all men, angels, and devils, to lay anything to the charge of God's elect, since Christ hath died. O law, when thou demandest of me a perfect righteousness, I, being a believer, present it to thee; for through Christ Jesus faith is accounted unto me for righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is mine, for I am one with him by faith, and this is the name wherewith he shall be called—"The Lord our righteousness."

Jesus has thus fulfilled the original demands of the law, but you know, brethren, that since we have broken the law there are other demands. For the remission of past sins something more is asked now than present and future obedience. Upon us, on account of our sins, the curse has been pronounced, and a penalty has been incurred. It is written that he "will by no means clear the guilty," but every transgression and iniquity shall have its just punishment and reward. Here, then, let us admire that the Lord Jesus Christ is the end of the law

as to penalty. That curse and penalty are awful things to think upon, but Christ has ended all their evil, and thus discharged us from all the consequences of sin. As far as every believer is concerned the law demands no penalty and utters no curse. The believer can point to the Great Surety on the tree of Calvary, and say, "See there, oh law, there is the vindication of divine justice which I offer to thee. Jesus pouring out his heart's blood from his wounds and dying on my behalf is my answer to thy claims, and I know that I shall be delivered from wrath through him." The claims of the law both as broken and unbroken Christ has met: both the positive and the penal demands are satisfied in him. This was a labour worthy of a God, and lo, the incarnate God has achieved it. He has finished the transgression, made an end of sins, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness. All glory be to his name.

Moreover, not only has the penalty been paid, but Christ has put great and special honour upon the law in so doing. I venture to say that if the whole human race had kept the law of God and not one of them had violated it, the law would not stand in so splendid a position of honour as it does today when the man Christ Jesus, who is also the Son of God, has paid obeisance to it. God himself, incarnate, has in his life, and yet more in his death, revealed the supremacy of law; he has shown that not even love nor sovereignty can set aside justice. Who shall say a word against the law to which the Lawgiver himself submits? Who shall now say that it is too severe when he who made it submits himself to its penalties. Because he was found in fashion as a man, and was our representative, the Lord demanded from his own Son perfect obedience to the law, and the Son voluntarily bowed himself to it without a single word, taking no exception to his task. "Yea, thy law is my delight," saith he, and he proved it to be so by paying homage to it even to the full. Oh wondrous law under which even Emmanuel serves! Oh matchless law whose yoke even the Son of God does not disdain to bear, but being resolved to save his chosen was made under the law, lived under it and died under it, "obedient to death, even the death of the cross."

The law's stability also has been secured by Christ. That alone can remain which is proved to be just, and Jesus has proved the law to be so, magnifying it and making it honourable. He says, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." I shall have to show you how he has made an end of the law in another sense, but as to the settlement of the eternal principles of right and wrong, Christ's life and death have achieved this forever. "Yea, we established the law," said Paul, "we do not make void the law through faith." The law is proved to be holy and just by the very gospel of faith, for the gospel which faith believes in does not alter or lower the law, but teaches us how it was to the uttermost fulfilled. Now shall the law stand fast forever and ever, since even to save elect man God will not alter it. He had a people, chosen, beloved, and ordained to life, yet he would not save them at the expense of one principle of right. They were sinful, and how could they be justified unless the law was suspended or changed? Was, then, the law changed? It seemed as if it must be so, if man was to be saved, but Jesus Christ came and showed us how the law could stand firm as a rock, and yet the redeemed could be justly saved by infinite mercy. In Christ we see both mercy and justice shining full orb'd, and yet neither of them in any degree eclipsing the other. The law has all it ever asked, as it ought to have, and yet the Father of all mercies sees all his chosen saved as he determined they should be through the death of his Son. Thus I have tried to show you how Christ is the fulfillment of the law to its utmost end. May the Holy Ghost bless the teaching.

And now, thirdly, he is the end of the law in the sense that he is *the termination of it*. He has terminated it in two senses. First of all, his people are not under it as a covenant of life. "We are not under the law, but under grace." The old covenant as it stood with father Adam was "This do and thou shalt live": its command he did not keep, and consequently he did not live, nor do we live in him, since in Adam all died. The old covenant was broken, and we became condemned thereby, but now, having suffered death in Christ, we are no more under it, but are dead to it. Brethren, at this present moment, although we rejoice to do good works, we are not seeking life through them, we are not hoping to obtain divine favour by our own goodness, nor even to keep ourselves in the love of God by any merit of our own. Chosen, not for our works, but according to the eternal will and good pleasure of God; called, not of works, but by the Spirit of God, we desire to continue in this grace and return no more to the bondage of the old covenant. Since we have put our trust in an atonement provided and applied by grace through Christ Jesus, we are no longer slaves but children, not working to be saved, but saved already, and working because we are saved. Neither that which we do, nor even that which the Spirit of God worketh in us is to us the ground and basis of the love of God toward us, since he loved us from the first, because he would love us, unworthy though we were; and he loves us still in Christ, and looks upon us not as we are in ourselves, but as we are in him; washed in his blood and covered in his righteousness. Ye are not under the law, Christ has taken you from the servile bondage of a condemning covenant and made you to receive the adoption of children, so that now ye cry, Abba, Father.

Again, Christ is the terminator of the law, for we are no longer under its curse. The law cannot curse a believer, it does not know how to do it; it blesses him, yea, and he shall be blessed; for as the law demands righteousness and looks at the believer in Christ, and sees that Jesus has given him all the righteousness it demands, the law is bound to pronounce him blessed. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Oh, the joy of being redeemed from the curse of the law by Christ, who was "made a curse for us," as it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Do ye, my brethren, understand the sweet mystery of salvation? Have you ever seen Jesus standing in your place that you may stand in his place? Christ accused and Christ condemned, and Christ led out to die, and Christ smitten of the Father, even to the death, and then you cleared, justified, delivered from the curse, because the curse has spent itself on your Redeemer. You are admitted to enjoy the blessing because the righteousness which was his is now transferred to you that you may be blessed of the Lord world without end. Do let us triumph and rejoice in this evermore. Why should we not? And yet some of God's people get under the law as to their feelings, and begin to fear that because they are conscious of sin they are not saved, whereas it is written, "he justifieth the ungodly." For myself, I love to live near a sinner's Saviour. If my standing before the Lord depended upon what I am in myself and what good works and righteousness I could bring, surely I should have to condemn myself a thousand times a day. But to get away from that and to say, "I have believed in Jesus Christ and therefore righteousness is mine," this is peace, rest, joy, and the beginning of heaven! When one attains to this experience, his love to Jesus Christ begins to flame up, and he feels that if the Redeemer has delivered him from the curse of the law he will not continue in sin, but he will endeavour to live in newness of life. We are not our own, we are bought with a price, and we would therefore glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are the Lord's. Thus much upon Christ in connection with the law.

II. Now, secondly, OURSELVES IN CONNECTION WITH CHRIST—for "Christ is the end of the law to everyone that believeth." Now see the point "to everyone that believeth," there the stress lies. Come, man, woman, dost thou believe? No weightier question can be asked under heaven. "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" And what is it to believe? It is not merely to accept a set of doctrines and to say that such and such a creed is yours, and there and then to put it on the shelf and forget it. To believe is, to trust, to confide, to depend upon, to rely upon, to rest in. Dost thou believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead? Dost thou believe that he stood in the sinner's stead and suffered the just for the unjust? Dost thou believe that he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him? And dost thou therefore lay the whole weight and stress of thy soul's salvation upon him, yea, upon him alone? Ah then, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to thee, and thou art righteous. In the righteousness of God thou art clothed if thou believest. It is of no use to bring forward anything else if you are not believing, for nothing will avail. If faith be absent the essential thing is wanting: sacraments, prayers, Bible reading, hearings of the gospel, you may heap them together, high as the stars, into a mountain, huge as high Olympus, but they are all mere chaff if faith be not there. It is thy believing or not believing which must settle the matter. Dost thou look away from thyself to Jesus for righteousness? If thou dost he is the end of the law to thee.

Now observe that there is no question raised about the previous character, for it is written, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." But, Lord, this man before he believed was a persecutor and injurious, he raged and raved against the saints and haled them to prison and sought their blood. Yes, beloved friend, and that is the very man who wrote these words by the Holy Ghost, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." So if I address one here this morning whose life has been defiled with every sin, and stained with every transgression we can conceive of, yet I say unto such, remember "all manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." If thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ thine iniquities are blotted out, for the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin. This is the glory of the gospel that it is a sinner's gospel; good news of blessing not for those without sin, but for those who confess and forsake it. Jesus came into the world, not to reward the sinless, but to seek and to save that which was lost; and he, being lost and being far from God, who cometh nigh to God by Christ, and believeth in him, will find that he is able to bestow righteousness upon the guilty. He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth, and therefore to the poor harlot that believeth, to the drunkard of many years standing that believeth, to the thief, the liar, and the scoffer who believeth, to those who have aforetime rioted in sin, but now turn from it to trust in him. But I do not know that I need mention such cases as these; to me the most wonderful fact is that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to me, for I believe in him. I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him until that day.

Another thought arises from the text, and that is, that there is nothing said by way of qualification as to the strength of the faith. He is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth, whether he is Little Faith or Greatheart. Jesus protects the rear rank as well as the vanguard. There is no difference between one

believer and another as to justification. So long as there is a connection between you and Christ the righteousness of God is yours. The link may be very like a film, a spider's line of trembling faith, but, if it runs all the way from the heart to Christ, divine grace can and will flow along the most slender thread. It is marvelous how fine the wire may be that will carry the electric flash. We may want a cable to carry a message across the sea, but that is for the protection of the wire, the wire which actually carries the message is a slender thing. If thy faith be of the mustard-seed kind, if it be only such as tremblingly touches the Saviour's garment's hem, if thou canst only say "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," if it be but the faith of sinking Peter, or weeping Mary, yet if it be faith in Christ, he will be the end of the law for righteousness to thee as well as to the chief of the apostles.

If this be so then, beloved friends, all of us who believe are righteous. Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ we have obtained the righteousness which those who follow the works of the law know nothing of. We are not completely sanctified, would God we were; we are not quit of sin in our members, though we hate it; but still for all that, in the sight of God, we are truly righteous and being qualified by faith we have peace with God. Come, look up, ye believers that are burdened with a sense of sin. While you chasten yourselves and mourn your sin, do not doubt your Saviour, nor question his righteousness. You are black, but do not stop there, go on to say as the spouse did, "I am black, but comely."

"Though in ourselves deform'd we are,
And black as Kedar's tents appear,
Yet, when we put Thy beauties on,
Fair as the courts of Solomon."

Now, mark that the connection of our text assures us that being righteous we are saved; for what does it say here, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be *saved*." He who is justified is saved, or what were the benefit of justification? Over thee, O believer, God hath pronounced the verdict "*saved*," and none shall reverse it. You are saved from sin and death and hell; you are saved even now, with a present salvation; "He hath saved us and called us with a holy calling." Feel the transports of it at this hour. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God."

And now I have done when I have said just this. If any one here thinks he can save himself, and that his own righteousness will suffice before God, I would affectionately beg him not to insult his Saviour. If your righteousness sufficeth, why did Christ come here to work one out? Will you for a moment compare your righteousness with the righteousness of Jesus Christ? What likeness is there between you and him? As much as between an emmet and an archangel. Nay, not so much as that: as much as between night and day, hell and heaven. Oh, if I had a righteousness of my own that no one could find fault with, I would voluntarily fling it away to have the righteousness of Christ, but as I have none of my own I do rejoice the more to have my Lord's. When Mr. Whitefield first preached at Kingswood, near Bristol, to the colliers, he could see when their hearts began to be touched by the gutters of white made by the tears as they ran down their black cheeks. He saw they were receiving the gospel, and he writes in his diary "as these poor colliers had no righteousness of their own they therefore gloried in Him who came to save publicans and sinners." Well, Mr. Whitefield, that is true of the colliers, but it is equally true of many of us here, who may not have had black faces, but we had black hearts. We can truly say that we also rejoice to cast away our own righteousness and count it dross and dung that we may win Christ, and be found in him. In him is our sole hope and only trust.

Last of all, for any of you to reject the righteousness of Christ must be to perish everlastingly, because it cannot be that God will accept you or your pretended righteousness when you have refused the real and divine righteousness which he sets before you in his Son. If you could go up to the gates of heaven, and the angel were to say to you, "What title have you to entrance here?" and you were to reply, "I have a righteousness of my own," then for you to be admitted would be to decide that your righteousness was on a par with that of Immanuel himself. Can that ever be? Do you think that God will ever allow such a lie to be sanctioned? Will he let a poor wretched sinner's counterfeit righteousness pass current side by side with the fine gold of Christ's perfection? Why was the fountain filled with blood if you need no washing? Is Christ a superfluity? Oh, it cannot be. You must have Christ's righteousness or be unrighteous, and being unrighteous you will be unsaved, and being unsaved you must remain lost forever and ever.

What! has it all come to this, then, that I am to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for righteousness, and to be made just through faith? Yes, that is it: that is the whole of it. What! trust Christ alone and then live as I like! You cannot live in sin after you have trusted Jesus, for the act of faith brings with it a change of nature and a renewal of your soul. The Spirit of God who leads you to believe will also change your heart. You spoke of

"living as you like," you will like to live very differently from what you do now. The things you loved before your conversion you will hate when you believe, and the things you hated you will love. Now, you are trying to be good, and you make great failures, because your heart is alienated from God; but when once you have received salvation through the blood of Christ, your heart will love God, and then you will keep his commandments, and they will be no longer grievous to you. A change of heart is what you want, and you will never get it except through the covenant of grace. There is not a word about conversion in the old covenant, we must look to the new covenant for that, and here it is—"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and an new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." This is one of the greatest covenant promises, and the Holy Ghost preforms it in the chosen. Oh that the Lord would sweetly persuade you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that promise and all the other covenant engagements shall be fulfilled to your soul. The Lord bless you! Spirit of God, send thy blessing on these poor words of mine for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Romans 10. HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—231, 535, 647.

Christ's People-- Imitators of Him

A Sermon (No. 21) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, April 29, 1855, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At Exeter Hall, Strand. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."—Acts 4:13.

BEHOLD! what a change divine grace will work in a man, and in how short a time. That same Peter, who so lately followed his master *afar off*, and with oaths and curses denied that he knew his name, is now to be found side by side with the loving John, boldly declaring that there is salvation in none other name save that of Jesus Christ, and preaching the resurrection of the dead, through the sacrifice of his dying Lord. The Scribes and Pharisees soon discover the reason of his boldness. Rightly did they guess that it rested not in his learning or his talents, for neither Peter nor John had been educated; they had been trained as fishermen; their education was a knowledge of the sea—of the fisherman's craft; none other had they; their boldness could not therefore spring from the self-sufficiency of knowledge, but from the Spirit of the living God. Nor did they acquire their courage from their station; for rank will confer a sort of dignity upon a man, and make him speak with a feigned authority, even when he has no talent or genius; but these men were, as it says in the original text, *idiotai*, private men, who stood in no official capacity; men without rank or station. When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and private individuals, they marveled, and they came to a right conclusion as to the source of their power—they had been dwelling with Jesus. Their conversation with the Prince of light and glory, backed up, as they might also have known, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, without which even that eminently holy example would have been in vain, had made them bold for their Master's cause. Oh! my brethren, it were well if this condemnation, so forced from the lips of enemies, could also be compelled by our own example. If we could live like Peter and John; if our lives were "living epistles of God, known and read of all men;" if, whenever we were seen, men would take knowledge of us, that we had been with Jesus, it would be a happy thing for this world, and a blessed thing for us. It is concerning that I am to speak to you this morning; and as God gives me grace, I will endeavor to stir up your minds by way of remembrance, and urge you so to imitate Jesus Christ, our heavenly pattern, that men may perceive that you are disciples of the Holy Son of God.

First, then, this morning, I will tell you *what a Christian should be*; secondly, I will tell you *when he should be so*; thirdly, *why he should be so*; and then fourthly *how he can be so*.

I. As God may help us then, first of all, we will speak of WHAT A BELIEVER SHOULD BE. A Christian should be a striking likeness of Jesus Christ. You have read lives of Christ, beautifully and eloquently written, and you have admired the talent of the persons who could write so well; but the best life of Christ is his living biography, written out in the words and actions of his people. If we, my brethren, were what we profess to be; if the Spirit of the Lord were in the heart of all his children, as we could desire; and if, instead of having abundance of formal professors, we were all possessors of that vital grace, I will tell you not only what we ought to be, but what we should be: we should be pictures of Christ, yea, such striking likenesses of him that the world would not have to hold us up by the hour together, and say, "Well, it seems somewhat of a

likeness;" but they would, when they once beheld us, exclaim, "He has been with Jesus; he has been taught of him; he is like him; he has caught the very idea of the holy Man of Nazareth, and he expands it out into his very life and every day actions."

In enlarging upon this point, it will be necessary to premise, that when we here affirm that men should be such and such a thing, we refer to the people of God. We do not wish to speak to them in any legal way. We are not under the law, but under grace. Christian men hold themselves bound to keep all God's precepts; but the reason why they do so is not because the *law* is binding upon them, but because the *gospel* constrains them; they believe, that having been redeemed by blood divine; having been purchased by Jesus Christ, they are more bound to keep his commands, than they would have been if they were under the law; they hold themselves to be ten thousand fold more debtors to God, than they could have been under the Mosaic dispensation. Not of force; not of compulsion; not through fear of the whip; not through legal bondage; but through pure, disinterested love and gratitude to God, they lay themselves out for his service, seeking to be Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile. This much I have declared lest any man should think that I am preaching works as the way to salvation; I will yield to none in this, that I will ever maintain—that by grace we are saved, and not by ourselves; but equally must I testify, that where the grace of God is, it will produce fitting deeds. To these I am ever bound to exhort you, while ye are ever expected to have good works for necessary purposes. Again, I do not, when I say that a believer should be a striking likeness of Jesus, suppose that any one Christian will perfectly exhibit all the features of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; yet, my brethren, the fact that perfection is beyond our reach, should not diminish the ardore of our desire after it. The artist, when he paints, knows right well that he shall not be able to excel Apelles; but that does not discourage him; he uses his brush with all the greater pains, that he may, at least in some humble measure, resemble the great master. So the sculptor, though persuaded that he will not rival Praxiteles, will hew out the marble still, and seek to be as near the model as possible. Thus so the Christian man; though he feels he never can mount to the heights of complete excellence, and perceives that he never can on earth become the exact image of Christ, still holds it up before him, and measures his own deficiencies by the distance between himself and Jesus. This will he do; forgetting all he has attained, he will press forward, crying, *Excelsior!* going upwards still, desiring to be conformed more and more to the image of Christ Jesus.

First, then, a Christian should be like Christ in his *boldness*. This is a virtue now-a-days called *impudence*, but the grace is equally valuable by whatever name it may be called. I suppose if the Scribes had given a definition of Peter and John, they would have called them *impudent fellows*.

Jesus Christ and his disciples were noted for their courage. "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Jesus Christ never fawned upon the rich; he stooped not to the great and noble; he stood erect, a man before men—the prophet of the people; speaking out boldly and freely what he thought. Have you never admired that mighty deed of his, when going to the city where he had lived and been brought up? Knowing that a prophet had no honor in his own country, the book was put into his hands (he had but then commenced his ministry), yet without tremor he unrolled the sacred volume, and what did he take for his text? Most men, coming to their own neighborhood, would have chosen a subject adapted to the taste, in order to earn fame. But what doctrine did Jesus preach that morning? One which in our age is scorned and hated—the doctrine of *election*. He opened the Scriptures, and began to read thus: "Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sodom, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus, the prophet; and none of them were cleansed, saving Naaman, the Syrian." Then he began to tell, how God saveth whom he pleases, and rescues whom he chooses. Ah! how they gnashed their teeth upon him, dragged him out, and would have cast him from the brow of the hill. Do you not admire his intrepidity? He saw their teeth gnashing; he knew their hearts were hot with enmity, while their mouths foamed with revenge and malice; still he stood like the angel who shut the lions' mouths; he feared them not; faithfully he proclaimed what he knew to be the truth of God, and still read on, despite them all. So, in his discourses. If he saw a Scribe or a Pharisee in the congregation, he did not keep back part of the price, but pointing his finger, he said, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites;" and when a lawyer came, saying, "Master, in speaking thus, thou condemnest us also;" he turned round and said "Woe unto you, lawyers, for ye bind heavy burdens upon men, while ye yourselves will not touch them with so much as one of your fingers." He dealt out honest truth; he never knew the fear of man; he trembled at none; he stood out God's chosen, whom he had anointed above his fellows, careless of man's esteem. My friends, be like Christ in this. Have none of the time-serving religion of the present day, which is merely exhibited in evangelical drawing-rooms,—a religion which only flourishes in a hot-bed atmosphere, a religion which is only to be perceived in good company. No; if ye are the servants of God, be like Jesus Christ, bold for your master; never blush to own your religion; your profession will never disgrace you; take care you never disgrace *that*. Your love to Christ will never dishonor

you; it may bring some temporary slight from your friends, or slanders from your enemies; but live on, and you shall live down their calumnies; live on, and ye shall stand amongst the glorified, honored even by those who hissed you, when *he* shall come to be glorified by his angels, and admired by them that love him. Be like Jesus, very valiant for your God, so that when they shall see your boldness, they may say, "He has been with Jesus."

But no one feature will give a portrait of a man; so the one virtue of boldness will never make you like Christ. There have been some who have been noble men, but have carried their courage to excess; they have thus been caricatures of Christ, and not portraits of him. We must amalgamate with our boldness the *loveliness* of Jesus' disposition. Let courage be the brass, let love be the gold. Let us mix the two together; so shall we produce a rich Corinthian metal, fit to be manufactured into the beautiful gate of the temple. Let your love and courage be mingled together. The man who is bold may indeed accomplish wonders. John Knox did much, but he might perhaps have done more if he had had a little love. Luther was a conqueror—peace to his ashes, and honor to his name!—still, we who look upon him at a distance, think that if he had sometimes mixed a little mildness with it—if, while he had the *fortitior in re*, he had been also *suaviter in modo*, and spoken somewhat more gently, he might have done even more good than he did. So brethren, while we too are bold, let us ever imitate the loving Jesus. The child comes to him; he takes it on his knee, saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." A widow has just lost her only son; he weeps at the bier, and with a word, restores life to the dead man. He sees a paralytic, a leper, or a man long confined to his bed; he speaks, they rise, and are healed. He lived for others, not for himself. His constant labors were without any motive, except the good of those who lived in the world. And to crown all, ye know the mighty sacrifice he made, when he condescended to lay down his life for man—when on the tree, quivering with agony, and hanging in the utmost extremity of suffering, he submitted to die for our sakes, that we might be saved. Behold in Christ love consolidated! He was one mighty pillar of benevolence. As God is love, so Christ is love. Oh, ye Christians, be ye loving also. Let your love and your beneficence beam out on all men. Say not, "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled," but "give a portion to seven, and also to eight." If ye cannot imitate Howard, and unlock the prison doors—if ye cannot visit the sad house of misery, yet each in your proper sphere, speak kind words, do kind actions; live out Christ again in the kindness of your life. If there is one virtue which most commends Christians, it is that of kindness; it is to love the people of God, to love the church, to love the world, to love all. But how many have we in our churches of Crab-tree Christians, who have mixed such a vast amount of vinegar, and such a tremendous quantity of gall in their constitutions, that they can scarcely speak one good word to you: they imagine it impossible to defend religion except by passionate ebullitions; they cannot speak for their dishonored Master without being angry with their opponent; and if anything is awry, whether it be in the house, the church, or anywhere else, they conceive it to be their duty to set their faces like flint, and to defy everybody. They are like isolated icebergs, no one cares to go near them. They float about on the sea of forgetfulness, until at last they are melted and gone; and though, good souls, we shall be happy enough to meet them in heaven, we are precious glad to get rid of them from the earth. They were always so unamiable in disposition, that we would rather live an eternity with them in heaven than five minutes on earth. Be ye not thus, my brethren. Imitate Christ in your loving spirits; speak kindly, act kindly, and do kindly, that men may say of you, "He has been with Jesus."

Another great feature in the life of Christ was his deep and *sincere humility*; in which let us imitate him. While we will not cringe or bow (far from it; we are the freemen whom the truth makes free; we walk through this world equal to all, inferior to none) yet we would endeavor to be like Christ, continually humble. Oh, thou proud Christian (for though it be a paradox, there must be some, I think; I would not be so uncharitable as to say that there are not some such persons), if thou art a Christian, I bid thee look at thy Master, talking to the children, bending from the majesty of his divinity to speak to mankind on earth, tabernacling with the peasants of Galilee, and then—aye, depth of condescension unparalleled—washing his disciples' feet, and wiping them with the towel after supper. This is your Master, whom ye profess to worship; this is your Lord, whom ye adore. And ye, some of you who count yourselves Christians, cannot speak to a person who is not dressed in the same kind of clothing as yourselves, who have not exactly as much money per year as you have. In England, it is true that a sovereign will not speak to a shilling, and a shilling will not notice a sixpence, and a sixpence will sneer at a penny. But it should not be so with Christians. We ought to forget caste, degree, and rank, when we come into Christ's church. Recollect, Christian, who your Master was—a man of the poor. He lived with them; he ate with them. And will ye walk with lofty heads and stiff necks, looking with insufferable contempt upon you meaner fellow-worms? What are ye? The meanest of all, because your trickeries and adornments make you proud. Pitiful, despicable souls ye are! How small ye look in God's sight! Christ was humble; he stooped to do anything which might serve others. He had no pride; he was an humble man, a friend of publicans and sinners, living and walking with them. So, Christian, be thou like thy Master—one who can stoop; yea, be thou one who thinks it no stooping, but rather esteems others better than himself, counts it his honor to sit with the poorest of Christ's people, and says, "If my name may be but written in the obscurest part

of the book of life, it is enough for me, so unworthy am I of his notice!" Be like Christ in his humility.

So might I continue, dear brethren, speaking of the various characteristics of Christ Jesus; but as you can think of them as well as I can, I shall not do so. It is easy for you to sit down and paint Jesus Christ, for you have him drawn out here in his word. I find that time would fail me if I were to give you an entire likeness of Jesus; but let me say, imitate him in his *holiness*. Was he zealous for his master? So be you. Ever go about doing good. Let not time be wasted. It is too precious. Was he self-denying, never looking to his own interest? So be you. Was he devout? So be you fervent in your prayers. Had he deference to his Father's will? So submit yourselves to him. Was he patient? So learn to endure. And best of all, as the highest portraiture of Jesus, try to forgive your enemies as he did; and let those sublime words of your Master, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," always ring in your ears. When you are prompted to revenge; when hot anger starts, bridle the steed at once, and let it not dash forward with you headlong. Remember, anger is temporary insanity. Forgive as you hope to be forgiven. Heap coals of fire on the head of your foe by your kindness to him. Good for evil, recollect, is god-like. Be god-like, then; and in all ways, and by all means, so live that your enemies may say, "He has been with Jesus."

II. Now, WHEN SHOULD CHRISTIANS BE THUS? For there is an idea in the world that persons ought to be very religious on a Sunday, but it does not matter what they are on a Monday. How many pious preachers are there on a Sabbath-day, who are very impious preachers during the rest of the week! How many are there who come up to the house of God with a solemn countenance, who join the song and profess to pray, yet have neither part nor lot in the matter, but are "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity!" This is true of some of you who are present here. When should a Christian, then, be like Jesus Christ? Is there a time when he may strip off his regimentals—when the warrior may unbuckle his armor, and become like other men? Oh! no; at all times and in every place let the Christian be what he professes to be. I remember talking some time ago with a person who said, "I do not like visitors who come to my house and introduce religion; I think we ought to have religion on the Sabbath-day, when we go to the house of God, but not in the drawing-room." I suggested to the individual that there would be a great deal of work for the upholsterers, if there should be no religion except in the house of God. "How is that?" was the question. "Why," I replied, "we should need to have beds fitted up in all our places of worship, for surely we need religion to die with, and consequently, every one would want to die there." Aye, we all need the consolations of God at last; but how can we expect to enjoy them unless we obey the precepts of religion during life? My brethren, let me say, be ye like Christ at all times. Imitate him in *public*. Most of us live in some sort of publicity; many of us are called to work before our fellow-men every day. We are watched; our words are caught; our lives are examined—taken to pieces. The eagle-eyed, argus-eyed world observes everything we do, and sharp critics are upon us. Let us live the life of Christ in public. Let us take care that we exhibit our Master, and not ourselves—so that we can say, "It is no longer I that live, but Christ that liveth in me." Take heed that you carry this into the *church* too, you who are church-members. Be like Christ in the church. How many there are of you like Diotrophes, seeking pre-eminence? How many are trying to have some dignity and power over their fellow Christians, instead of remembering that it is the fundamental rule of all our churches, that there all men are equal—alike brethren, alike to be received as such. Carry out the spirit of Christ, then, in your churches, wherever ye are; let your fellow members say of you, "He has been with Jesus."

But, most of all, take care to have religion in your *houses*. A religious house is the best proof of true piety. It is not my chapel, it is my house—it is not my minister, it is my home-companion—who can best judge me; it is the servant, the child, the wife, the friend, that can discern most of my real character. A good man will improve his household. Rowland Hill once said, he would not believe a man to be a true Christian if his wife, his children, the servants, and even the dog and cat, were not the better for it. That is being religious. If your household is not the better for your Christianity—if men cannot say, "This is a better house than others," then be not deceived—ye have nothing of the grace of God. Let not your servant, on leaving your employ, say, "Well, this is a queer sort of a religious family; there was no prayer in the morning, I began the day with my drudgery; there was no prayer at night, I was kept at home all the Sabbath-day. Once a fortnight, perhaps, I was allowed to go out in the afternoon, when there was nowhere to go where I could hear a gospel sermon. My master and mistress went to a place where of course they heard the blessed gospel of God—that was all for them; as for me, I might have the dregs and leavings of some overworked curate in the afternoon." Surely, Christian men will not act in that way. No! Carry out your godliness in your family. Let everyone say that you have practical religion. Let it be known and read in the house, as well as in the world. Take care of your character there; for what we are there, we really are. Our life abroad is often but a borrowed part, the actor's part of a great scene, but at home the wizard is removed, and men are what they seem. Take care of you home duties.

Yet again, my brethren, before I leave this point, imitate Jesus in *secret*. When no eye seeth you except the

eye of God, when darkness covers you, when you are shut up from the observation of mortals, even then be ye like Jesus Christ. Remember his ardent piety, his secret devotion—how, after laboriously preaching the whole day, he stole away in the midnight shades to cry for help from his God. Recollect how his entire life was constantly sustained by fresh inspirations of the Holy Spirit, derived by prayer. Take care of your secret life; let it be such that you will not be ashamed to read at the last great day. Your inner life is written in the book of God, and it shall one day be open before you. If the entire life of some of you were known, it would be no life at all; it would be a death. Yea, even of some true Christians we may say it is scarce a *life*. It is a dragging on of an existence—one hasty prayer a day—one breathing, just enough to save their souls alive, but no more. O, my brethren, strive to be more like Jesus Christ. These are times when we want more secret prayer. I have had much fear all this week. I know not whether it is true; but when I feel such a thing I like to tell it to those of you who belong to my own church and congregation. I have trembled lest, by being away from our own place, you have ceased to pray as earnestly as you once did. I remember your earnest groans and petitions—how you would assemble together in the house of prayer in multitudes, and cry out to God to help his servant. We cannot meet in such style at present; but do you still pray in private? Have you forgotten me? Have you ceased to cry out to God? Oh! my friends, with all the entreaties that a man can use, let me appeal to you. Recollect who I am, and what I am—a child, having little education, little learning, ability or talent; and here am I called upon week after week, to preach to this crowd of people. Will ye not, my beloved, still plead for me? Has not God been pleased to hear your prayers ten thousand times? And will ye now cease, when a mighty revival is taking place in many churches? Will ye now stop your petitions? Oh! no; go to your houses, fall upon your knees, cry aloud to God to enable you still to hold up your hands like Moses on the hill, that Joshua below may fight and overcome the Amalekites. Now is the time for victory; shall we lose it? This is the high tide that will float us over the bar; now let us put out the oars; let us pull by earnest prayer, crying for God the Spirit to fill the sails! Ye who love God, of every place and every denomination, wrestle for your ministers; pray for them; for why should not God even now put out his Spirit? What is the reason why we are to be denied Pentecostal seasons? Why not this hour, as one mighty band, fall down before him and entreat him, for his Son's sake, to revive his drooping church? Then would all men discern that we are verily the disciples of Christ.

III. But now, thirdly, **WHY SHOULD CHRISTIANS IMITATE CHRIST?** The answer comes very naturally and easily, Christians should be like Christ, first, *for their own sakes*. For their honesty's sake, and for their credit's sake, let them not be found liars before God and men. For their own healthful state, if they wish to be kept from sin and preserved from going astray, let them imitate Jesus. For their own happiness' sake, if they would drink wine on the lees well refined; if they would enjoy holy and happy communion with Jesus; if they would be lifted up above the cares and troubles of this world, let them imitate Jesus Christ. Oh! my brethren, there is nothing that can so advantage you, nothing can so prosper you, so assist you, so make you walk towards heaven rapidly, so keep you head upwards towards the sky, and your eyes radiant with glory, like the imitation of Jesus Christ. It is when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you are enabled to walk with Jesus in his very footsteps, and tread in his ways, you are most happy and you are most known to be the sons of God. For your own sake, my brethren, I say, be like Christ.

Next, *for religion's sake*, strive to imitate Jesus. Ah! poor religion, thou hast been sorely shot at by cruel foes, but thou hast not been wounded one-half so much by them as by thy friends. None have hurt thee, O, Christianity, so much as those who profess to be thy followers. Who have made these wounds in this fair hand of godliness? I say, the professor has done this, who has not lived up to his profession; the man who with pretences enters the fold, being naught but a wolf in sheep's clothing. Such men, sirs, injure the gospel more than others; more than the laughing infidel, more than the sneering critic, doth the man hurt our cause who professes to love it, but in his actions doth belie his love. Christian, lovest thou that cause? Is the name of the dear Redeemer precious to thee? Wouldst thou see the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ? Dost thou wish to see the proud man humbled and the mighty abased? Dost thou long for the souls of perishing sinners, and art thou desirous to win them, and save their souls from the everlasting burning? Wouldst thou prevent their fall into the regions of the damned? Is it thy desire that Christ should see the travail of his soul, and be abundantly satisfied? Doth thy heart yearn over thy fellow-immortals? Dost thou long to see them forgiven? Then be consistent with thy religion. Walk *before God* in the land of the living. Behave as an elect man should do. Recollect what manner of people we ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness. This is the best way to convert the world; yea, such conduct would do more than even the efforts of missionary societies, excellent as they are. Let but men see that our conduct is superior to others, then they will believe there is something in our religion; but, if they see us quite the contrary to what we avow, what will they say? "These religious people are no better than others! Why should we go amongst them?" And they say quite rightly. It is but common-sense judgment. Ah! my friends, if ye love religion for her own sake, be consistent, and walk in the love of God. Follow Christ Jesus.

Then, to put it in the strongest form I can, let me say, *for Christ's sake*, endeavor to be like him. Oh! could I fetch the dying Jesus here, and let him speak to you! My own tongue is tied this morning, but I would make his blood, his scars, and his wounds speak. Poor dumb mouths, I bid each of them plead in his behalf. How would Jesus, standing here, show you his hands this morning! "My friends," he would say, "hehold me! these hands were pierced for you; and look ye here at this my side. It was opened as the fountain of your salvation. See my feet; there entered the cruel nails. Each of these bones were dislocated for your sake. These eyes gushed with torrents of tears. This head was crowned with thorns. These cheeks were smitten; this hair was plucked; my body became the centre and focus of agony. I hung quivering in the burning sun; and all for you, my people. And will ye not love me now? I bid you be like me. Is there any fault in me? Oh! no. Ye believe that I am fairer than ten thousand fairs, and lovelier than ten thousand loves. Have I injured you? Have I not rather done all for your salvation? And do I not sit at my Father's throne, and e'en now intercede on your behalf? If ye love me,"—Christian, hear that word; let the sweet syllables ring forever in your ears, like the prolonged sounding of silver-toned bells;—"if ye love me, if ye love me, keep my commandments." Oh, Christian, let that "if" be put to thee this morning. "If ye love me." Glorious Redeemer! is it an "if" at all? Thou precious, bleeding Lamb, can there be an "if?" What, when I see thy blood gushing from thee; is it an "if?" Yes, I weep to say it is an "if." Oft my thoughts make it "if," and oft my words make it "if." But yet methinks my soul feels it is not "if," either. "Not to mine eyes is light so dear, Nor friendship half so sweet." "Yes, I love thee, I know that I love thee. Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee," can the Christian say. "Well, then," says Jesus, looking down with a glance of affectionate approbation, "*since* thou lovest me, keep my commandments." O beloved, what mightier reason can I give than this? It is the argument of love and affection. Be like Christ, since gratitude demands obedience; so shall the world know that ye have been with Jesus.

IV. Ah! then ye wept; and I perceive ye felt the force of pity, and some of you are inquiring, "HOW CAN I IMITATE HIM?" It is my business, then, before you depart, to tell you how you can become transformed into the image of Christ.

In the first place, then, my beloved friends, in answer to your inquiry, let me say, you must know Christ as your Redeemer before you can follow him as your Exemplar. Much is said about the example of Jesus, and we scarcely find a man now who does not believe that our Lord was an excellent and holy man, much to be admired. But excellent as was his example, it would be impossible to imitate it, had he not also been our sacrifice. Do ye this morning know that his blood was shed for you? Can ye join with me in this verse,—

"O the sweet wonders of that cross,
Where God the Saviour lov'd and died;
Her noblest life my spirit draws
From his dear wounds and bleeding side."

If so, you are in a fair way to imitate Christ. But do not seek to copy him until you are bathed in the fountain filled with blood drawn from his veins. It is not possible for you to do so; your passions will be too strong and corrupt, and you will be building without a foundation, a structure, which will be about as stable as a dream. You cannot mould your life to his pattern until you have had his spirit, till you have been clothed in his righteousness. "Well," say some, "we have proceeded so far, what next shall we do? We know we have an interest in him, but we are still sensible of manifold deficiencies." Next, then, let me entreat you to study Christ's character. This poor Bible is become an almost obsolete book, even with some Christians. There are so many magazines, periodicals, and such like ephemeral productions, that we are in danger of neglecting to search the Scriptures. Christian, wouldst thou know thy master? Look at him. There is a wondrous power about the character of Christ, for the more you regard it the more you will be conformed to it. I view myself in the glass, I go away, and forget what I was. I behold Christ, and I become like Christ. Look at him, then; study him in the evangelists, studiously examine his character. "But," say you, "we have done that, and we have proceeded but little farther." Then, in the next place, correct your poor copy every day. At night, try and recount all the actions of the twenty-four hours, scrupulously putting them under review. When I have proof-sheets sent to me of any of my writings, I have to make the corrections in the margin. I might read them over fifty times, and the printers would still put in the errors if I did not mark them. So must you do; if you find anything faulty at night, make a mark in the margin, that you may know where the fault is, and to-morrow may amend it. Do this day after day, continually noting your faults one by one, so that you may better avoid them. It was a maxim of the old philosophers, that, three times in the day, we should go over our actions. So let us do; let us not be forgetful; let us rather examine ourselves each night, and see wherein we have done amiss, that we may reform our lives.

Lastly, as the best advice I can give, seek more of the Spirit of God; for this is the way to become Christ-like. Vain are all your attempts to be like him till you have sought his spirit. Take the cold iron, and attempt to weld it if you can into a certain shape. How fruitless the effort! Lay it on the anvil, seize the blacksmith's hammer with all you might, let blow after blow fall upon it, and you shall have done nothing. Twist it, turn it, use all your implements, but you shall not be able to fashion it as you would. But put it in the fire, let it be softened and made malleable, then lay it on the anvil, and each stroke shall have a mighty effect, so that you may fashion it into any form you may desire. So take your heart, not cold as it is, not stony as it is by nature, but put it into the furnace; there let it be molten, and after that it can be turned like wax to the seal, and fashioned into the image of Jesus Christ.

Oh, my brethren, what can I say now to enforce my text, but that, if ye are like Christ on earth, ye shall be like him in heaven? If by the power of the Spirit ye become followers of Jesus, ye shall enter glory. For at heaven's gate there sits an angel, who admits no one who has not the same features as our adorable Lord. There comes a man with a crown upon his head, "Yes," he says, "thou hast a crown, it is true, but crowns are not the medium of access here." Another approaches, dressed in robes of state and the gown of learning. "Yes," says the angel, "it may be good, but gowns and learning are not the marks that shall admit you here." Another advances, fair, beautiful, and comely. "Yes," saith the angel, "that might please on earth, but beauty is not wanted here." There cometh up another, who is heralded by fame, and prefaced by the blast of the clamor of mankind; but the angel saith, "It is well with man, but thou hast no right to enter here." Then there appears another; poor he may have been; illiterate he may have been; but the angel, as he looks at him, smiles and says, "It is Christ again; a second edition of Jesus Christ is there. Come in, come in. Eternal glory thou shalt win. Thou art like Christ; in heaven thou shalt sit, because thou art like him." Oh! to be like Christ is to enter heaven; but to be unlike Christ is to descend to hell. Likes shall be gathered together at last, tares with tares, wheat with wheat. If ye have sinned with Adam and have died, ye shall lie with the spiritually dead forever, unless ye rise in Christ to newness of life; then shall we live with him throughout eternity. Wheat with wheat, tares with tares. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Go away with this one thought, then my brethren, that you can test yourselves by Christ. If you are like Christ, you are of Christ, and shall be with Christ. If you are unlike him, you have no portion in the great inheritance. May my poor discourse help to fan the floor and reveal the chaff; yea, may it lead many of you to seek to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, to the praise of his grace. To him be all honor given! Amen.

Christ's Plea for Ignorant Sinners

A Sermon (No. 2263) Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, July 3rd, 1892, Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington *On Lord's-day Evening, October 5th, 1890.* "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."—Luke 23:34.

WHAT tenderness we have here; what self-forgetfulness; what almighty love! Jesus did not say to those who crucified him, "Begone!" One such word, and they must have all fled. When they came to take him in the garden, they went backward, and fell to the ground, when he spoke but a short sentence; and now that he is on the cross, a single syllable would have made the whole company fall to the ground, or flee away in fright.

Jesus says not a word in his own defence. When he prayed to his Father, he might justly have said, "Father, note what they do to thy beloved Son. Judge them for the wrong they do to him who loves them, and who has done all he can for them." But there is no prayer against them in the words that Jesus utters. It was written of old, by the prophet Isaiah, "He made intercession for the transgressors;" and here it is fulfilled. He pleads for his murderers, "Father, forgive them."

He does not utter a single word of upbraiding. He does not say, "Why do ye this? Why pierce the hands that fed you? Why nail the feet that followed after you in mercy? Why mock the Man who loved to bless you?" No, not a word even of gentle upbraiding, much less anything like a curse. "Father, forgive them." You notice, Jesus does not say, "I forgive them," but you may read that between the lines. He says that all the more because he does not say it in words. But he had laid aside his majesty, and is fastened to the cross; and therefore he takes the humble position of a suppliant, rather than the more lofty place of one who had power to forgive. How often, when men say, "I forgive you," is there a kind of selfishness about it! At any rate, self is asserted in the very act of forgiving. Jesus take the place of a pleader, a pleader for those who were committing murder upon himself. Blessed be his name!

This word of the cross we shall use to-night, and we shall see if we cannot gather something from it for our

instruction; for, though we were not there, and we did not actually put Jesus to death, yet we really caused his death, and we, too, crucified the Lord of glory; and his prayer for us was, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

I am not going to handle this text so much by way of exposition, as by way of experience. I believe there are many here, to whom these words will be very appropriate. This will be our line of thought. First, *we were in measure ignorant*; secondly, *we confess that this ignorance is no excuse*; thirdly, *we bless our Lord for pleading for us*; and fourthly, *we now rejoice in the pardon we have obtained*. May the Holy Spirit graciously help us in our meditation!

I. Looking back upon our past experience, let me say, first, that WE WERE IN MEASURE IGNORANT. We who have been forgiven, we who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, we once sinned, in a great measure, through ignorance. Jesus says, "They know not what they do." Now, I shall appeal to you, brothers and sisters, when you lived under the dominion of Satan, and served yourselves and sin, was there not a measure of ignorance in it? You can truly say, as we said in the hymn we sang just now,— "Alas! I knew not what I did." It is true, first, that we were ignorant of *the awful meaning of sin*. We began to sin as children; we knew that it was wrong, but we did not know all that sin meant. We went on to sin as young men; peradventure we plunged into much wickedness. We knew it was wrong; but we did not see the end from the beginning. It did not appear to us as rebellion against God. We did not think that we were presumptuously defying God, setting at naught his wisdom, defying his power, deriding his love, spurning his holiness; yet we were doing that. There is an abysmal depth in sin. You cannot see the bottom of it. When we rolled sin under our tongue as a sweet morsel, we did not know all the terrible ingredients compounded in that deadly bittersweet. We were in a measure ignorant of the tremendous crime we committed when we dared to live in rebellion against God. So far, I think, you go with me.

We did not know, at that time, *God's great love to us*. I did not know that he had chosen me from before the foundation of the world; I never dreamed of that. I did not know that Christ stood for me as my Substitute, to redeem me from among men. I did not know the love of Christ, did not understand it then. You did not know that you were sinning against eternal love, against infinite compassion, against a distinguishing love such as God had fixed on you from eternity. So far, we knew not what we did.

I think, too, that we did not know all that we were doing in *our rejection of Christ, and putting him to grief*. He came to us in our youth; and impressed by a sermon we began to tremble, and to seek his face; but we were decoyed back to the world, and we refused Christ. Our mother's tears, our father's prayers, our teacher's admonitions, often moved us; but we were very stubborn, and we rejected Christ. We did not know that, in that rejection, we were virtually putting him away and crucifying him. We were denying his Godhead, or else we should have worshipped him. We were denying his love, or else we should have yielded to him. We were practically, in every act of sin, taking the hammer and the nails, and fastening Christ to the cross, but we did not know it. Perhaps, if we had known it, we should not have crucified the Lord of glory. We did know we were doing wrong; but we did not know all the wrong that we were doing.

Nor did we know fully *the meaning of our delays*. We hesitated; we were on the verge on conversion; we went back, and turned again to our old follies. We were hardened, Christless, prayerless still; and each of us said, "Oh, I am only waiting a little while till I have fulfilled my present engagements, till I am a little older, till I have seen a little more of the world!" The fact is, we were refusing Christ, and choosing the pleasures of sin instead of him; and every hour of delay was an hour of crucifying Christ, grieving his Spirit, and choosing this harlot world in the place of the lovely and ever blessed Christ. We did not know that.

I think we may add one thing more. *We did not know the meaning to our self-righteousness*. We used to think, some of us, that we had a righteousness of our own. We had been to church regularly, or we had been to the meeting-house whenever it was open. We were christened; we were confirmed; or, peradventure, we rejoiced that we never had either of those things done to us. Thus, we put our confidence in ceremonies, or the absence of ceremonies. We said our prayers; we read a chapter in the bible night and morning; we did—oh, I do not know what we did not do! But there we rested; we were righteous in our own esteem. We had not any particular sin to confess, nor any reason to lie in the dust before the throne of God's majesty. We were about as good as we could be; and we did not know that we were even then perpetrating the highest insult upon Christ; for, if we were not sinners, why did Christ die; and, if we had a righteousness of our own which was good enough, why did Christ come here to work out a righteousness for us? We made out Christ to be a superfluity, by considering that we were good enough without resting in his atoning sacrifice. Ah, we did not think we were doing that! We thought we were pleasing God by our religiousness, by our outward performances, by our ecclesiastical correctness; but all the while we were setting up anti-Christ in the place

of Christ. We were making out that Christ was not wanted; we were robbing him of his office and glory! Alas! Christ would say of us, with regard to all these things, "They know not what they do." I want you to look quietly at the time past wherein you served sin, and just see whether there was not a darkness upon your mind, a blindness in your spirit, so that you did not know what you did.

II. Well now, secondly, WE CONFESS THAT THIS IGNORANCE IS NO EXCUSE. Our Lord might urge it as a plea; but we never could. We did not know what we did, and so we were not guilty to the fullest possible extent; but we were guilty enough, therefore let us own it.

For first, remember, *the law never allows this as a plea*. In our own English law, a man is supposed to know what the law is. If he breaks it, it is no excuse to plead that he did not know it. It may be regarded by a judge as some extenuation; but the law allows nothing of the kind. God gives us the law, and we are bound to keep it. If I erred through not knowing the law, still it was a sin. Under the Mosaic law, there were sins of ignorance, and for these there were special offerings. The ignorance did not blot out the sin. That is clear in my text; for, if ignorance rendered an action no longer sinful, why should Christ say, "Father, forgive them"? But he does; he asks for mercy for what is sin, even though the ignorance in some measure be supposed to mitigate the criminality of it.

But, dear friends, *we might have known*. If we did not know, it was because we would not know. There was the preaching of the Word; but we did not care to hear it. There was this blessed Book; but we did not care to read it. If you and I had sat down, and looked at our conduct by the light of the Holy Scripture, we might have known much more of the evil of sin, and much more of the love of Christ, and much more of the ingratitude which is possible in refusing Christ, and not coming to him.

In addition to that, *we did not think*. "Oh, but," you say, "young people never do think!" But young people should think. If there is anybody who need not think, it is the old man, whose day is nearly over. If he does think, he has but a very short time in which to improve; but the young have all their lives before them. If I were a carpenter, and had to make a box, I should not think about it after I had made the box; I should think, before I began to cut my timber, what sort of box it was to be. In every action, a man thinks before he begins, or else he is a fool. A young man ought to think more than anybody else, for now he is, as it were, making his box. He is beginning his life-plan; he should be the most thoughtful of all men. Many of us, who are now Christ's people, would have known much more about our Lord if we had given him more careful consideration in our earlier days. A man will consider about taking a wife, he will consider about making a business, he will consider about buying a horse or a cow; but he will not consider about the claims of Christ, and the claims of the Most High God; and this renders his ignorance wilful, and inexcusable.

Beside that, dear friends, although we have confessed to ignorance, *in many sins we did not know a great deal*. Come, let me quicken your memories. There were times when you knew that such an action was wrong, when you started back from it. You looked at the gain it would bring you, and you sold your soul for that price, and deliberately did what you were well aware was wrong. Are there not some here, saved by Christ, who must confess that, at times, they did violence to their conscience? They did despite to the Spirit of God, quenched the light of heaven, drove the Spirit away from them, distinctly knowing what they were doing. Let us bow before God in the silence of our hearts, and own to all of this. We hear the Master say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Let us add our own tears as we say, "And forgive us, also, because in some things we did know; in all things we might have known; but we were ignorant for want of thought, which thought was a solemn duty which we ought to have rendered to God."

One more thing I will say on this head. When a man is ignorant, and does not know what he ought to do, what should he do? Well, he should do nothing till he does know. But here is the mischief of it, that *when we did not know, yet we chose to do the wrong thing*. If we did not know, why did we not choose the right thing? But, being in the dark, we never turned to the right; but always blundered to the left from sin to sin. Does not this show us how depraved our hearts are? Though we are seeking to be right, when we were left alone, we go wrong of ourselves. Leave a child alone; leave a man alone; leave a tribe alone without teaching and instruction; what comes of it? Why, the same as when you leave a field alone. It never, by any chance, produces wheat or barley. Leave it alone, and there are rank weeds, and thorns, and briars, showing that the natural set of the soil is towards producing that which is worthless. O friends, confess the inmate evil of your hearts as well as the evil of your lives, in that, when you did not know, yet, having a perverse instinct, you chose the evil, and refuse the good; and, when you did not know enough of Christ, and did not think enough of him to know whether you ought to have him or not, you would not have come unto him that you might have life. You needed light; but you shut your eyes to the sun. You were thirsty; but you would not drink of the living spring; and so your ignorance, though it was there, was a criminal ignorance, which you must confess

before the Lord. Oh, come ye to the cross, ye who have been there before, and have lost your burden there! Come and confess your guilt over again; and clasp that cross afresh, and look to him who bled upon it, and praise his dear name that he once prayed for you, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Now, I am going a step further. We were in a measure ignorant; but we confess that that measurable ignorance was no excuse.

III. Now, thirdly, WE BLESS OUR LORD FOR PLEADING FOR US. So you notice when it was that Jesus pleaded? It was, *while they were crucifying him*. They had not just driven in the nails, they had lifted up the cross, and dished it down into its socket, and dislocated all his bones, so that he could say, "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint." Ah, dear friends, it was then that instead of a cry or groan, this dear Son of God said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." They did not ask for forgiveness for themselves, Jesus ask for forgiveness for them. Their hands were imbrued in his blood; and it was then, even then, that he prayed for them. Let us think of the great love wherewith he loved us, even while we were yet sinners, when we rioted in sin, when we drank it down as the ox drinketh down water. Even then he prayed for us. "While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Bless his name to-night. He prayed for you when you did not pray for yourself. He prayed for you when you were crucifying him.

Then think of his plea, *he pleads his Sonship*. He says, "Father, forgive them." He was the Son of God, and he put his divine Sonship into the scale on our behalf. He seems to say, "Father, as I am thy Son, grant me this request, and pardon these rebels. Father, forgive them." The filial rights of Christ were very great. He was the Son of the Highest. "Light of light, very God of very God", the second Person in the Divine Trinity; and he puts that Sonship here before God and says, "Father, Father, forgive them." Oh, the power of that word from the Son's lip when he is wounded, when he is in agony, when he is dying! He says, "Father, Father, grant my one request; O Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" and the great Father bows his awful head, in token that the petition is granted.

Then notice, that Jesus here, silently, but really *pleads his sufferings*. The attitude of Christ when he prayed this prayer is very noteworthy. His hands were stretched upon the transverse beam; his feet were fastened to the upright tree; and there he pleaded. Silently his hands and feet were pleading, and his agonized body from the very sinew and muscle pleaded with God. His sacrifice was presented complete; and so it is his cross that takes up the plea, "Father, forgive them." O blessed Christ! It is thus that we have been forgiven, for his Sonship and his cross have pleaded with God, and have prevailed on our behalf.

I love this prayer, also, because of the *indistinctness* of it. It is "Father, forgive them." He does not say, "Father, forgive the soldiers who have nailed me here." He includes them. Neither does he say, "Father, forgive sinners in ages to come who will sin against me." But he means them. Jesus does not mention them by any accusing name: "Father, forgive my enemies. Father, forgive my murderers." No, there is no word of accusation upon those dear lips. "Father, forgive them." Now into that pronoun "them" I feel that I can crawl. Can you get in there? Oh, by a humble faith, appropriate the cross of Christ by trusting in it; and get into that big little word "them"! It seems like a chariot of mercy that has come down to earth into which a man may step, and it shall bear him up to heaven. "Father, forgive them."

Notice, also, what it was that Jesus asked for; to omit that, would be to leave out the very essence of his prayer. *He asked for full absolution for his enemies*: "Father, forgive them. Do not punish them; forgive them. Do not remember their sin; forgive it, blot it out; throw it into the depths of the sea. Remember it not, my Father. Mention it not against them any more for ever. Father, forgive them." Oh, blessed prayer, for the forgiveness of God is broad and deep! When man forgives, he leaves the remembrance of the wrong behind; but when God pardons, he says, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." It is this that Christ asked for you and me long before we had any repentance, or any faith; and in answer to that prayer, we were brought to feel our sin, we were brought to confess it, and to believe in him; and now, glory be to his name, we can bless him for having pleaded for us, and obtained the forgiveness of all our sins.

IV. I come now to my last remark. Which is this, WE NOW REJOICE IN THE PARDON WE HAVE OBTAINED. Have you obtained pardon? Is this your song? "Now, oh joy! My sins are pardon'd, Now I can, and do believe." I have a letter, in my pocket, from a man of education and standing, who has been an agnostic; he says that he was a sarcastic agnostic, and he writes praising God, and invoking every blessing upon my head for bringing him to the Saviour's feet. He says, "I was without happiness for this life, and without hope for the next." I believe that that is a truthful description of many an unbeliever. What hope is there for the world to come apart from the cross of Christ? The best hope such a man has is that he may die the

death of a dog, and there may be an end of him. What is the hope of the Romanist, when he comes to die? I feel so sorry for many of the devout and earnest friends, for I do not know what their hope is. They do not hope to go to heaven yet, at any rate; some purgatorial pains must be endured first. Ah, this is a poor, poor faith to die on, to have such a hope as that to trouble your last thoughts. I do not know of any religion but that of Christ Jesus which tells us of sin pardoned, absolutely pardoned. Now, listen. Our teaching is not that, when you come to die, you may, perhaps, find out that it is all right, but, "Beloved, now we are the sons of God." "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." He has it now, and he knows it, and he rejoices in it. So I come back to the last head of my discourse, we rejoice in the pardon Christ has obtained for us. We are pardoned. I hope that the larger portion of this audience can say, "By the grace of God, we know that the larger portion of this audience can say, "By the grace of God, we know that we are washed in the blood of the Lamb."

Pardon has come to us through Christ's plea. Our hope lies in the plea of Christ, and specially in his death. If Jesus paid my debt, and he did it if I am a believer in him, then I am out of debt. If Jesus bore the penalty of my sin, and he did it if I am a believer, then there is no penalty for me to pay, for we can say to him,—

"Complete atonement thou hast made,
And to the utmost farthing paid
Whate'er thy people owed:
Nor can his wrath on me take place,
If shelter'd in thy righteousness,
And sprinkled with thy blood.

"If thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of wrath divine:
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First of my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

If Christ has borne my punishment, I shall never bear it. Oh, what joy there is in this blessed assurance! Your hope that you are pardoned lies in this, that Jesus died. Those dear wounds of his are bled for you.

We praise him for our pardon because *we do know now what we did*. Oh, brethren, I know not how much we ought to love Christ, because we sinned against him so grievously! Now we know that sin is "exceeding sinful." Now we know that sin crucified Christ. Now we know that we stabbed our heavenly Lover to his heart. We slew, with ignominious death, our best and dearest Friend and Benefactor. We know that now; and we could almost weep tears of blood to think that we ever treated him as we did. But, it is all forgiven, all gone. Oh, let us bless that dear Son of God, who has put away even such sins as ours! We feel them more now than ever before. We know they are forgiven, and our grief is because of the pain that the purchase of our forgiveness cost our Saviour. We never knew what our sins really were till we saw him in a bloody sweat. We never knew the crimson hue of our sins till we read our pardon written in crimson lines with his precious blood. Now, we see our sin, and yet we do not see it; for God has pardoned it, blotted it out, cast it behind his back for ever.

Henceforth *ignorance*, such as we have described, *shall be hateful to us*. Ignorance of Christ and eternal things shall be hateful to us. If, through ignorance, we have sinned, we will have done with that ignorance. We will be students of his Word. We will study that masterpiece of all the sciences, the knowledge of Christ crucified. We will ask the Holy Ghost to drive far from us the ignorance that gendereth sin. God grant that we may not fall into sins of ignorance any more; but may we be able to say, "I know whom I have believed; and henceforth I will seek more knowledge, till I comprehend, with all saints, what are the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of the love of Christ, and know the love of God, which passeth knowledge!"

I put in a practical word here. If you rejoice that you are pardoned, *show your gratitude by your imitation of Christ*. There was never before such a plea as this, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Plead like that for others. Has anybody been injuring you? Are there persons who slander you? Pray to-night, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Let us always render good for evil, blessing for cursing; and when we are called to suffer through the wrong-doing of others, let us believe that they would not act as they do if it were not because of their ignorance. Let us pray for them; and make their very ignorance the plea for their forgiveness: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

I want you to think of the millions of London just now. See those miles of streets, pouring out their children this evening; but look at those public-houses with the crowds streaming in and out. God down our streets by moonlight. See what I almost blush to tell. Follow men and women, too, to their homes, and be this your prayer: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That silver bell—keep it always ringing. What did I say? That silver bell? Nay, it is the *golden* bell upon the priests' garments. Wear it on your garments, ye priests of God, and let it always ring out its golden note, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If I can set all God's saints imitating Christ with such a prayer as this, I shall not have spoken in vain.

Brethren, I see *reason for hope in the very ignorance that surrounds us*. I see hope for this poor city of ours, hope for this poor country, hope for Africa, China, and India. "They know not what they do." Here is a strong argument in their favour, for they are more ignorant than we were. They know less of the evil of sin, and less of the hope of eternal life, than we do. Send up this petition, ye people of God! Heap your prayers together with cumulative power, send up this fiery shaft of prayer, straight to the heart of God, while Jesus from his throne shall add his prevalent intercession, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

If there be any unconverted people here, and I know that there are some, we will mention them in our private devotion, as well as in the public assembly; and we will pray for them in words like these, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." May God bless you all, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

Luke 23:33-46. John 19:25-30

We have often read the story of our Saviour's sufferings; but we cannot read it too often. Let us, therefore, once again repair to "the place which is called Calvary." As we just now sang,—"*Come, let us stand beneath the cross; So may the blood from out his side Fall gently on us drop by drop; Jesus, our Lord is crucified.*" We will read, first, Luke's account of our Lord's crucifixion and death.

Luke 23:33. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one of the right hand, and the other on the left.

They gave Jesus the place of dishonour. Reckoning him to be the worst criminal of the three, they put him between the other two. They heaped upon him the utmost scorn which they could give to a malefactor; and in so doing they unconsciously honoured him. Jesus always deserves the chief place wherever he is. In all things he must have the pre-eminence. He is King of sufferers as well as King of saints.

34. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

How startled they must have been to hear such words from one who was about to be put to death for a supposed crime! The men that drove the nails, the men that lifted up the tree, must have been started back with amazement when they heard Jesus talk to God as his Father, and pray for them: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Did ever Roman legionary hear such words before? I should say not. They were so distinctly and diametrically opposed to the whole spirit of Rome. There is was blow for blow; only in the case of Jesus they gave blows where none had been received. The crushing cruelty of the Roman must have been startled indeed at such words as these, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

34, 35. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots. And the people stood beholding.

The gambling soldiers little dreamed that they were fulfilling Scriptures while they were raffling for the raiment of the illustrious Sufferer on the cross; yet so it was. In the twenty-second Psalm, which so fully sets forth our Saviour's sufferings, and which he probably repeated while he hung on the tree, David wrote, "They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." "And the people stood beholding," gazing, looking on the cruel spectacle. You and I would not have done that; there is a public sentiment which has trained us to hate the sight of cruelty, especially of deadly cruelty to one of our own race; but these people thought that they did no harm when they "stood beholding." They also were thus fulfilling the Scriptures; for the seventeenth verse of the twenty-second Psalm says, "They look and stare upon me."

35. And the rulers also with them derided him,

Laughed at him, made him the object of course jests.

35, 36. Saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God. And the soldiers

also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar.

In mockery, not giving it to him, as they did later in mercy; but in mockery, pretending to present him with weak wine, such as they drank.

37. And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

I fancy the scorn that they threw into their taunt: "If thou be the king of the Jews;" that was a bit of their own. "Save thyself;" that they borrowed from the rulers. Sometimes a scoffer or a mocker cannot exhibit all the bitterness that is in his heart except by using borrowed terms, as these soldiers did.

38. And a superscription also was written over him in the letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

John tells us that Pilate wrote this title, and that the chief priests tried in vain to get him to alter it. It was written in the three current languages of the time, so that the Greek, the Roman, and the Jew might alike understand who he was who was thus put to death. Pilate did not know as much about Christ as we do, or he might have written, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS, AND OF THE GENTILES, TOO.

39. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

He, too, borrows this speech from the rulers who derided Christ, only putting the words "and us" as a bit of originality. "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us."

40, 41. But the other answering rebuked him saying, Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

A fine testimony to Christ: "This man hath done nothing amiss;" nothing unbecoming, nothing out of order, nothing criminal, certainly; but nothing even "amiss." This testimony was well spoken by this dying thief.

42-46. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, in the thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up his ghost.

He yielded his life. He did not die, as we have to do, because our appointed time has come, but willingly the great Sacrifice parted with his life: "He gave up the ghost." He was a willing sacrifice for guilty men. Now let us see what John says concerning these hours of agony, these hours of triumph.

John 19:25. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

Last at the cross, first at the sepulchre. No woman's lip betrayed her Lord; no woman's hand ever smote him; their eyes wept for him; they gazed upon him with pitying awe and love. God bless the Marys! When we see so many of them about the cross, we feel that we honour the very name of Mary.

26, When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith into his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

Sad, sad spectacle! Now was fulfilled the word of Simeon, "Yes, a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Did the Saviour mean, as he gave a glance to John, "Woman, thou art losing one Son; but yonder stands another, who will be a son to thee in my absence"? "Woman, behold thy son!"

27. Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!

"Take her as thy mother, stand thou in my place, care for her as I have cared for her." Those who love Christ best shall have the honour of taking care of his church and of his poor. Never say of any poor relative or

friend, the widow or the fatherless, "They are a great burden to me." Oh, no! Say, "They are a great honour to me; my Lord has entrusted them to my care." John thought so; let us think so. Jesus selected the disciple he loved best to take his mother under his care. He selects those whom he loves best to-day, and puts his poor people under their wing. Take them gladly, and treat them well.

27, *And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home*

You expected him to do it, did you not? He loved his Lord so well.

28, *After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.*

There was a prophecy to that effect in the Psalms, and he must needs fulfil that. Think of a dying man prayerfully going through the whole of the Scriptures and carefully fulfilling all that is there written concerning him: "That the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus saith, I thirst."

29, 30. *Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar,*

For he did receive it. It was a weak kind of wine, commonly drunk by the soldiery. This is not that mixed potion which he refused, wine mingled with myrrh, which was intended to stupefy the dying in their pains: "When he had tasted thereof, he would not drink;" for he would not be stupefied. He came to suffer to the bitter end the penalty of sin; and he would not have his sorrow mitigated; but when this slight refreshment was offered to him, he received it. Having just expressed his human weakness by saying, "I thirst," he now manifests his all-sufficient strength by crying, with a loud voice as Matthew, Mark, and Luke all testify.

30. *He said, It is finished:*

What "it" was it that was finished? I will not attempt to expound it. It is the biggest "it" that ever was/ Turn it over and you will see that it will grow, and grow, and grow, and grow, till it fills the whole earth: "It is finished." 20. *And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

He did not give up the ghost, and then bow his head, because he was dead; but he bowed his head as though in the act of worship, or as leaning it down upon his Father's bosom, and then gave up the ghost. Thus have we had two gospel pictures of our dying Lord. May we remember them, and learn the lessons they are intended to teach!

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—561, 279, 278.

Christ's Marvellous Giving

A Sermon (No. 3513) Published on Thursday, May 25th, 1916. Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington. *ON Lord's-day Evening, November 25th, 1866.* "Who gave himself for us." —Titus 2:14.

WE have once more, you see, the old subject. We still have to tell the story of the love of God towards man in the person of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. When you come to your table you find a variety there. Sometimes there is one dish upon it, and sometimes another; but you are never at all surprised to find the bread there every time, and, perhaps, we might add that there would be a deficiency if there were not salt there every time too. So there are certain truths which cannot be repeated too often, and especially is this true of this master-truth, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." Why, this is the bread of life; "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is the salt upon the table, and must never be forgotten, This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, even the chief."

Now we shall take the text, and use it thus: first of *all we shall ask it some questions*; then *we shall surround it with a setting of facts*; and when we have done that, *we will endeavour to press out of it its very soul as we draw certain inferences from it.* First then:—

I. WE WILL PUT THE TEXT INTO THE WITNESS-BOX, AND ASK IT A FEW QUESTIONS.

There are only five words in the text, and we will be content to let it go with four questions. "Who gave himself for us" The first question we ask the text is, *Who is this that is spoken of?* and the text gives the answer. It is "the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us." We had offended God; the dignity of divine justice demanded that offenses against so good and just a law as that which God had promulgated should not be allowed to go unpunished. But the attribute of justice is not the only one in the heart of God. God is love, and is, therefore, full of mercy. Yet, nevertheless, he never permits one quality of his Godhead to triumph over another. He could not be too merciful, and so become unjust; he would not permit mercy to put justice to an eclipse. The difficulty was solved thus: God himself stooped from his loftiness and veiled his glory in a garb of our inferior clay. The Word—that same Word without whom was not anything made that was made—became flesh, and dwelt amongst us; and his apostles, his friends, and his enemies, beheld him—the seed of the woman, but yet the Son of God, very God of very God, in all the majesty of deity, and yet man of the substance of his mother in all the weakness of our humanity, sin being the only thing which separated us from him, he being without sin, and we being full of it. It is, then, *God*, who "gave himself for us"; it is, then, *man*, who gave himself for us. It is Jesus Christ, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God; who made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and, being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is Christ Jesus, the man, the God, "who gave himself for us." Now I hope we shall not make any mistakes here, for mistakes here will be fatal. We may be thought uncharitable for saying it, but we should be dishonest if we did not say it, that it is essential to be right here. "Ye cannot be right in the rest Unless ye think rightly of him." You dishonour Christ if you do not believe in his deity. He will have nothing to do with you unless you accept him as being God as well as man. You must receive him as being, without any diminution, completely and wholly divine, and you must accept him as being your brother, as being a man just as you are. This, this is the person, and, relying upon him, we shall find salvation; but, rejecting his deity, he will say to us, "You know me not, and I never knew you!"

The text has answered the question "Who?" and now, putting it in the witness-box again, we ask it another question—"What? *What did he do?*" The answer is, "*He gave himself for us.*" It was a gift. Christ's offering of himself for us was voluntary; he did it of his own will. He did not die because we merited that, he should love us to the death; on the contrary, we merited that he should hate us; we deserved that he should cast us from his presence obnoxious things, for we were full of sin. We were the wicked keepers of the vineyard, who devoured for our own profit the fruit which belonged to the King's Son, and he is that King's Son, whom we slew, with wicked hands ousting him out of the vineyard. But he died for us who were his enemies. Remember the words of Scripture, "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die; peradventure, for a good, a generous man, one might even dare to die; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." He *gave* himself. We cannot purchase the love of God. This highest expression of divine love, the gift of his own Son, was, in the nature of things, unpurchaseable. What could we have offered that God should come into this world, and be found in fashion as a man, and should die? Why, the works of all the angels in heaven put together could not have deserved one pang from Christ. If for ever the angels had continued their ceaseless songs, and if all men had remained faithful, and could have heaped up their pile of merit to add to that of the angels, and if all the creatures that ever were, or ever shall be, could each bring in their golden hemp of merit—yet could they ever deserve you cross? Could they deserve that the Son of God should hang bleeding and dying there? Impossible! It must be a gift, for it was utterly unpurchaseable; though all worlds were coined and minted, yet could they not have purchased a tear from the Redeemer; they were not worth it. It must be grace; it cannot be merit; he *gave* himself.

And the gift is so thoroughly a gift that no prep of any kind was brought to bear upon the Saviour. There was no necessity that he should die, except the necessity of his loving us. Ah! friends, we might have been blotted out of existence, and I do not know that there would have been any lack in God's universe if the whole race of man had disappeared. That universe is too wide and great to miss such chirping grasshoppers as we are. When one star is blotted out it may make a little difference to our midnight sky, but to an eye that sees immensity it can make no change. Know ye not that this little solar system, which we think so vast, and those distant fixed stars, and yon mighty masses of nebulae, if such they be, and yonder streaming comet, with its stupendous walk of grandeur—all these are only like a little corner in the field of God's great works? He taketh them all up as nothing, and considereth them mighty as they be, and beyond all human conception great—to be but the small dust of the balance which does not turn the scale; and if they were all gone to-morrow there would be no more loss than as if a few grains of dust were thrown to the summer's wind. But God himself must stoop, rather than we should die. Oh! what magnificence of love! And the more so because there was no need for it. In the course of nature God would have been as holy and as heavenly without us as he is with us, and the pomp of yonder skies would have been as illustrious had we been dashed into the flames of hell as it will be now. God hath gained nought, except the manifestation of a love beyond an angel's dream; a grace, the

heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of which surpass all knowledge of all creatures. God only knows the love of God which is manifested in Jesus Christ. He gave himself. We will leave this point now, when it is fully understood that Christ's dying to save sinners, and giving himself for the ungodly, was a pure act of gratuitous mercy. There was nothing to compel God to give his Son, and nothing to lead the Son to die, except the simple might of his love to men. He would not see us die. He had a Father's love to us. He seemed to stand over our fallen race, as David stood over Absalom, and we were as bad as Absalom; and there he fled, and said, "My son, my son! Would God I had died for thee, my son, my son!" But he did more than this, for he did die for us, and all for love of Us who were his enemies! "So strange, so boundless was the love, Which pitied dying man; The Father sent his equal Son To give them life again." 'Twas all of love and of grace!

The third question is, "*What did he give?*" "Who gave himself for us," and here lies the glory of the text, that he gave not merely the crowns and royalties of heaven, though it was much to leave these, to come and don the humble garb of a carpenter's son; not the songs of seraphs, not the shouts of cherubim: 'twas something to leave them to come and dwell amongst the groans and tears of this poor fallen world; not the grandeur of his Father's court, though it was much to leave that to come and live with wild beasts, and men more wild than they, to fast his forty days and then to die in ignomy and shame upon the tree. No; there is little said about all this. He gave all this, it is true, but he gave *himself*. Mark, brethren, what a richness there is here! It is not that he gave his righteousness, though that has become our dress. It is not even that he gave his blood, though that is the fount in which we wash. It is that he gave himself—his Godhead and manhood both combined. All that that word "Christ" means he came to us and for us. He gave himself. Oh! that we could dive and plunge into—this unfathomed sea—himself! Omnipotence, Omniscience, Infinity—himself. He gave himself—purity, love, kindness, meekness, gentleness—that wonderful compound of all perfections, to make up one perfection—himself. You do not come to Christ's house and say, "He gives me this house, his church, to dwell in." You do not come to his table and merely say, "He gives me this table to feast at," but you go farther, and you take him by faith into your arms, and you say, "Who loved me, and gave *himself* for me." Oh! that you could get hold of that sweet word—himself! It is the love of a husband to his wife, who not only gives her all that she can wish, daily food and raiment, and all the comforts that can nourish and cherish her, and make her life glad, but who gives himself to her. So does Jesus. The body and soul of Jesus, the deity of Jesus, and all that that means, he has been pleased to give to and for his people. "Who gave himself for us."

There is another question which we shall ask the text, and that is, "*For whom did Christ give himself?*" Well, the text says, "For *us*." There be those who say that Christ has thus given himself for every man now living, or that ever did or shall live. We are not able to subscribe to the statement, though there is a truth in it, that in a certain sense he is "the Saviour of all men," but then it is added, "Specially of them that believe." At any rate, dear hearer, let me tell thee one thing that is certain. Whether atonement may be said to be particular or general, there are none who partake in its real efficacy but certain characters, and those characters are known by certain infallible signs. You must not say that he gave himself for you unless these signs are manifest in you, and the first sign is that of simple faith in the Lord Jesus. If thou believest in him, that shall be a proof to thee that he gave himself for thee. See, if he gave himself for all men alike, then he did equally for Judas and for Peter. Care you for such love as that? He died equally for those who were then in hell as for those who were then in heaven. Care you for such a doctrine as that? For my part, I desire to have a personal, peculiar, and special interest in the precious blood of Jesus; such an interest in it as shall lead me to his right hand, and enable me to say, "He hath washed me from my sins, in his blood." Now I think we have no right to conclude that we shall have any benefit from the death of Christ unless we trust him, and if we do trust him, that trust will produce the following things:—"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity"—we shall hate sin; we shall fight against it; we shall be delivered from it—"and purify unto himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works." I have no right, therefore, to conclude that I shall be a partaker of the precious blood of Jesus unless I become in my life "zealous of good works," My good works cannot save me, cannot even help to save me; but they are evidences of my being saved, and if I am not zealous for good works, I lack the evidence of salvation, and I have no right whatever to conclude that I shall receive one jot of benefit from Christ's sufferings upon the tree. Oh! my dear hearer, I would to God that thou couldst trust the Man, the God, who died on Calvary! I would that thou couldst trust him so that thou couldst say, "He will save me; he has saved me." The gratitude which you would feel towards him would inspire you with an invincible hatred against sin. You would begin to fight against every evil way; you would conform yourselves, by his grace, to his law and his Word, and you would become a new creature in him! May God grant that you may yet be able to say, "Who gave himself for me"! I have asked the text enough questions, and there I leave them. For a few minutes only I am now going to use the text another way, namely:—

II. PUT THE TEXT INTO A SETTING OF FACTS.

There was a day before all days when there was no day but the Ancient of Days; a time when there was no time, but when Eternity was all. Then God, in the eternal purpose, decreed to save his people. If we may speak so of things too mysterious for us to know them, and which we can only set forth after the manner of men, God had determined that his people should be saved, but he foresaw that they would sin. It was necessary, therefore, that the penalty due to their sins should be borne by someone. They could not be saved except a substitute were found who would bear the penalty of sin in their place and stead. Where was such a substitute to be found? No angel offered. There was no angel, for God dwelt alone, and even if there had then been angels, they could never have dared to offer to sustain the fearful weight of human guilt. But in that solemn council-chamber, when it was deliberated who should enter into bonds of suretyship to pay all the debts of the people of God, Christ came and gave himself a bondsman and a surety for all that was due—from them, or would be due from them, to the judgment-seat of God. In that day, then, he "gave himself for us."

But Time began, and this round world had made, in the mind of God, a few revolutions. Men said the world was getting old, but to God it was but an infant. But the fulness of time was come, and suddenly, amidst the darkness of the night, there was heard sweeter singing than ere had come from mortal lips, "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good will to men!" What lit up the sky with unwonted splendour and what had filled the air with *chorales* at the dead of night? See the Babe upon its mother's breast, there in Bethlehem's manger! "He gave himself for us." That same one who had given himself a surety has come down to earth to be a man, and to give himself for us. See him! For thirty years he toils on, amidst the drudgery of the carpenter's shop! What is he doing? The law needed to be fulfilled, and he "gave himself for us," and fulfilled the law. But now the time comes when he is thirty-two or thirty-three years of age, and the law demands that the penalty shall be paid. Do you see him going to meet Judas in the garden, with confident, but solemn step? He "gave himself for us." He could with a word have driven those soldiers into hell, but they bind him—he "gave himself for us." They take him before Pilate, and Herod and Caiaphas, and they mock at him, and jeer him, and pluck his cheeks, and flagellate his shoulders! How is it that he will smart at this rate? How is it that he bears so passively all the insults and indignities which they heap upon him? He gave himself for us. Our sins demanded smart; he bared his back and took the smart; he gave himself for us. But do you see that dreadful procession going through the streets of Jerusalem, along the rough pavement of the Via Dolorosa? Do you see the weeping women as they mourn because of him? How is it that he is willing to be led a captive up to the hill of Calvary? Alas! they throw him on the ground! They drive accursed iron through his hands and feet. They hoist him into the air! They dash the cross into its appointed place, and there he hangs, a naked spectacle of scorn and shame, derided of men, and mourned by angels. How is it that the Lord of glory, who made all worlds, and hung out the stars like lamps, should now be bleeding and dying there? He gave himself for us. Can you see the streaming fountains of the four wounds in his hands and feet? Can you trace his agony as it carves lines upon his brow and all down his emaciated frame? No you cannot see the griefs of his soul. No spirit can behold them. They were too terrible for you to know them. It seemed as though all hell were emptied into the bosom of the Son of God, and as though all the miseries of all the ages were made to meet upon him, till he bore:—"All that incarnate God, could bear, With strength enough, but none to spare." Now why is all this but that he gave himself for us till his head hung down in death, and his arms, in chill, cold death, hung down by his side, and they buried the lifeless Victor in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea? He gave himself for us!

What more now remaineth? He lives again; on the third day he cometh from the tomb, and even then he still gave himself for us! Oh! yes, beloved, he has gone up on high but he still gives himself for us, for up there he is constantly engaged in pleading the sinner's cause. Up yonder, amidst the glories of heaven, he has not forgotten us poor sinners who are here below, but he spreads his hands, and pleads before his Father's throne and wins for us unnumbered blessings, for he gave himself for us.

And I have been thinking whether I might not use the text in another way. Christ's servants wanted a subject upon which to preach, and so he "gave himself for us," to be the constant topic of our ministry. Christ's servants wanted a sweet companion to be with them in their troubles, and he gave himself for us. Christ's people want comfort; they want spiritual food and drink, and so he gave himself for us—his flesh to be our meat, and his blood to be our spiritual drink. And we expect soon to go home to the land of the hereafter, to the realms of the blessed, and what is to be our heaven? Why, our heaven will be Christ himself, for he gave himself for us. Oh! he is all that we want, all that we wish for! We cannot desire anything greater and better than to be with Christ, and to have Christ, to feed upon Christ, to lie in Christ's bosom, to know the kisses of his mouth, to look at the gleamings of his loving eyes, to hear his loving words, to feel him press us to his heart, and tell us that he has loved us from before the foundation of the world, and given himself for us.

I think we have put the text now into a setting of certain facts; do not forget them, but let them be your joy! And now the last thing we have to do is to:—

III. TURN THE TEXT TO PRACTICAL ACCOUNT BY DRAWING FROM IT A FEW INFERENCES.

The first inference I draw is this—that *he who gave himself for his people will not deny them anything*. This is a sweet encouragement to you who practice the art of prayer. You know how Paul puts it, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him, also freely give us all things?" Christ is all. If Christ gives himself to you, he will give you your bread and your water, and he will give you a house to dwell in. If he gives you himself, he will not let you starve on the road to heaven. Jesus Christ does not Give us himself and then deny us common things. Oh! child of God, go boldly to the throne of grace! Thou hast got the major; thou shalt certainly have the minor; thou hast the greater, thou canst not be denied the less.

Now I draw another inference, namely, that if Christ has already given himself in so painful a way as I have described, since there is no need that he should suffer any more, *we must believe that he is willing to give himself now unto the hearts of poor sinners*. Beloved, for Christ to come to Bethlehem is a greater stoop than for him to come into your heart. Had Christ to die upon Calvary? That is all done, and he need not die again. Do you think that he who is willing to die is unwilling to apply the results of his passion? If a man leaps into the water to bring out a drowning child, after he has brought the child alive on shore, if he happens to have a piece of bread in his pocket, and the child needs it, do you think that he who rescued the child's life will deny that child so small a thing as a piece of bread? And come, dost thou think that Christ died on Calvary, and yet will not come into thy heart if thou seekest him? Dost thou believe that he who died for sinners will ever reject the prayer of a sinner? If thou believest that thou thinkest hardly of him, for his heart is very tender. He feels even a cry. You know how it is with your children; if they cry through pain, why, you would give anything for someone to come and heal them; and if you cry because your sin is painful, the great Physician will come and heal you. Ah! Jesus Christ is much more easily moved by our cries and tears than we are by the woes of our fellow-creatures. Come, poor sinner, come and put thy trust in my Master! Thou canst not think him hard-hearted. If he were, why did he die? Dost thou think him unkind? Then why did he bleed? Thou art inclined to think so hardly of him! Thou art making great cuts at his heart when thou thinkest him to be untender and ungenerous. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but rather that he would turn unto me and live." This is the voice of the God whom you look upon as so sternly just! Did Jesus Christ, the tender one, speak in even more plaintive tones, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest"? You working men, you labouring men, Christ bids you come to him "all ye that labour." And you who are unhappy, you who know you have done wrong, and cannot sleep at nights because of it; you who are troubled about sin, and would fain go and hide your heads, and get—"Anywhere, anywhere out of the world,"—your Father says to you one and all, "Run not from me, but come to me, my child!" Jesus, who died, says, "Flee not from me, but come to me, for I will accept you; I will receive you; I cast out none that come unto me." Sinner, Jesus never did reject a coming soul yet, and he never will. Oh! try him! Try him! Now come, with thy sins about thee just as thou art, to the bleeding, dying Saviour, and he will say to thee, "I have blotted out thy sins; go and sin no more; I have forgiven thee." May God grant thee grace to put thy trust in him "who gave himself for us"!

There are many other inferences which I might draw if I had time, but if this last one we have drawn be so applied to your hearts as to be carried out, it will be enough. Now do not you go and try to do good works in order to merit heaven. Do not go and try to pray yourselves into heaven by the efficacy of praying. Remember, he "gave himself for us." The old proverb is that "there is nothing freer than a gift," and surely this gift of God, this eternal life, must be free, and we must have it freely, or not at all. I sometimes see put up at some of our doctors that they receive "gratis patients." That is the sort of patients my Master receives. He receives none but those who come gratis. He never did receive anything yet, and he never will, except your love and your thanks after he has saved you. But you must come to him empty-handed; come just as you are, and he will receive you now, and you shall live to sing to the praise and the glory of his grace who has accepted you in the Beloved, and "who gave himself for us" God help you to do it. Amen.

Christ's Hospital

A Sermon (No. 2260) Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, June 12th, 1892, Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington On Lord's-day Evening, March 9th, 1890. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."—Psalm 147:3.

Often as we have read this Psalm, we can never fail to be struck with the connection in which this verse

stands, especially its connection with the verse that follows. Read the two together: "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names." What condescension and grandeur! What pity and omnipotence! He who leads out yonder ponderous orbs in almost immeasurable orbits, nevertheless, is the Surgeon of men's souls, and stoops over broken hearts, and with his own tender fingers closes up the gaping wound, and binds it with the liniment of love. Think of it; and if I should not speak as well as I could desire upon the wonderful theme of his condescension, yet help me by your own thoughts to do reverence to the Maker of the stars, who is, at the same time, the Physician for broken hearts and wounded spirits.

I am equally interested in the connection of my text with the verse that goes before it: "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel." The church of God is never so well built up as when it is built up with men of broken hearts. I have prayed to God in secret many a time, of late, that he would be pleased to gather out from among us a people who have a deep experience, who should know the guilt of sin, who should be broken and ground to powder under a sense of their own inability and unworthiness; for I am persuaded that, without a deep experience of sin, there is seldom much belief in the doctrine of grace, and not much enthusiasm in praising the Saviour's name. The church needs to be built up with men who have been pulled down. Unless we know in our hearts our need of a Saviour, we shall never be worth much in preaching him. That preacher who has never been converted, what can he say about it? And he who has never been in the dungeon, who has never been in the abyss, who has never felt as if he were cast out from the sight of God, how can he comfort many who are outcasts, and who are bound with the fetters of despair? May the Lord break many hearts, and then bind them up, that with them he may build up the church, and inhabit it!

But now, leaving the connection, I come to the text itself, and I desire to speak of it so that everyone here who is troubled may derive comfort from it, God the Holy Ghost speaking through it. Consider, first, *the patients and their sickness*: "He healed the broken in heart." Then, consider, *the Physician and his medicine*, and for a while turn your eyes to him who does this healing work. Then, I shall want you to consider, *the testimonial to the great Physician* which we have in this verse: "He healed the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Lastly, and most practically, we will consider, *what we ought to do* towards him who healeth the broken in heart.

I. First, then, consider THE PATIENTS AND THEIR SICKNESS. They are broken in heart. I have heard of many who have died of a broken heart; but there are some who live with a broken heart, and who live all the better for having had their hearts broken; they live another and higher life than they lived before that blessed stroke broke their hearts in pieces.

There are many sorts of broken hearts, and Christ is good at healing them all. I am not going to lower and narrow the application of my text. The patients of the great Physician are *those whose hearts are broken through sorrow*. Hearts are broken through disappointment. Hearts are broken through bereavement. Hearts are broken in ten thousand ways, for this is a heart-breaking world; and Christ is good at healing all manner of heart-breaks. I would encourage every person here, even though his heart-break may not be of a spiritual kind, to make an application to him who healed the broken in heart. The text does not say, "the spiritually broken in heart", therefore I will not insert an adverb where there is none in the passage. Come hither, ye that are burdened, all ye that labour and are heavy laden; come hither, all ye that sorrow, be your sorrow what it may; come hither, all ye whose hearts are broken, be the heart-break what it may, for he healeth the broken in heart.

Still, there is a special brokenness of heart to which Christ gives the very earliest and tenderest attention. He heals *those whose hearts are broken for sin*. Christ heals the heart that is broken because of its sin; so that it grieves, laments, regrets, and bemoans itself, saying, "Woe is me that I have done this exceeding great evil, and brought ruin upon myself! Woe is me that I have dishonoured God, that I have cast myself away from his presence, that I have made myself liable to his everlasting wrath, and that even now his wrath abideth upon me!" If there is a man here whose heart is broken about his past life, he is the man to whom my text refers. Are you heart-broken because you have wasted forty, fifty, sixty years? Are you heart-broken at the remembrance that you have cursed the God who has blessed you, that you have denied the existence of him without whom you never would have been in existence yourself, that you have lived to train your family without godliness, without any respect to the Most High God at all? Has the Lord brought this home to you? Has he made you feel what a hideous thing it is to be blind to Christ, to refuse his love, to reject his blood, to live an enemy to your best Friend? Have you felt this? O my friend, I cannot reach across the gallery to give you my hand; but will you think that I am doing it, for I wish to do it? If there is a heart here broken on account of sin, I thank God for it, and praise the Lord that there is such a text as this: "He healeth the broken in heart"

Christ also heals *hearts that are broken from sin*. When you and sin have quarrelled, never let the quarrel be made up again. You and sin were friends at one time; but now you hate sin, and you would be wholly rid of it if you could. You wish never to sin. You are anxious to be clear of the most darling sin that you ever indulged in, and you desire to be made as pure as God is pure. Your heart is broken away from its old moorings. That which you once loved you now hate. That which you once hated you now at least desire to love. It is well. I am glad that you are here, for to you is the text sent, "He healeth the broken in heart."

If there is a broken-hearted person anywhere about, many people despise him. "Oh," they say, "he is melancholy, he is mad, he is out of his mind through religion!" Yes, men despise the broken in heart, but such, O God, thou wilt not despise! The Lord looks after such, and heals them.

Those who do not despise them, at any rate avoid them. I know some few friends who have long been of a broken heart; and when I feel rather dull, I must confess that I do not always go their way, for they are apt to make me feel more depressed. Yet would I not get out of their way if I felt that I could help them. Still, it is the nature of men to seek the cheerful and the happy, and to avoid the broken-hearted. God does not do so; he heals the broken in heart. He goes where they are, and he reveals himself to them as the Comforter and the Healer.

In a great many cases people despair of the broken-hearted ones. "It is no use," says one, "I have tried to comfort her, but I cannot do it." "I have wasted a great many words," says another, "on such and such a friend, and I cannot help him. I despair of his ever getting out of the dark." Not so is it with God; he healeth the broken in heart. He despairs of none. He shows the greatness of his power, and the wonders of his wisdom, by fetching men and women out of the lowest dungeon, wherein despair has shut them.

As for the broken-hearted ones themselves, they do not think that they ever can be converted. Some of them are sure that they never can; they wish that they were dead, though I do not see what they would gain by that. Others of them wish that they had never been born, though that is a useless wish now. Some are ready to rush after any new thing to try to find a little comfort; while others, getting worse and worse, are sitting down in sullen despair. I wish that I knew who these were; I should like to come round, and just say to them, "Come, brother; there must be no doubting and no despair to-night, for my text is gloriously complete, and is meant for you. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Notice that fifth verse, "Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite." Consequently, he can heal the broken in heart. God is glorious at a dead lift. When a soul cannot stir, or help itself, God delights to come in with his omnipotence, and lift the great load, and set the burdened one free.

It takes great wisdom to comfort a broken heart. If any of you have ever tried it, I am sure you have not found it an easy task. I have given much of my life to this work; and I always come away from a desponding one with a consciousness of my own inability to comfort the heart-broken and cast-down. Only God can do it. Blessed be his name that he has arranged that one Person of the Sacred Trinity should undertake this office of Comforter; for no man could ever perform its duties. We might as well hope to be the Saviour as to be the Comforter of the heart-broken. Efficiently and completely to save or to comfort must be a work divine. That is why the Holy Divine Spirit, healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds with infinite power and unfailing skill.

II. Now, secondly, we are going to consider THE PHYSICIAN AND HIS MEDICINE: "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Who is this that healeth the broken in heart?

I answer that *Jesus was anointed of God* for this work. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted." Was the Holy Spirit given to Christ in vain? That cannot be. He was given for a purpose which must be answered, and that purpose is the healing of the broken-hearted. By the very anointing of Christ by the Holy Spirit, you may be sure that our Physician will heal the broken in heart.

Further, Jesus was *sent of God* on purpose to do his work; "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted." If Christ does not heal the broken-hearted, he will not fulfill the mission for which he came from heaven. If the broken-hearted are not cheered by his glorious life and the blessings that flow out of his death, then he will have come to earth for nothing. This is the very errand on which the Lord of glory left the bosom of the Father to be veiled in human clay, that he might heal the broken in heart; and he will do it.

Our Lord was also *educated* for this work. He was not only anointed and sent; but he was trained for it. "How?" say you. Why, he had a broken heart himself; and there is no education for the office of comforter like

being place where you yourself have need of comfort, so that you may be able to comfort others with the comfort wherewith you yourself have been comforted of God. Is your heart broken? Christ's heart was broken. He said, "Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness." He went as low as you have ever been, and deeper than you can ever go. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was his bitter cry. If that be your agonized utterance, he can interpret it by his own suffering. He can measure your grief by his grief. Broken hearts, there is no healing for you except through him who had a broken heart himself. Ye disconsolate, come to him! He can make your heart happy and joyous, by the very fact of his own sorrow, and the brokenness of his own heart. "In all our afflictions he was afflicted." He was tempted in all points like as we are", "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." For a broken heart, there is no physician like him.

Once more, I can strongly recommend my Lord Jesus Christ as the Healer of broken hearts, because he is so *experienced* in the work. Some people are afraid that the doctor will try experiments upon them; but our Physician will only do for us what he has done many times before. It is no matter of experiment with him; it is a matter of experience. If you knock to-night at my great Doctor's door, you will, perhaps say to him, "Here is the strangest patient, my Lord, that ever came to thee." He will smile as he looks at you, and he will think, "I have saved hundreds like you." Here comes one who says, "That first man's case was nothing compared with mine; I am about the worst sinner who ever lived." And the Lord Jesus Christ will say, "Yes, I saved the worst man that ever lived long ago, and I keep on saving such as he. I delight to do it." But here comes one who has a curious odd way of broken-heartedness. He is an out-of-the-way fretter. Yes, but my Lord is able to "have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." He can lay hold of this out-of-the-way one; for he has always been saving out-of-the-way sinners. My Lord has been healing broken hearts well nigh nineteen hundred years. Can you find a brass-plate anywhere in London telling of a physician of that age? He has been at the work longer than that; for it is not far off six thousand years since he went into this business, and he has been healing the broken in heart ever since that time.

I will tell you one thing about him that I have on good authority, that is, he never lost a case yet. There never was one who came to him with a broken heart, but he healed him. He never said to one, "You are too bad for me to heal;" but he did say, "Him that cometh to me, I will in now wise cast out." My dear hearer, he will not cast you out. You say, "You do not know me, Mr. Spurgeon." No, I do not; and you have come here to-night, and you hardly know why you are here; only you are very low and very sad. The Lord Jesus Christ loves such as you are, you poor, desponding, doubting, desolate, disconsolate one. Daughters of sorrow, sons of grief, look ye here! Jesus Christ has gone on healing broken hearts for thousands of years, and he is well up in the business. He understands it by experience, as well as by education. He is "mighty to save." Consider him; consider him; and the Lord grant you grace to come and trust him even now!

Thus I have talked to you about the Physician for broken hearts; shall I tell you what his chief medicine is? It is his own flesh and blood. There is no cure like it. When a sinner is bleeding with sin, Jesus pours his own blood into the wound; and when that wound is slow in healing, he binds his own sacrifice about it. Healing for broken hearts comes by the atonement, atonement by substitution, Christ suffering in our stead. He suffered for every one who believeth in him, and he that believeth in him is not condemned, and never can be condemned, for the condemnation due to him was laid upon Christ. He is clear before the bar of justice as well as before the throne of mercy. I remember when the Lord put that precious ointment upon my wounded spirit. Nothing ever healed me until I understood that he died in my place and stead, died that I might not die; and now, to-day, my heart would bleed itself to death were it not that I believe that he "his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "With his stripes we are healed," and with no medicine but this atoning sacrifice. A wonderful heal-all is this, when the Holy Ghost applies it with his own divine power, and lets life and love come streaming into the heart that was ready to bleed to death.

III. My time flies too quickly; so, thirdly, I want you to consider THE TESTIMONIAL TO THE GREAT PHYSICIAN which is emblazoned in my text. It is God the Holy Ghost who, by the mouth of his servant David, bears testimony to this congregation to-night that the Lord Jesus heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds. If I said it, you need no more believe it than I need believe it if you said it. One man's word is as good as another's if we be truthful men; but this statement is found in an inspired Psalm. I believe it; I dare not doubt it, for I have proven its truth.

I understand my text to mean this: *he does it effectually*. As I said last Thursday night, if there is a person cast down or desponding within twenty miles, he is pretty sure to find me out. I laugh sometimes, and say, "Birds of a feather flock together;" but they come to talk to me about their despondency, and sometimes they leave me half desponding in the attempt to get them out of their sadness. I have had some very sad cases just lately, and I am afraid that, when they went out of my room, they could not say of me, "He healeth the broken in heart." I am sure that they could say, "He tried his best. He brought out all the choicest arguments he could

think of to comfort me." And they have felt very grateful. They have come back sometimes to thank God that they have been a little bit encouraged; but some of them are frequent visitors; and I have been trying to cheer them up by the month together. But, when my Master undertakes the work, "He *healeth* the broken in heart," he not only tries to do it, he does it. He touches the secret sources of the sorrow, and takes the spring of the grief away. We try our bests; but we cannot do it. You know it is very hard to deal with the heart. The human heart needs more than human skill to cure it. When a person dies, and the doctors do not know the complaint of which he died, they say, "It was heart disease." They did not understand his malady; that is what that means. There is only one Physician who can heal the heart; but, glory be to his blessed name, "He *healeth* the broken in heart," he does it effectually.

As I read my text, I understand it to mean, *he does it constantly*. "He *healeth* the broken in heart." Not merely, "He did heal them years ago"; but he is doing it now. "He *healeth* the broken in heart, and *bindeth up* their wounds." What, at this minute? Ten minutes to eight? Yes, he is doing this work now. "He *healeth* the broken in heart," and when the service is over, and the congregation is gone, what will Jesus be doing then? Oh, he will still be healing the broken in heart! Suppose this year 1890 should run out, and the Lord does not come to judgment, what will he be doing then? He will still be healing the broken in heart. He has not used up his ointments. He has not exhausted his patience. He has not in the least degree diminished his power. He still *healeth*. "Oh dear!" said one, "If I had come to Christ a year ago, it would have been well with me." If you come to Christ to-night, it will be well with you, for "he *healeth* the broken in heart." I do not know who was the inventor of that idea of "sinning away the day of grace." If you are willing to have Christ, you may have him. If you are as old as Methuselah—and I do not suppose that you are older than he was—if you want Christ, you may have him. As long as you are out of hell, Christ is able to save you. He is going on with his old work. Because you are just past fifty, you say the die is cast; because you are past eighty, you say, "I am too old to be saved now." Nonsense! He *healeth*, he *healeth*, he is still doing it, "he *healeth* the broken in heart."

I go further than that, and say that *he does it invariably*. I have shown you that he does it effectually and constantly; but he does it invariably. There never was a broken heart brought to him that he did not heal. Do not some broken-hearted patients go out at the back door, as my Master's failures? No, not one. There never was one yet that he could not heal. Doctors are obliged, sometimes, in our hospitals to give up some persons, and say that they will never recover. Certain symptoms have proved that they are incurable. But, despairing one, in the divine hospital, of which Christ is the Physician, there never was a patient of his who was turned out as incurable. He is able to save to the uttermost. Do you know how far that is—"to the uttermost"? There is no going beyond "the uttermost", because the uttermost goes beyond everything else, to make it the uttermost. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Where are you, friend "Uttermost"? Are you here to-night? "Ah!" you say, "I wonder that I am not in hell." Well, so do I; but you are not, and you never will be, if you cast yourself on Christ. Rest in the full atonement that he has made; for he *healeth* always, without any failure, "he *healeth* the broken in heart, and *bindeth up* their wounds."

As I read these words, it seems to me that *he glories in doing it*. He said to the Psalmist, by the Holy Spirit, "Write a Psalm in which you shall begin with Hallelujah, and finish with Hallelujah, and set in the middle of the Psalm this as one of the things for which I delight to be praised, that I heal the broken in heart." None of the gods of the heathen were ever praised for this. Did you ever read a song to Jupiter, or to Mercury, or to Venus, or to any of them, in which they were praised for binding up the broken in heart? Jehovah, the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is the only God who makes it his boast that he binds up the broken in heart. Come, you big, black sinner; come, you desperado; come, you that have gone beyond all measurement in sin; you can glorify God more than anybody else by believing that he can save even you! He can save you, and put you among the children. He delights to save those that seemed farthest from him.

IV. This is my last point: consider WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO.

If there is such a Physician as this, and we have broken hearts, it goes without saying that, first of all, *we ought to resort to him*. When people are told that they have an incurable disease, a malady that will soon bring them to their grave, they are much distressed; but if, somewhere or other, they hear that the disease may be cured after all, they say, "Where? Where?" Well, perhaps it is thousands of miles away; but they are willing to go if they can. Or the medicine may be very unpleasant or very expensive; but if they find that they can be cured, they say, "I will have it." If anyone came to their door, and said, "Here it is, it will heal you; and you can have it for nothing, and as much as you ever want of it;" there would be no difficulty in getting rid of any quantity of the medicine, so long as we found people sick. Now, if you have a broken heart to-night, you will be glad to have Christ. I had a broken heart once, and I went to him and he healed it in a moment, and made

me sing for joy! Young men and women, I was about fifteen or sixteen when he healed me. I wish that you would go to him now, while you are yet young. The age of his patients does not matter. Are you younger than fifteen? Boys and girls may have broken hearts; and old men and old women may have broken hearts; but they may come to Jesus and be healed. Let them come to him to-night, and seek to be healed.

When you are about to go to Christ, possibly you ask, "How shall I go to him?" Go by prayer. One said to me, the other day, "I wish that you would write me a prayer, sir." I said, "No, I cannot do that, go and tell the Lord what you want." He replied, "Sometimes I feel such a great want that I do not know what it is I do want, and I try to pray, but I cannot. I wish that somebody would tell me what to say." "Why!" I said, "the Lord has told you what to say. This is what he has said: 'Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.'" Go to Christ in prayer with such words as those, or any others that you can get. If you cannot get any words, tears are just as good, and rather better; and groans and sighs and secret desires will be acceptable with God.

But add faith to them. *Trust the Physician*. You know that no ointment will heal you if you do not put it on the wound. Oftentimes when there is a wound, you want something with which to strap the ointment on. Faith straps on the heavenly heal-all. Go to the Lord with your broken heart, and believe that he can heal you. Believe that he alone can heal you; trust him to do it. Fall at his feet, and say, "If I perish, I will perish here. I believe that the Son of God can save me, and I will be saved by him; but I will never look anywhere else for salvation. 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!'" If you have come as far as that, you are very near the light; the great Physician will heal your broken heart before very long. Trust him to do it now.

When you have trusted in him, and your heart is healed, and you are happy, *tell others about him*. I do not like my Lord to have any tongue-tied children. I do not mean that I would want you all to preach. When a whole church takes to preaching, it is as if the whole body were a mouth, and that would be a vacuum. I want you to tell others, in some way or other, what the Lord has done for you; and be earnest in endeavouring to bring others to the great Physician. You all recollect, therefore I need not tell you again, the story that we had about the doctor at one of our hospitals, a year or two ago. He healed a dog's broken leg, and the grateful animal brought other dogs to have their broken legs healed. That was a good dog; some of you are not half as good as that dog. You believe that Christ is blessing you, yet you never try to bring others to him to be saved. That must not be the case any longer. We must excel that dog in our love for our species; and it must be our intense desire that, if Christ has healed us, he should heal our wife, our child, our friend, our neighbour; and we should never rest till others are brought to him.

Then, when others are brought to Christ, or even if they will not be brought to him, be sure to *praise him*. If your broken heart has been healed, and you are saved, and your sins forgiven, praise him. We do not sing half enough. I do not mean in our congregations; but when we are at home. We pray every day. Do we sing every day? I think that we should. Matthew Henry used to say, about family prayer, "They that pray do well; they that read and pray do better; they that read and pray and sing do best of all." I think that Matthew Henry was right. "Well, I have no voice," says one. Have you not? Then you never grumble at your wife; you never find fault with your food; you are not one of those who make the household unhappy by your evil speeches. "Oh, I do not mean that!" No, I thought you did not mean that. Well, praise the Lord with the same voice that you have used for complaining. "But I could not lend a tune," says one. Nobody said you were to do so. You can at least sing as I do. My singing is of a very peculiar character. I find that I cannot confine myself to one tune; in the course of a verse I use half-a-dozen tunes; but the Lord, to whom I sing, never finds any fault with me. He never blames me, because I do not keep this tune or that. I cannot help it. My voice runs away with me, and my heart too; but I keep on humming something or other by way of praising God's name. I would like you to do the same. I used to know an old Methodist; and the first thing in the morning, when he got up, he began singing a bit of a Methodist hymn; and if I met the old man during the day, he was always singing. I have seen him in his little workshop, with his lapstone on his knee, and he was always singing, and beating with his hammer. When I said to him once, "Why do you always sing, dear brother?" he replied, "Because I always have something to sing about." That is a good reason for singing. If our broken hearts have been healed, we have something to sing about in time and throughout eternity. Let us begin to do so to the praise of the glory of his grace, who "healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." God bless all the broken hearts that are in this congregation to-night, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

Psalm 147

This is one of the Hallelujah Psalms; it begins and ends with "Praise ye the LORD." May our hearts be in tune, that we may praise the Lord while we read these words of praise!

Verse 1. *Praise ye the LORD:*

It is not enough for the Psalmist to do it himself. He wants help in it, so he says, "Praise ye the LORD." Wake up, my brethren; bestir yourselves, my sisters; come, all of you, and unite in this holy exercise! "Praise ye the LORD."

1. *For it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.*

When a thing is good, pleasant, and comely, you have certainly three excellent reasons for attending to it. It is not everything that is good; but here you have a happy combination of goodness, pleasantness, and comeliness. It will do you good to praise God. God counts it good, and you will find it a pleasant exercise. That which is the occupation of heaven must be happy employment. "It is good to sing praises unto our God," "it is pleasant," and certainly nothing is more "comely" and beautiful, and more in accordance with the right order of things, than for creatures to praise their Creator, and the children of God to praise their Father in heaven.

2. *The LORD doth build up Jerusalem:*

Praise his name for that. You love his church; be glad that he builds it up. Praise him who quarries every stone, and puts it upon the one foundation that is laid, even Jesus.

2. *He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.*

Praise him for that. If you were once an outcast, and he has gathered you, give him your special personal song of thanksgiving.

3. *He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*

Praise him for that, ye who have had broken hearts! If he has healed you, surely you should give him great praise.

4. *He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names.*

He who heals broken hearts counts the stars, and calls them by their names, as men call their servants, and send them on their way. Praise his name. Can you look up at the starry sky at night without praising him who made the stars, and leads out their host?

5. *Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite.*

Praise him, then; praise his greatness, his almightiness, his infinite wisdom. Can you do otherwise? Oh, may God reveal himself so much to your heart that you shall be constrained to pay him willing adoration!

6. *The LORD lifteth up the meek:*

What a lifting up it is for them, out of the very dust where they have been trodden down by the proud and the powerful! The Lord lifts them up. Praise him for that.

6. *He casteth the wicked down to the ground.*

Thus he puts an end to their tyranny, and delivers those who were ground beneath their cruel power. Praise ye his name for this also. Excuse me that I continue to say to you, "Praise ye the Lord," for, often as I say it, you will not praise him too much; and we need to have our hearts stirred up to this duty of praising God, which is so much neglected. After all, it is the praise of God that is the ultimatum of our religion. Prayer does but sow; praise is the harvest. Praying is the end of preaching, and praising is the end of praying. May we bring to God much of the very essence of true religion, and that will be the inward praise of the heart!

7. *Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:*

"Unto our God." How that possessive pronoun puts a world of endearment into the majestic word "God"! "This God is our God." Come, my hearer, can you call God your God? Is he indeed yours? If so, "Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God."

8. *Who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon*

the mountains.

They did not talk about the "law of nature" in those days. They ascribed everything to God; let us do the same. It is a poor science that pushes God farther away from us, instead of bringing him nearer to us. HE covers the heaven with clouds, HE prepares the rain for earth, HE makes the grass to grow upon the mountains.

9. *He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.*

Our God cares for the birds and the beasts. He is as great in little things as in great things. Praise ye his name. The gods of the heathen could not have these things said of them; but our God takes pleasure in providing for the beasts of field and the birds of the air. The commissariat of the universe is in his hand: "Thou openest thine hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing."

10, 11. *He delighteth not in the strength of the horse: he taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man. The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.—*

Kings of the olden times rejoiced in the thews and sinews of their soldiers and their horses; but God has no delight in mere physical strength. He takes pleasure in spiritual things, even in the weakness which makes us fear him, even that weakness which has not grown into the strength of faith, and yet hopes in his mercy. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy."

12. *Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion.*

Let whole cities join together to praise God. Shall we live to see the day when all London shall praise him? Shall we, ever, as we go down these streets, with their multitudes of inhabitants, see the people standing in the doorways, and asking, "What must we do to be saved?" Shall we ever see every house with anxious enquirers in it, saying, "Tell us, tell us, how can we be reconciled to God?" Pray that it may be so. In Cromwell's day, if you went down Cheapside at a certain hour of the morning, you would find every blind drawn down; for the inmates were all at family prayer. There is no street like that in London now. In those glorious Puritan times, there was domestic worship everywhere, and the people seemed brought to Christ's feet. Alas, it was but an appearance in many cases; and they soon turned back to their own devices! Imitating the Psalmist, let us say, "Praise the Lord, O London; praise thy God, O England!"

13. *For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; he hath blessed thy children within thee.*

As a nation, we have been greatly prospered, defended, and supplied; and the church of God has been made to stand fast against her enemies, and her children have been blessed.

14, 15. *He maketh peace in thy borders, and filleth thee with the finest of the wheat. He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth: his word runneth very swiftly.*

Oriental monarchs were very earnest to have good post arrangements. They sent their decrees upon swift dromedaries. They can never be compared with the swiftness of the purpose of God's decree. "His word runneth very swiftly." Oh, that the day would come when, over all the earth, God's writ should run, and God's written Word should come to be revered, believed, and obeyed!

16. *He giveth snow like wool:*

Men say, "it" snows; but what "it" is it that snows? The Psalmist rightly says of the Lord, "HE giveth snow." They say that according to the condition of the atmosphere, snow is produced; but the believer says, "He giveth snow like wool." It is not only like wool for whiteness; but it is like it for the warmth which it gives.

16. *He scattereth the hoar frost like ashes.*

The simile is not to be easily explained; but it will often have suggested itself to you who, in the early morning, have seen the hoar frost scattered abroad.

17. *He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold?*

None can stand before his heat; but when he withdraws the fire, and takes away the heat, the cold is equally destructive. It burns up as fast as fire would. "Who can stand before his cold?" If God be gone, if the Spirit of

God be taken away from his church, or from any of you, who can stand before his cold? The deprivation is as terrible as if it were a positive infliction. "Who can stand before his cold?"

18. *He sendeth out his word, and melteth them; he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.*

The frozen waters were hard as iron; the south wind toucheth them, and they flow again. What can God not do? The great God of nature is our God. Let us praise him. Oh, may our hearts be in a right key to-night to make music before him!

19. *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes unto Israel.*

This is something greater than all his wonders in nature. The God of nature is the God of revelation. He hath not hidden his truth away from men. He hath come out of the eternal secrecies, and he hath showed his word, especially his Incarnate Word, unto his people. Let his name be praised.

20. *He hath not dealt so with any nation:*

Or, with any other nation. He revealed his statutes and his judgments to Israel; and since their day, the spiritual Israel has been privileged in like manner: "He hath not dealt so with any nation."

20. *And as for his judgments, they have not known them.*

Even to-day there are large tracts of country where God is not known. If we know him, let us praise him.

20. *Praise ye the LORD.*

Hallelujah! The Psalm ends upon its key-note: "Praise ye the LORD." So may all our lives end! Amen.
HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—386, 537, 587.

Christian Conversation

A Sermon (No. 2695) Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, October 7th, 1900, Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington. *On a Lord's-day Evening in the autumn of 1858.* "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power."—Psalm 145:11.

YOU HAVE only to look at the preceding verse, and you will discover, in a single moment, who are the people here spoken of who shall speak of the glory of God's kingdom, and talk of his power. They are the saints: "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. *They* shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." A saint will often be discovered by his conversation. He is a saint long before he knows it; he is a saint as being set apart unto salvation by God the Father in the covenant decree of election from all eternity; and he is a saint as being sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called. But he is more especially a saint as being sanctified by the quickening influence of the Holy Ghost, which renders him truly sanctified by making him holy, and bringing him into conformity with the image of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Yet it is not at all times easy to discern a saint except by Scriptural marks and evidences. There is nothing particular about the countenance or dress of a saint to distinguish him from his fellows. The saints have faces like other men; sometimes, they are sadly marred and furrowed by cares and troubles which worldlings do not know. They wear the same kind of garments as other men wear; they may be rich or they may be poor; but, still, there are some marks whereby we can discern them, and one of the special ways of discovering a saint is by his conversation. As I often tell you, you may know the quality of the water in a well by that which is brought up in the bucket; so may we tell a Christian by his conversation.

It is, however, much to be regretted that true children of the Lord often talk too little of him. What is the conversation of half the professors of the present day? Honesty compels us to say that, in many cases, it is a mass of froth and falsehood, and, in many more cases it is altogether objectionable; if it is not light and frivolous, it is utterly apart from the gospel, and does not minister grace unto the bearers. I consider that one of the great lacks of the Church, nowadays, is not so much Christian preaching as Christian talking,—not so much Christian prayer in the prayer-meeting, as Christian conversation in the parlour. How little do we hear concerning Christ! You might go in and out of the houses of half the professors of religion, and you would never hear of their Master at all. You might talk with them from the first of January to the last of December;

and if they happened to mention their Master's name, it would be, perhaps, merely as a compliment to him, or possibly by accident. Beloved, such things ought not to be. You and I, I am sure, are guilty in this matter; we all have need to reproach ourselves that we do not sufficiently remember the words of Malachi, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

Possibly some will ask, "Well, sir, how can we talk about religion? Upon what topic shall we converse? How are we to introduce it? It would not be polite, for instance, in the company with which we associate, to begin to say anything about the doctrines of grace, or about religious matters at all." Then, beloved, do not be polite; that is all I have to say in reply to such a remark as that. If it would be accounted contrary to etiquette to begin talking of the Saviour, cast etiquette to the winds, and speak about Christ somehow or other. The Christian is the aristocrat of the world; it is his place to make rules for society to obey,—not to stoop down, and conform to the regulations of society when they are contrary to the commands of his Master. He is the great Maker of laws; the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and he makes his people also to be kings. Kings make rules for ordinary men to obey; so must Christians do. They are not to submit to others; they must make others, by the worth of their principles, and the dignity of their character, submit to them. It is speaking too lightly of a Christian's dignity when we say that he dare not do the right, because it would not be fashionable. We care nothing for that, for "the fashion of this world passeth away," "but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Another says, "What could I speak of? There are so few topics that would be suitable. I must not speak upon doctrinal subjects, for it would offend one of the party. They might hold different views; one might be a Wesleyan, one might be a Baptist, one might be an Independent, one a Calvinist, one an Arminian;—how could I talk so as to please all? If I spoke of election, most of them would attack me at once; if I began to speak of redemption, we should soon differ on that subject, and I would not like to engender controversy." Beloved, engender controversy rather than have wrong conversation; better dispute over truth than agree about lies. Better, I say, is it to dispute concerning good doctrine, far more profitable is it to talk of the Word of God, even in a controversial manner, than to turn utterly away from it, and neglect it.

But, let me tell you, there is one point on which all Christians agree, and that is concerning the person, the work, and the blessed offices of our Saviour. Go where you will, professors, if they are genuine Christians, will always agree with you if you begin to talk about your Saviour; so you need not be afraid that you will provoke controversy; but supposing the mention of your Saviour's name does provoke dispute, then let it be provoked. And if your Master's truth offends the gentlemen to whom you speak of it let them be offended. His name we must confess; of his glory we will continually talk, for it is written in our text, "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power."

Now, then, first, here is *a subject for conversation*: "they shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom and talk of thy power." Secondly, we will try to find out *some causes why Christians must speak concerning this blessed subject* and then, thirdly, I will very briefly refer to *the effect of our talking more of Christ's kingdom and power*.

I. First, here is A SUBJECT FOR CONVERSATION: "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." Here are two subjects; for God, when he puts grace into the heart, does not lack a subject upon which we shall converse.

First, we are to converse concerning *the glory of Christ's kingdom*. The glory of Christ's kingdom should ever be a subject of discourse to a Christian; he should always be speaking, not merely of Christ's priesthood or his prophesying, but also of his kingdom, which has lasted from all eternity; and especially of that glorious kingdom of grace in which we now live, and of that brighter kingdom of millennial glory, which soon shall come upon this world, to conquer all other kingdoms, and break them in pieces.

The psalmist furnishes us with some divisions of this subject, all of which illustrate the glory of Christ's kingdom. In the 12th verse he says, "To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts." The glory of a kingdom depends very much on the achievements of that kingdom; so, in speaking of the glory of Christ's kingdom, we are to *make known his mighty acts*. We think that the glory of Old England—at least, our historians would say so,—rests upon the great battles she has fought, and the victories she has won. We turn over the records of the past, and we see her, in one place, vanquishing thousands of Frenchmen at Agincourt; at another period, we see the fleets of the Spanish Armada scattered by the breath of God. We turn to different battles, and we trace victory after victory, dotted along the page of history, and we say that this is the glory of our kingdom. Now, Christian, when you speak of the glory of your Master's kingdom, you must tell

something of his great victories;—how he routed Pharaoh, and cut the Egyptian Rahab, and wounded the dragon of the Nile; how he slew all the firstborn in one night; how, at his command, the Red Sea was divided; how the children of Israel crossed over in safety, and the chivalry of Egypt was drowned in the flood. Talk ye also of how God overcame Amalek, and smote Moab; how he utterly cut off those nations that warred against Israel, and caused them to pass away for ever. Tell how Babylon and Nineveh were made to rue the day when God smote them with his iron hand. Tell ye to the world how God hath crushed great nations and overcome proud monarchs; how Sennacherib's hosts were left dead within their camp, and how those that have risen up in rebellion against God have found his arm too mighty for their strength and prowess. Tell of the terrible acts of our Saviour's kingdom; record his victories in this world; nor cease there. Tell how our Saviour routed the devil in the wilderness when he came to tempt him. Tell how he—

"All his foes to ruin hurled,
Sin, Satan, earth, death, hell, the world.,
Tell how he hath bruised the head of Satan.
Tell how death has lost his prey.
Tell how hell's deepest dungeons have been visited,
and the power of the prince of darkness utterly cut off.
Tell ye how antichrist himself shall sink like a millstone in the flood.
Tell how false systems of superstition shall flee away,
like birds of night when the sun rises too brightly for their dim sight to bear.
Tell ye all this, tell it in Askalon and in Gath; tell it the wide world over,
that the Lord of hosts is the God of battles;
he is the conqueror of men and of devils; he is Master in his own dominions.
Tell ye the glory of his kingdom, and rehearse his mighty acts."

Christian, exhaust that theme if thou canst.

Then, in speaking of the glory of Christ's kingdom, the next thing we talk of is *its glorious majesty*. The psalmist further says, in the 12th verse, that the saints shall not only "make known God's mighty acts, but also the glorious majesty of his kingdom." Part of the glory of England consists, not in her achievements, but in the state and majesty which surround her. In ancient times especially, monarchs were noted for the great pomp with which they were surrounded. Thousands of houses must be razed to the ground to find a site for one dwelling for a king. His palace must be gorgeous with riches; its halls must be paved with marble, and its walls set with jewels; fountains must sparkle there; there must be beds of eider on which monarchs may recline; music, such as other ears do not hear, wines from the uttermost regions of the earth, and all manner of delights, are reserved for kings; precious stones and gems adorn their crowns; and everything that is rich and rare must be brought to deck the monarch, and increase the majesty of his kingdom.

Well, Christian, when speaking of Christ's kingdom, you are to talk of its majesty. Tell of your Saviour's glorious majesty; speak of the many crowns that he wears upon his head. Tell of the crown of grace which he wears continually; tell of the crown of victory which perpetually proclaims the triumphs he has won over the foe; tell of the crown of love wherewith his Father crowned him in the day of his espousals to his Church,—the crown which he has won by ten thousand hearts which he has broken, and untold myriads of spirits which he has bound up. Tell to all mankind that the glory of your Saviour's majesty far exceeds the glories of the ancient kings of Assyria and India. Tell that, before his throne above, there stand, in glorious state, not princes, but angels; not servants in gorgeous liveries, but cherubs, with wings of fire, waiting to obey his mighty behests. Tell that his palace is floored with gold, and that he has no need of lamps, or even of the sun, to enlighten it, for he himself is the light thereof. Tell ye to the whole world what is the glorious majesty of his kingdom.

But once more, Christians, in speaking of the glory of Christ's kingdom, you must talk of *its duration*, for much of the honour of the kingdom depends upon the time it has lasted. In verse 13, the psalmist says, "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." If one should say to you, concerning an earthly monarch, "Our king sits upon a throne which his ancestors have occupied for many generations;" tell him that a thousand years are to your King but as one day. If another tells you that his king has crowns which were worn by kings a thousand years ago, smile in his face, and tell him that a thousand years are as nothing in Christ's sight. When they speak of the antiquity of churches, tell them that you belong to a very ancient Church. If they talk to you of the venerable character of the religion which they profess, tell them that you believe in a very venerable religion, for yours is a religion which was from everlasting. Christ's

kingdom was set up long before this world was brought forth; when as yet neither sun, nor moon, nor stars, had been created, Christ's kingdom was firmly established. I wish Christians would more often talk about the glory of their Master's kingdom with regard to the time it has lasted. If you would begin to talk of the past history of God's Church, you would never have to exclaim, "I have said all that can be said about it, and I have nothing more to say." You would need eternity to keep on going back, back, back, until you came to God alone; and then you might say,—

"In his mighty breast I see,
Eternal thoughts of love to me."

Then you may speak concerning the future duration of your Master's kingdom. I suppose, if you were to talk much about the second coming of Christ, you would be laughed at, you would be thought diseased in your brain; for there are so few nowadays who receive that great truth, that, if we speak of it with much enthusiasm, people turn away, and say, "Ah! we do not know much about that subject, but Mr. So-and-so has turned his brain through thinking so much about it." Men are, therefore, half-afraid to speak of such a subject; but, beloved, we are not afraid to talk of it, for Christ's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and we may talk of the glory of the future as well as of the past. Some say that Christ's Church is in danger. There are many churches that are in danger; and the sooner they tumble down, the better; but the Church of Christ has a future that shall never end; it has a future that shall never become dim; it has a future which shall eternally progress in glory. Her glory now is the glory of the morning twilight; it soon shall be the glory of the blazing noon. Her riches now are but the riches of the newly-opened mine; soon she shall have riches much more abundant and far more valuable than any she has at present. She is now young; by-and-by, she will come, not to her dotage, but to her maturity. She is like a fruit that is ripening, a star that is rising, a sun that is shining more and more unto the perfect day; and soon she will blaze forth in all her glory, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners." O Christian, here is a topic worthy of thy conversation! Talk of the glory of thy Master's kingdom. Often speak of it while others amuse themselves with stories of sieges and battles; while they are speaking of this or that or the other event in history, tell them the history of the monarchy of the King of kings; speak to them concerning the fifth great monarchy in which Jesus Christ shall reign for ever and ever.

But I must not forget briefly to hint at the other subject of the saints' conversation: "*and shall talk of thy power.*" It is not simply of Christ's kingdom of which we are to speak, but also of his power. Here, again, the psalmist gives us something which will help us to a division of our subject. In the 14th and 15th verses, mention is made of three kinds of power of which we ought to speak: "The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down. The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season."

First, the Christian should speak of *Christ's upholding power*. What a strange expression this is, "The Lord upholdeth all that fall"! Yet remember John Bunyan's quaint old saying,—

"He that is down needs fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble, ever shall
Have God to be his guide."

So David says, "The Lord upholdeth all that fall." What a singular expression! How can he hold up those that fall? Yet those that fall, in this sense, are the only persons that stand. It is a remarkable paradox; but it is true. The man who stands on his feet, and says, "I am mighty,—I am strong enough to stand alone;"—down he will go; but he who falls into Christ's arms, he who says,—

"But, oh! for this no power have I,
My strength is at thy feet to lie;"

— that man shall not fall. We may well talk, then, of Christ's upholding power. Tell it to Christians; tell how he kept you when your feet were going swift to hell; how, when fierce temptations did beset you, your Master drove them all away; how, when the enemy was watching, he compassed you with his mighty strength; how, when the arrows fell thickly around you, his mighty arm did hold the shield before you, and so preserved you from them all. Tell how he saved you from death, and delivered your feet from falling by making you, first of

all, fall down prostrate before him.

Next, talk of *his exalting power*: "He raiseth up all those that be bowed down." Oh, how sweet it is, beloved, sometimes to talk of God's exalting power after we have been hewed down! I love to come into this pulpit, and talk to you as I would in my own room. I make no pretensions to preaching at all, but simply tell you what I happen to feel just now. Oh, how sweet it is to feel the praises of God's grace when you have been bowed down! Cannot some of us tell that, when we have been bowed down beneath a load of affliction, so that we could not even move, the everlasting arms have been around us, and have lifted us up? When Satan has put his foot on our back, and we have said, "We shall never be raised up any more," the Lord has come to our rescue. If we were only to talk on that subject in our conversation with one another, no Christian need have spiritless conversation in his parlour. But, nowadays, you are so afraid to speak of your own experience, and the mercy of God to you, that you will talk any stuff and nonsense rather than that. But, I beseech you, if you would do good in the world, rehearse God's deeds of raising up those that be bowed down.

Moreover, talk of God's *providing power*: "The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season." We ought often to speak of how God provides for his creatures in providence. Why should we not tell how God has taken us out of poverty, and made us rich; or, if he has not done that for us, how he has supplied our wants day by day in an almost miraculous manner! Some persons object to such a book as Huntington's "Bank of Faith," and I have heard some respectable people call it "The Bank of Nonsense." Ah! if they had ever been brought into Huntington's condition, they would see that it was indeed a bank of faith, and not a bank of nonsense; the nonsense was in those who read it, in their unbelieving hearts, not in the book itself. And he who has been brought into many straits and trials, and has been divinely delivered out of them, would find that he could write a "Bank of Faith" as good as Huntington's if he liked to do so; for he has had as many deliverances, and he could rehearse the mighty acts of God, who has opened his hands, and supplied the wants of his needy child. Many of you have been out of a situation, and you have cried to God to furnish you with one, and you have had it. Have you not sometimes been brought so low, through painful affliction, that you could not rest? And could you not afterwards say, "I was brought low, and he helped me"? Yes; "I was brought low, and he helped me out of my distress"? Yes; I see some of you nodding your heads, as much as to say, "We are the men who have passed through that experience; we have been brought into great straits, but the Lord has delivered us out of them all." Then do not be ashamed to tell the story. Let the world hear that God provides for his people. Go, speak of your Father. Do as the child does, who, when he has a little cake given to him, will take it out, and say, "Father gave me this." Do so with all your mercies; go and tell all the world that you have a good Father, a gracious Father, a heavenly Provider; and though he gives you a hand-basket portion, and you only live from hand to mouth, yet tell how graciously he gives it, and that you would not change your blest estate for all the world calls good or great.

II. I must be brief in speaking upon THE CAUSES WHICH WILL MAKE CHRISTIANS TALK OF THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM AND HIS POWER.

One cause is, that *it is the kingdom of their own King*. We do not expect French people to talk much about the victories of the English; and I suppose there is no Russian who would pay very many compliments to the prowess of our arms; but they will all talk about their own monarchs. Well, that is the reason why a Christian should speak of the glory of his Master's kingdom, and tell of his power, because it is the kingdom of his own King. Jesus Christ may be or may not be another man's King; but, certainly he is mine; he is the Monarch to whom I yield absolute submission. I am no longer an alien and a stranger, but I am one of his subjects; and I will talk concerning him, because he is my King.

Secondly, the Christian must talk of the King's victories, *because all those victories were won for him*; he recollects that his Master never fought a battle for himself,—never slew an enemy for himself. He slew them all for his people. And if for me,—a poor abject worm,—my Saviour did this, shall I not talk of the glory of his kingdom, when he won all that glory for me? Will I not speak of his power, when all that power was exercised for me? It was all for me. When he died, he died for me; when he suffered, he suffered for me; and when he led captivity captive, he did it for me. Therefore, I must and will speak of his dear name. I cannot help testifying to the glory of his grace in whatever company I may be.

Again, the Christian must talk of it, *because he himself has had a good share in fighting some of the battles*. You know how old soldiers will "shoulder their crutch, and tell how fields were won." The soldier, home from the Crimea, when he reads the accounts of the war, says, "Ah! I know that trench; I worked in it myself. I know the Redan; I was one of the men who attacked it." He is interested because he had a share in the battle. "*Quorum pars magna fui*," said the old soldier, in the days of Virgil; so we, if we have had a part in the battle, like to talk concerning it. And, beloved, it is this which makes our battles dear to us; we help to fight them.

Though there was one battle which our great Captain fought alone, and "of the people there was none with him," yet, in other victories, he has permitted his people to help to crush the dragon's head. Recollect that you have been a soldier in the army of the Lord; and that, in the last day, when he gives away the medals in heaven, you will have one; when he gives away the crowns, you will have one. We can talk about the battles, for we were in them; we can speak of the victories, for we helped to win them. It is to our own praise as well as to our Master's when we talk of his wondrous acts.

But the best reason why the Christian should talk of his Master is this, *if he has Christ in his heart, the truth must come out*; he cannot help it. The best reason in all the world is the woman's reason, who said she should do it because she would do it. So it often happens that the Christian cannot give us much reason why he must talk about his Saviour, except that he cannot help it, and he will not try to help it. It is in him, and it must come out. If God has put a fire inside a man's heart, do you think it can be kept down? If we have grace in our souls, will it never come out in conversation! God does not put his candles in lanterns through which they cannot be seen, but he sets them on candlesticks; he does not build his cities in valleys, but he puts them on hills, so that they cannot be hid. So he will not allow his grace to be concealed. A Christian man cannot help being discovered. None of you ever knew a secret believer,—a secret Christian. "Oh!" you say, "I am sure I have known such a man." But, look you, he could not have been a secret believer if you knew him, he could not be wholly secret; the fact that you knew him proves that he could not have been a secret Christian. If a man says that nobody knows a thing, and yet he knows it, he contradicts himself. You cannot, then, know a secret believer, and you never will. There may be, indeed, some who are secret for a time, but they always have to come out, like Joseph of Arimathaea, when he went and begged the body of Jesus. Ah! there are some of you sitting in your pews who fancy I shall never discover you; but I shall see you in the vestry by-and-by. Some of you keep on coming Sunday after Sunday, and you say, "Well, I must go by-and-by, and make a profession of faith." Yes, you will not be able to sit there long; if you have the grace of God within you, you will be obliged to come out, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ by being baptized in his name. Why not do so without further delay? If you love your Lord's name, come out at once, and own it.

III. Lastly, WHAT WOULD BE THE EFFECT OF OUR TALKING MORE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM AND POWER?

The first effect would be *that the world would believe us more*. The world says, "What a parcel of hypocrites Christian people are!" And they are about right concerning a good many of you. The world says, "Why, just look at them! They profess a deal of religion; but if you hear them talk, they do not speak differently from other people. They sing loudly enough, it is true, when they go to church or chapel; but when do you hear them sing at home? They go to the prayer-meeting; but have they a prayer-meeting at their own family altar? Believe them to be Christians? No! Their lives give the lie to their doctrines, and we do not believe them." If we oftener talked of Christ, I am sure the world would think us to be better Christians, and they would, no doubt, say so.

Again, if our conversations were more concerning Christ, *we, as Christian men, should grow faster, and be more happy*. What is the reason of the bickerings and jealousies between Christians? It is this, because they do not know one another. Mr. Jay used to tell a story about a man going out, one foggy morning, and seeing something coming in the fog; he thought it was a monster. But, by-and-by, as he came nearer, he exclaimed, "Oh, dear me! that's my brother John!" So it often happens, when we see people at a distance, and hold no spiritual conversation with them, we think they are monsters. But when we begin to talk together, and get near to one another, we say, "Why, it is brother John, after all!" There are more true brethren about us than we dream of. Then, I say, let your conversation, in all companies, wherever you may be, be so seasoned with salt that a man may know you to be a Christian. In this way, you would remove bickerings better than by all the sermons that could be preached, and be promoting a true Evangelical Alliance far more excellent and efficient than all the alliances which man can form.

Again, if we oftener talked of Christ like this, *how useful we might be in the salvation of souls!* O beloved, how few souls have some of you won to Christ! It says, in the Canticles, "There is not one barren among them;" but are not some of you barren,—without spiritual children? It was pronounced as a curse upon one of old that he should die childless. Oh! methinks that, though the Christian is always blessed, it is half a curse to die spiritually childless. There are some of you who are childless to-night. You never were the means of the conversion of a soul in all your lives. You hardly remember having tried to win anyone for the Saviour. You are good religious people so far as your outward conduct is concerned. You go to the house of God, but you never concern yourselves about winning souls for Jesus. O my God, let me die when I can no longer be the means of saving souls! If I can be kept out of heaven a thousand years, if thou wilt give me souls as my wages, let me still speak for thee; but if there be no more sinners to be converted,—no more to be brought in by my

ministry,—then let me depart, and be "with Christ, which is far better."

Oh, think of the crowns that are in heaven! "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." So many souls, so many gems! Have you ever thought what it would be to wear in heaven a starless crown? All the saints will have crowns, but those who win souls will have a star in their crown for every soul. Some of you, my friends, will wear a crown without a star; would you like that? You will be happy, you will be blessed, you will be satisfied, I know, when you will be there; but can you bear the thought of dying childless,—of having none in heaven who shall be begotten unto Christ by you,—never having travailed in birth for souls,—never having brought any to Christ? How can you bear to think of it? Then, if you would win souls, beloved, talk about Jesus. There is nothing like talking of him, to lead others to him. I read of the conversion of a servant, the other day. She was asked how she came to know the Lord, "Well," she said, "my master, at dinner, happened to make some simple observation to his sister across the table." The remark certainly was not addressed *to* the servant; and her master had no notion that she was listening; yet his word was blessed to her. It is well to talk behind the door that which you do not mind hearing afterwards in the street; it is good to speak that in the closet which you are not ashamed to listen to from the housetop, for you will have to listen to it from the housetop by-and-by, when God shall come and call you to account for every idle word you have spoken.

Souls are often converted through godly conversation. Simple words frequently do more good than long sermons. Disjointed, unconnected sentences are often of more use than the most finely polished periods or rounded sentences. If you would be useful, let the praises of Christ be ever on your tongue; let him live on your lips. Speak of him always; when thou walkest by the way, when thou sittest in thy house, when thou risest up, and even when thou liest down, it may be that thou hast someone to whom it is possible that thou mayest yet whisper the gospel of the grace of God. Many a sister has been brought to know the Saviour by a sister's pleadings that were only heard in the silence of the night. God give you, beloved, to fulfil our text! "They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." They *shall* do it, mark you; God will make you do it if you are his people. Go and do it willingly. Begin, from this time forth, and keep on doing it for ever. Say, concerning other conversation, "Begone far hence! avaunt! Thus shall be my constant and only theme." Be like the harp of old Anacreon, which would never sound any other note but that of love. The harpist wished to sing of Cadmus, and of mighty men of wisdom, but his harp would resound of love alone. Be, then, like Anacreon's harp,—sing of Christ alone! Christ alone! Christ alone! Jesus, Jesus only! Make him the theme of your conversation, for "they shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." God give you grace so to do, for Christ's sake! Amen.

Christ-- The Power and Wisdom of God

A Sermon (No. 132) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, May 17, 1857, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens. "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." —1 Corinthians 1:24.

UNBELIEF toward the gospel of Christ is the most unreasonable thing in all the world, because the reason which the unbeliever gives for his unbelief is fairly met by the character and constitution of the gospel of Christ. Notice that before this verse we read—"The Jews required a sign, the Greeks seek after wisdom." If you met the Jew who believed not on Christ in the apostle's day, he said, "I can not believe, because I want a sign;" and if you met the Greek, he said, "I can not believe, because I want a philosophic system, one that is full of wisdom." "Now," says the apostle, "both these objections are untenable and unreasonable. If you suppose that the Jew requires a sign, that sign is given him: Christ is the power of God. The miracles that Christ wrought upon earth were signs more than sufficiently abundant; and if the Jewish people had but the will to believe, they would have found abundant signs and reasons for believing in the personal acts of Christ and his apostles." And let the Greeks say, "I can not believe, because I require a wise system: O Greek, Christ is the wisdom of God. If thou wouldst but investigate the subject, thou wouldst find in it profoundness of wisdom—a depth where the most gigantic intellect might be drowned. It is no shallow gospel, but a deep, and a great deep too, a deep which passeth understanding. Thine objection is ill-founded; for Christ is the wisdom of God, and his gospel is the highest of all sciences. If thou wishest to find wisdom, thou must find it in the word of revelation."

Now, this morning, we shall try to bring out these two thoughts of the gospel; and it may be that God shall bless what we shall say to the removing of the objection of either Jew or Greek; that the one requiring a sign may see it in the *power* of God in Christ, and that he who requireth wisdom may behold it in the *wisdom* of God in Christ. We shall understand our text in a threefold manner: Christ, that is, *Christ personally*, is "the

power of God and the wisdom of God;" Christ, that is, *Christ's gospel*, is "the power of God and the wisdom of God;" Christ, that is, *Christ in the heart—true religion*, is "the power of God and the wisdom of God."

I. First, to begin, then, with CHRIST PERSONALLY. Christ considered as God and man, the Son of God equal with his Father, and yet the man, born of the Virgin Mary. Christ, in his complex person, is "the power of God and the wisdom of God." *He is the power of God from all eternity.* "By his word were the heavens made, and all the host of them." "The Word was God, and the Word was with God." "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." The pillars of the earth were placed in their everlasting sockets by the omnipotent right hand of Christ; the curtains of the heavens were drawn upon their rings of starry light by him who was from everlasting the All-glorious Son of God. The orbs that float aloft in ether, those ponderous planets, and those mighty stars, were placed in their positions or sent rolling through space by the eternal strength of him who is "the first and the last." "the Prince of the kings of the earth." Christ is the power of God, for he is the Creator of all things, and by him all things exist.

But *when he came to earth*, took upon himself the fashion of a man, tabernacled in the inn, and slept in the manger, he still gave proof that he was the Son of God; not so much so when, as an infant of a span long, the immortal was the mortal and the infinite became a babe; not so much so in his youth, but afterward when he began his public ministry, he gave abundant proofs of his power and Godhead. The winds hushed by his finger uplifted, the waves calmed by his voice, so that they became solid as marble beneath his tread; the tempest, cowering at his feet, as before a conqueror whom it knew and obeyed; these things, these stormy elements, the wind, the tempest, and the water, gave full proof of his abundant power. The lame man leaping, the deaf man hearing, the dumb man singing, the dead rising, these, again, were proofs that he was, the "power of God." When the voice of Jesus startled the shades of Hades, and rent the bonds of death, with "Lazarus, come forth!" and when the carcass rotten in the tomb woke up to life, there was proof of his divine power and Godhead. A thousand other proofs he afforded; but we need not stay to mention them to you who have Bibles in your houses, and who can read them every day. At last he yielded up his life, and was buried in the tomb. Not long, however, did he sleep; for he gave another proof of his divine power and Godhead, when starting from his slumber, he affrighted the guards with the majesty of his grandeur, not being holden by the bonds of death, they being like green withes before our conquering Samson, who had meanwhile pulled up the gates of hell, and carried them on his shoulders far away.

That he is the *power* of God *now*, Scripture very positively affirmeth; for it is written, "he sitteth at the right hand of God." He hath the reins of Providence gathered in his hands; the fleet coursers of Time are driven by him who sits in the chariot of the world, and bids its wheels run round; and he shall bid them stay when it shall please him. He is the great umpire of all disputes, the great Sovereign Head of the church, the Lord of heaven, and death, and hell; and by-and-by we shall know that he shall come, "On fiery clouds and wings of wind, Appointed Judge of all mankind;" and then the quickened dead, the startled myriads, the divided firmaments, the "Depart, ye cursed," and the "Come, ye blessed," shall proclaim him to be the power of God, who hath power over all flesh, to save or to condemn, as it pleaseth him.

But he is equally "the *wisdom* of God." The great things that he did *before all worlds* were proofs of his wisdom. He planned the way of salvation; he devised the system of atonement and substitution; he laid the foundations of the great plan of salvation. There was wisdom. But he built the heavens by wisdom, and he laid the pillars of light, whereon the firmament is balanced, by his skill and wisdom. Mark the world; and learn, as ye see all its multitudinous proofs of the wisdom of God, and there you have the wisdom of Christ; for he was the creator of it. And *when he became a man*, he gave proofs enough of wisdom. Even in childhood, when he made the doctors sit abashed by the questions that he asked, he showed that he was more than mortal. And when the Pharisee and Sadducee and Herodian were all at last defeated, and their nets were broken, he proved again the superlative wisdom of the Son of God. And when those who came to take him, stood enchained by his eloquence, spell-bound by his marvelous oratory, there was again a proof that he was the wisdom of God, who could so enchain the minds of men. And now that he intercedeth before the throne of God, now that he is our Advocate before the throne, the pledge and surety for the blessed, now that the reins of government are in his hands, and are ever wisely directed, we have abundant proofs that the wisdom of God is in Christ, as well as the power of God. Bow before him, ye that love him; bow before him, ye that desire him! Crown him, crown him, crown him! He is worthy of it, unto him is everlasting might; unto him is unswerving wisdom: bless his name; exalt him; clap your wings, ye seraphs; cry aloud, ye cherubim; shout, shout, shout, to his praise, ye ransomed host above. And ye, O men that know his grace, extol him in your songs for ever; for he is Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

II. But now Christ, that is, CHRIST'S GOSPEL, is the power and the wisdom of God.

Christ's gospel is *a thing of divine power*. Do you want proofs of it? Ye shall not go far. How could Christ's gospel have been established in this world as it was, if it had not in itself intrinsic might? By whom was it spread? By mitred prelates, by learned doctors, by fierce warriors, by caliphs, by prophets? No; by fishermen, untaught, unlettered; save as the Spirit gave them utterance, not knowing how to preach or speak. How did they spread it? By the bayonet, by their swords, by the keen metal of their blades? Did they drive their gospel into men at the point of the lance, and with the cimeter? Say, did myriads rush to battle, as they did when they followed the crescent of Mohammed, and did they convert men by force, by law, by might? Ah I no. Nothing but their simple words, their unvarnished eloquence, their rough declamation, their unhewn oratory; these it was, which, by the blessing of God's Spirit, carried the gospel round the world within a century after the death of its founder.

But what was this gospel which achieved so much? Was it a thing palatable to human nature? Did it offer a paradise of present happiness? Did it offer delight to the flesh and to the senses? Did it give charming prospects of wealth? Did it give licentious ideas to men? No; it was a gospel of morality most strict, it was a gospel with delights entirely spiritual—a gospel which abjured the flesh, which, unlike the coarse delusion of Joe Smith, cut off every prospect from men of delighting themselves with the joys of lust. It was a gospel holy, spotless, clean as the breath of heaven; it was pure as the wing of angel; not like that which spread of old, in the days of Mohammed, a gospel of lust, of vice, and wickedness, but pure, and consequently not palatable to human nature. And yet it spread. Why? My friends, I think the only answer I can give you is, because it has in it the power of God.

But do you want another proof? How has it been maintained since then? No easy path has the gospel had. The good bark of the church has had to plow her way through seas of blood, and those who have manned her have been bespattered with the bloody spray; yea, they have had to man her and keep her in motion, by laying down their lives unto the death. Mark the bitter persecution of the church of Christ from the time of Nero to the days of Mary, and further on, through the days of Charles the Second, and of those kings of unhappy memory, who had not as yet learned how to spell "toleration." From the dragoons of Claverhouse, right straight away to the gladiatorial shows of Rome, what a long series of persecutions has the gospel had! But, as the old divines used to say, "The blood of the martyrs" has been "the seed of the church." It has been, as the old herbalists had it, like the herb camomile, the more it is trodden on, the more it grows; and the more the church has been ill-treated, the more it has prospered. Behold the mountains where the Albigenes walk in their white garments; see the stakes of smithfield, not yet forgotten; behold ye the fields among the towering hills, where brave hands kept themselves free from despotic tyranny. Mark ye the Pilgrim Fathers, driven by a government of persecution across the briny deep. See what vitality the gospel has. Plunge her under the wave, and she rises, the purer for her washing; thrust her in the fire, and she comes out, the more bright for her burning; cut her in sunder, and each piece shall make another church; behead her, and like the hydra of old, she shall have a hundred heads for every one you cut away. She can not die, she must live; for she has the power of God within her.

Do you want another proof? I give you a better one than the last. I do not wonder that the church has outlived persecution so much as I wonder she has outlived the unfaithfulness of her professed teachers. Never was church so abused as the church of Christ has been, all through her history; from the days of Diotrephes, who sought to have the pre-eminence, even to these later times, we can read of proud, arrogant prelates, and supercilious, haughty lords over God's inheritance. Bonners, Dunstons, and men of all sorts, have come into her ranks, and done all they could to kill her; and with their lordly priestcraft they have tried to turn her aside. And what shall we say to that huge apostacy of Rome? A thousand miracles that ever the church outlived that! When her pretended head became apostate, and all her bishops disciples of hell, and she had gone far away, wonder of wonders, that she should come out, in the days of the glorious Reformation, and should still live. And, even now, when I mark the supineness of many of my brethren in the ministry—when I mark their utter and entire inefficiency of doing aught for God—when I see their waste of time, preaching now and then on the Sunday, instead of going to the highways and hedges and preaching the gospel everywhere to the poor—when I see the want of unction in the church itself, the want of prayerfulness—when I see wars and fightings, factions and disunions—when I see hot blood and pride, even in the meetings of the saints; I say it is a thousand thousand miracles that the church of God should be alive at all, after the unfaithfulness of her members, her ministers, and her bishops. She has the power of God within her, or else she would have been destroyed; for she has got enough within her own loins to work her destruction.

"But," says one, "you have not yet proved it is the power of God to my understanding." Sir, I will give you another proof. There are not a few of you, who are now present, who would be ready, I know, if it were necessary, to rise in your seats and bear me witness that I speak the truth. There are some who, not many months ago, were drunkards; some who were loose livers; men who were unfaithful to every vow which

should keep man to truth, and right, and chastity, and honesty, and integrity. Yes, I repeat, I have some here who look back to a life of detestable sin. You tell me, some of you, that for thirty years even (there is one such present now) you never listened to a gospel ministry, nor ever entered the house of God at all; you despised the Sabbath, you spent it in all kinds of evil pleasures, you plunged headlong into sin and vice, and your only wonder is, that God has not out you off long ago, as cumberers of the ground; and now you are here, as different as light from darkness. I know your characters, and have watched you with a father's love; for, child though I am, I am the spiritual father of some here whose years outcount mine by four times the number; and I have seen you honest who were thieves, and you sober who were drunkards. I have seen the wife's glad eye sparkling with happiness; and many a woman has grasped me by the hand, shed her tears upon me, and said, "I bless God; I am a happy woman now; my husband is reclaimed, my house is blessed; our children are brought up in the fear of the Lord." Not one or two, but scores of such are here. And, my friends, if these be not proofs that the gospel is the power of God, I say there is no proof of any thing to be had in the world, and every thing must be conjecture. Yes, and there worships with you this day (and if there be a secularist here, my friend will pardon me for alluding to him for a moment), there is in the house of God this day one who was a leader in your ranks, one who despised God, and ran very far away from right. And here he is! It is his honor this day to own himself a Christian; and I hope, when this sermon is ended, to grasp him by the hand, for he has done a valiant deed; he has bravely burned his papers in the sight of all the people, and has turned to God with full purpose of heart. I could give you proofs enough, if proofs were wanted, that the gospel has been to men the power of God and the wisdom of God. More proofs I could give, yea, thousands, one upon the other.

But we must notice the other points. Christ's gospel is the *wisdom* of God. Look at the gospel itself and you will see it to be wisdom. The man who scoffs and sneers at the gospel does so for no other reason but because he does not understand it. We have two of the richest books of theology extant that were written by professed infidels—by men that were so, I mean, before they wrote the books. You may have heard the story of Lord Lyttleton and West. I believe they determined to refute Christianity; one of them took up the subject of Paul's conversion, and the other, the subject of the resurrection; they sat down, both of them, to write books to ridicule those two events, and the effect was, that in studying the subject, they, both of them, became Christians, and wrote books which are now bulwarks to the church they hoped to have overthrown. Every man who looks the gospel fairly in the face, and gives it the study it ought to have, will discover that it is no false gospel, but a gospel that is replete with wisdom, and full of the knowledge of Christ. If any man will cavil at the Bible, he must cavil. There are some men who can find no wisdom anywhere, except in their own heads. Such men, however, are no judges of wisdom. We should not set a mouse to explain the phenomena of astronomy, nor should we set a man who is so foolish as to do nothing but cavil to understand the wisdom of the gospel. It needs that a man should at least be honest, and have some share of sense, or we can not dispute with him at all. Christ's gospel, to any man who believes it, is the wisdom of God.

Allow me just to hint that to be a believer in the gospel is no dishonor to a man's intellect. While the gospel can be understood by the poorest and the most illiterate, while there are shallows in it where a lamb may wade, there are depths where leviathan may swim. The intellect of Locke found ample space in the gospel; the mind of Newton submitted to receive the truth of inspiration as a little child, and found a something in its majestic being higher than itself, unto which it could not attain. The rudest and most untaught have been enabled, by the study of the holy Scripture of God's truth to enter the kingdom; and the most erudite have said of the gospel, it surpasses thought. I was thinking the other day what a vast amount of literature must be lost if the gospel be not true. No book was ever so suggestive as the Bible. Large tomes we have in our libraries which it takes all our strength to lift, all upon holy Scripture; myriads upon myriads of smaller volumes, tens of thousands of every shape and size, all written upon the Bible; and I have thought that the very suggestiveness of Scripture, the supernatural suggestiveness of holy Writ, may be in itself a proof of its divine wisdom, since no man has ever been able to write a book which could have so many commentators and so many writers upon its text as the Bible has received, by so much as one millionth part.

III. CHRIST IN A MAN THE GOSPEL IN THE SOUL, is the power of God and the wisdom of God. We will picture the Christian from his beginning to his end. We will give a short map of his history. He begins there, in that prison-house, with huge iron bars, which he can not file; in that dark, damp cell, where pestilence and death are bred. There, in poverty and nakedness, without a pitcher to put to his thirsty lips, without a mouthful even of dry crust to satisfy his hunger, that is where he begins—in the prison chamber of conviction, powerless, lost and ruined. Between the bars I thrust my hand to him, and give to him in God's name the name of Christ to plead. Look at him; he has been filing away at these bars many and many a day, without their yielding an inch; but now he has got the name of Christ upon his lips; he puts his hands upon the bars, and one of them is gone, and another, and another; and he makes a happy escape, crying, "I am free, I am free, I am free! Christ has been the power of God to me, in bringing me out of my trouble." No sooner is he free, however, than a thousand doubts meet him. This one cries, "You are not elect;" another cries, "You are not

redeemed;" another says, "You are not called;" another says, "You are not converted." "Avaunt," says he, "avaunt! Christ died;" and he just pleads the name of Christ as the power of God, and the doubts flee apace, and he walks straight on. He comes soon into the furnace of trouble; he is thrust into the innermost prison, and his feet are made fast in the stocks. God has put his hand upon him. He is in deep trouble; at midnight he begins to sing of Christ; and lo! the walls begin to totter, and the foundation of the prison to shake; and the man's chains are taken off, and he comes out free; for Christ hath delivered him from trouble. Here is a hill to climb, on the road to heaven. Wearily he pants up the side of that hill, and thinks he must die ere he can reach the summit. The name of Jesus is whispered in his ear; he leaps to his feet, and pursues his way, with fresh courage, until the summit is gained, when he cries, "Jesus Christ is the strength of my song; he also hath become my salvation." See him again. He is on a sudden beset by many enemies; how shall he resist them? With this true sword, this true Jerusalem blade, Christ, and him crucified. With this he keeps the devil at arm's length; with this he fights against temptation, and against lust, against spiritual wickedness in high places, and with this he resists. Now, he has come to his last struggle; the river Death rolls black and sullen before him; dark shapes rise upward from the flood, and howl and fright him. How shall he cross the stream? How shall he find a landing place on the other side? Dread thoughts perplex him for a moment; he is alarmed; but he remembers, Jesus died; and catching up that watchword he ventures to the flood. Before his feet the Jordan flies apace; like Israel of old, he walks through, dry shod, singing as he goes to heaven, "Christ is with me, Christ is with me, passing through the stream! Victory, victory, victory, to him that loveth me!"

To the Christian in his own experience Christ is ever the power of God. As for temptation he can meet that with Christ; as for trouble he can endure that through Christ who strengthens him, yea, he can say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Have you never seen a Christian in trouble, a true Christian? I have read a story of a man who was converted to God by seeing the conduct of his wife in the hour of trouble. They had a lovely child, their only offspring. The father's heart doted on it perpetually, and the mother's soul was knit up in the heart of the little one. It lay sick upon its bed, and the parents watched it night and day. At last it died. The father had no God: he rent his hair, he rolled upon the floor in misery, wallowed upon the earth, cursing his being, and defying God in the utter casting down of his agony. There sat his wife, as fond of the child as ever he could be; and though tears would come, she gently said "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "What," said he, starting to his feet, "you love that child? I thought that when that child died you would break your heart. Here am I, a strong man. I am mad: here are you, a weak woman, and yet you are strong and bold; tell me what it is possesses you?" Said she, "Christ is my Lord, I trust in him; surely I can give this child to him who gave himself for me." From that instant the man became a believer. "There must," said he, "be some truth and some power in the gospel, which could lead you to believe in such a manner, under such a trial." Christians! try to exhibit that spirit wherever you are, and prove to the worldling that in your experience at least "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

And now the last point. In the *Christian's experience*, Christ is wisdom, as well as power. If you want to be a thoroughly learned man the best place to begin, is to begin at the Bible, to begin at Christ. It is said that even children learn to read more quickly from the Bible than from any other book; and this I am sure of, that we, who are but grown-up children, will learn better and learn faster by beginning with Christ than we could by beginning with any thing else. I remember saying once, and as I can not say it better I will repeat it, that before I knew the gospel I gathered up a heterogeneous mass of all kinds of knowledge from here, there, and everywhere; a bit of chemistry, a bit of botany, a bit of astronomy, and a bit of this, that, and the other. I put them altogether, in one great confused chaos. When I learned the gospel, I got a shelf in my head to put every thing away upon just where it should be. It seemed to me as if, when I had discovered Christ and him crucified, I had got the center of the system, so that I could see every other science revolving around in order. From the earth, you know, the planets appear to move in a very irregular manner—they are progressive, retro grade, stationary; but if you could get upon the sun, you would see them marching round in their constant, uniform, circular motion. So with knowledge. Begin with any other science you like, and truth will seem to be awry. Begin with the science of Christ crucified, and you will begin with the sun, you will see every other science moving round it in complete harmony. The greatest mind in the world will be evolved by beginning at the right end. The old saying is, "Go from nature up to nature's God;" but it is hard work going up hill. The best thing is to go from nature's God down to nature; and if you once get to nature's God, and believe him and love him, it is surprising how easy it is to hear music in the waves, and songs in the wild whisperings of the winds; to see God everywhere, in the stones, in the rocks, in the rippling brooks, and hear him everywhere, in the lowing of cattle, in the rolling of thunder, and in the fury of tempests. Get Christ first, put him in the right place, and you will find him to be the wisdom of God in your own experience.

But wisdom is not knowledge; and we must not confound the two. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge; and Christ's gospel helps us, by teaching us the right use of knowledge. It directs us. Yon Christian has lost his

way in a dark wood; but God's Word is a compass to him, and a lantern, too: he finds his way by Christ. He comes to a turn in the road. Which is right, and which is wrong? He can not tell. Christ is the great sign-post, telling him which way to go. He sees every day new straits attend; he knows not which way to steer. Christ is the great pilot who puts his hand on the tiller, and makes him wise to steer through the shoals of temptation and the rocks of sin. Get the gospel, and you are a wise man. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and right understanding have they who keep his commandments." Ah! Christian, you have had many doubts, but you have had them all unriddled, when you have come to the cross of Christ. You have had many difficulties; but they have been all explained in the light of Calvary. You have seen mysteries, when you have brought them to the face of Christ, made clear and manifest, which once you never could have known. Allow me to remark here, that some people make use of Christ's gospel to illuminate their heads, instead of making use of it to illuminate their hearts. They are like the farmer Rowland Hill once described. The farmer is sitting, by the fire with his children; the cat is purring on the hearth, and they are all in great comfort. The plowman rushes in and cries, "Thieves! thieves! thieves!" The farmer rises up in a moment, grasps the candle, holds it up to his head, rushes after the thieves, and, says Rowland Hill, "he tumbles over a wheelbarrow, because he holds the light to his head, instead of holding it to his feet." So there are many who just hold religion up to illuminate their intellect, instead of holding it down to illuminate their practice; and so they make a sad tumble of it, and cast themselves into the mire, and do more hurt to their Christian profession in one hour than they will ever be able to retrieve. Take care that you make the wisdom of God, by God's Holy Spirit, a thing of true wisdom, directing your feet into his statutes, and keeping you in his ways.

And now a practical appeal, and we have done. I have been putting my arrow on the string; and if I have used any light similes, I have but done so just as the archer tips his arrow with a feather, to make it fly the better. I know that a rough quaint saying often sticks, when another thing is entirely forgotten. Now let us draw the bow, and send the arrow right at your hearts. Men, brethren, fathers, how many of you have felt in yourselves that Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God? Internal evidence is the best evidence in the world for the truth of the gospel. No Paley or Butler can prove the truth of the gospel so well as Mary, the servant girl yonder, that has got the gospel in her heart, and the power of it manifest in her life. Say, has Christ ever broken your bonds and set you free? Has he delivered you from your evil life, and from your sin? Has he given you "a good hope through grace," and can you now say, "On him I lean; on my beloved I stay myself?" If so, go away and rejoice: you are a saint; for the apostle has said, "He is unto us who are saved, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." But if you can not say this, allow me affectionately to warn you. If you want not this power of Christ, and this wisdom of Christ now, you will want them in a few short moments, when God shall come to judge the quick and the dead, when you shall stand before his bar, and when all the deeds that you have done shall be read before an assembled world. You will want religion then. O that you had grace to tremble now; grace to "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Hear ye how to be saved, and I have done. Do you feel that you are a sinner? Are you conscious that you have rebelled against God? Are you willing to acknowledge your transgressions, and do you hate and abhor them, while at the same time you feel you can do nothing to atone for them? Then hear this. Christ died for you; and if he died for you, you can not be lost. Christ died in vain for no man for whom he died. If you are a penitent and a believer, he died for you, and you are safe; go your way: rejoice "with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;" for he who has taught you your need of a Saviour, will give you that Saviour's blood to be applied to your conscience, and you shall ere long, with yonder blood-washed host, praise God and the Lamb saying, "Hallelujah, for ever, Amen!" Only do you feel that you are a sinner? If not, I have no gospel to preach to you; I can but warn you. But if you feel your lost estate, and come to Christ, come, and welcome, for he will never cast you away.

Coming Judgment of the Secrets of Men

A Sermon (No. 1849) Delivered on Lord's Day Morning, July 12th, 1885, by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington "The day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." —Romans 2:16.

IT IS impossible for any of us to tell what it cost the apostle Paul to write the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans. It is a shame even to speak of the things which are done of the vicious in secret places; but Paul felt it was necessary to break through his shame, and to speak out concerning the hideous vices of the heathen. He has left on record an exposure of the sins of his day which crimson the cheek of the modest when they read it, and makes both the ears of him that heareth it to tingle. Paul knew that this chapter would be read, not in his age alone, but in all ages, and that it would go into the households of the most pure and godly as long as the world should stand; and yet he deliberately wrote it, and wrote it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He

knew that it must be written to put to shame the abominations of an age which was almost past shame. Monsters that revel in darkness must be dragged into the open, that they may be withered up by the light. After Paul has thus written in anguish he bethought himself of his chief comfort. While his pen was black with the words he had written in the first chapter, he was driven to write of his great delight. He clings to the gospel with a greater tenacity than ever. As in the verse before us he needed to mention the gospel, he did not speak of it as "the gospel," but as "*my gospel*." "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to *my gospel*." He felt he could not live in the midst of so depraved a people without holding the gospel with both hands, and grasping it as his very own. "*My gospel*," saith he. Not that Paul was the author of it, not that Paul had an exclusive monopoly of its blessings, but that he had so received it from Christ himself, and regarded himself as so responsibly put in trust with it, that he could not disown it even for a instant. So fully had he taken it into himself that he could not do less than call it "my gospel." In another place he speaks of "our gospel;" thus using a possessive pronoun, to show how believers identify themselves with the truth which they preach. He had a gospel, a definite form of truth, and he believed in it beyond all doubt; and therefore he spoke of it as "my gospel." Herein we hear the voice of faith, which seems to say, "Though others reject it, I am sure of it, and allow no shade of mistrust to darken my mind. To me it is glad tidings of great joy: I hail it as 'my gospel.' If I be called a fool for holding it, I am content to be a fool, and to find all my wisdom in my Lord." "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." Is not this word "my gospel" the voice of love? Does he not by this word embrace the gospel as the only love of his soul—for the sake of which he had suffered the loss of all things, and did count them but dung—for the sake of which he was willing to stand before Nero, and proclaim, even in Caesar's palace, the message from heaven? Though each word should cost him a life, he was willing to die a thousand deaths for the holy cause. "My gospel," saith he, with a rapture of delight, as he presses to his bosom the sacred deposit of truth.

"My gospel." Does not this show his courage? As much as to say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." He says, "my gospel," as a soldier speaks of "my colours," or of "my king." He resolves to bear this banner to victory, and to serve this royal truth even to the death.

"My gospel." There is a touch of discrimination about the expression. Paul perceives that there are other gospels, and he makes short work with them, for he saith, "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let me be accused." The apostle was of a gentle spirit; he prayed heartily for the Jews who persecuted him, and yielded his life for the conversion of the Gentiles who maltreated him; but he had no tolerance for false gossellers. He exhibited great breadth of mind, and to save souls he became all things to all men; but when he contemplated any alteration or adulteration of the gospel of Christ, he thundered and lightnined without measure. When he feared that something else might spring up among the philosophers, or among the Judaizers, that should hide a single beam of the glorious Sun of Righteousness, he used no measured language; but cried concerning the author of such a darkening influence, "Let him be accursed." Every heart that would see men blessed whispers an "Amen" to the apostolic malediction. No greater curse can come upon mankind than the obscuration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul saith of himself and his true brethren, "We are not as many, which corrupt the word of God;" and he cries to those who turned aside from the one and only gospel, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" Of all new doctrines he speaks as of "another gospel, which is not another; but there be some that trouble you."

As for myself, looking at the matter afresh, amidst all the filthiness which I see in the world at this day, I lay hold upon the pure and blessed Word of God, and call it all the more earnestly, my gospel,—mine in life and mine in death, mine against all comers, mine for ever, God helping me: with emphasis—"my gospel."

Now let us notice what it was that brought up this expression, "My gospel." What was Paul preaching about? Certainly not upon any of the gentle and tender themes, which we are told nowadays ought to occupy all our time; but he is speaking of the terrors of the law, and in that connection he speaks of "my gospel."

Let us come at once to our text. It will need no dividing, for it divides itself. First, let us consider *that on a certain day God shall judge mankind*; secondly, on that day *God will judge the secrets of men*; thirdly, when he judges the secrets of men, *it will be by Jesus Christ*; and fourthly, *this is according to gospel*.

I. We begin with the solemn truth, that ON A CERTAIN DAY GOD WILL JUDGE MEN. A judgment is going on daily. God is continually holding court, and considering the doings of the sons of men. Every evil deed that they do is recorded in the register of doom, and each good action is remembered and laid up in store by God. That judgment is reflected in a measure in the consciences of men. Those who know the gospel, and

those who know it not, alike, have a certain measure of light, by which they know right from wrong; their consciences all the while accusing or else excusing them. This session of the heavenly court continues from day to day, like that of our local magistrates; but this does not prevent but rather necessitates the holding of an ultimate great assize.

As each man passes into another world, there is an immediate judgment passed upon him; but this is only the foreshadowing of that which will take place in the end of the world.

There is a judgment also passing upon nations, for as nations will not exist as nations in another world, they have to be judged and punished in this present state. The thoughtful reader of history will not fail to observe, how sternly this justice had dealt with empire after empire, when they have become corrupt. Colossal dominions have withered to the ground, when sentenced by the King of kings. Go ye and ask to-day, "Where is the empire of Assyria? Where are the mighty cities of Babylon? Where are the glories of the Medes and Persians? What has become of the Macedonian power? Where are the Caesars and their palaces?" These empires were forces established by cruelty, and used for oppression; they fostered luxury and licentiousness, and when they were no longer tolerable, the earth was purged from their polluting existence. Ah me! what horrors of war, bloodshed, and devastation, have come upon men as the result of their iniquities! The world is full of the monuments, both of the mercy and the justice of God: in fact the monuments of his justice, if rightly viewed, are proofs of his goodness; for it is mercy on the part of God to put an end to evil systems when, like a nightmare, they weigh heavily upon the bosom of mankind. The omnipotent Judge has not ceased from his sovereign rule over kingdoms, and our own country may yet have to feel his chastisements. We have often laughed among ourselves at the idea of the New Zealander sitting on the broken arch of London Bridge amid the ruins of this metropolis. But is it quite so ridiculous as it looks? It is more than possible it will be realized if our iniquities continue to abound. What is there about London that it should be more enduring than Rome? Why should the palaces of *our* monarchs be eternal if the palaces of Koyunjik have fallen? The almost boundless power of the Pharaohs has passed away, and Egypt has become the meanest of nations; why should not England come under like condemnation? What are we? What is there about our boastful race, whether on this side of the Atlantic or the other, that we should monopolize the favour of God? If we rebel, and sin against him, he will not hold us guiltless, but will deal out impartial justice to an ungrateful race.

Still, though such judgments proceed every day, yet there is to be a day, a period of time, in which, in a more distinct, formal, public, and final manner, God will judge the sons of men. We might have guessed this by the light of nature and of reason. Even heathen peoples have had a dim notion of a day of doom; but we are not left to guess it, we are solemnly assured of it in the Holy Scripture. Accepting this Book as the revelation of God, we know beyond all doubt that a day is appointed in which the Lord will judge the secrets of men.

By judging is here meant all that concerns the proceedings of trial and award. God will judge the race of men; that is to say, first, there will be a session of majesty, and the appearing of a great white throne, surrounded with pomp of angels and glorified beings. Then a summons will be issued, bidding all men come to judgment, to give in their final account. The heralds will fly through the realms of death, and summon those who sleep in the dust: for the quick and the dead shall all appear before that judgment-seat. John says, "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;" and he adds, "The sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them." Those that have been so long buried that their dust is mingled with the soil, and has undergone a thousand transmutations, shall nevertheless be made to put in a personal appearance before the judgment-seat of Christ. What an issue will that be! You and I and all the myriad myriads of our race shall be gathered before the throne of the Son of God. Then, when all are gathered, the indictment will be read, and each one will be examined concerning things done in the body, according to that he hath done. Then the books shall be opened, and everything recorded there shall be read before the face of heaven. Every sinner shall then hear the story of his life published to his everlasting shame. The good shall ask no concealment, and the evil shall find none. Angels and men shall then see the truth of things, and the saints shall judge the world. Then the great Judge himself shall give the decision: he shall pronounce sentence upon the wicked, and execute their punishment. No partiality shall there be seen; there shall be no private conferences to secure immunity for nobles, no hushing up of matters, that great men may escape contempt for their crimes. All men shall stand before the one great judgment-bar; evidence shall be given concerning them all, and a righteous sentence shall go forth from his mouth who knows not how to flatter the great.

This will be so, and it ought to be so: God should judge the world, because he is the universal ruler and sovereign. There has been a day for sinning, there ought to be a day for punishing; a long age of rebellion has been endured, and there must be a time when justice shall assert her supremacy. We have seen an age in which reformation has been commanded, in which mercy has been presented, in which expostulation and entreaty have been used, and there ought at last to come a day in which God shall judge both the quick and the

dead, and measure out to each the final result of life. It ought to be so for the sake of the righteous. They have been slandered; they have been despised and ridiculed; worse than that, they have been imprisoned and beaten, and put to death times without number: the best have had the worst of it, and there ought to be a judgment to set these things right. Besides the festering iniquities of each age cry out to God that he should deal with them. Shall such sin go unpunished? To what end is there a moral government at all, and how is its continuance to be secured, if there be not rewards and punishments and a day of account? For the display of his holiness, for the overwhelming of his adversaries, for the rewarding of those who have faithfully served him, there must be and shall be a day in which God will judge the world.

Why doth it not come at once? And when will it come? The precise day we cannot tell. Man nor angel knoweth that day, and it is idle and profane to guess at it, since even the Son of man, as such, knoweth not the time. It is sufficient for us that the Judgment Day will surely come; sufficient also to believe that it is postponed on purpose to give breathing time for mercy, and space for repentance. Why should the ungodly want to know when that day will come? What is that day to you? To you it should be darkness, and not light. It shall be your day of consuming as stubble fully dry: therefore bless the Lord that he delayeth his coming, and reckon that his longsuffering is for your salvation.

Moreover, the Lord keeps the scaffold standing till he hath built up the fabric of his church. Not yet are the elect all called out from among the guilty sons of men; not yet are all the redeemed with blood redeemed with power and brought forth out of the corruption of the age into the holiness in which they walk with God. Therefore the Lord waiteth for a while. But do not deceive yourselves. The great day of his wrath cometh on apace, and your days of reprieve are numbered. One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Ye shall die, perhaps, before the appearing of the Son of man: but ye shall see his judgment-seat for all that, for ye shall rise again as surely as he rose. When the apostle addressed the Grecian sages at Athens he said, "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." See ye not, O ye impenitent ones, that a risen Saviour is the sign of your doom. As God hath raised Jesus from the dead, so shall he raise your bodies, that in these you may come to judgment. Before the judgment-seat shall every man and woman in this house give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Thus saith the Lord.

II. Now I call your attention to the fact that "GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN." This will happen to all men, of every nation, of every age, of every rank, and of every character. The Judge will, of course, judge their outward acts, but these may be said to have gone before them to judgment: their secret acts are specially mentioned, because these will make judgment to be the more searching.

By "secrets of men," the Scripture means those secret crimes which hide themselves away by their own infamy, which are too vile to be spoken of, which cause a shudder to go through a nation if they be but dragged, as they ought to be, into the daylight. Secret offences shall be brought into judgment; the deeds of the night and of the closed room, the acts which require the finger to be laid upon the lip, and a conspiracy of silence to be sworn. Revolting and shameless sins which must never be mentioned lest the man who committed them should be excluded from his fellows as an outcast, abhorred even of other sinners—all those shall be revealed. All that you have done, any of you, or are doing, if you are bearing the Christian name and yet practising secret sin, shall be laid bare before the universal gaze. If you sit here amongst the people of God, and yet where no eye sees you, if you are living in dishonesty, untruthfulness, or uncleanness, it shall all be known, and shame and confusion of face shall eternally cover you. Contempt shall be the inheritance to which you shall awake, when hypocrisy shall be no more possible. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; but he will bring the secrets of men into judgment.

Specially our text refers to the hidden motives of every action; for a man may do that which is right from a wrong motive, and so the deed may be evil in the sight of God, though it seem right in the sight of men. Oh, think what it will be to have your motives all brought to light, to have it proven that you were godly for the sake of gain, that you were generous out of ostentation, or zealous for love of praise, that you were careful in public to maintain a religious reputation, but that all the while everything was done for self, and self only! What a strong light will that be which God shall turn upon our lives, when the darkest chambers of human desire and motive shall be as manifest as public acts! What a revelation will that be which makes manifest all thoughts, and imaginings, and lustings, and desires! All angers, and envies, and prides, and rebellions of the heart—what a disclosure will these make!

All the sensual desires and imaginings of even the best-regulated, what a foulness will these appear! What a

day it will be, when the secrets of men shall be set in the full blaze of noon!

God will also reveal secrets, that were secrets even to the sinners themselves, for there is sin in us which we have never seen, and iniquity in us which we have never yet discovered.

We have managed for our own comfort's sake to blind our eyes somewhat, and we take care to avert our gaze from things which it is inconvenient to see; but we shall be compelled to see all these evils in that day, when the Lord shall judge the secrets of men. I do not wonder that when a certain Rabbi read in the book of Ecclesiastes that God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, he wept. It is enough to make the best men tremble. Were it not for thee, O Jesus, whose precious blood hath cleansed us from all sin, where should we be! Were it not for thy righteousness, which shall cover those who believe in thee, who among us could endure the thought of that tremendous day? In thee, O Jesus, we are made righteous, and therefore we fear not the trial-hour; but were it not for thee our hearts would fail us for fear!

Now if you ask me why God should judge, especially the secrets of men—since this is not done in human courts, and cannot be, for secret things of this kind come not under cognizance of our short-sighted tribunals—I answer it is because there is really nothing secret from God. We make a difference between secret and public sins, but he doth not; for all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do. All deeds are done in the immediate presence of God, who is personally present everywhere. He knows and sees all things as one upon the spot, and every secret sin is but conceived to be secret through the deluded fantasy of our ignorance. God sees more of a secret sin than a man can see of that which is done before his face. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord."

The secrets of men will be judged because often the greatest of moral acts are done in secret. The brightest deeds that God delights in are those that are done by his servants when they have shut the door and are alone with him; when they have no motive but to please him; when they studiously avoid publicity, lest they should be turned aside by the praise of men; when the right hand knoweth not what the left hand doeth, and the loving, generous heart deviseth liberal things, and doeth it behind the screen, so that it should never be discovered how the deed was done. It were a pity that such deeds should be left out at the great audit. Thus, too, secret vices are also of the very blackest kind, and to exempt them were to let the worst of sinners go unpunished. Shall it be that these polluted things shall escape because they have purchased silence with their wealth? I say solemnly "God forbid." He does forbid it: what they have done in secret, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

Besides, the secret things of men enter into the very essence of their actions. An action is, after all, good or bad very much according to its motive. It may seem good, but the motive may taint it; and so, if God did not judge the secret part of the action he would not judge righteously. He will weigh our actions, and detect the design which led to them, and the spirit which prompted them.

Is it not certainly true that the secret thing is the best evidence of the man's condition? Many a man will not do in public that which would bring him shame; not because he is black-hearted enough for it, but because he is too much of a coward. That which a man does when he thinks that he is entirely by himself is the best revelation of the man. That which thou wilt not do because it would be told of thee if thou didst ill, is a poor index of thy real character. That which thou wilt do because thou wilt be praised for doing well, is an equally faint test of thy heart. Such virtue is mere self-seeking, or mean-spirited subservience to thy fellow-man; but that which thou doest out of respect to no authority but thine own conscience and thy God; that which thou doest unobserved, without regard to what man will say concerning it—that it is which reveals thee, and discovers thy real soul. Hence God lays a special stress and emphasis upon the fact that he will in that day judge "the secrets" of men by Jesus Christ.

Oh, friends, if it does not make you tremble to think of these things, it ought to do so. I feel the deep responsibility of preaching upon such matters, and I pray God of his infinite mercy to apply these truths to our hearts, that they may be forceful upon our lives. These truths ought to startle us, but I am afraid we hear them with small result; we have grown familiar with them, and they do not penetrate us as they should. We have to deal, brethren, with an omniscient God; with One who once knowing never forgets; with One to whom all things are always present; with One will conceal nothing out of fear, or favour of any man's person; with One who will shortly bring the splendour of his omniscience and the impartiality of his justice to bear upon all human lives. God help us, where'er we rove and where'er we rest, to remember that each thought, word, and act of each moment lies in that fierce light which beats upon all things from the throne of God.

III. Another solemn revelation of our text lies in this fact, that "GOD WILL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN BY JESUS CHRIST." He that will sit upon the throne as the Vice-regent of God, and as a Judge, acting for God, will be Jesus Christ. What a name for a Judge! The Saviour-Anointed—Jesus Christ: he is to be the judge of all mankind. Our Redeemer will be the Umpire of our destiny.

This will be, I doubt not, first for the display of his glory. What a difference there will be then between the babe of Bethlehem's manger, hunted by Herod, carried down by night into Egypt for shelter, and the King of kings and Lord of lords, before whom every knee must bow! What a difference between the weary man and full of woes, and he that shall then be girt with glory, sitting on a throne encircled with a rainbow! From the derision of men to the throne of universal judgment, what an ascent! I am unable to convey to you my own heart's sense of the contrast between the "despised and rejected of men," and the universally-acknowledged Lord, before whom Caesars and pontiffs shall bow into the dust. He who was judged at Pilate's bar, shall summon all to his bar. What a change from the shame and spitting, from the nails and the wounds, the mockery and the thirst, and the dying anguish, to the glory in which he shall come whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and out of whose mouth there goeth a two-edged sword! He shall judge the nations, even he whom the nations abhorred. He shall break them in pieces like a potter's vessel, even those who cast him out as unworthy to live among them. Oh, how we ought to bow before him now as he reveals himself in his tender sympathy, and in his generous humiliation! Let us kiss the Son lest he be angry; let us yield to his grace, that we may not be crushed by his wrath. Ye sinners, bow before those pierced feet, which else will tread you like clusters in the wine-press. Look ye up to him with weeping, and confess your forgetfulness of him, and put your trust in him; lest he look down on you in indignation. Oh, remember that he will one day say, "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." The holding of the judgment by the Lord Jesus will greatly enhance his glory. It will finally settle one controversy which is still upheld by certain erroneous spirits: there will be no doubt about our Lord's deity in that day: there will be no question that this same Jesus who was crucified is both Lord and God. God himself shall judge, but he shall perform the judgment in the person of his Son Jesus Christ, truly man, but nevertheless most truly God. Being God he is divinely qualified to judge the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth.

If you ask again, Why is the Son of God chosen to be the final Judge? I could give as a further answer that he receives this high office not only as a reward for all his pains, and as a manifestation of his glory, but also because men have been under his mediatorial sway, and he is their Governor and King. At the present moment we are all under the sway of the Prince Immanuel, God with us: we have been placed by an act of divine clemency, not under the immediate government of an offended God, but under the reconciling rule of the Prince of Peace. "All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." We are commanded to preach unto the people, and "to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of quick and dead." (Acts 10:42) Jesus is our Lord and King, and it is meet that he should conclude his mediatorial sovereignty by rewarding his subjects to their deeds.

But I have somewhat to say unto you which ought to reach your hearts, even if other thoughts have not done so. I think that God hath chosen Christ, the man Christ Jesus, to judge the world that there may never be a cavil raised concerning that judgment. Men shall not be able to say—We were judged by a superior being who did not know our weaknesses and temptations, and therefore he judged us harshly, and without a generous consideration of our condition. No, God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. He is our brother, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, partaker of our humanity, and therefore understands and knows what is in men. He has shown himself to be skilful in all the surgery of mercy throughout the ages, and at last he will be found equally skilful in dissecting motives and revealing the thoughts and intents of the heart. Nobody shall ever be able to look back on that august tribunal and say that he who sat upon it was too stern, because he knew nothing of human weakness. It will be the loving Christ, whose tears, and bloody sweat, and gaping wounds, attest his brotherhood with mankind; and it will be clear to all intelligences that however dread his sentences, he could not be unmerciful. God shall judge us by Jesus Christ, that the judgment may be indisputable.

But harken well—for I speak with a great weight upon my soul—this judgment by Jesus Christ, puts beyond possibility all hope of any after-interposition. If the Saviour condemns, and such a Saviour, who can plead for us? The owner of the vineyard was about to cut down the barren tree, when the dresser of the vineyard pleaded, "Let it alone this year also;" but what can come of that tree when that vinedresser himself shall say to the master, "It must fall; I myself must cut it down!" If your Saviour shall become your judge you will be judged indeed. If *he* shall say, "Depart, ye cursed," who can call you back? If he that bled to save men at last comes to this conclusion, that there is no more to be done, but they must be driven from his presence, then

farewell hope. To the guilty the judgment will indeed be a "Great day of dread, decision, and despair." An infinite horror shall seize upon their spirits as the words of the loving Christ shall freeze their very marrow, and fix them in the ice of eternal despair. There is, to my mind, a climax of solemnity in the fact that God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

Does not this also show how certain the sentence will be? for this Christ of God is too much in earnest to play with men. If he says, "Come, ye blessed," he will not fail to bring them to their inheritance. If he be driven to say, "Depart, ye cursed," he will see it done, and into the everlasting punishment they must go. Even when it cost him his life he did not draw back from doing the will of his Father, nor will he shrink in that day when he shall pronounce the sentence of doom. Oh, how evil must sin be since it constrains the tender Saviour to pronounce sentence of eternal woe! I am sure that many of us have been driven of late to an increased hatred of sin; our souls have recoiled within us because of the wickedness among which we dwell; it has made us feel as if we would fain borrow the Almighty's thunderbolts with which to smite iniquity. Such haste on our part may not be seemly, since it implies a complaint against divine long-suffering; but Christ's dealing with evil will be calm and dispassionate, and all the more crushing. Jesus, with his pierced hand, that bears the attestation of his supreme love to men, shall wave the impenitent away; and those lips which bade the weary rest in him shall solemnly say to the wicked, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." To be trampled beneath the foot which was nailed to the cross will be to be crushed indeed: yet so it is, God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

It seems to me as if God in this intended to give a display of the unity of all his perfections. In this same man, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, you behold justice and love, mercy and righteousness, combined in equal measure. He turns to the right, and says, "Come, ye blessed," with infinite suavity; and with the same lip, as he glances to the left, he says, "Depart, ye cursed." Men will then see at one glance how love and righteousness are one, and how they meet in equal splendour in the person of the Well-beloved, whom God has therefore chosen to be Judge of quick and dead.

IV. I have done when you have borne with me a minute or two upon my next point, which is this: and ALL THIS IS ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL. That is to say, there is nothing in the gospel contrary to the solemn teaching. Men gather to us, to hear us preach of infinite mercy, and tell of the love that blots out sin; and our task is joyful when we are called to deliver such a message; but oh, sirs, remember that nothing in our message makes light of sin. The gospel offers you no opportunity of going on in sin, and escaping without punishment. Its own cry is, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Jesus has not come into the world to make sin less terrible. Nothing in the gospel excuses sin; nothing in it affords toleration for lust or anger, or dishonesty, or falsehood. The gospel is as truly a two-edged sword against sin, as ever the law can be. There is grace for the man who quits his sin, but there is tribulation and wrath upon every man that doeth evil. "If ye turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready." The gospel is all tenderness to the repenting, but all terror to the obstinate offender. It has pardon for the very chief of sinners, and mercy for the vilest of the vile, if they will forsake their sins; but it is according to our gospel that he that goeth on in his iniquity, shall be cast into hell, and he that believeth not shall be damned. With deep love to the souls of men, I bear witness to the truth that he who turns not with repentance and faith to Christ, shall go away into punishment as everlasting as the life of the righteous. This is according to our gospel: indeed, we had not needed such a gospel, if there had not been such a judgment. The background of the cross is the judgment-seat of Christ. We had not needed so great an atonement, so vast a sacrifice, if there had not been an exceeding sinfulness in sin, an exceeding justice in the judgment, and an exceeding terror in the sure rewards of transgression.

"According to my gospel," saith Paul; and he meant that the judgment is an essential part of the gospel creed. If I had to sum up the gospel I should have to tell you certain facts: Jesus, the Son of God, became man; he was born of the virgin Mary; lived a perfect life; was falsely accused of men; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God; from whence he shall also come to judge the quick and the dead. This is one of the elementary truths of our gospel; we believe in the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the life everlasting.

The judgment is according to our gospel, and in times of righteous indignation its terrible significance seemeth a very gospel to the pure in heart. I mean this. I have read this and that concerning oppression, slavery, the treading down of the poor, and the shedding of blood, and I have rejoiced that there is a righteous Judge. I have read of secret wickednesses among the rich men of this city, and I have said within myself, "Thank God, there will be a judgment day." Thousands of men have been hanged for much less crimes than those which now disgrace gentlemen whose names are on the lips of rank and beauty. Ah me, how heavy is our heart as we think of it! It has come like a gospel to us that the Lord will be revealed in flaming fire, taking

vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Thess. 1:8) The secret wickedness of London cannot go on for ever. Even they that love men best, and most desire salvation for them, cannot but cry to God, "How long! How long! Great God, wilt thou for ever endure this?" God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world, and we sigh and cry until it shall end the reign of wickedness, and give rest to the oppressed. Brethren, we must preach the coming of the Lord, and preach it somewhat more than we have done; because it is the driving power of the gospel. Too many have kept back these truths, and thus the bone has been taken out of the arm of the gospel. Its point has been broken; its edge has been blunted. The doctrine of judgment to come is the power by which men are to be aroused. There is another life; the Lord will come a second time; judgment will arrive; the wrath of God will be revealed. Where this is not preached, I am bold to say the gospel is not preached. It is absolutely necessary to the preaching of the gospel of Christ that men be warned as to what will happen if they continue in their sins. Ho, ho, sir surgeon, you are too delicate to tell the man that he is ill! You hope to heal the sick without their knowing it. You therefore flatter them; and what happens? They laugh at you; they dance upon their own graves. At last they die! Your delicacy is cruelty; your flatteries are poisons; you are a murderer. Shall we keep men in a fool's paradise? Shall we lull them into soft slumbers from which they will awake in hell? Are we to become helpers of their damnation by our smooth speeches? In the name of God we will not. It becomes every true minister of Christ to cry aloud and spare not, for God hath set a day in which he will "judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." As surely as Paul's gospel was true the judgment will come. Wherefore flee to Jesus this day, O sinners. O ye saints, come hide yourselves again beneath the crimson canopy of the atoning sacrifice, that you may be now ready to welcome your descending Lord and escort him to his judgment-seat. O my hearers, may God bless you, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Portion of Scripture read before Sermon—John 12:37-50. Hymns from "Our Own Hymn Book"—93, 12, 518.

Coming to Christ

A Sermon (No. 3509) Published on Thursday, April 27th, 1916. Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington. *On Lord's-day Evening, June 17th, 1868.* "To whom coming."—1 Peter 2:4.

IN THESE three words you have, first of all, *a blessed person mentioned*, under the pronoun "whom"—"To whom coming." In the way of salvation we come alone to Jesus Christ. All comings to baptism, comings to confirmation, comings to sacrament are all null and void unless we come to Jesus Christ. That which saves the soul is not coming to a human priest, nor even attending the assemblies of God's saints; it is coming to Jesus Christ, the great exalted Saviour, once slain, but now enthroned in glory. You must get to him, or else you have virtually nothing upon which your soul can rely. "To whom coming." Peter speaks of all the saints as *coming to Jesus*, coming to him as unto a living stone, and being built upon him, and no other foundation can any man lay than that which is laid, and if any man say that coming anywhere but to Christ can bring salvation, he hath denied the faith and utterly departed from it. The coming mentioned in the text is a word which is sometimes explained in Scripture by hearing, at other times by trusting or believing, and quite as frequently by looking. "To whom coming." Coming to Christ does not mean coming with any natural motion of the body, for he is in heaven, and we cannot climb up to the place where he is; but it is a mental coming, a spiritual coming; it is, in one word, a trusting in and upon him. He who believes Jesus Christ to be God, and to be the appointed atonement for sin, and relies upon him as such, has come to him, and it is this coming which saves the soul. Whoever the wide world over has relied upon Jesus Christ, and is still relying upon him for the pardon of his iniquities, and for his complete salvation, is saved.

Notice one thing more in these three words, that *the participle is in the present*. "To whom coming," not "To whom having come," though I trust many of us have come, but the way of salvation is not to come to Christ and then forget it, but to continue coming, to be always coming. It is the very spirit of the believer to be always relying upon Christ, as much after a life of holiness as when he first commenced that life; as much when he has been blessed with much spiritual nearness of access to God, and a holy, heavenly frame of mind; as much then, I say, as when, a poor trembling penitent, he said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." To Christ we are to be, always coming; upon him always relying, to his precious blood always looking.

So I shall take the text, then, this evening thus:—These three words describe *our first salvation*, describe *the life of the Christian*, and then describe *his departure*, for what even is that but to be still coming to Christ, to be in his embrace for ever? First, then, these three words describe, and very accurately too:—

I. THE FIRST SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER.

It is coming to Christ. I shall not try to speak the experience of many present; I know if it were necessary you could rise and give your "Yea, yes" to it. In describing the work of grace at the first, I may say that *it was indeed a very simple thing for us to come to Christ*, but simple as it was, some of us were very long in finding it out. The simplest thing in all the world is just to look to Jesus and live, to drink of the life-giving stream, and find our thirst for ever assuaged. But though it is so plain that he who runs may read, and a man needs scarce any wit to comprehend the gospel, yet we went hither and thither, and searched for years before we discovered the simplicity which is in Christ Jesus. Most of us were like Penelope, who spun by day, and then unwound her work at night. It was even so we did. We thought we were getting up a little. We had some evidence. We said, "Yes, we are in a better state; are shall yet be saved." But ere long the night of sorrow came in. We had a sight of our own sinfulness, and what we had spun, I say, by day, we unwound again quite as quickly by night. Well, there are some of you much in the same way now. You are like a foolish builder who should build a wall, and then should begin to knock down all the stones at once. You build, and then pull down. Or, like the gardener who, having put into the ground his seeds and planted his flowers, is not satisfied with them, and thinks he will have something else, and so tries again. Ah! the methods and the shifts we will be at to try and save ourselves, while, after all, Christ has done it all. We will do anything rather than be saved by Christ's charity. We do not like to bow our necks to take the mercy of God, as poor undeserving sinners. Some will attend their church or their chapel with wonderful regularity, and think that that will ease their conscience, and when they get no ease of conscience from that, then they will! try sacraments, and when no salvation comes from them, then there will be good works, Popish ceremonies, and I know not what besides. All sorts of doings, good, bad, and indifferent, men will take to, if they may but have a finger in their own salvation, while all the while the blessed Saviour stands by, ready to save them altogether if they will but be quiet and take the salvation he has wrought. All attempts to save ourselves by our own works are but a base bargaining with God for eternal life, but he will never give eternal life at a price, nor sell it, for all that man could bring, though in each hand he should hold a star; he will give it freely to those who want it. He will dispense it without money and without price to all who come and ask for it, and, hungering and thirsting, are ready to receive it as his free gift, but:—

"Perish the virtue, as it ought, abhorred,
And the fool with it, who insults his Lord,"

by bringing in anything that he can do as a Around of dependence, and putting that in the place of the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I said, dear friends, that it was very simple, and indeed it is so, a very simple thing to trust Jesus and be saved, but it cost some of us many a day to find it out. Shall I just mention some of the ways in which persons are, long before they find it out. Some ask, "What is the best way to act faith? What is the best way to get this precious believing that I hear so much spoken of?" Now the question reminds me of a madman who, standing at a table which is well spread, says to a person standing there, "Tell me what is the best way to eat. What is the philosophy of eating?" "Why," the man replies, "I cannot be long about that; I need not write a long treatise on it: the best way I know of is to eat." And when people say, "What is the best way to get faith?" I say, "Believe." "But what is the best way to believe?" Why, believe. I can tell you nothing else. Some may say to you, "Pray for faith." Well, but how can you pray without faith? Or if they tell you to read, or do, or feel, in order to get faith, that is a roundabout way. I find not such exhortations as these put down as the gospel, but our Master, when he went to heaven, bade us go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; and what was that gospel to me? His own words are, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," and we cannot say anything clearer than that. "Believe"—that is, trust—"and be baptized," and these two things are put before you as Christ's ordained way of salvation. Now you want to philosophise, do you? Well, but why should a hungry man philosophise about the bread that is before him? Eat, sir, and philosophise afterwards. Believe in Jesus Christ, and when you get the joy and peace which faith in him will be sure to bring, then philosophise as you will.

But some are asking the question, "How shall I make myself fit to be saved?" That is similar to, a man who, being very black and filthy, coming home from a coal mine or from a forge, says, seeing the bath before him: "How shall I make myself fit to be"? You tell him at once that there cannot be any fitness for washing, except filthiness, which is the reverse of a fitness. So there can be no fitness for believing in Christ, except sinfulness, which is, indeed, the reverse of fitness. If you are hungry, you are fit to eat; if you are thirsty, you are fit to drink; if you are naked, you are fitted to receive the garments which charity is giving to those who need them; if you are a sinner, you are fitted for Christ, and Christ for you; if you are guilty, you are fitted to be pardoned; if you are lost, you are fitted to be saved. This, is all the fitness Christ requireth, and cast every

other thought of fitness far hence; yea, cast it to the winds. If thou be needy, Christ is ready to enrich thee. If thou wilt come and confess thine offences before God, the gracious Saviour is willing to pardon thee just as thou art. There is no other fitness wanted.

But then, if you have answered that, some will begin to say, "Yes, but the way of salvation is coming to Christ and I am afraid I do not come in the right way." Dear, dear, how unwise we are in the matter of salvation! We are much more foolish than little children are in common, everyday life. A mother says to her little child, "Come here, my dear, and I will give you this apple." Now I will tell you what the first thought of the child is about; it is about the apple; and the second thought off the child is about its mother; and the very last thought he has is about the way of coming. His mother told him to come, and he does not say, "Well, but I do not know whether I shall come right." He totters along as best he can, and that does not seem to occupy his thoughts at all. But when you say to a sinner, "Come to Christ, and you shall have eternal life," he thinks about nothing but his coming. He will not think about eternal life, nor yet about Jesus Christ, to whom he is bidden to come, but only about coming, when he need not think of that at all, but just do it—do what Jesus bids him—simply trust him." "What kind of coming is that," says John Bunyan, "which saves a soul?" and he answers, "Any coming in all the world if it does but come to Jesus." Some come running; at the very first sermon they hear they believe in him. Some come slowly; they are many years before they can trust him. Some come creeping; scarcely able to come, they have to be helped by others, but as long as they do but come, he has said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." You may have come in the most awkward way in all the world, as that man did who was let down by ropes through the ceiling into the place where Jesus was, but Christ rejects no coming sinner, and you need not be looking to your coming, but looking to Christ. Look to him as God—he can save you; as the bleeding, dying Son of Man—he is willing to save you, and flat before his cross, with all your guilt upon you, cast yourself, and believe that he will save you. Trust him to do it, and he must save you, for that is his own word, and from it he cannot depart. Oh! cease, then, that care about the calling, and look to the Saviour.

We have met with others who have said, "I Well, I understand that, that if I trust in Christ, I shall be saved, but—but—but—I do not understand that passage in the Revelation: I cannot make out that great difficulty in Ezekiel; I am a great deal troubled about predestination and free will, and I cannot believe that I shall be saved until I comprehend all this." Now, my dear friend, you are altogether on the wrong tack. When I was going from Cook's Haven to Heligoland to the North of Germany, I noticed when we were out at sea, far away from the sight of land, innumerable swarms of butterflies. I wondered whatever they could do there, and when I was at Heligoland I noticed that almost every wave that came up washed ashore large quantities of poor dead, drowned butterflies. Now do you know those butterflies were just like you? You want to go out on to the great sea of predestination, free will, and I do not know what. Now there is nothing for you there, and you have no more business there than the butterfly has out at sea. It will drown you. How much better for you just to come and fly to this Rose of Sharon—that is the thing for you. This Lily of the Valley—come and light here. There is something here for you, but out in that dread-sounding deep, without a bottom or a shore, you will be lost, seeking after the knowledge of difficulties, which God has hidden from man, and trying to pry into the thick darkness where God conceals truth which it were better not to reveal. Come you to Jesus. If you must have the knots untied, try to untie them after you get saved, but now your first business is with Jesus; your first business is coming unto him; for if you do not, your ruin is certain, and your destruction will be irretrievable. But I must not enlarge. Coming to Christ is very simple, yet how long it takes men to find it out!

Again, we, bear our witness to-night, that nothing but coming to Christ ever did give us any peace. In my own case I was distracted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted for some years, and I never could believe my sin forgiven or have any peace by day or night until I simply trusted Jesus, and from that time my peace has been like a river. I have rejoiced in the certainty of pardon, and sung with triumph in the Lord my God, and many of you are constantly doing the same, but until you looked to Christ, you had not any peace. You searched, and searched, and searched, but your search was fruitless until you looked into the five wounds of the expiring Saviour, and there you found life from the dead.

And once more, *when we did come to Christ, we came very tremblingly, but he did not cast us out.* We thought he never died for us, that he could not wash our sins away. We conceived that we were not of his elect; we dreamed that our prayers could only echo upon a brazen sky, and never bring us an answer. But still we came to Christ, because we dared not stop away. We were like a timid dove that is hunted by a hawk, and is afraid. We feared we should be destroyed, but he did not say to us, "You came to me tremblingly, and I will reject you." Nay, but into the bosom of his love he received us, and blotted out our sins. When we came to Jesus, we did not come bringing anything, but we came to him for everything. We came strictly empty-handed, and we got all we wanted in Christ. There is a piece of iron, and if it were to say, "Where am I to get the power from to cling to the loadstone?" the loadstone would say, "Let me get near you, and I will

supply you with that." So we sometimes think, "How can I believe? How can I hope? How can I follow Christ?" Ay, but let Christ get near us, and he finds us with all that. We do not come to Christ to bring our repentance, but to get repentance. We do not come to him with a broken heart, but for a broken heart. We do not so much even come to him with faith, as come to him for faith. "True belief and true repentance, Every grace that brings us nigh; Without money, Come to Jesus Christ, and buy." This is the first way of salvation—simply trusting and looking up to Christ for everything. But, then, we did trust. There is a difference between knowing about trust and trusting. By God's Holy Spirit, we were not left merely to talk about faith, nor to think about it, but we did believe. If the Government were to announce that there would be ten thousand acres of land in New Zealand given to a settler, I can imagine two men believing it. One believes it and forgets it; the other believes it and takes his passage to go out and get the land. Now the first kind of faith saves nobody; but the second faith, the practical faith, is that which, for the sake of seeking Christ, gives up the sins of this life, the pleasures of it—I mean the wicked pleasures of it—gives up all confidence in everything else, and casts itself into the arms of the Saviour. There is the sea of divine love; he shall be saved who plunges boldly into it, and casts himself upon its waves, hoping to be upborne. Oh! my hearer, hast thou done this? If so, thou art certainly a saved one. If thou hast not, oh! may grace enable thee to do it ere yet that setting sun has hidden himself beneath the horizon. Hast thou known this before, that a simple trust in Christ will save thee? This is the one message of this inspired Volume. This is the gospel according to Paul, the one gospel which we preach continually. Try it, and if it save thee not, we will be bondsmen for God for thee. But it must save thee, for God is true, and cannot fail, and he has declared, "He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Son of God."

Thus I have tried to explain as clearly as I can that coming to Jesus is the first business of salvation. Now, secondly, and with brevity. This is:—

II. A GOOD DESCRIPTION OF THE ENTIRE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

The Christian is always coming to Christ. He does not look upon faith as a matter of twenty years ago, and done with, but he comes today and he will come to-morrow. He will come to Jesus Christ afresh to-night before he goes to bed. We come to Jesus daily, for Christ is like the well outside the cottager's house. The man lets down the bucket and gets the cooling draught, but he goes again to-morrow, and he will have to go again at night if he is to leave a fresh supply. He must constantly go to the same place. Fishes do not live in the water they were in yesterday; they must be in it to-day. Men do not breathe the air which they breathed a week ago; they must have fresh air into the lungs moment by moment. Nobody thinks that he can be fed upon the fact that he did have a good meal six weeks ago; he has to eat continually. So "the just shall live by faith." We come to Jesus just as we came at first, and we say to him:—

"Nothing in my hands I bring,
Simply to thy cross I cling;
Naked come to thee for dress,
Helpless, look to thee for grace;
Foul, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die."

This is the daily and hourly life of the Christian.

But while we thus *come daily, we come more boldly than we used to do*. At first we came like cringing slaves; now we came as emancipated men. At first we came as strangers. Now we come as brethren. We still come to the cross, but it is not so much to find pardon for past sins, for these are forgiven, as to find fresh comfort from looking up to him who wrought out perfect righteousness for us.

We come, also, to Jesus Christ, *more closely than we used to do*. I hope, brethren and sisters, you can say that you are not at such a distance from Christ now as you once were. We ought to be always getting nearer to him. The old preachers used to illustrate nearness to Christ by the planets. They said there were Jupiter and Saturn far away, with very little light and very little heat from the sun, and then they have their satellites, their rings, their moons, and their belts to make for that. Just so they said, with some Christians. They get worldly comforts—their moons, and their belts—but they have not got much of their Master; they have got enough to save them, but oh! such little light. But, said they, when you get to Mercury, there is a planet without moons. Why, the sun is its moon, and, therefore, what does it want with moons when it has the full blaze of the sun's light and heat continually pouring upon it? And what a nimble planet it is; how it spins along in its orbit, because it is near the sun! Oh! to be like that—not to be far away from Jesus Christ, even with all the comforts

of this life, but to be near him, filled with life and sacred activity through the abundance of fellowship and communion with him. It is still coming, but it is coming after a nearer sort.

And I may say, too, that it is *coming of a dearer sort*, for there is more love in our coming now than there used to be. We did come at first, not so much loving Christ, as venturing to trust him, thinking him, perhaps, to be a hard Master; but now we know him to be the best of friends, the dearest of husbands. We come to his bosom, and we lean our heads upon it. We come in our private devotion; we tell him all our troubles; we unburden our hearts, and get his love shed abroad in our hearts in return, and we go away with a joy that makes our heart to leap within us and to bound like a young roe over the mountain-tops. Oh! happy is that man who gets right into the wounds of Jesus, and, with Thomas, cries, "My Lord and my God!" This is no, fanaticism, but a thing of sober, sound experience with some of us. We can rejoice in him, having no confidence in the flesh. It is still coming but it is coming after a dearer fashion.

Yet, mark you, it is *coming still to the same person*, coming still as poor humble ones to Christ. I have often told you, my dear brethren and sisters, that when you get a little above the ground, if it is only an inch, you get too high. When you begin to think that surely you are a saint, and that you have some good thing to trust to, that rotten stuff must all be pulled to pieces. Believe me, God will not let his people wear a rag of their own spinning; they must be clothed with Christ's righteousness from head to foot. The old heathen said he wrapped himself up in his integrity, but I should think he did not know what holes there were in it, or else he would have looked for something better. But we wrap ourselves in the righteousness of Christ, and there is not a cherub before the throne that wears a vestment so right royal as the poor sinner does when he wears the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Oh! child of God, always live upon your Lord. Hang upon him, as the pitcher hangs upon the nail. Lean on your Beloved; his arm will never weary of you. Stay yourselves upon him; wash in the precious fountain always; wear his righteousness continually; and be glad in the Lord, and your gladness need never fail while you simply and wholly lean upon him. And now, not to detain you longer, I come to the last point, upon which we will only say a word or two. The text is:—

III. A VERY CORRECT DESCRIPTION OF OUR DEPARTURE.

"To whom coming." We shall soon, very soon, quit this mortal frame. I hope you have learned to think of that without any kind of shudder. Can you not sing:—

"Ah! I shall soon be dying,
Time swiftly glides away;
But on my Lord relying
I hail the happy day."

What is there that we should wait here for? Those who have the most of this world's cuds have found it paltry stuff. It perishes in the using. There is a satiety about it; it cannot satisfy the great heart of an immortal man. It is well for us that there is to be an end of this life, and especially for us to whom that end is glowing with immortality. Well, the hour of death will be to us a coming to Christ, *a coming to sit upon his throne*. Did you ever think of that? "To him that overcometh will I give to sit upon my throne." Lord, Lord, we would be well content to, sit at thy feet. 'Twere all the heaven we would ask if we might but creep behind the door, or stand and be manual servants, or sit, like Mordecai, in the king's court.' No; but it must not be. We must sit on his throne, and reign with him for ever and ever. This is what death will bring you—a glorious participation in the royalties of your ascended Lord.

What is the next thing? "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." So that we, are to be going to Christ ere long *to behold his glory*, and what a sight that will be! Have you ever thought of that too? What must it be to behold his glory? Some of my brethren think that when they get to heaven they shall like to behold some of the works of God in nature and so on. I must confess myself more satisfied with the idea that I shall behold *his glory*, the glory of the Crucified, for it seems to me that no kind of heaven but that comes up to the description of the Apostle when he saith, "Eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." But to see the stars, has entered into the heart of man, and to behold the works of God in nature, has been conceived of; but the joys we speak of are so spiritual that the Apostle says, "He has revealed them unto us by his Spirit," and this is what he has revealed, "That they may behold my glory." St. Augustine used to say there were two sights he would like to have seen—Rome in her splendour, and Paul preaching—the last the better sight of the two. But there is a third sight for which one might give up all, give up seeing Naples, or seeing anything, if we might but see the King

his beauty. Why, even the distant glimpse which we catch of him through a glass or a telescope darkly ravishes the soul. Dr. Hawker was once waited upon by a friend, who asked him to go and see a naval review. He said, "No, thank you; I do not want to go." "You are a loyal man, doctor, and you would like to see the defences of your country." "Thank you, I do not wish to go." "But I have got a ticket for you, and you must go." "No," he said, "thank you," and after he had been pressed hard he said, "You have pressed me till I am ashamed, and now I must tell you—mine eyes have seen the King in his beauty, and the land which is very far off, and I have not any taste now for all the pomps that this world could possibly show." And if such a distant sight of Jesus can do this, what must it be to behold his glory with what the old Scotch divines used to call "a face-to-face view"; when the veil is taken down, when the clouds are blown away, and you see him face to face? Oh! long-expected day begin, when we shall be to him coming to dwell with him.

Once more only. Recollect we shall come to Christ not only to behold his glory, *but to share in it*. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Whatever Christ shall be, his people shall be, in happiness, riches, and honour, and together they shall take their full share. The Church, his bride, shall sit on the same throne with him, and of all the splendours of that eternal triumph she will have her half, for Christ is no niggard to his imperial spouse, but she whom he chose before the world began, and bought with blood, and wrapped in his righteousness, and espoused to himself for ever, shall be a full partaker of all the gifts that he poses world without end. And this shall be, and this shall be, and this shall be for ever; for ever you shall be with Christ, for ever coming to him. When the miser's wealth has melted; when the honours of the conqueror have been blown away or consumed like chaff in the furnace; when sun and moon grow dim with age, and the hoary pillars of this earth begin to rock and reel with stern decay; when the angel shall have put one foot on the sea and the other on the land, and shall have sworn by him that liveth that time shall be no more; when the ocean shall be licked up with tongues of fire, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up—then, then shall you be for ever with the Lord, eternally resting, eternally feasting, eternally magnifying him; being filled with all his fulness to the utmost capacity of your enlarged being, world without end.

So God grant it to us, that we may come to Christ now, that we may continue to come to Christ, that we may come to Christ then, lest rejecting him to-night we should be rejecting him for ever; lest refusing to trust him, we should be driven from his presence to abide in misery for ever! May we come now, for Christ's sake.

Compel Them to Come In

A Sermon (No. 227) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, December 5th, 1858, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens. "Compel them to come in." —Luke 14:23.

I FEEL in such a haste to go out and obey this commandment this morning, by compelling those to come in who are now tarrying in the highways and hedges, that I cannot wait for an introduction, but must at once set about my business.

Hear then, O ye that are strangers to the truth as it is in Jesus—hear then the message that I have to bring you. Ye have fallen, fallen in your father Adam; ye have fallen also in yourselves, by your daily sin and your constant iniquity; you have provoked the anger of the Most High; and as assuredly as you have sinned, so certainly must God punish you if you persevere in your iniquity, for the Lord is a God of justice, and will by no means spare the guilty. But have you not heard, hath it not long been spoken in your ears, that God, in his infinite mercy, has devised a way whereby, without any infringement upon his honour, he can have mercy upon you, the guilty and the undeserving? To you I speak; and my voice is unto you, O sons of men; Jesus Christ, very God of very God, hath descended from heaven, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. Begotten of the Holy Ghost, he was born of the Virgin Mary; he lived in this world a life of exemplary holiness, and of the deepest suffering, till at last he gave himself up to die for our sins, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." And now the plan of salvation is simply declared unto you—"Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." For you who have violated all the precepts of God, and have disdained his mercy and dared his vengeance, there is yet mercy proclaimed, for "whosoever calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." "For this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;" "whosoever cometh unto him he will in no wise cast out, for he is able also to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for us." Now all that God asks of you—and this he gives you—is that you will simply look at his bleeding dying son, and trust your souls in the hands of him whose name alone can save from death and hell. Is it not a marvelous thing, that the proclamation of this gospel does not receive the unanimous consent of

men? One would think that as soon as ever this was preached, "That whosoever believeth shall have eternal life," every one of you, "casting away every man his sins and his iniquities," would lay hold on Jesus Christ, and look alone to his cross. But alas! such is the desperate evil of our nature, such the pernicious depravity of our character, that this message is despised, the invitation to the gospel feast is rejected, and there are many of you who are this day enemies of God by wicked works, enemies to the God who preaches Christ to you to-day, enemies to him who sent his Son to give his life a ransom for many. Strange I say it is that it should be so, yet nevertheless it is the fact, and hence the necessity for the command of the text,—"*Compel them to come in.*"

Children of God, ye who have believed, I shall have little or nothing to say to you this morning; I am going straight to my business—I am going after those that will not come—those that are in the byways and hedges, and God going with me, it is my duty now to fulfil this command, "*Compel them to come in.*"

First, I must, *find you out*; secondly, I will go to work to *compel you to come in*.

I. First, I must FIND YOU OUT. If you read the verses that precede the text, you will find an amplification of this command: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind;" and then, afterwards, "Go out into the highways," bring in the vagrants, the highwaymen, "and into the hedges," bring in those that have no resting-place for their heads, and are lying under the hedges to rest, bring them in also, and "*compel them to come in.*" Yes, I see you this morning, you that are *poor*. I am to compel *you* to come in. You are poor in circumstances, but this is no barrier to the kingdom of heaven, for God hath not exempted from his grace the man that shivers in rags, and who is destitute of bread. In fact, if there be any distinction made, the distinction is on your side, and for your benefit—"Unto you is the word of salvation sent"; "For the poor have the gospel preached unto them." But especially I must speak to you who are *poor, spiritually*. You have no faith, you have no virtue, you have no good work, you have no grace, and what is poverty worse still, you have no hope. Ah, my Master has sent *you* a gracious invitation. Come and welcome to the marriage feast of his love. "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the waters of life freely." Come, I must lay hold upon you, though you be defiled with foulest filth, and though you have nought but rags upon your back, though your own righteousness has become as filthy clouts, yet must I lay hold upon you, and invite you first, and even compel you to come in.

And now I see you again. You are not only poor, but you are *maimed*. There was a time when you thought you could work out your own salvation without God's help, when you could perform good works, attend to ceremonies, and get to heaven by yourselves; but now you are maimed, the sword of the law has cut off your hands, and now you can work no longer; you say, with bitter sorrow—

"The best performance of my hands,
Dares not appear before thy throne."

You have lost all power now to obey the law; you feel that when you would do good, evil is present with you. You are maimed; you have given up, as a forlorn hope, all attempt to save yourself, because you are maimed and your arms are gone. But you are worse off than that, for if you could not work your way to heaven, yet you could walk your way there along the road by faith; but you are maimed in the feet as well as in the hands; you feel that you cannot believe, that you cannot repent, that you cannot obey the stipulations of the gospel. You feel that you are utterly undone, powerless in every respect to do anything that can be pleasing to God. In fact, you are crying out—

"Oh, could I but believe,
Then all would easy be,
I would, but cannot, Lord relieve,
My help must come from thee."

To you am I sent also. Before *you* am I to lift up the blood-stained banner of the cross, to you am I to preach this gospel, "Whoso calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved;" and unto you am I to cry, "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

There is yet another class. You are *halt*. You are halting between two opinions. You are sometimes seriously inclined, and at another time worldly gaiety calls you away. What little progress you do make in religion is but a limp. You have a little strength, but that is so little that you make but painful progress. Ah, limping

brother, to you also is the word of this salvation sent. Though you halt between two opinions, the Master sends me to you with this message: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if God be God, serve him; if Baal be God, serve him." Consider thy ways; set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live. Because I will do this, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel! Halt no longer, but decide for God and his truth.

And yet I see another class,—*the blind*. Yes, you that cannot see yourselves, that think yourselves good when you are full of evil, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness; to you am I sent. You, blind souls that cannot see your lost estate, that do not believe that sin is so exceedingly sinful as it is, and who will not be persuaded to think that God is a just and righteous God, to you am I sent. To you too that cannot see the Saviour, that see no beauty in him that you should desire him; who see no excellence in virtue, no glories in religion, no happiness in serving God, no delight in being his children; to you, also, am I sent. Ay, to whom am I not sent if I take my text? For it goes further than this—it not only gives a particular description, so that each individual case may be met, but afterwards it makes a general sweep, and says, "Go into the highways and hedges." Here we bring in all ranks and conditions of men—my lord upon his horse in the highway, and the woman trudging about her business, the thief waylaying the traveller—all these are in the highway, and they are all to be compelled to come in, and there away in the hedges there lie some poor souls whose refuges of lies are swept away, and who are seeking not to find some little shelter for their weary heads, to you, also, are we sent this morning. This is the universal command—compel them to come in.

Now, I pause after having described the character, I pause to look at the herculean labour that lies before me. Well did Melancthon say, "Old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon." As well might a little child seek to compel a Samson, as I seek to lead a sinner to the cross of Christ. And yet my Master sends me about the errand. Lo, I see the great mountain before me of human depravity and stolid indifference, but by faith I cry, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." Does my Master say, compel them to come in? Then, though the sinner be like Samson and I a child, I shall lead him with a thread. If God saith *do it*, if I attempt it in faith *it shall be done*; and if with a groaning, struggling, and weeping heart, I so seek this day to compel sinners to come to Christ, the sweet compulsions of the Holy Spirit shall go with every word, and some indeed shall be compelled to come in.

II. And now to the work—directly to the work. Unconverted, unreconciled, unregenerate men and women, I am to COMPEL YOU TO COME IN. Permit me first of all to accost you in the highways of sin and tell you over again my errand. The King of heaven this morning sends a gracious invitation to you. He says, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but had rather that he should turn unto me and live:" "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow." Dear brother, it makes my heart rejoice to think that I should have such good news to tell you, and yet I confess my soul is heavy because I see you do not think it good news, but turn away from it, and do not give it due regard. Permit me to tell you what the King has done for you. He knew your guilt, he foresaw that you would ruin yourself. He knew that his justice would demand your blood, and in order that this difficulty might be escaped, that his justice might have its full due, and that you might yet be saved, *Jesus Christ hath died*. Will you just for a moment glance at this picture. You see that man there on his knees in the garden of Gethsemane, sweating drops of blood. You see this next: you see that miserable sufferer tied to a pillar and lashed with terrible scourges, till the shoulder bones are seen like white islands in the midst of a sea of blood. Again you see this third picture; it is the same man hanging on the cross with hands extended, and with feet nailed fast, dying, groaning, bleeding; methought the picture spoke and said, "It is finished." Now all this hath Jesus Christ of Nazareth done, in order that God might consistently with his justice pardon sin; and the message to you this morning is this—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." That is trust him, renounce thy works, and thy ways, and set thine heart alone on this man, who gave himself for sinners.

Well brother, I have told you the message, what sayest thou unto it? Do you turn away? You tell me it is nothing to you; you cannot listen to it; that you will hear me by-and-by; but you will go your way this day and attend to your farm and merchandize. Stop brother, I was not told merely to tell you and then go about my business. No; I am told to compel you to come in; and permit me to observe to you before I further go, that there is one thing I can say—and to which God is my witness this morning, that I am in earnest with you in my desire that you should comply with this command of God. You may despise your own salvation, but I do not despise it; you may go away and forget what you shall hear, but you will please to remember that the things I now say cost me many a groan ere I came here to utter them. My inmost soul is speaking out to you, my poor brother, when I beseech you by him that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, consider my master's message which he bids me now address to you.

But do you spurn it? Do you still refuse it? Then I must change my tone a minute. I will not merely tell you the message, and invite you as I do with all earnestness, and sincere affection—I will go further. Sinner, in God's name I *command* you to repent and believe. Do you ask me whence my authority? I am an ambassador of heaven. My credentials, some of them secret, and in my own heart; and others of them open before you this day in the seals of my ministry, sitting and standing in this hall, where God has given me many souls for my hire. As God the everlasting one hath given me a commission to preach his gospel, I command you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; not on my own authority, but on the authority of him who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;" and then annexed this solemn sanction, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Reject my message, and remember "He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God." An ambassador is not to stand below the man with whom he deals, for we stand higher. If the minister chooses to take his proper rank, girded with the omnipotence of God, and anointed with his holy unction, he is to command men, and speak with all authority compelling them to come in: "command, exhort, rebuke with all long-suffering."

But do you turn away and say you will not be commanded? Then again will I change my note. If that avails not, all other means shall be tried. My brother, I come to you simple of speech, and I *exhort* you to flee to Christ. O my brother, dost thou know what a loving Christ he is? Let me tell thee from my own soul what I know of him. I, too, once despised him. He knocked at the door of my heart and I refused to open it. He came to me, times without number, morning by morning, and night by night; he checked me in my conscience and spoke to me by his Spirit, and when, at last, the thunders of the law prevailed in my conscience, I thought that Christ was cruel and unkind. O I can never forgive myself that I should have thought so ill of him. But what a loving reception did I have when I went to him. I thought he would smite me, but his hand was not clenched in anger but opened wide in mercy. I thought full sure that his eyes would dart lightning-flashes of wrath upon me; but, instead thereof, they were full of tears. He fell upon my neck and kissed me; he took off my rags and did clothe me with his righteousness, and caused my soul to sing aloud for joy; while in the house of my heart and in the house of his church there was music and dancing, because his son that he had lost was found, and he that was dead was made alive. I exhort you, then, to look to Jesus Christ and to be lightened. Sinner, you will never regret,—I will be bondsman for my Master that you will never regret it,—you will have no sigh to go back to your state of condemnation; you shall go out of Egypt and shall go into the promised land and shall find it flowing with milk and honey. The trials of Christian life you shall find heavy, but you will find grace will make them light. And as for the joys and delights of being a child of God, if I lie this day you shall charge me with it in days to come. If you will taste and see that the Lord is good, I am not afraid but that you shall find that he is not only good, but better than human lips ever can describe.

I know not what arguments to use with you. I appeal to your own self-interests. Oh my poor friend, would it not be better for you to be reconciled to the God of heaven, than to be his enemy? What are you getting by opposing God? Are you the happier for being his enemy? Answer, pleasure-seeker; hast thou found delights in that cup? Answer me, self-righteous man: hast thou found rest for the sole of thy foot in all thy works? Oh thou that goest about to establish thine own righteousness, I charge thee let conscience speak. Hast thou found it to be a happy path? Ah, my friend, "Wherefore dost thou spend thy money for that which is not bread, and thy labour for that which satisfieth not; hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." I exhort you by everything that is sacred and solemn, everything that is important and eternal, flee for your lives, look not behind you, stay not in all the plain, stay not until you have proved, and found an interest in the blood of Jesus Christ, that blood which cleanseth us from all sin. Are you still cold and indifferent? Will not the blind man permit me to lead him to the feast? Will not my maimed brother put his hand upon my shoulder and permit me to assist him to the banquet? Will not the poor man allow me to walk side-by-side with him? Must I use some stronger words. Must I use some other compulsion to compel you to come in? Sinners, this one thing I am resolved upon this morning, if you be not saved ye shall be without excuse. Ye, from the grey-headed down to the tender age of childhood, if ye this day lay not hold on Christ, your blood shall be on your own head. If there be power in man to bring his fellow, (as there is when man is helped by the Holy Spirit) that power shall be exercised this morning, God helping me. Come, I am not to be put off by your rebuffs; if my exhortation fails, I must come to something else. My brother, I *entreat* you, I entreat you stop and consider. Do you know what it is you are rejecting this morning? You are rejecting Christ, your only Saviour. "Other foundation can no man lay;" "there is none other name given among men whereby we must be saved." My brother, I cannot bear that ye should do this, for I remember what you are forgetting: the day is coming when you will want a Saviour. It is not long ere weary months shall have ended, and your strength begin to decline; your pulse shall fail you, your strength shall depart, and you and the grim monster—death, must face each other. What will you do in the swellings of Jordan without a Saviour? Death-beds are stony things without the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an awful thing to die anyhow; he

that hath the best hope, and the most triumphant faith, finds that death is not a thing to laugh at. It is a terrible thing to pass from the seen to the unseen, from the mortal to the immortal, from time to eternity, and you will find it hard to go through the iron gates of death without the sweet wings of angels to conduct you to the portals of the skies. It will be a hard thing to die without Christ. I cannot help thinking of you. I see you acting the suicide this morning, and I picture myself standing at your bedside and hearing your cries, and knowing that you are dying without hope. I cannot bear that. I think I am standing by your coffin now, and looking into your clay-cold face, and saying, "This man despised Christ and neglected the great salvation." I think what bitter tears I shall weep then, if I think that I have been unfaithful to you, and how those eyes fast closed in death, shall seem to chide me and say, "Minister, I attended the music hall, but you were not in earnest with me; you amused me, you preached to me, but you did not plead with me. You did not know what Paul meant when he said, 'As though God did beseech you by us we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.'"

I entreat you let this message enter your heart for another reason. I picture myself standing at the bar of God. As the Lord liveth, the day of judgment is coming. You believe that? You are not an infidel; your conscience would not permit you to doubt the Scripture. Perhaps you may have pretended to do so, but you cannot. You feel there must be a day when God shall judge the world in righteousness. I see you standing in the midst of that throng, and the eye of God is fixed on you. It seems to you that he is not looking anywhere else, but only upon you, and he summons you before him; and he reads your sins, and he cries, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire in hell!" My hearer, I cannot bear to think of you in that position; it seems as if every hair on my head must stand on end to think of any hearer of mine being damned. Will you picture yourselves in that position? The word has gone forth, "Depart, ye cursed." Do you see the pit as it opens to swallow you up? Do you listen to the shrieks and the yells of those who have preceded you to that eternal lake of torment? Instead of picturing the scene, I turn to you with the words of the inspired prophet, and I say, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Oh! my brother, I cannot let you put away religion thus; no, I think of what is to come after death. I should be destitute of all humanity if I should see a person about to poison himself, and did not dash away the cup; or if I saw another about to plunge from London Bridge, if I did not assist in preventing him from doing so; and I should be worse than a fiend if I did not now, with all love, and kindness, and earnestness, beseech you to "lay hold on eternal life," "to labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for the meat that endureth unto everlasting life."

Some hyper-calvinist would tell me I am wrong in so doing. I cannot help it. I must do it. As I must stand before my Judge at last, I feel that I shall not make full proof of my ministry unless I entreat with many tears that ye would be saved, that ye would look unto Jesus Christ and receive his glorious salvation. But does not this avail? are all our entreaties lost upon you; do you turn a deaf ear? Then again I change my note. Sinner, I have pleaded with you as a man pleadeth with his friend, and were it for my *own* life I could not speak more earnestly this morning than I do speak concerning *yours*. I did feel earnest about my own soul, but not a whit more than I do about the souls of my congregation this morning; and therefore, if ye put away these entreaties I have something else:—I must *threaten* you. You shall not always have such warnings as these. A day is coming, when hushed shall be the voice of every gospel minister, at least for you; for your ear shall be cold in death. It shall not be any more threatening; it shall be the fulfillment of the threatening. There shall be no promise, no proclamations of pardon and of mercy; no peace-speaking blood, but you shall be in the land where the Sabbath is all swallowed up in everlasting nights of misery, and where the preachings of the gospel are forbidden because they would be unavailing. I charge you then, listen to this voice that now addresses your conscience; for if not, God shall speak to you in his wrath, and say unto you in his hot displeasure, "I called and ye refused; I stretched out my hand and no man regarded; therefore will I mock at your calamity; I will laugh when your fear cometh." Sinner, I threaten you again. Remember, it is but a short time you may have to hear these warnings. You imagine that your life will be long, but do you know how short it is? Have you ever tried to think how frail you are? Did you ever see a body when it has been cut in pieces by the anatomist? Did you ever see such a marvelous thing as the human frame? "Strange, a harp of a thousand strings, Should keep in tune so long." Let but one of those cords be twisted, let but a mouthful of food go in the wrong direction, and you may die. The slightest chance, as we have it, may send you swift to death, when God wills it. Strong men have been killed by the smallest and slightest accident, and so may you. In the chapel, in the house of God, men have dropped down dead. How often do we hear of men falling in our streets—rolling out of time into eternity, by some sudden stroke. And are you sure that heart of your's is quite sound? Is the blood circulating with all accuracy? Are you quite sure of that? And if it be so, how long shall it be? O, perhaps there are some of you here that shall never see Christmas-day; it may be the mandate has gone forth already, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." Out of this vast congregation, I might with accuracy tell how many will be dead in a year; but certain it is that the whole of us shall never meet together again in any one assembly. Some out of this vast crowd, perhaps some two or three, shall depart ere the new year shall be ushered in. I remind you, then, my brother, that either the gate of salvation may be shut, or else you may be out of the place where the gate of mercy stands. Come, then, let the threatening have

power with you. I do not threaten because I would alarm without cause, but in hopes that a brother's threatening may drive you to the place where God hath prepared the feast of the gospel. And now, *must I turn hopelessly away?* Have I exhausted all that I can say? No, I will come to you again. Tell me what it is, my brother, that keeps you from Christ. I hear one say, "Oh, sir, it is because I feel myself too guilty." That cannot be, my friend, that cannot be. "But, sir, I am the chief of sinners." Friend, you are not. The chief of sinners died and went to heaven many years ago; his name was Saul of Tarsus, afterwards called Paul the apostle. He was the chief of sinners, I know he spoke the truth. "No," but you say still, "I am too vile." You cannot be viler than the *chief* of sinners. You must, at least, be second worst. Even supposing you are the worst now alive, you are second worst, for he was chief. But suppose you are the worst, is not that the very reason why you should come to Christ. The worse a man is, the more reason he should go to the hospital or physician. The more poor you are, the more reason you should accept the charity of another. Now, Christ does not want any merits of your's. He gives freely. The worse you are, the more welcome you are. But let me ask you a question: Do you think you will ever get better by stopping away from Christ? If so, you know very little as yet of the way of salvation at all. No, sir, the longer you stay, the worse you will grow; your hope will grow weaker, your despair will become stronger; the nail with which Satan has fastened you down will be more firmly clenched, and you will be less hopeful than ever. Come, I beseech you, recollect there is nothing to be gained by delay, but by delay everything may be lost. "But," cries another, "I feel I cannot believe." No, my friend, and you never will believe if you look first at your believing. Remember, I am not come to invite you to faith, but am come to invite you to Christ. But you say, "What is the difference?" Why, just this, if you first of all say, "I want to believe a thing," you never do it. But your first inquiry must be, "What is this thing that I am to believe?" Then will faith come as the consequence of that search. Our first business has not to do with faith, but with Christ. Come, I beseech you, on Calvary's mount, and see the cross. Behold the Son of God, he who made the heavens and the earth, dying for your sins. Look to him, is there not power in him to save? Look at his face so full of pity. Is there not love in his heart to prove him *willing* to save? Sure sinner, the sight of Christ will help thee to believe. Do not believe first, and then go to Christ, or else thy faith will be a worthless thing; go to Christ without any faith, and cast thyself upon him, sink or swim. But I hear another cry, "Oh sir, you do not know how often I have been invited, how long I have rejected the Lord." I do not know, and I do not want to know; all I know is that my Master has sent me, to compel you to come in; so come along with you now. You may have rejected a thousand invitations; don't make this the thousandth-and-one. You have been up to the house of God, and you have only been gospel hardened. But do I not see a tear in your eye; come, my brother, don't be hardened by this morning's sermon. O, Spirit of the living God, come and melt this heart for it has never been melted, and compel him to come in! I cannot let you go on such idle excuses as that; if you have lived so many years slighting Christ, there are so many reasons why now you should not slight him. But did I hear you whisper that this was not a convenient time? Then what must I say to you? When will that convenient time come? Shall it come when you are in hell? Will that time be convenient? Shall it come when you are on your dying bed, and the death throttle is in your throat—shall it come then? Or when the burning sweat is scalding your brow; and then again, when the cold clammy sweat is there, shall those be convenient times? When pains are racking you, and you are on the borders of the tomb? No, sir, this morning is the convenient time. May God make it so. Remember, I have no authority to ask you to come to Christ *to-morrow*. The Master has given you no invitation to come to him next Tuesday. The invitation is, "*To-day* if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation," for the Spirit saith "*to-day*." "*Come now* and let us reason together;" why should you put it off? It may be the last warning you shall ever have. Put it off, and you may never weep again in chapel. You may never have so earnest a discourse addressed to you. You may not be pleaded with as I would plead with you now. You may go away, and God may say, "He is given unto idols, let him alone." He shall throw the reins upon your neck; and then, mark—your course is sure, but it is sure damnation and swift destruction.

And now again, is it all in vain? Will you not now come to Christ? Then what more can I do? I have but one more resort, and that shall be tried. I can be permitted to weep for you; I can be allowed to pray for you. You shall scorn the address if you like; you shall laugh at the preacher; you shall call him fanatic if you will; he will not chide you, he will bring no accusation against you to the great Judge. Your offence, so far as he is concerned, is forgiven before it is committed; but you will remember that the message that you are rejecting this morning is a message from one who loves you, and it is given to you also by the lips of one who loves you. You will recollect that you may play your soul away with the devil, that you may listlessly think it a matter of no importance; but there lives at least one who is in earnest about your soul, and one who before he came here wrestled with his God for strength to preach to you, and who when he has gone from this place will not forget his hearers of this morning. I say again, when words fail us we can give tears—for words and tears are the arms with which gospel ministers compel men to come in. You do not know, and I suppose could not believe, how anxious a man whom God has called to the ministry feels about his congregation, and especially about some of them. I heard but the other day of a young man who attended here a long time, and his father's hope was that he would be brought to Christ. He became acquainted, however, with an infidel; and now he

neglects his business, and lives in a daily course of sin. I saw his father's poor wan face; I did not ask him to tell me the story himself, for I felt it was raking up a trouble and opening a sore; I fear, sometimes, that good man's grey hairs may be brought with sorrow to the grave. Young men, you do not pray for yourselves, but your mothers wrestle for you. You will not think of your own souls, but your fathers anxiety is exercised for you. I have been at prayer meetings, when I have heard children of God pray there, and they could not have prayed with more earnestness and more intensity of anguish if they had been each of them seeking their own soul's salvation. And is it not strange that we should be ready to move heaven and earth for your salvation, and that still you should have no thought for *yourselves*, no regard to eternal things?

Now I turn for one moment to some here. There are some of you here members of Christian churches, who make a profession of religion, but unless I be mistaken in you—and I shall be happy if I am—your profession is a lie. You do not live up to it, you dishonour it; you can live in the perpetual practice of absenting yourselves from God's house, if not in sins worse than that. Now I ask such of you who do not adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour, do you imagine that you can call me your pastor, and yet that my soul cannot tremble over you and in secret weep for you? Again, I say it may be but little concern to you how you defile the garments of your Christianity, but it is a great concern to God's hidden ones, who sigh and cry, and groan for the iniquities of the professors of Zion.

Now does anything else remain to the minister besides weeping and prayer? Yes, there is one thing else. God has given to his servants not the power of regeneration, but he has given them something akin to it. It is impossible for any man to regenerate his neighbour; and yet how are men born to God? Does not the apostle say of such an one that he was begotten by him in his bonds. Now the minister has a power given him of God, to be considered both the father and the mother of those born to God, for the apostle said he travailed in birth for souls till Christ was formed in them. What can we do then? We can now appeal to the Spirit. I know I have preached the gospel, that I have preached it earnestly; I challenge my Master to honour his own promise. He has said it shall not return unto me void, and it shall not. It is in his hands, not mine. I cannot compel you, but thou O Spirit of God who hast the key of the heart, thou canst compel. Did you ever notice in that chapter of the Revelation, where it says, "Behold I stand at the door and knock," a few verses before, the same person is described, as he who hath the key of David. So that if knocking will not avail, he has the key and can and will come in. Now if the knocking of an earnest minister prevail not with you this morning, there remains still that secret opening of the heart by the Spirit, so that you shall be compelled.

I thought it my duty to labour with you as though I must do it; now I throw it into my Master's hands. It cannot be his will that we should travail in birth, and yet not bring forth spiritual children. It is with *him*; he is master of the heart, and the day shall declare it, that some of you constrained by sovereign grace have become the willing captives of the all-conquering Jesus, and have bowed your hearts to him through the sermon of this morning. [Mr. Spurgeon concluded with a very interesting anecdote, but as its insertion would make the sermon too long for a penny number, the publishers have decided to print it as one of the "New Park Street Tracts."]

Confession of Sin--A Sermon With Seven Texts

A Sermon (No. 113) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 18, 1857, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens.

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

The subject of this morning's discourse will be this—CONFESSION OF SIN. We know that this is absolutely necessary to salvation. Unless there be a true and hearty confession of our sins to God, we have no promise that we shall find mercy through the blood of the Redeemer. "Whosoever confesseth his sins and forsaketh them shall find mercy." But there is no promise in the Bible to the man who will not confess his sins. Yet, as upon every point of Scripture there is a liability of being deceived, so more especially in the matter of confession of sin. There be many who make a confession, and a confession before God, who notwithstanding, receive no blessing, because their confession has not in it certain marks which are required by God to prove it genuine and sincere, and which demonstrate it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. My text this morning consists

of three words, "I have sinned." And you will see how these words, in the lips of different men, indicate very different feelings. While one says, "I have sinned," and receives forgiveness; another we shall meet with says, "I have sinned," and goes his way to blacken himself with worse crimes than before, and dive into greater depths of sin than heretofore he had discovered. The Hardened Sinner. PHARAOH—"I have sinned."—*Exodus* 9:27.

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

But why this confession from the lips of the haughty tyrant? He was not often wont to humble himself before Jehovah. Why doth the proud one bow himself? You will judge of the value of his confession when you hear the circumstances under which it was made. "And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So that there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation." "Now," says Pharaoh, whilst the thunder is rolling through the sky, while the lightning-flashes are setting the very ground on fire, and while the hail is descending in big lumps of ice, now, says he, "I have sinned." He is but a type and specimen of multitudes of the same class. How many a hardened rebel on shipboard, when the timbers are strained and creaking, when the mast is broken, and the ship is drifting before the gale, when the hungry waves are opening their mouths to swallow the ship up alive and quick as those that go into the pit—how many a hardened sailor has then bowed his knee, with tears in his eyes, and cried, "I have sinned!" But of what avail and of what value was his confession? The repentance that was born in the storm died in the calm; that repentance of his that was begotten amidst the thunder and the lightning, ceased so soon as all was hushed in quiet, and the man who was a pious mariner when on board ship, became the most wicked and abominable of sailors when he placed his foot on *terra firma*. How often, too, have we seen this in a storm of thunder and lightning? Many a man's cheek is blanched when he hears the thunder rolling; the tears start to his eyes, and he cries, "O God, I have sinned!" while the rafters of his house are shaking, and the very ground beneath him reeling at the voice of God which is full of majesty. But alas, for such a repentance! When the sun again shines, and the black clouds are withdrawn, sin comes again upon the man, and he becomes worse than before. How many of the same sort of confessions, too, have we seen in times of cholera, and fever, and pestilence! Then our churches have been crammed with hearers, who, because so many funerals have passed their doors, or so many have died in the street, could not refrain from going up to God's house to confess their sins. And under that visitation, when one, two, and three have been lying dead in the house, or next door, how many have thought they would really turn to God! But, alas! when the pestilence had done its work, conviction ceased; and when the bell had tolled the last time for a death caused by cholera, then their hearts ceased to beat with penitence, and their tears did flow no more.

Have I any such here this morning? I doubt not I have hardened persons who would scorn the very idea of religion, who would count me a cant and hypocrite if I should endeavour to press it home upon them, but who know right well that religion is true, and who feel it in their times of terror! If I have such here this morning, let me solemnly say to them, "Sirs, you have forgotten the feelings you had in your hours of alarm; but, remember, God has not forgotten the vows you then made." Sailor, you said if God would spare you to see the land again, you would be his servant; you are not so, you have lied against God, you have made him a false promise, for you have never kept the vow which your lips did utter. You said, on a bed of sickness, that if he would spare your life you would never again sin as you did before; but here you are, and this week's sins shall speak for themselves. You are no better than you were before your sickness. Couldst thou lie to thy fellow-man, and yet go unreprieved? And thinkest thou that thou wilt lie against God, and yet go unpunished? No; the vow, however rashly made, is registered in heaven; and though it be a vow which man cannot perform, yet, as it is a vow which he has made himself, and made voluntarily too, he shall be punished for the non-keeping it; and God shall execute vengeance upon him at last, because he said he would turn from his ways, and then when the blow was removed he did it not. A great outcry has been raised of late against tickets-of-leave; I have no doubt there are some men here, who before high heaven stand in the same position as the ticket-of-leave men stand to our government. They were about to die, as they thought; they promised good behaviour if they might be spared, and they are here to-day on ticket-of-leave in this world: and how have they fulfilled their promise? Justice might raise the same outcry against them as they do against the burglars so constantly let loose upon us. The avenging angel might say, "O God, these men said, if they were spared they would be so much better; if anything they are worse. How have they violated their promise, and how have they brought down divine wrath upon their heads!" This is the first style of penitence; and it is a style I hope none of you will imitate, for it is utterly worthless. It is of no use for you to say, "I have sinned," merely under the influence of terror, and then to forget it afterwards. The Double-minded Man. BALAAM—"I

have sinned."—*Numbers 22:34.*

II. Now for a second text. I beg to introduce to you another character—the *double-minded man*, who says, "I have sinned," and feels that he has, and feels it deeply too, but who is so worldly-minded that he "loves the wages of unrighteousness." The character I have chosen to illustrate this, is that of Balaam. Turn to the book of Numbers, the 22nd chap. and the 34th verse: "And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned."

"I have sinned," said Balaam; but yet he went on with his sin afterwards. One of the strangest characters of the whole world is Balaam. I have often marvelled at that man; he seems really in another sense to have come up to the lines of Ralph Erskine—"To good and evil equal bent, And both a devil and a saint." For he did seem to be so. At times no man could speak more eloquently and more truthfully, and at other times he exhibited the most mean and sordid covetousness that could disgrace human nature. Think you see Balaam; he stands upon the brow of the hill, and there lie the multitudes of Israel at his feet; he is bidden to curse them, and he cries, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" And God opening his eyes, he begins to tell even about the coming of Christ, and he says, "I shall see him, but not now. I shall behold him, but not nigh." And then he winds up his oration by saying—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" And ye will say of that man, he is a hopeful character. Wait till he has come off the brow of the hill, and ye will hear him give the most diabolical advice to the king of Moab which it was even possible for Satan himself to suggest. Said he to the king, "You cannot overthrow these people in battle, for God is with them; try and entice them from their God." And ye know how with wanton lusts they of Moab tried to entice the children of Israel from allegiance to Jehovah; so that this man seemed to have the voice of an angel at one time, and yet the very soul of a devil in his bowels. He was a terrible character; he was a man of two things, a man who went all the way with two things to a very great extent. I know the Scripture says, "No man can serve two masters." Now this is often misunderstood. Some read it, "No man can *serve two* masters." Yes he can; he can serve three or four. The way to read it is this: "No man can serve two *masters*," They cannot both be masters. He can serve two, but they cannot both be his master. A man can serve two who are not his masters, or twenty either; he may live for twenty different purposes, but he cannot live for more than one master purpose—there can only be one master purpose in his soul. But Balaam laboured to serve two; it was like the people of whom it was said, "They feared the Lord, and served other gods." Or like Rufus, who was a loaf of the same leaven; for you know our old king Rufus painted God on one side of his shield, and the devil on the other, and had underneath, the motto: "Ready for both; catch who can." There are many such, who are ready for both. They meet a minister, and how pious and holy they are; on the Sabbath they are the most respectable and upright people in the world, as you would think; indeed they effect a drawling in their speech, which they think to be eminently religious. But on a week day, if you want to find the greatest rogues and cheats, they are some of those men who are so sanctimonious in their piety. Now, rest assured, my hearers, that no confession of sin can be genuine, unless it be a whole hearted one. It is of no use for you to say, "I have sinned," and then keep on sinning. "I have sinned," say you, and it is a fair, fair face you show; but, alas! alas! for the sin you will go away and commit. Some men seem to be born with two characters. I remarked when in the library at Trinity College, Cambridge, a very fine statue of Lord Byron. The librarian said to me, "Stand here, sir." I looked, and I said, "What a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!" "Come here," he said, "to the other side." "Ah! what a demon! There stands the man that could defy the deity." He seemed to have such a scowl and such a dreadful leer in his face; even as Milton would have painted Satan when he said—"Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." I turned away and said to the librarian, "Do you think the artist designed this?" "Yes," he said, "he wished to picture the two characters—the great, the grand, the almost superhuman genius that he possessed, and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul." There are some men here of the same sort. I dare say, like Balaam, they would overthrow everything in argument with their enchantments; they could work miracles; and yet at the same time there is something about them which betrays a horrid character of sin, as great as that which would appear to be their character for righteousness. Balaam, you know, offered sacrifices to God upon the altar of Baal: that was just the type of his character. So many do; they offer sacrifices to God on the shrine of Mammon; and whilst they will give to the building of a church, and distribute to the poor, they will at the other door of their counting-house grind the poor for bread, and press the very blood out of the widow, that they may enrich themselves. Ah! it is idle and useless for you to say, "I have sinned," unless you mean it from your heart. That double minded man's confession is of no avail. The Insincere Man. SAUL—"I have sinned."—*1 Samuel 15:24.*

III. And now a third character, and a third text. In the first book of Samuel, the 15th chap. and 24th verse: "And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned."

Here is the *insincere man*—the man who is not like Balaam, to a certain extent sincere in two things; but the man who is just the opposite—who has no prominent point in his character at all, but is moulded everlastingly by the circumstances that are passing over his head. Such a man was *Saul*. Samuel reproved him, and he said,

"I have sinned." But he did not mean what he said: for if you read the whole verse you will find him saying, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words; *because I feared the people*:" which was a lying excuse. Saul never feared anybody; he was always ready enough to do his own will—he was the despot. And just before he had pleaded another excuse, that he had saved the bullocks and lambs to offer to Jehovah, and therefore both excuses could not have been true. You remember, my friends, that the most prominent feature in the character of Saul was his insincerity. One day he fetched David from his bed, as bethought, to put him to death in his house. Another time he declares, "God forbid that I should do aught against thee, my son David." One day, because David saved his life, he said, "Thou art more righteous than I; I will do so no more." The day before he had gone out to fight against his own son-in-law, in order to slay him. Sometimes Saul was among the prophets, easily turned into a prophet, and then afterwards among the witches; sometimes in one place, and then another, and insincere in everything. How many such we have in every Christian assembly; men who are very easily moulded! Say what you please to them, they always agree with you. They have affectionate dispositions, very likely a tender conscience; but then the conscience is so remarkably tender, that when touched it seems to give, and you are afraid to probe deeper,—it heals as soon it is wounded. I think I used the very singular comparison once before, which I must use again: there are some men who seem to have india-rubber hearts. If you do but touch them, there is an impression made at once; but then it is of no use, it soon restores itself to its original character. You may press them whatever way you wish, they are so elastic you can always effect your purpose; but then they are not fixed in their character, and soon return to be what they were before. O sirs, too many of you have done the same; you have bowed your heads in church, and said, "We have erred and strayed from thy ways;" and you did not mean what you said. You have come to your minister; you have said, "I repent of my sins;" you did not then feel you were a sinner; you only said it to please him. And now you attend the house of God; no one more impressible than you; the tear will run down your cheek in a moment, but yet, notwithstanding all that, the tear is dried as quickly as it is brought forth, and you remain to all intents and purposes the same as you were before. To say, "I have sinned," in an unmeaning manner, is worse than worthless, for it is a mockery of God thus to confess with insincerity of heart.

I have been brief upon this character; for it seemed to touch upon that of Balaam; though any thinking man will at once see there was a real contrast between Saul and Balaam, even though there is an affinity between the two. Balaam was the great bad man, great in all he did; Saul was little in everything except in stature, little in his good and little in his vice; and he was too much of a fool to be desperately bad, though too wicked to be at any time good: while Balaam was great in both: the man who could at one time defy Jehovah, and yet at another time could say, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more." The Doubtful Penitent. ACHAN—"I have sinned."—*Joshua 7:20*.

IV. And now I have to introduce to you a very interesting case; it is the case of the doubtful penitent, the case of *Achan*, in the book of Joshua, the 7th chap. and the 20th verse:—"And Achan answered Joshua, indeed I have sinned."

You know that Achan stole some of the prey from the city of Jericho—that he was discovered by lot, and put to death. I have singled this case out as the representative of some whose characters are doubtful on their death beds; who do repent apparently, but of whom the most we can say is, that we hope their souls are saved at last, but indeed we cannot tell. Achan, you are aware, was stoned with stones, for defiling Israel. But I find in the Mishna, an old Jewish exposition of the Bible, these words, "Joshua said to Achan, the Lord shall trouble thee *this* day." And the note upon it is—He said *this* day, implying that he was only to be troubled in this life, by being stoned to death, but that God would have mercy on his soul, seeing that he had made a full confession of his sin." And I, too, am inclined, from reading the chapter, to concur in the idea of my venerable and now glorified predecessor, Dr. Gill, in believing that Achan really was saved, although he was put to death for the crime, as an example. For you will observe how kindly Joshua spoke to him. He said, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." And you find Achan making a very full confession. He says, "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done. When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." It seems so full a confession, that if I might be allowed to judge, I should say, "I hope to meet Achan the sinner, before the throne of God." But I find Matthew Henry has no such opinion; and many other expositors consider that as his body was destroyed, so was his soul. I have, therefore, selected his case, as being one of doubtful repentance. Ah! dear friends, it has been my lot to stand by many a death-bed, and to see many such a repentance as this; I have seen the man, when worn to a skeleton, sustained by pillows in his bed; and he has said, when I have talked to him of judgment to come, "Sir, I feel I have been guilty, but Christ is good; I trust in him." And I have said within myself, "I believe the man's soul is safe." But I have always

come away with the melancholy reflection that I had no proof of it, beyond his own words; for it needs proof in acts and in future life, in order to sustain any firm conviction of a man's salvation. You know that great fact, that a physician once kept a record of a thousand persons who thought they were dying, and whom he thought were penitents; he wrote their names down in a book as those, who, if they had died, would go to heaven; they did not die, they lived; and he says that out of the whole thousand he had not three persons who turned out well afterwards, but they returned to their sins again, and were as bad as ever. Ah! dear friends, I hope none of you will have such a death-bed repentance as that; I hope your minister or your parents will not have to stand by your bedside, and then go away and say, "Poor fellow, I hope he is saved. But alas! death-bed repentances are such flimsy things; such poor, such trivial grounds of hope, that I am afraid, after all, his soul may be lost." Oh! to die with a full assurance; oh! to die with an abundant entrance, leaving a testimony behind that we have departed this life in peace! That is a far happier way than to die in a doubtful manner, lying sick, hovering between two worlds, and neither ourselves nor yet our friends knowing to which of the two worlds we are going. May God grant us grace to give in our lives evidences of true conversion, that our case may not be doubtful! The Repentance of Despair. JUDAS—"I have sinned."—*Matthew 27:4*.

V. I shall not detain you too long, I trust, but I must now give you another bad case; the worst of all. It is the REPENTANCE OF DESPAIR. Will you turn to the 27th chap. of Matthew, and the 4th verse? There you have a dreadful case of the repentance of despair. You will recognize the character the moment I read the verse: "And Judas said, I have sinned." Yes, Judas the traitor, who had betrayed his Master, when he saw that his Master was condemned, "repented, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed innocent blood, and cast down the pieces in the temple, and went" and what?—"and *hanged himself*." Here is the worst kind of repentance of all; in fact, I know not that I am justified in calling it repentance; it must be called remorse of conscience. But Judas did confess his sin, and then went and hanged himself. Oh! that dreadful, that terrible, that hideous confession of despair. Have you never seen it? If you never have, then bless God that you never were called to see such a sight. I have seen it once in my life, I pray God I may never see it again,—the repentance of the man who sees death staring him in the face, and who says, "I have sinned." You tell him that Christ has died for sinners; and he answers, "There is no hope for me; I have cursed God to his face; I have defied him; my day of grace I know is past; my conscience is seared with a hot iron; I am dying, and I know I shall be lost!" Such a case as that happened long ago, you know, and is on record—the case of Francis Spira—the most dreadful case, perhaps, except that of Judas, which is upon record in the memory of man. Oh! my hearers, will any of you have such a repentance? If you do, it will be a beacon to all persons who sin in future; if you have such a repentance as that, it will be a warning to generations yet to come. In the life of Benjamin Keach—and he also was once of my predecessors—I find the case of a man who had been a professor of religion, but had departed from the profession, and had gone into awful sin. When he came to die, Keach, with many other friends, went to see him, but they could never stay with him above five minutes at a time; for he said, "Get ye gone; it is of no use your coming to me; I have sinned away the Holy Ghost; I am like Esau, I have sold my birthright, and though I seek it carefully with tears, I can never find it again." And then he would repeat dreadful words, like these: "My mouth is filled with gravel stones, and I drink wormwood day and night. Tell me not tell me not of Christ! I know he is a Saviour, but I hate him and he hates me. I know I must die; I know I must perish!" And then followed doleful cries, and hideous noises, such as none could bear. They returned again in his placid moments only to stir him up once more, and make him cry out in his despair, "I am lost! I am lost! It is of no use your telling me anything about it!" Ah! I there may be a man here who may have such a death as that; let me warn him, ere he come to it; and may God the Holy Spirit grant that that man may be turned unto God, and made a true penitent, and then he need not have any more fear; for he who has had his sins washed away in a Saviour's blood, need not have any remorse for his sins, for they are pardoned through the Redeemer. The Repentance of the Saint. JOB—"I have sinned."—*Job 7:20*

VI. And now I come into daylight. I have been taking you through dark and dreary confessions; I shall detain you there no longer, but bring you out to the two good confessions which I have to read to you. The first is that of Job in 7th chap., at the 20th verse: "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?" This is the *repentance of the saint*. Job was a saint, but he sinned. This is the repentance of the man who is a child of God already, an acceptable repentance before God. But as I intend to dwell upon this in the evening, I shall now leave it, for fear of wearying you. David was a specimen of this kind of repentance, and I would have you carefully study his penitential psalms, the language of which is ever full of weeping humility and earnest penitence. The Blessed Confession. THE PRODIGAL—"I have sinned."—*Luke 15:18*.

VII. I come now to the last instance, which I shall mention; it is the case of the prodigal. In Luke xv. 18, we find the prodigal says: "Father I have sinned." Oh, here is a *blessed confession*! Here is that which proves a man to be a regenerate character—"Father, I have sinned." Let me picture the scene. There is the prodigal; he has run away from a good home and a kind father, and he has spent all his money with harlots, and now he

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

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

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

Consolation Proportionate to Spiritual Sufferings

A Sermon (No. 13) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, March 11, 1855, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At Exeter Hall, Strand. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." —2 Corinthians 1:5.

SEEK ye rest from your distresses ye children of woe and sorrow ? This is the place where ye may lighten

your burden, and lose your cares. Oh, son of affliction and misery, wouldst thou forget for a time thy pains and griefs? This is the Bethesda the house of mercy; this is the place where God designs to cheer thee, and to make thy distresses stay their never ceasing course; this is the spot where his children love to be found, because here they find consolation in the midst of tribulation, joy in their sorrows, and comfort in their afflictions. Even worldly men admit that there is something extremely comforting in the sacred Scriptures, and in our holy religion; I have even heard it said of some, that after they had, by their logic, as they thought, annihilated Christianity, and proved it to be untrue, they acknowledged that they had spoilt an excellently comforting delusion, and that they could almost sit down and weep to think it was not a reality. Ay, my friends, if it were not true, ye might weep. If the Bible were not the truth of God—if we could not meet together around his mercy seat, then ye might put your hands upon your loins and walk about as if ye were in travail. If ye had not something in the world beside your reason, beside the fleeting joys of earth—if ye had not something which God had given to you, some hope beyond the sky, some refuge that should be more than terrestrial, some deliverance which should be more than earthly, then ye might weep;—ah! weep your heart out at your eyes, and let your whole bodies waste away in one perpetual tear. Ye might ask the clouds to rest on your head, the rivers to roll down in streams from both your eyes, for your grief would "have need of all the watery things that nature could produce." But, blessed be God, we have consolation, we have joy in the Holy Ghost. We find it nowhere else. We have raked the earth through, but we have discovered ne'er a jewel; we have turned this dunghill-world o'er and o'er a thousand times, and we have found nought that is precious; but here, in this Bible, here in the religion of the blessed Jesus we the sons of God, have found comfort and joy; while we can truly say, "As our afflictions abound, so our consolations also abound by Christ."

There are four things in my text to which I invite your attention: the first is *the sufferings to be expected*—"The sufferings of Christ abound in us;" secondly, *the distinction to be noticed*—they are the sufferings of Christ; thirdly, a *proportion to be experienced*—as the sufferings of Christ abound, so our consolations abound; and fourthly, *the person to be honored*—"So our consolation aboundeth by CHRIST."

I. Our first division then is, THE SUFFERINGS TO BE EXPECTED. Our holy Apostle says "The sufferings of Christ abound in us." Before we buckle on the Christian armour we ought to know what that service is which is expected of us. A recruiting sergeant often slips a shilling into the hand of some ignorant youth, and tells him that Her Majesty's Service is a fine thing, that he has nothing to do but walk about in his flaming colors, that he will have no hard service—in fact, that he has nothing to do but to be a soldier, and go straight on to glory. But the Christian sergeant when he enlists a soldier of the cross, never deceives him like that. Jesus Christ himself said, "Count the cost." He wished to have no disciple who was not prepared to go all the way—"to bear hardness as a good soldier." I have sometimes heard religion described in such a way that its high coloring displeases me. It is true "her ways are ways of pleasantness;" but it is not true that a Christian never has sorrow or trouble. It is true that light-eyed cheerfulness, and airy-footed love, can go through the world without much depression: and tribulation: but it is not true that Christianity will shield a man from trouble; nor ought it to be so represented. In fact, we ought to speak of it in the other-way. Soldier of Christ, if thou enlistest, thou wilt have to do hard battle. There is no bed of down for thee; there is no riding to heaven in a chariot; the rough way must be trodden; mountains must be climbed, rivers must be forded, dragons must be fought, giants must be slain, difficulties must be overcome, and great trials must be borne. It is not a smooth road to heaven, believe me; for those who have gone but a very few steps therein have found it to be a rough one. It is a pleasant one; it is the most delightful in all the world, but it is not easy in itself; it is only pleasant because of the company, because of the sweet promises on which we lean, because of our Beloved who walks with us through all the rough and thorny brakes of this vast wilderness. Christian, expect trouble: "Count it not strange concerning the fiery trial, and as though some strange thing had happened unto thee;" for as truly as thou art a child of God, thy Saviour hath left thee for his legacy,—"In the world, ye shall have tribulation; in me ye shall have peace." If I had no trouble I would not believe myself one of the family. If I never had a trial I would not think myself a heir of heaven. Children of God must not, shall not, escape the rod. Earthly parents may spoil their children but the heavenly Father never shall his. "Whom he loveth he chasteneth," and scourgeth every son whom he hath chosen. His people must suffer; therefore, expect it Christian; if thou art a child of God believe it, look for it, and when it comes, say, "Well suffering, I foresaw thee; thou art no stranger; I have looked for thee continually." You cannot tell how much it will lighten your trials, if you await them with resignation. In fact, make it a wonder if you get through a day easily. If you remain a week without persecution, think it a remarkable thing; and if you should, perchance, live a month without heaving a sigh from your inmost heart, think it a miracle of miracles. But when the trouble comes, say, "Ah! this is what I looked for; it is marked in the chart to heaven; the rock is put down; I will sail confidently by it; my Master has not deceived me." "Why should I complain of want or distress, Temptation or pain? he told me no less." But why must the Christian expect trouble? Why must he expect the sufferings of Christ to abound in him? Stand here a moment, my brother, and I will show thee four reasons wherefore thou must endure trial. First look upward, then look downward, then look around thee, and then look within thee;

and thou wilt see four reasons why the sufferings of Christ should abound in thee.

Look upward. Dost thou see thy heavenly Father, a pure and holy being, spotless, just, perfect? Dost thou know that thou art one day to be like him? Thinkest thou that thou wilt easily come to be conformed to his image? Wilt thou not require much furnace work, much grinding in the mill of trouble, much breaking with the pestle in the mortar of affliction, much being broken under the wheels of agony? Thinkest thou it will be an easy thing for thy heart to become as pure as God is? Dost thou think thou canst so soon get rid of thy corruptions, and become perfect, even as thy Father which is in heaven is perfect?

Lift up thine eye again; dost thou discern those bright spirits clad in white, purer than alabaster, more chaste, more fair than Parian marble? Behold them as they stand in glory. Ask them whence their victory came. Some of them will tell you they swam through seas of blood. Behold the scars of honor on their brows; see, some of them lift up their hands and tell you they were once consumed in fire; while others were slain by the sword, rent in pieces by wild beasts; were destitute afflicted, tormented. O ye noble army of martyrs, ye glorious hosts of the living God. Must ye swim through seas of blood, and shall I hope to ride to heaven wrapped in furs and ermine? Did ye endure suffering, and shall I be pampered with the luxuries of this world? Did ye *fight* and then reign, and must I reign without a battle. Oh, no. By God's help I will expect that as ye suffered so must I, and as through much tribulation ye entered the kingdom of heaven, so shall I.

Next, Christian, turn thine eyes downward. Dost thou know what foes thou hast beneath thy feet? There are hell and its lions against thee. Thou wast once a servant of Satan and no king will willingly lose his subjects. Dost thou think that Satan be pleased with thee? Why, thou hast changed thy country. Thou wast once a liege servant of Apollyon, but now thou art become a good soldier of Jesus Christ; and dost thou think the devil is pleased with thee? I tell thee nay. If thou hadst seen Satan the moment thou wast converted, thou wouldst have beheld a wondrous scene. As soon as thou gavest thy heart to Christ, Satan spread his bat-like-wings: down he flew into hell, and summoning all his councilors, he said "Sons of the pit, true heirs of darkness; ye who erst were clad in light, but who fell with me from high dignities, another of my servants has forsaken me; I have lost another of my family; he is gone over to the side of the Lord of Hosts. Oh ye, my compeers, ye fellow-helpers of the powers of darkness, leave no stone unturned to destroy him. I bid you all hurl all your fiercest darts at him; plague him; let hell-dogs bark at him; let fiends besiege him; give him no rest, harrass him to the death; let the fumes of our corrupt and burning lake ever rise in his nostrils; persecute him; the man is a traitor; give him no peace; since I cannot have him here to bind him in chains of adamant, since I ne'er can have him here to torment and afflict him, as long as ye can, till his dying day, I bid you howl at him; until he crosses the river, afflict him, grieve him, torment him; for the wretch has turned against me, and become a servant of the Lord." Such may have been the scene in hell, that very day when thou didst love the Lord. And dost thou think Satan loves thee better now? Ah! no. He will always be at thee, for thine enemy, "like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." Expect trouble therefore, Christian, when thou lookest beneath thee.

Then, man of God, look around thee. Do not be asleep. Open thine eyes, and look around thee. Where art thou? Is that man a friend next to thee? No; thou art in an enemy's country. This is a wicked world. Half the people, I suppose, profess to be irreligious, and those who profess to be pious, often are not. "Cursed is he that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm."—Blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is."—"As for men of low degree, they are vanity," the voice of the crowd is not worth having; and as for "men of high degree, they are a lie," which is worse still. The world is not to be trusted in, not to be relied upon. The true Christian treads it beneath his feet, with "all that earth calls good or great." Look around thee my brother; thou wilt see some good hearts, strong and valiant; thou wilt see some true souls, sincere and honest; thou wilt see some faithful lovers of Christ; but I tell thee O child of light, that where thou meetest one sincere man, thou wilt meet twenty hypocrites; where thou wilt find one that will lead thee to heaven, thou wilt find a score who would push thee to hell. Thou art in a land of enemies, not of friends. Never believe the world is good for much. Many people have burned their fingers by taking hold of it. Many a man has been injured by putting his hand into a nest of the rattlesnake—the world; thinking that the dazzling hues of the sleeping serpent were securities from harm. O Christian! the world is not thy friend. If it is, then thou art not God's friend; for he who is the friend of the world is the enemy of God; and he who is despised of men, is often loved of Jehovah. Thou art in an enemy's country, man: therefore, expect trouble: expect that the man who "eats thy bread will lift up his heel against thee;" expect that thou shalt be estranged from those that love thee; be assured that since thou art in the land of the foe, thou shalt find foemen everywhere. When thou sleepest, think that thou sleepest on the battle-field; when thou walkest believe that there is an ambush in every hedge. Oh! take heed, take heed: this is no good world to shut thine eyes in. Look around thee, man; and when thou art upon the watch-tower, reckon surely that trouble cometh.

II. Now, secondly, there is A DISTINCTION TO BE NOTICED. Our sufferings are said to be the sufferings of Christ. Now, suffering in itself is not an evidence of Christianity. There are many people who have trials and troubles who are not children of God. I have heard some poor whining people come and say, "I know I am a child of God because I am in debt, because I am in poverty, because I am in trouble." Do you indeed? I know a great many rascals in the same condition; and I don't believe you are a child of God any the more because you happen to be in poor circumstances. There are abundance who are in trouble and distress besides God's children. It is not the peculiar lot of God's family; and if I had no other ground of my hope as a Christian, except my experience of trials, I should have but very poor ground indeed. But there is a distinction to be noticed. Are these sufferings the sufferings of Christ, or are they not? A man is dishonest, and is put in jail for it; a man is a coward and men hiss at him for it; a man is insincere, and, therefore, persons avoid him. Yet he says he is persecuted. Persecuted! Not at all; it serves him right. He deserves it. But such persons will comfort themselves with the thought, that they are "the dear people of God," because other people avoid them; when it so happens that they just deserve it. They do not live as they ought to do; therefore the world's punishment is their desert. Take heed, beloved, that your sufferings are true sufferings of Christ; be sure they are not your own sufferings; for if they are, you will get no relief. It is only when they are the sufferings of Jesus that we may take comfort.

"Well," you say, "What is meant by our sufferings being the sufferings of Christ?" You know the word "Christ" in the Bible sometimes means the whole Church with Christ, as in 1 Cor. xii.12, and several other passages which I cannot just now remember; but you will call to mind a scripture where it says, "I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, for his body's sake, which is the Church." Now, as Christ, the head, had a certain amount of suffering to endure, so the body must also have a certain weight laid upon it. Our afflictions are the sufferings of Christ mystical, the sufferings of Christ's body, the sufferings of Christ's church; for you know that if a man could be so tall as to have his head in heaven and his feet at the bottom of the sea, it would be the same body, and the head would feel the sufferings of the feet. So, though my head is in heaven, and I am on earth, my griefs are Christ's griefs; my trials are Christ's trials, my afflictions, he suffers. "I feel at my heart all thy sighs and thy groans, For thou art most near me, my flesh and my bones; In all thy distresses, thy Head feels the pain, Yet all are most needful, not one is in vain." The trials of a true Christian are as much the sufferings of Christ, as the agonies of Calvary.

Still you say, "We want to discern whether our troubles are the trials of Christ." Well, they are the trials of Christ, if you suffer for Christ's sake. If you are called to endure hardness for the sake of the truth, then those are the sufferings of Christ. If you suffer for your own sake, it may be a punishment for your own sins; but if you endure for Christ's sake, then they are the trials of Christ. "But," say some, "is there any persecution now-a-days? Do any Christians have to suffer for Christ's sake now?" Suffer, sirs! Yes. "I could a tale unfold" this morning, if I pleased, of bigotry insufferable, of persecution well nigh as bad as that in the days of Mary; only our foes have not the power and the law on their side. I could tell you of some who, from the simple fact, that they choose to come and hear this despised young man, this ranting fellow, are to be looked upon as the offscouring of all things. Many are the persons who come to me, who have to lead a miserable and unhappy life, simply because from my lips they heard the word of truth. Still, despite of all that is said, they will hear it now. I have, I am sure, many before me, whose eyes would drop with tears, if I were to tell their history—some who have privately sent me word of how they have to suffer for Christ's sake, because they choose to hear whom they please. Why, is it not time that men should choose to do as they like. If I do not care to do just as other ministers do, have not I a right to preach as I please? If I haven't I will—that is all. And have not other parties a right to hear me if they like, without asking the lords and governors of the present day, whether the man is really clerical or not. Liberty! liberty! Let persons do as they please. But liberty—where is it? Ye say it is in Britain. It is, in a measure, but not thoroughly. However, I rejoice that there are some who say, "Well, my soul is profited: and let men say what they will, I will hold hard and fast to truth, and to the place where I hear the word to my soul's edification." So, dear hearts, go on, go on; and if ye suffer for Christ's sake, they are Christ's sufferings. If ye came here simply because ye gained anything by it, then your sufferings would be your own; but since there is nothing to gain but the profit of our own souls, still hold on; and whate'er is said, your persecution will but win you a brighter crown in glory.

Ah! Christian, this ennobles us. My brethren, this makes us proud and happy to think that our trials are the trials of Jesus. Oh! I think it must have been some honor to the old soldier, who stood by the Iron Duke in his battles, to be able to say, "We fight under the good old Duke, who has won so many battles: and when he wins, part of the honor will be ours." Christian, thou fightest side by side with Jesus; Christ is with thee; every blow is a blow aimed at Christ; every slander is a slander on Christ; the battle is the Lord's; the triumph is the Lord's, therefore, still on to victory! I remember a story of a great commander, who, having won many glorious victories, led his troops into a defile, and when there, a large body of the enemy entirely surrounded him. He knew a battle was inevitable on the morning, he therefore went round to all the tents, to hear in what

condition his soldier's minds were—whether they were dispirited or not. He came to one tent, and as he listened, he heard a man say, "There is our general; he is very brave, but he is very unwise this time; he has led us into a place where we are sure to be beaten; there are so many of the enemy's cavalry, so many infantry:" and then the man counted up all the troops on their own side, and made them only so many. Then the commander, after he had heard the tale, gently drew aside a part of the tent, and said, "How many do you count me for? You have counted the infantry and cavalry; but how many do you count me for—me, your mighty captain, who have won so many victories." Now, Christian, I say, how many do you count one? He is not one, nor a thousand: he is the "chief among ten thousand." But he is more than that. Oh! put him down for a high figure; and when thou countest up thine aids and auxiliaries, put down Christ for all in all, for in him victory is certain—the triumph is secure.

III. Our third point is, A PROPORTION TO BE EXPERIENCED. As the sufferings of Christ abound in us so the consolations of Christ abound. Here is a blessed proportion. God always keeps a pair of scales—in this side he puts his people's trials and in that he puts their consolations. When the scale of trial is nearly empty, you will always find the scale of consolation in nearly the same condition; and when the scale of trials is full, you will find the scale of consolation just as heavy for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, even so shall consolation abound by Christ. This is a matter of pure experience. Some of you do not know anything at all about it. You are not Christians, you are not born again, you are not converted; ye are unregenerate, and, therefore, ye have never realized this wonderful proportion between the sufferings and the consolations of a child of God. Oh! it is mysterious that, when the black clouds gather most, the light within us is always the brightest. When the night lowers and the tempest is coming on, the heavenly captain is always closest to his crew. It is a blessed thing, when we are most cast down, then it is that we are most lifted up by the consolations of Christ. Let me show you how.

The first reason is, because *trials make more room, for consolation*. There is nothing makes a man have a big heart like a great trial. I always find that little, miserable people, whose hearts are about the size of a grain of mustard-seed, never have had much to try them. I have found that those people who have no sympathy for their fellows—who never weep for the sorrows of others—very seldom have had any woes of their own. Great hearts can only be made by great troubles. The spade of trouble digs the reservoir of comfort deeper, and makes more room for consolation. God comes into our heart—he finds it full—he begins to break our comforts and to make it empty; than there is more room for grace. The humbler a man lies, the more comfort he will always have. I recollect walking with a ploughman one day—a man who was deeply taught, although he was a ploughman; and really ploughmen would make a great deal better preachers than many college gentlemen—and he said to me, "Depend upon it, my good brother, if you or I ever get one inch above the ground, we shall get just that inch too high." I believe it is true; for the lower we lie, the nearer to the ground we are—the more our troubles humble us—the more fit we are to receive comfort; and God always gives us comfort when we are most fit for it. That is one reason why consolations increase in the same ratio as our trials.

Then again, *trouble exercises our graces*, and the very exercise of our graces tends to make us more comfortable and happy. Where showers fall most, there the grass is greenest. I suppose the fogs and mists of Ireland make it "the Emerald Isle;" and wherever you find great fogs of trouble, and mists of sorrow, you always find emerald green hearts: full of the beautiful verdure of the comfort and love of God. O Christian, do not thou be saying, "Where are the swallows gone? they are gone: they are dead." They are not dead; they have skimmed the purple sea, and gone to a far off land; but they will be back again by-and-by. Child of God, say not the flowers are dead; say not the winter has killed them, and they are gone. Ah! no; though winter hath coated them with the ermine of its snow; they will put up their heads again, and will be alive very soon. Say not, child of God, that the sun is quenched, because the cloud hath hidden it. Ah! no; he is behind there, brewing summer for thee; for when he cometh out again, he will have made the clouds fit to drop in April showers, all of them mothers of the sweet May flowers. And oh! above all, when thy God hides his face, say not, that he has forgotten thee. He is but tarrying a little while to make thee love him better; and when he cometh, thou shalt have joy in the Lord, and, shalt rejoice with joy unspeakable. Waiting, exercises our grace; waiting, tries our faith; therefore, wait on in hope; for though the promise tarry, it can never come too late.

Another reason why we are often most happy in our troubles is this—*then we have the closest dealing with God*. I speak from heart knowledge and real experience. We never have such close dealings with God as when we are in tribulation. When the barn is full, man can live without God; when the purse is bursting with gold, we somehow can do without so much prayer. But once take your *gourds* away, you want your God; once cleanse away the idols out of the house, then you must go and honor Jehovah. Some of you do not pray half as much as you ought. If you are the children of God, you will have the whip, and when you have that whip, you will run to your Father. It is a fine day, and the child walks before its father; but there is a lion in the road, now he

comes and takes his father's hand. He could run half-a-mile before him when all was fine and fair; but once bring the lion, and it is "father! father!" as close as he can be. It is even so with the Christian. Let all be well, and he forgets God. Jeshurun waxes fat, and he begins to kick against God; but take away his hopes, blast his joys, let the infant lie in the coffin, let the crops be blasted, let the herd be cut off from the stall, let the husband's broad shoulder lie in the grave, let the children be fatherless—then it is that God is a God indeed. Oh, strip me naked; take from me all I have; make me poor, a beggar, penniless, helpless: dash that cistern in pieces; crush that hope; quench the stars; put out the sun; shroud the moon in darkness, and place me all alone in space, without a friend, without a helper; still, "Out of the depths will I cry unto thee, O God." There is no cry so good as that which comes from the bottom of the mountains; no prayer half so hearty as that which comes up from the depths of the soul, through deep trials and afflictions. Hence they bring us to God, and we are happier; for that is the way to be happy—to live near to God. So that while troubles abound, they drive us to God, and then consolations abound.

Some people call troubles weights. Verily they are so. A ship that has large sails and a fair wind, needs ballast. Troubles are the ballast of a believer. The eyes are the pumps which fetch out the bilge-water of his soul, and keep him from sinking. But if trials be weights I will tell you of a happy secret. There is such a thing as making a weight lift you. If I have a weight chained to me, it keeps me down; but give me pulleys and certain appliances, and I can make it lift me up. Yes, there is such a thing as making troubles raise me towards heaven. A gentleman once asked a friend, concerning a beautiful horse of his, feeding about in the pasture with a clog on its foot, "Why do you clog such a noble animal?" "Sir," said he, "I would a great deal sooner clog him than lose him: he is given to leap hedges." That is why God clogs his people. He would rather clog them than lose them; for if he did not clog them, they would leap the hedges and be gone. They want a tether to prevent their straying, and their God binds them with afflictions, to keep them near to him, to preserve them, and have them in his presence. Blessed fact—as our troubles abound, our consolations also abound.

IV. Now we close up with our last point; and may the Holy Ghost once more strengthen me to speak a word or two to you. **THERE IS A PERSON TO BE HONOURED.** It is a fact that Christians can rejoice in deep distress; it is a truth, that put them in prison, and they still will sing; like many birds, they sing best in their cages. It is true that when waves roll over them, their soul never sinks. It is true they have a buoyancy about them which keeps their heads always above the water, and helps them to sing in the dark, dark night, "God is with me still." But to whom shall we give the honor? To whom shall the glory be given? Oh! to Jesus, to Jesus; for the text says it is all by Jesus. It is not because I am a Christian that I get joy in my trouble—not necessarily so; it is not always the fact that troubles bring their consolations; but it is Christ who comes to me. I am sick in my chamber; Christ cometh up stairs, he sitteth by my bedside, and he talketh sweet words to me. I am dying; the chilly cold waters of Jordan have touched my foot, I feel my blood stagnate and freeze. I must die; Christ puts his arms around me, and says, "Fear not, beloved; to die is to be blessed; the waters of death have their fountain head in heaven; they are not bitter, they are sweet as nectar, for they flow from the throne of God." I wade in the stream, the billows gather around me, I feel that my heart and flesh fail but there is the same voice in my ears, "Fear not, I am with thee! be not dismayed; I am thy God." Now, I come to the borders of the infinite unknown, that country "from whose bourne no traveller returns;" I stand almost affrighted to enter the realm of shades; but a sweet voice says, "I will be with thee whithersoever thou goest; if thou shouldst make thy bed in Hades I will be with thee;" and I still go on, content to die, for Jesus cheers me; he is my consolation and my hope. Ah! ye who know not that matchless name, Jesus, ye have lost the sweetest note which e'er can give melody. Ah! ye who have never been entranced by the precious sonnet contained in that one word Jesu, ye who know not that Jesu means, I-ES-U, ("I ease you"); ye have lost the joy and comfort of your lives, and ye must live miserable and unhappy. But the Christian can rejoice, since Christ will never forsake him, never leave him, but will be with him.

A word or two to characters—First, I have a word with you who are *expecting troubles*, and are very sad because you are looking forward to them. Take the advice of the common people, and "never cross a bridge till you get to it." Follow my advice: never bring your troubles nearer than they are, for they will be sure to come down upon you soon enough. I know that many persons fret themselves about their trials before they come. What on earth is the good of it? If you will show me any benefit in it, I will say go on; but to me it seems quite enough for the Father to lay the rod on the child without the child chastising itself. Why should you do so? You, who are afraid of trouble, why should you be so? The trial may never overtake you; and if it does come, strength will come with it. Therefore, up with thee, man, who are sitting down groaning, because of forebodings. "Religion never was designed To make our pleasures less." Out on thee! Up! up! Why wilt thou sit down and be frozen to death? When trouble comes, then fight it; with manful heart and strong, plunge into the stream, accoutred as thou art, and swim it through; but oh! do not fear it before it comes.

Then Christian *in trouble*, I have a word to say with thee. So my brother, thou art in trouble; thou art come into the waves of affliction, art thou? No strange thing, is it brother? Thou hast been there many times before. "Ah," but sayest thou, "this is the worst I ever had. I have come up here this morning with a millstone round my neck; I have a mine of lead in my heart: I am miserable, I am unhappy, I am cast down exceedingly." Well, but brother, as thy troubles abound, so shall thy consolation. Brother, hast thou hung thy harp upon the willows? I am glad thou hast not broken the harp altogether. Better, to hang it on the willows than to break it; be sure not to break it. Instead of being distressed about thy trouble, rejoice in it; thou wilt then honor God, thou wilt glorify Christ, thou wilt bring sinners to Jesus, if thou wilt sing in the depths of trouble, for then they will say, "There must be something in religion after all, otherwise the man would not be so happy."

Then one word with you who are almost *driven to despair*. I would stretch my hands out, if I could, this morning—for I believe a preacher ought to be a Briareus, with a thousand hands to fetch out his hearers one by one, and speak to them. There is a man here quite despairing—almost every hope gone. Brother, shall I tell thee what to do? Thou hast fallen off the main deck, thou art in the sea, the floods surround thee; thou seemest to have no hope; thou catchest at straws; what shalt thou do now? Do? why lie upon the sea of trouble, and float upon it; be still, and know that God is God, and thou wilt never perish. All thy kicking and struggling will sink thee deeper; but lie still, for behold the life-boat cometh; Christ is coming to thy help; soon he will deliver thee, and fetch thee out of all thy perplexities.

Lastly, some of you have no interest in this sermon at all. I never try to deceive my hearers by making them believe that all I say belongs to all who hear me. There are different characters in God's word; it is yours to search your own hearts this day, and see whether ye are God's people, or not. As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, there are two classes here. I do not own the distinction of aristocratic and democratic; in my sight, and in God's sight, every man is alike. We are made of one flesh and blood; we do not have china gentlemen and earthenware poor people; we are all made of the same mould of fashion. There is one distinction, and only one. Ye are all either the children of God, or children of the devil; ye are all either born again, or dead in trespasses and sins. It is yours to let the question ring in your ears: "Where am I? Is yon black tyrant, with his fiery sword, my king; or do I own Jehovah-Jesus as my strength, my shield, my Saviour?" I shall not force you to answer it; I shall not say anything to you about it. Only answer it yourselves; let your hearts speak; let your souls speak. All I can do is to propose the question. God apply it to your souls! I beseech him to send it home! and make the arrow stick fast! "Is Jesus mine! I am now prepared, To meet with what I thought most hard; Yes, let the winds of trouble blow,

And comforts melt away like snow, No blasted trees, nor failing crops, Can hinder my eternal hopes; Tho' creatures change, the Lord's the same; Then let me triumph in his name.

David's Dying Song

A Sermon (No. 19) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, April 15, 1855, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At Exeter Hall, Strand. "Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all *things* and sure: for *this is* all my salvation, and all *my* desire, although he make *it* not to grow." —2 Samuel 23:5.

THESE be the last words of David; so we read at the commencement of the chapter. Many have been the precious sentences which have fallen from his inspired lips; seraphic has been the music which has dropped from his fingers when they flew along the strings of his harp; but now that sweet voice is to be hushed in death, and now the son of Jesse is to sleep with his fathers. Surely it were well to press around his bed, to hear the dying monarch's last testimony; yea, we can conceive that angels themselves would for an instant check their rapid flight, that they might visit the chamber of the dying mighty one, and listen to his last death song. It is always blessed to hear the words of departing saints. How many choice thoughts have we gained in the bedchamber of the righteous, beloved? I remember one sweet idea, which I once won from a death-bed. A dying man desired to have one of the Psalms read to him, and the 17th being chosen, he stopped at the 6th verse, "Incline thine ear unto me and hear my speech," and faintly whispering, said, "Ah, Lord, I cannot speak, my voice fails me; incline thine ear, put it against my mouth, that thou mayest hear me." None but a weak and dying man, whose life was ebbing fast, could have conceived such a thought. It is well to hear saints' words when they are near heaven—when they stand upon the banks of Jordan. But here is a special case, for these be the last words of *David*. They are something more than human utterances; for we are told that the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and his word was in his tongue. These were his closing accents. Ah! methinks, lisping these words he rose from earth to join the chorus of the skies. He commenced the sentence upon earth, and he finished it in heaven. He began, "Although my house *be* not so with God;" and as he

winged his flight to heaven, he still sang, "yet hast thou made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: "and now before the throne he constantly hymns the same strain—"yet hast thou made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." I hope, my friends, there are many of us who can join in this verse this morning, and who hope to close our earthly pilgrimage with this upon our tongue.

We shall notice first, that the Psalmist had *sorrow in his house*—"Although my house be not so with God." Secondly, he had *confidence in the covenant*—"yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant." And thirdly, he had *satisfaction in his heart*, for he says—"this is all my salvation, and all my desire.

I. The Psalmist says he had *sorrow in his house*—"Although my house be not so with God." What man is there of all our race, who, if he had to write his history, would not need to use a great many "althoughs"? If you read the biography of any man, as recorded in the Sacred Word, you will always find a "but," or an "although," before you have finished. Naaman was a mighty man of valour, and a great man with his master, *but* he was a leper. There is always a "but" in every condition, a crook in every lot, some dark tint upon the marble pillar, some cloud in the summer sky, some discord in the music, some alloy in the gold. So David, though a man who had been raised from the sheepfold, a mighty warrior, a conqueror of giants, a king over a great nation, yet, had his "althoughs;" and the "although" which he had, was one in his own house. Those are the worst troubles which we have in our own household. We love not an evil beast abroad, but we hate the lion most when it prowls upon our own estates, or croucheth on the floor of our dwelling. The greatest trouble with the thorn is when it lieth in our bed, and we feel it in our pillow. Civil war is always the fiercest—those are foes indeed who are of our own household. I think, perhaps David intended, when he said "Although my house be not so with God," to speak partly of his *affairs*. If any man else had looked at David's affairs—the government of his country—he would have said, "David's government is the mirror of excellence." His house was so rightly ordered, that few of his subjects could murmur at him; but David recollected that a greater and keener eye than that of man rested on him; and he says, speaking of his empire and his house—for you know the word "house" in Scripture often means our business, our affairs, our transactions, ("Set thine house in order, for thou must die, and not live,")—he says, although before man my house may be well swept, and garnished, yet it is not so with God as I can desire. Oh, beloved, there are some of us who can walk before our fellow-men conscious of innocence; we dare defy the gaze of our fellow-mortals; we can say, "Lord! thou knowest I am not wicked;" we are blameless before this perverse generation: we walk amongst them as lights in the world, and God has helped us, so that we are clean from the great transgression; we are not afraid of a criticism of our character, we are not fearful of being inspected by the eyes of all men, for we feel that through God's grace we have been kept from committing ourselves; he has kept us, and the evil one toucheth us not. But with all this conscious innocence—with all that dignity with which we stand before our fellows—when we go into God's sight, how changed we are! Ah, then, my friends, we say not, "Lord! thou knowest I am not wicked;" but rather, we fall prostrate, and cry, "Unclean, unclean, unclean;" and as the leper cools his heated brow with the water running in the cool sequestered brook, so do we have our body in Siloam's stream, and strive to wash ourselves clean in the water and blood from Christ's riven side. We feel that our house is "not so with God;" though in the person of Jesus we are free from sin, and white as angels are: yet when we stand before God, in our own persons, we are obliged to confess, that honest as we may be, upright as we have been, just and holy before men, yet our house is "not so with God."

But I imagine that the principal meaning of these words of David refers to his family—*his children*. David had many trials in his children. It has often been the lot of good men to have great troubles from their sons and daughters. True, we know some households that are the very image of peace and happiness, where the father and mother bend the knee together in family prayer, and they look upon an offspring, numerous or not, as it may be, but most of them devoting their hearts to God. I know a household which stands like a green oasis in the desert of this world. There be sons who preach God's gospel, and daughters who are growing up to fear the Lord, and to love him. Such a household is indeed a pleasant halting-place for a weary soul in its pilgrimage through this wilderness of life. Oh! happy is that family whom God hath blessed. But there are other houses where you will find the children are the trials of the parents. "Although my house be not so with God," may many an anxious father say; and ye pious mothers might lift your streaming eyes to heaven, and say, "Although my house be not so with God." That first-born son of yours, who was your pride, has now turned out your disgrace. Oh! how have the arrows of his ingratitude pierced into your soul, and how do you keenly feel at this present moment, that sooner would you have buried him in his infancy; sooner might he never have seen the light, and perished in the birth, than that he should live to have acted as he has done, to be the misery of your existence, and the sorrow of your life. O sons who are ungodly, unruly, gay, and profligate, surely ye do not know the tears of pious mothers, or ye would stop your sin. Methinks, young man, thou wouldst not willingly allow thy mother to shed tears, however dearly you may love sin. Will you not then stop at her entreaties? Can you trample upon your mother? Oh! though you are riding a steeple-chase to hell, cannot her weeping supplications induce you to stay your mad career? Will you grieve her who gave you life, and

fondly cherished you at her breast? Surely you will long debate e'er you can resolve to bring her grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Or has sin brutalized you? Are ye worse than stones? Have natural feelings become extinct? Is the evil one entirely your master? Has he dried up all the tender sympathies of your heart? Stay! young prodigal, and ponder!

But, Christian men! ye are not alone in this. If ye have family troubles, there are others who have borne the same. Remember Ephraim! Though God had promised that Ephraim should abound as a tribe with tens of thousands, yet it is recorded in 1 Chron. 7:20–22: "And the sons of Ephraim; Shuthelah and Bered his son, and Tahath his son, and Eladah his son, and Tahath his son, and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him." Abraham himself had his Ishmael, and he cried to God on account thereof. Think of Eli, a man who served God as a high priest, and though he could rule the people, he could not rule his sons; and great was his grief thereat. Ah! some of you, my brethren in the gospel, may lift your hands to heaven, and ye may utter this morning these words with a deep and solemn emphasis—you may write "Although" in capitals, for it is more than true with some of you—"Although my house be not so with God."

Before we leave this point: What must I say to any of those who are thus tried and distressing in estate and family? *First*, let me say to you, my brethren, it is *necessary that you should have an "although"* in your lot, because if you had not, you know what you would do; you would build a very downy nest on earth, and there you would lie down in sleep; so God puts a thorn in your nest in order that you may sing. It is said by the old writers, that the nightingale never sang so sweetly as when she sat among thorns, since say they, the thorns prick her breast, and remind her of her song. So it may be with you. Ye, like the larks, would sleep in your nest did not some trouble pass by and affright you; then you stretch your wings, and carolling the matin song, rise to greet the sun. Trials are sent to wean you from the world; bitters are put into your drink, that ye may learn to live upon the dew of heaven: the food of earth is mingled with gall, that ye may only seek for true bread in the manna which droppeth from the sky. Your soul without trouble would be as the sea if it were without tide or motion; it would become foul and obnoxious. As Coleridge describes the sea after a wondrous calm, so would the soul breed contagion and death.

But furthermore, recollect this, O thou who art tried in thy children—that *prayer can remove thy troubles*. There is not a pious father or mother here, who is suffering in the family, but may have that trial taken away yet. Faith is as omnipotent as God himself, for it moves the arm which leads the stars along. Have you prayed long for your children without a result? and have ye said, "I will cease to pray, for the more I wrestle, the worse they seem to grow, and the more am I tried?" Oh! say not so, thou weary watcher. Though the promise tarrieth, it will come. Still sow the seed; and when thou sowest it, drop a tear with each grain thou putteth into the earth. Oh, steep thy seeds in the tears of anxiety, and they cannot rot under the clods, if they have been baptized in so vivifying a mixture. And what though thou diest without seeing thy sons the heirs of light? They shall be converted even after thy death; and though thy bones shall be put in the grave, and thy son may stand and curse thy memory for an hour, he shall not forget it in the cooler moments of his recollection, when he shall meditate alone. Then he shall think of thy prayers, thy tears, thy groans; he shall remember thine advice—it shall rise up, and if he live in sin, still thy words shall sound as one long voice from the realm of spirits, and either affright him in the midst of his revelry, or charm him heavenward, like angel's whispers, saying, "Follow on to glory, where thy parent is who once did pray for thee." So the Christian may say, "Although my house be not so with God now, *it may be yet*," therefore will I still wait, for there be mighty instances of conversion. Think of John Newton. He even became a slaver, yet was brought back. Hope on; never despair; faint heart never winneth the souls of men, but firm faith winneth all things; therefore watch unto prayer. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch." There is your trouble, a small cup filled from the same sea of tribulation as was the Psalmist's when he sung, "Although my house be not so with God."

II. But secondly: David had *confidence in the covenant*. Oh! how sweet it is to look from the dulness of earth to the brilliancy of heaven! How glorious it is to leap from the ever tempest-tossed bark of this world, and stand upon the *terra firma* of the covenant! So did David. Having done with his "Although," he then puts in a blessed "yet" Oh! it is a "yet," with jewels set: "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure."

Now let us notice these words as they come. First, David rejoiced in the covenant, because it is *divine in its origin*. "Yet hath HE made with me an everlasting covenant." O that great word HE. Who is that? It is not my odd-father or my odd mother who has made a covenant for me—none of that nonsense. It is not a covenant man has made for me, or with me; but yet hath HE made with me an everlasting covenant." It is divine in its origin, not human. The covenant on which the Christian rests, is not the covenant of his infant sprinkling; he

has altogether broken that scores of times, for he has not "renounced the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," as he should have done, nor "all the lusts of the flesh." Nor has he really become regenerate through those holy drops of water which a cassocked priest cast on his face. The covenant on which he rests and stands secure, is that covenant which God has made with him. "Yet hath HE made." Stop, my soul. God, the everlasting Father, has positively made a covenant with thee; yes, that God, who in the thickest darkness dwells and reigns for ever in his majesty alone; that God, who spake the world into existence by a word; who holds it, like an Atlas, upon his shoulders, who poises the destiny of all creation upon his finger; that God, stooping from his majesty, takes hold of thy hand and makes a covenant with thee. Oh! is it not a deed, the stupendous condescension of which might ravish our hearts for ever if we could really understand it? Oh! the depths! "HE hath made with me a covenant." A king has not made a covenant with me—that were somewhat: an emperor has not entered into a compact with me; but the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Shaddai, the Lord of all flesh, the Jehovah of ages, the everlasting Elohim. "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant." O blessed thought! it is of divine origin.

But notice *its particular application*. "Yet hath he made with ME an everlasting covenant." Here lies the sweetness of it to me, as an individual. "Oh how sweet to view the flowing Of Christ's soul-redeeming blood, With divine assurance knowing, That he made my peace with God." It is nought for me that he made peace for the world; I want to know whether he made peace for *me*: it is little that he hath made a covenant, I want to know whether he has made a covenant with ME. David could put his hand upon his heart and say, "Yet hath he made a covenant with ME." I fear I shall not be wrong in condemning the fashionable religion of the day, for it is a religion which belongs to the crowd; and not a personal one which is enjoyed by the individual. You will hear persons say, "Well, I believe the doctrine of justification; I think that men are justified through faith." Yes, but are *you* justified by faith? "I believe," says another, "that we are sanctified by the Spirit." Yes, all very well, but are *you* sanctified by the Spirit? Mark you, if ever you talk about personal piety very much, you will always be run down as extravagant. If you really say from your heart, "I know I am forgiven; I am certain that I am a pardoned sinner;"—and every Christian will at times be able to say it, and would always, were it not for his unbelief—if you say, "I know in whom I have believed; I am confident that I have not a sin now recorded in the black roll; that I am free from sin as if I had never transgressed, through the pardoning blood of Jesus," men will say it is extravagant. Well, it is a delightful extravagance, it is the extravagance of God's Word; and I would to God more of us could indulge in that holy, blessed extravagance. For we may well be extravagant when we have an infinite sum to spend; we may well be lavish when we know we never can exhaust the treasure. Oh! how sweet it is to say, "Yet hath he made with ME an everlasting covenant. It is nought that you talk to me of my brother being saved. I am very glad that my friend should get to glory, and I shall rejoice to meet you all; but after all, the thing is, "Shall I be there?" "Shall I amongst them stand, To see his smiling face?" Now, Christian, thou canst apply this personally. The covenant is made with thee. Man, open thine eyes; there is thy name in the covenant. What is it? It is some plain English name, perhaps. It never had an M.P. nor an M.A. after it, nor a "Sir," before it. Never mind, that name is in the covenant. If you could take down your Father's family Bible in heaven, you would find your name put in the register. O blessed thought! *my* name—positively mine! not another's. So, then, these eyes shall see him, and not another's for me. Rejoice, Christian; it is a personal covenant. "Yet hath he made *with me* an everlasting covenant."

Furthermore, this covenant is not only divine in its origin, but it is *everlasting in its duration*. I have had some very pretty letters sent me from anonymous writers who have listened to me; and being great cowards (whom I always abhor) they cannot sign their names. They may know what fate they receive; the condign punishment I appoint to them. I cut them asunder, and thrust them into the fire. I hope the authors will not have a similar fate. Some of them, however, quarrel with me, because I preach the everlasting gospel. I dare not preach another, for I would not have another if it were offered to me. An everlasting gospel is the only one which I think worthy of an everlasting God. I am sure it is the only one which can give comfort to a soul that is to live throughout eternity. Now, you know what an "everlasting covenant" signifies. It meant a covenant which had no beginning, and which shall never, never end. Some do not believe in the everlasting nature of God's love to his people. They think that God begins to love his people when they begin to love him. My Arminian friends, did you ever sing that verse in your meeting?—of course you have—"O yes, I do love Jesus, Because he first lov'd me." That is a glorious Calvinistic hymn, though we know whose hymn book it is in. Well, then, if Jesus loved you before you loved him, why cannot you believe that he always did love you? Besides, how stupid it is to talk so, when you know God does not change. There is no such thing as time with him; there is no past with him. If you say, "he loves me now," you have in fact said, "he loved me yesterday, and he will love me for ever." There is nothing but *now* with God. There is no such thing as past or future; and to dispute about eternal election and so on, is all of no avail; because, if God did choose his people at all—and we all admit that he chooses them now—I do not care about whether you say he did so ten thousand, thousand years ago, because there is no such thing as the past with God; with him it is all *now*. He sees things, past and future, as present in his eye. Only tell me that he loves me now; that word "now," in God's dictionary, means everlasting. Tell me

that God has now pardoned my sins; it means, that he always has, for his acts are eternal acts. Oh how sweet to know an everlasting covenant! I would not barter my gospel for fifty thousand other gospels. I love a certain salvation; and when I first heard it preached, that if I believed, God's grace would keep me all my life long, and would never let me fall into hell, but that I should preserve my character unblemished, and walk among my fellow-creatures pure and holy, then said I, "That is the gospel for me; an everlasting gospel." As for that sandy gospel, which bets you fall away and then come back again, it is the wickedest falsehood on earth. If I believed it, I would preach the gospel and be holy on the Sunday, and fall away on the Monday, and be a Christian again on the Tuesday; and I should say, "I have fallen from grace and have got up again." But now, as a true Calvinistic Christian, I desire to have in myself, and see in others, a life of constant consistency; nor can I think it possible to fall away, and then return, after the many passages which assert the impossibility of such a thing. That is the greatest safeguard on earth—that I have something within me that never can be quenched; that I put on the regimentals of a service which I never must leave, which I cannot leave without having proved that I never was enlisted at all. Oh! that keeps me near my God. But once make me doubt that, and you will see me the vilest character living under the sun. Take from me the everlastingness of the gospel, and you have taken all. Dear old Watts Wilkinson once said to Joseph Irons, when he said, "I love you to preach the covenant everlasting nature of God's love,"—"Ah!" said the old saint, "What is there else in the gospel if you do not preach it?" Brother, what is there else? If we do not preach an everlasting gospel, the gospel is not worth twopence. You may get anything uncertain anywhere else; it is in the Bible alone that we get everlasting things. "I to the end shall endure As sure as the earnest is given; More happy, but not more secure,

Are the glorified spirits in heaven."

But notice the next word, for it is a sweet one, and we must not let one portion go, "It is ordered *in all things*." "Order is heaven's first law," and God has not a disorderly covenant. It is an orderly one. When he planned it, before the world began, it was in all things ordered well. He so arranged it, that justice should be fully satisfied, and yet mercy should be linked hand-in-hand with it. He so planned it that vengeance should have its utmost jot and tittle, and yet mercy should save the sinner. Jesus Christ came to confirm it, and by his atonement, he ordered it in all things; he paid every drop of his blood; he did not leave one farthing of the ransom-money for his dear people, but he ordered it in all things. And the Holy Spirit, when he sweetly applies it, always applies it in order; he orders it in all things. He makes us sometimes understand this order, but if we do not, be sure of this, that the covenant is a well-ordered covenant. I have heard of a man who bought a piece of land, and when the covenant was being made, he thought he knew more about it than the lawyer; but you know it is said that when a man is his own lawyer he has a fool for his client. In this case the man had a fool for his client; and he drew up the covenant so badly, that in a few years it was discovered to be good for nothing, and he lost his property. But our Father's covenant is drawn up according to the strictest rules of justice; and so is ordered in all things. If hell itself should search it—if it were passed round amongst a conclave of demons, they could not find a single fault with it. There are the technical terms of heaven's court; there is the great seal at the bottom, and there is the signature of Jesus, written in his own blood. So it is "ordered in all things."

That word *things* is not in the original, and we may read it *persons*, as well as *things*. It is ordered in all persons—all the persons whose names are in the covenant; it is ordered for them, and they shall come according to the promise: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." O my beloved Christian, stop at this promise a moment, for it is a sweet well of precious water to slake thy thirst and refresh thy weariness. It is "ordered in all things." What dost thou want more than this? Dost thou need constraining grace? It is "ordered in *all things*." Dost thou require more of the spirit of prayer? It is "ordered in *all things*." Dost thou desire more faith? It is "ordered in *all things*." Art thou afraid lest thou shouldst not hold out to the end? It is "ordered in *all things*." There is converting grace in it; pardoning grace in it; justifying grace, sanctifying grace, and persevering grace; for it is "ordered in all things, and sure." Nothing is left out; so that whene'er we come, we find all things there stored up in heavenly order. Galen, the celebrated physician, says of the human body, that its bones are so well put together, all the parts being so beautifully ordered, that we could not change one portion of it without spoiling its harmony and beauty; and if we should attempt to draw a model man, we could not, with all our ingenuity, fashion a being more wondrous in workmanship than man as he is. It is so with regard to the covenant. If we might alter it, we could not change it for the better; all its portions are beautifully agreed. I always feel when I am preaching the gospel covenant that I am secure. If I preach any other gospel, I am vulnerable, I am open to attack; but standing upon the firm ground of God's covenant, I feel I am in a tower of strength, and so long as I hold all the truths, I am not afraid that even the devils of hell can storm my castle. So secure is the man who believes the everlasting gospel; no logic can stand against it. Only let our preachers give the everlasting gospel to the people, and they will drink it as the ox drinketh water. You will find they love God's truth. But so long as God's gospel is smothered, and the candle is put under a bushel, we cannot expect men's souls will be brought to love it. I pray God that the candle may burn the bushel up, and that the light may be manifest.

But now, to wind up our description of this covenant, it is *sure*. If I were a rich man, there would be but one thing I should want to make my riches all I desire, and that would be, to have them sure, for riches make to themselves wings, and fly away. Health is a great blessing, and we want but to write one word on it to make it the greatest blessing, that is the adjective "sure." We have relatives, and we love them; ah! if we could but write "sure" on them, what a blessed thing it would be. We cannot call anything "sure" on earth; the only place where we can write that word is on the covenant, which is "ordered in all things and *sure*." Now there is some poor brother come here this morning who has lost his covenant, as he thinks. Ah! brother, you once had peaceful hours and sweet enjoyment in the presence of God; but now you are in gloom and doubt; you have lost your roll. Well, let me tell you, though you have lost your roll, the covenant is not lost, for all that. You never had the covenant in your hands yet; you only had a copy of it, You thought you read your title clear, but you never read the title-deeds themselves; you only held a copy of the lease and you have lost it. The covenant itself; where is it? It is under the throne of God; it is in the archives of heaven, in the ark of the covenant; it is in Jesus's breast, it is on his hands, on his heart—it is there. Oh! if God were to put my salvation in my hands, I should be lost in ten minutes; but my salvation is not there—it is in Christ's hands. You have read of the celebrated dream of John Newton, which I will tell you to the best of my recollection. He thought he was out at sea, on board a vessel, when some bright angel flew down and presented him with a ring, saying, "As long as you wear this ring you shall be happy, and your soul shall be safe." He put the ring on his finger, and he felt happy to have it in his own possession. Then there came a spirit from the vasty deep, and said to him; "That ring is nought but folly;" and by cajolery and flattery the spirit at last persuaded him to slip the ring from off his finger, and he dropped it in the sea. Then there came fierce things from the deep; the mountains bellowed, and hurled upward their volcanic lava: all the earth was on fire, and his soul in the greatest trouble. By-and-bye a spirit came, and diving below, fetched up the ring, and showing it to him, said, "Now thou art safe, for I have saved the ring." Now might John Newton have said, "Let me put it on my finger again." "No, no; you cannot take care of it yourself;" and up the angel flew, carrying the ring away with him, so that then he felt himself secure, since no cajolery of hell could get it from him again, for it was up in heaven. My life is "hid with Christ in God." If I had my spiritual life in my own possession, I should be a suicide very soon; but it is not with me; and as I cannot save myself, *as a Christian* I cannot destroy myself, for my life is wrapped up in the covenant: it is with Christ in heaven. Oh, glorious and precious covenant!

III. Now to close our meditation. The Psalmist had *a satisfaction in his heart*. "This is," he said, all my salvation, and all my desire." I should ill like the task of riding till I found a satisfied worldly man. I suspect there is not a horse that would not be worn off its legs before I found him; I think I should myself grow grey with age before I had discovered the happy individual, except I went to one place—that is, the heart of a man who has a covenant made with him, "ordered in all things, and *sure*." Go to the palace, but there is not satisfaction there; go to the cottage, though the poet talks about sweet retirement and blest contentment, there is not satisfaction there. The only solid satisfaction—satisfying the mouth with good things—is to be found in the true believer, who is satisfied from himself, satisfied with the covenant, Behold David: he says, "As for my salvation, I am secure; as for my desire, I am gratified: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire." *He is satisfied with his salvation*. Bring up the moralist. He has been toiling and working in order to earn salvation. Are you confident that if you died you would enter into heaven? "Well, I have been as good as other people, and, I dare say, I shall be more religious before I die;" but he cannot answer our question. Bring up the religious man—I mean the merely outwardly religious man. Are you sure that if you were to die you would go to heaven? "Well, I regularly attend church or chapel, I cannot say that I make any pretensions to be able to say, 'He hath made with me an everlasting covenant.'" Very well, you must go. So I might introduce a score of men, and there is not one of them who can say, "This is all my salvation." They always want a little supplement, and most of you intend making that supplement a little while before you die. An old Jewish Rabbi says, that every man ought to repent at least one day before his last day; and as we do not know when our last day shall be, we ought to repent to-day. How many wish they knew when they were going to die, for then they fancy they would be sure to repent, and be converted a little while before. Why, if you had it revealed to you, that you would die at twenty minutes past twelve next Sunday, you would go on in sin up till twelve o'clock, and then you would say, "There are twenty minutes more—time enough yet;" and so until the twenty minutes past had come, when your soul would sink into eternal flames. Such is procrastination. It is the thief of time; it steals away our life; and did we know the hour of our dissolution, we should be no more prepared for it than we are now. You cannot say, can you, that you have all your salvation? But a Christian can. He can walk through the cholera and the pestilence, and feel that should the arrow smite him, death would be to him the entrance of life; he can lie down and grieve but little at the approach of dissolution, for he has all his salvation; his jewels are in his breast, gems which shall shine in heaven.

Then, the Psalmist says, he has *all his desire*. There is nought that can fill the heart of man except the Trinity. God has made man's heart a triangle. Men have been for centuries trying to make the globe fill the triangle,

but they cannot do it: it is the Trinity alone that can fill a triangle, as old Quarles well says. There is no way of getting satisfaction but by gaining Christ, getting heaven, winning glory, getting the covenant, for the word covenant comprises all the other things. "All my desire,"—says the Psalmist. "I nothing want on earth, above, Happy in my Saviour's love." I have not a desire; I have nothing to do but to live and be happy all my life in the company of Christ, and then to ascend to heaven, to be in his immediate presence, where "Millions of years these wondering eyes Shall o'er my Saviour's beauties rove, And endless ages I'll adore The wonders of his love."

Just one word with my friends who do not agree with me in doctrine. I am sure, my dear friends, that I wish not to anathematize any of those whose creed is the reverse of mine; only they must allow me to differ from them and to speak freely; and if they do not *allow* me they know very well that I shall. But I have this much to say to those dear friends who cannot bear the thought of an everlasting covenant. Now, you cannot alter it, can you? If you do not like it, there it is. "God hath made with me an everlasting covenant." And you must confess, when you read the Bible, that there are some very knotty passages for you. You might, perhaps, remove them out of your Bible; but then you cannot erase them out of divine verities. You know it is true, that God is immutable, do you not? He never changes—you must know that, for the Bible says so. It declares that when he has begun a good work, he will carry it through. Do not get reading frothy commentators any longer; take the Bible as it stands, and if you do not see everlasting love there, there is some fault in your eyes, and it is a case rather for the Ophthalmic hospital, than for me. If you cannot see everlasting, eternal security, blood-bought righteousness, there, I am hopeless altogether of your conversion to the truth, while you read it with your present prejudices. It has been my privilege to give more prominence in the religious world to those old doctrines of the gospel. I have delighted in the musty old folios which many of my brethren have kept bound in sheepskins and goatskins, on their library shelves. As for new books, I leave them to others. Oh! if we might but go back to those days when the best of men were our pastors—the days of the Puritans. Oh! for a puritanical gospel again; then we should not have the sleepy hearers, the empty chapels, the drowsy preachers, the velvet-mouthed men who cannot speak the truth; but we should have "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will towards men." Do go home and search. I have told you what I believe to be true; if it is not true, detect the error by reading your Bibles for yourselves, and searching out the matter. As for you, ye ungodly, who hitherto have had neither portion nor lot in this matter, recollect that God's Word speaks to you as well as to the Christian, and says, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel?" graciously promising that whosoever cometh to Christ he will in no wise cast out. It is a free gospel, free as the air, and he who has but life to breathe it may breathe it; so that every poor soul here, who is quickened, and has a sense of his guilt, may come to Christ. "Let not conscience make you linger, Nor of fitness fondly dream." All the evidence you require is to feel your need of Christ; and recollect, if you only once come, if you do but believe, you will be safe through all eternity; and amidst the wreck of matter, the crash of worlds, the conflagration of the universe, and the destruction of all terrestrial things, your soul must still be eternally secure in the covenant of God's free grace. God enable you now to become his adopted children by faith in Jesus.

Declension from First Love

A Sermon (No. 217) Delivered on Sabbath Evening, September 26, 1858, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."—Revelation 2:4.

IT IS A GREAT THING to have as much said in our commendation as was said concerning the church at Ephesus. Just read what "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness," said of them—"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: and hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." Oh, my dear brothers and sisters, we may feel devoutly thankful if we can humbly, but honestly say, that this commendation applies to us. Happy the man whose works are known and accepted of Christ. He is no idle Christian, he has practical godliness; he seeks by works of piety to obey God's whole law, by works of charity to manifest his love to the brotherhood, and by works of devotion to show his attachment to the cause of his Master. "I know thy works." Alas! some of you cannot get so far as that. Jesus Christ himself can bear no witness to your works, for you have not done any. You are Christians by profession, but you are not Christians as to your practice. I say again, happy is that man to whom Christ can say, "I know thy works." It is a commendation worth a world to have as much as that said of us. But further, Christ said, "and thy labour." This is more still. Many Christians have works, but only few Christians have labour. There were many preachers in Whitfield's day that had works, but Whitfield had labour. He toiled and travailed for souls. He was "in labours more abundant." Many were they in the apostle's

days who did works for Christ; but pre-eminently the apostle Paul did labour for souls. It is not work merely, it is anxious work; it is casting forth the whole strength, and exercising all the energies for Christ. Could the Lord Jesus say as much as that of you—"I know thy labour?" No. He might say, "I know thy loitering; I know thy laziness; I know thy shirking of the work; I know thy boasting of what little thou dost; I know thine ambition to be thought something of, when thou art nothing." But ah! friends, it is more than most of us dare to hope that Christ could say, "I know thy labour."

But further, Christ says, "I know thy patience." Now there be some that labour, and they do it well. But what does hinder them? They only labour for a little season, and then they cease to work and begin to faint. But this church had laboured on for many years; it had thrown out all its energies—not in some spasmodic effort, but in a continual strain and unabated zeal for the glory of God. "I know thy patience." I say again, beloved, I tremble to think how few out of this congregation could win such praise as this. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil." The thorough hatred which the church had of evil doctrine, of evil practice, and its corresponding intense love for pure truth and pure practice—in that I trust some of us can bear a part. "And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." Here, too, I think some of us may hope to be clear. I know the difference between truth and error. Arminianism will never go down with us; the doctrine of men will not suit our taste. The husks, the bran, and the chaff, are not things that we can feed upon. And when we listen to those who preach another gospel, a holy anger burns within us, for we love the truth as it is in Jesus; and nothing but that will satisfy us. "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." They had borne persecutions, difficulties, hardships, embarrassments, and discouragements, yet had they never flagged, but always continued faithful. Who among us here present could lay claim to so much praise as this? What Sunday-school teacher have I here who could say, "I have laboured, and I have borne, and have had patience, and have not fainted." Ah, dear friends, if you can say it, it is more than I can. Often have I been ready to faint in the Master's work; and though I trust I have not been tired of it, yet there has sometimes been a longing to get from the work to the reward, and to go from the service of God, before I had fulfilled, as a hireling, my day. I am afraid we have not enough of patience, enough of labour, and enough of good works, to get even as much as this said of us. But it is in our text, I fear the mass of us must find our character. "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." There may be a preacher here present. Did you ever hear of a minister who had to preach his own funeral sermon? What a labour that must have been, to feel that he had been condemned to die, and must preach against himself, and condemn himself! I stand here to-night, not in that capacity, but in one somewhat similar. I feel that I who preach shall this night condemn myself; and my prayer before I entered this pulpit was, that I might fearlessly discharge my duty, that I might deal honestly with my own heart, and that I might preach, knowing myself to be the chief culprit, and you each in your measure to have offended in this respect, even though none of you so grievously as I have done. I pray that God the Holy Spirit, through his renewings, may apply the word, not merely to your hearts, but to mine, that I may return to my first love, and that you may return with me.

In the first place, *what was our first love?* Secondly, *how did we lose it?* And thirdly, *let me exhort you to get it again.*

I. First, WHAT WAS OUR FIRST LOVE? Oh, let us go back—it is not many years with some of us. We are but youngsters in God's ways, and it is not so long with any of you that you will have very great difficulty in reckoning it. Then if you are Christians, those days were so happy that your memory will never forget them, and therefore you can easily return to that first bright spot in your history. Oh, what love was that which I had to my Saviour the first time he forgave my sins. I remember it. You remember each for yourselves, I dare say, that happy hour when the Lord appeared to us, bleeding on his cross, when he seemed to say, and did say in our hearts, "I am thy salvation; I have blotted out like a cloud thine iniquities, and like a thick cloud thy sins." Oh, how I loved him! Passing all loves except his own was that love which I felt for him then. If beside the door of the place in which I met with him there had been a stake of blazing faggots, I would have stood upon them without chains; glad to give my flesh, and blood, and bones, to be ashes that should testify my love to him. Had he asked me then to give all my substance to the poor, I would have given all and thought myself to be amazingly rich in having beggared myself for his name's sake. Had he commanded me then to preach in the midst of all his foes, I could have said:— "There's not a lamb amongst thy flock I would disdain to feed, There's not a foe before whose face

I'd fear thy cause to plead." I could realize then the language of Rutherford, when he said, being full of love to Christ, once upon a time, in the dungeon of Aberdeen—"Oh, my Lord, if there were a broad hell betwixt me and thee, if I could not get at thee except by wading through it, I would not think twice but I would plunge through it all, if I might embrace thee and call thee mine."

Now it is that first love that you and I must confess I am afraid we have in a measure lost. Let us just see

whether we have it. When we first loved the Saviour how earnest we were; there was not a single thing in the Bible, that we did not think most precious; there was not one command of his that we did not think to be like fine gold and choice silver. Never were the doors of his house open without our being there. If there were a prayer meeting at any hour in the day we were there. Some said of us that we had no patience, we would do too much and expose our bodies too frequently—but we never thought of that "Do yourself no harm," was spoken in our ears; but we would have done anything then. Why there are some of you who cannot walk to the Music Hall on a morning, it is too far. When you first joined the church, you would have walked twice as far. There are some of you who cannot be at the prayer meeting—business will not permit; yet when you were first baptized, there was never a prayer meeting from which you were absent. It is the loss of your first love that makes you seek the comfort of your bodies instead of the prosperity of your souls. Many have been the young Christians who have joined this church, and old ones too, and I have said to them, "Well, have you got a ticket for a seat?" "No, sir." "Well, what will you do? Have you got a preference ticket?" "No, I cannot get one; but I do not mind standing in the crowd an hour, or two hours. I will come at five o'clock so that I can get in. Sometimes I don't get in, sir; but even then I feel that I have done what I ought to do in attempting to get in." "Well," but I have said, "you live five miles off, and there is coming and going back twice a day—you cannot do it." "Oh, sir," they have said "I can do it; I feel so much the blessedness of the Sabbath and so much enjoyment of the presence of the Saviour." I have smiled at them; I could understand it, but I have not felt it necessary to caution them—and now their love is cool enough. That first love does not last half so long as we could wish. Some of you stand convicted even here; you have not that blazing love, that burning love, that ridiculous love as the worldling would call it, which is after all the love to be most coveted and desired. No, you have lost your first love in that respect. Again, how obedient you used to be. If you saw a commandment, that was enough for you—you did it. But now you see a commandment, and you see profit on the other side; and how often do you dally with the profit and choose the temptation, instead of yielding an unsullied obedience to Christ.

Again, how happy you used to be in the ways of God. Your love was of that happy character that you could sing all day long; but now your religion has lost its lustre, the gold has become dim; you know that when you come to the Sacramental table, you often come there without enjoying it. There was a time when every bitter thing was sweet; whenever you heard the Word, it was all precious to you. Now you can grumble at the minister. Alas! the minister has many faults, but the question is, whether there has not been a greater charge in you than there has been in him. Many are there who say, "I do not hear Mr. So-and-so as I used to,"—when the fault lies in their own ears. Oh, brethren, when we live near to Christ, and are in our first love, it is amazing what a little it takes to make a good preacher to us. Why, I confess I have heard a poor illiterate Primitive Methodist preach the gospel, and I felt as if I could jump for joy all the while I was listening to him, and yet he never gave me a new thought or a pretty expression, nor one figure that I could remember, but he talked about Christ; and even his common things were to my hungry spirit like dainty meats. And I have to acknowledge, and, perhaps, you have to acknowledge the same—that I have heard sermons from which I ought to have profited, but I have been thinking on the man's style, or some little mistakes in grammar. When I might have been holding fellowships with Christ in and through the ministry, I have, instead thereof, been getting abroad in my thoughts even to the ends of the earth. And what is the reason for this, but that I have lost my first love.

Again: when we were in our first love, what would we do for Christ; now how little will we do. Some of the actions which we performed when we were young Christians, but just converted, when we look back upon them, seem to have been wild and like idle tales. You remember when you were a lad and first came to Christ, you had a half-sovereign in your pocket; it was the only one you had, and you met with some poor saint and gave it all away. You did not regret that you had done it, your only regret was that you had not a great deal more, for you would have given all. You recollected that something was wanted for the cause of Christ. Oh! we could give anything away when we first loved the Saviour. If there was a preaching to be held five miles off, and we could walk with the lay-preacher to be a little comfort to him in the darkness, we were off. If there was a Sunday-school, however early it might be, we would be up, so that we might be present. Unheard-of feats, things that we now look back upon with surprise, we could perform them. Why cannot we do them now? Do you know there are some people who always live upon what they have been. I speak very plainly now. There is a brother in this church who may take it to himself; I hope he will. It is not very many years ago since he said to me, when I asked him why he did not do something—"Well, I have done my share; I used to do this, and I have done the other; I have done so-and-so." Oh, may the Lord deliver him, and all of us, from living on "has beens!" It will never do to say we have done a thing. Suppose, for a solitary moment, the world should say, "I have turned round; I will stand still." Let the sea say, "I have been ebbing and flowing, lo! these many years; I will ebb and flow no more." Let the sun say, "I have been shining, and I have been rising and setting so many days; I have done this enough to earn me a goodly name; I will stand still;" and let the moon wrap herself up in veils of darkness, and say, "I have illuminated many a night, and I have lighted many

a weary traveller across the moors; I will shut up my lamp and be dark forever." Brethren, when you and I cease to labour, let us cease to live. God has no intention to let us live a useless life. But mark this; when we leave our first works, there is no question about having lost our first love; that is sure. If there be strength remaining, if there be still power mentally and physically, if we cease from our office, if we abstain from our labours, there is no solution of this question which an honest conscience will accept, except this, "Thou hast lost thy first love, and, therefore, thou hast neglected thy first works." Ah! we were all so very ready to make excuses for ourselves. Many a preacher has retired from the ministry, long before he had any need to do so. He has married a rich wife. Somebody has left him a little money, and he can do without it. He was growing weak in the ways of God, or else he would have said, "My body with my charge lay down, And cease at once to work and live." And let any man here present who was a Sunday-school teacher and who has left it, who was a tract distributor and who has given it up, who was active in the way of God but is now idle, stand to-night before the bar of his conscience, and say whether he be not guilty of this charge which I bring against him, that he has lost his first love.

I need not stop to say also, that this may be detected in the closet as well as in our daily life; for when first love is lost, there is a want of that prayerfulness which we have. I remember the day I was up at three o'clock in the morning. Till six, I spent in prayer, wrestling with God. Then I had to walk some eight miles, and started off and walked to the baptism. Why, prayer was a delight to me then. My duties at that time kept me occupied pretty well from five o'clock in the morning till ten at night, and I had not a moment for retirement, yet I would be up at four o'clock to pray; and though I feel very sleepy now-a-days, and I feel that I could not be up to pray, it was not so then, when I was in my first love. Somehow or other, I never lacked time then. If I did not get it early in the morning, I got it late at night. I was compelled to have time for prayer with God; and what prayer it was! I had no need then to groan because I could not pray; for love, being fervent, I had sweet liberty at the throne of grace. But when first love departs, we begin to think that ten minutes will do for prayer, instead of an hour, and we read a verse or two in the morning, whereas we used to read a portion, but never used to go into the world without getting some marrow and fatness. Now, business has so increased, that we must get into bed as soon as we can; we have not time to pray. And then at dinner time, we used to have a little time for communion; that is dropped. And then on the Sabbath-day, we used to make it a custom to pray to God when we got home from his house, for just five minutes before dinner, so that what we heard we might profit by; that is dropped. And some of you that are present were in the habit of retiring for prayer when you went home; your wives have told that story; the messengers have heard it when they have called at your houses, when they have asked the wife—"What is your husband?" "Ah!" she has said, "he is a godly man; he cannot come home to his breakfast but he must slip upstairs alone. I know what he is doing—he is praying. Then when he is at table, he often says—"Mary, I have had a difficulty to-day, we must go and have a word or two of prayer together." And some of you could not take a walk without prayer, you were so fond of it you could not have too much of it. Now where is it? You know more than you did; you have grown older; you have grown richer, perhaps. You have grown wiser in some respects; but you might give up all you have got, to go back to "Those peaceful hours you once enjoyed, How sweet their memory still!" Oh, what would you give if you could fill "That aching void, The world can never fill," but which only the same love that you had at first, can ever fully satisfy!

II. And now, beloved, WHERE DID YOU AND I LOSE OUR FIRST LOVE, if we have lost it? Let each one speak for himself, or rather, let me speak for each.

Have you not lost your first love in the world some of you? You used to have that little shop once, you had not very much business; well, you had enough, and a little to spare. However, there was a good turn came in business; you took two shops, and you are getting on very well. Is it not marvellous, that when you grew richer and had more business, you began to have less grace?

Oh, friends, it is a very serious thing to grow rich? Of all the temptations to which God's children are exposed it is the worst, because it is one that they do not dread, and therefore it is the more subtle temptation. You know a traveller if he is going a journey, takes a staff with him, it is a help to him; but suppose he is covetous, and says, "I will have a hundred of these sticks," that will be no help to him at all; he has only got a load to carry, and it stops his progress instead of assisting him. But I do believe there are many Christians that lived near to God, when they were living on a pound a week, that might give up their yearly incomes with the greatest joy, if they could have now the same contentment, the same peace of mind, the same nearness of access to God, that they had in times of poverty. Ah, too much of the world is a bad thing for any man! I question very much whether a man ought not sometimes to stop, and say, "There is an opportunity of doing more trade, but it will require the whole of my time, and I must give up that hour I have set apart for prayer; I will not do the trade at all; I have enough, and therefore let it go. I would rather do trade with heaven than trade with earth."

Again: do you not think also that perhaps you may have lost your first love by getting too much with worldly people? When you were in your first love, no company suited you but the godly; but now you have got a young man that you talk with, who talks a great deal more about frivolity, and gives you a great deal more of the froth and scum of levity, than he ever gives you of solid godliness. Once you were surrounded by those that fear the Lord, but now you dwell in the tents of "Freedom," where you hear little but cursing. But, friends, he that carrieth coals in his bosom must be burned; and the that hath ill companions cannot but be injured. Seek, then, to have godly friends, that thou mayest maintain thy first love.

But another reason. Do you not think that perhaps you have forgotten how much you owe to Christ? There is one thing, that I feel from experience I am compelled to do very often, viz., to go back to where I first started:—"I, the chief of sinners am, But Jesus died for me." You and I get talking about our being saints; we know our election, we rejoice in our calling, we go on to sanctification; and we forget the hole of the pit whence we were digged. Ah, remember my brother, thou art nothing now but a sinner saved through grace; remember what thou wouldst have been, if the Lord had left thee. And surely, then, by going back continually to first principles, and to the great foundation stone, the cross of Christ, thou wilt be led to go back to thy first love.

Dost thou not think, again, that thou hast lost thy first love by neglecting communion with Christ? Now preacher, preach honestly, and preach at thyself. Has there not been, sometimes, this temptation to do a great deal for Christ, but not to live a great deal with Christ? One of my besetting sins, I feel, is this. If there is anything to be done actively for Christ, I instinctively prefer the active exercise to the passive quiet of his presence. There are some of you, perhaps, that are attending a Sunday school, who would be more profitably employed to your own souls if you were spending that hour in communion with Christ. Perhaps, too, you attend the means so often, that you have no time in secret to improve what you gain in the means. Mrs. Bury once said, that if "all the twelve apostles were preaching in a certain town, and we could have the privilege of hearing them preach, yet if they kept us out of our closets, and led us to neglect prayer, better for us never to have heard their names, than to have gone to listen to them." We shall never love Christ much except we live near to him. Love to Christ is dependent on our nearness to him. It is just like the planets and the sun. Why are some of the planets cold? Why do they move at so slow a rate? Simply because they are so far from the sun: put them where the planet Mercury is, and they will be in a boiling heat, and spin round the sun in rapid orbits. So, beloved, if we live near to Christ, we cannot help loving him: the heart that is near Jesus must be full of his love. But when we live days and weeks and months without personal intercourse, without real fellowship, how can we maintain love towards a stranger? He must be a friend, and we must stick close to him, as he sticks close to us—closer than a brother; or else, we shall never have our first love.

There are a thousand reasons that I might have given, but I leave each of you to search your hearts, to find out why you have lost, each of you, your first love.

III. Now, dear friends, just give me all your attention for a moment, while I earnestly beseech and implore of you to **SEEK TO GET YOUR FIRST LOVE RESTORED**. Shall I tell you why? Brother, though thou be a child of God, if thou hast lost thy first love, there is some trouble near at hand. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth," and he is sure to chasten thee when thou sinnest. It is calm with you to night, is it? Oh! but dread that calm, there is a tempest lowering. Sin is the harbinger of tempest: read the history of David. All David's life, in all his troubles, even in the rocks of the wild goats, and in the caves of Engedi, he was the happiest of men till he lost his first love; and from the day when his lustful eye was fixed upon Bathsheba, even to the last, he went with broken bones sorrowing to his grave. It was one long string of afflictions: take heed it be not so with thee. "Ah, but," you say, "I shall not sin as David did." Brother, you cannot tell: if you have lost your first love, what should hinder you but that you should lose your first purity? Love and purity go together. He that loveth is pure; he that loveth little shall find his purity decrease, until it becomes marred and polluted. I should not like to see you, my dear friends, tried and troubled: I do weep with them that weep. If there be a child of yours sick, and I hear of it, I can say honestly, I do feel something like a father to your children, and as a father to you. If you have sufferings and afflictions, and I know them, I desire to feel for you, and spread your griefs before the throne of God. Oh, I do not want my heavenly Father to take the rod out to you all; but he will do it, if you fall from your first love. As sure as ever he is a Father, he will let you have the rod if your love cools. Bastards may escape the rod. If you are only base-born professors you may go happily along; but the true-born child of God, when his love declines, must and shall smart for it.

There is yet another thing, my dear friends, if we lose our first love—what will the world say of us if we lose our first love? I must put this, not for our name's sale, but for God's dear name's sake. O what will the world say of us? There was a time, and it is not gone yet, when men must point at this church, and say of it, "There

is a church, that is like a bright oasis in the midst of a desert, a spot of light in the midst of darkness." Our prayer meetings were prayer meetings indeed, the congregations were as attentive as they were numerous. Oh, how you did drink in the words; how your eyes flashed with a living fire, whenever the name of Christ was mentioned! And what, if in a little time it shall be said, "Ah, that church is quite as sleepy as any other; look at them when the minister preaches, why they can sleep under him, they do not seem to care for the truth. Look at the Spurgeonites, they are just as cold and careless as others; they used to be called the most pugnacious people in the world, for they were always ready to defend their Master's name and their Master's truth, and they got that name in consequence, but now you may swear in their presence and they will not rebuke you: how near these people once used to live to God and his house, they were always there; look at their prayer meetings, they would fill their seats as full at a prayer meeting as at an ordinary service; now they are all gone back." "Ah," says the world, "just what I said; the fact is, it was a mere spasm, a little spiritual excitement, and it has all gone down." And the worldling says, "Ah, ah, so would I have it, so would I have it!" I was reading only the other day of an account of my ceasing to be popular; it was said my chapel was now nearly empty, that nobody went to it: and I was exceedingly amused and interested. "Well, if it come to that," I said, "I shall not grieve or cry very much; but if it is said the church has left its zeal and first love, that is enough to break any honest pastor's heart." Let the chaff go, but if the wheat remain we have comfort. Let those who are the outer-court worshippers cease to hear, what signifieth? let them turn aside, but O, ye soldiers of the Cross, if ye turn your backs in the day of battle, where shall I hide my head? what shall I say for the great name of my Master, or for the honour of his gospel? It is our boast and joy, that the old-fashioned doctrine has been revived in these days, and that the truth that Calvin preached, that Paul preached, and that Jesus preached, is still mighty to save, and far surpasses in power all the neologies and new-fangled notions of the present time. But what will the heretic say, when he sees it is all over? "Ah," he will say, "that old truth urged on by the fanaticism of a foolish young man, did wake the people a little; but it lacked marrow and strength, and it all died away!" Will ye thus dishonour your Lord and Master, ye children of the heavenly king? I beseech you do not so—but endeavour to receive again as a rich gift of the Spirit your first love.

And now, once again, dear friends, there is a thought that ought to make each of us feel alarmed, if we have lost our first love. May not this question arise in our hearts—Was I ever a child of God at all? Oh, my God, must I ask myself this question? Yes, I will. Are there not many of whom it is said, they went out from us because they were not of us; for if they had been of us, doubtless they would have continued with us? Are there not some whose goodness is as the morning cloud and as the early dew—may that not have been my case? I am speaking for you all. Put the question—may I not have been impressed under a certain sermon, and may not that impression have been a mere carnal excitement? May it not have been that I thought I repented but did not really repent? May it not have been the case, that I got a hope somewhere but had not a right to it? And I never had the loving faith that unites me to the Lamb of God. And may it not have been that I only thought I had love to Christ, and never had it, for if I really had love to Christ should I be as I now am? See how far I have come down! may I not keep on going down until my end shall be perdition, and the never-dying worm, and the fire unquenchable? Many have gone from heights of a profession to the depths of damnation, and may not I be the same? May it not be true of me that I am as a wandering star for whom is reserved blackness of darkness for ever? May I not have shone brightly in the midst of the church for a little while, and yet may I not be one of those poor foolish virgins who took no oil in my vessel with my lamp, and therefore my lamp will go out? Let me think, if I go on as I am, it is impossible for me to stop, if I am going downwards I may go on going downwards. And O my God, if I go on backsliding for another year—who knows where I may have backslidden to? Perhaps into some gross sin. Prevent, prevent it by thy grace! Perhaps I may backslide totally. If I am a child of God I cannot do that. But still, may it not happen that I only thought I was a child of God, and may I not so far go back that at last my very name to live shall go because I always have been dead? Oh! how dreadful it is to think and to see in our church, members who turn out to be dead members! If I could weep tears of blood, they would not express the emotion that I ought to feel, and that you ought to feel, when you think there are some among us that are dead branches of a living vine. Our deacons find that there is much of unsoundness in our members. I grieve to think that because we cannot see all our members, there are many who have backslidden. There is one who says, "I joined the church, it is true, but I never was converted. I made a profession of being converted, but I was not, and now I take no delight in the things of God. I am moral, I attend the house of prayer, but I am not converted. My name may be taken off the books; I am not a godly man." There are others among you who perhaps have gone even further than that—have gone into sin, and yet I may not know it. It may not come to my ears in so large a church as this. Oh! I beseech you, my dear friends, by him that liveth and was dead, let not your good be evil spoken of, by losing your first love.

Are there some among you that are *professing* religion, and not *possessing* it? Oh, give up your profession, or else get the truth and sell it not. Go home, each of you, and cast yourselves on your faces before God, and ask him to search you, and try you, and know your ways, and see if there be any evil way in you, and pray that he

may lead you in the way everlasting. And if hitherto you have only professed, but have not possessed, seek ye the Lord while he may be found, and call ye upon him while he is near. Ye are warned, each one of you; you are solemnly told to search yourselves and make short work of it. And if any of you be hypocrites, at God's great day, guilty as I may be in many respects, there is one thing I am clear of—I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. I do not believe that any people in the world shall be damned more terribly than you shall if you perish; for of this thing I have not shunned to speak—the great evil of making a profession without being sound at heart. No, I have even gone so near to personality, that I could not have gone further without mentioning your names. And rest assured, God's grace being with me, neither you nor myself shall be spared in the pulpit in any personal sin that I may observe in any one of you. But oh, do let us be sincere! May the Lord sooner split this church till only a tenth of you remain, than ever suffer you to be multiplied a hundred-fold unless you be multiplied with the living in Zion, and with the holy flock that the Lord himself hath ordained, and will keep unto the end. To-morrow morning, we shall meet together and pray, that we may have our first love restored; and I hope many of you will be found there to seek again the love which you have almost lost.

And as for you that never had that love at all, the Lord breathe it upon you now for the love of Jesus. Amen.

Elijah's Appeal to the Undecided

A Sermon (No. 134) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, May 31, 1857, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him."—1 Kings 18:21.

IT WAS A DAY to be remembered, when the multitudes of Israel were assembled at the foot of Carmel and when the solitary prophet of the Lord came forth to defy the four hundred and fifty priests of the false god. We might look upon that scene with the eye of historical curiosity, and we should find it rich with interest. Instead of doing so, however, we shall look upon it with the eye of attentive consideration, and see whether we can not improve by its teachings. We have upon that hill of Carmel, and along the plain, three kinds of persons. We have first the devoted servant of Jehovah, a solitary prophet; we have, on the other hand, the decided servants of the evil one, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal; but the vast mass of that day belonged to a third class—they were those who had not fully determined whether fully to worship Jehovah, the God of their fathers, or Baal, the god of Jezebel. On the one hand, their ancient traditions led them to fear Jehovah, and on the other hand, their interest at court led them to bow before Baal. Many of them therefore, were secret and half-hearted followers of Jehovah, while they were the public worshipers of Baal. The whole of them at this juncture were halting between two opinions. Elijah does not address his sermon to the priests of Baal; he will have something to say to them by-and-by, he will preach them horrible sermons in deeds of blood. Nor has he aught to say to those who are the thorough servants of Jehovah, for they are not there; but his discourse is alone directed to those who are halting between two opinions.

Now, we have these three classes here this morning. We have, I hope, a very large number who are on Jehovah's side, who fear God and serve him; we have a number who are on the side of the evil one, who make no profession of religion, and do not observe even the outward symptoms of it; because they are both inwardly and outwardly the servants of the evil one. But the great mass of my hearers belong to the third class—the waverers. Like empty clouds they are driven hither and thither by the wind; like painted beauties, they lack the freshness of life; they have a name to live and are dead. Procrastinators, double-minded men, undecided persons, to you I speak this morning—"How long halt ye between two opinions?" May the question be answered by God's Spirit in your hearts, and may you be led to say, "No longer, Lord, do I halt; but this day I decide for thee, and am thy servant for ever!"

Let us proceed at once to the text. Instead of giving the divisions at the commencement, I will mention them one by one as I proceed.

I. First, you will note that *the prophet insisted upon the distinction which existed between the worship Baal and the worship of Jehovah*. Most of the people who were before him thought that Jehovah was God, and that Baal was God too; and that for this reason the worship of both was quite consistent. The great mass of them did not reject the God of their fathers wholly, nor did they bow before Baal wholly; but as polytheists, believing in many gods, they thought both Gods might be worshiped, and each of them have a share in their hearts. "No," said the prophet when he began, "this will not do, these are *two* opinions; you can never make them one, they are two contradictory things which can not be combined. I tell you that instead of combining

the two, which is impossible, you are halting between the two, which makes a vast difference." "I will build in my house," said one of them, "an altar for Jehovah here, and an altar for Baal there. I am of one opinion; I believe them both to be God." "No, no," said Elijah, "it can not be so; they are *two*, and must be two. These things are not one opinion, but two opinions. No, you can not unite them." Have I not many here who say, "I am worldly, but I am religious too; I can go to the Music Hall to worship God on Sunday; I went to the Derby races the other day; I go, on the one hand, to the place where I can serve my lusts; I am to be met with in every dancing room of every description, and yet at the same time I say my prayers most devoutly. May I not be a good churchman, or a right good dissenter, and a man of the world too? May I not, after all, hold with the hounds as well as run with the hare? May I not love God and serve the devil too—take the pleasure of each of them, and give my heart to neither? We answer—Not so, they are two opinions; you can not do it, they are distinct and separate. Mark Anthony yoked two lions to his chariot; but there are two lions no man ever yoked together yet—the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the lion of the pit. These can never go together. Two opinions you may hold in politics, perhaps, but then you will be despised by every body, unless you are of one opinion or the other, and act as an independent man. But two opinions in the matter of soul-religion you can not hold. If God be God, serve him, and do it thoroughly; but if this world be God, serve it, and make no profession of religion. If you are a worldling, and think the things of the world the best, serve them; devote yourself to them, do not be kept back by conscience; spite your conscience, and run into sin. But remember, if the Lord be your God, you can not have Baal too; you must have one thing or else the other. "No man can serve two masters." If God be served, he will be a master; and if the devil be served he will not be long before he will be a master; and "ye can not serve two masters." O! be wise, and think not that the two can be mingled together. How many a respectable deacon thinks that he can be covetous, and grasping in business, and grind the faces of the poor, and yet be a saint! O! liar to God and to man! He is no saint; he is the very chief of sinners! How many a very excellent woman, who is received into church fellowship among the people of God, and thinks herself one of the elect, is to be found full of wrath and bitterness, a slave of mischief and of sin, a tattler, a slanderer, a busybody; entering into other people's houses, and turning every thing like comfort out of the minds of those with whom she comes in contact—and yet she is the servant of God and of the devil too! Nay, my lady this will never answer; the two never can be served thoroughly. Serve your master, whoever he be. If you do profess to be religious, be so thoroughly; if you make any profession to be a Christian, be one; but if you are no Christian, do not *pretend* to be. If you love the world, then love it; but cast off the mask, and do not be a hypocrite. The double-minded man is of all men the most despicable; the follower of Janus, who wears two faces, and who can look with one eye upon the (so-called) Christian world with great delight, and give his subscription to the Tract Society, the Bible Society, and the Missionary Society, but who has another eye over there, with which he looks at the Casino, the Coal-hole, and other pleasures, which I do not care to mention, but which some of you may know more of than I wish to know. Such a man, I say, is worse than the most reprobate of men, in the opinion of any one who knows how to judge. Not worse in his open character, but worse really, because he is not honest enough to go through with that he professes. And how many such are there in London, in England; everywhere else! They try to serve both masters; but it can not be; the two things can not be reconciled; God and Mammon, Christ and Belial, these never can meet; there never can be an agreement between them, they never can be brought into unity, and why should you seek to do it? "*Two opinions*," said the prophet. He would not allow any of his hearers to profess to worship both. "No," said he, "these are two opinions, and you are halting between the two."

II. In the second place, *the prophet calls these waverers to an account for the amount of time which they had consumed in making their choice.* Some of them might have replied, "We have not had yet an opportunity of judging between God and Baal; we have not yet had time enough to make up our minds;" but the prophet puts away that objection, and he says, "*How long* halt ye between two opinions? How long? For three years and a half not a drop of rain has fallen at the command of Jehovah; is not that proof enough? Ye have been all this time, three years and a half expecting, till I should come, Jehovah's servant, and give you rain; and yet, though you yourselves are starving, your cattle dead, your fields parched, and your meadows covered with dust, like the very deserts, yet all this time of judgment, and trial and affliction, has not been enough for you to make up your minds. "*How long* then," said he, "halt ye between two opinions?"

I speak not, this morning, to the thoroughly worldly; with them I have now nothing to do; another time I may address them. But I am now speaking to you who are seeking to serve God and to serve Satan; you who are trying to be Christian worldlings, trying to be members of that extraordinary corporation, called the "religious world," which is a thing that never had an existence except in title. You are endeavoring, if you can, to make up your mind which it shall be; you know you can not serve both, and you are coming now to the period when you are saying, "Which shall it be? Shall I go thoroughly into sin, and revel in the pleasures of the earth, or become a servant of God?" Now, I say to you this morning, as the prophet did, "*How long* halt ye?" Some of you have been halting until your hair has grown gray; the sixtieth year of some of you is drawing nigh. Is not sixty years long enough to make up your choice? "*How long* halt ye?" Perhaps one of you may have

tottered into this place, leaning on his staff, and you have been undecided up till now. Your eightieth year has come; you have been a religious character outwardly, but a worldling truly; you are still up to this date halting, saying, "I know not on which side to be." How long, sirs, in the name of reason, in the name of mortality, in the name of death, in the name of eternity, "*How long* halt ye between two opinions?" Ye middle-aged men, ye said when ye were youths, "When we are out of our apprenticeship we will become religious; let us sow our wild oats in our youth, and let us then begin to be diligent servants of the Lord." Lo! ye have come to middle age, and are waiting till that quiet villa shall be built, and ye shall retire from business, and then ye think ye will serve God. Sirs, ye said that same when ye came of age, and when your business began to increase. I therefore solemnly demand of you, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" How much time do you want? O! young man, thou saidst in thine early childhood, when a mother's prayer followed thee, "I will seek God when I come to manhood;" and thou hast passed that day; thou art a man, and more than that, and yet thou art halting still. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" How many of you have been churchgoers and chapel-goers for years! Ye have been impressed, too, many a time, but ye have wiped the tears from your eyes, and have said, "I will seek God and turn to him with full purpose of heart;" and you are now just where you were. How many sermons do you want? How many more Sundays must roll away wasted? How many warnings, how many sicknesses, how many tollings of the bell to warn you that you must die? How many graves must be dug for your family before you will be impressed? How many plagues and pestilences must ravage this city before you will turn to God in truth? "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Would God ye could answer this question, and not allow the sands of life to drop, drop, drop from the glass saying, "When the next goes I will repent," and yet that next one findeth you impenitent. You say, "When the glass is just so low, I will turn to God." No, sir, no; it will not answer for you to talk so; for thou mayest find thy glass empty before thou thoughtest it bad begun to run low, and thou mayest find thyself in eternity when thou didst but think of repenting and turning to God. How long, ye gray heads, how long, ye men of ripe years, how long, ye youths and maidens, how long will ye be in this undecided, unhappy state? "How long halt ye between two opinions?"

Thus we have brought you so far. We have noted that there are two opinions, and we have asked the question, How long time you want to decide? One would think the question would require very little time, if time were all; if the will were not biassed to evil and contrary to good, it would require no more time than the decision of a man who has to choose a halter or life, wealth or poverty; and if we were wise, it would take no time at all; if we understood the things of God, we should not hesitate, but say at once, "Now God is my God, and that for ever."

III. But the prophet charges these people with the absurdity of their position. Some of them said, "What! prophet, may we not continue to halt between two opinions? We are not desperately irreligious, so we are better than the profane, certainly we are not thoroughly pious; but, at any rate, a little piety is better than none, and the mere profession of it keeps us decent, let us try both!" "Now," says the prophet, "how long halt ye?" or, if you like to read it so, "how long *limp* ye between two opinions?" (How long *wriggle* ye between two opinions? would be a good word, if I might employ it.) He represents them as like a man whose legs are entirely out of joint; he first goes on one side, and then on the other, and can not go far either way. I could not describe it without putting myself into a most ludicrous posture. "How long *limp* ye between two opinions?" The prophet laughs at them, as it were. And is it not true, that a man who is neither one thing or another is in a most absurd position? Let him go among the worldlings; they laugh under their sleeve, and say, "This is one of the Exeter Hall saints," or, "That is one of the elect." Let him go among the Christian people, those that are saints, and they say, "How a man can be so inconsistent, how he can come into our midst one day, and the next be found in such and such society, we can not tell." Methinks even the devil himself must laugh at such a man in scorn. "There," says he, "I am every thing that is bad; I do sometimes pretend to be an angel of light, and put on that garb; but you do really excell me in every respect, for I do it to get something by it, but you do not get any thing by it. You do not have the pleasures of this world, and you do not have the pleasures of religion either; you have the fears of religion without its hopes; you are afraid to do wrong, and yet you have no hope of heaven; you have the duties of religion without the joys; you have to do just as religious people do, and yet there is no heart in the matter; you have to sit down, and see the table all spread before you, and then you have not power to eat a single morsel of the precious dainties of the gospel." It is just the same with the world; you dare not go into this or that mischief that brings joy to the wicked man's heart; you think of what society would say. We do not know what to make of you. I might describe you, if I might speak as the Americans do but I will not. Ye are half one thing, and half the other. You come into the society of the saints, and try to talk as they talk; but you are like a man who has been taught French in some day-school in England; he makes a queer sort of Frenchified English, and Englishized French, and every one laughs at him. The English laugh at him for trying to do it, and the French laugh at him for failing in it. If you spoke your own language, if you just spoke out as a sinner, if you professed to be what you are, you would at least get the respect of one side; but now you are rejected by one class, and equally rejected by the other. You come into our midst, we can not

receive you; you go amongst worldlings, they reject you too; you are too good for them, and too bad for us. Where are you to be put? If there were a purgatory, that would be the place for you; where you might be tossed on the one side into ice, and on the other into the burning fire, and that for ever. But as there is no such place as purgatory, and as you really are a servant of Satan, and not a child of God, take heed, take heed, how long you stay in a position so absurdly ridiculous. At the day of judgment, wavering men will be the scoff and the laughter even of hell. The angels will look down in scorn upon the man who was ashamed to own his Master thoroughly, while hell itself will ring with laughter. When that grand hypocrite shall come there—that undecided man, they will say, "Aha! we have to drink the dregs, but above them there were sweets; you have only the dregs. You dare not go into the riotous and boisterous mirth of our youthful days, and now you have come here with us to drink the same dregs; you have the punishment without the pleasure." O! how foolish will even the damned call you, to think that you halted between two opinions! "How long limp ye, wriggle ye, walk ye in an absurd manner, between two opinions?" In adopting either opinion, you would at least be consistent; but in trying to hold both, to seek to be both one and the other, and not knowing which to decide upon, you are limping between two opinions. I think a good translation is a very different one from that of the authorized version—"How long hop ye upon two sprays?" So the Hebrew has it. Like a bird, which perpetually flies from bough to bough, and is never still. If it keeps on doing this, it will never have a nest. And so with you: you keep leaping between two boughs, from one opinion to the other; and so between the two, you get no rest for the sole of your foot, no peace, no joy, no comfort, but are just a poor miserable thing all your life long.

IV. We have brought you thus far, then; we have shown you the absurdity of this halting. Now, very briefly, the next point in my text is this. The multitude who had worshiped Jehovah and Baal, and who were now undecided, might reply, "*But how do you know that we do not believe that Jehovah is God? How do you know we are not decided in opinion?*" The prophet meets this objection by saying, "I know you are not decided in opinion, because *you are not decided in practice*. If God be God, *follow him*; if Baal, *follow him*. You are not decided in practice." Men's opinions are not such things as we imagine. It is generally said now-a-days, that all opinions are right, and if a man shall honestly hold his convictions, he is, without doubt, right. Not so; truth is not changed by our opinions; a thing is either true or false of itself, and it is neither made true nor false by our views of it. It is for us, therefore, to judge carefully, and not to think that any opinion will do. Besides, opinions have influence upon the conduct, and if a man have a wrong opinion, he will, most likely, in some way or other, have wrong conduct, for the two usually go together. "Now," said Elijah, "that you are not the servants of God, is quite evident, for you do not follow him; that you are not thoroughly servants of Baal either, is quite evident, for you do not follow him." Now I address myself to you again. Many of you are not the servants of God; you do not follow him; you follow him a certain distance in the form, but not in the spirit; you follow him on Sundays; but what do you do on Mondays? You follow him in religious company, in evangelical drawing-rooms, and so on; but what do you do in other society? You do not follow him. And, on the other hand, you do not follow Baal; you go a little way with the world, but there is a place to which you dare not go; you are too respectable to sin as others sin or to go the whole way of the world. Ye dare not go to the utmost lengths of evil. "Now," says the prophet, twining them upon this—"if the Lord be God, follow him. Let your conduct be consistent with your opinions; if you believe the Lord to be God, carry it out in your daily life; be holy, be prayerful, trust in Christ, be faithful, be upright, be loving; give your heart to God, and follow him. If Baal be God, then follow him; but do not pretend to follow the other." Let your conduct back up your opinion; if you really think that the follies of this world are the best, and believe that a fine fashionable life, a life of frivolity and gayety, flying from flower to flower, getting honey from none, is the most desirable, carry it out. If you think the life of the debauchee is so very desirable, if you think his end is to be much wished for, if you think his pleasures are right, follow them. Go the whole way with them. If you believe that to cheat in business is right, put it up over your door—"I sell trickery goods here;" or if you do not say it to the public, tell your conscience so; but do not deceive the public; do not call the people to prayers when you are opening a "British Bank." If you mean to be religious, follow out your determination thoroughly; but if you mean to be worldly, go the whole way with the world. Let your conduct follow out your opinions. Make your life tally with your profession. Carry out your opinions whatever they be. But you dare not; you are too cowardly to sin as others do, honestly before God's sun; your conscience will not let you do it—and yet you are just so fond of Satan, that you dare not leave him wholly and become thoroughly the servants of God. O do not let your character be like your profession; either keep up your profession, or give it up: do be one thing or the other.

V. And now the prophet cries, "If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him," and in so doing, *he states the ground of his practical claim*. Let your conduct be consistent with your opinions. There is another objection raised by the crowd. "Prophet," says one, "then comest to demand a practical proof of our affection; then sayest, Follow God. Now, if I believe God to be God, and that is my opinion, yet I do not see what claim he has to my opinions." Now, mark how the prophet puts it: he says, "*If God be God*, follow him." The reason why I claim that you should follow out your opinion concerning God is, that God is God; God has a claim

upon you, as creatures, for your devout obedience. One person replies, "What profit should I have, if I served God thoroughly? Should I be more happy? Should I get on better in this world? Should I have more peace of mind?" Nay, nay, that is a secondary consideration. The only question for you is, "If God be God follow him." Not if it be more advantageous to you; but, "if *God be God*, follow him." The secularist would plead for religion on the ground that religion might be the best for this world, and best for the world to come. Not so with the prophet; he says, "I do not put it on that ground, I insist that it is your bounden duty, if you believe in God, simply because he is God, to serve him and obey him. I do not tell you it is for your advantage—it may be, I believe it is—but that I put aside from the question; I demand of you that you follow God, if you believe him to be *God*. If you do not think he is God; if you really think that the devil is God, then follow him; his pretended godhead shall be your plea, and you shall be consistent; but if God be God, if he made you, I demand that you serve him; if it is he who puts the breath into your nostrils, I demand that you obey him. If God be really worthy of your worship, and you really think so, I demand that you either follow him, or else deny that he is God at all." Now, professor, if thou sayest that Christ's gospel is the gospel, if thou believest in the divinity of the gospel, and puttest thy trust in Christ, I demand of thee to follow out the gospel, not merely because it will be to thy advantage, but because the gospel is divine. If thou makest a profession of being a child of God, if thou art a believer, and thinkest and believest religion is the best, the service of God the most desirable, I do not come to plead with thee because of any advantage thou wouldst get by being holy; it is on this ground that I put it, that the Lord is God; and if he be God, it is thy business to serve him. If his gospel be true, and thou believest it to be true, it is thy duty to carry it out. If thou sayest Christ is not the Son of God, carry out thy Jewish or thy infidel convictions, and see whether it will end well. If thou dost not believe Christ to be the Son of God, if thou art a Mohammedan, be consistent, carry out thy Mohammedan convictions, and see whether it will end well. But, take heed, take heed! If, however, thou sayest God is God, and Christ the Saviour, and the gospel true; I demand of thee, only on this account, that thou carry it out. What a strong plea some would think the prophet might have had, if he had said, "God is your fathers, God, therefore follow him!" But no, he did not come down to that; he said, "If God be God—I do not care whether he be your fathers' God or not—follow him." "Why do you go to chapel?" says one, "and not to church?" "Because my father and grandfather were dissenters." Ask a churchman, very often, why he attends the establishment. "Well, our family were always brought up to it; that is why I go." Now, I do think that the worst of all reasons for a particular religion, is that of our being brought up to it. I never could see that at all. I have attended the house of God with my father and my grandfather; but I thought, when I read the Scriptures, that it was my business to judge for myself. I knew that my father and my grandfather took little children in their arms, and put drops of water on their faces, and they were baptized. I took up my Bible, and I could not see any thing about babes being baptized. I picked up a little Greek; and I could not discover that the word "baptized" meant to sprinkle; so I said to myself, "Suppose they are good men, they may be wrong; and though I love and revere them, yet it is no reason why I should imitate them." And therefore I left them, and became what I am to-day, a Baptist minister, so called, but I hope a great deal more a Christian than a Baptist. It is seldom I mention it; I only do so by way of illustration here. Many a one will go to chapel, because his grandmother did. Well, she was a good old soul, but I do not see that she ought to influence your judgment. "That does not signify," says one, "I do not like to leave the church of my fathers." No more do I; I would rather belong to the same denomination with my father; I would not willfully differ from any of my friends, or leave their sect and denomination, but let God be above our parents; though our parents are at the very top of our hearts, and we love them and reverence them, and in all other matters pay them strict obedience, yet, with regard to religion, to our own Master we stand or fall, and we claim to have the right of judging for ourselves as men, and then we think it our duty, having judged, to carry out our convictions. Now I am not going to say, "If God be your mother's God, serve him;" though that would be a very good argument with some of you; but with you waverers, the only plea I use is, "If God be God, serve him;" if the gospel be right, believe it; if a religious life be right, carry it out; if not, give it up. I only put my argument on Elijah's plea—"If God be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." VI. And now I make my appeal to the halters and waverers, with some questions, which I pray the Lord to apply. Now I will put this question to them: "*How long halt ye?*" I will tell them; ye will halt between two opinions, all of you who are undecided, *until God shall answer by fire*. Fire was not what these poor people wanted that were assembled there. When Elijah says, that "the God that answereth by fire let him be God," I fancy I hear some of them saying, "No; the God that answereth by water let him be God; we want rain badly enough." "No," said Elijah, "if rain should come, you would say that it was the common course of providence; and that would not decide you." I tell you, all the providences that befall you undecided ones will not decide you. God may surround you with providences; he may surround you with frequent warnings from the death-bed of your fellows; but providences will never decide you. It is not the God of rain, but the God of fire that will do it. There are two ways in which you undecided ones will be decided by-and-by. You that are decided for God will want no decision; you that are decided for Satan will want no decision; you are on Satan's side, and must dwell for ever in eternal burning. But these undecided ones want something to decide them, and will have either one of the two things; they will either have the fire of God's Spirit to decide them, or else the fire of eternal judgment, and that will decide them. I may preach to

you, my hearers; and all the ministers in the world may preach to you that are wavering, but you will never decide for God through the force of your own will. None of you, if left to your natural judgment, to the use of your own reason, will ever decide for God. You may decide for him merely as an outward form, but not as an inward spiritual thing, which should possess your heart as a Christian, as a believer in the doctrine of effectual grace. I know that none of you will ever decide for God's gospel, unless God decide you; and I tell you that you must either be decided by the descent of the fire of his Spirit into your hearts now, or else in the day of judgment. O! which shall it be? O! that the prayer might be put up by the thousand lips that are here: "Lord, decide me now by the fire of thy Spirit; O! let thy Spirit descend into my heart, to burn up the bullock, that I may be a whole burnt offering to God; to burn up the wood and the stones of my sin; to burn up the very dust of worldliness; ah, and to lick up the water of my impiety, which now lieth in the trenches, and my cold indifference, that seek to put out the sacrifice." "O make this heart rejoice or ache! Decide this doubt for me; And if it be not broken, break, And heal it, if it be." "O sovereign grace, my heart subdue; I would be led in triumph too, A willing captive to my Lord, To sing the triumphs of his word." And it may be, that whilst I speak, the mighty fire, unseen by men, and unfelt by the vast majority of you, shall descend into some heart which has of old been dedicated to God by his divine election, which is now like an altar broken down, but which God, by his free grace, will this day build up. O! I pray that that influence may enter into some hearts, that there may be some go out of this place, saying, "Tis done, the great transaction's done, I am my Lord's, and he is mine; He drew me, and I followed on, Glad to obey the voice divine." Now rest my undivided heart, fixed on this stable center, rest." O! that many may say that! But remember, if it be not so, the day is coming—*dies irae*, the day of wrath and anger—when ye shall be decided of God; when the firmament shall be lit up with lightnings, when the earth shall roll with drunken terror, when the pillars of the universe shall shake, and God shall sit, in the person of his Son, to judge the world in righteousness. You will not be undecided then, when, "Depart ye cursed," or "Come, ye blessed," shall be your doom. There will be no indecision then, when you shall meet him with joy or else with terror—when, "rocks hide me, mountains on me fall," shall be your doleful shriek; or else your joyful song shall be, "The Lord is come." In that day you will be decided; but till then, unless the living fire of the Holy Spirit decide you, you will go on halting between two opinions. May God grant you his Holy Spirit that you may turn unto him and be saved!

Encouragement for the Depressed

A Sermon (No. 3489) Published on Thursday, December 9th, 1915. Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington *On Lord's-day Evening, 27th, August 1871*. "For who hath despised the day of small things?"—Zechariah 4:10.

ZECHARIAH WAS ENGAGED in the building of the temple. When its foundations were laid, it struck everybody as being a very small edifice compared with the former glorious structure of Solomon. The friends of the enterprise lamented that it should be so small; the foes of it rejoiced and uttered strong expressions of contempt. Both friends and foes doubted whether, even on that small scale, the structure would ever be completed. They might lay the foundations, and they might rear the walls a little way, but they were too feeble a folk, possessed of too little riches and too little strength, to carry out the enterprise. It was the day of small things. Friends trembled; foes jeered. But the prophet rebuked them both—rebuked the unbelief of friends, and the contempt of enemies, by this question, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" and by a subsequent prophecy which removed the fear.

Now we shall use this question at this time for the comfort of two sorts of people—first, *for weak believers*, and secondly, *for feeble workers*. Our object shall be the strengthening of the hands that hang down, and the confirming of the feeble knees. We will begin, first of all, with:—

I. WEAK BELIEVERS

Let us describe them. It is with them a day of small things. Probably you have only been lately brought into the family of God. A few months ago you were a stranger to the divine life, and to the things of God. You have been born again, and you have the weakness of the infant. You are not strong yet, as you will be when you have grown in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It is the early day with you, and it is also the day of small things. Now your *knowledge is small*. My dear brother, you have not been a Bible student long; thank God that you know yourself a sinner, and Christ your Saviour. That is precious knowledge; but you feel now what you once would not have confessed—your own ignorance of the things of God. Especially do the deep things of God trouble you. There are some doctrines that are very simple to other believers that appear to be mysterious, and even to be depressing to you. They are high—you cannot attain to

them. They are to you what hard nuts would be to children, whose teeth have not yet appeared. Well, be not at all alarmed about this. All the men in God's family have once been children too. There are some that seem to be born with knowledge—Christians that come to a height in Christ very rapidly. But these are only here and there. Israel did not produce a Samson every day. Most have to go through a long period of spiritual infancy and youth. And, alas! There are but few in the Church, even now, who might be called fathers there. Do not marvel, therefore, if you are somewhat small in your knowledge. Your *discernment, too, is small*. It is possible that anybody with a fluent tongue would lead you into error. You have, however, discernment, if you are a child of God, sufficient to be kept from deadly errors, for though there are some who would, if it were possible, deceive even the very elect, yet the elect cannot be deceived, for, the life of God being in them, they discern between the precious and the vile—they choose not the things of the world, but they follow after the things of God. Your discernment, however, seeming so small, need not afflict you. It is by reason of use, when the senses are exercised, that we fully discern between all that is good and all that is evil. Thank God for a little discernment—though you see men as trees walking, and your eyes are only half opened. A little light is better than none at all. Not long since you were in total darkness. Now if there be a glimmer, be thankful, for remember where a glimmer can enter the full noontide can come, yea, and shall come in due season. Therefore, despise not the time of small discernment. Of course, you, my dear brother or sister, have *small experience*. I trust you will not ape experience, and try to talk as if you had the experience of the veteran saints when you are as yet only a raw recruit. You have not yet done business on the great waters. The more fierce temptations of Satan have not assailed you—the wind has been tempered as yet to the shorn lamb; God has not hung heavy weights on slender threads, but hath put a small burden on a weak back. Be thankful that it is so. Thank him for the experience that you have, and do not be desponding because you have not more. It will all come in due time. "Despise not the day of small things." It is always unwise to get down a biography and say, "Oh! I cannot be right, because I have not felt all this good man did." If a child of ten years of age were to take down the diary of his grandfather and were to say, "Because I do not feel my grandfather's weakness, do not require to use his spectacles, or lean upon his staff, therefore I am not one of the same family," it would be very foolish reasoning. Your experience will ripen. As yet it is but natural that it should be green. Wait a while and bless God for what you have.

Probably this, however, does not trouble you so much as one other thing, you have *but small faith*, and, that faith being small, your feelings are very variable. I often hear this from young beginners in the divine life, "I was so happy a month ago, but I have lost that happiness now." Perhaps tomorrow, after they have been at the house of God, they will be as cheerful as possible, but the next day their joy is gone. Beware, my dear Christian friends, of living by feeling. John Bunyan puts down Mr. Live-by-feeling as one of the worst enemies of the town of Mansoul. I think he said he was hanged. I am afraid he, somehow or other, escaped from the executioner, for I very commonly meet him; and there is no villain that hates the souls of men and causes more sorrow to the people of God than this Mr. Live-by-feeling. He that lives by feeling will be happy today, and unhappy tomorrow; and if our salvation depended upon our feelings, we should be lost one day and saved another, for they are as fickle as the weather, and go up and down like a barometer. We live by faith, and if that faith be weak, bless God that weak faith is faith, and that weak faith is true faith. If thou believest in Christ Jesus, though thy faith be as a grain of mustard seed, it will save thee, and it will, by-and-bye, grow into something stronger. A diamond is a diamond, and the smallest scrap of it is of the same nature as the Koh-i-noor, and he that hath but little faith hath faith for all that; and it is not great faith that is essential to salvation, but faith that links the soul to Christ; and that soul is, therefore, saved. Instead of mourning so much that thy faith is not strong, bless God that thou hast any faith at all, for if he sees that thou despisest the faith he has given thee, it may be long before he gives thee more. Prize that little, and when he sees that thou art so glad and thankful for that little, then will he multiply it and increase it, and thy faith shall mount even to the full assurance of faith.

I think I hear you also add to all this the complaint that your *other graces seem to be small* too. "Oh," say you, "my patience is so little. If I have a little pain I begin to cry out. I was in hopes I should be able to bear it without murmuring. My courage is so little: the blush is on my cheek if anybody asks me about Christ—I think I could hardly confess him before half a dozen, much less before the world. I am very weak indeed." Ah! I don't wonder. I have known some who have been strong by reason of years, and have still been lacking in that virtue. But where faith is weak, of course, the rest will be weak. A plant that has a weak root will naturally have a weak stem and then will have but weak fruit. Your weakness of faith sends a weakness through the whole. But for all this, though you are to seek for more faith, and consequently for more grace—for stronger graces, yet do not despise what graces you have. Thank God for them, and pray that the few clusters that are now upon you, may be multiplied a thousand-fold to the praise of the glory of his grace. Thus I have tried to describe those who are passing through the day of small things.

But the text says, "*Who hath despised the day of small things?*" Well, some have, but there is a great comfort

in this—*God the Father has not*. He has looked upon you—you with little grace, and little love, and little faith, and he has not despised you. No, God is always near the feeble saint. If I saw a young man crossing a common alone, I should not be at all astonished, and I should not look round for his father. But I saw today, as I went home, a very tiny little tot right out on the Common—a pretty little girl, and I thought, "The father or mother are near somewhere." And truly there was the father behind a tree, whom I had not seen. I was as good as sure that the little thing was not there all alone. And when I see a little weak child of God, I feel sure that God the Father is near, watching with wakeful eye, and tending with gracious care the feebleness of his new-born child. He does not despise you if you are resting on his promise. The humble and contrite have a word all to themselves in Scripture, that these he will not despise.

It is another sweet and consoling thought that *God the Son does not despise* the day of small things. Jesus Christ does not, for you remember this word, "He shall carry the lambs in his bosom." We put that which we most prize nearest our heart, and this is what Jesus does. Some of us, perhaps, have outgrown the state in which we were lambs, but to ride in that heavenly carriage of the Saviour's bosom—we might well be content to go back and be lambs again. He does not despise the day of small things.

And it is equally consolatory to reflect that *the Holy Spirit does not despise* the day of small things, for he it is who, having planted in the heart the grain of mustard seed, watches over it till it becomes a tree. He it is who, having seen the new-born child of grace, doth nurse, and feed, and tend it until it comes to the stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. The blessed Godhead despises not the weak believer. O weak believer, be consoled by this.

Who is it, then, that may despise the day of small things? *Perhaps Satan has* told you and whispered in your ear that such little grace as yours is not worth having, that such an insignificant plant as you are will surely be rooted up. Now let me tell you that Satan is a liar, for he himself does not despise the day of small things; and I am sure of that, because he always makes a dead set upon those who are just coming to Christ. As soon as ever he sees that the soul is a little wounded by conviction, as soon as ever he discovers that a heart begins to pray, he will assault it with fiercer temptations than ever. I have known him try to drive such a one to suicide, or to lead him into worse sin than he has ever committed before. He:— "Trembles when he sees The weakest saint upon his knees." He may tell you that the little grace in you is of no account, but he knows right well that it is the handful of corn on the top of the mountain, the fruit whereof shall shake like Lebanon. He knows it is the little grace in the heart that overthrows his kingdom there. "Ah!" say you, "but I have been greatly troubled lately because I have many *friends that despise me*, because though I can hardly say I am a believer, yet I have some desire towards God." What sort of friends are these? Are they worldly friends? Oh! Do not fret about what they say. It would never trouble me if I were an artist, if a blind man were to utter the sharpest criticism on my works. What does he know about it? And when an ungodly person begins to say about your piety that it is deficient and faulty, poor soul, let him say what he will—it need not affect you. "Ah!" say you, "the persons that seem to despise me, and to put me out, and tell me that I am no child of God, are, I believe, Christians." Well then, do two things: first, lay what they say to you in a measure to heart, because it may be if God's children do not see in you the mark of a child, perhaps you are not a child. Let it lead you to examination. Oh! Dear friends, it is very easy to be self-deceived, and God may employ, perhaps, one of his servants to enlighten you upon this, and deliver you from a strong delusion. But, on the other hand, if you really do trust in your Saviour, if you have begun to pray, if you have some love to God, and any Christian treats you harshly as if he thought you a hypocrite, forgive him—bear it. He has made a mistake. He would not do so if he knew you better. Say within yourself, "After all, if my brother does not know me, it is enough if my Father does. If my Father loves me, though my brother gives me the cold shoulder, I will be sorry for it, but it shall not break my heart. I will cling the closer to my Lord because his servants seem shy of me." Why, it is not much wonder, is it, that some Christians should be afraid of some of you converts, for think what you used to be a little while ago? Why, a mother hears her son say he is converted. A month or two ago she knew where he spent his evenings, and what were his habits of sin, and though she hopes it is so, she is afraid lest she should lead him to presumption, and she rejoices with trembling, and, perhaps, tells him more about her trembling than she does about her rejoicing. Why, the saints of old could not think Saul was converted at first. He was to be brought into the church meeting and received—I will suppose the case. I should not wonder before he came, when he saw the elders, one of them would say, "Well, the young man seems to know something of the grace of God: there is certainly a change in him, but it is a remarkable thing that he should wish to join the very people he was persecuting; but, perhaps, it is a mere impulse. It may be, after all, that he will go back to his old companions." Do you wonder they should say so? Because I don't. I am not at all surprised. I am sorry when there are unjust suspicions, I am sorry when a genuine child of God is questioned; but I would not have you lay it much to heart. As I have said before, if your Father knows you, you need not be so broken in heart because your brother does not. Be glad that God does not despise the day of small things. And now let me say to you who are in this state of small things, that I *earnestly trust that you will not*

yourselves despise the day of small things. "How can we do that?" say you. Why, *you can do it by desponding.* Why, I think there was a time when you would have been ready to leap for joy, if you had been told that you would have given you a little faith, and now you have got a little faith, instead of rejoicing, you are sighing, and moaning, and mourning. Do not do so. Be thankful for moonlight, and you shall get sunlight: be thankful for sunlight, and you shall get that light of heaven which is as the light of seven days. Do not despond lest you seem to despise the mercy which God has given you. A poor patient that has been very, very lame and weak, and could not rise from his bed, is at last able to walk with a stick. "Well," he says to himself, "I wish I could walk, and run, and leap as other men." Suppose he sits down and frets because he cannot. His physician might put his hand on his shoulder and say, "My good fellow, why, you ought to be thankful you can stand at all. A little while ago you know you could not stand upright. Be glad for what you have got: don't seem to despise what has been done for you." I say to every Christian here, while you long after strength, don't seem to despise the grace that God has bestowed, but rejoice and bless his name.

You can despise the day of small things, again, *by not seeking after more.* "That is strange," say you. Well, a man who has got a little, and does not want more—it looks as if he despised the little. He who has a little light, and does not ask for more light, does not care for light at all. You that have a little faith, and do not want more faith, do not value faith at all—you are despising it. On the one hand, do not despond because you have the day of small things, but in the next place, do *not stand still and be satisfied with what you have*; but prove your value of the little by earnestly seeking after more grace. Do not despise the grace that God has given you, but bless God for it: and do this in the presence of his people. If you hold your tongue about your grace, and never let anyone know, surely it must be because you do not think it is worth saying anything about. Tell your brethren, tell your sisters, and they of the Lord's household, that the Lord hath done gracious things for you; and then it will be seen that you do not despise his grace.

And now let us run over a thought or two about these small things in weak believers. Be it remembered that little faith is saving faith, and that the day of small things is a day of safe things. Be it remembered that it is natural that living things should begin small. The man is first a babe. The daylight is first of all twilight. It is by little and by little that we come unto the stature of men in Christ Jesus. The day of small things is not only natural, but promising. Small things are living things. Let them alone, and they grow. The day of small things has its beauty and its excellence. I have known some who in after years would have liked to have gone back to their first days. Oh! well do some of us remember when we would have gone over hedge and ditch to hear a sermon. We had not much knowledge, but oh! how we longed to know. We stood in the aisles then, and we never got tired. Now soft seats we need, and very comfortable places, and the atmosphere must neither be too hot nor too cold. We are getting dainty now perhaps; but in those first young days of spiritual life, what appetites we had for divine truth, and what zeal, what sacred fire was in our heart! True, some of it was wild fire, and, perhaps, the energy of the flesh mingled with the power of the spirit, but, for all that, God remembers the love of our espousals, and so do we remember it too. The mother loves her grown-up son, but sometimes she thinks she does not love him as she did when she could cuddle him in her arms. Oh! the beauty of a little child! Oh! the beauty of a lamb in the faith! I daresay, the farmer and the butcher like the sheep better than the lambs, but the lambs are best to look at, at any rate; and the rosebud—there is a charm about it that there is not in the full-blown rose. And so in the day of small things there is a special excellence that we ought not to despise. Besides, small as grace may be in the heart, it is divine—it is a spark from the ever-blazing sun. He is a partaker of the divine nature who has even a little living faith in Christ. And being divine, it is immortal. Not all the devils in hell could quench the feeblest spark of grace that ever dropped into the heart of man. If God has given thee faith as a grain of mustard seed, it will defy all earth and hell, all time and eternity, ever to destroy it. So there is much reason why we should not despise the day of small things.

One word and I leave this point. You Christians, don't despise anybody, but specially do not despise any in whom you see even a little love to Christ. But do more—look after them, look after the little ones. I think I have heard of a shepherd who had a remarkably fine flock of sheep, and he had a secret about them. He was often asked how it was that his flocks seemed so much to excel all others. At last he told the secret—"I give my principal attention to the lambs." Now you elders of the church, and you my matronly sisters, you that know the Lord, and have known him for years, look up the lambs, search them out, and take a special care of them; and if they are well nurtured in their early days they will get a strength of spiritual constitution that will make them the joy of the Good Shepherd during the rest of their days. Now I leave that point. In the second place, I said that I would address a word or two to:—

II. FEEBLE WORKERS

Thank God, there are many workers here tonight, and maybe they will put themselves down as feeble. May the words I utter be an encouragement to them, and to feeble workers collectively. When a church begins, it

is usually small; and the day of small things is a time of considerable anxiety and fear. I may be addressing some who are members of a newly-organised church. Dear brethren, do not despise the day of small things. Rest assured that God does not save by numbers, and that results are not in the spiritual kingdom in proportion to numbers. I have been reading lately with considerable care the life of John Wesley by two or three different authors in order to get as well as I could a fair idea of the good man; but one thing I have noticed—that the beginnings of the work which has become so wonderfully large were very small indeed. Mr. Wesley and his first brethren were not rich people. Nearly all that joined him were poor. Here and there, there was a person of some standing, but the Methodists were the poor of the land. And his first preachers were not men of education. One or two were so, but the most were good outdoor preachers—head preachers, magnificent preachers as God made them by his Spirit; but they were not men who had had the benefit of college training, or who were remarkable for ability. The Methodists had neither money nor eminent men at first, and their numbers were very few. During the whole life of that good man, which was protracted for so many years, the denomination did not attain any very remarkable size. They were few, and apparently feeble; but Methodism was never so glorious as it was at first, and there never were so many conversions, I believe, as in those early days. Now I speak sorrowfully. It is a great denomination. It abounds in wealth: I am glad it does. It has mighty orators: I rejoice it has. But it has no increase, no conversion. This year and other years it remains stationary. I do not say this because that is an exceptional denomination, for almost all others have the same tale. Year by year as the statistics come in, it is just this. "No increase—hardly hold our ground." I use that as an illustration here. This church will get in precisely the same condition if we do not look out—just the same state. When we have not the means we get the blessing, and when we seem to have the might and power, then the blessing does not come. Oh! may God send us poverty; may God send us lack of means, and take away our power of speech if it must be, and help us only to stammer, if we may only thus get the blessing. Oh! I crave to be useful to souls, and all the rest may go where it will. And each church must crave the same. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Instead of despising the day of small things, we ought to be encouraged. It is by the small things that God seems to work, but the great things he does not often use. He won't have Gideon's great host—let them go to their homes—let the mass of them go. Bring them down to the water: pick out only the men that lap, and then there is a very few. You can tell them almost on your fingers' ends—just two or three hundred men. Then Gideon shall go forth against the Midianites; and as the cake of barley bread smote the tent, and it lay along, so the sound of the sword of the Lord and of Gideon at the dead of night shall make the host to tremble, and the Lord God shall get to himself the victory. Never mind your feebleness, brethren, your fewness, your poverty, your want of ability. Throw your souls into God's cause, pray mightily, lay hold on the gates of heaven, stir heaven and earth, rather than be defeated in winning souls, and you will see results that will astonish you yet. "Who hath despised the day of small things?"

Now take the case of each Christian individually. Every one of us ought to be at work for Christ, but the great mass of us cannot do great things. Don't despise, then, the day of little things. You can only give a penny. Now then, he that sat over by the treasury did not despise the widow's two mites that made a farthing. Your little thank-offering, if given from your heart, is as acceptable as if it had been a hundred times as much. Don't, therefore, neglect to do the little. Don't despise the day of small things. You can only give away a tract in the street. Don't say, "I won't do that." Souls have been saved by the distribution of tracts and sermons. Scatter them, scatter them—they will be good seed. You know not where they may fall. You can only write a letter to a friend sometimes about Christ. Don't neglect to do it: write one tomorrow. Remember a playmate of yours; you may take liberties with him about his soul from your intimacy with him. Write to him about his state before God, and urge him to seek the Saviour. Who knows?—a sermon may miss him, but a letter from the well-known school companion will reach his heart. Mother, it is only two or three little children at home that you have an influence over. Despise not the day of small things. Take them tomorrow; put your arms around their necks as they kneel by you—pray, "God bless my boys and girls, and save them"—tell them of Christ now. Oh! How well can mothers preach to children! I can never forget my mother's teaching. On the Sunday night, when we were at home, she would have us round the table and explain the Scriptures as we read, and then pray; and one night she left an impression upon my mind that never will be erased, when she said, "I have told you, my dear children, the way of salvation, and if you perish you will perish justly. I shall have to say 'Amen' to your condemnation if you are condemned"; and I could not bear that. Anybody else might say "Amen," but not my mother. Oh! You don't know—you that have to deal with children—what you may do. Despise not these little opportunities. Put a word in edgeways for Christ—you that go about in trains, you that go into workshops and factories. If Christians were men who were all true to their colours, I think we should soon see a great change come over our great establishments. Speak up for Jesus—be not ashamed of him, and because you can say but little, don't refuse, therefore, to say that, but rather say it over twenty times, and so make the little into much. Again, and again, and again, repeat the feeble stroke, and there shall come to be as much result from it as from one tremendous blow. God accepts your little works if they are done in faith in his dear Son. God will give success to your little works: God will educate you by your little works to do greater works; and your little works may call out others who shall do greater works by far than ever you shall

be able to accomplish. Evangelists, go on preaching at the street corner—you that visit the low lodging-houses, go on. Get into the room and talk of Jesus Christ there as you have done. You that go into the country towns on the Sabbath and speak on the village-greens of Christ, go on with it. I am glad to see you, but I am glad to miss you when I know you are about the Master's work. We don't want to keep the salt in the box: let it be rubbed into the putrid mass to stay the putrefaction. We don't want the seed forever in the corn-bin: let it be scattered and it will give us more. Oh! brethren and sisters, wake up if any of you are asleep. Don't let an ounce of strength in this church be wasted—not a single grain of ability, either in the way of doing, or praying, or giving, or holy living. Spend and be spent, for who hath despised the day of small things? The Lord encourage weak believers, and the Lord accept the efforts of feeble workers, and send to both his richest benediction for Christ's 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*. If 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 preacher 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.*

In order that all men may know for a certainty what are the doctrines of Mr. SPURGEON, we beg to remind the readers of The New Park Street Pulpit that we have published a "CONFESSION OF FAITH," which that gentleman edited, and which he has put forth as the articles of his own creed. Price—In Paper Covers, 4d. Cloth, 8d. Roan, gilt edges, 1s. PASSMORE & ALABASTER, Publishers, 18, Paternoster Row.

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 involve God's grace changing its living nature. God's immutability becoming variable, God's faithfulness becoming changeable, and God, himself being undeified; for all these things falling away would necessitate.

III. But if a child of God could fall away, and grace could cease in a man's heart—now comes the third question—Paul says, **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO BE RENEWED**. What did the Apostle mean? One eminent commentator says, he meant that it would be very 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 wilt 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 militating 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 knows 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.

II. 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."

God's Word Not To Be Refused

A Sermon (No. 3492) Published on Thursday, December 30th, 1915. Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington *On Lord's-day Evening, 27th November, 1870.* "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we

escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven."—Hebrews 12:25.

WE ARE NOT a cowering multitude gathered in trembling fear around the smoking mount of Horeb; we have come where the great central figure is the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. We have gathered virtually in the outer circle of which the saints above and holy angels make the inner ring. And now tonight Jesus speaks to us in the gospel. So far as his gospel shall be preached by us here, it shall not be the word of man, but the word of God; and although it comes to you through a feeble tongue, yet the truth itself is not feeble, nor is it any less divine than if Christ himself should speak it with his own lips. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." The text contains:—

I. AN EXHORTATION OF A VERY SOLEMN, EARNEST KIND.

It does not say, "*Refuse* not him that speaketh," but "*See* that ye refuse not him that speaketh"—that is, "be very circumspect that by no means, accidental or otherwise, you do refuse the Christ of God, who now in the gospel speaks to you. Be watchful, be earnest, lest even through inadvertence ye should refuse the prophet of the gospel dispensation—Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who speaks in the gospel from heaven to the sons of men." It means, "Give earnest heed and careful attention, that by no means, and in no way you refuse him that speaketh." My object tonight will be to help you, beloved friends, especially you that have not laid hold on Christ, who are not the children of Zion, who are joyful in their king—to help you tonight, that you may see to it.

And to go to our point at once, we shall have many things to say, and we shall speak them in brief sentences, hoping that the thoughts as they arise may be accepted by your mind, and may, by God's Spirit, work upon your hearts and conscience. There is great need of this exhortation from many considerations not mentioned in the text. A few of these we will hint at first.

First, *from the excellency of the Word of God itself*. "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh." That which Jesus speaks concerns your soul, concerns your everlasting destiny; it is God's wisdom; God's way of mercy; God's plan by which you may be saved. If this were a secondary matter, ye need not be so earnest about receiving it, but of all things under heaven, nothing so concerns you as the gospel. See, then, that ye refuse not this precious Word, more precious than gold or rubies—which alone can save your souls.

See to this, again, because *there is an enemy of yours who will do all he can that you may refuse him that speaketh*. Satan is always busiest where the gospel is most earnestly preached. Let the sower scatter handfuls of seeds, and birds will find out the seeds and soon devour them. Let the gospel be preached, and these birds of the air, fiends of hell, will soon by some means try to remove these truths from your hearts, lest they should take root in your hearts and bring forth fruit unto repentance.

Give earnest heed, again, "that ye refuse not him that speaketh," because *the tendency of your own mind* will be to refuse Christ. Oh! sirs, ye are fallen through your first father, Adam, and the tendencies now of your souls are towards evil, and not towards the right, and when the Lord comes from heaven to you, you will reject him if left to yourselves. Watch, then, I say; see that ye refuse not, stir up your souls, awaken your minds, lest this delirious tendency of sin should make you angry with your best friend, and constrain you to thrust from you that which is your only hope for the hereafter. When a man knows that he has a bad tendency which may injure him, if he be wise he watches against it. So, knowing this, which God's Word tells you, watch, I pray you, lest ye refuse him that speaketh.

Bethink you well, too, that you have need to see to this, because *some of you have rejected Christ long enough already*. He has spoken to you from this pulpit, from other pulpits, from the Bible, from the sick-bed. He spoke to you lately in the funeral knell of your buried friend—many voices, but all with this one note, "Come to me, repent, be saved"; but until now ye have refused "him that speaketh." Will not the time past suffice to have played this mischievous game? Will not the years that have rolled into eternity bear enough witness against you? Must ye add to all this weight by again refusing? Oh! I implore you to see to it that ye do not again "refuse him that speaketh from heaven," for there is not a word of that which he speaks, but what is love to your souls. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came not armed with terrors to work wrath among the sons of men; all was mercy, all was grace, and to those who listen to him he has nothing to speak but tenderness and loving-kindness; your sins shall be forgiven you; the time of your ignorances God will wink at; your transgressions shall be cast into the depths of the sea; for you there shall be happiness on earth, and glory hereafter. Who would not listen when it is good news to be heard? Who would not listen when the best tidings that God himself ever sent forth from the excellent glory is proclaimed by the noblest Ambassador that ever spake to men, namely, God's own Son, Jesus, the once crucified, but now exalted Saviour? For these reasons,

then, at the very outset I press upon you this exhortation, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh such precious truth", which the enemy would fain take out of your minds: truth which you yourselves have refused long enough already, and truth which is sweet, and will be exceedingly precious to your souls if you receive it. But now the text gives us:

II. SOME FURTHER REASONS for seeing to it that we do not "refuse him that speaketh." One reason I see in the text is this: see to this because *there are many ways of refusing him that speaketh*, and you may have fallen into one or other of these. See to it; pass over in examination your own state and conduct, lest you may have been refusing Christ. *Some refuse the Saviour by not hearing of him.* In his day there were some that would not listen, and there are such now. The Sabbath days of some of you are not days of listening to the gospel. Where were you this morning? Where are you usually all the Lord's Day long? Remember, you cannot live in London, where the gospel is preached, and be without responsibility. Though you will not come to the house of God to hear of it, yet be sure of this, the kingdom of God hath come nigh unto you. You may close your ears to the invitation of the gospel, but at last you will not be able to close your ear to the denunciation of wrath. If you will not come and hear of Christ on the cross, you must one day see for yourselves Christ on his throne. "See that ye refuse not him that speaks to you from heaven" by refusing to be found where his gospel is proclaimed.

Many come to hear it, and yet refuse him that speaketh, for *they hear listlessly*. In many congregations—I will not judge this—a very large proportion of hearers are listless hearers. It little matters to them what is the subject in hand: they hear the sentences and phrases that come from the speaker's tongue, but these penetrate the ear only, and never reach their heart. Oh! how sad it is that this should be the case with almost all who have heard the gospel long, and who are not converted! They get used to it; no form of alarm could reach them, and perhaps no form of invitation could move them to penitence. The preacher may exhaust his art. They are like the adder that is deaf. He may know how to charm others, but these he cannot charm, charm he never so wisely.

Oh! see ye gospel hearers up yonder, and ye below here, that have been hearing Christ these many years, see that ye refuse not him that day by day during so long a time has spoken to you in the preaching of the gospel out of heaven.

But there are some who do hear, and have a very intelligent idea of what they hear, but who *actually refuse to believe it*. For divers reasons best known to themselves they reject the testimony of the incarnate God. They hear that God the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and he hath borne testimony that whosoever believeth in him is not condemned. They know but they will not believe in him. They will give you first one excuse, and then another, but all the excuses put together will never mitigate the fact that they do not believe the testimony of God concerning his Son, Jesus Christ, and so they "refuse him that speaketh." How many, how many here are by their unbelief refusing the Christ that speaks out of heaven?

Some are even *offended at the gospel*, as in Christ's day. When he came to a tender point in his preaching they went back and walked no more with him. Such there are to be found in our assemblies. The gospel galls them; there is some point that touches their prejudices, something that touches their favourite sin, and they are vexed and irritable. They ought to be angry—angry with their sin—but they are angry with Christ instead. They ought to denounce themselves, and patiently seek mercy, but this is not palatable to them; they would rather denounce the preacher, or denounce the preacher's Master.

Some will even hear the gospel, the very gospel of Christ to catch at words and pervert sentences to make play of the preacher's words which he uses, when they are honestly the best he can find, and, worse still, make play with the sense, too, with the very gospel—and find themes for loose jokes and profane and ribald words, even in the cross. Dicing, like the soldier at the cross-foot, with the blood falling on them, so some make merriment when the blood of Jesus is falling upon them to their condemnation. May it not be so with any here present, but there have been such who have even reviled the Saviour, and had hard words for God in human flesh—could not believe that he bore the guilt of sin, could not admire the love astounding that made him suffer for the guilt of his enemies—could not see anything admirable in the heroic sacrifice of the great Redeemer, but rather turned their heel against their benefactor, and poured forth venomous words on him that loved the sons of men and died saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

And some have practically shown they have refused him that speaketh, for they have *begun to persecute his people*; they have maltreated those that sought the glory of God, and anything that had a savour of Christ about it has been despicable and detestable to them.

Oh! dear hearers, I shall ask you, since there are all these ways of refusing Christ, to see to it that ye do not fall into any of them. The grosser forms, perhaps, you would be too shocked at, but don't fall into the others. Do not especially fall into that indifference which has as much of insult to the Saviour almost as blasphemy. Is it nothing to you, is it nothing to you that God should come from heaven that he might be just in the salvation of men, and that, coming from heaven to be thus just, he should himself suffer that we might not suffer—the Christ of God bleed and die instead of the undeserving, hell-deserving sinners? Shall this be told you—pressed upon you—and will you refuse it? Will you refuse him who speaks himself, in his own sacrifice, and in the blood which he hath carried within the veil continues now to speak—will you, will you refuse him? Pray God you may see to it that in no form you do.

And now passing on, but keeping to the same point, striking the hammer on the head of the same nail, there are many reasons why men refuse Christ; therefore, see that for none of these reasons ye do it. Some refuse him *out of perfect indifference*; the great mass of men have not a thought above their meat and their drink. Like the cock that found the diamond on the dunghill, they turn it over and wish it were a grain of barley. What care they for heaven, or the pardon of sin? Their mind does not reach to that. See that ye—that ye, *none of you*, are so sensuous as to "refuse him that speaketh from heaven" for such a reason as this. Some reject him *because of their self-righteousness*: they are good enough. Jesus Christ speaks against them, they say; he does not applaud their righteousness, he ridicules them rather; he tells them that their prayers are long prayers, and their many good works are, after all, a poor ground for reliance." So as the Saviour will not patronize their righteousness, neither will they have to do with him. Oh! say not ye are rich and increased in goods; ye are naked, and poor, and miserable. Say not ye can win heaven by your merits; ye have none; your merits drag you down to hell. Yet many will refuse the Saviour because of the insanity of their self-righteousness.

Some, too, reject him because of *their self-reliant wisdom*. "Why," they say, "this is a very thoughtful age." And everywhere I hear it dinned into my ears, "thoughtful preaching," "thinkings," "intellectual preaching." And what a mass of rottenness before high heaven the whole lot is that is produced by these thinking preachers and these intellectual men! For my part I would rather say to them, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh," for one word of God is better than all the thoughts of all the philosophers, and one sentence from the lip of Christ I do esteem to be more precious than the whole Alexandrian library, and the Bodleian also if you will, so much as it comes from man. Nay, it is the thinking of Christ we have to think about; otherwise our thinking may prove our curse. A man, if he is drowning, if he have a rope thrown to him, had better lay hold of it than merely be there thinking about the possibilities of salvation by some other means. While your souls are being lost, sirs, there is better employment for you than merely indulging in rhapsodies and inventions of your own supposed judgment. Take hold of this, the gospel of Jesus revealed of God, lest ye perish, and perish with a vengeance.

Some reject the Saviour from another cause: *they do not like the holiness of Christ's teaching*. They refuse him that speaketh because they think Christ's religion too strict, too precise, cuts off their pleasures, condemns their lusts. Yes, yes, it is so, but to reject Christ for such a reason is certainly to be most unreasonable, for it should be in every man a desire to be delivered from these passions and lusts, and because Christ can deliver us, shall we, therefore, reject him? God forbid that we should be led astray by such a reason.

Some reject him because they have *a fear of the world*. If they were Christians, they would probably be laughed at as Methodistic, Presbyterian, Puritanic, or some other name. And shall we lose our souls to escape the sneers of fools? He is not a man—call him by some other name—he is no man that flings away his soul because he is such a coward that he cannot bear to do and believe the right, and bear the frown of fashion.

There are others who refuse the Saviour *simply out of procrastination*. They have no reason for it, but they hope they shall have a more convenient season. They are young people as yet, or they are not so very old, or if they are old, yet still life will linger a little while, and so still they refuse him that speaketh.

I have not mentioned a worthy reason for refusing him that speaketh, nor do I believe there is a worthy reason. It seems to me that if it be so, that God himself has taken upon himself human form, and has come here to effect our redemption from our sin and misery, there cannot be any reason that will stand a moment's looking at for refusing him that speaketh. It must be my duty and my privilege to hear what it is that God has got to say to me: it must be my duty to lend him all my heart to try and understand what it is that he says, and then to give him all my will to do, or to be whatever he would have me to do or to be.

"But did God thus come?" says one. I always feel that the very declaration is its own proof. No heart could ever have contrived or invented this as a piece of imagination, the love, the story of the redeeming love of God in Christ Jesus. If I had no evidence but the mere statement, I think I must accept it, for it wears truth

upon its very forefront. Who should conceive it? The offended God comes here to redeem his creatures from their own offence. Since he must in justice punish, he comes to bear the punishment himself, that he may be just and yet be inconceivably gracious! My soul flies into the arms of this revelation; it seems to be the best news my troubled conscience ever had—God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Oh! there cannot be a reasonable motive for rejecting the Saviour, and I, therefore, impress it upon you, since so many unreasonable motives carry men away, see that ye refuse not him that speaketh, and may the Spirit of God grant that you may not be able to refuse. But now coming to the text again, we have:—

III. A VERY HIGH MOTIVE GIVEN for seeing that we refuse not him that speaketh. It is this—because *in refusing him, we shall be despising the highest possible authority*. When Moses spake in God's name, it was no light thing to refuse such an ambassador. Still, Moses was but a man. Though clothed with divine authority, yet he was but a man and a servant of God. But Jesus Christ is God by nature. See that ye refuse not him who is of heavenly origin, who came from heaven, who is clothed with such divine powers, that every word he speaks is virtually spoken from heaven, and who, being now in heaven, speaks through his ever living gospel directly out of the excellent glory. Regard ye this, I pray you, and remember well the parable which Jesus gave. A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen, and when the time came that he should receive the fruit he sent a servant, and they stoned him. He sent another, and they beat him. He sent another, and they maltreated him. After he had thus sent many of his servants, and the dressers of the vineyard had incurred his high displeasure by the shameful way in which they had treated the servants, he sent his own son, and he said, "They will reverence my son." It was the highest degree of guilt when they said, "This is the heir; let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." Then they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard. You know how the Saviour was treated by the sons of men; but here is the point I aim at; it is this: to reject Jesus Christ, to refuse him, to refuse merely his gospel, if he did not speak in it, might not be so high a misdemeanour, but to refuse him!—I don't know how it is, but my heart feels very heavy, even to sinking, at the thought that any man here should be able to refuse Christ, the Son of God, the Everlasting and the ever Blessed. But I cannot speak out what I feel. It fills my soul with horror to think that any creature should refuse his God, when his God speaks, but much more when God comes down on earth in infinite, wondrous, immeasurable love, takes upon himself the form of man, and suffers, and then turns round to his rebellious creature and says, "Listen, I am ready to forgive you; I am willing to pardon you; do but listen to me." Oh! it seems monstrous that men should refuse Christ! I don't know how you feel about it, but if you have ever measured that in your thoughts, it will have seemed to be the most monstrous of all crimes. If, in order to be saved, the terms were hard and the conditions difficult, I could understand a man saying, "It mocks me," but when the gospel is nothing but this, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?"; when it is nothing but, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," what shall I say? I cannot fashion an excuse for any of you, and if you, after having heard the gospel, be cast into hell, I dare not think that its utmost pains will be too severe for so high an insult to such wondrous love. Ye will not be saved, sirs; ye put from you your own life; ye will not be saved when the way of salvation is plain, easy, simple, close to your hand. "What chains of vengeance they deserve, That slight the bonds of love." I cannot—I could not—conceive a punishment too severe for men who, knowing that their rejection of Christ will bring upon them everlasting punishment, yet wilfully reject him. Ye choose your own delusion. If ye drank poison and did not know it, I could pity you; if you made all your veins to swell with agony, and caused your death—but when we stand up and say, "Sirs, it is poison; see others drop and die; touch it not!"—when we give you something a thousand times better, and bid you take that, but you will not take that, but *will* have the poison—then if you will, you must. If, then, you would destroy your soul, it must be so; but we would plead with you yet again, "See, see that ye refuse not him that speaketh." I wish I could raise him before you tonight—even the Christ of God, and bid him stand here, and you should see his hands and his feet, and you should ask, "What are these marks we see there?" He would reply, "These are the wounds that I received when I suffered for the sons of men," and he bares his side and says, "See here, here went the spear when I died that sinners might live." In glory now, yet once, saith he, this face was defiled with spittle, and this body mangled with Pilate's scourge and Herod's rod, and I, whom angels worshipped, was treated as a menial, ay, worse, God himself forsook me, Jehovah hid his face from me, that I, bearing the punishment of sin, might really bear it, not in fiction, but in fact, and might suffer the equivalent for all the miseries that souls redeemed by me ought to have suffered had they been cast into hell. Will ye look at his wounds, and yet refuse him? Will you hear the story of his love, and yet reject him? Must he go away and say in his heart, "They have refused me; they have refused me; I told them of salvation; I showed them how I bought salvation; they have refused me; I will go my way, and they shall never see my face again till that day when they shall say, 'Mountains fall upon us; hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne'?" If you will not have him in mercy, you must have him in judgment, and if the silver sceptre of God will not touch you, the Christ of God, the man of Nazareth, will come a second time on the clouds of heaven, and woe unto you in that tremendous day. Then shall the nations of the earth weep and wail because of him. They would not have him as their Saviour; they must have him as their Judge, and out of his mouth

shall the sentence come, "Depart! Depart!"

Now I have to close with the last reason that is given in the text why we should see that we "refuse not him that speaketh." It is this: that if we do:—

IV. THERE IS A DOOM TO BE FEARED, for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from *heaven*. You hear the din that goes up from the Red Sea when the angry billows leap over Pharaoh and his horsemen. Why is the king asleep in the midst of the waters? Why are the chivalry of Egypt cut off? They rejected Moses when he said, "Thus saith the Lord, Let my people go." If Pharaoh escaped not when he refused him that spake on earth, oh! dreadful shall be that day when the Christ who this day speaks to you, and whom you reject, shall lift up the rods of his anger, and the lake of fire, more direful than the Red Sea, shall swallow up his adversaries. See you that next sight? A number of men are standing there holding censers of incense in their hands, and there stands Moses, the servant of God, and he says, "If these die the death of common men, God hath not spoken by me," for they have rebelled against Moses. Do you see the sight? Can you picture it? If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, how shall we escape if we refuse him that speaketh from heaven? Go through the peninsular of the Arabian desert. See how the tribes drop, one by one, and leave graves behind them as the track of their march. Of all that came out of Egypt, not one entered into Canaan. Who slew all these? They were all slain there because they resisted the Word of God by his servant Moses, and he swore in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest. If they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, how shall we escape if we refuse him that speaketh to us from heaven?

I might multiply instances and give you proof of how God avenged the refusal to listen to his servant Moses, but how much more will he avenge it if we listen not to Jesus Christ the Lord! "Oh!" says one, "you preach the terrors of the Lord." The terrors of the Lord!—I scarce think of them; they are too dreadful for human language; but if I speak severely, even for a moment, it is in love. I dare not play with you, sinner; I dare not tell you sin is a trifle; I dare not tell you that the world to come is a matter of no great account; I dare not come and tell you that you need not be in earnest. I shall have to answer for it to my Master. I have these words ringing in my ears, "If the watchman warns them not, they shall perish, but their blood will I require at the watchman's hands." I cannot bear that I should have the blood of souls upon my skirts, and, therefore, do I again say to you—refuse what I say as much as you will; cast anything that is mine to the dogs; have nothing to do with it; but wherein I have spoken to you Christ's Word, and I have told you his gospel, "Believe and live," "He that believeth on him is not condemned," "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." Wherein it is Christ's gospel, it is Christ that speaks, and I again say to you, for your soul's sake, "Refuse not him that speaks from heaven to you." May his Spirit sweetly incline you to listen to Christ's Word, and may you be saved tonight.

If you don't have Christ tonight, some of you never will have him. If you are not saved tonight, some of you never will be. 'Tis now or never with you. God's Spirit strives with you, conscience is a little awakened. Catch every breeze, catch every breeze; do not let this pass by. Oh! that tonight you might seek, and that tonight you might find he Saviour. Else remember if you refuse him that speaks from heaven, he lifts his hands and swears that you shall not enter into his rest. Then are you lost, lost, lost, beyond all recall! God bless every one of you, and may we meet in heaven.

I do not know, I sometimes am afraid that there are not so many conversions as there used to be. If I thought there were no more souls to be saved by me in this place, under God, I would break away from every comfort, and go and find out a place where I could find some that God would bless. Are they all saved that will be? You seaholders, have I fished in this pond till there is no more to come? Is it to be so, that in all the ground where wheat ever will grow, wheat has grown, and there can be no more? My brethren and sisters in Christ, pray God to send his Spirit that there may be more brought to Jesus. If not, it is hard, hard work to preach in vain. Perhaps I grow stale and dull to you; I would not if I could help it. If I could learn how to preach, I would go to school. If I could find the best way to reach you I am sure I would spare no pains. I do not know what more to say, but if Christ himself shall be refused, how shall I speak for him? If his dear wounds, if his precious blood, if his dying groans, if his love to the souls of men all go for nothing, then my words cannot be anything; they may well go to the wind. But do, do turn ye to him. Cast not away your souls. Come to him; he will receive you; he waiteth to be gracious. Whosoever is heavy laden, let him come tonight. One tear, one sigh, one cry—send it up to him; he will hear you. Come and trust him; he will save you. God bless you for Christ's love's sake. Amen.

The Bible

A Sermon

(No. 15) Delivered on Sabbath Evening, March 18, 1855, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At Exeter Hall, Strand. "I have written to him the great things of my law; but they were counted as a strange thing." —Hosea 8:12 This is God's complaint against Ephraim. It is no mean proof of his goodness, that he stoops to rebuke his erring creatures; it is a great argument of his gracious disposition, that he bows his head to notice terrestrial affairs. He might, if he pleased, wrap himself with might as with a garment; he might put the stars around his wrist for bracelets, and bind the suns around his brow for a coronet; he might dwell alone, far, far above this world, up in the seventh heaven, and look down with calm and silent indifference upon all the doings of his creatures; he might do as the heathens supposed their Jove did, sit in perpetual silence, sometimes nodding his awful head to make the fates move as he pleased, but never taking thought of the little things of earth, disposing of them as beneath his notice, engrossed with his own being, swallowed up within himself, living alone and retired; and I, as one of his creatures, might stand by night upon a mountain-top, and look upon the silent stars and say, "Ye are the eyes of God, but ye look not down on me; your light is the gift of his omnipotence, but your rays are not smiles of love to me. God, the mighty Creator, has forgotten me; I am a despicable drop in the ocean of creation, a sear leaf in the forest of beings, an atom in the mountain of existence. He knows me not; I am alone, alone, alone." But it is not so, beloved. Our God is of another order. He notices every one of us; there is not a sparrow or a worm but is found in his decrees. There is not a person upon whom his eye is not fixed. Our most secret acts are known to him. Whatsoever we do, or bear, or suffer, the eye of God still rests upon us, and we are beneath his smile—for we are his people; or beneath his frown—for we have erred from him.

Oh! how ten-thousand-fold merciful is God, that, looking down upon the race of man, he does not smite it out of existence. We see from our text that God looks upon man; for he says of Ephraim, "I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing." But see how, when he observes the sin of man, he does not dash him away and spurn him with his foot; he does not shake him by the neck over the gulf of hell, until his brain doth reel and then drop him forever; but rather, he comes down from heaven to plead with his creatures; he argues with them; he puts himself, as it were, upon a level with the sinner—states his grievances and pleads his claim. O Ephraim, I have written unto thee the great things of my law, but they have been unto thee as a strange thing! I come here to-night in God's stead, my friends, to plead with you as God's ambassador, to charge many of you with a sin; to lay it to your hearts by the power of the Spirit, so that you may be convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come. The crime I charge you with is the sin of the text. God has written to you the great things of his law, but they have been unto you as a strange thing. It is concerning this blessed book, the Bible, that I mean to speak tonight. Here lies my text—this Word of God. Here is the theme of my discourse, a theme which demands more eloquence than I possess; a subject upon which a thousand orators might speak at once; a mighty, vast, and comprehensive theme, which might engross all eloquence throughout eternity, and still it would remain unexhausted.

Concerning the Bible, I have three things to say to-night, and they are all in my text. First, its author, "I have written;" secondly, its subjects—the great things of God's law; and thirdly, its common treatment—it has been accounted by most men a strange thing.

I. First, then, concerning this book: Who is *the author*? The text says that it is God. "I have written to him the great things of my law." Here lies my Bible—who wrote it? I open it, and find it consists of a series of tracts. The first five tracts were written by a man called Moses; I turn on, and I find others. Sometimes I see David is the penman, at other times Solomon. Here I read Micah, then Amos, then Hosea. As I turn further on, to the more luminous pages of the New Testament, I see Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, Paul, Peter, James, and others; but when I shut up the book; I ask myself, who is the author of it? Do these men jointly claim the authorship? Are they the compositors of this massive volume? Do they between themselves divide the honor? Our holy religion answers, No! This volume is the writing of the living God; each letter was penned with an Almighty finger; each word in it dropped from the everlasting lips; each sentence was dictated by the Holy Spirit. Albeit, that Moses was employed to write his histories with his fiery pen, God guided that pen. It may be that David touched his harp, and let sweet Psalms of melody drop from his fingers; but God moved his hands over the living strings of his golden harp. It may be that Solomon sang canticles of love, or gave forth words of consummate wisdom, but God directed his lips, and made the preacher eloquent. If I follow the thundering Nahum, when his horses plough the waters, or Habakkuk, when he sees the tents of Cushan in affliction; if I read Malachi, when the earth is burning like an oven; if I turn to the smooth page of John, who tells of love, or the rugged, fiery chapters of Peter, who speaks of fire devouring God's enemies; if I turn to Jude, who launches forth anathemas upon the foes of God, everywhere I find God speaking; it is God's voice, not man's; the words are God's words, the words of the Eternal, the Invisible, the Almighty, the Jehovah of this

earth. This Bible is God's Bible, and when I see it, I seem to hear a voice springing up from it, saying, "I am the book of God; man, read me. I am God's writing; open my leaf, for I was penned by God; read it, for he is my author, and you will see him visible and manifest everywhere." "I have written to him the great things of my law."

How do you know that God wrote the book? That is just what I shall not try to prove to you. I could if I pleased, demonstrate it, for there are arguments enough, there are reasons enough, did I care to occupy your time to-night in bringing them before you; but I shall do no such thing. I might tell you, if I pleased, that the grandeur of the style is above that of an mortal writing, and that all the poets who have ever existed could not, with all their works united, give us such sublime poetry and such mighty language as is to be found in the Scriptures. I might insist upon it, that the subjects of which it treats are beyond the human intellect; that man could never have invented the grand doctrines of a Trinity in the Godhead; man could not have told us anything of the creation of the universe; he could never have been the author of the majestic idea of Providence—that all things are ordered according to the will of one great Supreme Being, and work together for good. I might enlarge upon its honesty, since it tells the faults of its writers; its unity, since it never belies itself; its master simplicity, that he who runs may read it; and I might mention a hundred more things, which would all prove, to a demonstration, that the book is of God. But I come not here to prove it. I am a Christian minister, and you are Christians, or profess to be so; and there is never any necessity for Christian ministers to make a point of bringing forward infidel arguments in order to answer them. It is the greatest folly in the world. Infidels, poor creatures, do not know their own arguments till we tell them, and then they glean their blunted shafts to shoot them at the shield of truth again. It is follow to bring forward these firebrands of hell, even if we are well prepared to quench them. Let men of the world learn error of themselves; do not let us be propagators of their falsehoods. True, there are some preachers who are short of stock, and want to fill them up; but God's own chosen men need not do that; they are taught of God, and God supplies them with matter, with language, with power. There may be some one here to-night who has come without faith, a man of reason, a freethinker. With him I have no argument at all. I profess not to stand here as a controversialist, but as a preacher of things that I know and feel. But I too, have been like him. There was an evil hour when I once shipped the anchor of my faith; I cut the cable of my belief; I no longer moored myself hard by the coasts of Revelation; I allowed my vessel to drift before the wind; I said to reason, "Be thou my captain;" I said to my own brain, "Be thou my rudder;" and I started on my mad voyage. Thank God, it is all over now; but I will tell you its brief history. It was one hurried sailing over the tempestuous ocean of free thought. I went on, and as I went, the skies began to darken; but to make up for that deficiency, the waters were brilliant with coruscations of brilliancy. I saw sparks flying upward that pleased me, and I thought, "If this be free thought, it is a happy thing." My thoughts seemed gems, and I scattered stars with both my hands; but anon, instead of these coruscations of glory, I saw grim fiends, fierce and horrible, start up from the waters, and as I dashed on, they gnashed their teeth, and grinned upon me; they seized the prow of my ship and dragged me on, while, in part, gloried at the rapidity of my motion, but yet shuddered at the terrific rate with which I passed the old landmarks of my faith. As I hurried forward, with an awful speed, I began to doubt my very existence; I doubted if there were a world, I doubted if there was such a thing as myself. I went to the very verge of the dreary realms of unbelief. I went to the very bottom of the sea of Infidelity. I doubted everything. But here the devil foiled himself: for the very extravagance of the doubt, proved its absurdity. Just when I saw the bottom of that sea, there came a voice which said, "And can this doubt be true?" At this very thought I awoke. I started from that deathdream, which, God knows might have damned my soul, and ruined this, my body, if I had not awoke. When I arose, faith took the helm; from that moment I doubted not. Faith steered me back; faith cried, "Away, away!" I cast my anchor on Calvary; I lifted my eye to God; and here I am, "alive, and out of hell." Therefore, I speak what I do know. I have sailed that perilous voyage; I have come safe to land. Ask me again to be an infidel! No; I have tried it; it was sweet at first, but bitter afterwards. Now, lashed to God's gospel more firmly than ever, standing as on a rock of adamant, I defy the arguments of hell to move me; for "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him." But I shall neither plead nor argue this night. You profess to be Christian men, or else you would not be here. Your professions may be lies; what you say you are, may be the very contrary to what you *really* are; but still I suppose you all admit that this is the Word of God. A thought or two then upon it. "I have written to him the great things of my law."

First, my friends, stand over this volume, and *admire its authority*. This is no common book. It is not the sayings of the sages of Greece; here are not the utterances of philosophers of past ages. If these words were written by a man, we might reject them; but O let me think the solemn thought, that this book is God's handwriting—that these words are God's! Let me look at its date; it is dated from the hills of heaven. Let me look at its letters; they flash glory on my eye. Let me read the chapters; they are big with meaning and mysteries unknown. Let me turn over the prophecies; they are pregnant with unthought-of wonders. Oh, book of books! And wast thou written by my God? Then will I bow before thee. Thou book of vast authority! thou

art a proclamation from the Emperor of Heaven; far be it from me to exercise my reason in contradicting thee. Reason, thy place is to stand and find out what this volume means, not to tell what this book ought to say. Come thou, my reason, my intellect, sit thou down and listen, for these words are the words of God. I do not know how to enlarge on this thought. Oh! if you could ever remember that this Bible was actually and really written by God. Oh! if ye had been let into the secret chambers of heaven, if ye had beheld God grasping his pen and writing down these letters—then surely ye would respect them; but they are just as much God's handwriting as if you had seen God write them. This Bible is a book of authority; it is an authorized book, for God has written it. Oh! tremble, lest any of you despise it; mark its authority, for it is the Word of God.

Then, since God wrote it, mark *its truthfulness*. If I had written it, there would be worms of critics who would at once swarm upon it, and would cover it with their evil spawn; Had I written it, there would be men who would pull it to pieces at once, and perhaps quite right too. But this is the Word of God; come, search, ye critics, and find a flaw; examine it, from its Genesis to its Revelation, and find an error. This is a vein of pure gold, unalloyed by quartz, or any earthly substance. This is a star without a speck; a sun without a blot; a light without darkness; a moon without its paleness; a glory without a dimness. O Bible! it cannot be said of any other book, that it is perfect and pure; but of thee we can declare all wisdom is gathered up in thee, without a particle of folly. This is the judge that ends the strife, where wit and reason fail. This is the book untainted by any error; but is pure, unalloyed, perfect truth. Why? Because God wrote it. Ah! charge God with error if ye please; tell him that his book is not what it ought to be. I have heard men, with prudish and mock-modesty, who would like to alter the Bible; and (I almost blush to say it) I have heard ministers alter God's Bible, because they were afraid of it. Have you never heard a man say, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not"—what does the Bible say?—"Shall be *damned*." But that does not happen to be polite enough, so they say, "Shall be *condemned*." Gentlemen, pull the velvet out of your mouths; speak God's word; we want none of your alterations. I have heard men in prayer instead of saying, "Make your calling and *election* sure," say "Make your calling and *salvation* sure." Pity they were not born when God lived far—far back that they might have taught God how to write. Oh, impudence beyond all bounds! Oh full-blown self-conceit! To attempt to dictate to the All-wise—to teach the Omniscient and instruct the Eternal. Strange that there should be men so vile as to use the penknife of Jehoiaakim to cut passages out of the word, because they are unpalatable. O ye who dislike certain portions of Holy Writ, rest assured that your taste is corrupt, and that God will not stay for your little opinion. Your dislike is the very reason why God wrote it, because you out not to be suited; you have no right to be pleased. God wrote what you do not like; he wrote the truth. Oh! let us bend in reverence before it, for God inspired it. It is pure truth. Here from this fountain gushes *aqua vitae*—the water of life—without a single particle of earth; here from this sun cometh forth rays of radiance, without the mixture of darkness. Blessed Bible! thou art all truth.

Yet once more, before we leave this point, let us stop and consider *the merciful nature of God*, in having written us a Bible at all. Ah! he might have left us without it, to grope our dark way, as blind men seek the wall; he might have suffered us to wander on with the star of reason as our only guide. I recollect a story of Mr. Hume, who so constantly affirmed that the light of reason is abundantly sufficient. Being at a good minister's house one evening, he had been discussing the question, and declaring his firm belief in the sufficiency of the light of nature. On leaving, the minister offered to hold him a candle to light him down the steps. He said "No; the light of nature would be enough; the moon would do." It so happened that the moon was covered with a cloud, and he fell down the steps. "Ah!" said the minister, "you had better have had a little light from above, after all, Mr. Hume." So, supposing the light of nature to be sufficient, we had better have a little light from above too, and then we shall be sure to be right. Better have two lights than only one. The light of creation is a bright light. God may be seen in the stars; his name is written in gilt letters on the brow of night; you may discover his glory in the ocean waves, yea, in the trees of the field; but it is better to read it in two books than in one. You will find it here more clearly revealed; for he has written this book himself, and he has given you the key to understand it, if you have the Holy Spirit. Ah, beloved, let us thank God for this Bible; let us love it; let us count it more precious than much fine gold.

But let me say one thing, before I pass on to the second point. If this be the Word of God, what will become of some of you who have not read it for the last month? "Month, sir! I have not read it for this year." Ay, there are some of you who have not read it at all. Most people treat the Bible very politely. They have a small pocket volume, neatly bound; they put a white pocket-handkerchief round it and carry it to their places of worship; when they get home, they lay it up in a drawer till next Sunday morning; then it comes out again for a little bit of a treat, and goes to chapel; that is all the poor Bible gets in the way of an airing. That is your style of entertaining this heavenly messenger. There is dust enough on some of your Bibles to write "damnation" with your fingers. There are some of you who have not turned over your Bibles for a long, long while, and what think you? I tell you blunt words, but true words. What will God say at last? When you shall come before him, he shall say, "Did you read my Bible?" "*No*." "I wrote you a letter of mercy; did you read

it?" "No." "Rebel! I have sent thee a letter inviting thee to me; didst thou ever read it?" "Lord, I never broke the seal; I kept it shut up." "Wretch!" says God, "then, thou deservest hell, if I sent thee a loving epistle, and thou wouldst not even break the seal; what shall I do unto thee?" Oh, let it not be so with you. Be Bible-readers; be Bible

II. Our second point is: *The subjects on which the Bible treats.* The words of the text are these: "I have written to him the great things of my law." The Bible treats of great things, and of great things only. there is nothing in this Bible which is unimportant. Every verse in it has a solemn meaning; and if we have not found it out yet, we hope yet to do it. You have seen mummies, wrapped round and round with folds of linen. Well, God's Bible is like that; it is a vast roll of white linen, woven in the loom of truth; so you will have to continue unwinding it, roll after roll, before you get the real meaning of it from the very depth; and when you have found, as you think, a part of the meaning, you will still need to keep on unwinding, unwinding, and all eternity you will be unwinding the words of this great volume. Yet there is nothing in the Bible but great things. Let me divide, so as to be more brief. First, all things in this Bible are great; but, secondly, some things are the greatest of all.

All things in the Bible are great. Some people think it does not matter what doctrines you believe; that it is immaterial what church you attend; that all denominations are alike. Well, I dislike Mrs. Bigotry above almost all people in the world, and I never give her any compliment or praise; but there is another woman I hate equally as much, and that is Mrs. Latitudinarianism—a well-known character, who has made the discovery that all of us are alike. Now, I believe that a man may be saved in any church. Some have been saved in the Church of Rome—a few blessed men whose names I could mention here. I know, blessed be God, what multitudes are saved in the Church of England; she has a host of pious, praying men in her midst. I think that all sections of Protestant Christians have a remnant according to the election of grace; and they had need to have, some of them, a little salt, for otherwise they would go to corruption. But when I say that, do you imagine that I think them all on a level? Are they all alike truthful? One sect says infant baptism is right; another says it is wrong; yet you say they are both right. I cannot see that. One teaches we are saved by free grace; another say us that we are not, but are saved by free will; and yet you believe they are both right. I do not understand that. One says that God loves his people, and never leaves off loving them; another says that he did not love his people before they loved him—that he often loves them, and then ceases to love them, and turns them away. They may both be right in the main; but can they both be right when one says "Yes," and the other says "No?" I must have a pair of spectacles, to enable me to look backwards and forwards at the same time, before I can see that. It cannot be, sirs, that they are both right. But some say they differ upon non-essentials. This text says, "I have written to him the *great* things of my law." There is nothing in God's Bible which is not great. Did ever any of you sit down to see which was the purest religion? "Oh," say you, "we never took the trouble. We went just where our father and mother went." Ah! that is a profound reason indeed. You went where your father and mother did. I thought you were sensible people; I didn't think you went where other people pulled you, but went of your own selves. I love my parents above all that breathe, and the very thought that they believe a thing to be true, helps me to think it is correct; but I have not followed them; I belong to a different denomination, and I thank God that I do. I can receive them as Christian brethren and sisters; but I never thought that, because they happened to be one thing, I was to be the same. No such thing. God gave me brains, and I will use them; and if you have any intellect, use it too. Never say it doesn't matter. Whatever God has put here is of eminent importance; he would not have written a thing that was indifferent. Whatever is here is of some value; therefore, search all questions, try all by the Word of God. I am not afraid to have what I preach tried by this book. Only give me a fair field and no favor, and this book; if I say anything contrary to it, I will withdraw it the next Sabbath-day. By this I stand, by this I fall. Search and see; but don't say, "it does not matter." If God says a thing, it always must be of importance.

But, while all things in God's word are important, *all are not equally important.* There are certain fundamental and vital truths which must be believed, or otherwise no man would be saved. If you want to know what you must believe, if ye would be saved, you will find the great things of God's law between these two covers; they are all contained here. As a sort of digest or summary of the great things of law, I remember an old friend of mine once saying, "Ah! you preach the three R's, and God will always bless you." I said, "What are the three R's?" and he answered, "Ruin, redemption, and regeneration." They contain the sum and substance of divinity. R for ruin. We were all ruined in the fall; we were lost when Adam sinned, and we were all ruined by our own transgressions; we are all ruined by our own evil hearts, and our own wicked wills; and we all shall be ruined, unless grace saves us. Then there is a second R for redemption. We are ransomed by the blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish and without spot; we are rescued by his power; we are ransomed by his merits; we are redeemed by his strength. then there is R for regeneration. If we would be pardoned, we must also be regenerated; for no man can partake of redemption unless he is regenerate. Let him be as good as he pleases; let him serve God, as he imagines, as much as he likes; unless he is regenerate, and has a new heart, a new

birth, he will still be in the first R, that is ruin. These things contain an epitome of the gospel. I believe there is a better epitome in the five points of Calvinism;—Election according to the foreknowledge of God; the natural depravity and sinfulness of man; particular redemption by the blood of Christ; effectual calling by the power of the Spirit; and ultimate perseverance by the efforts of God's might. I think all those need to be believed, in order to salvation; but I should not like to write a creed like the Athanasian, beginning with "Whosoever shall be saved, before all things it is necessary that he should hold the Catholic faith, which faith is this,"—when I got so far, I should stop, because I should not know what to write. I hold the Catholic faith of the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. It is not for me to draw up creeds; but I ask you to search the Scriptures, for this is the word of life.

God says, "I have written to him the great things of my law." Do you doubt their greatness? Do ye think they are not worth your attention? Reflect a moment, man. Where art thou standing now? "Lo on a narrow neck of land, Twixt two unbounded seas I stand; An inch of time, a moment's space, May lodge me in yon heavenly place, Or shut me up in hell."

I recollect standing on a seashore once, upon a narrow neck of land, thoughtless that the tide might come up. The tide kept continually washing up on either side, and, wrapped in thoughts, I stood there, until at last there was the greatest difficulty in getting on shore. You and I stand each day on a narrow neck, and there is one wave coming up there; see, how near it is to your foot; and lo! another follows at every tick of the clock; "Our hearts, like muffled drums, are beating funeral marches to the tomb." We are always tending downwards to the grave each moment that we live. *This book* tells me that if I am converted, when I die, there is a heaven of joy and love to receive me; it tells me that angels' pinions shall be stretched, and I, borne by strong cherubic wings, shall out-soar the lightning, and mount beyond the stars, up to the throne of God, to dwell forever. "Far from a world of grief and sin, With God eternally shut in." Oh! it makes the hot tear start from my eye, it makes my heart too big for this my body, and my brain whirls at the thought of "Jerusalem, my happy home, Name ever dear to me." Oh! that sweet scene beyond the clouds; sweet fields arrayed in living green, and rivers of delight. Are not these great things? But then, poor unregenerate soul, the Bible says if thou art lost, thou art lost forever; it tells thee that if thou diest without Christ, without God, there is no hope for thee; that there is no place without a gleam of hope, where thou shalt read, in burning letters, "Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not;" it tells you, that ye shall be driven from his presence with a "depart, ye cursed." Are these not great things? Yes, sirs, as heaven is desirable, as hell is terrible, as time is short, as eternity is infinite, as the soul is precious, as pain is to be shunned, as heaven is to be sought, as God is eternal, and as his words are sure, these are great things, things ye ought to listen to.

III. Our last point is: *The treatment which the poor Bible receives in this world*; it is accounted a strange thing. What does that mean—the Bible accounted a strange thing? In the first place, it means that it is very strange to some people, because *they never read it*. I remember reading, on one occasion, the sacred story of David and Goliath, and there was a person present, positively grown up to years of maturity, who said to me, "Dear me! what an interesting story; what book is that in?" And I recollect a person once coming to me in private; I spoke to her about her soul, she told me how deeply she felt, how she had a desire to serve God, but she found another law in her members. I turned to a passage in Romans, and read to her, "The good that I would I do not; and the evil which I would not that I do!" She said, "Is that in the Bible? I did not know it." I did not blame her, because she had no interest in the Bible till then; but I did not wonder that there could be found persons who knew nothing about such a passage. Ah! you know more about your ledgers than your Bible; you know more about your day-books than what God has written; many of you will read a novel from beginning to end, and what have you got? A mouthful of froth when you have done. But you cannot read the Bible; that solid, lasting, substantial, and satisfying food goes uneaten, locked up in the cupboard of neglect; while anything that man writes, a catch of the day, is greedily devoured. "I have written to him the great things of my law, *but* they were counted as a strange thing." Ye have never read it. I bring the broad charge against you. Perhaps, ye say, I ought not to charge you with any such thing. I always think it better to have a worse opinion of you than too good an one. I charge you with this: you do not read your Bibles. Some of you have never read it through. I know I speak what your heart must say is honest truth. You are not Bible readers. You say you have the Bible in your houses; do I think you are such heathens as not to have a Bible? But when did you read it last? How do you know that your spectacles, which you have lost, have not been there for the last three years? Many people have not turned over its pages for a long time, and God might say unto them, "I have written unto you the great things of my law, but they have been accounted unto you a strange thing."

Others there be who read the Bible; but when they read it, *they say it is so horribly dry*. That young man over there says it is a "bore;" that is the words he uses. He says, "My mother says to me, when you go up to town, read a chapter every day. Well, I thought I would please her, and I said I would. I am sure I wish I had not. I did not read a chapter yesterday, or the day before. We were so busy, I could not help it." You do not love the

Bible, do you? "No, there is nothing in it which is interesting." Ah, I thought so. But a little while ago *I* could not see anything in it. Do you know why? Blind men cannot see, can they? But when the Spirit touches the scales of the eyes, they fall off; and when he puts eye-salves on, the Bible becomes precious. I remember a minister who went to see an old lady, and he thought he would give her some precious promises out of the word of God. Turning to one, he saw written in the margin "P.," and he asked, "What does this mean?" "That means precious, sir." Further down, he saw "T. and P.," and he asked what the letters meant. "That," she said, "means tried and proved, for I have tried and proved it." If you have tried God's word and proved it—if it is precious to your soul, then you are Christians; but those persons who despise the Bible, have "neither part nor lot in the matter." If it is dry to you, you will be dry at last in hell. If you do not esteem it as better than your necessary food, there is no hope for you; for you lack the greatest evidence of your Christianity.

Alas! alas! the worst case is to come. *There are some people who hate the Bible*, as well as despise it. Is there such an one stepped in here? Some of you said, "Let us go and hear what the young preacher has to say to us." This is what he has to say to you: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish." This is what he hath to say to you: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all that forget God." And this, again he has to say to you: "Behold, there shall come in the last days, mockers, like yourselves, walking after your own lusts." But more: he tells you to-night that if you are saved, you must find salvation here. Therefore, despise not the Bible; but search it, read it, and come unto it. Rest thee will assured, O scorner, that thy laughs cannot alter truth, thy jests cannot avert thine inevitable doom. Though in thy hardihood thou shouldst make a league with death, and sign a covenant with hell—yet swift justice shall o'ertake thee, and strong vengeance strike the low. In vain dost thou jeer and mock, for eternal verities are mightier than thy sophistries, nor can thy smart sayings alter the divine truth of a single word of this volume of Revelation. Oh! why dost thou quarrel with thy best friend, and ill-treat thy only refuge? There yet remains hope, even for the scorner. Hope in a Saviour's veins. Hope in the Father's mercy. Hope in the Holy Spirit's omnipotent agency.

I have done when I have said one word. My friend, the philosopher, says it may be very well for me to urge people to read the Bible; but he thinks there are a great many sciences far more interesting and useful than theology. *Extremely obliged to you for your opinion, sir*. What science do you mean? The science of dissecting beetles and arranging butterflies? "No," you say, "certainly not." The science, then, of arranging stones, and telling us of the strata of the earth? "No, not exactly that." Which science, then? "Oh, all sciences," say you, "are better than the science of the Bible." Ah! sir, that is your opinion; and it is because you are far from God, that you say so. But the science of Jesus Christ is the most excellent of sciences. Let no one turn away from the Bible because it is not a book of learning and wisdom. It is. Would ye know astronomy? It is here: it tells you of the Sun of Righteousness and the Star of Bethlehem. Would you know of botany? It is here: it tells you of the plant of renown—the Lily of the Valley, and the rose of Sharon. Would you know geology and mineralogy? You shall learn it here: for you may read of the Rock of Ages, and the White Stone with the name engraven thereon, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. Would ye study history? Here is the most ancient of all the records of the history of the human race. Whate'er your science is, come and bend o'er this book; your science is here. Come and drink out of this fair fount of knowledge and wisdom, and ye shall find yourselves made wise unto salvation. Wise and foolish, babes and men, gray-headed sires, youths and maidens—I speak to you, I plead with you, I beg of you respect your Bibles, and search them out, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of Christ.

I have done. Let us go home and practice what we have heard. I have heard of a woman, who, when she was asked what she remembered of the minister's sermon, said, "I don't recollect anything of it. It was about short weights and bad measures, and I didn't recollect anything but to go home and burn the bushel." So, if you will remember to go home and burn the bushel, if you will recollect to go home and read your Bibles, I shall have said enough. And may God, in his infinite mercy, when you read your Bibles, pour into your souls the illuminating rays of the Sun of Righteousness, by the agency of the ever-adorable Spirit; then you will read to your profit and to your soul's salvation.

We may say of THE BIBLE: "God's cabinet of revealed counsel 't is! Where weal and woe, are ordered so That every man may know which shall be his; Unless his own mistake, false application make. "It is the index to eternity. He cannot miss of endless bliss. That takes this chart to steer by, Nor can he be mistook that speaketh by this book. "It is the book of God. What if I should Say, God of books, let him that looks Angry at that expression, as too bold, His thoughts in silence smother, till he find such another."

The Ark of His Covenant

A Sermon (No. 2427) Intended for Reading on Lord's-day, August 25th, 1895, Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington, *On Thursday Evening, August 18th, 1887.* "And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament [covenant-R-V.], and great hail."—Revelation 11:19.

I SHALL take the passage quite by itself. I do not fully understand its connection, whether it relates to that which goes before or that which comes afterwards; and happily, it is necessary for us to know this, for the passage stands complete in itself, and is full of valuable instruction.

Dear friends, even we who believe have as yet failed to see much of the truth of God. We know enough to save us, to comfort us, and to help us on our way to heaven; but oh, how much of the glory of divine truth has never yet been revealed to our eyes! Some of God's children do not fully know even the common truths as yet, and those who do not know them realize but little of their depth and height. From our text, it appears that there are certain things of God which as yet we have not yet seen there is need that they should be opened to us: "The temple of God was opened in heaven." When our Lord Jesus died, He rent the veil of the temple, and so He laid open the Holy of Holies but such is our dimness of sight, that we need to have the temple opened, and we need to have the Holy of Holies opened, so that we may see what is not really concealed, but what we are not ready to perceive by reason of the slowness of our understandings. The two words for "temple" here may relate not only to the temple itself, but also to the Holy of Holies, the innermost shrine. Both of these, it seems, need to be opened, or else we shall not see what there is in them. Blessed be the Holy Spirit that He does open up one truth after another to us. Our Savior's promise to His disciples was, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." If we were more teachable, if we were more anxious to be taught, and waited upon Him more, He would, doubtless, lead us into many a truth which at the present moment we have not fully enjoyed. It is a happy thing for you and for me when at any time we can say, "The temple of God was opened in heaven, so that we saw even that which was in the innermost shrine of the holy temple."

The saints in heaven doubtless behold all the glory of God so far as it can be perceived by created beings; but we who are on the right way thither behold, as in a glass darkly, the glory of the Lord. We know only in part, but the part we do know is not so great as it might be, we might know far more than we do even here. Some suppose that they can know but little, because they say that 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." Yes, but why do you stop there? Half a text is often not true; go on to the end of the passage: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God"; and that which your eye cannot see, and your ear cannot hear, and the heart of man cannot imagine, can be revealed to you by the Spirit of the Lord. Oh, that we were more conscious of the power of the Spirit, and that we waited upon Him for yet fuller instruction! Then I am persuaded that, in our measure and degree, it would be true to us, even as to the perfected ones above, "The temple of God was opened in heaven," and they saw that which was in the holiest place.

What did they see when the temple was opened? When the secret place was laid bare to them, what did they see? That is to be my subject now. "There was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant." If we could look into heaven at this moment, this is what we should see, "the ark of his covenant." O sinner, thou thinkest that thou wouldst see an angry God, but thou wouldst see the ark of His covenant! O child of God, perhaps thou dreamest of many things that might distress thee in the glory of that sight; but rest thou content, this would be the main sight that thou wouldst see, Jesus, the incarnate God, the great covenant Surety! Thou wouldst see there, where, the Godhead shines resplendent, the ark of His covenant.

I. I shall begin by noticing, first, that THE ARK OF HIS COVENANT IS ALWAYS NEAR TO GOD: "There was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant."

Of course, the outward symbol is gone; we are not now speaking of a temple made with hands, that is to say, of this building. We speak of the spiritual temple above; we speak of the spiritual Holy of Holies. If we could look in there, we should see the ark of the covenant; and we should see the covenant itself always near to God. The covenant is always there. God never forgets it; it is ever before Him: "There was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant."

Why is this? Is it not because the covenant is always standing? The Lord said concerning His people of old. "I will make with them an everlasting covenant," of which David said, "Yet hath he made with me an

everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." If God has made a covenant with you, it is not simply for today and tomorrow, nor merely for this life, but for the ages of ages, even forever and ever. If He has struck hands with you through the great Surety, and He has pledged Himself to you, remember, "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." Jehovah hath said, "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." What He hath said He will stand to forever. He will keep His Word. He said to His Son, "I will preserve thee. .and give thee for a covenant of the people"; and He will never revoke the gift. This covenant stands secure. Though earth's old columns bow, and though my spirits sink, and flesh and heart fail me, yet this covenant shall bear me up even to the end.

The covenant of grace is forever the same, because, first, *the God who made it changes not*. There can be no change in God. The supposition is inconsistent with a belief in His deity. Hear what He says: "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The sun hath his changes, but the Father of lights is without variableness, or shadow of turning. "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" God has never to alter His purposes; why should He? Those purposes are always infinitely wise. He knoweth the end from the beginning; so His covenant, which He made with such deliberation in the councils of eternity, that covenant which is sealed with the most precious things He ever had, even with the blood of His only-begotten Son, that covenant upon which He stakes His eternal honor, for His glory and honor are wrapped up with the covenant of grace—that covenant cannot be changed because God Himself changeth not.

Then, next, *the Christ who is its Surety and Substance changes not*. Christ, the great Sacrifice by whose death the covenant was ratified, Christ, the Surety, who has sworn to carry out our part of the covenant, Christ, who is the very sum and substance of the covenant, never alters. "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." If we had a variable Savior, brethren, we should have a changeable covenant. Look at Adam; he could change, and therefore he was a poor representative of the human race. Our first federal head soon fell because he was a mere man; but the Surety of the new covenant is the Son of God, who, like His Father, faileth not, and changeth not. Though He is of the substance of His mother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and therefore can stand as man's Representative, yet is he Light of Light, very God of very God, and so He standeth fast and firm, like the unchanging God Himself. In this great truth we do and we will rejoice. The covenant is always before God, for Christ is always there. He, the Lamb in the midst of the throne, makes the covenant always to be close to the heart of God.

And, beloved, note you this. The covenant must always be near to God because *the love which suggested it changes not*. The Lord loves His people with a love which has no beginning, no end, no boundary, no change. He says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-Kindness have I drawn thee." When the love of God's heart goeth forth toward the believer, it is not changeable like the love of man, sometimes high and sometimes low, sometimes strong and sometimes weak; but, as it is said of our Savior, "having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end," so can it be said of the great Father that His love is evermore the same; and if the love which dictated the covenant is always in the heart of God, depend upon it that the covenant which comes of that love is always there in the secret place of the Most High.

Reflect also, beloved brethren, that *the promises contained in the covenant change not*. I quoted to you, just now, one passage about the promises, and that is enough: "All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen." Not one single promise of God shall ever fall to the ground unfulfilled. His Word in the form of promises, as well as in the form of the gospel, shall not return unto Him void. O souls, you may hang your whole weight upon any promise of God! You need not fear that it will break. Though all the vessels of the King's house were hung on one nail made by Him, that nail would bear them all up, as well as the fagons as the vessels of smaller measure. Heaven and earth may hang upon a single promise of God. The voice that rolls the stars along, and keeps them all in their orbits, is that voice which spoke even the least of the promises, and therefore every promise of God stands secure forever.

And once more, not only the promises, but *the force and binding power of the covenant change not*. All God's acts are done with a reference to His covenant, and all His covenant has a reference to His covenanted ones. Remember what Moses said of old, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Everything that He does follows the line and rule of His covenant. If He chastens and afflicts, it is not in anger, but in His dear covenant love. When first that covenant came into full action with the redeemed, it was all powerful; but it is just as powerful still. All that God doeth is still guided and directed by His eternal purpose and His covenant pledges to His people. Stand still, then, and when thou lookest up, if thou canst not

see that temple because thine eye of faith is dim, if thou scarcely darest to look within into the secret place which is the holiest of all, yet know thou of a surety that the covenant is still there, and always there, whether thou seest it or seest it not.

I will tell thee when perhaps, thou wilt best know that the covenant is there; that is, when the storm-clouds gather the most thickly. When thou shalt see the black masses come rolling up, then remember that the Lord said to Noah, "I do set my bow in the loud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." Then shalt thou know that Jehovah remembereth His covenant; thou mayest even be half glad of a black cloud, that the sun of the divine love may paint upon it the many-colored bow, that God may look on it, and remember His covenant. It is good for thee to look on it; but what must it be for Him to look on it, and to remember His covenant? Be thou glad that the covenant is always near to God, as our text declares, "And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant."

II. Now, secondly, THE COVENANT IS SEEN OF SAINTS: There was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant."

First, we see it when, by faith, *we believe in Jesus as our Covenant-head.*

By faith we know that God has entered into covenant with us. He that believeth in Christ Jesus is in covenant with God. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "He that believeth on Him is not condemned." He that believeth in Him is at peace with God, he has passed from death unto life, and shall never come into condemnation. Thou art in covenant with God, believer. Wipe thy weeping eyes, ask God to take the dust out of them, that thou mayest see that there is an unchanging covenant made with thee tonight and forever.

Next, we see this covenant when, by faith, *we perceive it in God's actions toward us.* Faith may see the covenant of God in all His actions. Do you not remember how the old Scotch woman blessed God for her porridge, but she blessed Him most of all because the porridge was in the covenant? God had promised bread and water, and therefore it was sure to come to her. God sent her bread to her in the form of porridge, and she blessed the Lord that it was in the covenant. Now, I thank God that food is in the covenant, and that raiment is in the covenant. It is written, "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass," so they are in the covenant. Life is in the covenant and death is in the covenant: "To die is gain." Everything that is to happen to us is in the covenant; and when faith sees it so, it makes like a happy one. Am I chastened? I say to myself "Well, the rod was in the covenant, for the Lord said that, if His children disobeyed Him, He would chasten them with the rod of men. If I never had the rod, I should be afraid I was not in the covenant." Is it not written, "In the world ye shall have tribulation?" That is a part of the covenant, you see; so that, when you get it, say to yourself, "The God who is evidently keeping this part of His covenant will keep the rest of it to me, His child."

Brethren, we get, perhaps, the best sight of the covenant when *by prayer we plead it.* In that hour of our wrestling, in the time of our inward craving of mercies from the hand of God, we come at last to this. "Lord, thou hast promised; do as thou hast said." I love to put my finger on a promise, and then to plead it with the Lord, saying, "This is thy Word, my Father; and I know that thou wilt not run back from it. O God, I believe in the inspiration of this Book, and I take every word of it as coming from thy lips. Wilt thou not seal it to my conscience, my heart, my experience, by proving it to be true?" Have you ever found the Lord's promises fail you? I remember one who had put in the margin of her Bible in several places, "I and P"; and when she was asked what those letters meant, she said, "That they mean, 'Tried and Proved.' As I go through life, I keep trying and proving the promises of God, and then I put a mark in the margin of my Bible against every one I have tested, that I may not forget it the next time I have to plead it." That is the way to see the covenant at the right hand of God, when you plead it in prayer.

And there are some of us, I think, who can say that *our experience up till now* proves that God does not forget His covenant. We have wandered, but we have been able to say, "He restoreth my soul." for He has restored us. We have needed many things, and we have gone to Him in prayer, and pleaded that word, "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," and He has listened to the cries of His servants. He said He would do so: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." He has remembered us in our low estate, for His mercy endureth forever; and some of us who are no longer young can set to our seal that God is true because of many experiences of His faithfulness. If they tell us that there is nothing in the Bible, and nothing in God, and nothing in the gospel of Christ, we laugh them to scorn. We have now for many a year lived upon the faithfulness of God, and we cannot be driven into a distrust of Him. He is faithful, and His mercy endureth forever.

Do you not also think that, *when we arrive in heaven, we shall have a wonderful retrospect,* and that

retrospect will all come to this: "The temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his covenant?" Miss Hannah More very prettily puts it that, often, we do not see the right side of things here. She went into a carpet manufactory, and she looked at what the workmen were doing, and she could see nothing that looked like beauty of design. There were tags and ends hanging out, and she said to the men, "I cannot perceive any design here," and they answered, "No, madam, for you are on the wrong side of the carpet"; but when she went round to the other side, she saw the beauty of the workmanship. Alas! we are at present on the wrong side of God's work; we must get to heaven to see it perfectly, and when we get there, we shall— Sing, with wonder and surprise, His loving-kindness in the skies. and we shall say, It was all right; it could not have been better. Every dark and bending line Meets in the centre of his love. God hath not erred. He has not gone about the longest way to do His work, but He has done in the wisest and most prudent manner all that was for the best and highest interests of His dear covenanted ones.

Thus, I have shown you that sometimes, and it should be always, God's people do see that glorious covenant of grace which is in the temple above.

III. Now I want to have your attention while I say briefly, in the third place, that **THE COVENANT CONTAINS MUCH THAT IS WORTH SEEING.** Let us think of what was in the ancient ark of the covenant, for all that was in that ark as a type is to be seen in Christ our heavenly covenant ark above.

In that ark, if you and I could have gone into the holy place, and have had our eyes strengthened to look, we should have seen, first, *God dwelling among men*. What a wonderful thing! Over the top of the lid of that sacred coffer which was called the ark, there shone an amazing light which was the index of the presence of God. He was in the midst of the camp of Israel. He that filleth heaven and earth, the infinite Jehovah, deigned to make that place His special dwelling-place, so that He is addressed as, "Thou that dwellest between the cherubims." Here is a part of the new covenant: "I will dwell in them, and walk in them." It is marvelous that God does speak with men. He whom you heard thundering, last night, as He drove His chariot through the sky, that God in infinite condescension speaks with us, and has come down to us, and taken us into relationship with Himself in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is at once the fellow of the Almighty, and the brother of the sons of men. O beloved, rejoice in the covenant, that God is no longer divided from men! The chasm made by sin is filled, the gulf is bridged, and God now dwells with me, and manifests Himself to them; and "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him."

Next, in that ark you would have noticed, if you could have seen into it, *God reconciled and communing with men upon the mercy-seat*. Over the top of that ark, as I have told you, was a golden lid, which fitted it, and covered it exactly, and that golden lid was called the mercy-seat, the throne of grace. There God spoke with men. He sat there, as it were, enthroned as the Friend of men. Now, it is a part of the covenant that God hears prayer, that God answers our petitions, that He meets us in a way of reconciled love, that He speaks to us in tones which the spirit can hear though the ear cannot. Thank God for a blood-besprinkled mercy-seat. What should we do if we had not that as our meeting-place with the thrice-holy Jehovah?

Then, within the ark, underneath the lid, if we could have looked in, we should have seen the law, *the two tables of stone*, which represent *law fulfilled in Christ*, and henceforth laid up in His heart, and laid up in our hearts, too, if we delight in the law of God after the inward man. Now, this is our joy, that the law of God has nothing against the believer. It is fulfilled in Christ, and we see it laid up in Christ, not to be a stone to fall upon us to grind us to powder, but beautiful and fair to look upon as it is in the heart of Christ, and fulfilled in the life of Christ. I rejoice in the covenant which contains in it stipulations all fulfilled, and commands all executed, by our great Representative.

Together with those tables of the law there was laid up a rod, a rod which had originally been a dry stick in the hands of Aaron, but when it was laid up before the Lord it budded, and blossomed, and brought forth almonds. So, in the covenant of grace, we see *the kingdom established and flourishing in Christ*, and we rejoice in it. Oh how pleased we are to bow before His fruitful sceptre! What wonderful fruit we gather from that blessed rod! Reign, reign, Jesus, reign! The more Thou dost rule us, the more Thou art absolute Sovereign of our hearts, the happier shall we be, and the more shall we delight ourselves in Thee. There is no liberty like complete subjection beneath the sway of Jesus who is our Prophet, Priest, and King.

Then, by the side of that rod there was laid up *the golden pot full of manna, the provision made for the wilderness*. Let us rejoice that there is in the covenant all the provision that we need. God has laid up for us in Christ all our spiritual meat, all the food that we shall ever need between here and heaven. "Feed me till I want no more," we cry to our blessed covenant Representative, and He will do so.

Then, over the top off the ark, sat *the cherubim with outstretched wings*, as, I think, *representing how the angels are in league with us, and with the angels all the forces and powers of the universe*. This day, the beasts of the field are our friends, and the stones of the field have ceased to be our foes. Child of God, you may travel by land or sea; you may go where you will; for everywhere you are in your Father's house. All that you see about you is a friend to you, since you are a friend to God. I often wonder that the earth bears up ungodly men. It must groan beneath the weight of a swearer; it must want to open and swallow him up. But with the gracious man, the man who fears God, all things are at peace; and we may know it to be so. "Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." We do not often enough realize, I think, the friendship of all God's creatures to those who are His children. St. Francis, thought he was a Romish monk, yet had a true idea when he used to regard the sparrows and other birds of the air, and even the dogs in the street, as his friends and his brothers, and talked to them as such. And Luther was much of the same mind when he opened His window, and listened to the chirpings of the robins in the early spring, and felt that they had come to teach the theological doctor some lesson which he had not learned. Oh yes, oh yes, we are quite at home anywhere, now that God is our God! True, the earth travaileth, and is in pain, and the creation suffers and will suffer till Christ comes again; but still her travail is our travail, and we are in sympathy with her, and when she doth reflect the glory of her God she is our looking-glass in which we see our Father's face.

Thus, I think, I have shown you that there is much to be seen in the ark of the covenant. God give us grace, like the angels, to fix our eyes upon it! "Which things the angels desire to look into." We have more to do with the ark of His covenant than they have; let us be more desirous even than they are to look therein.

IV. I close with this fourth point. **THE COVENANT HAS SOLEMN SURROUNDINGS.** Listen: "There were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail."

When the people entered into covenant with God on Sinai, the Lord came down upon the top of the mount, and there were thunderings, and lightnings, and voices, and an earthquake. There were all these tokens of His presence, and *God will not leave the covenant of his grace without the sanctions of His power*; that thunder, that lightning, that storm—all these are engaged to keep His covenant. When they are wanted, the God who smote Egypt with great hailstones, the God who made the Kishon to sweep his enemies away, the God who made the stars in heaven to fight against Sisera, will bring all the overwhelming forces that are at His command to the help of His people, and the fulfilling of the covenant which He has made with them. O you who are His people, fall back in confidence upon the God who has treasures of snow, and hail, and the dread artillery of storms and tempest! Most of you, my hearers, have never seen a great storm yet, nor heard in its majesty the thunder of God's power. You must be in the tropics to know what these can be, and even then you would have to say, "These are but parts of His ways." Oh, how the Lord can shake the earth, and make it tremble even to its deep foundations when He pleases! He can make what we call "the solid earth" to be as weak as water when He doth but lift up His finger. But all the power that God hath—and it is boundless—is all in that right hand which has been lifted high to heaven in the solemn oath that He will save His people. Wherefore, lean upon God without the shadow of a doubt. He may well put all your fears to rest even by the thunder of His power.

Then reflect that there is another side to this truth. You who are not in covenant with God, you who have not believed that Jesus is the Christ, you who have never fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before you, you who refuse the divine mercy which comes to you through the bleeding person of the suffering Christ, do remember that there will be for you the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the voices, and the earthquake, and the great hail, for these set forth *the terrors of eternal law, overthrowing God's adversaries*. You have no conception of what God will do with the ungodly. False teachers may smooth it down as much as they like, but that Book is full of thunderbolts to you who refuse God's mercy. Listen to this one text: "Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." Can you sport with that? Listen to another: "Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies!" What will you say to that, or to this? "And again they said Alleluia. And her smoke rose up forever and ever." "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark; of his name." That they talk as if we invented these terrible words, but we do not; we merely quote the Scriptures of truth, and they are terrible indeed to the wicked. That they should make men start in their sleep, and never rest until they find a Savior. A Universalist once said to a Christian man that, whatever he did, God would not punish him, and the other replied, "If I spit on your god, I suppose he will not punish me. If I curse him, if I defy him, it will all come right at last?" "Yes," said the Universalist. "Well," answered the other, "that may be the character of your god; but don't you try that

kind of thing with my God, the God of the Scriptures, or else you will find that because He is love He cannot, and He will not, suffer this world to be in anarchy, but he will rule it, ;and govern it, and He will punish those that refuse His infinite compassion." So I beseech you, my hearers, fly to Jesus at once; weary, and heavy-laden, look to Him, for He saith especially to you, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." The Lord add His blessing to the truth I have tried to preach to you, the sweet and the terrible alike, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

Hebrews 9

Verse 1. *Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.*

That is to say, a material sanctuary, a sanctuary made out of such things as this world contains. Under the old covenant, there were certain outward symbols. Under the new covenant, we have not the symbols, but we have the substance itself. The old law dealt with types and shadows, but the gospel deals with the spiritual realities themselves.

2, 3. *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread' which is called the sanctuary. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;*

All this was by divine appointment; the form of the rooms, the style of the furniture, everything was ordained of God; and that not merely for ornament, but for purposes of instruction. As we shall see farther on, the Holy Ghost intended a significance, a teaching, about everything in the old tabernacle, whether it was a candlestick, or a table, or the shewbread.

4, 5. *Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.*

It would not have been to the point which the apostle had in hand, so he waived the explanation of those things for another time.

6-8. *Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people: the Holy Ghost this signifying.*

It is from this sentence that I am sure that the Holy Ghost had a signification, a meaning; a teaching, for every item of the ancient tabernacle and temple; and we are not spinning fancies out of idle brains when we interpret these types, and learn from them important gospel lessons. "The Holy Ghost this signifying,"—

8. *That the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:*

It was necessary that you should take away the sacred tent, the tabernacle, ay, and take away the temple, too, before you could learn the spiritual meaning of them. You must break the shell to get at the kernel. So God had ordained. Hence, there is now no tabernacle, no temple, no holy court, no inner shrine, the holy of holies. The material worship is done away with, in order that we may render the spiritual worship of which the material was but the type,

9. *Which was a figure for the time then present,*

Only a figure, and only meant for "the time then present." It was the childhood of the Lord's people; it was a time when, as yet, the light had not fully broken in upon spiritual eyes, so they must be taught by picture-books. That they must have a kind of Kindergarten for the little children, that they might learn the elements of the faith by the symbols, types, and representations of a material worship. When we come into the true gospel light, all that is done away with; it was only "a figure for the time then present."

9. *In which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience:*

All those rites could only give a fleshly purity, but they could not touch the conscience. If men saw what was meant by the outward type, then the conscience was appeased; but by the outward sign itself the conscience

was never comforted, if it was a living and lowly conscience.

10. *Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.*

These ordinances were only laid upon the Jews—not upon any other people—and only laid upon them until the better and brighter days of reformation and fuller illumination.

11. *But Christ—*

Oh, how we seem to rise when we begin to get near to Him, away from the high priests of the Jews! "but Christ"—

11. *being come an high priest of good things to come,*

Not of the shadows, but of the good things themselves: "an high priest of good things to come,"—

11. *by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;*

That tabernacle was His body, which was not made with hands, nor yet formed by carnal generation as our human tabernacle is. This greater and more perfect tabernacle was made according to the power of an endless life.

12. *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

The Jewish high priests went once a year into the Holy of Holies. Each year as it came round demanded that they should go again. Their work was never done; but "He entered in once," and only once, "into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." I love that expression, "eternal redemption"—a redemption which really does redeem, and redeems forever and ever. If you are redeemed by it, you cannot be lost; if this redemption be yours, it is not for a time, or for a season, but it is "eternal redemption." Oh, how you ought to rejoice in the one entrance within the veil by our great High Priest who has obtained eternal redemption for us!

13-15. *For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.*

When you come to deal with Christ, you have to do with eternal things. There is nothing temporary about Him, or about His work. It is "eternal redemption" that He has obtained for us, it is an "eternal inheritance" that He has purchased for us.

16, 17. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

Or, "Where a covenant is, there must also be the death of him who covenants, or of that by which the covenant is established." Or read it as we have it in our version, for it seems as if it must be so, although we are loathe to give the meaning of "testament" to the word, since its natural meaning is evidently covenant: "Where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth"; or, if you will, while the victim that was to confirm the covenant lived, the covenant was not ratified; it must be slain before it could be thus effective.

18-22. *Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.*

There is no truth more plain than this in the whole of the Old Testament; and it must have within it a very weighty lesson to our souls. There are some who cannot endure the doctrine of a substitutionary atonement. Let them beware lest they be casting away the very soul and essence of the gospel. It is evident that the sacrifice of Christ was intended to give ease to the conscience, for we read that the blood of bulls and of goats could not do that. I fail to see how any doctrine of atonement except the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Christ can give ease to the guilty conscience. Christ in my stead suffering the penalty of my sin—that pacifies my conscience, but nothing else does: "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

23. *It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these;*

These things down below are only the patterns, the models, the symbols of the heavenly things; they could therefore be ceremonially purified with the blood which is the symbol of the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

23, 24. *But the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hand, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:*

He never went within the veil in the Jewish temple; that was but the symbol of the true holy of holies. He has gone "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

25-28. *Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And as it is appointed unto mere once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;*

There is no need that He should die again, His one offering has forever perfected His people. There remains nothing but His final coming for the judgment of the ungodly, and the acquittal of His redeemed.

28. *And unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*

Christ's second coming will be "without sin," and without a sin offering, too, wholly apart from sin, unto the salvation of all His chosen. May we all be amongst those who are looking for Him! Amen. HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—327, 228, 193.

The Bliss of the Glorified

A Sermon (No. 3499) Published on Thursday, February 17th, 1916. Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington. *On Lord's-day Evening, August 13th, 1871.* "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat."—Revelation 7:16.

WE cannot too often turn our thoughts heavenward, for *this is one of the great cures for worldliness*. The way to liberate our souls from the bonds that tie us to earth is to strengthen the cords that kind us to heaven. You will think less of this poor little globe when you think more of the world to come. This contemplation will also serve *to console us for the loss*, as we call it, *of those who have gone before*. It is their gain, and we will rejoice in it. We cannot have a richer source of consolation than this, that they who have fallen asleep in Christ have not perished; they have not lost life, but they have gained the fullness of it. They are rid of all that molests us here, and they enjoy more than we as yet can imagine. Cheer your hearts, ye mourners, by looking up to the gate of pearl, by looking up—to those who day without night surround the throne of their Redeemer. It will also *tend to quicken our diligence* if we think much of heaven. Suppose I should miss it after all! What if I should not so run that I may obtain! If heaven be little, I shall be but a little loser by losing it; but if it be indeed such that the half could never be told us, then, may God grant us diligence to make our calling and election sure, that we may be certain of entering into this rest, and may not be like the many who came out of Egypt, but who perished in the wilderness and never entered into the promised land. All things considered, I know of no meditation that is likely to be more profitable than a frequent consideration of the rest which remaineth for the people of God. I ask, then, for a very short time that your thoughts may go upward to the golden streets.

And, first, we shall think a little of *the blessedness of the saints* as described in the simple words of our text;

then we will say a few words as to *how they came by that felicity*; and thirdly, *draw some practical lessons from it*. First, then, we have here:—

I. A DESCRIPTION OF THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE GLORIFIED.

We have not the full description of it here; but we have here a description of certain *evils from which they are free*. You notice they are of two or three kinds—first, *such as originate within*—"They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more"—they are free from inward evils; secondly, *such as originate without*—"Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." They are altogether delivered from the results of outward circumstances. Take the first: "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more." We are never so to strain Scripture for a spiritual sense as to take away its natural sense, and hence we will begin by saying this is no doubt to be understood physically of the body they will have in glory. Whether there will be a necessity for eating and drinking in heaven, we will not say, for we are not told, but anyhow it is met by the text, "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them"—if they need food—"and lead them to living fountains of water" if they need to drink. Whatever may be the necessities of the future, those necessities shall never cause a pang. Here, the man who is hungry may have to ask the question, "What shall I eat?"; the man who is thirsty may have to say, "What shall I drink?"; and we have all to ask, "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" But such questions shall never arise there. They are abundantly supplied. Children of God have been hungry here: the great Son of God, the head of the household was hungry before them; and they need not wonder if they have fellowship with him in this suffering. Children of God have had to thirst here: their great Lord and Master said, "I thirst"; they need not wonder, therefore, if in his affliction they have to take some share. Should not they who are to be like their head in heaven be conformed unto him on earth? But up yonder there is no poverty, and there shall be no accident that shall place them in circumstances of distress. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more."

While we take this physically, there is no doubt that *it is to be understood mentally*. Our minds are also constantly the victims of hungerings and thirstings. There are on earth various kinds of this hunger and thirst—in a measure evil, in a measure also innocent. There are many men that in this world are *hungering after wealth*, and the mouth of avarice can never be filled. It is as insatiable as the horse-leech, and for ever cries, "Give, give!" But such hunger was never known in heaven, and never can be, for they are satisfied there; they have all things and abound. All their enlarged capacities can desire they already possess, in being near the throne of God and beholding his glory; there is no wealth which is denied them. Here, too, some of the sons of men hunger *after fame*, and oh! what have not men done to satisfy this? It is said that breaks through stone walls; certainly ambition has done it. Death at the cannon's mouth has been a trifle, if a man might win the bubble reputation. But in heaven there is no such hunger as that. Those who once had it, and are saved, scorn ambition henceforth. And what room would there be for ambition in the skies? They take their crowns and cast them at their Saviour's feet. They have their palm-branches, for they have won the victory, but they ascribe the conquest to the Lamb, their triumph to his death. Their souls are satisfied with his fame. The renown of Christ has filled their spirit with everlasting contentment. They hunger no more, nor thirst any more, in that respect. And oh! what hunger and thirst there has been on earth by those of tender and large heart *for a fit object of love*! I mean not now the common thing called "love," but the friendship which is in man's heart, and sends out its tendrils wanting something to which to cling. We must—we are born and created for that very purpose—we must live together, we cannot develop ourselves alone. And oftentimes a lonely spirit has yearned for a brother's ear, into which to pour its sorrows; and doubtless many a man has been brought to destruction and been confined to the lunatic asylum whose reason might have been saved had there been some sympathetic spirit, some kind, gentle heart that would have helped to bear his burden. Oh! the hunger and the thirst of many a soul after a worthy object of confidence. But they hunger and they thirst, up there, no more. Their love is all centred on their Saviour. Their confidence, which they reposed in him on earth, is still in him. He is their bosom's Lord, their heart's Emperor, and they are satisfied, and, wrapped up in him, they hunger and they thirst no more.

And how many young spirits there are on earth that are *hungering after knowledge* who would fain get the hammer and break the rock, and find out the history of the globe in the past. They would follow philosophy, if they could, to its source, and find out the root of the matter. Oh! to know, to know, to know! The human mind pants and thirsts for this. But there they know even as they are known. I do not know that in heaven they know all things—that must be for the Omniscient only—but they know all they need or really want to know; they are satisfied there. There will be no longer searching with a spirit that is ill at ease. They may, perhaps, make progress even there, and the scholar may become daily more and more wise; but there shall never be such a hungering and thirsting as to cause their mental faculties the slightest pang. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Oh! blessed land where the seething ocean of man's mind is hushed, and sleeps in everlasting calm! Oh! blessed country where the hungry spirit, that crieth every hour for bread, and yet for

more, and yet for more, and spends its labour for that which satisfieth not, shall be fed with the bread of angels, and be satisfied with favour and full of the goodness of the Lord.

But, dear friends, surely the text also means *our spiritual hungering and thirsting*. "Blessed is the man that hungers and thirst to-day after righteousness, for he shall be filled." This a kind of hunger that we ought to desire to have; this is a sort of thirst that the more you have of it will be the indication of the possession of more grace. On earth it is good for saints to hunger and to thirst spiritually, but up there they have done even with that blessed hunger and that blessed thirst. Today, beloved, some of us are *hungering after holiness*. Oh! what would I not give to be holy, to be rid of sin, of every evil thing about me! My eyes—ah! adieu sweet light, if I might also say, "Adieu sin! My mouth—ah! well would I be content to be dumb if I might preach by a perfect life on earth! There is no faculty I know of that might not be cheerfully surrendered if the surrender of it would deprive us of sin. But they never thirst for holiness in heaven, for this excellent reason, that they are without fault before the throne of God. Does it not make your mouth water? Why this is the luxury of heaven to be perfect. Is not this—the heaven of heaven, to be clean rid of the root and branch of sin, and not a rag or bone, or piece of a bone of our old depravity left—all gone like our Lord, made perfect without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. And here, too, brethren and sisters, we very rightly hunger and thirst *after full assurance and confidence*. Many are hungering after it; they hope they are saved, and they thirst to be assured that they are. But there is no such thirst as that in heaven, for, having crossed the golden threshold of Paradise, no saint ever asks himself, "Am I saved?" They see his face without a cloud between; they bathe in the sea of his love; they cannot question that which they perpetually enjoy. So, too, on earth I hope we know what it is to hunger and thirst *for fellowship with Christ*. Oh! when he is gone from us—if he do but hide his face from us, how we cry, "My soul desires thee in the night"! We cannot be satisfied unless we have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. But in heaven they have no such thing. There the shepherd is always with the Sheep, the King is ever near them, and because of his perpetual presence their hungering and their thirsting will be banished for ever. Thus much upon those evils, then, that would arise from within. As they are perfect, whatever comes from within is a source of pleasure to them, and never of pain.

And now, dear friends, *the evils that come from without*: let us think of them. We no doubt can appreciate in some measure, though not to the degree which we should if we were in Palestine in the middle of summer—we can appreciate the words, "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." This signifies that nothing external shall injure the blessed. Take it literally. There shall be nothing in the surroundings of heavenly saints that shall cause glorified spirits any inconvenience. I think we may take it mainly in relation to the entire man glorified; and so let us say that on earth the sun lights on us and many heats in the form of affliction. What *heats of affliction* some here have passed through! Why there are some here who are seldom free from physical pain. There are many of the best of God's children that, if they get an hour without pain, are joyful indeed. There are others that have had a great fight of affliction Through poverty they have fought hard. They have been industrious, but somehow or other God has marked them out for the scant tables and the thread-worn garments. They are the children of poverty, and the furnace heat is very hot about them. With others it has been repeated deaths of those they have loved. Ah! how sad is the widow's case! How deep the grief of the fatherless! How great the sorrow of bereaved parents! Sometimes the arrows of God fly one after the other; first one falls and then another until we think we shall hardly have one left. These are the heats of the furnace of affliction. And at other times these take the form of ingratitude from children. I think we never ought to repine so much about the death of a child as about the ungodly life of a child. A dead cross is very heavy, but a living cross is heavier far. Many a mother has had a son of whom she might regret that he did not die even the very hour of his birth, for he has lived to be the grief of his parents, and a dishonour to their name. These are sharp trials—these heats—but you shall have done with them soon. "Neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." No poverty, no sickness, no bereavement, no ingratitude—nothing of the kind. They for ever rest from affliction. Heat sometimes comes in another form—in *the matter of temptation*. Oh! how some of God's people have been tried—tried by their flesh! Their constitution, perhaps, has been hot, impulsive, and they have been carried off their feet, or would have been but for the interposing grace of God, many and many a time. They have been tempted, too, in their position, and they of their own household have been their enemies. They have been tempted by their peculiar circumstances; their feet have almost gone many a time. And they have been tempted by the devil; and hard work it is to stand against Satanic insinuations. It is hot, indeed, when his fiery darts fly. Oh! when we shall have once crossed the river, how some of us who have been much tempted will look back upon that old dog of hell, and laugh him to scorn because he will not be able even to bark at us again! Then we shall be for ever free from him. He worries us now because he would devour us, but there, as he cannot devour, so shall he not even worry us. "Neither shall the sun " of temptation " light on them, nor any heat." Happy are the people that are in such a case. The *heats of persecution* have often, too, carried about the saints. It is the lot of God's people to be tried in this way. Through much tribulation of this sort they inherit the kingdom; but there are no Smithfields in heaven, and no Bonners to light up the faggots, no Inquisitions in heaven, no slanderers there to spoil the good man's name. They shall

never have the heat of persecution to suffer again. And, once more, they shall not have *the heat of care*. I do not know that we need have it, even here; but there are a great many of God's people who allow care to get very hot about them. Even while sitting in this place to-night while the hymn was going up, "What must it be to be there!" the thoughts of some of you have been going away to your business, or your home. While we are trying to preach and draw your attention upwards, perhaps some housewife is thinking of something she has left out which ought to have been looked up before she came away, or wondering where she left the key. We make any excuses for care through the cares we continually invent, forgetting the words, "Cast all your care on him, for he careth for you." But they have no cares in heaven. "They hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat." Ah! good man, there shall be no ships at sea by-and-by—no harvests—to trouble you as to whether the good weather will last! Ah! good woman, you shall have no more children that are sickly to fret over, for there you will have all you desire, and be in a family circle that is unbroken, for all the brothers and sisters of God's family shall by-and-by be there, and so you shall be eternally blest.

We have thus opened up as well as we could the words of the text on the felicity of the saints. Now, very briefly:—

II. How DO THEY COME TO BE HAPPY?

Well, it is quite clear that they did not come to it because they were very fortunate people on earth, for if you read another passage of the Word of God you will find, "These are they that came out of great tribulation." Those that have had trial and suffering on earth are amongst those that have the bliss of heaven. Encourage yourselves, you poor and suffering ones. It is quite certain they did not come there from their own merit, for we read, they have "washed their robes"—they wanted washing. They did not keep them always undefiled. There had been spots upon them. They came there not because they deserved to be there, but because of the rich grace of God. How did they come there then? Well, first, they came there *through the lamb that was slain*. He bore the sun and the heat, and, therefore, the sun doth not light on them, nor any heat. The hot sun of Jehovah's justice shone full upon the Saviour—scorched, and burned, and consumed him with grief and anguish; and because the Saviour suffered, therefore we suffer it no more. All our hopes of heaven are found at the cross.

But they came there next *because the Saviour shed his blood*. They washed their robes in it. Faith linked them to the Saviour. The fountain would not have cleansed their robes if they had not washed in it. Oh! there shall be none come to heaven but such as have by faith embraced what God provides. Dear hearer, judge thyself whether thou art right, therefore. Hast thou washed thy robe and made it white in the Lamb's blood? Is Christ all in all to thee? If not, canst thou hope to be there? And they are there in perfect bliss, we are told. No sun lights on them, nor any heat, because the Lamb in the midst of the throne is with them. How could they be unhappy who see Christ? Is not this the secret of their bliss, that Jesus fully reveals himself to them?

And besides, *they have the love of God to enjoy*, for the last word of the chapter is, "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." The blood of Jesus applied, the presence of Jesus enjoyed, and the love of God fully revealed—these are the causes of the bliss of the saved in heaven. But we must close our meditation with the last point, which is:—

III. WHAT THIS TEACHES US.

? First, the bliss of the saved in glory teaches us *to long for it*. It is legitimate to long for heaven—not to long to escape from doing our duty here. It is idleness to be always wanting to have done with this world—it is clear sloth—but to be longing to be where Jesus is, is only natural and gracious. Should not the child long to go home from the school? Should not the captive pine for liberty? Should not the traveller in foreign lands long to see his native country? Should not the bride, the married wife, when she has been long away from her husband, long to see his face? If you did not long for heaven, surely you might question whether heaven belonged to you. If you have ever tasted of the joys of the saints, as believers do on earth, you will sing with full soul:—"My thirsty spirit faints To reach the land I love The bright inheritance of saints, Jerusalem above."
You may long for this.

And the next lesson is, be patient until you get there. As it will be such a blessed place when you arrive, don't trouble about the difficulties of the way. You know our hymn:—"The way may be rough, but it cannot be long." So "Let us fill it with hope, and cheer it with song." You know how well your horse goes when you turn its head homewards. Perhaps you had to flog him a bit before, but when he begins to know he is going

down the long lane which leads home he will soon lift up his ears, and away, away he will go. We ought to have as much sense as horses. Our heads are turned towards heaven We are steering towards that port—homeward bound. It may be rough weather but we shall soon be in the fair haven where not a wave of trouble shall ever disturb us again. Be patient, be patient. The husbandman has waited for the precious fruits of the earth; you can well wait for the precious things of heaven. You sow in tears, but you shall reap in joy. He has promised you a harvest. He who cannot lie has said the seed-time and harvest shall never cease They do not cease below; depend upon it, they won't cease above. There is a harvest for you who have been sowing here below.

Our first lesson, then, is, long for this, and then be patient in waiting. But our next lesson is to be, wait your appointed time. And now the next instruction is, *make much of faith*. They entered heaven because they had washed their robes in blood. Make much of the blood and much of the faith by which you have washed. Dear hearers, have you all got faith? It is, as it were, the key of blessedness. "But all men have not faith," says the Apostle. Hast thou faith? Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus? In other words, dost thou trust thyself alone with him? Can you sing with our poet:— "Nothing in my hand I bring Simply to thy cross I cling; Naked, come to thee for dress, Helpless, look to thee for grace. Foul, I to the fountain fly, Wash me, Saviour, or I die"? Make much of the faith that will admit you to heaven.

Once more, our text teaches us this lesson—Do any of us want to know what heaven is on earth? Most of us will say, "Aye" to that. Well then, the text tells you *how to find heaven on earth*. You find it in the same way as they find it in heaven. First, be thou washed in the blood of Christ, and that will be a great help towards happiness on earth. It will give thee peace now, "the peace of God that passeth all understanding." Some people think that heaven on earth is to be found in the theatre, and in the ballroom, and in the giddy haunts of fashion. Well, it may be heaven to some, but if God has any love to you, it won't be heaven to you. Wash your robe, therefore, in the Saviour's blood, and there will be the beginning of heaven on earth.

Then next, it appears, if you read the connection of our text, that those who enjoy heaven serve God day and night in his temple. If you want heaven on earth, serve God continually day and night. Having washed your robe first, then put it on, and go out to serve God. Idle Christians are often unhappy Christians I have met with many a spiritual dyspeptic always full of doubts and fears. Is there a young man here full of doubts and fears who has lost the light he once possessed, and the joy he once had? Dear brother, get to work. In cold weather the best way to be warm is not to get before a fire, but to work. Exercise gives a healthy glow, even amidst the frost. "I am doing something," says one. Yes, with one hand; use the other hand. "Perhaps I should have too many irons in the fire," says one. You cannot have too many. Put them all in, and blow the fire with all the bellows you can get. I do not believe any Christian man works too hard, and, as a rule, if those who kill themselves in Christ's service were buried in a cemetery by themselves, it would be a long while before it would get filled. Work hard for Christ. It makes happy those who are in heaven to serve God day and night, and it will make you happy on earth. Do all you can. Another way is to have fellowship with Christ here. Read again this chapter. "He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them—he shall feed them." Oh! if you want to be happy, live near to Jesus. Poor men are not poor when Christ lives in their house. Truly, sick men have their beds made easy when Christ is there. Has he not said, "I will make his bed in all his sickness"? Only get fellowship with Jesus, and outward circumstances won't distress you. The sun will not light on you, nor any heat. You will be like the shepherd on Salisbury Plain, who said it was good weather, though it rained hard. "It is weather," said he, "that pleases me." "How so?" said a traveller to him. "Well, sir," he said, "it pleases God, and what pleases God pleases me." "Good day!" said one to a Christian man. "I never had a bad day since I was converted," said he. "They are all good now since Christ is my Saviour." Do you not see, then, that if your wishes are subdued, if you do not hunger any more, or thirst any more as you used to do, and if you always live near to Christ, you will begin to enjoy heaven on earth. Begin, then, the heavenly life here below. The Bible says, "For he hath raised us up, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The way to live on earth, according to many, is to live on earth, but to look upward to heaven. That is a good way of living, but I will tell you a better, and that is to live in heaven, and look down on earth. The Apostle had learned that when he said, "Our conversation is in heaven." It is good to be on earth, and look up to heaven; it is better for the mind to be in heaven, and to look down upon earth. May we learn that secret. The Lord lead us into it. Then when faith is strong, and love is ardent, and hope is bright, we shall sing, with Watts:— "The men of grace have found Glory begun below; Celestial fruits on earthly ground From faith and hope may grow." The Lord grant you a participation in this bliss, beloved, and an abundant entrance into that bliss for ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

The Blood-Shedding

A Sermon (No. 118) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, February 22, 1857, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At The Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens "Without shedding of blood is no remission." —Hebrews 9: 22.

I will show you three fools.

One is yonder soldier, who has been wounded on the field of battle, grievously wounded, well nigh unto death; the surgeon is by his side, and the soldier asks him a question. Listen, and judge of his folly. What question does he ask? Does he raise his eyes with eager anxiety and inquire if the wound be mortal, if the practitioner's skill can suggest the means of healing, or if the remedies are within reach and the medicine at hand? No, nothing of the sort; strange to tell, he asks, "Can you inform me with what sword I was wounded, and by what Russian I have been thus grievously mauled? I want," he adds, "to learn every minute particular respecting the origin of my wound." The man is delirious or his head is affected. Surely such questions at such a time are proof enough that he is bereft of his senses.

There is another fool. The storm is raging, the ship is flying impetuous before the gale, the dark scud moves swiftly over head, the masts are creaking, the sails are rent to rags, and still the gathering tempest grows more fierce. Where is the captain? Is he busily engaged on the deck, is he manfully facing the danger, and skilfully suggesting means to avert it? No sir, he has retired to his cabin, and there with studious thoughts and crazy fancies he is speculating on the place where this storm took its rise. "It is mysterious, this wind; no one ever yet" he says, "has been able to discover it." And, so reckless of the vessel, the lives of the passengers, and his own life, he is careful only to solve his curious questions. The man is mad, sir; take the rudder from his hand; he is clean gone mad! If he should ever run on shore, shut him up as a hopeless lunatic.

The third fool I shall doubtless find among yourselves. You are sick and wounded with sin, you are in the storm and hurricane of Almighty vengeance, and yet the question which you would ask of me, this morning, would be, "Sir, what is the origin of evil?" You are mad, Sir, spiritually mad; that is not the question you would ask if you were in a sane and healthy state of mind; your question would be: "How can I get rid of the evil?" Not, "How did it come into the world?" but "How am I to escape from it?" Not, "How is it that hail descends from heaven upon Sodom?" but "How may I, like Lot, escape out of the city to a Zoar." Not, "How is it that I am sick?" but "Are there medicines that will heal me? Is there a physician to be found that can restore my soul to health?" Ah! you trifle with subtleties while you neglect certainties. More questions have been asked concerning the origin of evil than upon anything else. Men have puzzled their heads, and twisted their brains into knots, in order to understand what men can never know—how evil came into this world, and how its entrance is consistent with divine goodness? The broad fact is this, there is evil; and your question should be, "How can I escape from the wrath to come, which is engendered of this evil?" In answering that question this verse stands right in the middle of the way (like the angel with the sword, who once stopped Balaam on his road to Barak,) "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Your real want is to know how you can be saved; if you are aware that your sin must be pardoned or punished, your question will be, "How can it be pardoned?" and then point blank in the very teeth of your enquiry, there stands out this fact: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Mark you, this is not merely a Jewish maxim; it is a world-wide and eternal truth. It pertaineth not to the Hebrews only, but to the Gentiles likewise. Never in any time, never in any place, never in any person, can there be remission apart from shedding of blood. This great fact, I say, is stamped on nature; it is an essential law of God's moral government, it is one of the fundamental principles which can neither be shaken nor denied. Never can there be any exception to it; it stands the same in every place throughout all ages—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." It was so with the Jews; they had no remission without the shedding of blood. Some things under the Jewish law might be cleansed by water or by fire, but in no case where absolute sin was concerned was there ever purification without blood—teaching this doctrine, that blood, and blood alone, must be applied for the remission of sin. Indeed the very heathen seem to have an inkling of this fact. Do not I see their knives gory with the blood of victims? Have I not heard horrid tales of human immolations, of holocausts, of sacrifices; and what mean these, but that there lies deep in the human breast, deep as the very existence of man, this truth,—"that without shedding of blood there is no remission." And I assert once more, that even in the hearts and consciences of my hearers there is something which will never let them believe in remission apart from a shedding of blood. This is the grand truth of Christianity, and it is a truth which I will endeavour now to fix upon your memory; and may God by his grace bless it to your souls. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

First, let me show you the blood-shedding, before I begin to dwell upon the text. Is there not a special blood-shedding meant? Yes, there was a shedding of most precious blood, to which I must forthwith refer you. I shall not tell you now of massacres and murders, nor of rivers of blood of goats and rams. There was a blood-shedding once, which did all other shedding of blood by far outvie; it was a man—a God—that shed his

blood at that memorable season. Come and see it. Here is a garden dark and gloomy; the ground is crisp with the cold frost of midnight; between those gloomy olive trees I see a man, I hear him groan out his life in prayer; harken, angels, harken men, and wonder; it is the Saviour groaning out his soul! Come and see him. Behold his brow! O heavens! drops of blood are streaming down his face, and from his body; every pore is open, and it sweats! but not the sweat of men that toil for bread; it is the sweat of one that toils for heaven—he "sweats great drops of blood!" That is the blood-shedding, without which there is no remission. Follow that man further; they have dragged him with sacrilegious bands from the place of his prayer and his agony, and they have taken him to the hall of Pilate; they seat him in a chair and mock him; a robe of purple is put on his shoulders in mockery; and mark his brow—they have put about it a crown of thorns, and the crimson drops of gore are rushing down his cheeks! Ye angels! the drops of blood are running down his cheeks! But turn aside that purple robe for a moment. His back is bleeding. Tell me, demons who did this. They lift up the thongs, still dripping clots of gore; they scourge and tear his flesh, and make a river of blood to run down his shoulders! That is the shedding of blood without which there is no remission. Not yet have I done: they hurry him through the streets; they fling him on the ground; they nail his hands and feet to the transverse wood, they hoist it in the air, they dash it into its socket, it is fixed, and there he hangs the Christ of God. Blood from his head, blood from his hands, blood from his feet! In agony unknown he bleeds away his life; in terrible throes he exhausts his soul. "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani." And then see! they pierce his side, and forthwith runneth out blood and water. This is the shedding of blood, sinners and saints; this is the awful shedding of blood, the terrible pouring out of blood, without which for you, and for the whole human race, there is no remission.

I have then, I hope, brought my text fairly out: without this shedding of blood there is no remission. Now I shall come to dwell upon it more particularly.

Why is it that this story doth not make men weep? I told it ill, you say. Ay, so I did; I will take all the blame. But, sirs, if it were told as ill as men could speak, were our hearts what they should be, we should bleed away our lives in sorrow. Oh! it was a horrid murder that! It was not an act of regicide; it was not the deed of a fratricide, or of a parricide; it was—what shall I say?—I must make a word—a deicide; the killing of a God; the slaying of him who became incarnate for our sins. Oh! if our hearts were but soft as iron, we must weep, if they were but tender as the marble of the mountains, we should shed great drops of grief; but they are harder than the nether millstone; we forget the griefs of him that died this ignominious death, we pity not his sorrows, nor do we account the interest we have in him as though he suffered and accomplished all for us. Nevertheless, here stands the principle—"Without shedding of blood is no remission."

Now, I take it, there are two things here. First, there is a *negative expressed*: "No remission without shedding of blood." And then there is a *positive implied*, forsooth, with shedding of blood there is remission.

I. First, I say, here is A NEGATIVE EXPRESSED: there is no remission without blood—without the blood of Jesus Christ. This is of divine authority; when I utter this sentence I have divinity to plead. It is not a thing which you may doubt, or which you may believe; it must be believed and received, otherwise you have denied the Scriptures and turned aside from God. Some truths I utter, perhaps, have little better basis than my own reasoning and inference, which are of little value enough; but this I utter, not with quotations from God's Word to back up my assertion, but from the lips of God himself. Here it stands in great letters, "There is no remission." So divine its authority. Perhaps you will kick at it: but remember, your rebellion is not against me, but against God, If any of you reject this truth, I shall not controvert; God forbid I should turn aside from proclaiming his gospel, to dispute with men. I have God's irrevocable statute to plead now, here it stands: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." You may believe or disbelieve many things the preacher utters; but this you disbelieve at the peril of your souls. It is God's utterance: will you tell God to his face you do not believe it? That were impious. The negative is divine in its authority; bow yourselves to it, and accept its solemn warning.

But some men will say that God's way of saving men, by shedding of blood, is a cruel way, an unjust way, an unkind way; and all kinds of things they will say of it. Sirs, I have nothing to do with your opinion of the matter; it is so. If you have any faults to find with your Maker, fight your battles out with him at last. But take heed before you throw the gauntlet down; it will go ill with a worm when he fighteth with his Maker, and it will go ill with you when you contend with him. The doctrine of atonement when rightly understood and faithfully received, is delightful, for it exhibits boundless love, immeasurable goodness, and infinite truth; but to unbelievers it will always be a hated doctrine. So it must be sirs; you hate your own mercies; you despise your own salvation. I tarry not to dispute with you; I affirm it in God's name: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

And note how decisive this is in its character: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." "But, sir,

can't I get my sins forgiven by my repentance? if I weep, and plead, and pray, will not God forgive me for the sake of my tears?" "No remission," says the text, "without shedding of blood." "But, sir, if I never sin again, and if I serve God more zealously than other men, will he not forgive me for the sake of my obedience?" "No remission," says the text, "without shedding of blood." "But, sir, may I not trust that God is merciful, and will forgive me without the shedding of blood?" "No," says the text, "without shedding of blood there is no remission;" none whatever. It cuts off every other hope. Bring your hopes here, and if they are not based in blood, and stamped with blood, they are as useless as castles in the air, and dreams of the night. "There is no remission," says the text, in positive and plain words; and yet men will be trying to get remission in fifty other ways, until their special pleading becomes as irksome to us as it is useless for them. Sirs, do what you like, say what you please, but you are as far off remission when you have done your best, as you were when you began, except you put confidence in the shedding of our Saviour's blood, and in the blood-shedding alone, for without it there is no remission.

And note again *how universal it is in its character*. "What! may not I get remission without blood-shedding?" says the king; and he comes with the crown on his head; "May not I in all my robes, with this rich ransom, get pardon without the blood-shedding?" "None," is the reply; "none." Forthwith comes the wise man, with a number of letters after his name—"Can I not get remission by these grand titles of my learning?" "None; none." Then comes the benevolent man—"I have dispersed my money to the poor, and given my bounty to feed them; shall not I get remission?" "None;" says the text, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." How this puts everyone on a level! My lord, you are no bigger than your coachman; Sir, squire, you are no better off than John that ploughs the ground; minister, your office does not serve you with any exemption—your poorest hearer stands on the very same footing. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." No hope for the best, any more than for the worst, without this shedding of blood. Oh! I love the gospel, for this reason among others, because it is such a levelling gospel. Some persons do not like a levelling gospel; nor would I, in some senses of the word. Let men have their rank, and their titles, and their riches, if they will; but I do like, and I am sure all good men like, to see rich and poor meet together and feel that they are on a level; the gospel makes them so. It says "Put up your money-bags, they will not procure you remission; roll up your diploma, that will not get you remission; forget your farm and your park, they will not get you remission; just cover up that escutcheon, that coat of arms will not get you remission. Come, you ragged beggars, filthy off-scourings of the world, penniless; come hither; here is remission as much for you, ill-bred and ill-mannered though ye be, as for the noble, the honorable, the titled, and the wealthy. All stand on a level here; the text is universal: "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

Mark too, *how perpetual my text is*. Paul said, "there is no remission;" I must repeat this testimony too. When thousands of years have rolled away, some minister may stand on this spot and say the same. This will never alter at all; it will always be so, in the next world as well as this: no remission without shedding of blood. "Oh! yes there is," says one, "the priest takes the shilling, and he gets the soul out of purgatory." That is a mere pretence; it never was in. But without shedding of blood there is no real remission. There may be tales and fancies, but there is no true remission without the blood of propitiation. Never, though you strained yourselves in prayer; never, though you wept yourselves away in tears; never, though you groaned and cried till your heart-strings break; never in this world, nor in that which is to come, can the forgiveness of sins be procured on any other ground than redemption by the blood of Christ, and never can the conscience be cleansed but by faith in that sacrifice. The fact is, beloved, there is no use for you to satisfy your hearts with anything less than what satisfied God the Father. Without the shedding of blood nothing would appease his justice; and without the application of that same blood nothing can purge your consciences.

II. But as there is no remission without blood-shedding, IT IS IMPLIED THAT THERE IS REMISSION WITHOUT IT. Mark it well, this remission is a present fact. The blood having been already shed, the remission is already obtained. I took you to the garden of Gethsemane and the mount of Calvary to see the bloodshedding. I might now conduct you to another garden and another mount to shew you the grand proof of the remission. Another garden, did I say? Yes, it is a garden, fraught with many pleasing and even triumphant reminiscences. Aside from the haunts of this busy world, in it was a new sepulchre, hewn out of a rock where Joseph of Arimathea thought his own poor body should presently be laid. But there they laid Jesus after his crucifixion.

He had stood surety for his people, and the law had demanded his blood; death had held him with strong grasp; and that tomb was, as it were, the dungeon of his captivity, when, as the good shepherd, he laid down his life for the sheep. Why, then, do I see in that garden, an open, untenanted grave? I will tell you. The debts are paid, the sins are cancelled—, the remission is obtained. How, think you? That great Shepherd of the sheep hath been brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and in him also we have obtained redemption through his blood. There, beloved, is proof the first.

Do you ask further evidence? I will take you to Mount Olivet. You shall behold Jesus there with his hands raised like the High Priest of old to bless his people, and while he is blessing them, he ascends, the clouds receiving him out of their sight. But why, you ask, oh why hath he thus ascended, and whither is he gone? Behold he entereth, not into the holy place made with hands, but he entereth into heaven itself with his own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Now, therefore, we have boldness to draw near by the blood of Christ. The remission is obtained, here is proof the second. Oh believer, what springs of comfort are there here for thee.

And now let me commend this remission by the shedding of blood to those who have not yet believed. Mr. Innis, a great Scotch minister, once visited an infidel who was dying. When he came to him the first time, he said, "Mr. Innis, I am relying on the mercy of God; God is merciful, and he will never damn a man for ever." When he got worse and was nearer death, Mr. Innis went to him again, and he said, "Oh! Mr. Innis, my hope is gone; for I have been thinking if God be merciful, God is just too; and what if, instead of being merciful to me, he should be just to me? What would then become of me? I must give up my hope in the mere mercy of God; tell me how to be saved!" Mr. Innis told him that Christ had died in the stead of all believers—that God could be just, and yet the justifier through the death of Christ. "Ah!" said he, "Mr. Innis, there is something solid in that; I can rest on that; I cannot rest on anything else;" and it is a remarkable fact that none of us ever met with a man who thought he had his sins forgiven unless it was through the blood of Christ. Meet a Mussulman; he never had his sins forgiven; he does not say so. Meet an Infidel; he never knows that his sins are forgiven. Meet a Legalist; he says, "I hope they will be forgiven;" but he does not pretend they are. No one ever gets even a fancied hope apart from this, that Christ, and Christ alone, must save by the shedding of his blood.

Let me tell a story to show how Christ saves souls. Mr. Whitfield had a brother who had been like him, an earnest Christian, but he had backslidden; he went far from the ways of godliness; and one afternoon, after he had been recovered from his backsliding, he was sitting in a room in a chapel house. He had heard his brother preaching the day before, and his poor conscience had been cut to the very quick. Said Whitfield's brother, when he was at tea, "I am a lost man," and he groaned and cried, and could neither eat nor drink. Said Lady Huntingdon, who sat opposite, "What did you say, Mr. Whitfield?" "Madam," said he, "I said, I am a lost man." "I'm glad of it," said she; "I'm glad of it." "Your ladyship, how can you say so? It is cruel to say you are glad that I am a lost man." "I repeat it, sir," said she; "I am heartily glad of it." He looked at her, more and more astonished at her barbarity. "I am glad of it," said she, "because it is written, 'The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.'" With the tears rolling down his cheeks, he said, "What a precious Scripture; and how is it that it comes with such force to me? Oh! madam," said he, "madam, I bless God for that; then he will save me; I trust my soul in his hands; he has forgiven me." He went outside the house, felt ill, fell upon the ground, and expired. I may have a lost man here this morning. As I cannot say much, I will leave you, good people; you do not want anything.

Have I got a lost man here? Lost man! Lost woman! Where are you? Do you feel yourself to be lost? I am so glad of it; for there is remission by the blood-shedding. O sinner, are there tears in your eyes? Look through them. Do you see that man in the garden? That man sweats drops of blood for you. Do you see that man on the cross? That man was nailed there for you. Oh! if I could be nailed on a cross this morning for you all, I know what you would do: you would fall down and kiss my feet, and weep that I should have to die for you. But sinner, lost sinner, Jesus died for you—for you; and if he died for you., you cannot be lost. Christ died in vain for no one. Are you, then, a sinner? Are you convinced of sin because you believe not in Christ? I have authority to preach to you. Believe in his name and you cannot be lost. Do you say you are no sinner? Then I do not know that Christ died for you. Do you say that you have no sins to repent of? Then I have no Christ to preach to you. He did not come to save the righteous; he came to save the wicked. Are you wicked? Do you feel it? Are you lost? Do you know it? Are you sinful? Will you confess it? Sinner! if Jesus were here this morning, he would put out his bleeding hands, and say, "Sinner, I died for you, will you believe me?" He is not here in person; he has sent his servant to tell you. Won't you believe him? "Oh!" but you say, "I am such a sinner;" "Ah!" says he, "that is just why I died for you, because you are a sinner." "But," you say, "I do not deserve it." "Ah!" says he, "that is just why I did it." Say you, "I have hated him." "But," says he, "I have always loved you." "But, Lord, I have spat on thy minister, and scorned thy word." "It is all forgiven," says he, "all washed away by the blood which did run from my side. Only believe me; that is all I ask. And that I will give you. I will help you to believe." "Ah!" says one, "but I do not want a Saviour." Sir, I have nothing to say to you except this—"The wrath to come! the wrath to come!" But there is one who says, "Sir, you do not mean what you say! Do you mean to preach to the most wicked men or women in the place?" I mean what I say. There she is! She is a harlot, she has led many into sin, and many into hell, There she is; her own friends have turned her out of doors; her father called her a good-for-nothing hussey, and said she should never come

to the house again. Woman I dost thou repent? Dost thou feel thyself to be guilty? Christ died to save thee, and thou shalt be saved. There he is. I can see him. He was drunk; he has been drunk very often. Not many nights ago I heard his voice in the street, as he went home at a late hour on Saturday night, disturbing everybody; and he beat his wife, too. He has broken the Sabbath; and as to swearing, if oaths be like soot, his throat must want sweeping bad enough, for he has cursed God often. Do you feel yourself to be guilty, my hearer? Do you hate your sins, and are you willing to forsake them? Then I bless God for you. Christ died for you. Believe! I had a letter a few days ago, from a young man who heard that during this week I was going to a certain town. Said he, "Sir, when you come, do preach a sermon that will fit me; for do you know, sir, I have heard it said that we must all think ourselves to be the wickedest people in the world, or else we cannot be saved. I try to think so, but I cannot, because I have not been the wickedest. I want to think so, but I cannot. I want to be saved, but I do not know how to repent enough." Now, if I have the pleasure of seeing him, I shall tell him, God does not require a man to think himself the wickedest in the world, because that would sometimes be to think a falsehood; there are some men who are not so wicked as others are. What God requires is this, that a man should say, "I know more of myself than I do of other people; I know little about them, and from what I see of myself, not of my actions, but of my heart, I do think there can be few worse than I am. They may be more guilty openly, but then I have had more light, more privileges, more opportunities, more warnings, and therefore I am still guiltier." I do not want you to bring your brother with you, and say, "I am more wicked than he is;" I want you to come yourself, and say, "Father, I have sinned;" you have nothing to do with your brother William, whether he has sinned more or less; your cry should be, "Father, I have sinned;" you have nothing to do with your cousin Jane, whether or not she has rebelled more than you. Your business is to cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner!" That is all. Do you feel yourselves lost? Again, I say,— "Come, and welcome, sinner, come!"

To conclude. There is not a sinner in this place who knows himself to be lost and ruined, who may not have all his sins forgiven, and "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." You may, though black as hell, be white as heaven this very instant. I know 'tis only by a desperate struggle that faith takes hold of the promise, but the very moment a sinner believes, that conflict is past. It is his first victory, and a blessed one. Let this verse be the language of your heart; adopt it, and make it your own: "A guilty weak, and helpless worm. In Christ's kind arms I fall; He is my strength and righteousness, My Jesus and my all."

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 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 oftentimes passed by, neglected and forgotten. "Brethren, we are debtors."

II. In the second place, very briefly, WHAT OUGHT WE TO DRAW FROM THIS DOCTRINE, that we are debtors?

First, we think we should learn *a lesson of humility*. If we 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 shalt not come out till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." But if thou agreeest 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.

The Covenant Promise of the Spirit

A Sermon (No. 2200) Delivered on Lord's-Day Morning, April 12th, 1891, by C. H. SPURGEON, At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington "And I will put my spirit within you."—Ezekiel 36:27.

No preface is needed; and the largeness of our subject forbids our wasting time in beating about the bush. I shall try to do two things this morning: first, I would *commend the text*; and secondly, I would in some measure *expound the text*.

I. First, as for THE COMMENDATION OF THE TEXT, the tongues of men and of angels might fail. To call it a golden sentence would be much too commonplace: to liken it to a pearl of great price would be too poor a comparison. We cannot feel, much less speak, too much in praise of the great God who has put this clause into the covenant of His grace. In that covenant every sentence is more precious than heaven and earth; and this line is not the least among His choice words of promise: "I will put my spirit within you."

I would begin by saying that it is a *gracious word*. It was spoken to a graceless people, to a people who had followed "their own way," and refused the way of God; a people who had already provoked something more than ordinary anger in the Judge of all the earth; for He Himself said (verse 18), "I poured my fury upon them." These people, even under chastisement, caused the holy name of God to be profaned among the heathen, whither they went. They had been highly favoured, but they abused their privileges, and behaved worse than those who never knew the Lord. They sinned wantonly, wilfully, wickedly, proudly and presumptuously; and by this they greatly provoked the Lord. Yet to them He made such a promise as this—"I will put my spirit within you." Surely, where sin abounded grace did much more abound.

Clearly this is a word of grace, for the law saith nothing of this kind. Turn to the law of Moses, and see if there be any word spoken therein concerning the putting of the Spirit within men to cause them to walk in God's statutes. The law proclaims the statutes; but the gospel alone promises the spirit by which the statutes will be obeyed. The law commands and makes us know what God requires of us; but the gospel goes further, and inclines us to obey the will of the Lord, and enables us practically to walk in His ways. Under the dominion of grace the Lord worketh in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

So great a boon as this could never come to any man by merit. A man might so act as to deserve a reward of a certain kind, in measure suited to His commendable action; but the Holy Spirit can never be the wage of human service: the idea verges upon blasphemy. Can any man deserve that Christ should die for him? Who would dream of such a thing? Can any man deserve that the Holy Ghost should dwell in him, and work holiness in him? The greatness of the blessing lifts it high above the range of merit, and we see that if the Holy Ghost be bestowed, it must be by an act of divine grace—grace infinite in bounty, exceeding all that we could have imagined. "Sovereign grace o'er sin abounding" is here seen in clearest light. "I will put my spirit within you" is a promise which drops with graces as the honeycomb with honey. Listen to the divine music which pours from this word of love. I hear the soft melody of grace, grace, grace, and nothing else but grace. Glory be to God, who gives to sinners the indwelling of His Spirit.

Note, next, that *it is a divine word*: "I will put my spirit within you." Who but the Lord could speak after this fashion? Can one man put the Spirit of God within another? Could all the church combined breathe the Spirit of God into a single sinner's heart? To put any good thing into the deceitful heart of man is a great achievement; but to put the Spirit of God into the heart, truly this is the finger of God. Nay, here I may say, the Lord has made bare His arm, and displayed the fulness of His mighty power. To put the Spirit of God into our nature is a work peculiar to the Godhead, and to do this within the nature of a free agent, such as man, is marvellous. Who but Jehovah, the God of Israel, can speak after this royal style, and, beyond all dispute, declare, "I will put my spirit within you?" Men must always surround their resolves with conditions and uncertainties; but since omnipotence is at the back of every promise of God, He speaks like a king; yea, in a style which is only fit for the eternal God. He purposes and promises, and He as surely performs. Sure, then, is this sacred saying, "I will put my spirit within you." Sure, because divine. O sinner, if we poor creatures had the saving of you, we should break down in the attempt; but, behold the Lord Himself comes on the scene, and the work is done! All the difficulties are removed by this one sentence, "I will put my spirit within you." We have wrought with our spirit, we have wept over you, and we have entreated you; but we have failed. Lo, there cometh One into the matter who will not fail, with whom nothing is impossible; and He begins His work by saying, "I will put my spirit within you." The word is of grace and of God; regard it, then, as a pledge from the God of grace.

To me there is much charm in the further thought that *this is an individual and personal word*. The Lord

means, "I will put my spirit within you": that is to say, within *you*, as individuals. "I will put my spirit within you" one by one. This must be so since the connection requires it. We read in verse 26, "A new heart also will I give you." Now, a new heart can only be given to one person. Each man needs a heart of his own, and each man must have a new heart for himself. "And a new spirit will I put within you." Within each one this must be done. "And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh"—these are all personal, individual operations of grace. God deals with men one by one in the solemn matters of eternity, sin, and salvation. We are born one by one, and we die one by one: even so we must be born again one by one, and each one for himself must receive the Spirit of God. Without this a man has nothing. He cannot be caused to walk in God's statutes except by the infusion of grace into him as an individual. I think I see among my hearers a lone man, or woman, who feels himself, or herself, to be all alone in the world, and therefore hopeless. You can believe that God will do great things for a nation, but how shall the solitary be thought of? You are an odd person, one that could not be written down in any list; peculiar sinner, with constitutional tendencies all your own. Thus saith God, "I will put my spirit within you"; within *your* heart—even *yours*. My dear hearers, you who have long been seeking salvation, but have not known the power of the Spirit—this is what you need. You have been striving in the energy of the flesh, but you have not understood where your true strength lieth. God saith to you, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord"; and again, "I will put my spirit within you." Oh, that this word might be spoken of the Lord to that young man who is ready to despair; to that sorrowful woman who has been looking into herself for power to pray and believe! You are without strength or hope in and of yourself; but this meets your case in all points. "I will put my spirit within you"—within you as an individual. Enquire of the Lord for it. Lift up your heart in prayer to God, and ask Him to pour upon you the Spirit of grace and of supplications. Plead with the Lord, saying, "Let thy good Spirit lead me. Even me." Cry, "Pass me not, my gracious Father; but in me fulfil this wondrous word of thine, 'I will put my spirit within you.'"

Note, next, that *this is a separating word*. I do not know whether you will see this readily; but it must be so: this word separates a man from his fellows. Men by nature are of another spirit from that of God, and they are under subjection to that evil spirit, the Prince of the power of the air. When the Lord comes to gather out His own, fetching them out from among the heathen, He effects the separation by doing according to this word, "I will put my spirit within you." This done, the individual becomes a new man. Those who have the Spirit are not of the world, nor like the world; and they soon have to come out from among the ungodly, and to be separate; for difference of nature creates conflict. God's Spirit will not dwell with the evil spirit: you cannot have fellowship with Christ and with Belial; with the kingdom of heaven and with this world. I wish that the people of God would again wake up to the truth that to gather out a people from among men is the great purpose of the present dispensation. It is still true, as James said at the Jerusalem Council, "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." We are not to remain clinging to the old wreck with the expectation that we shall pump the water out of her and get her safe into port. No; the cry is very different—"Take to the lifeboat! Take to the lifeboat!" You are to quit the wreck, and then you are to carry away from the sinking mass that which God will save. You must be separate from the old wreck, lest it suck you down to sure destruction. Your only hope of doing good to the world is by yourselves being "not of the world," even as Christ was not of the world. For you to go down to the world's level will neither be good for it nor for you. That which happened in the days of Noah will be repeated; for when the sons of God entered into alliance with the daughters of men, and there was a league between the two races, the Lord could not endure the evil mixture, but drew up the sluices of the lower deep and swept the earth with a destroying flood. Surely, in that last day of destruction, when the world is overwhelmed with fire, it will be because the church of God shall have degenerated, and the distinctions between the righteous and the wicked shall have been broken down. The Spirit of God, wherever He comes, doth speedily make and reveal the difference between Israel and Egypt; and in proportion as His active energy is felt, there will be an ever-widening gulf between those who are led of the Spirit and those who are under the dominion of the flesh. The possession of the Spirit will make you, my hearer, quite another sort of man from what you now are, and then you will be actuated by motives which the world will not appreciate; for the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Then you will act, and speak, and think, and feel in such a way, that this evil world will misunderstand and condemn you. Since the carnal mind knoweth not the things that are of God—for those things are spiritually discerned—it will not approve your objects and designs. Do not expect it to be your friend. The spirit which makes you to be the seed of the woman is not the spirit of the world. The seed of the serpent will hiss at you, and bruise your heel. Your Master said, "Because ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world; therefore the world hateth you." It is a separating word this. Has it separated you? Has the Holy Spirit called you alone and blessed you? Do you differ from your old companions? Have you a life they do not understand? If not, may God in mercy put into you that most heavenly deposit, of which He speaks in our text: "I will put my spirit within you"!

But now notice, *that it is a very uniting word*. It separates from the world, but it joins to God. Note how it

runs: "I will put my Spirit within you." It is not merely *a* spirit, or *the* spirit, but *my* spirit. Now when God's own Spirit comes to reside within our mortal bodies, how near akin we are to the Most High! "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" Does not this make a man sublime? Have you never stood in awe of your own selves, O ye believers? Have you enough regarded even this poor body, as being sanctified and dedicated, and elevated into a sacred condition, by being set apart to be the temple of the Holy Ghost? Thus are we brought into the closest union with God that we can well conceive of. Thus is the Lord our light and our life; while our spirit is subordinated to the divine Spirit. "I will put my spirit within you"—then God Himself dwelleth in you. The Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead is in you. With Christ in God your life is hid, and the Spirit seals you, anoints you, and abides in you. By the Spirit we have access to the Father; by the Spirit we perceive our adoption, and learn to cry, "Abba, Father"; by the Spirit we are made partakers of the divine nature, and have communion with the thrice holy Lord.

I cannot help adding here that *it is a very condescending word*—"I will put my spirit within you." Is it really so, that the Spirit of God who displays the power and energetic force of God, by whom God's Word is carried into effect—that the Spirit who of old moved upon the face of the waters, and brought order and life from chaos and death—can it be so that He will deign to sojourn in men? God in our nature is a very wonderful conception! God in the babe at Bethlehem, God in the carpenter of Nazareth, God in the "man of sorrows," God in the Crucified, God in Him who was buried in the tomb—this is all marvellous. The incarnation is an infinite mystery of love; but we believe it. Yet, if it were possible to compare one illimitable wonder with another, I should say that God's dwelling in His people and that repeated ten thousand times over, is more marvellous. That the Holy Ghost should dwell in millions of redeemed men and women, is a miracle not surpassed by that of our Lord's espousal of human nature. For our Lord's body was perfectly pure, and the Godhead, while it dwells with His holy manhood, does at least dwell with a perfect and sinless nature; but the Holy Spirit bows Himself to dwell in sinful men; to dwell in men who, after their conversion, still find the flesh warring against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; men who are not perfect, though they strive to be so; men who have to lament their shortcomings, and even to confess with shame a measure of unbelief. "I will put my spirit within you" means the abiding of the Holy Spirit in our imperfect nature. Wonder of wonders! Yet is it as surely a fact as it is a wonder. Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the Spirit of God, for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." You could not bear the suspicion that you are not His; and therefore, as surely as you are Christ's, you have His Spirit abiding in you. The Saviour has gone away on purpose that the Comforter might be given to dwell in you, and He does dwell in you. Is it not so? If it be so, admire this condescending God, and worship and praise His name. Sweetly submit to His rule in all things. Grieve not the Spirit of God. Watch carefully that nothing comes within you that may defile the temple of God. Let the faintest monition of the Holy Spirit be law to you. It was a holy mystery that the presence of the Lord was specially within the veil of the Tabernacle, and that the Lord God spake by Urim and Thummim to His people; it is an equally sacred marvel that now the Holy Ghost dwells in our spirits and abides within our nature and speaks to us whatsoever He hears of the Father. By divine impressions which the opened ear can apprehend, and the tender heart can receive, He speaketh still. God grant us to know His still small voice so as to listen to it with reverent humility and loving joy; then shall we know the meaning of these words, "I will put my spirit within you."

Nor have I yet done with commending my text, for I must not fail to remind you that *it is a very spiritual word*. "I will put my spirit within you" has nothing to do with our wearing a peculiar garb—that would be a matter of little worth. It has nothing to do with affectations of speech—those might readily become a deceptive peculiarity. Our text has nothing to do with outward rites and ceremonies; but goes much further and deeper. It is an instructive symbol when the Lord teaches us our death with Christ by burial in baptism: it is to our great profit that He ordains bread and wine to be tokens of our communion in the body and blood of His dear Son; but these are only outward things, and if they are unattended with the Holy Spirit they fail of their design. There is something infinitely greater in this promise—"I will put my spirit within you." I cannot give you the whole force of the Hebrew, as to the words "within you," unless I paraphrase them a little, and read "I will put my spirit in the midst of you." The sacred deposit is put deep down in our life's secret place. God puts His Spirit not upon the surface of the man, but into the centre of his being. The promise means—"I will put my spirit in your bowels, in your hearts, in the very soul of you." This is an intensely spiritual matter, without admixturing of anything material and visible. It is spiritual, you see, because it is the Spirit that is given; and He is given internally within our spirit. It is true the Spirit operates upon the external life, but it is through the secret and internal life, and of that inward operation our text speaks. This is what we so greatly require. Do you know what it is to attend a service and hear God's truth faithfully preached, and yet you are forced to say, "Somehow or other it did not enter into me; I did not feel the unction and taste the savor of it"? "I will put my spirit within you," is what you need. Do you not read your Bibles, and even pray, and do not both devotional exercises become too much external acts? "I will put my spirit *within* you" meets this evil. The good Spirit fires your heart; he penetrates your mind; he saturates your soul; he touches the secret and vital springs of

your existence. Blessed Word! I love my text. It loves it better than I can speak of it.

Observe once more that *this Word is a very effectual one*. "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." The Spirit is operative—first upon the inner life, in causing you to love the law of the Lord; and then it moves you openly to keep His statutes concerning Himself, and His judgments between you and your fellow-men. Obedience, if a man should be flogged to it, would be of little worth; but obedience springing out of a life within, this is a priceless breastplate of jewels. If you have a lantern, you cannot make it shine by polishing the glass outside, you must put a candle within it: and this is what God does, He puts the light of the Spirit within us, and then our light shines. He puts His Spirit so deep down into the heart, that the whole nature feels it: it works upward, like a spring from the bottom of a well. It is, moreover, so deeply implanted that there is no removing it. If it were in the memory, you might forget it; if it were in the intellect, you might err in it; but "within you" it touches the whole man, and has dominion over you without fear of failure. When the very kernel of your nature is quickened into holiness, practical godliness is effectually secured. Blessed is he who knows by experience our Lord's words—"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

If I should fail in expounding the text, I hope I have so fully commended it to you, that you will turn it over and meditate upon it yourselves, and so get a home-born exposition of it. The key of the text is within its own self; for if the Lord gives you the Spirit, you will then understand his words—"I will put my spirit within you."

II. But now I must work upon THE EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT. I trust the Holy Spirit will aid me therein. Let me show you how the good Spirit manifests the fact that He dwells in men. I have to be very brief on a theme that might require a great length of time; and can only mention a part of His ways and workings.

One of the first effects of the Spirit of God being put within us is *quickening*. We are dead by nature to all heavenly and spiritual things; but when the Spirit of God comes, then we begin to live. The man visited of the Spirit begins to feel; the terrors of God make him tremble, the love of Christ makes him weep. He begins to fear, and he begins to hope: a great deal of the first and a very little of the second, it may be. He learns spiritually to sorrow: he is grieved that he has sinned, and that he cannot cease from sinning. He begins to desire that which once he despised: he specially desires to find the way of pardon, and reconciliation with God. Ah, dear hearers! I cannot make you feel, I cannot make you sorrow for sin, I cannot make you desire eternal life; but it is all done as soon as this is fulfilled by the Lord, "I will put my spirit within you." The quickening Spirit brings life to the dead in trespasses and sins.

This life of the Spirit shows itself by causing the man to pray. The cry is the distinctive mark of the living child. He begins to cry in broken accents, "God be merciful to me." At the same time that he pleads, he feels the soft relentings of repentance. He has a new mind towards sin, and he grieves that he should have grieved his God. With this comes faith; perhaps feeble and trembling, only a touch of the hem of the Saviour's robe; but still Jesus is his only hope and his sole trust. To Him he looks for pardon and salvation. He dares to believe that Christ can save even him. Then has life come into the soul when trust in Jesus springs up in the heart.

Remember, dear friends, that as the Holy Spirit gives quickening at the first, so He must revive and strengthen it. Whenever you become dull and faint, cry for the Holy Spirit. Whenever you cannot feel in devotion as you wish to feel, and are unable to rise to any heights of communion with God, plead my text in faith, and beg the Lord to do as He hath said, namely, "I will put my spirit within you." Go to God with this covenant clause, even if you have to confess, "Lord, I am like a log, I am a helpless lump of weakness. Unless thou come and quicken me I cannot live to Thee." Plead importunately the promise, "I will put my spirit within you." All the life of the flesh will gender corruption; all the energy that comes of mere excitement will die down into the black ashes of disappointment; the Holy Ghost alone is the life of the regenerated heart. Have you the Spirit? and if you have Him within you, have you only a small measure of His life, and do you wish for more? Then go still where you went at first. There is only one river of the water of life: draw from its floods. You will be lively enough, and bright enough, and strong enough, and happy enough when the Holy Spirit is mighty within your soul.

When the Holy Spirit enters, after quickening He gives *enlightening*. We cannot make men see the truth, they are so blind; but when the Lord puts His Spirit within them their eyes are opened. At first they may see rather hazily; but still they do see. As the light increases, and the eye is strengthened, they see more and more clearly. What a mercy it is to see Christ, to look unto Him, and so to be lightened! By the Spirit, souls see

things in their reality: they see the actual truth of them, and perceive that they are facts. The Spirit of God illuminates every believer, so that he sees still more marvellous things out of God's law; but this never happens unless the Spirit opens his eyes. The apostle speaks of being brought "out of darkness into His marvellous light"; and it is a marvellous light, indeed, to come to the blind and dead. Marvellous because it reveals truth with clearness. It reveals marvellous things in a marvellous way. If hills and mountains, if rocks and stones were suddenly to be full of eyes, it would be a strange thing in the earth, but not more marvellous than for you and me by the illumination of the Holy Spirit to see spiritual things. When you cannot make people see the truth, do not grow angry with them, but cry, "Lord, put thy spirit within them." When you get into a puzzle over the Word of the Lord, do not give up in despair, but believingly cry, "Lord, put thy Spirit within me." Here lies the only true light of the soul. Depend upon it, all that you can see by any light except the Spirit of God you do not spiritually see. If you only see intellectually, or rationally, you do not see to salvation. Unless intellect and reason have received heavenly light, you may see, and yet not see; even as Israel of old. Indeed, your boasted clear sight may aggravate your ruin, like that of the Pharisees, of whom our Lord said, "But now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." O lord, grant us the Spirit within, for our soul's illumination!

The Spirit also works *conviction*. Conviction is more forcible than illumination: it is the setting of a truth before the eye of the soul, so as to make it powerful upon the conscience. I speak to many here who know what conviction means; still I will explain it from my own experience. I knew what sin meant by my reading, and yet I never knew sin in its heinousness and horror, till I found myself bitten by it as by a fiery serpent, and felt its poison boiling in my veins. When the Holy Ghost made sin to appear sin, then was I overwhelmed with the sight, and I would fain have fled from myself to escape the intolerable vision. A naked sin stripped of all excuse, and set in the light of truth, is a worse sight than to see the devil himself. When I saw sin as an offence against a just and holy God, committed by such a proud and yet insignificant creature as myself, then was I alarmed. Sirs, did you ever see and feel yourselves to be sinners? "Oh, yes," you say, "we are sinners." O sirs, do you mean it? Do you know what it means? Many of you are no more sinners in your own estimation than you are Hottentots. The beggar who exhibits a sham sore knows not disease; if he did he would have enough of it without pretences. To kneel down and say, "Lord, have mercy upon us miserable sinners," and then to get up and feel yourself a very decent sort of body, worthy of commendation, is to mock Almighty God. It is by no means a common thing to get hold of a real sinner, one who is truly so in his own esteem; and it is as pleasant as it is rare, for you can bring to the real sinner the real Saviour, and He will welcome him. I do not wonder that Hart said: "A sinner is a sacred thing, The Holy Ghost hath made him so." The point of contact between a sinner and Christ is sin. The Lord Jesus gave Himself for our sins, He never gave Himself for our righteousnesses. He comes to heal the sick, and the point He looks to is our sickness. When a physician is called in he has no patience with things apart from his calling. "Tut, tut!" he cries, "I do not care about your furniture, nor the number of your cows, nor what income tax you pay, nor what politics you admire; I have come to see a sick man about his disease, and if you will not let me deal with it I will be gone." When a sinner's corruptions are loathsome to himself, when his guilt is foul in his own nostrils, when he fears the death that will come of it, then he is really convinced by the Holy Spirit; and no one ever knows sin as his own personal ruin till the Holy Spirit shows it to him. Conviction as to the Lord Jesus comes in the same way. We do not know Christ as our Saviour till the Holy Spirit is put within us. Our Lord says—"He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you," and you never see the things of the Lord Jesus till the Holy Ghost shows them to you. To know Jesus Christ as your Saviour, as one who died for you in particular, is a knowledge which only the Holy Spirit imparts. To apprehend present salvation, as your own personally, comes by your being convinced of it by the Spirit. Oh, to be convinced of righteousness, and convinced of acceptance in the Beloved! This conviction cometh only of Him that hath called you, even of Him of whom the Lord saith, "I will put my Spirit within you."

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit comes into us for *purification*. "I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." When the Spirit comes, He infuses a new life, and that new life is a fountain of holiness. The new nature cannot sin, because it is born of God, and "it is a living and incorruptible seed." This life produces good fruit, and good fruit only. The Holy Ghost is the life of holiness. At the same time, the coming of the Holy Ghost into the soul gives a mortal stab to the power of sin. The old man is not absolutely dead, but it is crucified with Christ. It is under sentence, and before the eye of the law it is dead; but as a man nailed to a cross may linger long, but yet he cannot live, so the power of evil dies hard, but die it must. Sin is an executed criminal: those nails which fasten it to the cross will hold it fast till no breath remains in it. God the Holy Ghost gives the power of sin its death wound. The old nature struggles in its dying agonies, but it is doomed, and die it must. But you never will overcome sin by your own power, nor by any energy short of that of the Holy Spirit. Resolves may bind it, as Samson was bound with cords; but sin will snap the cords asunder. The Holy Spirit lays the axe at the root of sin, and fall it must. The Holy Ghost within a man is "the Spirit of judgment, the Spirit of burning." Do you know Him in that

character? As the Spirit of judgment, the Holy Spirit pronounces sentence on sin, and it goes out with the brand of Cain upon it. He does more: He delivers sin over to burning. He executes the death penalty on that which He has judged. How many of our sins have we had to burn alive! and it has cost us no small pain to do it. Sin must be got out of us by fire, if no gentler means will serve; and the Spirit of God is a consuming fire. Truly, "our God is a consuming fire." They paraphrase it, "God out of Christ is a consuming fire"; but that is not Scripture: it is, "*our* God," our covenant God, who is a consuming fire to refine us from sin. Has not the Lord said, "I will purely purge away all thy dross, and take away all thy sin"? This is what the Spirit does, and it is by no means easy work for the flesh, which would spare many a flattering sin if it could.

The Holy Spirit bedews the soul with purity till He saturates it. Oh, to have a heart saturated with holy influences till it shall be as Gideon's fleece, which held so much dew that Gideon could wring out a bowl full from it! Oh, that our whole nature were filled with the Spirit of God; that we were sanctified wholly, body, soul, and spirit! Sanctification is the result of the Holy Spirit being put within us.

Next, the Holy Ghost acts in the heart as the Spirit of *preservation*. Where He dwells men do not go back unto perdition. He works in them a watchfulness against temptation day by day. He works in them to wrestle against sin. Rather than sin a believer would die ten thousand deaths. He works in believers union to Christ, which is the source and guarantee of acceptable fruitfulness. He creates in the saints those holy things which glorify God, and bless the sons of men. All true fruit is the fruit of the Spirit. Every true prayer must be "praying in the Holy Ghost." He helpeth our infirmities in prayer. Even the hearing of the Word of the Lord is of the Spirit, for John says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice." Everything that comes of the man, or is kept alive in the man, is first infused and then sustained and perfected of the Spirit. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." We never go an inch towards heaven in any other power than that of the Holy Ghost. We do not even stand fast and remain steadfast except as we are upheld by the Holy Spirit. The vineyard which the Lord hath planted He also preserves; as it is written, "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Did I hear that young man say, "I should like to become a Christian, but I fear I should not hold out? How am I to be preserved?" A very proper inquiry for "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Temporary Christians are no Christians: only the believer who continues to believe will enter heaven. How, then, can we hold on in such a world as this? Here is the answer. "I will put my spirit within you." When a city has been captured in war, those who formerly possessed it seek to win it back again; but the king who captured it sends a garrison to live within the walls, and he said to the captain, "Take care of this city that I have conquered, and let not the enemy take it again." So the Holy Ghost is the garrison of God within our redeemed humanity, and he will keep us to the end. "May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." For preservation, then, we look to the Holy Spirit.

Lest I weary you, I will be very brief upon the next point: the Holy Spirit within us is for *guidance*. The Holy Spirit is given to lead us into all truth. Truth is like a vast grotto, and the Holy Spirit brings torches, and shows us all the splendour of the roof; and since the passage seems intricate, He knows the way, and He lead us into the deep things of God. He opens up to us one truth after another, by His light and by His guidance, and thus we are "taught of the Lord." He is also our practical guide to heaven, helping and directing us on the upward journey. I wish Christian people oftener inquired of the Holy Ghost as to guidance in their daily life. Know ye not that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? You need not always be running to this friend and to that to get direction: wait upon the Lord in silence, sit still in quiet before the oracle of God. Use the judgment God has given you; but when that suffices not, resort to Him whom Mr. Bunyan calls "the Lord High Secretary," who lives within, who is infinitely wise, and who can guide you by making you to "hear a voice behind you saying, This is the way, walk ye in it." The Holy Ghost will guide you in life; He will guide you in death; and He will guide you to glory. He will guard you from modern error, and from ancient error, too. He will guide you in a way that you know not; and through the darkness He will lead you in a way you have not seen: these things will He do unto you, and not forsake you.

Oh, this precious text! I seem to have before me a great cabinet full of jewels rich and rare. May God the Holy Ghost Himself come and hand these out to you, and may you be adorned with them all the days of your life!

Last of all, "I will put my spirit within you," that is, by way of *consolation*, for His choice name is "The Comforter." Our God would not have His children unhappy, and therefore, He Himself, in the third Person of the blessed Trinity, has undertaken the office of Comforter. Why does your face such mournful colours wear? God can comfort you. You that are under the burden of sin; it is true no man can help you into peace, but the Holy Ghost can. O God, to every seeker here who has failed to final rest, grant Thy Holy Spirit! Put Thy Spirit within him, and he will rest in Jesus. And you dear people of God, who are worried, remember that worry and

the Holy Ghost are very contradictory one to another. "I will put my spirit within you" means that you shall become gentle, peaceful, resigned, and acquiescent in the divine will. Then you will have faith in God that all is well. That text with which I began my prayer this morning was brought home to my heart this week. Our dearly beloved friend Adolph Saphir passed away last Saturday, and his wife died three or four days before him. When my dear brother, Dr. Sinclair Patterson, went to see him, the beloved Saphir said to him, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Nobody would have quoted that passage but Saphir, the Biblical student the lover of the word, the lover of the God of Israel. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." His dear wife is gone, and he himself is ill; but "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." This is a deep well of overflowing comfort, if you understand it well. God's promise is light as well as his promise, and the Holy Spirit makes us know this. God's word and will and way are all light to his people, and in him is no darkness at all for them. God himself is purely and only light. What if there be darkness in me, there is no darkness in him; and his Spirit causes me to fly to him! What if there be darkness in my family, there is no darkness in my covenant God, and his Spirit makes me rest in him. What if there be darkness in me by reason of my failing strength, there is no failing in him, and there is no darkness in him: his Spirit assures me of this. David says— "God my exceeding joy"; and such He is to us. "Yea, mine own God is he"! Can you say, "My God, my God"? Do you want anything more? Can you conceive of anything beyond your God? Omnipotent to work all for ever! Infinite to give! Faithful to remember! He is all that is good. Light only: "in him is no darkness at all." I have all light, yea, all things, when I have my God. The Holy Spirit makes us apprehend this when He is put within us. Holy Comforter, abide with us, for then we enjoy the light of heaven. Then are we always peaceful and even joyful; for we walk in unclouded light. In Him our happiness sometimes rises into great waves of delight, as if it leaped up to the glory. The Lord make this text your own—"I will put my Spirit within you." Amen.

The Comforter

A Sermon (No. 5) Delivered on Sabbath Evening, January 21, 1855, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—John 14:26.

Good old Simeon called Jesus the consolation of Israel; and so he was. Before his actual appearance, his name was the day-star; cheering the darkness, and prophetic of the rising sun. To him they looked with the same hope which cheers the nightly watcher, when from the lonely castle-top he sees the fairest of the stars, and hails her as the usher of the morn. When he was on earth, he must have been the consolation of all those who were privileged to be his companions. We can imagine how readily the disciples would run to Christ to tell him of their griefs, and how sweetly, with that matchless intonation of his voice, he would speak to them, and bid their fears be gone. Like children, they would consider him as their Father; and to him every want, every groan, every sorrow, every agony, would at once be carried; and he, like a wise physician, had a balm for every wound; he had mingled a cordial for their every care; and readily did he dispense some mighty remedy to allay all the fever of their troubles. Oh! it must have been sweet to have lived with Christ. Surely, sorrows were then but joys in masks, because they gave an opportunity to go to Jesus to have them removed. Oh! would to God, some of us may say, that we could have lain our weary heads upon the bosom of Jesus, and that our birth had been in that happy era, when we might have heard his kind voice, and seen his kind look, when he said, "Let the weary ones come unto me."

But now he was about to die. Great prophecies were to be fulfilled; and great purposes were to be answered; therefore, Jesus must go. It behoved him to suffer, that he might be made a propitiation for our sins. It behoved him to slumber in the dust awhile, that he might perfume the chamber of the grave to make it—

"No more a carnel house to fence
The relics of lost innocence."

It behoved him to have a resurrection, that we, who shall one day be the dead in Christ, might rise first, and in glorious bodies stand upon earth. And if behoved him that he should ascend up on high, that he might lead captivity captive; that he might chain the fiends of hell; that he might lash them to his chariot-wheels, and drag them up high heaven's hill, to make them feel a second overthrow from his right arm, when he should dash them from the pinnacles of heaven down to the deeper depths beneath. "It is right I should go away from you," said Jesus, "for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." Jesus must go. Weep, ye disciples; Jesus

must be gone. Mourn, ye poor ones, who are to be left without a Comforter. But hear how kindly Jesus speaks: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, who shall be with you, and shall dwell in you forever." He would not leave those few poor sheep alone in the wilderness; he would not desert his children, and leave them fatherless. Albeit that he had a mighty mission which did fill his heart and hand; albeit he had so much to perform, that we might have thought that even his gigantic intellect would be overburdened; albeit he had so much to suffer, that we might suppose his whole soul to be concentrated upon the thought of the sufferings to be endured. Yet it was not so; before he left, he gave soothing words of comfort; like the good Samaritan, he poured in oil and wine, and we see what he promised: "I will send you another Comforter—one who shall be just what I have been, yea, even more; who shall console you in your sorrows, remove your doubts, comfort you in your afflictions, and stand as my vicar on earth, to do that which I would have done had I tarried with you."

Before I discourse of the Holy Ghost as the Comforter, I must make one or two remarks on the different translations of the word rendered "Comforter." The Rhenish translation, which you are aware is adopted by Roman Catholics, has left the word untranslated, and gives it "Paraclete." "But the Paraclete, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things." This is the original Greek word, and it has some other meanings besides "Comforter." Sometimes it means the monitor or instructor: "I will send you another monitor, another teacher." Frequently it means "Advocate;" but the most common meaning of the word is that which we have here: "I will send you another *Comforter*." However, we cannot pass over those other two interpretations without saying something upon them.

"I will send you another *teacher*." Jesus Christ had been the official teacher of his saints whilst on earth. They called no man Rabbi except Christ. They sat at no man's feet to learn their doctrines; but they had them direct from the lips of him who "spake as never man spake." "And now," says he, "when I am gone, where shall you find the great infallible teacher? Shall I set you up a pope at Rome, to whom you shall go, and who shall be your infallible oracle? Shall I give you the councils of the church to be held to decide all knotty points?" Christ said no such thing. "I am the infallible paraclete, or teacher, and when I am gone, I will send you another teacher, and he shall be the person who is to explain Scripture; he shall be the authoritative oracle of God, who shall make all dark things light, who shall unravel mysteries, who shall untwist all knots of revelation, and shall make you understand what you could not discover, had it not been for his influence." And, beloved, no man ever learns anything aright, unless he is taught of the Spirit. You may learn election, and you may know it so that you shall be damned by it, if you are not taught of the Holy Ghost; for I have known some who have learned election to their soul's destruction; they have learned it so that they said they were of the elect, whereas, they had no marks, no evidences, and no works of the Holy Ghost in their souls. There is a way of learning truth in Satan's college, and holding it in licentiousness; but if so, it shall be to your souls as poison to your veins and prove your everlasting ruin. No man can know Jesus Christ unless he is taught of God. There is no doctrine of the Bible which can be safely, thoroughly, and truly learned, except by the agency of the one authoritative teacher. Ah! tell me not of systems of divinity; tell me not of schemes of theology; tell me not of infallible commentators, or most learned and most arrogant doctors; but tell me of the Great Teacher, who shall instruct us, the sons of God, and shall make us wise to understand all things. He is *the* Teacher; it matters not what this man or that man says; I rest on no man's boasting authority, nor will you. Ye are not to be carried away with the craftiness of men, nor sleight of words; this is the authoritative oracle—the Holy Ghost resting in the hearts of his children.

The other translation is *advocate*. Have you ever thought how the Holy Ghost can be said to be an advocate? You know Jesus Christ is called the wonderful, the counsellor, the mighty God; but how can the Holy Ghost be said to be an advocate? I suppose it is thus; he is an advocate on earth to plead against the enemies of the cross. How was it that Paul could so ably plead before Felix and Agrippa? How was it that the Apostles stood unawed before the magistrates, and confessed their Lord? How has it come to pass, that in all times God's ministers have been made fearless as lions, and their brows have been firmer than brass; their hearts sterner than steel, and their words like the language of God? Why, it was simply for this reason; that it was not the man who pleaded, but it was God the Holy Ghost pleading through him. Have you never seen an earnest minister, with hands uplifted and eyes dropping tears, pleading with the sons of men? Have you never admired that portrait from the hand of old John Bunyan?—a grave person with eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hand, the law of truth written on his lips, the world behind his back, standing as if he pleaded with men, and a crown of gold hanging over his head. Who gave that minister so blessed a manner, and such goodly matter? Whence came his skill? Did he acquire it in the college? Did he learn it in the seminary? Ah, no. He learned it of the God of Jacob; he learned it of the Holy Ghost; for the Holy Ghost is the great counsellor who teaches us how to advocate his cause aright.

But, beside this, the Holy Ghost is the advocate in men's hearts. Ah! I have known men reject a doctrine until

the Holy Ghost began to illuminate them. We, who are the advocates of the truth, are often very poor pleaders; we spoil our cause by the words we use; but it is a mercy that the brief is in the hand of a special pleader, who will advocate successfully, and overcome the sinner's opposition. Did you ever know him fail once? Brethren, I speak to your souls; has not God in old times convinced you of sin? Did not the Holy Ghost come and prove that you were guilty, although no minister could ever get you out of your self-righteousness? Did he not advocate Christ's righteousness? Did he not stand and tell you that your works were filthy rags? And when you had well-nigh still refused to listen to his voice, did he not fetch hell's drum and make it sound about your ears; bidding you look through the vista of future years, and see the throne set, and the books open, and the sword brandished, and hell burning, and fiends howling, and the damned shrieking forever? And did he not convince you of the judgment to come? He is a mighty advocate when he pleads in the soul—of sin, of righteousness, and of the judgment to come. Blessed advocate! Plead in my heart; plead with my conscience. When I sin, make conscience bold to tell me of it; when I err, make conscience speak at once; and when I turn aside to crooked ways, then advocate the cause of righteousness, and bid me sit down in confusion, knowing by guiltiness in the sight of God.

But there is yet another sense in which the Holy Ghost advocates, and that is, he advocates our cause with Jesus Christ, with groanings that cannot be uttered. O my soul! thou art ready to burst within me. O my heart! thou art swelled with grief. The hot tide of my emotion would well-nigh overflow the channels of my veins. I long to speak, but the very desire chains my tongue. I wish to pray, but the fervency of my felling curbs my language. There is a groaning within that cannot be uttered. Do you know who can utter that groaning? who can understand it, and who can put it into heavenly language, and utter it in a celestial tongue, so that Christ can hear it? O yes; it is God the Holy spirit; he advocates our cause with Christ, and then Christ advocates it with his Father. He is the advocate who maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered.

Having thus explained the Spirit's office as a teacher and advocate, we now come to the translation of our version—the *Comforter*; and here I shall have three divisions: first, the *comforter*; secondly, the *comfort*; and thirdly, the *comforted*.

I. First, then, the COMFORTER. Briefly let me run over in my mind, and in your minds too, the characteristics of this glorious Comforter. Let me tell you some of the attributes of his comfort, so that you may understand how well adapted he is to your case.

And first, we will remark, that God the Holy Ghost is a very *loving* Comforter. I am in distress, and I want consolation. Some passer-by hears of my sorrow, and he steps within, sits down, and essays to cheer me; he speaks soothing words, but he loves me not; he is a stranger; he knows me not at all; he has only come in to try his skill. And what is the consequence? His words run o'er me like oil upon a slab of marble—they are like the pattering rain upon the rock; they do not break my grief; it stands unmoved as adamant, because he has no love for me. But let some one who loves me dear as his own life, come and plead with me, then truly his words are music; they taste like honey; he knows the password of the doors of my heart, and my ear is attentive to every word; I catch the intonation of each syllable as it falls, for it is like the harmony of the harps of heaven. Oh! there is a voice in love, it speaks a language which is its own; it has an idiom and a brogue which none can mimic; wisdom cannot imitate it; oratory cannot attain unto it; it is love alone which can reach the mourning heart; love is the only handkerchief which can wipe the mourner's tears away. And is not the Holy Ghost a loving comforter? Dost thou know, O saint, how much the Holy Spirit loves thee? Canst thou measure the love of the Spirit? Dost thou know how great is the affection of his soul towards thee? Go measure heaven with thy span; go weigh the mountains in the scales; go take the ocean's water, and tell each drop; go count the sand upon the sea's wide shore; and when thou hast accomplished this, thou canst tell how much he loveth thee. He has loved thee long, he has loved thee well, he loved thee ever, and he still shall love thee; surely he is the person to comfort thee, because he loves. Admit him, then, to your heart, O Christian, that he may comfort you in your distress.

But next, he is a *faithful* Comforter. Love sometimes proveth unfaithful. "Oh! sharper than a serpent's tooth" is an unfaithful friend! Oh! far more bitter than the gall of bitterness, to have a friend turn from me in my distress! Oh! woe of woes, to have one who loves me in my prosperity, forsake me in the dark day of my trouble. Sad indeed; but such is not God's Spirit. He ever loves, and loves even to the end—a faithful Comforter. Child of God, you are in trouble. A little while ago, you found him a sweet and loving Comforter; you obtained relief from him when others were but broken cisterns; he sheltered you in his bosom, and carried you in his arms. Oh, wherefore dost thou distrust him now? Away with thy fears; for he is a faithful Comforter. "Ah!, but," thou sayest, "I fear I shall be sick, and shall be deprived of his ordinances." Nevertheless he shall visit thee on thy sick bed, and sit by thy side, to give thee consolation. "Ah! but I have distresses greater than you can conceive of; wave upon wave rolleth over me; deep calleth unto deep, at the

noise of the Eternal's waterspouts." Nevertheless, he will be faithful to his promise. "Ah! but I have sinned." So thou hast, but sin cannot sever thee from his love; he loves thee still. Think not, O poor downcast child of God, because the scars of thine old sins have marred thy beauty, that he loves thee less because of that blemish. O no! He loved thee when he foreknew thy sin; he loved thee with the knowledge of what the aggregate of thy wickedness would be; and he does not love thee less now. Come to him in all boldness of faith; tell him thou hast grieved him, and he will forget thy wandering, and will receive thee again; the kisses of his love shall be bestowed upon thee, and the arms of his grace shall embrace thee. He is faithful; trust him, he will never deceive you; trust him, he will never leave you.

Again, he is an *unwearied* Comforter. I have sometimes tried to comfort persons, and have been tired. You, now and then, meet with a case of a nervous person. You ask, "What is your trouble?" You are told; and you essay, if possible, to remove it; but while you are preparing your artillery to battle the trouble, you find that it has shifted its quarters, and is occupying quite a different position. You change your argument and begin again; but lo, it is again gone, and you are bewildered. You feel like Hircules, cutting off the evergrowing heads of the Hydra, and you give up your task in despair. You meet with persons whom it is impossible to comfort, reminding one of the man who locked himself up in fetters, and threw the key away, so that nobody could unlock him. I have found some in the fetters of despair. "O, I am the man," say they, "that has seen affliction; pity me, pity me, O, my friends;" and the more you try to comfort such people, the worse they get; and, therefore, out of all heart, we leave them to wander alone among the tombs of their former joys. But the Holy Ghost is never out of heart with those whom he wishes to comfort. He attempts to comfort us, and we run away from the sweet cordial; he gives us some sweet draught to cure us, and we will not drink it; he gives some wondrous potion to charm away all our troubles, and we put it away from us. Still he pursues us; and though we say that we will not be comforted, he says we *shall* be, and when he has said, he does it; he is not to be wearied by all our sins, nor by all our murmurings.

And oh, how *wise* a Comforter is the Holy Ghost. Job had comforters, and I think he spoke the truth when he said, "Miserable comforters are ye all." But I dare say they esteemed themselves wise; and when the young man Elihu rose to speak, they thought he had a world of impudence. Were they not "grave and reverend seigniors?" Did not they comprehend his grief and sorrow? If they could not comfort him, who could? But they did not find out the cause. They thought he was not really a child of God, that he was self-righteous, and they gave him the wrong physic. It is a bad case when the doctor mistakes a disease and gives a wrong prescription, and so perhaps kills the patient. Sometimes, when we go and visit people, we mistake their disease; we want to comfort them on this point, whereas they do not require any such comfort at all, and they would be better left alone, than spoiled by such unwise comforters as we are. But oh, how wise the Holy Spirit is! He takes the soul, lays it on the table, and dissects it in a moment; he finds out the root of the matter, he sees where the complaint is, and then he applies the knife where something is required to be taken away, or puts a plaster where the sore is; and he never mistakes. O how wise is the blessed Holy Ghost; from ever comforter I turn, and leave them all, for thou art he who alone givest the wisest consolation.

Then mark, how *safe* a Comforter the Holy Ghost is. All comfort is not safe, mark that. There is a young man over there very melancholy. You know how he became so. He stepped into the house of God and heard a powerful preacher, and the word was blessed, and convinced him of sin. When he went home, his father and the rest found there was something different about him, "Oh," they said, "John is mad, he is crazy;" and what said his mother? "Send him into the country for a week; let him go to the ball or the theatre." John, did you find any comfort there? "Ah no; they made me worse, for while I was there I thought hell might open and swallow me up." Did you find any relief in the gayeties of the world? "No," say you, "I thought it was idle waste of time." Alas! this is miserable comfort, but it is the comfort of the worldling; and, when a Christian gets into distress, how many will recommend him this remedy and the other. "Go and hear Mr. So-and-so preach;" "have a few friends at your house;" "Read such-and-such a consoling volume;" and very likely it is the most unsafe advice in the world. The devil will sometimes come to men's souls as a false comforter; and he will say to the soul, "What need is there to make all this ado about repentance? you are no worse than other people;" and he will try to make the soul believe, that what is presumption, is the real assurance of the Holy Ghost; thus he deceives many by false comfort. Ah! there have been many, like infants, destroyed by elixirs, given to lull them to sleep; many have been ruined by the cry of "peace, peace," when there is no peace; hearing gentle things, when they ought to be stirred to the quick. Cleopatra's asp was brought in a basket of flowers; and men's ruin often lurks in fair and sweet speeches. But the Holy Ghost's comfort is safe, and you may rest on it. Let him speak the word, and there is a reality about it; let him give the cup of consolation, and you may drink it to the bottom; for in its depths there are no dregs, nothing to intoxicate or ruin, it is all safe.

Moreover, the Holy Ghost is an *active* Comforter; he does not comfort by words, but by deeds. Some comfort by, "Be ye warmed, and be ye filled, giving nothing." But the Holy Ghost gives, he intercedes with Jesus; he

gives us promises, he gives us grace, and so he comforts us. Mark again, he is always a *successful* Comforter; he never attempts what he cannot accomplish.

Then, to close up, he is an *ever-present* Comforter, so that you never have to send for him. Your God is always near you; and when you need comfort in your distress, behold the word is nigh thee; it is in thy mouth, and in thy heart. He is an ever-present help in time of trouble. I wish I had time to expand these thoughts, but I cannot.

II. The second thing is the COMFORT. Now there are some persons who make a great mistake about the influence of the Holy Spirit. A foolish man, who had a fancy to preach in a certain pulpit, though in truth he was quite incapable of the duty, called upon the minister, and assured him solemnly, that it had been revealed to him by the Holy Ghost that he was to preach in his pulpit. "Very well," said the minister, "I suppose I must not doubt your assertion, but as it has not been revealed to me that I am to let you preach, you must go your way, until it is." I have heard many fanatical persons say the Holy Spirit revealed this and that to them. Now, that is very generally revealed nonsense. The Holy Ghost does not reveal anything fresh now. He brings old things to our remembrance. "He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have told you." The canon of revelation is closed, there is no more to be added; God does not give a fresh revelation, but he rivets the old one. When it has been forgotten, and laid in the dusty chamber of our memory, he fetches it out and cleans the picture, but does not paint a new one. There are no new doctrines, but the old ones are often revived. It is not, I say, by any new revelation that the Spirit comforts. He does so by telling us old things over again; he brings a fresh lamp to manifest the treasures hidden in Scripture; he unlocks the strong chests in which the truth has long lain, and he points to secret chamber filled with untold riches; but he coins no more, for enough is done. Believer! there is enough in the Bible for thee to live upon forever. If thou shouldst outnumber the years of Methuselah, there would be no need for a fresh revelation; if thou shouldst live till Christ should come upon the earth, there would be no need for the addition of a single word; if thou shouldst go down as deep as Jonah, or even descend as David said he did into the belly of hell, still there would be enough in the Bible to comfort thee without a supplementary sentence. But Christ says, "He shall take of mine, and show it unto you." Now, let me just tell you briefly what it is the Holy Ghost tells us.

Ah! does he not whisper to the heart, "Saint, be of good cheer; there is one who died for thee; look to Calvary, behold his wounds, see the torrent gushing from his side—there is thy purchaser, and thou art secure. He loves thee with an everlasting love, and this chastisement is meant for thy good; each stroke is working thy healing; by the blueness of the wound thy soul is made better." "Whom he loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Doubt not his grace, because of thy tribulation; but believe that he loveth thee as much in seasons of trouble, as in times of happiness. And then, moreover, he says, "What is all thy suffering compared with that of thy Lord's? or what, when weighed in the scales of Jesus' agonies, is all thy distress? And especially at times does the Holy Ghost take back the veil of heaven, and lets the soul behold the glory of the upperworld! Then it is that the saint can say, "O thou art a Comforter to me!" "Let cares like a wild deluge come, And storms of sorrow fall; May I but safely reach my home, My God, my heaven, my all." Some of you could follow, were I to tell of manifestations of heaven. You, too, have left sun, moon, and stars at your feet, while, in your flight, outstripping the tardy lightning, you have seemed to enter the gates of pearl, and tread the golden streets, borne aloft on wings of the Spirit. But here we must not trust ourselves; lest, lost in reverie, we forget our theme.

III. And now, thirdly, who are the comforted persons? I like, you know, at the end of my sermon to cry out, "Divide! divide!" There are two parties here—some who are comforted, and others who are the comfortless ones—some who have received the consolations of the Holy Ghost, and some who have not. Now let us try and sift you, and see which is the chaff and which is the wheat; and may God grant that some of the chaff may, this night, be transformed into his wheat!

You may say, "How am I to know whether I am a recipient of the comfort of the Holy Ghost?" You may know it by one rule. If you have received one blessing from God, you will receive all other blessings too. Let me explain myself. If I could come here as an auctioneer, and sell the gospel off in lots, I should dispose of it all. If I could say, here is justification through the blood of Christ—free; giving away, gratis; many a one would say, "I will have justification; give it to me; I wish to be justified; I wish to be pardoned." Suppose I took sanctification, the giving up of all sin, a thorough change of heart, leaving off drunkenness and swearing; many would say, "I don't want that; I should like to go to heaven, but I do not want that holiness; I should like to be saved at last, but I should like to have my drink still; I should like to enter glory, but then I must have an oath or two on the road." Nay, but, sinner, if thou hast one blessing, thou shalt have all. God will never divide the gospel. He will not give justification to that man, and sanctification to another—pardon to one, and

holiness to another. No, it all goes together. Whom he call, them he justifies; whom he justifies, them he sanctifies; and whom he sanctifies, them he also glorifies. Oh; if I could lay down nothing but the *comforts* of the gospel, ye would fly to them as flies do to honey. When ye come to be ill, ye send for the clergyman. Ah! you all want your minister then to come and give you consoling words. But, if he be an honest man, he will not give some of you a particle of consolation. He will not commence pouring oil, when the knife would be better. I want to make a man feel his sins before I dare tell him anything about Christ. I want to probe into his soul and make him feel that he is lost before I tell him anything about the purchased blessing. It is the ruin of many to tell them, "Now just believe on Christ, and that is all you have to do." If, instead of dying, they get better, they rise up white-washed hypocrites—that is all. I have heard of a city missionary who kept a record of two thousand persons who were supposed to be on their death-bed, but recovered, and whom he should have put down as converted persons had they died; and how many do you think lived a Christian life afterwards out of the two thousand? Not two. Positively he could only find one who was found to live afterwards in the fear of God. Is it not horrible that when men and women come to die, they should cry, "Comfort, comfort?" and that hence their friends conclude that they are children of God, while, after all, they have no right to consolation, but are intruders upon the enclosed grounds of the blessed God. O God, may these people ever be kept from having comfort when they have no right to it! Have you the other blessings? Have you had the conviction of sin? Have you ever felt your guilt before God? Have your souls been humbled at Jesus' feet? And have you been made to look to Calvary alone for your refuge? If not, you have no right to consolation. Do not take an atom of it. The Spirit is a convincer before he is a Comforter; and you must have the other operations of the Holy Spirit, before you can derive anything from this.

And now I have done. You have heard what this babbler hath said once more. What has it been? Something about the Comforter. But let me ask you, before you go, what do you know about the Comforter? Each one of you, before descending the steps of this chapel, let this solemn question thrill through your souls—What do you know of the Comforter? O! poor souls, if ye know not the Comforter, I will tell you what you shall know—You shall know the Judge! If ye know not the Comforter on earth, ye shall know the Condemner in the next world, who shall cry, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire in hell." Well might Whitefield call out, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord!" If ye were to live here forever, ye might slight the gospel; if ye had a lease of your lives, ye might despise the Comforter. But, sirs, ye must die. Since last we met together, probably some have gone to their long last home; and ere we meet again in this sanctuary, some here will be amongst the glorified above, or amongst the damned below. Which will it be? Let your soul answer. If to-night you fell down dead in your pews, or where you are standing in the gallery, where would you be? in *heaven* or in *hell*? Ah! deceive not yourselves; let conscience have its perfect work; and if in the sight of God, you are obliged to say, "I tremble and fear lest my portion should be with unbelievers," listen one moment, and then I have done with thee. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." Weary sinner, hellish sinner, thou who art the devil's castaway, reprobate, profligate, harlot, robber, thief, adulterer, fornicator, drunkard, swearer, Sabbath-breaker—list! I speak to thee as well as to the rest. I exempt no man. God hath said there is no exemption here. "*Whosoever* believeth on the name of Jesus Christ shall be saved." Sin is no barrier; thy guilt is no obstacle. Whosoever—though he were as black as Satan, though he were filthy as a fiend—whosoever this night believes, shall have every sin forgiven, shall have every crime effaced; shall have every iniquity blotted out; shall be saved in the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall stand in heaven safe and secure. That is the glorious gospel. God apply it to your hearts, and give you faith in Jesus!

"We have listened to the preacher—
Truth by him has now been shown;
But we want a GREATER TEACHER,
From the everlasting throne;
APPLICATION Is the work of God alone."

The Death of Christ

A Sermon (No. 173) Delivered on Sabbath Morning, January 24, 1858, by the REV. C.H. SPURGEON at the Music Hall, Royal Surrey Gardens. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."—Isaiah 53:10.

THAT myriads of eyes are casting their glances at the sun! What multitudes of men lift up their eyes, and

behold the starry orbs of heaven! They are continually watched by thousands—but there is one great transaction in the world's history, which every day commands far more spectators than that sun which goeth forth like a bridegroom, strong to run his race. There is one great event, which every day attracts more admiration than do the sun, and moon, and stars, when they march in their courses. That event is, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. To it, the eyes of all the saints who lived before the Christian era were always directed; and backwards, through the thousand years of history, the eyes of all modern saints are looking. Upon Christ, the angels in heaven perpetually gaze. "Which things the angels desire to look into," said the apostle. Upon Christ, the myriad eyes of the redeemed are perpetually fixed; and thousands of pilgrims, through this world of tears, have no higher object for their faith, and no better desire for their vision, than to see Christ as he is in heaven, and in communion to behold his person. Beloved, we shall have many with us, whilst this morning we turn our face to the Mount of Calvary. We shall not be solitary spectators of the fearful tragedy of our Saviour's death: we shall but dart our eyes to that place which is the focus of heaven's joy and delight, the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Taking our text, then, as a guide, we propose to visit Calvary, hoping to have the help of the Holy Spirit whilst we look upon him who died upon the cross. I would have you notice this morning, first of all, the *cause of Christ's death*—"It pleased the Lord to bruise him." "It pleased *Jehovah* to bruise him," saith the original; "*he* hath put him to grief." Secondly, the *reason of Christ's death*—"When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Christ died because he was an offering for sin. And then, thirdly, the *effects and consequences of Christ's death*. "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Come, Sacred Spirit, now, whilst we attempt to speak on these matchless themes.

I. First, we have THE ORIGIN OF CHRIST'S DEATH. "It pleased *Jehovah* to bruise him; he hath put him to griefs." He who reads Christ's life, as a mere history, traces the death of Christ to the enmity of the Jews, and to the fickle character of the Roman governor. In this he acteth justly, for the crime and sin of the Saviour's death must lay at the door of manhood. This race of ours became a deicide and slew the Lord, and nailed its Saviour to a tree. But he who reads the Bible with the eye of faith, desiring to discover its hidden secrets, sees something more in the Saviour's death than Roman cruelty, or Jewish malice: he sees the solemn decree of God fulfilled by men, who were the ignorant, but guilty instruments of its accomplishment. He looks beyond the Roman spear and nail, beyond the Jewish taunt and jeer, up to the Sacred Fount, whence all things flow, and traces the crucifixion of Christ to the breast of Deity. He believes with Peter—"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." We dare not impute to God the sin, but at the same time the fact, with all its marvelous effects in the world's redemption, we must ever trace to the Sacred Fountain of divine love. So cloth our prophet. He says, "It pleased *Jehovah* to bruise him. He overlooks both Pilate and Herod, and traces it to the heavenly Father, the first Person in the Divine Trinity. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him, *he* hath put him to grief."

Now, beloved, there be many who think that God the Father is at best but an indifferent spectator of salvation. Others do belie him still more. They look upon Him as an unloving, severe Being, who had no love to the human race, and could only be made loving by the death and agonies of our Saviour. Now, this is a foul libel upon the fair and glorious grace of God the Father, to whom for ever be honor: for Jesus Christ did not die to make God loving, but he died because God *was* loving. 'Twas not to make *Jehovah's* love Toward his people flame, That Jesus from the throne above,
A suffering man became. "Twas not the death which he endured, Nor all the pangs he bore, That God's eternal love procured, For God was love before." Christ was sent into the world by his Father, as the consequence of the Father's affection for his people. Yea, he "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The fact is, that the Father as much decreed salvation, as much effected it, and as much delighted in it, as did either God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit. And when we speak of the Saviour of the world, we must always include in that word, if we speak in a large sense, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, for all these three, as one God, do save us from our sins. The text puts away every hard thought concerning the Father, by telling us that it pleased *Jehovah* to bruise Jesus Christ. The death of Christ is traceable to God the Father. Let us try if we can see it is so.

1. First it is traceable in decree. God, the one God of heaven and earth, hath the book of destiny entirely in his power. In that book there is nothing written by a stranger's hand. The penmanship of the solemn book of predestination is from beginning to end entirely divine. "Chained to his throne a volume lies, With all the fates of men, With every angel's form and size
Drawn by th' eternal pen." No inferior hand hath sketched even so much as the least minute parts of providence. It was all, from its Alpha to its Omega, from its divine preface to its solemn finis, marked out, designed, sketched, and planned by the mind of the all-wise, all-knowing God. Hence, not even Christ's death

was exempt from it. He that wings an angel and guides a sparrow, he that protects the hairs of our head from falling prematurely to the ground, was not likely, when he took notice of such little things, to omit in his solemn decrees the greatest wonder of earth's miracles, the death of Christ. No; the blood-stained page of that book, the page which makes both past and future glorious with golden words,—that blood-stained page, I say, was as much written of Jehovah, as any other. He determined that Christ should be born of the Virgin Mary, that he should suffer under Pontius Pilate, that he should descend into Hades, that thence he should rise again, leading captivity captive, and then should reign for ever at the right hand of the Majesty on high. Nay, I know not but that I shall have Scripture for my warrant when I say, that this is the very core of predestination, and that the death of Christ is the very center and main-spring by which God did fashion all his other decrees, making this the bottom and foundation-stone upon which the sacred architecture should be builded. Christ was put to death by the absolute foreknowledge and solemn decree of God the Father, and in this sense "it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief."

2. But a little further, Christ's coming into the world to die was the effect of the Father's will and pleasure. Christ came not into this world unsent. He had laid in Jehovah's bosom from before all worlds, eternally delighting himself in his Father, and being himself his Father's eternal joy. "In the fullness of time" God did rend his Son from his bosom, his only-begotten Son, and freely delivered him up for *us* all. Herein was matchless, peerless love, that the offended judge should permit his co-equal Son to suffer the pains of death for the redemption of a rebellious people. I want your imaginations for one minute to picture a scene of olden times. There is a bearded patriarch, who rises early in the morning and awakes his son, a young man full of strength, and bids him arise and follow him. They hurry from the house silently and noiselessly, before the mother is awake. They go three days, journey with their men; until they come to the Mount, of which the Lord hath spoken. You know the patriarch. The name of Abraham is always fresh in our memories. On the way, that patriarch speaks not one solitary word to his son. His heart is too full for utterance. He is overwhelmed with grief. God has commanded him to take his son, his only son, and slay him upon the mountain as a sacrifice. They go together; and who shall paint the unutterable anguish of the father's soul, whilst he walks side by side with that beloved son, of whom he is to be the executioner? The third day has arrived; the servants are bidden to stay at the foot of the hill, whilst they go to worship God yonder. Now, can any mind imagine how the father's grief must overflow all the banks of his soul, when, as he walked up that hill-side, his son said to him, "Father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" Can you conceive how he stifled his emotions, and, with sobs, exclaimed, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb." See! the father has communicated to his son the fact that God has demanded his life. Isaac, who might have struggled and escaped from his father, declares that he is willing to die, if God hath decreed it. The father takes his son, binds his hands behind his back, piles up the stones, makes an altar, lays the wood, and has his fire ready. And now where is the artist that can depict the anguish of the father's countenance, when the knife is unsheathed, and he holds it up, ready to slay his son? But here the curtain falls. Now the black scene vanishes at the sound of a voice from heaven. The ram caught in the thicket supplies the substitute, and faith's obedience need go no further. Ah! my brethren, I want to take you from this scene to a far greater one. What faith and obedience made man do, that love constrained God himself to do. He had but one son, that son his own heart's delight: he covenanted to yield him up for our redemption, nor did he violate his promise; for, when the fullness of time was come, he sent his Son to be born of the Virgin Mary, that he might suffer for the sins of man. O! can ye tell the greatness of that love, which made the everlasting God not only put his Son upon the altar, but actually do the deed, and thrust the sacrificial knife into his Son's heart? Can you think how overwhelming must have been the love of God toward the human race, when he completed in act what Abraham only did in intention? Look ye there, and see the place where his only Son hung dead upon the cross, the bleeding victim of awakened justice! Here is love indeed; and here we see how it was, that it pleased the Father to bruise him.

3. This allows me to push my text just one point further. Beloved, it is not only true that God did design and did permit with willingness the death of Christ; it is moreover, true that the unutterable agonies that clothed the death of the Saviour with superhuman terror, were the effect of the Father's bruising of Christ in very act and deed. There is a martyr in prison: the chains are on his wrists, and yet he sings. It has been announced to him that to-morrow is his burning day. He claps his hands right merrily, and smiles while he says, "It will be sharp work to-morrow, I shall breakfast below on fiery tribulations, but afterward I will sup with Christ. Tomorrow is my wedding-day, the day for which I have long panted, when I shall sign the testimony of my life by a glorious deaths." The time is come; the men with the halberds precede him through the streets. Mark the serenity of the martyr's countenance. He turns to some who look upon him, and exclaims, "I value these iron chains far more than if they had been of gold; it is a sweet thing to die for Christ. There are a few of the boldest of the saints gathered round the stake, and as he unrobes himself, ere he stands upon the fagots to receive his doom, he tells them that it is a joyous thing to be a soldier of Christ, to be allowed to give his body to be burned; and he shakes hands with them, and bids them "Good by" with merry cheer. One would

think he were going to a bridal, rather than to be burned. He steps upon the fagots; the chain is put about his middle; and after a brief word of prayer, as soon as the fire begins to ascend, he speaks to the people with manful boldness. But hark! he sings whilst the fagots are crackling and the smoke is blowing upward. He sings, and when his nether parts are burned, he still goes on chanting sweetly some psalm of old. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."

Picture another scene. There is the Saviour going to his cross, all weak and wan with suffering; his soul is sick and sad within him. There is no divine composure there. So sad is his heart, that he faints in the streets. The Son of God faints beneath a cross that many a criminal might have carried. They nail him to the tree. There is no song of praise. He is lifted up in the air, and there he hangs preparatory to his death. You hear no shout of exultation. There is a stern compression of his face, as if his soul were still saying, "If it be possible let this cross pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Hark! he speaks. Will he not sing sweeter songs than ever came from martyr's lips? Ah! no; it is an awful wail of woe that can never be imitated. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The martyrs said not that: God was with them. Confessors of old cried not so, when they came to die. They shouted in their fires, and praised God on their racks. Why this? Why doth the Saviour suffer so? Why, beloved, it was because the Father bruised him. That sunshine of God's countenance that has cheered many a dying saint, was withdrawn from Christ; the consciousness of acceptance with God, which has made many a holy man espouse the cross with joy, was not afforded to our Redeemer, and therefore he suffered in thick darkness of mental agony. Read the 22nd Psalm, and learn how Jesus suffered. Pause over the solemn words in the 1st, 2nd, 6th, and following verses. Underneath the church are the ever lasting arms; but underneath Christ there were no arms at all, but his Father's hand pressed heavily against him; the upper and the nether mill-stones of divine wrath pressed and bruised him; and not one drop of joy or consolation was afforded to him. "It pleased Jehovah to bruise him; *he* hath put him to grief." This, my brethren, was the climax of the Saviour's woe, that his Father turned away from him, and put him to grief.

Thus have I expounded the first part of the subject—the origin of our Saviour's worst sufferings, the Father's pleasure.

II. Our second head must explain the first, or otherwise it is an insolvable mystery how God should bruise his Son, who was perfect innocence, while poor fallible confessors and martyrs have had no such bruising from him in the time of their trial. **WHAT WAS THE REASON OF THE SAVIOUR'S SUFFERING?** We are told here, "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." Christ was thus troubled, because his soul was an offering for sin. Now, I am going to be as plain as I can, while I preach over again the precious doctrine of the atonement of Christ Jesus our Lord. Christ was an offering for sin, in the sense of a substitute. God longed to save; but, if such a word may be allowed, Justice tied his hands. "I must be just," said God; "that is a necessity of my nature. Stern as fate, and fast as immutability, is the truth that I must be just. But then my heart desires to forgive—to pass by man's transgressions and pardon them. How can it be done? Wisdom stepped in, and said, "It shall be done thus;" and Love agreed with Wisdom. "Christ Jesus, the Son of God, shall stand *in man's place*, and he shall be offered upon Mount Calvary *instead of man*. Now, mark: when you see Christ going up the Mount of Doom, you see man going there: when you see Christ hurled upon his back, upon the wooden cross, you see the whole company of his elect there; and when you see the nails driven through his blessed hands and feet, it is the whole body of his Church who there, in their substitute, are nailed to the tree. And now the soldiers lift the cross, and dash it into the socket prepared for it. His bones are every one of them dislocated, and his body is thus torn with agonies which can not be described. 'Tis manhood suffering there; 'tis the Church suffering there, in the substitute. And when Christ dies, you are to look upon the death of Christ, not as his own dying merely, but as the dying of all those for whom he stood as the scape-goat and the substitute. It is true, Christ died really himself; it is equally true that he did not die for himself, but died as the substitute, in the room, place, and stead of all believers. When you die you will die for yourselves; when Christ died, he died for you, if you be a believer in him. When you pass through the gates of the grave, you go there solitary and alone; you are not the representative of a body of men, but you pass through the gates of death as an individual; but, remember, when Christ went through the sufferings of death, he was the representative Head of all his people.

Understand, then, the sense in which Christ was made a sacrifice for sin. But here lies the glory of this matter. It was as a substitute for sin that he did actually and literally suffer punishment for the sin of all his elect. When I say this, I am not to be understood as using any figure whatever, but as saying actually what I mean. Man for his sin was condemned to eternal fire; when God took Christ to be the substitute, it is true, he did not send Christ into eternal fire, but he poured upon him grief so desperate, that it was a valid payment for even an eternity of fire. Man was condemned to live forever in hell. God did not send Christ forever into hell; but

he put on Christ, punishment that was equivalent for that. Although he did not give Christ to drink the actual hells of believers, yet he gave him a *quid pro quo*—something that was equivalent thereunto. He took the cup of Christ's agony, and he put in there, suffering, misery, and anguish such as only God can imagine or dream of, that was the exact equivalent for all the suffering, all the woe, and all the eternal tortures of every one that shall at last stand in heaven, bought with the blood of Christ. And you say, "Did Christ drink it all to its dregs?" Did he suffer it all? Yes, my brethren, he took the cup, and "At one triumphant draught of love, He drank damnation dry." He suffered all the horror of hell: in one pelting shower of iron wrath it fell upon him, with hail-stones bigger than a talent; and he stood until the black cloud had emptied itself completely. There was our debt; huge and immense; he paid the utmost farthing of whatever his people owed; and now there is not so much as a doit or a farthing due to the justice of God in the way of punishment from any believer; and though we owe God gratitude, though we owe much to his love, we owe nothing to his justice; for Christ in that hour took all our sins, past, present, and to come, and was punished for them all there and then, that we might never be punished, because he suffered in our stead. Do you see, then, how it was that God the Father bruised him? Unless he had so done the agonies of Christ could not have been an equivalent for our sufferings; for hell consists in the hiding of God's face from sinners, and if God had not hidden his face from Christ, Christ could not—I see not how he could—have endured any suffering that could have been accepted as an equivalent for the woes and agonies of his people.

Methinks I heard some one say, "Do you mean us to understand this atonement that you have now preached as being a literal fact?" I say, most solemnly, I do. There are in the world many theories of atonement; but I can not see any atonement in any one, except in this doctrine of substitution. Many divines say that Christ did something when he died that enabled God to be just, and yet the Justifier of the ungodly. What that something is they do not tell us. They believe in an atonement made for every body; but then, their atonement is just this. They believe that Judas was atoned for just as much as Peter; they believe that the damned in hell were as much an object of Jesus Christ's satisfaction as the saved in heaven; and though they do not say it in proper words, yet they must mean it, for it is a fair inference, that in the case of multitudes, Christ died in vain, for he died for them all, they say; and yet so ineffectual was his dying for them, that though he died for them they are damned afterward. Now, such an atonement I despise—I reject it. I may be called Antinomian or Calvinist for preaching a limited atonement; but I had rather believe a limited atonement that is efficacious for all men for whom it was intended, than an universal atonement that is not efficacious for anybody, except the will of man be joined with it. Why, my brethren, if we were only so far atoned for by the death of Christ that any one of us might afterward save himself, Christ's atonement were not worth a farthing, for there is no man of us can save himself—no, not under the gospel; for if I am to be saved by faith, if that faith is to be my own act, unassisted by the Holy Spirit, I am as unable to save myself by faith as to save myself by good works. And after all, though men call this a limited atonement, it is as effectual as their own fallacious and rotten redemptions can pretend to be. But do you know the limit of it? Christ hath bought a "multitude that no man can number." The limit of it is just this: *He hath died for sinners*; whoever in this congregation inwardly and sorrowfully knows himself to be a sinner, Christ died for him; whoever seeks Christ, shall know Christ died for him; for our sense of need of Christ, and our seeking after Christ, are infallible proofs that Christ died for us. And, mark, here is something substantial. The Arminian says Christ died for him; and then, poor man, he has but small consolation therefrom, for he says, "Ah! Christ died for me; that does not prove much. It only proves I may be saved if I mind what I am after. I may perhaps forget myself; I may run into sin and I may perish. Christ has done a good deal for me, but not quite enough, unless I do something." But the man who receives the Bible as it is, he says, "Christ died for me, then my eternal life is sure. I know," says he, "that Christ can not be punished in a man's stead, and the man be punished afterwards. No," says he, "I believe in a just God, and if God be just, he will not punish Christ first, and then punish men afterwards. No; my Saviour died, and now I am free from every demand of God's vengeance, and I can walk through this world secure; no thunderbolt can smite me, and I can die absolutely certain that for me there is no flame of hell, and no pit digged; for Christ, my ransom, suffered in my stead, and, therefore, am I clean delivered. Oh! glorious doctrine! I would wish to die preaching it! What better testimony can we bear to the love and faithfulness of God than the testimony of a substitution eminently satisfactory for all them that believe on Christ? I will here quote the testimony of that pre-eminently profound divine, Dr. John Owen:—"Redemption is the freeing of a man from misery by the intervention of a ransom. Now, when a ransom is paid for the liberty of a prisoner, does not justice demand that he should have and enjoy the liberty so purchased for him by a valuable consideration? If I should pay a thousand pounds for a man's deliverance from bondage to him that retains him, who hath power to set him free, and is contented with the price I give, were it not injurious to me and the poor prisoner that his deliverance be not accomplished? Can it possibly be conceived that there should be a redemption of men, and those men not redeemed? That a price should be paid and the ransom not consummated? Yet all this must be made true, and innumerable other absurdities, if universal redemption be asserted. A price is paid for all, yet few delivered; the redemption of all consummated, yet, few of them redeemed; the judge satisfied, the jailer conquered, and yet the prisoners inthralled! Doubtless '*universal*,' and '*redemption*,' where the greatest part of

men perish, are as irreconcilable as '*Roman*, and '*Catholic*.' If there be a universal redemption of all, then all men are redeemed. If they are redeemed, then are they delivered from all misery, virtually or actually, whereunto they were inthrall'd, and that by the intervention of a ransom. Why, then, are not all saved? In a word, the redemption wrought by Christ being the full deliverance of the persons redeemed from all misery, wherein they were inwrapped, by the price of his blood, it can not possibly be conceived to be universal unless all be saved: so that the opinion of the Universalists is unsuitable to redemption."

I pause once more; for I hear some timid soul say—"But, sir, I am afraid I am not elect, and if so, Christ did not die for me." Stop sir! Are you a sinner? Do you feel it? Has God, the Holy Spirit, made you feel that you are a lost sinner? Do you want salvation? If you do not want it it is no hardship that it is not provided for you; but if you really feel that you want it, you are God's elect. If you have a desire to be saved, a desire given you by the Holy Spirit, that desire is a token for good. If you have begun believingly to pray for salvation, you have therein a sure evidence that you are saved. Christ was punished for you. And if now you can say, "Nothing in my hands I bring, Simply to the cross I cling." you may be as sure you are God's elect as you are sure of your own existence; for this is the infallible proof of election—a sense of need and a thirst after Christ.

III. And now I have just to conclude by noticing the BLESSED EFFECTS of the Saviour's death. On this I shall be very brief.

The *first* effect of the Saviour's death is, "He shall see his seed." Men shall be saved by Christ. Men have offspring by life; Christ had an offspring by death. Men die and leave their children, and they see not their seed; Christ lives, and every day sees his seed brought into the unity of the faith. One effect of Christ's death is the salvation of multitudes. Mark, not a chance salvation. When Christ died the angel did not say, as some have represented him, "Now by his death many *may* be saved;" the word of prophecy had quenched all "buts" and "peradventures;" "By his righteousness he *shall* justify many. There was not so much as an atom of chance work in the Saviour's death. Christ knew what he bought when he died; and what he bought he will have—that, and no more, and no less. There is no effect of Christ's death that is left to peradventure. "Shalls" and "wills" made the covenant fast: Christ's bloody death shall effect its solemn purpose. Every heir of grace shall meet around the throne, "Shall bless the wonders of his grace, And make his glories known." The *second* effect of Christ's death is, "He shall prolong his days." Yes, bless his name, when he died he did not end his life. He could not long be held a prisoner in the tomb. The third morning came, and the conqueror, rising from his sleep burst the iron bonds of death, and came forth from his prison house, no more to die. He waited his forty days, and then, with shouts of sacred song, he "led captivity captive, and ascended up on high." "In that he died he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth he liveth unto God," no more to die. "Now by his Father's side he Sits, And there triumphant reigns," the conqueror over death and hell.

And, *last* of all, by Christ's death the Father's good pleasure was effected and prospered. God's good pleasure is, that that this world shall one day be totally redeemed from sin; God's good pleasure is, that this poor planet, so long swathed in darkness, shall soon shine out in brightness, like a new-born sun. Christ's death hath done it. The stream that flowed from his side on Calvary shall cleanse the world from all its blackness. That hour of mid-day darkness was the rising of a new sun of righteousness, which shall never cease to shine upon the earth. Yes, the hour is coming when swords and spears shall be forgotten things—when the harness of war and the pageantry of pomp shall all be laid aside for the food of the worm or the contemplation of the curious. The hour approacheth when old Rome shall shake upon her seven hills, when Mohammed's crescent shall wane to wax no more, when all the gods of the heathens shall lose their thrones and be cast out to the moles and the bats; and then, when from the equator to the poles Christ shall be honored, the Lord paramount of earth, when from land to land, from the river even to the ends of the earth, one King shall reign, one shout shall be raised, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." Then, my brethren, shall it be seen what Christ's death has accomplished, for "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

The Death of Christ for His People

A Sermon (No. 2656) Intended for Reading on Lord's-Day, January 7th, 1900, Delivered by C. H. SPURGEON, At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark. *On a Lord's-day Evening in the winter of 1857.* "He laid down his life for us." —1 John 3:16.

COME, believer and contemplate this sublime truth, thus proclaimed to thee in simple monosyllables: "He laid down his life for us." There is not one long word in the sentence; it is all as simple as it can be; and it is simple because it is sublime. Sublimity in thought always needs simplicity in words to express itself. Little

thoughts require great words to explain them; little preachers need Latin words to convey their feeble ideas, but great thoughts and great expressers of those thoughts are content with little words.

"He laid down his life for us." Here there is not much upon which any man can display his eloquence; here is little room for metaphysical discussion or for deep thought; the text sets before us a simple yet sublime doctrine. What, then, shall I do with it? If I would speak of it profitably to myself, since I need not employ my wit to dissect it, nor my oratory to proclaim it, let me exercise my adoration to worship it; let me prostrate all my powers before the throne, and, like an angel when his work is done, and he has nowhere else to fly at his Lord's command, let me fold the wings of my contemplation, and stand before the throne of this great truth, and meekly bow myself, and worship him that was, and is, and is to come,—the great and glorious One who "laid down his life for us."

It will be well for me, in commencing my discourse, to remind you that there is no understanding the death of Christ unless we understand the person of Christ. If I were to tell you that God died for us, although I might be telling you a truth, and you might possibly not misunderstand what I meant, yet I should be at the same time uttering an error. God cannot die; it is, of course, impossible, from his very nature, that he could even for a moment cease to exist. God is incapable of suffering. It is true that we sometimes use words to express emotions on the part of God; but, then, we speak after the manner of men. He is impassive; he cannot suffer; it is not possible for him to endure aught; much less, then, is it possible for him to suffer death. Yet we are told, in the verse from which our text is taken, "Hereby perceive we the love *of God*." You notice that the words "of God" are inserted by the translators. They are in italics because they are not in the original. A better translation would be, "Hereby perceive we love." But when we read "of God," it might lead the ignorant to fancy that God could die; whereas, God could not. We must always understand, and constantly remember, that our Lord Jesus Christ was "very God of very God," and that, as God, he had all the attributes of the Most High, and could not, therefore, be capable either of suffering or death. But then he was also man, "man of the substance of his mother," man, just like ourselves, sin alone excepted. And the Lord Jesus died not as God; it was as man that he gave up the ghost; as man, he was nailed to the cross. As God, he was in heaven, even when his body was in the tomb; as God, he was swaying the sceptre of all worlds even when the mock sceptre of reed was in his hand, and the imperial robe of universal monarchy was on the eternal shoulders of his Godhead when the soldier's old purple cloak was wrapped about his manhood. He did not cease to be God, he did not lose his Omnipotence, and his eternal dominion, when he became man; nor did he, as God, die or suffer; it was as man that he "laid down his life for us."

Come, now, my soul, and worship this man, this God. Come, believer, and behold thy Saviour; come to the innermost circle of all sanctity, the circle that contains the cross of Christ, and here sit down; and, whilst thou dost worship, learn three lessons from the fact that "he laid down his life for us." The first lesson should be,—Did he lay down his life for us? Ah! then, my brethren, *how great must have been our sins* that they could not have been atoned for at any other price! Secondly, did he lay down his life for *us*? Ah! then, beloved, *how great must have been his love!* He would not stop short anywhere, until life itself had been resigned. Thirdly, did he lay down his life for *us*? Ah! then, my soul, be of good cheer; *how safe art thou!* If such an atonement hath been offered, if such a sure satisfaction hath been given to Almighty God, how secure thou art! Who is he that can destroy him who hath been bought with the blood of such a Redeemer?

I. Come, then, let me believingly meditate on the first sad fact. Did Christ lay down his life for me? Then, **HOW GREAT MUST HAVE BEEN MY SINS!**

Ah! my brethren, I will speak a little of my own experience, and in so doing I shall also be describing yours. I have seen my sins in many different ways. I saw them once by the blazing light of Sinai; and, oh! my spirit shrank within me, for my sins seemed exceeding black. When the sound of the trumpet waxed loud and long, and the lighting and fire flashed into my heart, I saw a very hell of iniquity within my soul, and I was ready then to curse the day that I was born, that I should have had such a heart, so vile and so deceitful. I thought that then I had seen the exceeding blackness of my sin. Alas! I had not seen enough of sin to make me loathe it so as to leave it, for that conviction passed away. Sinai was but a volcano, and it was hushed to silence; and then I began to play with sin again, and loved it as much as ever.

I beheld another sight one day; I saw my sins by the light of heaven. I looked up, and I considered the heavens, the work of God's fingers; I perceived the purity of God's character written on the sunbeams, I saw his holiness engraved upon the wide world, as well as revealed in Scripture; and as I compared myself with him, I thought I saw how black I was. O God! I never knew the heinousness of my own guilt, until I saw the glory of thy character; but now I see the brightness of thy holiness, my whole soul is cast down at the thought of my sinfulness, and my great departure from the living God. I thought that, then, I had seen enough. Ah! I

had seen enough to make me worship for a moment; but my gladness was as the early cloud and as the morning dew, and I went my way, and forgot what manner of man I was. When I had lost the sense of the majesty of God, I lost also the consciousness of my own guilt.

Then there came to me another view, and I beheld God's lovingkindness to me; I saw how he had dandled me upon the knee of Providence,—how he had carried me all my life long,—how he had strewn my path with plenty, and given me all things richly to enjoy. I remembered how he had been with me in the hour of trial, how he had preserved me in the day of hurricane, and kept me safe at the moment of storm. I remembered all his goodness to me; and, struck with surprise at his mercy, I looked upon my sin in the light of his grace; and I said, "O sin, how base thou art, what dire ingratitude dost thou manifest against a God so profoundly kind!"

I thought, then, surely I had seen the worst of sin, when I had laid it side by side, first with the character of God, and afterwards with his bounties. I cursed sin from my inmost heart, and thought I had seen enough of it. But, ah! my brethren, I had not. That sense of gratitude passed away, and I found myself still prone to sin, and still loving it.

But, oh, there came a thrice-happy, yet thrice-mournful hour! One day, in my wanderings, I heard a cry, a groan; methought 'twas not a cry such as came from mortal lip, it had in it such unutterable depths of wondrous woe. I turned aside, expecting to see some great sight; and it was indeed a great sight that I saw. Lo, there, upon a tree, all bleeding, hung a man. I marked the misery that made his flesh all quiver on his bones; I beheld the dark clouds come rolling down from heaven, like the chariots of misery; I saw them clothe his brow with blackness; I saw even in the thick darkness, for mine eyes were opened, and I perceived that his heart was as full of the gloom and horror of grief as the sky was full of blackness. Then I seemed to look into his soul, and I saw there torrents of unutterable anguish,—wells of torment of such an awful character that mortal lip dare not sip, lest it should be burned with scalding heat. I said, "Who is this mighty sufferer? Why doth he suffer thus? Hath he been the greatest of all sinners, the basest of all blasphemers?" But a voice came forth from the excellent glory, and it said, "This is my beloved Son; but he took the sinner's sin upon himself, and he must bear its penalty." O God! I thought, I never saw sin till that hour, when I saw it tear Christ's glories from his head,—when it seemed for a moment even to withdraw the lovingkindness of God from him,—when I saw him covered with his own blood, and plunged into the uttermost depths of oceans of grief. Then I said, "Now shall I know what thou art, O sin, as never before I knew it!" Though those other sights might teach me something of the dire character of evil, yet never, till I saw the Saviour on the tree, did I understand how base a traitor man's guilt was to man's God.

O heir of heaven, lift now thine eye, and behold the scenes of suffering through which thy Lord passed for thy sake! Come in the moonlight, and stand between those olives; see him sweat great drops of blood. Go from that garden, and follow him to Pilate's bar. See your Matter subjected to the grossest and filthiest insult; gaze upon the face of spotless beauty defiled with the spittle of soldiers; see his head pierced with thorns; mark his back, all rent, and torn, and scarred, and bruised, and bleeding beneath the terrible lash. And O Christian, see him die! Go and stand where his mother stood, and hear him say to thee, "Man, behold thy Saviour!" Come thou to-night, and stand where John stood; hear him cry, "I thirst," and find thyself unable either to assuage his griefs or to comprehend their bitterness. Then, when thou hast wept there, lift thine hand, and cry, "Revenge!" Bring out the traitors; where are they? And when your sins are brought forth as the murderers of Christ, let no death be too painful for them; though it should involve the cutting off of right arms, or the quenching of right eyes, and putting out their light for ever; do it! For if these murderers murdered Christ, then let them die. Die terribly they may, but die they must. Oh! that God the Holy Ghost would teach you that first lesson, my brethren, the boundless wickedness of sin, for Christ had to lay down his life before your sin could be wiped away.

II. Now we will come to the second head, and here we will lift up our hearts from the depths of sadness to the heights of affection. Did the Saviour lay down his life for me? We will read it now, "He laid down his life for me;" and I pray the Lord to help each of you, by faith, to read it so, because, when we say "us", that is dealing in generalities,—blessed generalities, it is true,—but let us, at this time, deal in specialities, and say, each one of us who can do so truthfully, "He laid down his life for *me*." Then, **HOW GREATLY HE MUST HAVE LOVED ME!**

Ah, Lord Jesus! I never knew thy love till I understood the meaning of thy death. Beloved, we shall try again, if we can, to tell the story of our own experience, to let you see how God's love is to be learned. Come, saint, sit down, and meditate on thy creation, note how marvellously thou hast been formed, and all thy bones fitted to one another, and see love there. Mark, next, that predestination which placed thee where thou art; for the lines have fallen unto thee in pleasant places, and, notwithstanding all thy troubles, thou hast, compared with

many a poor soul, "a goodly heritage." Mark, then, the love of God displayed in the predestination that has made thee what thou art, and placed thee where thou art. Then look thou back, and see the lovingkindness of thy Lord, as displayed to thee in all thy journey up till now. Thou art getting old, and thy hair is whitening above thy brow; but he hath carried thee all the days of old; not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord thy God hath promised. Recall thy life-story. Go back now, and look at the tapestry of thy life, which God has been working every day with the golden filament of his love, and see what pictures of grace there are upon it. Canst thou not say that Jesus has loved thee? Turn thine eye back, and read the ancient rolls of the everlasting covenant, and see thy name amongst the firstborn, the elect, the Church of the living God. Say, did he not love thee when he wrote thy name there? Go and remember how the eternal settlements were made, and how God decreed and arranged all things so that thy salvation should come to pass. Say, was there not love there?

Pause at the remembrance of thy convictions; think of thy conversion; recollect thy preservation, and how God's grace hath been working upon thee, in adoption, in justification, and in every item of the new covenant; and when thou hast summed up all these things, let me ask thee this question,—Do all these things produce in thee such a sense of gratitude as the one thing that I shall mention now, the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? For, my brother, if thy mind is like mine, although thou wilt think highly enough of all these things that God hath given thee, thou wilt be obliged to confess that the thought of the death of Christ upon the cross swallows them all up. This I know, my brethren, I may look back, I may look forward, but whether I look back to the decrees of eternity, or look forward to the pearl-gated city, and all the splendours that God has prepared for his own beloved children, I can never see my Father's love so beaming forth, in all its effulgence, as when I look at the cross of Christ, and see him die thereon. I can read the love of God in the rocky letters of the eternal covenant, and in the blazing letters of heaven hereafter; but, my brethren, in those crimson lines, those lines written in blood, there is something more striking than there is anywhere else, for they say, "He laid down his life for us" Ah, here it is ye learn love. You know the old story of Damon and Pythias,—how the two friends struggled together as to which should die for the other; there was love there. But, ah! there is no comparison between Damon and Pythias, and a poor sinner and his Saviour. Christ laid down his life, his glorious life, for a poor worm; he stripped himself of all his splendours, then of all his happiness, then of his own righteousness, then of his own robes, till he was naked to his own shame; and then he laid down his life, that was all he had left, for our Saviour had not kept anything back.

Just think of that for a moment. He had a crown in heaven; but he laid that aside, that you and I might wear one for ever. He had a girdle of brightness—brighter than the stars,—about his loins; but he took it off, and laid it by, that you and I might eternally wear a girdle of righteousness. He had listened to the holy songs of the cherubim and seraphim; but he left them all that we might for ever dwell where angels sing; and then he came to earth, and he had many things, even in his poverty, which might have tended to his comfort; he laid down, first one glory, and then another, at love's demand; at last, it came to this, he had nothing left but one poor garment, woven from the top throughout, and that was clinging to his back with blood, and he laid down that also. Then there was nothing left, he had not kept back one single thing. "There," he might have said, "take an inventory of all I have, to the last farthing; I have given it all up for my people's ransom." And there was nought left now but his own life. O love insatiable! couldst thou not stay there? Though he had given up one hand to cancel sin, and the other hand to reconcile us unto God; and had given up one foot that we might have our sinful feet for ever transfixed, and nailed, and fastened, never to wander, and the other foot to be fastened to the tree that we might have our feet at liberty to run the heavenly race; and there was nothing left but his poor heart, and he gave his heart up too, and they set it abroach with the spear, and forthwith there came out thence blood and water.

Ah, my Lord! what have I ever given to thee compared to what thou hast given for me? Some poor things, like some rusty farthings, I have given thee; but how little compared with what thou hast given me! Now and then, my Lord, I have given thee a poor song upon an ill-toned instrument; sometimes, my Lord, I have done some little service for thee; but, alas! my fingers were so black, they spoiled what I intended to have presented to thee white as snow. It is nought I have done for thee, my Lord. No, though I have been a missionary, and surrendered home and friends; no, though I have been a martyr, and given my body to be burned, I will say, in the last hour, "My Master, I have done nothing for thee, after all, in comparison with what thou hast done for me; and yet, what can I do more? How can I show my love to thee, for thy love to me, so peerless, so matchless? What shall I do? I will do nothing but—

'Dissolved by thy goodness, I'll fall to the ground,
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found.'

"That is all I can do, and that I must and will do."

III. Now, beloved, we will change the theme, and go one note higher. We have run up the gamut a long way, and now we have just reached the height of the octave. But we have something else to get out of the text: "He laid down his life for us." Did my Saviour lay down his life for me? Then, HOW SAFE I AM!

We will have no controversy to-night with those who do not see this truth; the Lord open their blind eyes, and show it to them! That is all we will say. We, who know the gospel, see, in the fact of the death of Christ, a reason that no strength of logic can ever shake, and no power of unbelief can remove, why we should be saved. There may be men, with minds so distorted that they can conceive it possible that Christ should die for a man who afterwards is lost; I say, there may be such. I am sorry to say that there are still to be found some such persons, whose brains have been so addled, in their childhood, that they cannot see that what they hold is both a preposterous falsehood and a blasphemous libel. Christ dies for a man, and then God punishes that man again; Christ suffers in a sinner's stead, and then God condemns that sinner after all! Why, my friends, I feel quite shocked in only mentioning such an awful error; and were it not so current as it is, I should certainly pass it over with the contempt that it deserves. The doctrine of Holy Scripture is this, that God is just, that Christ died in the stead of his people, and that, as God is just, he will never punish one solitary soul of Adam's race for whom the Saviour did thus shed his blood. The Saviour did, indeed, in a certain sense, die for all; all men receive many a mercy through his blood, but that he was the Substitute and Surety for all men, is so inconsistent, both with reason and Scripture, that we are obliged to reject the doctrine with abhorrence. No, my soul, how shalt thou be punished if thy Lord endured thy punishment for thee? Did he die for thee? O my soul, if Jesus was not thy Substitute, and did not die in thy very stead, then he is no Saviour to thee! But if he was thy Substitute, if he suffered as thy Surety, in thy stead, then, my soul, "Who is he that condemneth?" Christ hath died, yea, rather, hath risen again, and sitteth at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us. There stands the master-argument: Christ "laid down his life for us," and "if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." If the agonies of the Saviour put our sins away, the everlasting life of the Saviour, with the merits of his death added thereunto, must preserve his people, even unto the end.

This much I know,—ye may hear men stammer when they say it,—but what I preach is the old Lutheran, Calvinistic, Augustinian, Pauline, Christian truth,—there is not one sin in the Book of God against anyone that believeth. Our sins were numbered on the Scapegoat's head, and there is not one sin, that ever a believer did commit, that hath any power to damn him, for Christ hath taken the damning power out of sin, by allowing it, to speak by a bold metaphor, to damn himself, for sin did condemn him; and, inasmuch as sin condemned him, sin cannot condemn us. O believer, this is thy security, that all thy sin and guilt, all thy transgressions and thine iniquities, have been atoned for, and were atoned for before they were committed; so that thou mayest come with boldness, though red with all crimes, and black with every lust, and lay thine hand on that Scapegoat's head, and when thou hast put thine hand there, and seen that Scapegoat driven into the wilderness, thou mayest clap thine hands for joy, and say, "It is finished, sin is pardoned." "Here's pardon for transgressions pest, It matters not how black their cast; And oh, my soul, with wonder view, For sin's to come, here's pardon too!" This is all I want to know; did the Saviour die for me? Then I will not continue in sin that grace may abound; but nothing shall stop me of thus glorying, in all the churches of the Lord Jesus, that my sins are entirely removed from me; and, in God's sight, I may sing, as Hart did sing,—

"With Christ's spotless vesture on,
Holy as the Holy One."

O marvellous death of Christ, how securely dost thou set the feet of God's people on the rocks of eternal love; and how securely dost thou keep them there! Come, dear brethren, let us suck a little honey out of this honeycomb. Was there ever anything so luscious and so sweet to the believer's taste as this all-glorious truth that we are complete in him; that in and through his death and merits we are accepted in the Beloved? Oh, was there ever anything more sublime than this thought, that he hath already raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, far above all principalities and powers; just where he sits? Surely there is nothing more sublime than that, except it be that a master-thought stamps all these things with more than their own value,—that master-thought that, though the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, the covenant of his love shall never depart from us. "For," saith Jehovah, "I will never forget thee, O Zion;" "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me." O Christian, that is a firm foundation, cemented with blood, on which thou mayest build for eternity! Ah, my soul! thou needest no other hope but this. Jesus, thy mercy never dies; I will plead this truth when cast down with anguish,—Thy mercy never dies. I will plead this when Satan hurls temptations at me, and when conscience casts the remembrance of my sin in my teeth; I will plead this ever, and I will plead it now,—

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress."

Yea, and after I die, and even when I stand before thine eyes, thou dread Supreme,—

"When from the dust of death I rise,
To take my mansion in the skies,
E'en then shall this be all my plea,
'Jesus hath lived and died for me.'

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

Ah, brethren, if this is your experience you may come to the table of communion now right happily; it will not be coming to a funeral, but to a feast of gladness. "He laid down his life for us."

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. "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 cheeks! Do you see his hands bleeding, and his feet too, gushing gore? Behold him! The bulls of Bashan gird him round, and the dogs are hounding him to death! Hear him! "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" The earth startles with affright. A God is groaning on a cross! What! Does not this dishonour Christ? No; it honours him! Each of the thorns becomes 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? m"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 acknowledge 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 longsuffering 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.