



Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 9: 1863

by

Charles Spurgeon

About *Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 9: 1863* by Charles Spurgeon

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Gethsemane

A Sermon

(No. 493)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, February 8th, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”—Luke 22:44.

FEW HAD FELLOWSHIP with the sorrows of Gethsemane. The majority of the disciples were not there. They were not sufficiently advanced in grace to be admitted to behold the mysteries of “the agony.” Occupied with the Passover feast at their own houses, they represent the many who live upon the letter, but are mere babes and sucklings as to the spirit of the gospel. The walls of Gethsemane fitly typify that weakness in grace which effectually shuts in the deeper marvels of communion from the gaze of ordinary believers. To twelve, nay, to eleven only was the privilege given to enter Gethsemane and see this great sight. Out of the eleven, eight were left at some distance; they had fellowship, but not of that intimate sort to which the men greatly beloved are admitted. Only three highly favored ones, who had been with him on the mount of transfiguration, and had witnessed the life-giving miracle in the house of Jairus—only these three could approach the veil of his mysterious sorrow: within that veil even these must not intrude; a stone’s-cast distance must be left between. He must tread the wine-press alone, and of the people there must be none with him. Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, represent the few eminent, experienced, grace-taught saints, who may be written down as “Fathers;” these having done business on great waters, can in some degree, measure the huge Atlantic waves of their Redeemer’s passion; having been much alone with him, they can read his heart far better than those who merely see him amid the crowd. To some selected spirits it is given, for the good of others, and to strengthen them for some future, special, and tremendous conflict, to enter the inner circle and hear the pleadings of the suffering High priest; they have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and are made conformable unto his death. Yet I say, even these, the elect out of the elect, these choice and peculiar favourites among the kings courtiers, even these cannot penetrate the secret places of the Savior’s woe, so as to comprehend all his agonies. “Thine unknown sufferings” is the remarkable expression of the Greek liturgy; for there is an inner chamber in his grief, shut out from human knowledge and fellowship. Was it not here that Christ was more than ever an “Unspeakable gift” to us? Is not Watts right when he sings—

“And all the unknown joys he gives,
Were bought with agonies unknown.”

Since it would not be possible for any believer, however experienced, to know for himself all that our Lord endured in the place of the olivepress, when he was crushed beneath the upper and the nether mill-stone of mental suffering and hellish malice, it is clearly far beyond the preacher’s capacity to set it forth to you. Jesus himself must give you access to the wonders of Gethsemane: as for me, I can but invite you to enter the garden, bidding you put your shoes from off your feet, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground. I am neither Peter, nor James, nor John, but one

who would fain like them drink of the Master's cup, and be baptized with his baptism. I have hitherto advanced only so far as yonder band of eight, but there I have listened to the deep groanings of the man of sorrows. Some of you, my venerable friends, may have learned far more than I; but you will not refuse to hear again the roarings of the many waters which strove to quench the love of the Great Husband of our souls.

Several matters will require our brief consideration. Come Holy Spirit, breathe light into our thoughts, life into our words.

I. Come hither and behold the SAVIOR'S UNUTTERABLE WOE.

The emotions of that dolorous night are expressed by several words in Scripture. John describes him as saying four days before his passion, "Now is my soul troubled," as he marked the gathering clouds he hardly knew where to turn himself, and cried out "What shall I say?" Matthew writes of him, "he began to be sorrowful and very heavy." Upon the word *ademonein* translated "very heavy," Goodwin remarks that there was a distraction in the Savior's agony since the root of the word signifies "separated from the people—men in distraction, being separated from mankind." What a thought, my brethren, that our blessed Lord should be driven to the very verge of distraction by the intensity of his anguish. Matthew represents the Savior himself as saying "My soul is *exceeding sorrowful*, even unto death." Here the word *Perilupos* means encompassed, encircled, overwhelmed with grief. "He was plunged head and ears in sorrow and had no breathing-hole," is the strong expression of Goodwin. Sin leaves no cranny for comfort to enter, and therefore the sin-bearer must be entirely immersed in woe. Clark records that he began to be *sore amazed*, and to be very heavy. In this case *thambeisthai*, with the prefix *ek*, shows extremity of amazement like that of Moses when he did exceedingly fear and quake. O blessed Savior, how can we bear to think of thee as a man astonished and alarmed! Yet was it even so when the terrors of God set themselves in array against thee. Luke uses the strong language of my text—"being in an agony." These expressions, each of them worthy to be the theme of a discourse, are quite sufficient to show that the grief of the Savior was of the most extraordinary character; well justifying the prophetic exclamation "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which was done unto me." He stands before us peerless in misery. None are molested by the powers of evil as he was; as if the powers of hell had given commandment to their legions, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king himself."

Should we profess to understand all the sources of our Lord's agony, wisdom would rebuke us with the question "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in search of the depths?" We cannot do more than look at the revealed causes of grief. It partly arose from the horror of his soul *when fully comprehending the meaning of sin*. Brethren, when you were first convinced of sin and saw it as a thing exceeding sinful, though your perception of its sinfulness was but faint compared with its real heinousness, yet horror took hold upon you. Do you remember those sleepless nights? Like the Psalmist, you said "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long, for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer." Some of us can remember when our souls chose strangling rather than life; when if the shadows of death could have covered us from the wrath of God we would have been too glad to sleep in the grave that we might not make our bed in hell. Our blessed Lord saw sin in its natural blackness. He had a most distinct perception of its treasonable assault upon his God, its murderous hatred to himself, and its destructive influence upon mankind. Well might horror take hold upon him, for a sight of sin must be far more hideous than a sight of hell, which is but its offspring.

Another deep fountain of grief was found in the fact that Christ now *assumed more fully his official position with regard to sin*. He was now made *sin*. Hear the word! he, who knew no sin, was made *sin* for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. In that night the words of Isaiah were fulfilled—"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Now he stood as the sin-bearer, the substitute accepted by Divine justice to bear that we might never bear the whole of wrath divine. At that hour heaven looked on him as standing in the sinner's stead, and treated as sinful man had richly deserved to be treated. Oh! dear friends, when the immaculate Lamb of God found himself in the place of the guilty, when he could not repudiate that place because he had voluntarily accepted it in order to save his chosen, what must his soul have felt, how must his perfect nature have been shocked at such close association with iniquity?

We believe that at this time, *our Lord had a very clear view of all the shame and suffering of his crucifixion*. The agony was but one of the first drops of the tremendous shower which discharged itself upon his head. He foresaw the speedy coming of the traitor-disciple, the seizure by the officers, the mock-trials before the Sanhedrim, and Pilate, and Herod, the scourging and buffeting, the crown of thorns, the shame, the spitting. All these rose up before his mind, and, as it is a general law of our nature that the foresight of trial is more grievous than trial itself, we can conceive how it was that he who answered not a word when in the midst of the conflict, could not restrain himself from strong crying and tears in the prospect of it. Beloved friends, if you can revive before your mind's eye the terrible incidents of his death the hounding through the streets of Jerusalem, the nailing to the cross, the fever, the thirst, and, above all, forsaking of his God, you cannot marvel that he began to be very heavy, and was sore amazed.

But possibly a yet more fruitful tree of bitterness was this—*that now his Father began to withdraw his presence from him*. The shadow of that great eclipse began to fall upon his spirit when he knelt in that cold midnight amidst the olives of Gethsemane. The sensible comforts which had cheered his spirit were taken away; that blessed application of promises which Christ Jesus needed as a man, was removed, all that we understand by the term "consolations of God" were hidden from his eyes. He was left single-handed in his weakness to contend for the deliverance of man. The Lord stood by as if he were an indifferent spectator, or rather, as if he were an adversary, he wounded him "with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one."

But in our judgment the fiercest heat of the Savior's suffering in the garden lay in *the temptations of Satan*. That hour above any time in his life, even beyond the forty days' conflict in the wilderness, was *the time of his temptation*. "This is your hour and the power of darkness." Now could he emphatically say, "The prince of this world cometh." This was his last hand-to-hand fight with all the hosts of hell, and here must he sweat great drops of blood before the victory can be achieved.

We have glanced at the fountains of the great deep which were broken up when the floods of grief deluged the Redeemer's soul. Brethren, this one lesson ere we pass from the contemplation. "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Let us reflect that no suffering can be unknown to him. We do but run with footmen—he had to contend with horsemen; we do but wade up to our ankles in shallow streams of sorrow—he had to buffet with the swellings of Jordan. He will never fail to succor his people when tempted; even as it was said of old, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them."

II. Turn we next to contemplate THE TEMPTATION OF OUR LORD.

At the outset of his career, the serpent began to nibble at the heel of the promised deliverer; and now as the time approached when the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, that old dragon made a desperate attempt upon his great destroyer. It is not possible for us to lift the veil where revelation has permitted it to fall, but we can form some faint idea of the suggestions with which Satan tempted our Lord. Let us, however, remark by way of caution, before we attempt to paint this picture, that whatever Satan may have suggested to our Lord, his perfect nature did not in any degree whatever submit to it so as to sin. The temptations were, doubtless, of the very foulest character, but they left no speck or flaw upon him, who remained still the fairest among ten thousand. The prince of this world came, but he had nothing in Christ. He struck the sparks, but they did not fall, as in our case, upon dry tinder; they fell as into the sea, and were quenched at once. He hurled the fiery arrows, but they could not even scar the flesh of Christ; they smote upon the buckler of his perfectly righteous nature, and they fell off with their points broken, to the discomfiture of the adversary.

But what, think you, were these temptations? It strikes me, from some hints given, that they were somewhat as follows—there was, first, *a temptation to leave the work unfinished*; we may gather this from the prayer—"If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." "Son of God," the tempter said, "is it so? Art thou really called to bear the sin of man? Hath God said, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty,' and art thou he, the chosen of God, to bear all this load? Look at thy weakness! Thou sweatest, even now, great drops of blood; surely thou art not he whom the Father hath ordained to be mighty to save; or if thou be, what wilt thou win by it? What will it avail thee? Thou hast glory enough already. See what miscreants they are for whom thou art to offer up thyself a sacrifice. Thy best friends are asleep about thee when most thou needest their comfort; thy treasurer, Judas, is hastening to betray thee for the price of a common slave. The world for which thou sacrificest thyself will cast out thy name as evil, and thy Church, for which thou dost pay the ransom-price, what is it worth? A company of mortals! Thy divinity could create the like any moment it pleaseth thee; why needest thou, then, pour out thy soul unto death?" Such arguments would Satan use; the hellish craft of one who had then been thousands of years tempting men, would know how to invent all manner of mischief. He would pour the hottest coals of hell upon the Savior. It was in struggling with this temptation, among others, that, being in an agony, our Savior prayed more earnestly.

Scripture implies that our Lord was assailed by *the fear that his strength would not be sufficient*. He was heard in that he feared. How, then, was he heard? An angel was sent unto him strengthening him. His fear, then, was probably produced by a sense of weakness. I imagine that the foul fiend would whisper in his ear—"Thou! thou endure to be smitten of God and abhorred of men! Reproach hath broken thy heart already; how wilt thou bear to be publicly put to shame and driven without the city as an unclean thing? How wilt thou bear to see thy weeping kinsfolk and thy broken-hearted mother standing at the foot of thy cross? Thy tender and sensitive spirit will quail under it. As for thy body, it is already emaciated; thy long fastings have brought thee very low; thou wilt become a prey to death long ere thy work is done. Thou wilt surely fail. God hath forsaken thee. Now will they persecute and take thee; they will give up thy soul to the lion, and thy darling to the power of the dog." Then would he picture all the sufferings of crucifixion, and say, "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day when the Lord shall deal with thee?" The temptation of Satan was not directed against the Godhead, but the manhood of Christ, and therefore the fiend would probably dwell upon the feebleness of man. "Didst thou not say thyself, 'I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the despised of the people?' How wilt thou bear it when the

wrath-clouds of God gather about thee? The tempest will surely shipwreck all thy hopes. It cannot be; thou canst not drink of this cup, nor be baptized with this baptism.” In this manner, we think, was our Master tried. But see he yields not to it. Being in an agony, which word means in a wrestling, he struggles with the tempter like Jacob with the angel. “Nay,” saith he, “I will not be subdued by taunts of my weakness; I am strong in the strength of my Godhead, I will overcome thee yet.” Yet was the temptation so awful, that, in order to master it, his mental depression caused him to “sweat as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”

Possibly, also, the temptation may have arisen from a suggestion *that he was utterly forsaken*. I do not know—there may be sterner trials than this, but surely this is *one* of the worst, to be utterly forsaken. “See,” said Satan, as he hissed it out between his teeth—“see, thou hast a friend nowhere! Look up to heaven, thy Father hath shut up the bowels of his compassion against thee. Not an angel in thy Father’s courts will stretch out his hand to help thee. Look thou yonder, not one of those spirits who honored thy birth will interfere to protect thy life. All heaven is false to thee; thou art left alone. And as for earth, do not all men thirst for thy blood? Will not the Jew be gratified to see thy flesh torn with nails, and will not the Roman gloat himself when thou, the King of the Jews, art fastened to the cross? Thou hast no friend among the nations; the high and mighty scoff at thee, and the poor thrust out their tongues in derision. Thou hadst not where to lay thy head when thou wast in thy best estate; thou hast no place now where shelter will be given thee. See the companions with whom thou hast taken sweet counsel, what are they worth? Son of Mary, see there thy brother James, see there thy loved disciple John, and thy bold Apostle Peter—they sleep, they sleep; and yonder eight, how the cowards sleep when thou art in thy sufferings! And where are the four hundred others? They have forgotten thee; they will be at their farms and their merchandize by morning. Lo! thou hast no friend left in heaven or earth. All hell is against thee. I have stirred up mine infernal den. I have sent my missives throughout all regions summoning every prince of darkness to set upon thee this night, and we will spare no arrows, we will use all our infernal might to overwhelm thee; and what wilt thou do, thou solitary one?” It may be, this was the temptation; I think it was, because the appearance of an angel unto him strengthening him removed that fear. He was heard in that he feared; he was no more alone, but heaven was with him. It may be that this is the reason of his coming three times to his disciples—as Hart puts it—

“Backwards and forwards thrice he ran
As if he sought some help from man.”

He would see for himself whether it was really true that all men had forsaken him; he found them all asleep; but perhaps he gained some faint comfort from the thought that they were sleeping, not from treachery, but from sorrow, the spirit indeed was willing, but the flesh was weak.

We think Satan also assaulted our Lord with a bitter taunt indeed. You know in what guise the tempter can dress it, and how bitterly sarcastic he can make the insinuation—“*Ah! thou wilt not be able to achieve the redemption of thy people*. Thy grand benevolence will prove a mockery, and thy beloved ones will perish. Thou shalt not prevail to save them from my grasp. Thy scattered sheep shall surely be my prey. Son of David, I am a match for thee; thou canst not deliver out of my hand. Many of thy chosen have entered heaven on the strength of thine atonement, but I will drag them thence, and quench the stars of glory; I will thin the courts of heaven of the choristers of God, for thou wilt not fulfill thy suretyship; thou canst not do it. Thou art not able to bring up all this great people; they will perish yet. See, are not the sheep scattered now that the Shepherd is smitten? They will all forget thee. Thou wilt never see of the travail of thy soul. Thy desired end

will never be reached. Thou wilt be for ever the man that began to build but was not able to finish." Perhaps this is more truly the reason why Christ went three times to look at his disciples. You have seen a mother; she is very faint, weary with a heavy sickness, but she labors under a sore dread that her child will die. She has started from her couch, upon which disease had thrown her, to snatch a moment's rest. She gazes anxiously upon her child. She marks the faintest sign of recovery. But she is sore sick herself, and cannot remain more than an instant from her own bed. She cannot sleep, she tosses painfully, for her thoughts wander; she rises to gaze again—"How art thou, my child, how art thou? Are those palpitations of thy heart less violent? Is thy pulse more gentle?" "But, alas! she is faint, and she must go to her bed again, yet she can get no rest. She will return again and again to watch the loved one. So, methinks, Christ looked upon Peter, and James, and John, as much as to say, "No, they are not all lost yet; there are three left," and, looking upon them as the type of all the Church, he seemed to say—"No, no; I will overcome; I will get the mastery; I will struggle even unto blood; I will pay the ransom-price, and deliver my darlings from their foe."

Now these, methinks, were his temptations. If you can form a fuller idea of what they were than this, then right happy shall I be. With this one lesson I leave the point—"Pray that ye enter not into temptation." This is Christ's own expression; his own deduction from his trial. You have all read, dear friends, John Bunyan's picture of Christian fighting, with Apollyon. That master-painter has sketched it to the very life. He says, though "this sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent, I never saw him all the while give so much as one pleasant look, till he perceived he had wounded Apollyon with his two-edged sword; then indeed, he did smile and look upward! But it was the dreadfulest sight I ever saw." That is the meaning of that prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." Oh you that go recklessly where you are tempted, you that pray for afflictions—and I have known some silly enough to do that—you that put yourselves where you tempt the devil to tempt you, take heed from the Master's own example. He sweats great drops of blood when he is tempted. Oh! pray God to spare you such trial. Pray this morning and every day, "Lead me not into temptation."

III. Behold, dear brethren, THE BLOODY SWEAT.

We read, that "he sweat as it were great drops of blood." Hence a few writers have supposed that the sweat was not actually blood, but had the appearance of it. That interpretation, however, has been rejected by most commentators, from Augustine downward, and it is generally held that the words "as it were" do not only set forth *likeness* to blood, but signify that it was actually and literally blood. We find the same idiom used in the text—"We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father." Now, clearly, this does not mean that Christ was like the only-begotten of the Father, since he is really so. So that generally this expression of Holy Scripture sets forth, not a mere likeness to a thing, but the very thing itself. We believe, then, that Christ did really sweat blood. This phenomenon, though somewhat unusual, has been witnessed in other persons. There are several cases on record, some in the old medicine books of Galen, and others of more recent date, of persons who after long weakness, under fear of death have sweat blood. But this case is altogether one by itself for several reasons. If you will notice, he not only sweat blood, but it was in great drops; the blood coagulated, and formed large masses. I cannot better express what is meant than by the word "gouts"—big, heavy drops. This has not been seen in any case. Some slight effusions of blood have been known in cases of persons who were previously enfeebled, but great drops never. When it is said "falling to the ground"—it shows their copiousness, so that they not only stood upon the surface and were sucked up by his garments till he became like the red heifer

which was slaughtered on that very spot, but the drops fell to the ground. Here he stands unrivalled. He was a man in good health, only about thirty years of age, and was laboring under no fear of death; but the mental pressure arising from his struggle with temptation, and the straining of all his strength, in order to baffle the temptation of Satan, so forced his frame to an unnatural excitement, that his pores sent forth great drops of blood which fell down to the ground. This proves how tremendous must have been the weight of sin when it was able so to crush the Savior that he distilled drops of blood! This proves too, my brethren, the mighty power of his love. It is a very pretty observation of old Isaac Ambrose that the gum which exudes from the tree without cutting is always the best. This precious camphire-tree yielded most sweet spices when it was wounded under the knotty whips, and when it was pierced by the nails on the cross; but see, it giveth forth its best spice when there is no whip, no nail, no wound. This sets forth the voluntariness of Christ's sufferings, since without a lance the blood flowed freely. No need to put on the leech, or apply the knife; it flows spontaneously. No need for the rulers to cry "Spring up, O well;" of itself it flows in crimson torrents. Dearly beloved friends, if men suffer some frightful pain of mind—I am not acquainted with the medical matter—apparently the blood rushes to the heart. The cheeks are pale; a fainting fit comes on; the blood has gone inward, as if to nourish the inner man while passing through its trial. But see our Savior in his agony; he is so utterly oblivious of self, that instead of his agony driving his blood to the heart to nourish himself, it drives it outward to bedew the earth. The agony of Christ, inasmuch as it pours him out upon the ground, pictures the fullness of the offering which he made for men.

Do you not perceive, my brethren, how intense must have been the wrestling through which he passed, and will you not hear its voice *to you?*—"Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." It has been the lot of some of us to have sore temptations—else we did not know how to teach others—so sore that in wrestling against them the cold, clammy sweat has stood upon our brow. The place will never be forgotten by me—a lonely spot; where, musing upon my God, an awful rush of blasphemy went over my soul, till I would have preferred death to the trial; and I fell on my knees there and then, for the agony was awful, while my hand was at my mouth to keep the blasphemies from being spoken. Once let Satan be permitted really to try you with a temptation to blasphemy, and you will never forget it, though you live till your hairs are blanched; or let him attack you with some lust, and though you hate and loathe the very thought of it, and would lose your right arm sooner than indulge in it, yet it will come, and hunt, and persecute, and torment you. Wrestle against it even unto sweat, my brethren, yea, even unto blood. None of you should say, "I could not help it; I was tempted." Resist till you sweat blood rather than sin. Do not say, "I was so pressed with it; and it so suited my natural temperament, that I could not help falling into it." Look at the great Apostle and High Priest of your profession, and sweat even to blood rather than yield to the great tempter of your souls. Pray that ye enter not into temptation, so that when ye enter into it ye may with confidence say, "Lord, I did not seek this, therefore help me through with it, for thy name's sake."

IV. I want you, in the fourth place, to notice THE SAVIOR'S PRAYER.

Dear friends, when we are tempted and desire to overcome, the best weapon is prayer. When you cannot use the sword and the shield, take to yourself the famous weapon of All-prayer. So your Savior did. Let us notice his prayer. *It was lonely prayer.* He withdrew even from his three best friends about a stone's cast. Believer, especially in temptation, be much in solitary prayer. As private prayer is the key to open heaven, so is it the key to shut the gates of hell. As it is a shield

to prevent, so is it the sword with which to fight against temptation. Family-prayer, social prayer, prayer in the Church, will not suffice, these are very precious, but the best beaten spice will smoke in your censer in your private devotions, where no ear hears but God. Betake yourselves to solitude if you would overcome.

Mark, too, it was *humble prayer*. Luke says he knelt, but another evangelist says he fell on his face. What! does the King fall on his face? Where, then, must be thy place, thou humble servant of the great Master? Doth the Prince fall flat to the ground? Where, then, wilt thou lie? What dust and ashes shall cover thy head? What sackcloth shall gird thy loins? Humility gives us good foot-hold in prayer. There is no hope of any real prevalence with God, who casteth down the proud, unless we abase ourselves that he may exalt us in due time.

Further, it was *filial prayer*. Matthew describes him as saying "O my Father," and Mark puts it, "Abba, Father." You will find this always a stronghold in the day of trial to plead your adoption. Hence that prayer, in which it is written, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," begins with "Our Father which art in heaven." Plead as a child. You have no rights as a subject; you have forfeited them by your treason, but nothing can forfeit a child's right to a father's protection. Be not then ashamed to say, "My Father, hear my cry."

Again, observe that it was *persevering prayer*. He prayed three times, using the same words. Be not content until you prevail. Be as the importunate widow, whose continual coming earned what her first supplication could not win. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

Further, see how it glowed to a red-hot heat—it was *earnest prayer*. "He prayed more earnestly." What groans were those which were uttered by Christ! What tears, which welled up from the deep fountains of his nature! Make earnest supplication if you would prevail against the adversary.

And last, it was *the prayer of resignation*. "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." Yield, and God yields. Let it be as God wills, and God will will it that it shall be for the best. Be thou perfectly content to leave the result of thy prayer in his hands, who knows when to give, and how to give, and what to give, and what to withhold. So pleading, earnestly, importunately, yet mingling with it humility and resignation, thou shalt yet prevail.

Dear friends, we must conclude, turn to the last point with this as a practical lesson—"Rise and pray." When the disciples were lying down they slept; sitting was the posture that was congenial to sleep. Rise; shake yourselves; stand up in the name of God; rise and pray. And if you are in temptation, be you more than ever you were in your life before, instant, passionate, importunate with God that he would deliver you in the day of your conflict.

V. As time has failed us we close with the last point, which is, THE SAVIOR'S PREVALENCE.

The cloud has passed away. Christ has knelt, and the prayer is over. "But," says one, "did Christ prevail in prayer?" Beloved, could we have any hope that he would prevail in heaven if he had not prevailed on earth? Should we not have had a suspicion that if his strong crying and tears had not been heard *then*, he would fail *now*? His prayers did speed, and therefore he is a good intercessor for us. "How was he heard?" The answer shall be given very briefly indeed. He was heard, I think, in three respects. The first gracious answer that was given him was, *that his mind was suddenly rendered calm*. What a difference there is between "My soul is exceeding sorrowful,"—his hurrying too and fro, his repetition of the prayer three times, the singular agitation that was upon him—what a contrast between all these and his going forth to meet the traitor with "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Like a troubled sea before, and now as calm as when he himself said, "Peace be

still," and the waves were quiet. You cannot know a profounder peace than that which reigned in the Savior when before Pilate he answered him not a word. He is calm to the last, as calm as though it were his day of triumph rather than his day of trouble. Now I think this was vouchsafed to him in answer to his prayer. He had sufferings perhaps more intense, but his mind was now quieted so as to meet them with greater deliberation. Like some men, who when they first hear the firing of the shots in a battle are all trepidation, but as the fight grows hotter and they are in greater danger, they are cool and collected; they are wounded, they are bleeding, they are dying; yet are they quiet as a summer's eve; the first young flush of trouble is gone, and they can meet the foe with peace—so the Father heard the Savior's cry, and breathed such a profound peace into his soul, that it was like a river, and his righteousness like the waves of the sea.

Next, we believe that he was answered *by God strengthening him through an angel*. How that was done we do not know. Probably it was by what the angel said, and equally likely is it that it was by what he did. The angel may have whispered the promises; pictured before his mind's eye the glory of his success; sketched his resurrection; portrayed the scene when his angels would bring his chariots from on high to bear him to his throne; revived before him the recollection of the time of his advent, the prospect when he should reign from sea to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth; and so have made him strong. Or, perhaps, by some unknown method God sent such power to our Christ, who had been like Samson with his locks shorn, that he suddenly received all the might and majestic energy that were needed for the terrific struggle. Then he walked out of the garden no more a worm and no man, but made strong with an invisible might that made him a match for all the armies that were round about him. A troop had overcome him, like Gad of old, but he overcame at last. Now he can dash through a troop; now he can leap over a wall. God has sent by his angel force from on high, and made the man Christ strong for battle and for victory.

And I think we may conclude with saying, that God heard him in granting him now, not simply strength, *but a real victory over Satan*. I do not know whether what Adam Clarke supposes is correct, that in the garden Christ did pay more of the price than he did even on the cross; but I am quite convinced that they are very foolish who get to such refinement that they think the atonement was made on the cross, and nowhere else at all. We believe that it was made in the garden as well as on the cross; and it strikes me that in the garden one part of Christ's work was finished, wholly finished, and that was his conflict with Satan. I conceive that Christ had now rather to bear the absence of his Father's presence and the revilings of the people and the sons of men, than the temptations of the devil. I do think that these were over when he rose from his knees in prayer, when he lifted himself from the ground where he marked his visage in the clay in drops of blood. The temptation of Satan was then over, and he might have said concerning that part of the work—"It is finished; broken is the dragon's head; I have overcome him." Perhaps in those few hours that Christ spent in the garden the whole energy of the agents of iniquity was concentrated and dissipated. Perhaps in that one conflict all that craft could invent, all that malice could devise, all that infernal practice could suggest, was tried on Christ, the devil having his chain loosened for that purpose, having Christ given up to him, as Job was, that he might touch him in his bones and in his flesh, yea, touch him in his heart and his soul, and vex him in his spirit. It may be that every devil in hell and every fiend of the pit was summoned, each to vent his own spite and to pour their united energy and malice upon the head of Christ. And there he stood, and he could have said as he stood up to meet the next adversary—a devil in the form of man—Judas—"I come this day from Bozrah, with garments dyed red from Edom; I have trampled on my enemies, and overcome them once for all;

now go I to bear man's sin and my Father's wrath, and to finish the work which he has given me to do." If this be so, Christ was then heard in that he feared; he feared the temptation of Satan, and he was delivered from it; he feared his own weakness, and he was strengthened; he feared his own trepidation of mind, and he was made calm.

What shall we say, then, in conclusion, but this lesson. Does it not say "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall have." Then if your temptations reach the most tremendous height and force, still lay hold of God in prayer and you shall prevail. Convinced sinner! that is a comfort for you. Troubled saint! that is a joy for you. To one and all of us is this lesson of this morning—"Pray that ye enter not into temptation." If in temptation let us ask that Christ may pray for us that our faith fail not, and when we have passed through the trouble let us try to strengthen our brethren, even as Christ has strengthened us this day."

The Betrayal

A Sermon

(No. 494)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, February 15th, 1863, by the

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At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?”—Luke 22:47, 48.

WHEN SATAN HAD BEEN ENTIRELY worsted in his conflict with Christ in the garden, the man-devil Judas came upon the scene. As the Parthian in his flight turns round to shoot the fatal arrow, so the arch-enemy aimed another shaft at the Redeemer, by employing the traitor into whom he had entered. Judas became the devil's deputy, and a most trusty and serviceable tool he was. The Evil One had taken entire possession of the apostate's heart, and, like the swine possessed of devils, he ran violently downwards towards destruction. Well had infernal malice selected the Savior's trusted friend to be his treacherous betrayer, for thus he stabbed at the very center of his broken and bleeding heart. But, beloved, as in all things God is wiser than Satan, and the Lord of goodness outwitteth the Prince of Evil, so, in this dastardly betrayal of Christ, prophecy was fulfilled, and Christ was the more surely declared to be the promised Messiah. Was not Joseph a type? and, lo! like that envied youth, Jesus was sold by his own brethren. Was he not to be another Samson, by whose strength the gates of hell should be torn from their posts? lo! like Samson, he is bound by his countrymen, and delivered to the adversary. Know ye not that he was the anti-type of David? and was not David deserted by Ahithophel, his own familiar friend and counsellor? Nay, brethren, do not the words of the Psalmist receive a literal fulfillment in our Master's betrayal? What prophecy can be more exactly true than the language of the forty-first and fifty-fifth Psalms? In the first we read, “Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me;” and in the fifty-fifth the Psalmist is yet more clear; “For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him: he hath broken his covenant. The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.” Even an obscure passage in one of the lesser prophets, must have a literal fulfillment, and for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a base slave, must the Savior be betrayed by his choice friend. Ah! thou foul fiend, thou shalt find at the last that thy wisdom is but intensified folly; as for the deep plots and plans of thy craft, the Lord shall laugh them to scorn; after all, thou art but the unconscious drudge of him whom thou abhorrest; in all the black work thou doest so greedily, thou art no better than a mean scullion in the royal kitchen of the King of kings.

Without further preface, let us advance to the subject of our Lord's betrayal. First, concentrate your thoughts upon Jesus, *the betrayed one*; and when ye have lingered awhile there, solemnly

gaze into the villanous countenance of *Judas, the betrayer*—he may prove a beacon to warn us against the sin which gendereth apostacy.

I. LET US TARRY AWHILE, AND SEE OUR LORD UNGRATEFULLY AND DASTARDLY BETRAYED.

It is appointed that he must die, but how shall he fall into the hands of his adversaries? Shall they capture him in conflict? It must not be, lest he appear an unwilling victim. Shall he flee before his foes until he can hide no longer? It is not meet that a sacrifice should be hunted to death. Shall he offer himself to the foe? That were to excuse his murderers, or be a party to their crime. Shall he be taken accidentally or unawares? That would withdraw from his cup the necessary bitterness which made it wormwood mingled with gall. No; he must be betrayed by his friend, that he may bear the utmost depths of suffering, and that in every separate circumstance there may be a well of grief. One reason for the appointment of the betrayal, lay in the fact *that it was ordained that man's sin should reach its culminating point in his death*. God, the great owner of the vineyard, had sent many servants, and the husbandmen had stoned one and cast out another; last of all, he said, "I will send my Son; surely they will reverence my Son." When they slew the heir to win the inheritance, their rebellion had reached its height. The murder of our blessed Lord was the extreme of human guilt; it developed the deadly hatred against God which lurks in the heart of man. When man became a deicide, sin had reached its fullness; and in the black deed of the man by whom the Lord was betrayed, that fullness was all displayed. If it had not been for a Judas, we had not known how black, how foul, human nature may become. I scorn the men who try to apologize for the treachery of this devil in human form, this son of perdition, this foul apostate. I should think myself a villain if I tried to screen him, and I shudder for the men who dare extenuate his crimes. My brethren, we should feel a deep detestation of this master of infamy; he has gone to his own place, and the anathema of David, part of which was quoted by Peter, has come upon him, "When he shall be judged, let him be condemned: and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office." Surely, as the devil was allowed unusually to torment the bodies of men, even so was he let loose to get possession of Judas as he has seldom gained possession of any other man, that we might see how foul, how desperately evil is the human heart. Beyond a doubt, however, the main reason for this was *that Christ might offer a perfect atonement for sin*. We may usually read the sin in the punishment. Man betrayed his God. Man had the custody of the royal garden, and should have kept its green avenues sacred for communion with his God; but he betrayed the trust; the sentinel was false; he admitted evil into his own heart, and so into the paradise of God. He was false to the good name of the Creator, tolerating the insinuation which he should have repelled with scorn. Therefore must Jesus find man a traitor to him. There must be the counterpart of the sin in the suffering which he endured. You and I have often betrayed Christ. We have, when tempted, chosen the evil and forsaken the good; we have taken the bribes of hell, and have not followed closely with Jesus. It seemed most fitting, then, that he who bore the chastisement of sin should be reminded of its ingratitude and treachery by the things which he suffered. Besides, brethren, that *cup must be bitter to the last degree which is to be the equivalent for the wrath of God*. There must be nothing consolatory in it; pains must be taken to pour into it all that even Divine wisdom can invent of awful and unheard of woe, and this one point—"He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me," was absolutely necessary to intensify the bitterness. Moreover, we feel persuaded that by thus suffering at the hand of a traitor *the Lord became a faithful High Priest*, able to sympathize with us when we fall under the like affliction. Since slander and ingratitude

are common calamities, we can come to Jesus with full assurance of faith; he knows these sore temptations, for he has felt them in their very worst degree. We may cast every care, and every sorrow upon him, for he careth for us, having suffered with us. Thus, then, in our Lord's betrayal, Scripture was fulfilled, sin was developed, atonement was completed, and the great all-suffering High Priest became able to sympathize with us in every point.

Now let us *look at the treason itself*. You perceive how black it was. Judas was *Christ's servant*, what if I call him his confidential servant. He was a partaker in apostolic ministry and the honor of miraculous gifts. He had been most kindly and indulgently treated. He was a sharer in all the goods of his Master, in fact he fared far better than his Lord, for the Man of Sorrows always took the lion's share of all the pains of poverty and the reproach of slander. He had food and raiment given him out of the common stock, and the Master seems to have indulged him very greatly. The old tradition is, that next to the apostle Peter he was the one with whom the Savior most commonly associated. We think there must be a mistake there, for surely John was the Savior's greatest friend; but Judas, as a servant had been treated with the utmost confidence. Ye know, brethren, how sore is that blow which comes from a servant in whom we have put unlimited trust. But Judas was more than this: *he was a friend, a trusted friend*. That little bag into which generous women cast their small contributions had been put into his hands, and very wisely too, for he had the financial vein. His main virtue was economy, a very needful quality in a treasurer. As exercising a prudent foresight for the little company, and watching the expenses carefully, he was, as far as men could judge, the right man in the right place. He had been thoroughly trusted. I read not that there was any annual audit of his accounts; I do not discover that the Master took him to task as to the expenditure of his privy purse. Everything was given to him, and he gave, at the Master's direction, to the poor, but no account was asked. This is vile indeed, to be chosen to such a position, to be installed purse-bearer to the Ring of kings, Chancellor of God's exchequer, and then to turn aside and sell the Savior; this is treason in its uttermost degree. Remember that the world looked upon Judas *as colleague* and partner with our Lord. To a great extent the name of Judas was associated with that of Christ. When Peter, James, or John had done anything amiss, reproachful tongues threw it all on their Master. The twelve were part and parcel of Jesus of Nazareth. One old commentator says of Judas—"He was Christ's alter ego"—to the people at large there was an identification of each apostle with the leader of the band. And oh! when such associations have been established, and then there is treachery, it is as though our arm should commit treason against our head, or as if our foot should desert the body. This was a stab indeed! Perhaps, dear brethren, our Lord saw in the person of Judas *a representative man*, the portraiture of the many thousands who in after ages imitated his crime. Did Jesus see in Iscariot all the Judases who betray truth, virtue, and the cross? Did he perceive the multitudes of whom we may say, that they were, spiritually, in the loins of Judas? Hymeneus, Alexander, Hermogenes, Philetus, Demas, and others of that tribe, were all before him as he saw the man, his equal, his acquaintance, bartering him away for thirty pieces of silver.

Dear friends, the position of Judas must have tended greatly to aggravate his treason. Even the heathens have taught us that ingratitude is the worst of vices. When Caesar was stabbed by his friend Brutus, the world's poet writes—

"This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms,
Quite vanquish'd him; then burst his mighty heart;

And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
 Even at the base of Pompey's statua,
 _____ great Caesar fell."

Many ancient stories, both Greek and Roman, we might quote to show the abhorrence which the heathens entertain towards ingratitude and treachery. Certain, also, of their own poets, such, for instance, as Sophocles, have poured out burning words upon deceitful friends; but we have no time to prove what you will all admit, that nothing can be more cruel, nothing more full of anguish, than to be sold to destruction by one's bosom friend. The closer the foeman comes the deeper will be the stab he gives; if we admit him to our heart, and give him our closest intimacy, then can he wound us in the most vital part.

Let us notice, dear friends, while we look at the breaking heart of our agonizing Savior, *the manner in which he met this affliction*. He had been much in prayer; prayer had overcome his dreadful agitation; he was very *calm*; and we need to be very calm when we are forsaken by a friend. Observe his gentleness. The first word he spake to Judas, when the traitor had polluted his cheek with a kiss, was this—"FRIEND!" FRIEND!! Note that! Not "Thou hateful miscreant," but "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" not "Wretch, wherefore dost thou dare to stain my cheek with thy foul and lying lips?" no, "Friend, wherefore art thou come?" Ah! if there had been anything good left in Judas, this would have brought it out. If he had not been an unmitigated, incorrigible, thrice-dyed traitor, his avarice must have lost its power at that instant, and he would have cried—"My master! I came to betray thee, but that generous word has won my soul; here, if thou must be bound, I will be bound with thee; I make a full confession of my infamy!" Our Lord added these words—there is reproof in them, but notice how kind they are still, how much too good for such a caitiff—"Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" I can conceive that the tears gushed from his eyes, and that his voice faltered, when he thus addressed his own familiar friend and acquaintance—"Betrayest *thou*," my Judas, my treasurer, "betrayest thou *the Son of Man*," thy suffering, sorrowing friend, whom thou hast seen naked and poor, and without a place whereon to lay his head. Betrayest thou *the Son of Man*—and dost thou prostitute the fondest of all endearing signs—a *kiss*—that which should be a symbol of loyalty to the King, shall it be the badge of thy treachery—that which was reserved for affection as her best symbol—dost thou make it the instrument of my destruction? Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" Oh! if he had not been given up to hardness of heart, if the Holy Ghost had not utterly left him, surely this son of perdition would have fallen prostrate yet again, and weeping out his very soul, would have cried—"No, I cannot betray thee, thou suffering Son of man; forgive, forgive; spare thyself; escape from this bloodthirsty crew, and pardon thy treacherous disciple!" But no, no word of compunction, while the silver is at stake! Afterwards came the sorrow that worketh death, which drove him, like Ahithophel, his prototype, to court the gallows to escape remorse. This, also, must have aggravated the woe of our beloved Lord, when he saw the final impenitence of the traitor, and read the tearful doom of that man of whom he had once said, it would be better for him that he had never been born.

Beloved, I would have you fix your eyes on your Lord in your quiet meditations as being thus despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and gird up the loins of your minds, counting it no strange thing if this fiery trial should come upon you, but being determined that though your Lord should be betrayed by his most eminent disciples, yet, through his grace you will cling to him in shame and in suffering, and will follow him, if needs be, even unto death. God

give us grace to see the vision of his nailed hands and feet, and remembering that all this came from the treachery of a friend, let us be very jealous of ourselves, lest we crucify the Lord afresh and put him to an open shame by betraying him in our conduct, or in our words, or in our thoughts.

II. Grant me your attention while we make an estimate of the man by whom the Son of man was betrayed—JUDAS THE BETRAYER.

I would call your attention, dear friends, *to his position and public character*. Judas was a *preacher*; nay, he was a foremost preacher, “he obtained part of this ministry,” said the Apostle Peter. He was not simply one of the seventy; he had been selected by the Lord himself as one of the twelve, an honorable member of the college of the apostles. Doubtless he had preached the gospel so that many had been gladdened by his voice, and miraculous powers had been vouchsafed to him, so that at his word the sick had been healed, deaf ears had been opened; and the blind had been made to see; nay, there is no doubt that he who could not keep the devil out of himself, had cast devils out of others. Yet how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! He that was as a prophet in the midst of the people, and spake with the tongue of the learned, whose word and wonders proved that he had been with Jesus and had learned of him—he betrays his Master. Understand, my brethren, that no gifts can ensure grace, and that no position of honor or usefulness in the Church will necessarily prove our being true to our Lord and Master. Doubtless there are bishops in hell, and crowds of those who once occupied the pulpit are now condemned for ever to bewail their hypocrisy. You that are Church-officers, do not conclude that because you enjoy the confidence of the Church, that therefore of an absolute certainty the grace of God is in you. Perhaps it is the most dangerous of all positions for a man to become well known and much respected by the religious world, and yet to be rotten at the core. To be where others can observe our faults is a healthy thing though painful; but to live with beloved friends who would not believe it possible for us to do wrong, and who if they saw us err would make excuses for us—this is to be where it is next to impossible for us ever to be aroused if our hearts be not right with God. To have a fair reputation and a false heart is to stand upon the brink of hell.

Judas *took a very high degree officially*. He had the distinguished honor of being entrusted with the Master’s financial concerns, and this, after all, was no small degree to which to attain. The Lord, who knows how to use all sorts of gifts, perceived what gift the man had. He knew that Peter’s unthinking impetuosity would soon empty the bag and leave the company in great straits, and if he had entrusted it to John, his loving spirit might have been cajoled into unwise benevolence towards beggars of unctious tongue; he might even have spent the little moneys in buying alabaster boxes whose precious ointments should anoint the Master’s head. He gave the bag to Judas, and it was discreetly, prudently, and properly used; there is no doubt he was the most judicious person, and fitted to occupy the post. But oh! dear friends, if the Master shall choose any of us who are ministers or Church-officers, and give us a very distinguished position; if our place in the ranks shall be that of commanding officers, so that even our brother ministers look up with esteem, and our fellow-elders or deacons regard us as being fathers in Israel—oh! if we turn, if we prove false, how damnable shall be our end at the last! What a blow shall we give to the heart of the Church, and what derision will be made in hell!

You will observe that the character of Judas *was openly an admirable one*. I find not that he committed himself in any way. Not the slightest speck defiled his moral character so far as others could perceive. He was no boaster, like Peter; he was free enough from the rashness which cries, “Though all men should forsake thee yet will not I.” He asks no place on the right hand of the

throne, his ambition is of another sort. He does not ask idle questions. The Judas who asks questions is “not Iscariot.” Thomas and Philip are often prying into deep matters, but not Judas. He receives truth as it is taught him, and when others are offended and walk no more with Jesus, he faithfully adheres to him, having golden reasons for so doing. He does not indulge in the lusts of the flesh or in the pride of life. None of the disciples suspected him of hypocrisy; they said at the table, “Lord, is it I?” They never said, “Lord, is it Judas?” It was true he had been filching for months, but then he did it by littles, and covered his defalcations so well by financial manipulations that he ran no risk of detection from the honest unsuspecting fishermen with whom he associated. Like some merchants and traders we have heard of—invaluable gentlemen as chairmen of speculating companies and general managers of swindling banks—he could abstract a decent per-centage and yet make the accounts exactly tally. The gentlemen who have learned of Judas, manage to cook the accounts most admirably for the shareholders, so as to get a rich joint for their own table; over which they, no doubt, entreat the divine blessing. Judas was, in his known life, a most admirable person. He would have been an alderman ere long there is no doubt, and being very pious and richly-gifted, his advent at churches or chapels would have created intense satisfaction. “What a discreet and influential person;” say the deacons. “Yes,” replies the minister; “what an acquisition to our councils; if we could elect him to office he would be of eminent service to the Church.” I believe that the Easter chose him as apostle on purpose that we might not be at all surprised if we find such a man a minister in the pulpit, or a colleague of the minister, working as an officer in Christ’s Church. These are solemn things, my brethren; let us take them to heart, and if any of us wear a good character among men and stand high in office, let this question come home close to us—“Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I?” Perhaps he who shall last ask the question is just the man who ought to have asked it first.

But, secondly, I call your attention *to his real nature and sin*. Judas was a man with a conscience. He could not afford to do without it. He was no Sadducee who could fling religion overboard; he had strong religious tendencies. He was no debauched person; he never spent a two-pence in vice on his life, not that he loved vice less, but that he loved the two-pence more. Occasionally he was generous, but then it was with other people’s money. Well did he watch his lovely charge, the bag. He had a conscience, I say, and a ferocious conscience it was when it once broke the chain, for it was his conscience which made him hang himself. But then it was a conscience that did not sit regularly on the throne; it reigned by fits and starts. Conscience was not the leading element. Avarice predominated over conscience. He would get money, if honestly, he liked that best, but if he could not get it conscientiously, then anyhow in the world. He was but a small trader; his gains were no great things, or else he would not have sold Christ for so small a sum as that—ten pounds at the outside, of our money at its present value—some three or four pounds, as it was in those days. It was a poor price to take for the Master; but then a little money was a great thing to him. He had been poor; he had joined Christ with the idea that he would soon be proclaimed King of the Jews, and that then he should become a nobleman, and be rich. Finding Christ a long while in coming to his kingdom, he had taken little by little, enough to lay by in store; and now, fearing that he was to be disappointed in all his dreams, and never having had any care for Christ, but only for himself, he gets out of what he thinks to have been a gross mistake in the best way he can, and makes money by his treason against his Lord. Brethren, I do solemnly believe, that of all hypocrites, those are the persons of whom there is the least hope whose God is their money. You may reclaim a drunkard; thank God, we have seen many instances of that; and even a fallen Christian, who has given way

to vice, may loathe his lust, and return from it; but I fear me that the cases in which a man who is cankered with covetousness has ever been saved, are so few, that they might be written on your finger-nail. This is a sin which the world does not rebuke; the most faithful minister can scarce smite its forehead. God knoweth what thunders I have launched out against men who are all for this world, and yet pretend to be Christ's followers; but yet they always say, "I is not for me." What I should call stark naked covetousness, they call prudence, discretion, economy, and so on; and actions which I would scorn to spit upon, they will do, and think their hands quite clean after they have done them, and still sit as God's people sit, and hear as God's people hear, and think that after they have sold Christ for paltry gain, they will go to heaven. O souls, souls, souls, beware, beware, beware, most of all of greed! It is not money, nor the lack of money, but *the love* of money which is the root of all evil. It is not getting it; it is not even keeping it; it is loving it; it is making it your god; it is looking at that as the main chance, and not considering the cause of Christ, nor the truth of Christ, nor the holy life of Christ, but being ready to sacrifice everything for gains' sake. Oh! such men make giants in sin; they shall be set up for ever as butts for infernal laughter; their damnation shall be sure and just.

The third point is, *the warning which Judas received, and the way in which he persevered*. Just think—the night before he sold his Master what do you think the Master did? Why, he washed his feet! And yet he sold him! Such condescension! Such love! Such familiarity! He took a towel, and girded himself, and washed Judas's feet! And yet those very feet brought Judas as a guide to them that took Jesus! And you remember what he said when he had washed his feet—"Now ye are clean, but not all;" and he turned a tearful eye on Judas. What a warning for him! What could be more explicit? Then when the Supper came, and they began to eat and drink together, the Lord said—"One of you shall betray me." That was plain enough; and a little farther on he said explicitly—"He that dippeth with me in the dish the same is he." What opportunities for repentance! He cannot say he had not a faithful preacher. What could have been more personal? If he does not repent now, what is to be done? Moreover, Judas saw that which was enough to make a heart of adamant bleed; he saw Christ with agony on his face, for it was just after Christ had said "Now is my soul troubled," that Judas left the feast and went out to sell his Master. That face, so full of grief, ought to have turned him, must have turned him, if he had not been, given up and left alone, to deliver over his soul unto his own devices. What language could have been more thundering than the words of Jesus Christ, when he said, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born." He had said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil." Now, if while these thunders rolled over his head, and the lightningflashes pointed at his person, if, then, this man was not aroused, what a hell of infernal pertinacity and guilt must have been within his soul! Oh! but if any of you, if any of you shall sell Christ for the sake of keeping the shop open on Sunday, if you shall sell Christ for the extra wages you may earn for falsehood—oh! if you shall sell Christ for the sake of the hundred pounds that you may lay hold of by a villanous contract—if you do that, you do not perish unwarned. I come into this pulpit to please no man among you. God knoweth if I knew more of your follies you should have them pointed out yet more plainly; if I knew more of the tricks of business, I would not flinch to speak of them! But, O sirs, I do conjure you by the blood of Judas, who hanged himself at last, turn you—if such there be—turn you from this evil, if haply your sin may be blotted out!

Let us for one minute *notice the act itself*. He sought out his own temptation. He did not wait for the devil to come to him; he went after the devil. He went to the chief priests and said, "What

will ye give me?" One of the old Puritan divines says, "This is not the way people generally trade; they tell their own price." Judas says "What will ye give me? Anything you like. The Lord of life and glory sold at the buyer's own price. What will ye give me?" And another very prettily puts it, "What could they give him? What did the man want? He did not want food and raiment; he fared as well as his Master and the other disciples; he had enough; he had all that his needs could crave, and yet he said, What will ye give me? What will ye give me? What will ye give ne?" Alas! some people's religion is grounded on that one question—"What will you give me?" Yes, they would go to church if there are any charities given away there, but if there were more to be got by not going they would do that. "What will you give me?" Some of these people are not even so wise as Judas. Ah! there is a man over yonder who would sell the Lord for a crown, much more for ten pounds, as Judas did! Why, there are some who will sell Christ for the smallest piece of silver in our currency. They are tempted to deny their Lord, tempted to act in an unhallowed way, though the gains are so paltry that a year's worth of them would not come to much. No subject could be more dreadful than this, if we really would but look at it carefully. This temptation happeneth to each of us. Do not deny it. We all like to gain; it is but natural that we should; the propensity to acquire is in every mind, and under lawful restrictions it is not an improper propensity; but when it comes into conflict with our allegiance to our Master, and in a world like this it often will, we must overcome it or perish. There will arise occasions with some of you many times in a week in which it is "God—or gain;" "Christ, or the thirty pieces of silver;" and therefore I am the more urgent in pressing this on you. Do not, though the world should bid its highest, though it should heap its comforts upon one another, and add fame, and honour, and respect, do not, I pray you, forsake your Master. There have been such cases; cases of persons who used to come here, but they found they did not get on, because Sunday was the best day's trade in the week; they had some good feelings, some good impressions once, but they have lost them now. We have known others who have said, "Well, you see, I did once think I loved the Lord, but my business went so badly when I came up to the house of God, that I left it; I renounced my profession." Ah, Judas! ah, Judas! ah, Judas! let me call thee by thy name, for such thou art! This is the sin of the apostate over again; God help thee to repent of it, and go, not to any priest, but to Christ and make confession, if haply thou mayest be saved. You perceive that in the act of selling Christ, Judas was faithful to his master. "Faithful to his master?" you say. Yes, his master was the devil, and having made an agreement with him he carried it out honestly. Some people are always very honest with the devil. If they say they will do a wrong thing they say they ought to do it because *they said* they would; as if any oath could be binding on a man if it be an oath to do wrong? "I will never go into that house again," some have said, and they have said afterwards, "Well, I wish I had not said it." Was it a wrong thing? What is your oath then? It was an oath given to the devil. What was that foolish promise but a promise to Satan, and will you be faithful to him? Ah! would God that you were faithful to Christ! Would that any of us were as true to Christ as Satan's servants are to their master!

Judas betrayed his Master with a kiss. That is how most apostates do it; it is always with a kiss. Did you ever read an infidel book in your life which did not begin with profound respect for truth? I never have. Even modern ones, when bishops write them, always begin like that. They betray the Son of man with a kiss. Did you ever read a bank of bitter controversy which did not begin with such a sickly lot of humility, such sugar, such butter, such treacle, such everything sweet and soft, that you said, "Ah! there is sure to be something bad here, for when people begin so softly and

sweetly, so humbly and so smoothly, depend upon it they have rank hatred in their hearts." The most devout looking people are often the most hypocritical in the world.

We conclude with the repentance of Judas. He did repent; he did repent, but it was the repentance that worketh death. He did make a confession, but there was no respect to the deed itself, but only to its consequences. He was very sorry that Christ was condemned. Some latent love that he had once had to a kind Master, came up when he saw that he was condemned. He did not think, perhaps, it would come to that; he may have had a hope that he would escape out of their hands, and then he would keep his thirty pieces of silver and perhaps sell him over again. Perhaps he thought that he would rid himself from their hands by some miraculous display of power, or would proclaim the kingdom, and so he himself would only be hastening on that very blessed consummation. Friends, the man who repents of consequences does not repent. The ruffian repents of the gallows but not of the murder, and that is no repentance at all. Human law of course must measure sin by consequences, but God's law does not. There is a pointsman on a railway who neglects his duty; there is a collision on the line, and people are killed; well, it is manslaughter to this man through his carelessness. But that pointsman, perhaps, many times before had neglected his duty, but no accident came of it, and then he walked home and said, "Well, I have done no wrong." Now the wrong, mark you, is never to be measured by the accident, but by the thing itself, and if you have committed an offense and you have escaped undetected it is just as vile in God's eye; if you have done wrong and Providence has prevented the natural result of the wrong, the honor of that is with God, but you are as guilty as if your sin had been carried out to its fullest consequences, and the whole world set ablaze. Never measure sin by consequences, but repent of them as they are in themselves.

Though being sorry for consequences, since these are unalterable, this man was led to remorse. He sought a tree, adjusted the rope, and hanged himself, but in his haste he hanged himself so badly that the rope broke, he fell over a precipice, and there we read his bowels gushed out; he lay a mangled mass at the bottom of the cliff, the horror of every one who passed. Now you that make a gain of godliness—if there be such here—you may not come to a suicide's end, but take the lesson home. Mr. Keach, my venerable predecessor, gives at the end of one of his volumes of sermons, the death of a Mr. John Child. John Child had been a Dissenting minister, and for the sake of gain, to get a living, he joined the Episcopalians against his conscience; he sprinkled infants; and practiced all the other paraphernalia of the Church against his conscience. At last, at last, he was arrested with such terrors for having done what he had, that he renounced his living, took to a sick bed, and his dying oaths, and blasphemies, and curses, were something so dreadful, that his case was the wonder of that age. Mr. Keach wrote a full account of it, and many went to try what they could do to comfort the man, but he would say, "Get ye hence; get ye hence; it is of no use; I have sold Christ." You know, also, the wonderful death of Francis Spira. In all literature, there is nothing so awful as the death of Spira. The man had known the truth; he stood well among reformers; he was an honored, and to a certain extent apparently a faithful man; but he went back to the Church of Rome; he apostatized; and then when conscience was aroused he did not fly to Christ, but he looked at the consequences instead of at the sin, and so, feeling that the consequences could not be altered, he forget that the sin might be pardoned, and perished in agonies extreme. May it never be the unhappy lot of any of us to stand by such a death-bed; but the Lord have mercy upon us now, and make us search our hearts. Those of you who say, "We do not want that sermon," are probably the persons who need it most. He who shall say, "Well, we have no Judas amongst us," is probably a

Judas himself. Oh! search yourselves; turn out every cranny; look in every corner of your soul, to see whether your religion be for Christ's sake, and for truth's sake, and for God's sake, or whether it be a profession which you take up because it is a respectable thing, a profession which you keep up because it keeps you up. The Lord search us and try us, and bring us to know our ways.

And now, in conclusion—there is a Savior, and that Savior is willing to receive us now. If I am not a saint, yet I am a sinner. Would it not be best for all of us to go again to the fountain, and wash and be clean. Let each of us go anew, and say, "Master, thou knowest what I am; I know not myself; but, if I be wrong, make me right; if I be right, keep me so. My trust is in thee. Keep me now, for thine own sake, Jesus." Amen.

The Greatest Trial on Record

A Sermon

(No. 495)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, February 22nd, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed.”—Psalm 2:2.

AFTER OUR LORD HAD been betrayed by the false-hearted Judas, he was bound by the officers who had come to take him; no doubt the cords were drawn as tight, and twisted as mercilessly as possible. If we believe the traditions of the fathers, these cords cut through the flesh even to the very bones, so that all the way from the garden to the house of Annas, his blood left a crimson trail. Our Redeemer was hurried along the road which crosses the brook Kedron. A second time he was made like unto David, who passed over that brook, weeping as he went; and perhaps it was on this occasion that he drank of that foul brook by the way. The brook Redron, you know, was that into which all the filth of the sacrifices of the temple was cast, and Christ, as though he were a foul and filthy thing, must be led to the black stream. He was led into Jerusalem by the sheep-gate, the gate through which the lambs of the Passover and the sheep for sacrifice were always driven. Little did they understand, that in so doing they were again following out to the very letter the significant types which God had ordained in the law of Moses. They led, I say, this Lamb of God through the sheep-gate, and they hastened him on to the house of Annas, the ex-high priest, who, either from his relationship to Caiaphas, from his natural ability, or his prominence in opposing the Savior, stood high in the opinion of the rulers. Here they made a temporary call, to gratify the bloodthirsty Annas with the sight of his victim; and then, hastening on, they brought him to the house of Caiaphas, some little distance off; where, though it was but a little past the dead of night, many members of the Sanhedrim were assembled. In a very short time, no doubt informed by some speedy messenger, all the rest of the elders came together, and sat down with great delight to the malicious work. Let us follow our Lord Jesus Christ, not, like Peter, afar off, but, like John, let us go in with Jesus into the high priest's house, and when we have tarried awhile there, and have seen our Savior despitefully used, let us traverse the streets with him, till we come to the hall of Pilate, and then to the palace of Herod, and then afterwards to the place called “the pavement,” where Christ is subjected to an ignominious competition with Barabbas, the murderer, and where we hear the howling of the people, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

Brethren, as the Lord gave commandment concerning even the ashes and offal of the sacrifices, we ought to think no matter trivial which stands in connection with our great burnt offering. My admonition is, “Gather up the fragments which remain, that nothing be lost.” As goldsmiths sweep their shops, to save even the filings of the gold, so every word of Jesus should be treasured up as very precious. But, indeed, the narrative to which I invite you is not unimportant. Things which were purposed of old, prophesied by seers, witnessed by apostles, written by evangelists, and published by the ambassadors of God, are not matters of secondary interest, but deserve our solemn

and devout attention. Let all our hearts be awed as we follow the King of kings in his pathway of shame and suffering.

I. Come we, then, to the hall of Caiaphas. After the mob had dragged our Lord from the house of Annas, they reached the palace of Caiaphas, and there *a brief interval* occurred before the High Priest came forth to question the prisoner. How were those sad minutes spent? Was the poor victim allowed a little pause to collect his thoughts, that he might face his accusers calmly? Far from it; Luke shall tell the pitiful story: "And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee? And many other things blasphemously spake they against him." The officers were pausing until the chairman of the court should please to have an interview with the prisoner, and instead of suffering the accused to take a little rest before a trial so important, upon which his life and character depended, they spend all the time in venting their bitter malice upon him. Observe how they insult his claim to the Messiahship! In effect, they mock him thus: "Thou claimest to be a prophet like unto Moses; thou knowest things to come; if thou be sent of God, prove it by discovering thy foes; we will put thee on thy trial, and test thee, O thou man of Nazareth." They bind his eyes, and then, smiting him one after another, they bid him exercise his prophetic gift, for their amusement, and prophecy who it was that smote him. Oh, shameful question! How gracious was the silence, for an answer might have withered them for ever. The day *shall* come when all that smite Christ, shall find that he *has* seen them, though they thought his eyes were blinded. The day shall come, blasphemer, worldling, careless man, when everything that you have done against Christ's cause and Christ's people, shall be published before the eyes of men and angels, and Christ shall *answer* your question, and shall tell you who it is that smote him. I speak to some this morning who have forgotten that Christ sees them; and they have ill-treated his people; they have spoken ill of his holy cause, saying, "How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" I tell you, the Judge of men shall ere long, point you out, and make you, to your shame and confusion of face, confess that you smote the Savior when you smote his Church.

This preliminary mockery being over, *Caiaphas, the high priest came in*; he began at once to interrogate the Lord before the public trial doubtless with the view of catching him in his speech. The high priest asked him first of his *disciples*. We do not know what questions he asked; perhaps they were something like these: "What meanest thou, to allow a rabble to follow thee wherever thou goest? Who art thou, that thou shouldst have twelve persons always attending thee and calling thee Master? Dost thou intend to make these the leaders of a band of men? Are these to be thy lieutenants, to raise a host on thy behalf? Or dost thou pretend to be a prophet, and are these the sons of the prophets who follow thee, as Elisha did Elias? Moreover, where are they? Where are thy gallant followers? If thou art a good man, why are they not here to bear witness to thee? Where are they gone? Are they not ashamed of their folly, now that thy promises of honor all end in shame?" The high priest "asked him of his disciples." Our Lord Jesus on this point said not a syllable. Why this silence? Because it is not for our Advocate to accuse his disciples. He might have answered, "Well dost thou ask, 'Where are they?' the cowards forsook me; when one proved a traitor, the rest took to their heels. Thou sayest, 'Where are my disciples?' *there is one yonder*, sitting by the fire, warming his hands, the same who just now denied me with an oath." But no, he would not utter a word of accusation; he whose lips are mighty to intercede for his people, will never speak against them. Let Satan slander, but Christ pleads. The accuser of the brethren is the prince of this world: the Prince of peace is ever our Advocate before the eternal throne.

The high priest next shifted his ground, and asked him concerning *his doctrine*—what it was that he taught—whether what he taught was not in contradiction to the original teachings of their great law-giver Moses—and whether he had not railed at the Pharisees, reviled the Scribes, and exposed the rulers. The Master gave a noble answer. Truth is never shamefaced; he boldly points to his public life as his best answer. “I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold they know what I said.” No sophistries—no attempt at evasion—the best armor for truth is her own naked breast. He had preached in the market-places, on the mountain’s brow, and in the temple courts; nothing had been done in a corner. Happy is the man who can make so noble a defense. Where is the joint in such harness? Where can the arrow pierce the man arrayed in so complete a panoply? Little did that arch-knave Caiaphas gain by his crafty questioning. For the rest of the questioning, our Lord Jesus said not a word in self-defense; he knew that it availed not for a lamb to plead with wolves; he was well aware that whatever he said would be misconstrued and made a fresh source of accusation, and he willed, moreover, to fulfill the prophecy, “He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” But what power he exerted in thus remaining silent! Perhaps nothing displays more fully the omnipotence of Christ, than this power of self-control. Control the Deity? What power less than divine can attempt the task? Behold, my brethren, the Son of God does more than rule the winds and commend the waves, he restrains *himself*. And when a word, a whisper, would have refuted his foes, and swept them to their eternal destruction, he “openeth not his mouth.” He who opened his mouth for his enemies, will not utter a word for himself. If ever silence were more than golden, it is this deep silence under infinite provocation.

During this preliminary examination, our Lord suffered an outrage which needs a passing notice. When he had said, “Ask them that hear me,” some over-officious person in the crowd struck him in the face. The margin in John 18:22, very properly corrects our version, and renders the passage, “with a rod.” Now, considering that our blessed Lord suffered so much, this one little particular might seem unimportant, only it happens to be the subject of prophecy in the book of Micah 5:1, “They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek.” This smiting while under trial is peculiarly atrocious. To strike a man while he is pleading in his own defense, would surely be a violation of the laws even of barbarians. It brought Paul’s blood into his face, and made him lose his balance when the high priest ordered them to smite him on the mouth. I think I hear his words of burning indignation: “God shall smite thee, thou whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?” How soon the servant loses his temper: how far more glorious the meekness of the Master. What a contrast do these gentle words afford us—“If I have spoken evil bear witness to the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?” This was such a concentrated infamy, to strike a man while pleading for his life, that it well deserved the notice both of evangelist and prophet.

But now *the Court are all sitting*; the members of the great Sanhedrim are all in their various places, and Christ is brought forth for the public trial before the highest ecclesiastical court; though it is, mark you, a foregone conclusion, that by hook or by crook they will find him guilty. They scour the neighborhood for witnesses. There were fellows to be found in Jerusalem, like those who in the olden times frequented the Old Bailey, “straw witnesses,” who were ready to be bought on either side; and, provided they were well paid, would swear to anything. But for all this, though

the witnesses were ready to perjure themselves, they could not agree one with another; being heard separately, their tales did not tally. At last two came, with some degree of similarity in their witness; they were both liars, but for once the two liars had struck the same note. They declared that he said "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands," Mark 14:58. Now here was, first, misquotation. He never said, "I will destroy the temple," his words were, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." See how they add to his words and twist them to their own ends. Then again, they not only misquoted the words, but they misrepresented the sense, wilfully, because he spake concerning the temple of his body, and not the literal temple in which they worshipped; and this they must have known. He said, "Destroy *this* temple"—and the accompanying action might have showed them that he meant his own body, which was raised by his glorious resurrection after destruction upon the cross. Let us add, that even when thus misrepresented, the witness was not sufficient as the foundation of a capital charge. Surely there could be nothing worthy of death in a man's saying, "Destroy this temple, and I will build it in three days." A person might make use of those words a thousand times over—he might be very foolish, but he would not be guilty of death for such an offense. But where men have made up their minds to hate Christ, they will hate him without a cause. Oh! ye that are adversaries of Christ—and there are some such here to-day—I know ye try to invent some excuse for your opposition to his holy religion; ye forge a hundred falsehoods; but ye know that your witness is not true, and your trial in conscience through which you pass the Savior, is but a mock one. Oh that ye were wise, and would understand him to be what he is, and submit yourselves to him now.

Finding that their witness, even when tortured to the highest degree, was not strong enough, *the high priest*, to get matter of accusation, *adjured him* by the Most High God to answer whether he was the Christ, "the Son of the Blessed." Being thus adjured, our Master would not set us an example of cowardice; he spake to purpose; he said, "*I am*," Mark 14:62, and then, to show how fully he knew this to be true, he added, "ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." I cannot understand what Unitarians do with this incident. Christ was put to death on a charge of blasphemy, for having declared himself to be the Son of God. Was not that the time when any sensible person would have denied the accusation? If he had not really claimed to be the Son of God, would he not *now* have spoken? Would he not now, once for all, have delivered our minds from the mistake under which we are laboring, if, indeed, it be a mistake, that he is the Son of God? But no, he seals it with his blood; he bears open testimony before the herd of his accusers. "I am." *I am* the Son of God, and *I am* the sent-one of the Most High. Now, now the thing is done. They want no further evidence. The judge, forgetting the impartiality which becomes his station, pretends to be wonderfully struck with horror, rends his garments, turns round to ask his co-assessors whether they need any further witness, and they, all too ready, hold up their hands in token of unanimity, and he is at once condemned to die. Ah! brethren, and no sooner condemned, than the high priest, stepping down from his divan, spits in his face, and then the Sanhedrim follow, and smite him on his cheek; and then they turn him down to the rabble that had gathered in the court, and they buffet him from one to the other, and spit upon his blessed cheeks, and smite him, and then they play the old game again, which they had learned so well before the trial came on; they blindfold him for a second time, place him in the chair, and as they smite him with their fists they cry. "Prophet! Prophet! Prophet! who is it that smote thee? Prophecy unto us!" And thus the Savior passed a second time through that most brutal and

ignominious treatment. If we had tears, if we had sympathies, if we had hearts, we should prepare to shed those tears, to awake those sympathies, and break those hearts, *now*. O thou Lord of life and glory! how shamefully wast thou illtreated by those who pretended to be the curators of holy truth, the conservators of integrity, and the teachers of the law!

Having thus sketched the trial as briefly as I could, let me just say, that, throughout the whole of this trial before the ecclesiastical tribunal, it is manifest that they did all they could to pour contempt upon his two claims—to Deity and to Messiahship. Now, friends, this morning—this morning, as truly as on that eventful occasion—you and I must range ourselves on one of two sides. Either this day we must cheerfully acknowledge his Godhead, and accept him also as the Messiah, the Savior promised of old to us; or else we must take our post with those who are the adversaries of God and of his Christ. Will you ask yourself the question, on which side will you now stand? I pray you, do not think that Christ's Deity needs any further proof than that which this one court gives. My dear friends, there is no religion under heaven, no false religion, which would have dared to hazard such a statement, as that yonder man who was spit upon and buffeted was none other than incarnate God. No false religion would venture to draw upon the credulity of its followers to that extent. What! that man there who speaks not a word, who is mocked, despised, rejected, made nothing of—what! he “very God of very God?” You do not find Mohammed, nor any false prophet, asking any person to believe a doctrine so extraordinary. They know too well that there is a limit even to human faith; and they have not ventured upon such a marvellous assertion as this, that yonder despised man is none other than the upholder of all things. No false religion would have taught a truth so humbling to him who is its founder and Lord. Besides, it is not in the power of any man-made religion to have conceived such a thought. That Deity should willingly submit to be spit upon to redeem those whose mouths vented the spittle! In what book do you read such a wonder as this? We have pictures drawn from imagination; we have been enchanted along romantic pages, and we have marvelled at the creative flights of human genius; but where did you ever read such a thought as this? “God was made flesh and dwelt among us”—he was despised, scourged, mocked, treated as though he were the offscouring of all things, brutally treated, worse than a dog, and all out of pure love to his enemies. Why, the thought is such a great one, so God-like, the compassion in it is so divine, that it *must* be true. None but God could have thought of such a thing as this stoop from the highest throne in glory to the cross of deepest shame and woe. And do you think that if the doctrine of the cross were not true, such effects would follow from it? Would those South Sea Islands, once red with the blood of cannibalism, be now the abode of sacred song and peace? Would this island, once itself the place of naked savages, be what it is, through the influence of the benign gospel of God, if that gospel were a lie? Ah! hallowed mistake, indeed, to produce such peaceful, such blessed, such lasting, such divine results! Ah! he *is* God. The thing is not false. And that he is Messiah, who shall doubt? If God *should* send a prophet, what better prophet could you desire? What character would you seek to have exhibited more completely human and divine? What sort of a Savior would you wish for? What could better satisfy the cravings of conscience? Who could commend himself more fully to the affections of the heart? He must be, we feel at once, as we see him, one alone by himself, with no competitor; he *must* be the Messiah of God.

Come, now, sirs, on which side will you range yourselves? Will you smite him? I put the question—“Who is it that will smite him this day? Who is it that will spit upon him this day?” “I will not,” says one, “but I do not accept nor believe in him.” In *that* you smite him. “I do not hate him,” says another, “but I am not saved by him.” In refusing his love you smite him. Whoever

among you will not trust him with your soul—in *that* you smite him, smite him in the tenderest part: since you impugn his love and power to save. Oh! “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.” That suffering man stands in the room, and place, and stead of every one that will believe on him. Trust him! trust him!—you have then accepted him as your God, as your Messiah. Refuse to trust him!—you have smitten him; and you may think it little to do this to-day; but when he rides upon the clouds of heaven you will see your sin in its true light, and you will shudder to think that ever you could have refused *him* who now reigns “King of kings and Lord of lords.” God help you to accept him, as your God and Christ, to-day!

II. But our time flies too rapidly, and we must hasten with it, and accompany our Savior to another place.

The Romans had taken away from the Jews the power to put a person to death, they sometimes did it still, but they did it, as in the case of Stephen, by popular tumult. Now, in our Savior’s case they could not do this, because there was still a strong feeling in favor of Christ among the people, a feeling so strong, that had they not been bribed by the rulers, they would never have said, “Crucify him! crucify him!” You will remember that the priests and rulers did not arrest him on the feast day, “lest” said they “there be a tumult among the people.” Besides, the Jewish way of putting a person to death, was by stoning: hence, unless there was a sufficient number of persons who hated him, a person would never get put to death at all. That is why the method of putting to death by stoning was chosen, because if a person was generally thought to be innocent, very few persons would stone him; and although he would be somewhat maimed, his life might possibly be spared. They thought, therefore, the Savior might escape as he did at other times, when they took up stones to stone him. Moreover they desired to put him to the death of the accursed; they would confound him with slaves and criminals, and hang him like the Canaanitish kings of old; therefore they hound him away to Pilate. The distance was about a mile. He was bound in the same cruel manner, and was doubtless cut by the cords. He had already suffered most dreadfully; please to remember the bloody sweat of last Sabbath week; then remember that he has already twice been beaten; and he is now hurried along, without any rest or refreshment, just as the morning is breaking, along the streets to the place where Pilate lived, perhaps the tower of Antonia, close to the temple itself; we are not quite sure. He is bound and they hurry him along the road; and here the Romish writers supply a great number of particulars of anguish out of their very fertile imaginations. After they had brought him there a difficulty occurred. These holy people, these very righteous elders, could not come into the company of Pilate, because Pilate, being a Gentile, would defile them; and there was a broad space outside the palace, like a raised platform, this was called “the pavement,” where Pilate was wont to sit on those high days, that he might not touch these blessed Jews. So he came out on the pavement, and they themselves went not into the hall, but remained before “the pavement.” Always notice, that sinners who can swallow camels will strain at gnats, crowds of men who will do great sins are very much afraid of committing some little things which they they think will affect their religion. Notice, that many a man who is a big thief during the week, will ease his conscience by rigid Sabbatarianism when the day comes round. In fact, most hypocrites run for shelter to some close observance of days, ceremonies, and observations, when they have slighted the weightier matters of the law.

Well, Pilate receives him bound. The charge brought against him was not, of course, blasphemy; Pilate would have laughed at that, and declined all interference. They accused him of stirring up

sedition, pretending to be a king, and teaching that it was not right to pay tribute to Caesar. This last charge was a clear and manifest lie. *He* refuse to pay tribute? Did not he send to the fish's mouth to get the money? *He* say that Caesar must not have his due? Did he not tell the Herodians—"Render unto Caesar the things that are Cesar's?" *He* stir up a sedition?—the man that had "not where to lay his head?" *He* pretend to snatch the diadem from Caesar?—*he*, the man who hid himself, when the people would have taken him by force and made him a king? Nothing can be more atrociously false. Pilate examines him, and discovers at once, both from his silence and from his answer, that he is a most extraordinary person; he perceives that the kingdom which he claims is something supernatural; he cannot understand it. He asks him what he came into the world for, the reply puzzles and amazes him, "To bear witness to the truth," says he. Now, that was a thing no Roman understood; for a hundred years before Pilate came, Jugurtha said of the city of Rome, "a city for sale;" bribery, corruption, falsehood, treachery, villany, these were the gods of Rome, and truth had fled the seven hills, the very meaning of the word was scarcely known. So Pilate turned on his heel, and said, "What is truth?" As much as to say, "I am the procurator of this part of the country; all I care for is money." "What's truth?" I do not think he asked the question, "What *is* truth?" as some preach from it, as if he seriously desired to know what it really was, for surely he would have paused for the divine reply and not have gone away from Christ the moment afterwards. He said, "Pshaw; What's truth?" Yet there was something so awful about the prisoner, that his wife's dream, and her message—"See that thou have nothing to do with this just person," all worked upon the superstitious fears of this very weak-minded ruler; so he went back and told the Jews a second time, "I find no fault in him;" and when they said, "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning at Galilee to this place," he caught at that word "Galilee." "Now," he thought, "I will be rid of this man; the people shall have their way, and yet I will not be guilty." "Galilee?" said he; "why, Herod is ruler there; you had better take him to Herod at once." He thus gained two or three points; he made Herod his friend; he hoped to exonerate himself of his crime, and yet please the mob. Away they go to Herod. Oh! I think I see that blessed Lamb of God again hounded through the streets. Did you ever read such a tale? No martyr, even in bloody Mary's time, was ever harried thus as the Savior was. We must not think that his agonies were all confined to the cross; they were endured in those streets—in those innumerable blows, and kicks, and strikings with the fist, that he had to bear. They took him before Herod, and Herod having heard of his miracles, thought to see some wonderful thing, some piece of jugglery, done in his presence; and when Christ refused to speak, and would not plead before "that fox" at all, then Herod treated him with a sneer. "They made nothing of him." Can you picture the scene? Herod, his captains, his lieutenants, all, down to the meanest soldiers, treat the Savior with a broad grin! "A pretty king," they seem to say; "a miserable beggar better! Look at his cheeks, all bruised where they have been smiting him: is that the color of royalty's complexion?" "Look," say they, "he is emaciated, he is covered with blood, as though he had been sweating drops of blood all night. Is *that* the imperial purple?" And so they "made nothing of him," and despised his kingship. And Herod said, "Bring out that costly white robe, you know, if he be a king, let us dress him so," and so the white robe is put on him—not a purple one—that Pilate put on afterwards. He has two robes put on him—the one put on by the Jews, the other by the Gentiles; seeming to be a fit comment on that passage in Solomon's song, where the spouse says, "My beloved is white and ruddy"—white with the gorgeous robe which marked him King of the Jews, and then red with the purple robe which Pilate afterwards cast upon his shoulders, which proved him King of nations too. And so Herod and his men of war,

after treating him as shamefully as they could, looking at him as some madman more fit for Bedlam than elsewhere, sent him back again to Pilate. Oh! can you not follow him? You want no great imagination—as you see them dragging him back again! It is another journey along those streets; another scene of shameful tumult, bitter scorn, and cruel smitings. Why, he dies a hundred deaths, my brethren, it is not one—it is death on death the Savior bears, as he is dragged from tribunal to tribunal.

See, they bring him to Pilate a second time. Pilate again is anxious to save him. He says, “I have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him: no, nor yet Herod; I will therefore release him!” “No, no,” they say; and they clamor greatly. He proposes a cruel alternative, which yet he meant for tender mercy “I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.” He gave him over to his lictors to be scourged. The Roman scourge was, as I have explained before, a most dreadful instrument. It was made of the sinews of oxen, and little sharp pieces of bone, which, you know, cause the most frightful lacerations, if by accident you even run them into your hand; little sharp pieces, splinters of bone, were intertwined every here and there among the sinews; so that every time the lash came down some of these pieces of bone went right into the flesh, and tore off heavy thonglulls, and not only the blood but the very flesh would be rent away. The Savior was tied to the column, and thus beaten. He had been beaten before; but this of the Roman lictor was probably the most severe of his flagellations. After Pilate had beaten him, he gave him up to the soldiers for a short time, that they might complete the mockery, and so be able to witness that Pilate had no idea of the royalty of Jesus, and no complicity in any supposed treason. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on his head, and bowed before him, and spat on him, and put a reed in his hands; they smote the crown of thorns into his temple, they covered him with a purple robe; and then Pilate brought him out, saying, “Behold the man!” I believe he did it out of pity. He thought, “Now I have wounded him and cut him to pieces thus, I will not kill him; that sight will move their hearts.” Oh! that *Ecce Homo* ought to have melted their hearts, if Satan had not made them harder than flints and sterner than steel. But no, they cry, “Crucify him! crucify him!” So Pilate listens to them again, and they change their note, “He hath spoken blasphemy.” This was a wrong charge to bring; for Pilate, having his superstition again aroused, is the more afraid to put him to death; and he comes out again, and says, “I find no fault in him.” What a strong contest between good and evil in that man’s heart! But they cried out again, “If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar’s friend.” They hit the mark this time, and he yields to their clamor. He brings forth a basin of water, and he washes his hands before them all, and he says, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it.” A poor way of escaping! That water could not wash the blood from his hands, though *their* cry did bring the blood on their heads—“His blood be on us and on our children.” When that is done, Pilate takes the last desperate step of sitting down on the pavement in royal state; he condemns Jesus, and bids them take him away. But ere he is taken to execution, the dogs of war shall snap at him again. The Jews no doubt having bribed the soldiers to excessive zeal of scorn, they a second time—(oh! mark this; perhaps ye thought this happened only once. This is the fifth time he has thus been treated)—the soldiers took him back again, and once more they mocked him, once more they spat upon him, and treated him shamefully. So, you see, there was once when he first went to the house of Caiaphas; then after he was condemned there; then Herod and his men of war; then Pilate after the scourging; and then the soldiers, after the ultimate condemnation. See ye not how manifestly “he was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” I do

not know when I ever more heartily wished to be eloquent than I do now. I am talking to my own lips, and saying, "Oh! that these lips had language worthy of the occasion!" I do but faintly sketch the scene. I cannot lay on the glowing colors. Oh, that I could set forth thy grief, thou Man of Sorrows! God the Holy Ghost impress it on your memories and on your souls, and help you pitifully to consider the griefs of your blessed Lord.

I will now leave this point, when I have made this practical application of it. Remember, dear friends, that this day, as truly as on that early morning, a division must be made among us. Either you must this day accept Christ as your King, or else his blood will be on you. I bring my Master out before your eyes, and say to you, "Behold your King." Are you willing to yield obedience to him? He claims first your implicit faith in his merit: will you yield to that? He claims, next, that you will take him to be Lord of your heart, and that, as he shall be Lord within, so he shall be Lord without. Which shall it be? Will you choose him *now*? Does the Holy Spirit in your soul—for without that you never will—does the Holy Spirit say, "Bow the knee, and take him as your king?" Thank God, then. But if not, his blood is on you, to condemn you. *You* crucified him. Pilate, Caiaphas, Herod, the Jews and Romans, all meet in you. *You* scourged him; *you* said, "Let him be crucified." Do not say it was not so. In effect you join their clamours when you refuse him; when you go your way to your farm and to your merchandise, and despise his love and his blood, *you* do spiritually what *they* did literally—you despise the King of kings. Come to the fountain of his blood, and wash and be clean.

III. But we must close with a third remark. Christ really underwent yet a third trial. He was not only tried before the ecclesiastical and civil tribunals, but, he was really tried before the great democratical tribunal, that is, the assembly of the people in the street.

You will say, "How?" Well, the trial was somewhat singular, but yet it was really a trial. Barabbas—a thief, a felon, a murderer, a traitor, had been captured; he was probably one of a band of murderers who were accustomed to come up to Jerusalem at the time of the feast, carrying daggers under their cloaks to stab persons in the crowd, and rob them, and then he would be gone again; besides that, he had tried to stir up sedition, setting himself up possibly as a leader of banditti. Christ was put into competition with this villain; the two were presented before the popular eye, and to the shame of manhood, to the disgrace of Adam's race, let it be remembered that the perfect, loving, tender, sympathizing, disinterested Savior was met with the word, "Crucify him!" and Barabbas, the thief, was preferred. "Well," says one, "that was atrocious." The same thing is put before *you* this morning—the very same thing; and every unregenerate man will make the same choice that the Jews did, and only men renewed by grace will act upon the contrary principle. I say, friend, this day I put before you Christ Jesus, or your sins. The reason why many come not to Christ is because they cannot give up their lusts, their pleasures, their profits. Sin is Barabbas; sin is a thief; it will rob your soul of its life; it will rob God of his glory. Sin is a murderer; it stabbed our father Adam; it slew our purity. Sin is a traitor; it rebels against the king of heaven and earth. If you prefer sin to Christ, Christ has stood at your tribunal, and you have given in your verdict that sin is better than Christ. Where is that man? He comes here every Sunday; and yet he is a drunkard? Where *is* he? You prefer that reeling demon Bacchus to Christ. Where is that man? He comes here. Yes; and where are his midnight haunts? The harlot and the prostitute can tell! You have preferred your own foul, filthy lust to Christ. I know some here that have their consciences open pricked, and yet there is no change in them. You prefer Sunday trading to Christ; you prefer cheating to Christ; you prefer the theater to Christ; you prefer the harlot to Christ; you prefer the devil himself

to Christ, for he it is that is the father and author of these things. “No,” says one, “I don’t, I don’t.” Then I do again put this question, and I put it very pointedly to you—“If you do not prefer your sins to Christ, how is it that you are not a Christian?” I believe this is the main stumbling-stone, that “Men love darkness rather than light, *because* their deeds are evil.” We come not to Christ because of the viciousness of our nature, and depravity of our heart; and this *is* the depravity of your heart, that you prefer darkness to light, put bitter for sweet, and choose evil as your good. Well, I think I hear one saying, “Oh! I *would* be on Jesus Christ’s side, but I did not look at it in that light; I thought the question was. “Would *he* be on my side? I am such a poor guilty sinner that I would fain stand anywhere, if Jesu’s blood would wash me.” Sinner! sinner! if thou talkest like that, then I will meet thee right joyously. Never was a man one with Christ till Christ was one with him. If you feel that you can now stand with Christ, and say, “Yes, despised and rejected, he is nevertheless my God, my Savior, my king. Will he accept me? Why, soul, he has accepted you; he has renewed you, or else you would not talk so. You speak like a saved man. You may not have the comfort of salvation, but surely there is a work of grace in your heart, God’s divine election has fallen upon you, and Christ’s precious redemption has been made for you, or else you would not talk so. You cannot be willing to come to Christ, and yet Christ reject you. God forbid we should suppose the possibility of any sinner crying after the Savior, and the Savior saying, “No, I will not have you.” Blessed be his name, “Him that cometh to me,” he says, “I will in no wise cast out.” “Well,” says one, “then I would have him to-day. How can I do it?” There is nothing asked of thee but this. Trust him! trust him! Believe that God put him in the stead of men; believe that what he suffered was accepted by God instead of their punishment; believe that this great equivalent for punishment can save *you*. Trust him; throw yourself on *him*; as a man commits himself to the waters, so do you; sink or swim! You will never sink, you will never sink; for “he that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ hath everlasting life, and shall never come into condemnation.”

May these faint words upon so thrilling a subject bless your souls, and unto God be glory, for ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

The New Song

A Sermon

(No. 496)

Delivered on Sunday Evening, December 28th, 1862, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.”—Psalm 98:1.

THERE MUST BE NEW SONGS on new occasions of triumph. It would have been absurd for Miriam with her timbrel to conduct the music of the daughters of Israel to some old sonnet that they had learned in Egypt. Nay, an old song could not have spoken out the feelings of that generation, much less could it have served to utter a voice, the jubilant notes of which distant posterity should echo. They must have a new song while they cry the one unto the other, “Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.” The like had never been known before, but henceforth father to son must show forth its fame. In after times, when Deborah and Barak had routed the hosts of Sisera, they did not borrow Miriam’s song; but they had a new psalm for the new event. They said, “Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.” In after years, at the building of the temple, or on the solemn feast days, it was ever the wont of the inspired poets of the age to cry, “O come, let us sing unto the Lord a new song.” Thus the grateful notes of praise have gathered volume and augmented their compass as the ages have rolled onwards; and these as it were only the rehearsals for a grand oratorio. What then, shall be the marvellous novelty and the matchless glory of that song which shall be sung at the last upon Mount Zion, when ten thousand times ten thousand of the warriors of God shall surround Jesus the conqueror, when we shall hear a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and like great thunders, when shall be heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps; what shall be, I say, the strange novelty of that new song which they shall sing before the throne, when the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures shall fall before God upon their faces, and worship him for ever and ever? Would that our ears could anticipate that tremendous burst of “Hallelujah! hallelujah! hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.”

I want to carry your minds, if I can, to-night, for a little season to that last and grandest, because the decisive victory, which shall tell out the name and fame of Jehovah in all his mighty attributes, and in all his majestic deeds, when the battle shall be over for ever, and the banner shall be furled and the sword shall be sheathed, because the last foe shall be destroyed, and placed beneath the feet of the Almighty victor; “His right hand, and his holy arm, hath him the victory.” My text seems, however suitable it may be to other occasions, to be most fitting to that last and most splendid triumph.

Three things there are in it: *victory transcendent; Deity conspicuous; holiness glorified.*

I. First in our text we perceive very clearly VICTORY TRANSCENDENT.

What shall we say of that victory? The shouts thereof already greet our ears, and the anthem that celebrates it is already prepared, when all the principalities and powers of this world shall be

laid low, the pride of earth shall burst like a bubble, the great globe itself shall dissolve, and the things that are seen shall be folded up like a vesture, worn out, and crumbled with decay, that victory will be transcendent; there shall be none comparable to it; it shall stand matchless and unrivalled in all the wars of God, of angels, or men.

Well, we must say of that victory, *there shall be none to dispute the claim of God the Most High*. The most splendid victories of one army have frequently been claimed by the opposite partisans. If you stand beneath the triumphal arch in Paris, you will see the names of some battles which you simple-minded Englishmen always thought had been won by British soldiers; but you discover that our history was all a mistake, and that the Frenchmen really retired victorious from the plain. I suppose in America it is always difficult to ascertain who has been the conqueror; and where there are no generals, and the whole affair seems to be which shall kill the most and wade through the most blood, there naturally must be difficulty in ascertaining who has won the day. But in this case there shall be no dispute whatever. The dragon's head shall be so completely broken, that he can do nothing but bite his iron bonds and growl out his confession that God is stronger than he. The hosts of hell shall have been so utterly routed, that the deep groans of dismay and shrieks of terror shall be the confession that Omnipotence rules their terrible doom. As for Death, when he shall see his captives all loosed before his eyes; as for the grave, when the key shall be rent from her grip, and all her treasures plucked from her grasp—death and the grave shall both acknowledge that their victory is gone for ever; Christ has been the conqueror, the Son of God who in our nature has already taken away the sting. There may be to-day some who write their names down as Atheists; there may be others who openly avow that they are the adversaries of God; and throughout the universe there are never wanting those who are hopeful that the issue will turn out as they wish—they are hopeful that wrong will master right; that evil shall drive out good, and darkness extinguish light. But there shall not be one such being left on that great day of victory; it shall be acknowledged even by the lip of despair that the Lord God, “with his own right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.” Blazoned across the sky in lightnings such as the eye of terror has never beheld before; thundered out with trumpet louder than even that which startled the sleeping dead, every tongue in earth and hell shall confess, because every ear hath heard, that the Lord reigneth, and is king for ever and ever.

But further, as this victory will be certainly beyond all dispute, let me remind you it will be transcendent, because *there shall be nothing that can occur to mar it*. When the last shock of the dread artillery shall have been endured by the hosts of God's elect; when the last charge shall have driven the foes before them as thin clouds fly before a Biscay gale; then, as the heroes sit down to read the story of the war, they shall discover that there is nothing to mar the splendor of that glory, for it has been a victory throughout. Of all other victories we read, at one time the balance trembled—sometimes the host on this side wavered; perhaps for the first half day it seemed not only doubtful which would win, but it appeared as though the adversary at length defeated would certainly be the conqueror. But, beloved, when we shall read history in the light of heaven, we shall discover that God was never conquered—that never did the ranks reel; we shall see that even the most disastrous strokes of Providence, even the most dire calamities that ever occurred to the Church, were only the on-march, the tramp of victories yet to come. I am certain that those things we most deplore to-day will even become the subjects of the most marvellous gratitude to-morrow. We look to-day upon the black side of the question, and say, “Ah! here, indeed, goodness was foiled;” but when we look at the whole matter through, we shall see that every dark and bending

line meets in the center of the divine plan, and that which seemed the most incongruous and out of place with its fellow, was the most fitting and the most necessary of the whole programme. Satan at the last shall not be able to put his finger upon any spot of the battle-field and say, "Here my hosts routed the troops of Emmanuel." Everywhere it shall be seen that, from the dawning day, when first he struck the blow at Eve and made her sin, to the very last, when Christ shall drag him up the everlasting hills, led captive at his chariot wheels, from the first to the last, the Lord's "right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

Remember, too, that *this is a victory all along the line*. The general's cautious eye marks that there the left wing has driven the adversary back, but for that right wing bring up the reserves, let not the ranks be broken. Stern liners, let your chivalry be seen yonder for that wing reels. Generally in the battle some part must fail, while in this portion or the other there shall be success. Ah! but at the last when Christ shall stand, and bare his brow in heaven's sunlight, and all his angels shall be with him, it shall be seen that they were everywhere triumphant. The blood on Madagascar's rocks shall not defeat the on-march of God's armies. Saints may be burned, may be sawn in sunder, may wander about in sheep skins and goat skins, but they shall be victorious everywhere. Spain may shut her gates against the gospel, and the inquisition may make that place its stronghold, but as sure as there is a God in heaven, Christ shall be conqueror there. Tyrants may pass edicts to exterminate Christians, conclaves may make decrees to drive out the religion of Jesus, but in every place, in every land, where ever foot of man has trodden this green earth, shall there be victory; from the north to the south, from the east to the west, everywhere shall be triumph—China and Japan, Brazil and Chili, the islands of the south, the frozen regions of the north, even Africa with her sable sons, the dwellers in the wilderness shall bow before him and lick the dust at his feet. There shall be victory all along the line. Not from one place merely, but from all, shall be heard the tune—"His own right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

And it shall be *a victory Sustained by the news of the morrow*. Not so among the embattled hosts of men. How hard to brook the morrow! Then the general's brow is dark, and his eye is heavy, for the list of the dead and wounded is brought in for inspection. "Another victory like this," says one, "and I am defeated for ever. It is dearly purchased," saith he, "with the blood of these mothers' sons. My comrades and companions in arms must bite the ground to let the country live." But in that last great battle of God the muster-roll shall be found without one missing in it; as they call their names they shall all answer, there shall not be one left dead upon the field. "How so? How so?" saith unbelief, "are they not dead and buried now? Have not their bodies lain to bleach upon the side of the Alps? Have they not been burned in the fire and scattered as ashes to the four winds? Do not the saints sleep to-day in our cemeteries, and in our grave-yards, and doth not the deep engulf full many a body that was a temple of the Holy Ghost?" I answer, yes, but they shall come again. Refrain thine eyes from weeping, O daughter of Jerusalem; refrain thine heart from sorrow, for they shall come again from the land of their captivity. We that are alive and remain shall not have the preference beyond them that sleep, "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed; so when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." "His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

And sometimes, on the morrow, the general feels the glory of the victory is marred, for there are many prisoners; they are not dead, their corpses lie not on the field, but they have been taken off by the opposite parties, and they are a prey; and who knoweth what may become of them; what

dungeons may contain them; to what tortures they may be put. But in this last victory of God, *there shall be no prisoners*, no prisoners left in the hand of his enemy. I know there are some who say that we may be children of God, and yet fall from grace and perish. My brethren, it is a foul slander upon the faithfulness and power of the Redeemer. I know that all he undertakes to save he will save, and he will bring the troops off from the battle field, every brow crowned with laurel, not one slain, not one a prisoner; the gates of hell shall never enclose the ransomed of the Lord; amongst the groans of the lost there shall never be heard a sigh from one that was once a saint before God. There are no prisoners. March out your prisoners, Prince of Hell, bring forth, if you can, one soul that Jesus bought with blood, one soul that the Spirit quickened, one soul that the Eternal Father gave to the hands of the Great Surety to keep for ever—bring him forth. Ah! ye have none. “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?” Thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, “My ransomed shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads;” then shall it be said, “His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.”

But, beloved, after the battle is over, the conqueror wipes his brow and says, “Ah, but the scattered hosts may rally, and they who were driven to-day like chaff before the wind, may rise again, and long may be the campaign, and fierce the struggle, before we have stamped out the sparks of war. “Sleep on your arms,” saith he, “you may be attacked to-morrow, be ready for the cry of ‘boot and saddle,’ for there may be a charge again ere many hours are spent.” But not so in this case: the victory is crushing, total, final; it is once for ever with evil, with darkness, with hell; they shall never again be able to tempt the righteous, or to cast them down, or to pale their cheeks with fear; they shall never be able again to win the world to their dominion, they are routed, routed, routed for ever. Hosts of evil, it is not your heel that is bruised—your head is broken; the Lord hath used his people as his battle-axe and his weapons of war, and he hath cleft ye and left ye without might or strength for ever and for ever. So, dear friends, this is our joy and comfort, that once the battle over, the whole campaign is ended; there shall be no further onslaughts; we rest eternally; we triumph everlastingly; no more fights to risk, no more conflicts in which to tug and strive. This shall be the note that shall ring throughout the arches of eternity—“The Lord’s right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory for ever and for ever.”

I think these are two good reasons why I should say this victory is transcendent—there is none to dispute it, and there is nothing to mar it.

But yet further we will venture to enlarge upon this victory by shewing its particulars. The ultimate triumph and victory of God in all his purposes will lie in several things. How glorious the fact that *all whom he ordained to save are saved!* Calling was the first work which he wrought in them; they were called every one of them, but like the rest of mankind they would not come; their wills were so desperate that they resisted long; the minister preached at them; their mother wept over them; their father entreated them; providence came and hewed them; afflictions broke them in pieces, and they were unsaved still; but not in one case where God ordains to call has the calling failed. In every case where his electing love hath set its purpose, the will is turned round, the affections yield, the judgment gives way, the man is subdued—he is called, he is quickened. There may be some such here to-night, who think, “Well, I never would be saved upon such terms as acknowledging the sovereign grace of God, even if he wills to do it.” Thy will must give way before the crushing force of the will of God. He hath mysterious ways of finding an entrance into the most reluctant heart, and taking up his throne there for ever.

How clearly is this victory seen *in the subjugation of the lusts and passions of the called sinner!* He may have been a drunkard, he thought he could not give it up, but the rod of iron “dashes in pieces the potter’s vessel.” He may have loved the pleasures of the flesh, they were dear to him as his right eye, but grace overcame the most darling lust, and threw to the earth the most pampered sin.

Not less conspicuously will it appear in the perseverance of every saint. Not a stone will have been left unturned by the adversary to prevent the saints holding on; the caverns of hell will be emptied against God’s redeemed; Satan and his myrmidons will do their utmost to cast them down to destruction, but they shall hold on their way, they shall wax stronger and stronger, and when at last the gates of heaven shall be fast closed, because there are no more to enter, it shall be proclaimed, while devils bite their iron bands in shame, that not a soul who was written in the Book of Life was lost, not one whom Jesus bought with blood has been unredeemed, not one quickened by grace suffered to die, not one who truly began the heavenly race turned aside from it, not one concerning whom it was said, “These are mine, and in the day when I make up my jewels they shall be mine;” not one of these is lost, but all saved, saved eternally. Oh! that will be a splendid victory! What can be greater? You that know the conflict through which the child of God has to pass will bear me witness that if you get to heaven, you will sing with all your might the conqueror’s hymn. And I think we all should do the same. I remember saying once that if ever I got to heaven I would sing the loudest there, for I owed the most to sovereign grace. But when I came down stairs, one said to me, “You made a mistake, I shall sing more loudly than you, for I owe more than you do.” And I found that was the general opinion, that each brother and each sister thought that he owed most to divine grace. Now, if we are all to sing loudest what a shout of triumph there will be! And I suppose the verse in our hymn is quite true to the apprehension of each of us—

“Then loudest of the crowd I’ll sing,
While heaven’s resounding mansions ring
With shouts of sovereign grace.”
What a transcendent triumph!

Not a few shall there be to share the triumph, but *a multitude that no man can number*; for the glory shall be enhanced *by the salvation of so many*. Heaven is none of your narrow places for narrow-hearted bigots. No, brethren, our largest imagination never yet could grasp heaven, but it will hold multitudes of multitudes. Nor will the praise be any the less, when we consider that there were so many of such varied clans and climes, some of all kindreds on the face of the earth, swarthy or white. There shall be found in heaven the vilest sinner that lived, there shall be brought thither the proudest rebel, and the stoutest hearted, and the most obstinate of sinners; there shall be such in heaven as would have made a wonder in hell, some, I say, who would have been such great sinners, had they been suffered to go to hell, that their dreadful fall would even hell itself appal, but they are in heaven, saved by sovereign grace. And, O beloved! as there are such persons, this will help to make the victory grand, that they were saved by such means, such simple means, by the simple preaching of the gospel; not by wisdom, not by science, not by eloquence, but by the simple telling out of the story of the cross. How this will tend to make the triumph brighter than it could have been in any other way.

And, O beloved, this victory will excel all others in *the routing of such foes, such cruel, such crafty, such mighty, such numerous foes*. Sin, sin, it is a name of horror—sin o’erthrown. Death—what glooms are concentrated in that word!—death destroyed. Satan—what craft, what

cruelties, what malice linger there—Satan bound hand and foot, and led captive. Such a victory over such foes. I find no words in any tongue by which I can describe its magnitude. And oh! the results of that victory, how bright! Souls knit to Christ by such love, tongues tuned to such music, hearts burning with such fire, heaven filled with such devout, such holy inhabitants, the ears of Deity regaled with such grateful music, heaven filled with such myriads of happy spirits. The peaceful results, setting aside the overthrow, will be enough to make this victory grander than all the triumphs of men or angels put together.

Say now, and gather up all your enthusiasm to say it—What a victory shall that be, when *there shall not be a single trophy in the hands of the adversary*. The victory shall be unparalleled in this, that all the success which the enemy thought he had achieved shall only tend to make his defeat the more galling, and add lustre to the victorious King of kings. You see sometimes hanging up in old minsters tattered flags, that were taken from the adversary; sometimes when the report of battle comes in, we are told the battle was won, that so many cannon and so many flags were left with the enemy. But, O Lord God! thou hast not left a single trophy in the hands of thy foe. I said he had no prisoners, but he shall not even have a flag, not one truth rent in pieces, not one doctrine of revelation hung up to rot in the minsters of hell; not one single attribute of God that shall be trailed in the mire, not one single truth of Christianity to be laughed at, and despised by fiends, not a trophy; there shall not a hair of your head perish, not so much as that shall Satan gain, not a bone, not a fragment of the saint, either of his body or his spirit—no trophies left. And all this will make hell angry, to think that God gave him vantage-ground, let him contend with poor feeble men; but God was in man, and fought with Satan—man, a poor feeble worm, fought with Satan, and, like David, he threw the stone of faith at the giant's head, and destroyed him with his own weapons. God hath destroyed death by the death of Christ, destroyed sin by the great sin-bearer, yea he has destroyed the dragon by the seed of a woman, who bruised his head with that very seed whose heel the serpent once did bite. Glory be unto thee, O Lord! This is thy victory. The more we muse upon it, the higher doth our rapture rise, and the more prepared do our hearts grow to peal forth the words of the Psalmist, "His right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory."

II. Secondly; observe that DEITY IS CONSPICUOUS HERE.

Man is not made mention of. There is no name of Moses, or of the prophets, or of the apostles here; I read not the names of Chrysostom and Augustine, nor of those modern fathers of the Church, such as Calvin, and Zwingle—the stars are lost in the blaze of the sun. O God! how glorious is thy right arm, and how do thy disciples, thy children, hide their heads and say, "Not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory!" But mark, beloved, as they are not mentioned it is not because the mention need to be avoided, for the more we talk of instrumentalities, or rather think about them—(I do not say the more we think *of* them, but the more we think *about* them)—the more persuaded we shall be that it only adds to God's glory to use men, for men are such poor tools to work with. You have heard of the celebrated painter who gained renown by painting with poor brushes, when the good ones were stolen; and Quintin Matsys, who made a cover for the well without tools, when all the proper tools were taken away; he wrought the ironwork with such poor implements as he could get. So was the skill of the painter or artisan admired in that he could produce such effects under such disadvantageous conditions. Ah! then what an artist must he be! they exclaim concerning the one. And they look upon this piece of ironwork, and say of the other, "What! no graving tools, no casting, how could he do it?" So when we shall come to look at men, when we look at them in the light which eternity shall reveal, we shall say of the best of them, "How can the Lord have won

such victories with such poor things as these!" So that you may mention the instruments every one of them, from righteous Abel down to the last preacher of the Word, and yet it shall be true, that the victory shall speak the sole praise of the General. No doubt, dear friends, this will be a part of the splendor of the triumph to think that he did win by man. It was in man that Satan conquered: Adam and Eve were led astray by the crafty wiles of Satan. It is by man that death came, and by man comes the resurrection of the dead. This will be gall and wormwood in the cup of the lost, when they shall see the *Man* Christ Jesus, the seed of the woman, sitting at the right hand of God. This is judgment's greatest terror, "Hide us from the Lamb;" and this shall be hell's greatest horror, "Hide us from the Lamb; let us not behold his face." But glory be unto thee, most gracious God, for thou hast lifted man up above all the works of thy hands, and given him dominion above all creatures, so that principalities and powers are put beneath his feet in the person of Christ. And all this only proves that "His own right-hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

I wish I might enlarge here and speak of the conspicuous glory of God in this respect, that all the persons of the Trinity will be glorified, the Father, the Son, the Spirit. All the attributes of God, his unsearchable greatness, and his unrivalled majesty, his grace, his power, his truth, his justice, his holiness, his immutability, these shall shine forth with resplendent lustre. His wondrous works and his terrible acts shall declare his praise; they shall be the theme of every tongue, and the topic of every conversation. "Men shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." All his decrees shall be seen in their final accomplishment, every one of them fulfilled, the counsel answering to the providence. Of all that the Father willed, of all that the Son performed, of all that the Spirit revealed, not one thing is frustrated. How shall I gather up these things? O for the voice of a mighty angel! O for a seraph's lip of fire, to speak now of the splendor of that last day, when not only the great but the little, not only the abundance of God's providence, and the great deeps of his counsel, but even the small deeds of his lovingkindness shall be made to sing forth his praise, when not only the leviathan deeds of God shall make the deep to praise the Lord, but even the little fish that move therein, shall leap up to join the chorus, and everywhere from everything, for everything, there shall be heard the tune—"His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."

III. We have in our text a third thought, which we can only hint at. In all this—**HOLINESS WILL BE GLORIFIED.**

Note the adjective,—"*His holy arm.*" When we contemplate any actions of God, you will notice that the name which cherubs utter, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth," is always brought out. Where Christ bears sin, and overcomes it, I hear the cry of "Holy, holy, holy," from the cross. Where Jesus breaks the tomb, and conquers death, I seem to hear the note of "Holy, holy, holy," for it makes the day holy on which the deed was done. And when he ascends to glory, and the Father says, "Well done," we seem to hear still the note, "Holy, holy, holy." In everything, from the manger to the cross, and from the cross onward to the crown, holiness becometh God's house, and all God's acts for ever. Is it not, dear friends, after all the hinge of the struggle? Is not this the point, just as you know in great battles, there is some one mountain or hill, which is the object of struggle, not for the value of that particular hill, but because on that the battle will depend, so holiness is just the point, the rallying point between God and Satan. Here are the two war-cries. The hosts of evil cry, "Sin, sin, sin;" but the cry of the armies of the Lord of hosts is this, "Holiness, holiness, holiness." Every time we strike a blow it is "Holiness;" and every time they attack us it is "Sin." Sin is the real object of their aim. When Satan attacks, it is to stab at holiness, and when

we resist, it is to guard holiness, or to drive back his sin. Mark you, this, I say, is the point of the battle, and by that ye shall be able to judge on which side you are. What is your war-cry? What is your war-cry? When Cromwell fought with the soldiers of the covenant at Dunbar, you will remember they were distinguished by their cries, on the one side, "The Covenant, the Covenant;" and on the other side, "The Lord of hosts, the Lord of hosts." And so to-night there is the cry on either side, "Sin and the pleasures thereof." Is that your war-cry, friend? You say "No,"—how is it then you were at the theater the other night? You say "No,"—how is it then you frequent the tavern? You say "No,"—how is it then you have got so many misgotten gains about you now? You say, "No,"—how is it you make appointments for deeds of sin, and perhaps to-night, or to-morrow night, intend to fulfill them? I tell you, sirs, there are many of you whose war-cry to-night is "Sin, and the pleasures thereof." On the other hand, I trust there are not a few in this vast throng, who can say, "Oh! sir, feebly though I speak it, yet my war" cry is 'Holiness, and the cross'"—that goeth with it, "Holiness, and the cross." Ah! beloved you are just now on the side that is laughed at, the world points at you and says, "There are your saints." Yes, here they are, sir, what dare you say against them? Abide your time, man, and have your jeering out; ye shall change that laugh for everlasting howlings by-and-bye. "There are your Methodists; there are your hypocritical professors." What, sir, dare you say it? The servants of the living God will know how to answer you in that day, when their king shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven, and his glory shall be manifest, and they shall share his triumph, and all flesh shall see it, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Come, we will pass that question again to-night, "What is your war-cry?" There has been a good deal of wickedness these last few days in London. I love to see holy mirth; I delight to see men well feasted. I like Christmas; I wish it came six times a-year. I like the generosity of those who give to the poor. Let it be extended. I would not stop a smile. God forbid me! But cannot men be happy without drunkenness? cannot they be mirthful without blasphemy? Is there no possibility of being happy without lasciviousness? Are there no other ways of finding true pleasure besides selling your soul to the devil? O sirs! I say there have been thousands in this huge city who have been going about the streets, and whose cry has been, "Sin, and the pleasures thereof! Where is the music-hall? Where is the Casino? Where is the Coal Hole? Where is the tavern? Where is the ball-room? Sin, and the pleasures thereof." O Satan! thou hast many soldiers, and right brave soldiers they are, and never are they afraid of thy cause, nor ashamed of thy name nor of thy unholy work. Ay, thou art well served, O prince of hell! and rich will be thy wages when thy drudges earn the fire for which they have labored. But I hope and trust there are some to-night who will change their watch-note. Ye have not nailed your colors to the mast, have you? Even if you have, by God's grace I would pull the nails out. Are ye determined to die? Will you serve the black prince for ever, and perish with him? Jesus Emmanuel, the captain of our salvation, bids me cry to you, "Enlist beneath my banner." Believe in him, trust in him, and live. Oh! trust the merit of the cross, the virtue of the blood, the tears, and the dying groans. This it is to be a Christian, and ever afterwards this shall be your war-note—"Holiness, and the cross thereof!" O take this, all! Fear not. The cross with holiness will bring the mortifying of the flesh, the shame of the world, and the reproach of men. Take both, for now the battle is raging. But, O my brethren, another crush, and another, and another, and another, and we shall gain the top of the hill, and the shout of "Holiness and the cross!" shall be answered by the echoes all round the world, for everywhere holiness shall be victorious, and men shall know the Lord. Ay, and the echoes of

heaven shall answer, too, and the spirits of the sanctified shall cry, “Holiness, and the crown thereof!” Then we will change one word of our watch-note; and as our enemies have broken before us and are utterly destroyed; as they melt away like the fat of rams; as unto smoke they consume away, we will sing for ever, “Holiness, and the crown thereof! holiness, and the crown thereof!” But that shall be only one note: this shall be the song—“His own right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.”

I would that some soul would believe in Jesus to-night, that it might share in the victory. I would that young man’s heart would be given to Christ to-night, or yours yonder. He deserves it of you: if it were only his mercy in having spared you, he deserves it. And thou greyheaded sinner there, does he not deserve thy heart for sparing thee so long? Yield, I pray thee; his love meets thee. Yield; his terrors threaten thee. Yield; lay down thy weapons, and be for ever forgiven. May God help thee to do it. The Lord prove his sovereignty and his power to-night in the conversion of many of his chosen; and unto him shall be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The Procession of Sorrow

A Sermon

(No. 497)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, March 1st, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“And they took Jesus, and led him away.”—John 19:16.

NEXT SATURDAY ALL EYES will be fixed on a great Prince who shall ride through our streets with his Royal Bride. To-day I invite your attention to another Prince, marching in another fashion through his metropolis. London shall see the glory of the one: Jerusalem beheld the shame of the other. Come hither, ye lovers of Immanuel, and I will show you this great sight—the King of sorrow marching to his throne of grief, the cross. I claim for the procession of my Lord an interest superior to the pageant you are now so anxiously expecting. Will your Prince be sumptuously arrayed? Mine is adorned with garments crimsoned with his own blood. Will your Prince be decorated with honors? Behold, my King is not without his crown—alas, a crown of thorns set with ruby drops of blood! Will your thoroughfares be thronged? So were the streets of Jerusalem; for great multitudes followed him. Will ye raise a clamor of tumultuous shouting? Such a greeting had the Lord of glory, but alas, it was not the shout of welcome, but the yell of “Away with him! away with him.” High in the air ye bid your banners wave about the heir of England’s throne, but how shall ye rival the banner of the sacred cross, that day for the first time borne among the sons of men. For the thousands of eyes which shall gaze upon the youthful Prince, I offer the gaze of men and angels. All nations gathered about my Lord, both great and mean men clustered around his person. From the sky the angels viewed him with wonder and amazement; the spirits of the just looked from the windows of heaven upon the scene, yea, the great God and Father watched each movement of his suffering Son. But ye ask me where is the spouse, the king’s daughter fair and beautiful? My Lord is not altogether without his espoused one. The Church, the bride of Christ, was there conformed to the image of her Lord; she was there, I say, in Simon, bearing the cross, and in the women weeping and lamenting. Say not that the comparison is strained, for in a moment I will withdraw it and present the contrast. Grant me only thus much of likeness: we have here a Prince with his bride, bearing his banner, and wearing his royal robes, traversing the streets of his own city, surrounded by a throng who shout aloud, and a multitude who gaze with interest profound. But how vast was the disparity! The most careless eye discerns it. Yonder young Prince is ruddy with the bloom of early youth and health; my Master’s visage is more marred than that of any man. See, it has been blackened with bruises, and stained with the shameful spittle of them that derided him. Your heir of royalty is magnificently drawn along the streets in his stately chariot, sitting at his ease: my princely sufferer walks with weary feet, marking the road with crimson drops; not borne, but bearing; not carried, but carrying his cross. Your Prince is surrounded by a multitude of friends; hark how they joyously welcome him! And well they may; the son of such noble parents deserves a nation’s love. But my Prince is hated without a cause. Hark how their loud voices demand that he should be hastened to execution! How harshly grate the cruel syllables, “Crucify him! crucify him!” Your noble Prince is preparing for his marriage: mine is hastening to his doom. Oh, shame

that men should find so much applause for Princes and none for the King of kings. Yet, dear friends, to some eyes there will be more attraction in the procession of sorrow, of shame, and of blood, than in you display of grandeur and joy. Oh! I pray you, lend your ears to such faint words as I can utter on a subject all too high for me, the march of the world's Maker along the way of his great sorrow; your Redeemer traversing the rugged path of suffering, along which he went with heaving heart and heavy footsteps, that he might pave a royal road of mercy for his enemies.

I. After our Lord Jesus Christ had been formally condemned by Pilate, our text tells us he was led away. I invite your attention to CHRIST AS LED FORTH.

Pilate, as we reminded you, scourged our Savior according to the common custom of Roman courts. The lictors executed their cruel office upon his shoulders with their rods and scourges, until the stripes had reached the full number. Jesus is formally condemned to crucifixion, but before he is led away he is given over to the Praetorian guards that those rough legionaries may insult him. It is said that a German regiment was at that time stationed in Judea, and I should not wonder if they were the lineal ancestors of those German theologians of modern times who have mocked the Savior, tampered with revelation, and cast the vile spittle of their philosophy into the face of truth. The soldiery mocked and insulted him in every way that cruelty and scorn could devise. The platted crown of thorns, the purple robe, the reed with which they smote him, and the spittle with which they disfigured him, all these marked the contempt in which they held the King of the Jews. The reed was no mere rush from the brook, it was of a stouter kind, of which easterns often make walkingstaves, the blows were cruel as well as insulting; and the crown was not of straw but thorn, hence it produced pain as well as pictured scorn. When they had mocked him they pulled off the purple garment he had worn, this rough operation would cause much pain. His wounds unstaunched and raw, fresh bleeding from beneath the lash, would make this scarlet robe adhere to him, and when it was dragged off; his gashes would bleed anew. We do not read that they removed the crown of thorns, and therefore it is most probable, though not absolutely certain, that our Savior wore it along the *Via Dolorosa*, and also bore it upon his head when he was fastened to the cross. Those pictures which represent our Lord as wearing the crown of thorns upon the tree have therefore at least *some* scriptural warrant. They put his own clothes upon him, because they were the perquisites of the executioner, as modern hangmen take the garments of those whom they execute, so did the four soldiers claim a right to his raiment. They put on him his own clothes that the multitudes might discern him to be the same man, the very man who had professed to be the Messiah. We all know that a different dress will often raise a doubt about the identity of an individual; but lo! the people saw him in the street, not arrayed in the purple robe, but wearing his garment without seam, woven from the top throughout, the common smock-frock, in fact, of the countrymen of Palestine, and they said at once, "Yes, 'tis he, the man who healed the sick, and raised the dead; the mighty teacher who was wont to sit upon the mountain-top, or stand in the temple courts and preach with authority, and not as the Scribes." There can be no shadow of doubt but that our Lord was really crucified, and no one substituted for him. How they led him forth we do not know. Romish expositors, who draw upon their prolific fancy for their facts, tell us that he had a rope about his neck with which they roughly dragged him to the tree; this is one of the most probable of their surmises, since it was not unusual for the Romans thus to conduct criminals to the gallows. We care, however, far more for the fact that he went forth carrying his cross upon his shoulders. This was intended at once to proclaim his guilt and intimate his doom. Usually the crier went before with an announcement such as this, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, who for making himself a King, and stirring

up the people, has been condemned to die.” This cross was a ponderous machine; not so heavy, perhaps, as some pictures would represent it, but still no light burden to a man whose shoulders were raw with the lashes of the Roman scourge. He had been all night in agony, he had spent the early morning at the hall of Caiaphas, he had been hurried, as I described to you last Sunday, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate; he had, therefore, but little strength left, and you will not wonder that by-and-bye we find him staggering beneath his load, and that another is called to bear it with him. He goes forth, then, bearing his cross.

What learn we here as we see Christ led forth? Do we not see here the truth of that which was set forth in shadow by *the scape-goat*? Did not the high-priest bring the scape-goat, and put both his hands upon its head, confessing the sins of the people, that thus those sins might be laid upon the goat? Then the goat was led away by a fit man into the wilderness, and it carried away the sins of the people, so that if they were sought for, they could not be found. Now we see Jesus brought before the priests and rulers, who pronounce him guilty; God himself imputes our sins *to him*; he was made sin for us; and, as the substitute for our guilt, bearing our sin upon his shoulders—for that cross was a sort of representation in wood of our guilt and doom—we see the great Scape-goat led away by the appointed officers of justice. Bearing upon his back the sin of all his people, the offering goes without the camp. Beloved, can you say he carried *your* sin? As you look at the cross upon his shoulders does it represent *your* sin? Oh I raise the question, and be not satisfied unless you can answer it most positively in the affirmative. There is one way by which you can tell whether he carried your sin or not. Hast thou laid thy hand upon his head, confessed thy sin, and trusted in him? Then thy sin lies not on thee; not one single ounce or drachma of it lies on thee; it has all been transferred by blessed imputation to Christ, and he bears it on his shoulder in the form of yonder heavy cross. What joy, what satisfaction this will give if we can sing—

“My soul looks back to see
The burden thou didst bear,
When hastening to the accursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there!”

Do not let the picture vanish till you have satisfied yourselves once for all that Christ was here the substitute for you.

Let us muse upon the fact that Jesus was conducted without the gates of the city. It was *the common place of death*. That little rising ground, which perhaps was called Golgotha, the place of a skull, from its somewhat resembling the crown of a man’s skull, was the common place of execution. It was one of Death’s castles; here he stored his gloomiest trophies; he was the grim lord of that stronghold. Our great hero, the destroyer of Death, bearded the lion in his den, slew the monster in his own castle, and dragged the dragon captive from his own den. Methinks Death thought it a splendid triumph when he saw the Master impaled and bleeding in the dominions of destruction; little did he know that the grave was to be rifled, and himself destroyed, by that crucified Son of man.

Was not the Redeemer led thither *to aggravate his shame*? Calvary was like our Old Bailey; it was the usual place of execution for the district. Christ must die a felon’s death, and it must be upon the felon’s gallows, in the place where horrid crimes had met their due reward. This added to his shame; but, methinks, in this, too, he draws the nearer to us, “He was numbered with the transgressors, and bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

But further, my brethren; this, I think, is the great lesson from Christ's being slaughtered without the gate of the city—*let us go forth, therefore, without the camp, bearing his reproach*. You see there the multitude *are leading him forth from the temple*. He is not allowed to worship with them. The ceremonial of the Jewish religion denies him any participation in its pomps; the priests condemn him never again to tread the hallowed floors, never again to look upon the consecrated altars in the place of his people's worship. He is exiled from *their friendship*, too. No man dare call him friend now, or whisper a word of comfort to him. Nay more; he is banished from their *society*, as if he were a leper whose breath would be infectious whose presence would scatter plague. They force him without the walls, and are not satisfied till they have rid themselves of his obnoxious presence. For him they have no tolerance. Barrabas may go free; the thief and the murderer may be spared; but for Christ there is no word, but "Away with such a fellow from the earth! It is not fit that he should live." Jesus is therefore hunted out of the city, beyond the gate, with the will and force of his own nation, but he journeys not against his own will; even as the lamb goeth as willingly to the shambles as to the meadow, so doth Christ cheerfully take up his cross and go without the camp. See, brethren, here is a picture of what we may expect from men if we are faithful to our Master. It is not likely that we shall be able to worship with their worship. They prefer a ceremonial pompous and gaudy; the swell of music, the glitter of costly garments, the parade of learning all these must minister grandeur to the world's religion, and thus shut out the simple followers of the Lamb. The high places of earth's worship and honor are not for us. If we be true to our Master we shall soon lose the friendship of the world. The sinful find our conversation distasteful; in our pursuits the carnal have no interest; things dear to us are dross to worldlings, while things precious to them are contemptible to us. There have been times, and the days may come again, when faithfulness to Christ has entailed exclusion from what is called "society." Even now to a large extent the true Christian is like a Pariah, lower than the lowest caste, in the judgment of some. The world has in former days counted it God's service to kill the saints. We are to reckon upon all this, and should the worst befall us, it is to be no strange thing to us. These are silken days, and religion fights not so stern a battle. I will not say it is because we are unfaithful to our Master that the world is more kind to us, but I half suspect it is, and it is very possible that if we were more thoroughly Christians the world would more heartily detest us, and if we would cleave more closely to Christ we might expect to receive more slander, more abuse, less tolerance, and less favor from men. You young believers, who have lately followed Christ, should father and mother forsake you, remember you were bidden to reckon upon it; should brothers and sisters deride, you must put this down as part of the cost of being a Christian. Godly working-men, should your employers or your fellow-workers frown upon you; wives, should your husbands threaten to cast you out, remember, without the camp was Jesus' place, and without the camp is yours. Oh! ye Christian men, who dream of trimming your sails to the wind, who seek to win the world's favor, I do beseech you cease from a course so perilous. We are in the world, but we must never be of it; we are not to be secluded like monks in the cloister, but we are to be separated like Jews among Gentiles; men, but not of men; helping, aiding, befriending, teaching, comforting, instructing, but not sinning either to escape a frown or to win a smile. The more manifestly there shall be a great gulf between the Church and the world, the better shall it be for both; the better for the world, for it shall be thereby warned; the better for the Church, for it shall be thereby preserved. Go ye, then, like the Master, expecting to be abused, to wear an ill-name, and to earn reproach; go ye, like him, without the camp.

II. Let us now gaze for awhile upon CHRIST CARRYING HIS CROSS.

I have shown you, believer, your position; let me now show you your *service*. Christ comes forth from Pilate's hall with the cumbrous wood upon his shoulder, but through weariness he travels slowly, and his enemies urgent for his death, and half afraid, from his emaciated appearance, that he may die before he reaches the place of execution, allow another to carry his burden. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, they cannot spare him the agonies of dying on the cross, they will therefore remit the labor of carrying it. They place the cross upon Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country. We do not know what may have been the color of alimony face, but it was most likely black. Simon was an African; he came from Cyrene. Alas poor African, thou hast been compelled to carry the cross even until now. Hail, ye despised children of the sun, ye follow first after the King in the march of woe. We are not sure that Simon was a disciple of Christ; he may have been a friendly spectator; yet one would think the Jews would naturally select a disciple if they could. Coming fresh from the country, not knowing what was going on, he joined with the mob, and they made him carry the cross. Whether a disciple then or not, we have every reason to believe that he became so afterwards; he was the father, we read, of Alexander and Rufus, two persons who appear to have been well known in the early Church; let us hope that salvation came to his house when he was compelled to bear the Savior's cross.

Dear friends, we must remember that, although no one died on the cross with Christ, for atonement must be executed by a solitary Savior, yet another person did carry the cross for Christ; for this world, while redeemed by price by Christ, and by Christ alone, is to be redeemed by divine power manifested in the sufferings and labors of the saints as well as those of Christ. Mark you, the *ransom* of men was all paid by Christ; that was redemption *by price*. But power is wanted to dash down those idols, to overcome the hosts of error; where is it to be found? In the Lord of Hosts, who shows his power in the sufferings of Christ and of his Church. The Church must suffer, that the gospel may be spread by her means. This is what the Apostle meant when he said, "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church." There was nothing behind in the price, but there is something behind in the manifested power, and we must continue to fill up that measure of revealed power, carrying each one of us the cross with Christ, till the last shame shall have been poured upon his cause, and he shall reign for ever and ever. We see in Simon's carrying the cross a picture of what the Church is to do throughout all generations. Mark then, Christian, Jesus does not suffer so as to exclude your suffering. He bears a cross, not that you may escape it, but that you may endure it. Christ does exempt you from sin, but not from sorrow; he does take the curse of the cross, but he does not take the cross of the curse away from you. Remember that, and expect to suffer.

Beloved, let us comfort ourselves with this thought, that in our case, as in Simon's, *it is not our cross, but Christ's cross which we carry*. When you are molested for your piety; when your religion brings the trial of cruel mockings upon you; then remember, it is not your cross, it is *Christ's* cross; and how delightful is it to carry the cross of our Lord Jesus?

You carry the cross after him. You have blessed company; your path is marked with footprints of your Lord. If you will look, there is the mark of his blood-red shoulder upon that heavy cross. 'Tis *his* cross, and he goes before you as a shepherd goes before his sheep. Take up your cross daily and follow him.

Do not forget, also, *that you bear this cross in partnership*. It is the opinion of some commentators that Simon only carried one end of the cross, and not the whole of it. That is very possible; Christ may have carried the heavier end, against the transverse beam, and Simon may

have borne the lighter end. Certainly it is so with you; you do but carry the light end of the cross; Christ bore the heavier end.

“His way was much rougher and darker than mine;
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?”

Rutherford says, “Whenever Christ gives us a cross, he cries, ‘Halves, my love.’” Others think that Simon carried the whole of the cross. If he carried all the cross, yet he only carried the wood of it; he did not bear the sin which made it such a load. Christ did but transfer to Simon the outward frame, the mere tree; but the curse of the tree, which was our sin and its punishment, rested on Jesus’ shoulders still. Dear friend, if you think that you suffer all that a Christian can suffer; if all God’s billows roll over you, yet, remember, there is not one drop of wrath in all your sea of sorrow. Jesus took the wrath; Jesus carried the sin; and now all that you endure is but for his sake, that you may be conformed unto his image, and may aid in gathering his people into his family.

Although Simon carried Christ’s cross, *he did not volunteer to do it, but they compelled him*. I fear me, beloved, I fear me that the most of us if we ever do carry it, carry it by compulsion, at least when it first comes on to our shoulders we do not like it, and would fain run from it, but the world compels us to bear Christ’s cross. Cheerfully accept this burden, ye servants of the Lord. I do not think we should seek after needless persecution. That man is a fool and deserves no pity, who purposely excites the disgust of other people. No, no; we must not make a cross of our own. Let there be nothing but your religion to object to, and then if that offends them let them be offended, it is a cross which you must carry joyfully.

Though Simon had to bear the cross for a very little while, it gave him lasting honor. I do not know how far it was from Pilate’s house to the Mount of Doom. Romanists pretend to know; in fact they know the very spot where Veronica wiped the blessed face with her handkerchief, and found his likeness impressed upon it; we also know very well where that was *not* done; in fact they know the very spot where Jesus fainted, and if you go to Jerusalem you can see all these different places if you only carry enough credulity with you; but the fact is the city has been so razed, and burned, and ploughed, that there is little chance of distinguishing any of these positions, with the exception, it may be, of Mount Calvary, which being outside the walls may possibly still remain. The *Via Dolorosa*, as the Romanists call it, is a long street at the present time, but it may have been but a few yards. Simon had to carry the cross but for a very little time, yet his name is in this Book for ever, and we may envy him his honor. Well, beloved, the cross we have to carry is only for a little while at most. A few times the sun will go up and down the hill; a few more moons will wax and wane, and then we shall receive the glory. “I reckon that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” We should love the cross, and count it very dear, because it works out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Christians, will you refuse to be cross-bearers for Christ? I am ashamed of some professed Christians, heartily ashamed of them! Some of them have no objection to worship with a poor congregation till they grow rich, and then, forsooth, they must go with the world’s church, to mingle with fashion and gentility. There are some who in company hold their tongues, and never say a good word for Christ. They take matters very gently; they think it unnecessary to be soldiers of the cross. “He that taketh not up his cross and followeth not after me,” says Christ, “is not worthy of me.” Some of you will not be baptized because you think people will say, “He is a professor; how holy he ought to be.” I am glad the world expects much from us, and watches us narrowly. All this is a blessed clog upon us, and a means of keeping us more near the Lord. Oh!

you that are ashamed of Christ, how can you read that text, "He that is ashamed of me, and of my words, of him will I be ashamed when I come in the glory of my Father, and all my holy angels with me." Conceal your religion? Cover it with a cloak? God forbid! Our religion is our glory; the Cross of Christ is our honor, and, while not ostentatiously parading it, as the Pharisees do, we ought never to be so cowardly as to conceal it. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." Take up your cross, and go without the camp, following your Lord, even until death.

III. I have now a third picture to present to you—CHRIST AND HIS MOURNERS.

As Christ went through the streets, a great multitude looked on. In the multitude there was a sparse sprinkling of tender-hearted women, probably those who had been healed, or whose children had been blessed by him. Some of these were persons of considerable rank; many of them had ministered to him of their substance; amidst the din and howling of the crowd, and the noise of the soldiery, they raised an exceeding loud and bitter cry, like Rachel weeping for her children, who would not be comforted, because they were not. The voice of sympathy prevailed over the voice of scorn. Jesus paused, and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves and for your children." The sorrow of these good women was a very proper sorrow; Jesus did not by any means forbid it, he only recommended another sorrow as being better; not finding fault with this, but still commending that. Let me show what I think he meant. Last Sunday the remark was made to me—"If the story of the sufferings of Christ had been told of any other man, all the congregation would have been in tears." Some of us, indeed, confess that, if we had read this narrative of suffering in a romance, we should have wept copiously, but the story of *Christ's* sufferings does not cause the excitement and emotion one would expect. Now, I am not sure that we ought to blame ourselves for this. If we weep for the sufferings of Christ in the same way as we lament the sufferings of another man, our emotions will be only natural, and may work no good. They would be very proper, very proper; God forbid that we should stay them, except with the gentle words of Christ, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me." The most Scriptural way to describe the sufferings of Christ is not by laboring to excite sympathy through highly-coloured descriptions of his blood and wounds. Romanists of all ages have wrought upon the feelings of the people in this manner, and to a degree the attempt is commendable, but if it shall all end in tears of pity, no good is done. I have heard sermons, and studied works by Romish writers upon the passion and agony, which have moved me to copious tears, but I am not clear that all the emotion was profitable. I show unto you a more excellent way.

What, then, dear friends, should be the sorrows excited by a view of Christ's sufferings? They are these—*Weep not because the Savior bled, but because your sins made him bleed.*

"'Twere you my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormentors were;
Each of my grimes became a nail,
And unbelief the spear."

When a brother makes confession of his transgressions, when on his knees before God he humbles himself with many tears, I am sure the Lord thinks far more of the tears of repentance than he would do of the mere drops of human sympathy. "Weep for yourselves," says Christ, "rather than for me."

The sufferings of Christ *should make us weep over those who have brought that blood upon their heads.* We ought not to forget the Jews. Those once highly favored people of God who cursed

themselves with, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," ought to make us mourn when we think of their present degradation. There are no passages in all the public ministry of Jesus so tender as those which have regard to Jerusalem. It is not sorrow over Rome, but Jerusalem. I believe there was a tenderness in Christ's heart to the Jew of a special character. He loved the Gentile, but still Jerusalem was the city of the Great King. It was, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" He saw its streets flowing like bloody rivers; he saw the temple naming up to heaven; he marked the walls loaded with Jewish captives crucified by command of Titus; he saw the city razed to the ground and sown with salt, and he said, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children, for the day shall come when ye shall say to the rocks, Hide us, and to the mountains, Fall upon us."

Let me add, that when we look at the sufferings of Christ, *we ought to sorrow deeply for the souls of all unregenerate men and women*. Remember, dear friends, that what Christ suffered for us, these unregenerate ones must suffer for themselves, except they put their trust in Christ. The woes which broke the Savior's heart must crush theirs. Either Christ must die for me, or else I must die for myself the second death; if he did not carry the curse for me, then on me must it rest for ever and ever. Think, dear friends, there are some in this congregation who as yet have no interest in Jesu's blood, some sitting next to you, your nearest friends who, if they were now to close their eyes in death, would open them in hell! Think of that! Weep not for him, but for these. Perhaps they are your children, the objects of your fondest love, with no interest in Christ, without God and without hope in the world! Save your tears for them; Christ asks them not in sympathy for himself. Think of the millions in this dark world! It is calculated that one soul passes from time into eternity every time the clock ticks! So numerous has the family of man now become, that there is a death every second; and when we know how very small a proportion of the human race have even nominally received the cross—and there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved—oh! what a black thought crosses our mind! What a cataract of immortal souls dashes downwards to the pit every hour! Well might the Master say, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves." You have, then, no true sympathy for Christ if you have not an earnest sympathy with those who would win souls for Christ. You may sit under a sermon, and feel a great deal, but your feeling is worthless unless it leads you to weep for yourselves and for your children. How has it been with you? Have you repented of sin? Have you prayed for your fellow men? If not, may that picture of Christ fainting in the streets lead you to do so this morning.

IV. In the fourth place, one or two words upon CHRIST'S FELLOW-SUFFERERS.

There were two other cross-bearers in the throng; they were malefactors; their crosses were just as heavy as the Lord's, and yet, at least, one of them had no sympathy with him, and his bearing the cross only led to his death, and not to his salvation. This hint only. I have sometimes met with persons who have suffered much; they have lost money, they have worked hard all their lives, or they have laid for years upon a bed of sickness, and they therefore suppose that because they have suffered so much in this life, they shall thus escape the punishment of sin hereafter. I tell you, sirs, that yonder malefactor carried his cross and died on it; and you will carry your sorrows, and be damned with them, except you repent. That impenitent thief went from the cross of his great agony—and it was agony indeed to die on a cross—he went to that place, to the flames of hell; and you, too, may go from the bed of sickness, and from the abode of poverty, to perdition, quite as readily as from the home of ease and the house of plenty. No sufferings of ours have anything to do with the atonement of sin. No blood but that which *He* has spilt, no groans but those which came

from *His* heart, no suffering but that which was endured by *Him*, can ever make a recompense for sin. Shake off the thought, any of you who suppose that God will have pity on you because you have endured affliction. You must consider Jesus, and not yourself; turn your eye to Christ, the great substitute for sinners, but never dream of trusting in yourselves. You may think that this remark is not needed; but I have met with one or two cases where it was required; and I have often said I would preach a sermon for even one person, and, therefore, I make this remark, even though it should rebuke but one.

V. I close with THE SAVIOR'S WARNING QUESTION—“*If they do these things in the green tree, what will they do in the dry?*” Among other things methinks he meant this—“If I, the innocent substitute for sinners, suffer thus, what will be done when the sinner himself—the dry tree—whose sins are his own, and not merely imputed to him, shall fall into the hands of an angry God.” Oh! ye unregenerate men and women, and there are not a few such here now, remember that when God saw Christ in the sinner's place he did not spare him, and when he finds you without Christ, he will not spare *you*. You have seen Jesus led away by his enemies; so shall you be dragged away by fiends to the place appointed for you. “Deliver him to the tormentors,” was the word of the king in the parable; it shall be fulfilled to you—“Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Jesus was deserted of God; and if he, who was only imputedly a sinner, was deserted, how much more shall you be? “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani,*”—what an awful shriek! But what shall be your cry when you shall say, “Good God! good God! why hast thou forsaken me?” and the answer shall come back, “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.” These are awful words, but they are not mine; they are the very words of God in Scripture. Oh! sinner, if God hides his face from Christ, how much less will he spare you! He did not spare his Son the stripes. Did I not describe last Sabbath the knotted scourges which fell upon the Saviours back? What whips of steel for you, what knots of burning wire for you, when conscience shall smite you, when the law shall scourge you with its ten-thonged whip! Oh! who would stand in your place, ye richest, ye merriest, ye most self-righteous sinners—who would stand in your place when God shall say, “Awake O sword against the rebel, against the man that rejected me; smite him, and let him feel the smart for ever!” Christ was spit upon with shame; sinner, what shame will be yours! The whole universe shall hiss you; angels shall be ashamed of you; your own friends, yes, your sainted mother, shall say “Amen” to your condemnation; and those who loved you best shall sit as assessors with Christ to judge you and condemn you! I cannot roll up into one word all the mass of sorrows which met upon the head of Christ who died for us, therefore it is impossible for me to tell you what streams, what oceans of grief must roll over *your* spirit if you die as you now are. You may die so, you may die now. There are more unlikely things than that you will be dead before next Sunday. Some of you will! It does not often happen that five or six thousand people meet together twice; it never does, I suppose; the scythe of death must cut some of you down before my voice shall warn you again! Oh! souls, I do beseech you, by the agonies of Christ, by his wounds and by his blood, do not bring upon yourselves the curse; do not bear in your own persons the awful wrath to come! May God deliver you! Trust in the Son of God and you shall never die.

The Lord bless you, for Jesu's own sake. Amen.

The Gladness of the Man of Sorrows

A Sermon

(No. 498)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, March 8th, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.”—Psalm 45:7, 8.

DURING THE LAST FEW SABBATH-DAYS we have been considering the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. We followed him through the agony of the garden, the sorrows of the betrayal, the weariness and slander of his various trials, the shame and mockery of the soldiery, and the sorrows of his cross-bearing progress along the streets of the city. It seems fit this morning to make a pause that we may take breath awhile in this our pilgrimage of sorrow, and be comforted by a view of the glory-land to which the thorny pathway leads. A festive occasion like the present may have unfitted your minds for deep contemplations upon the Passion, and it may be more congenial with our present mood of gladness to meditate upon the glory which followed the shame. The same person will be before our eye, but we shall view him in a brighter light, we shall see the silver lining of the black cloud of anguish, the rich pearls hidden in the stormy deep of his sufferings, and the days of heaven which were conceived in the womb of the black night of his agony. The Man of Sorrows is the fountain of all joy to others, and is the possessor of all the joys of heaven and earth, by virtue of his triumphs. He has experienced joys in proportion to his sorrows; as he once waded through deep waters of grief he has now climbed to the highest mountains of happiness. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross despising the shame, and now having sat down at his Father's right-hand he enjoys pleasures for evermore. We have seen our David crossing the brook Kedron weeping as he went; shall we not gaze upon him as he dances before the ark for joy? We saw him crowned with thorns, shall we not go forth to meet him and behold him with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart? Oh that while we muse upon these things our heavenly Father may hear the prayer of our great Advocate who once cried on our behalf—“And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have *my joy* fulfilled in themselves.”

Our text describes the joy poured forth upon our glorious King in a twofold manner. Our Lord is first made joyous by his Father—“Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” But there is another joy, which he getteth not from one person, but from many. Read the next verse—“All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby *they* have made thee glad.” Here both saints and angels unite to swell the ever-deepening, and widening river of the Savior's gladness. When we shall have walked by these still waters and trodden these green pastures, perhaps we shall be prepared to say with the apostle, “And not only so, but *we also* joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement,” and we shall be qualified to

sing with the spouse, "We will rejoice and be glad in thee; Ye will remember thy love more than wine; the upright love thee."

I. Come, my brethren, let us ponder that part of OUR SAVIOR'S JOY WHICH IS GIVEN HIM BY HIS FATHER.

To a degree the Redeemer possessed this joy *even while he was here on earth*. We are not sure that the early life of the Savior was full of sorrow. As he grew in wisdom and in stature, he also grew in favor both with God and man; and favor with God and man would probably give the youthful Jesus an unusual degree of holy happiness. When he entered upon his public ministry, sorrows in troops beset him, so that the countenance once fairer than the children of men, became more marred than that of any man, and at the age of thirty-two or thirty-three he was taken to be near fifty, from the effect of labor, hardship and woe. Yet, even in the days of his affliction, the Great Mourner was not utterly wretched, even amid the wormwood and the gall there were drops of joy. When, in his baptism, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended, did that divine Dove bring no peace, no comfort upon his wings? When the Father bare witness, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," did those approving words from the opening heavens afford no satisfaction to the mind of the obedient Son? Brethren, the perfect nature of our Redeemer could not but rejoice exceedingly in the smile of the Father and the descent of the Holy Ghost. When in the wilderness, after the forty days of fasting and of temptation, the angels ministered unto him, did they bring him no celestial joys, no consolations of God? Did he know no secret joys upon the mountain-tops, where he communed with God at midnight? Was it no delight to him to utter sweet invitations and loving words of mercy? Surely those lips were blessed which poured forth benedictions, and there must have been some comfort in the hands which bound up the broken-hearted and opened the prisons of the captives. We read that Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." The doctrine of electing love stirred the deeps of his great soul, and made the floods clap their hands. "The King shall joy in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice."

Do you think, brethren, our Savior lived in this world, *doing so much good*, without receiving some joy in his acts of mercy? To teach, to labor, and to make men holy, must give joy to a benevolent mind. It could not be otherwise than pleasant to a good man to do good. If God delighteth in mercy, surely his express image must do the same. To restore the dead to their sorrowing relations, was this no satisfaction? Did the widow's grateful eye in the gates of Nain kindle no joy-flashes in his heart? Bid the thankfulness of Mary and Martha inspire no comfort in the Life-giver? Think you that it was not gladsome work to feed the famishing multitudes? Who could look upon the feasting thousands without rejoicing? To heal the leper, to restore the lame, to give eyes to the blind and ears to the deaf, who could do all this and not be happy in distributing the boons? Surely, brethren, there were some hosannas in Jesu's ears, and though he could always bear the cry of "Crucify him! Crucify him!" yet he must have felt the wondrous joy of doing good, which is one of the delights entailed on all self-sacrificing lovers of others.

Bethink you, beloved, of his character, and surely he must have known the joy *of being good*; for there is a deep gladness in holiness, a blessed peacefulness in righteousness. The holiness of angels is their happiness, and although to a large degree the Savior laid his peace aside, yet there is a rest of soul from which virtue cannot separate. Distractions of conscience he never knew, disturbance of mind, on account of sin he did not feel on his own account, although as our substitute

he was made sin for us. He suffered. Mark, I am not for a moment detracting from his sufferings, high mountains of grief I see; the eagle's wing cannot reach their summit, nor foot of angel climb their brows; but lo, I see leaping streams of pleasure running adown the rugged steeps, and amid the hollows of the desolate hills I gaze upon deep lakes of joy unfathomable by mortal line.

Brethren, we have every reason to believe that our Savior permanently found a solace while on earth, in the consideration *that he was doing his Father's will*. He said, "It is my meat and my drink, to do the will of him that sent me." "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" On several occasions the voice from heaven proclaimed the Father's good pleasure in his only begotten: once the glory of heaven enwraps him on the holy mount; and during his whole life he had the presence of God until the moment of necessary desertion, when we find him, for the first and only time, crying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" To do a work which he had contemplated from all eternity, to engage in an occupation which had always been most delightful in prospect, could not have been altogether and only sorrowful. It was a Passover with many bitter herbs, but with desire had he desired to eat of it. It was a baptism, and a baptism of blood, but he was straitened until it was accomplished. Of old, in expectation his delights were with the sons of men. Were there none in the work? Brethren, let your Lord speak for himself—"Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."

In the glorious prospect which this great work opened to him when it should he completed, I am absolutely sure our Savior found comfort. Think not I speak too strongly; I have scriptural warrant. Turn to the twenty-second Psalm, which is the soliloquy of Christ upon the cross, and you find him, after he bemoaned his desolate condition, comforting himself thus, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto he Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this." He saw with prescient eye through the thick darkness which enveloped the cross, the rising of the bright sun of heaven's eternal noon. He saw, when he hung upon the cross, not only the mocking eyes of multitudes of enemies, but the loving eyes of millions of souls whom he should redeem from hell; he heard not only the shouts of the ribald mob, but the songs of blood-redeemed spirits. When he saw the lions and heard them roar, was it not a comfort to the shepherd that he had kept the sheep, and none of them had perished. Indeed, my brethren, there is more than enough of evidence to prove that a rich anointing of gladness rested on the head of the Man of Sorrows.

Still, dear friends, this may be viewed by some as a moot point; we allow that there is room for difference of opinion; but not so as to the great joy which Christ obtained *after he had endured the cross, despising the shame*. Let us enter into the secret joys of our Beloved. Consider, my brethren, the work accomplished; Chiist has borne the wrath of God; God is reconciled to his people; death has been destroyed; Christ as risen from the dead; the dragon's head has been broken, the powers of sin have been subdued; our Lord ascends to heaven with a shout, with the trump of the archangel; the glorified spirits accord him a triumphal entry. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in!" He sits down upon his throne at his Father's right hand, and then it is that he is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

I should not have failed to remark that, as God, our Redeemer always possessed fullness of joy and pleasures for evermore, We are speaking of him in his complex person as man and God, and in his official character as Mediator, it is his delight in this capacity which we now consider.

The joy of the risen Mediator laid, first of all, in this, *that he had now accomplished a work which he had meditated upon from all eternity*. Before the day-star marked the dawn; before the calm of space had ever been stirred by wing of angel, or the solemnity of silence had been startled with song of seraph, Christ had purposed to redeem his people, It was in the eternal purpose of the great Second Person in the Divine Unity, from before all worlds, to redeem unto himself a people by price. What joy must it give him now that he can say, "I have finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness."

His heart had not only meditated, *but had been mightily set upon his work*. He had bound his people's names upon his breast; he had graven them upon the pylons of his hands. His ears were bored, for he intended to serve even until death. What if I say that, from before all worlds, he thirsted and panted that he might do the Father's will, and redeem his people from their ruin! Now, brethren, that desire which had been in him like coals of juniper, unquenchable, is now fulfilled to the uttermost; how can he be otherwise than anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, since none other ever purposed so firmly or succeeded so perfectly.

Consider, too, *how great the pains which he endured, and we must believe the joy to be commensurate with the pain*. In the accomplishing of his great life-purpose, he descended to the cross of deepest woe. Have I not tried to paint in my poor way the mysterious agonies of our blessed Savior? but I feel that I have failed. Now when all this had been suffered, what joy to look back upon it! Never day so bright as that which follows black darkness; never calm so sweet as that which succeeds hurricane and tempest; never native place so delightful as to the long exiled pilgrim. So deep the sorrow, so high the joy; so unspeakable the grief, so unutterable the bliss.

Remember, beloved brethren, *the enemies he had overcome*, and you will not marvel that his joy was matchless. Had he not worsted Death—grim tyrant—vanquisher of all mankind? Had he not broken the head of the old serpent, who in his crushing coils had bound and pressed a universe of souls? Did he not defeat in battle all the fiends in hell? Was not evil for ever dethroned? Did not goodness sit upon a glorious high throne? Was not virtue exalted to the highest heaven, and sin cast down to the lowest hell in that day of the judgment of this world, when the Prince of Darkness was cast out? "Behold," he might have said, "I see Satan falling like lightning from heaven; the dragon bound with a great chain. Lo, hell's gates are shut upon the saints, the grave is rifled of its spoils, heaven is crowded with the saved, and earth purified from sin." O Jesus, thou mighty conqueror, thy glorious victories must surely give to thee, as they do to us, a blessed anointing with the oil of gladness!

Our Lord possesses in heaven now, as perfect man, the joy of looking back upon a life without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; the satisfaction of seeing this perfect obedience covering all his people, till they stand lovely in his loveliness; the equal delight of observing the efficacy of his blood to wash the foulest, and make them whiter than snow, while his intercession scatters mercy in one everlasting shower upon the sons of men. Since his heart was love his joy must be in deeds of love, and as he has become a fountain always welling up with loving gifts towards the chosen sons of men, his delight must be unchanging like his nature, and unbounded like his divinity. "God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

We pause a moment, having tried to dwell upon the joy, to notice the cause of it. "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness, therefore God hath anointed thee." It seems, then, that the first cause why Jesus Christ has received fullness of joy lies in *his having loved righteousness*. This he did necessarily because of the spotless purity of his nature; this he did practically in *the hallowed sincerity and integrity of his life*. Of whom could it be said so truly as of our Lord, that the law of God was in his heart. How abundantly did he prove his love to righteousness, by vindicating it in his death, fulfilling in his own person all the sentence of divine wrath taking upon himself all the curses which fell upon offenders. You cannot suppose righteousness to be more clearly manifested than in the living works of Jesus, nor more completely avenged than in the dying throes. How sovereign is that righteousness to which even the Son of God bowed his head and gave up the ghost. The world deluged with water, the plains of Sodom smoking with brimstone, the land of Egypt vexed with plagues, all these terrible things in righteousness manifest the justice of God, but none of them so solemnly as the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus. Our Beloved loved righteousness indeed when he emptied out all his heart-floods that he might make us righteous. Moreover, as in his life and death we see that he loved righteousness, we discern it too *in the constant effect of his work*. His gospel makes men righteous. Does it not give them a legal righteousness by imputation, a real righteousness by infusion, a righteousness which covers them with fine linen without and makes them all glorious within. The spirit of the gospel which we preach is to magnify that which is pure and lovely and of good repute. Wherever the Lord Jesus displays his gracious power, sins yields the throne, purity wins the scepter, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through the perfect sacrifice, the living power of Jesus.

The text adds, "*Thou hatest wickedness.*" A man's character is not complete without a perfect hatred of sin. "Be ye angry, and sin not." There can hardly be goodness in a man if he be not angry at sin; he who loves truth must hate every false way. How our Lord Jesus hated it when the temptation came! Thrice it assailed him in different forms, but ever it was, "Get thee behind me, Satan." How he hated it when he saw it in others; none the less fervently because he showed his hate oftener in tears of pity than in words of rebuke; yet what language could be more stern, more Elijah-like, than the words, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayer." He hated wickedness so much that he bled that he might wound it to the heart; he died that it might die; he was buried that he might bury in his tomb; and he rose that he might for ever trample it beneath his feet. Christ is in the Gospel, my brethren, and you all know how utterly that Gospel is opposed to wickedness in every shape. No matter how wickedness may array itself in fair garments, and imitate the language of holiness, the precepts of Jesus, like his famous scourge of small cords, chase wickedness out of the temple, and will not let it have peaceful lodging in the Church. So too, in the heart where Jesus reigns, what war there is between Christ and Belial? And when our Redeemer shall come to be our judge, in those thundering words, "Depart, ye cursed," which are, indeed, but a prolongation of his life-teaching concerning sin, then shall it be seen, I say, that he hated wickedness. As warm as is his love to sinners, so hot is his hatred of sin; as perfect as is the righteousness which he completed, so perfect shall be the destruction of every form of wickedness. Oh thou glorious champion of right, and destroyer of wrong, for this cause hath God, even thy God, anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

But, beloved, we must dwell for one moment upon another thought supplied by the text. The *character of this joy* is hinted at by way of comparison—"God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." And who are his fellows? Suppose his fellows to be

the kings and princes of this world, for the psalm is descriptive of Christ in his royalty. Well, is he not anointed with gladness above them all? Kings rejoice in their dominions, their extent and population: our King looks from shore to shore, and from the river even to the ends of the earth, and of his dominion there is no end. Princes delight in the fame and honor which their office and deeds may bring them; but before the Lord Jesus Christ the fame of monarchs dwindles into nothing. His name shall endure for ever; throughout all generations the people shall praise him. Monarchs delight in the riches and treasure which their dominions yield; Christ receiveth a wealth of love and homage from his people, before which the riches of Croesus become poverty itself. "The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor." Kings are wont to rejoice in the victories they have achieved. He that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, travelling in the greatness of his strength, hath more joy than they. They boast the sureness of their throne; but "thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." The inward thought of some kings may be that they are invincible in power, and that their will is law; but at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and his enemies shall become as the fat of rams; into smoke shall they consume, yea, into smoke shall they consume away. Good kings rejoice in the beneficence of their rule, and the happiness of their subjects; our King may surely glory in the favors which he has scattered from his scepter. But time would hail us if we were to complete the contrast here. Kings of the earth, ye may take off your crowns, and remain uncrowned in the presence of lying Jesus, for on his head are many crowns. O ye lords and mighty men, ye may lay down your dignities and honors, for ye are unhonoured and undignified in the presence of him who is above his fellows!

My brethren, where shall his fellows be found? Search ye among the wise, and who shall match the gladness of incarnate wisdom, for man's wisdom bringeth sorrow. Go ye, and travel among the famous, and who shall be compared with his illustrious name, where else is there a name so full of joy? Search out the mighty, who hath an arm like his? Go ye, and search among the good and excellent, who have blessed their kind by philanthropy; who among them is so anointed as the Man of Nazareth? As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. Standing as high above all the rest of men as the heavens are above the earth; he is, indeed, anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. I find that some interpreters read it—"The oil of gladness for his fellows." The rendering is probably incorrect, but it bears a very truthful, sweet, and comfortable thought in it. If the saints are his fellows, and he is not ashamed to call them brethren, then the oil of gladness was first poured on his head, that it might descend even to the skirts of his garments, and that all the saints might be made partakers of his joy.

We have said enough, we think, on this first point; here is the material for much meditation. Search, my brethren, and learn how the Lord, even our God, has glorified his Son Jesus.

II. Turn we now to THE GLADNESS AFFORDED BY THE CHURCH. "All thy garments smell of myrrh, and cassia, and aloes, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad." His garments have been saturated with very precious and fragrant odours; this is the work of his Church. In the phrase, "ivory palaces" the allusion is to certain costly structures which some Oriental kings erected, plated within and without with ivory. We read of Ahab that he built an ivory house; and it was a solemn threat from the lip of Amos, "the houses of ivory shall perish." These ivory houses relate, I suppose, either to the courts of glory, or, more consistently with our interpretation this morning, to the hearts of believers; or, better still, to the churches, which are like palaces of ivory, both for glory and majesty, for richness, and for purity. The saints' graces, their love, their praise, their prayers, their faith, are like myrrh, cassia, and aloes, and the Savior's garments are so

perfumed therewith, that when he rides in his triumphal chariot he scatters sweet odours all around. It is a great and certain truth, that Christ finds an intense satisfaction in his Church. "He will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." In his people, *as the objects of his choice*, he finds satisfaction; 'tis true there is nothing in them naturally; they are by nature heirs of wrath, even as others; but having set his love upon them, having determined to make them his people, he takes a delight in the objects of his choice because of that choice. Nothing in us could have been the origin of the Saviour's first delight in us. Now, doubtless, that we are his workmanship, he takes a delight in the works of his own hands; but when we were like broken potsherds, thrown away upon the dunghill of the fall, if he saw anything in us it must have been in his own eyes.

But, dear friends, as men always take a deep interest in that which has *cost them dearly*, so since that triumphant day when Jesus stretched out his hands upon the tree and paid the price for his people, he has found an infinite solace and delight in them. He sees in every believer's face a memento of his groans; he looks into the eye of every penitent, and sees his own tears there; he hears the cry of every mourner, and there hears his own groans over again; he beholds the reward of his soul's travail in every regenerate heart, and hence, as the purchase of his blood, we make him glad.

Again, *as his workmanship*, as he sees us day by day more conformed to his image, he rejoices in us. Just as you see the sculptor with his chisel fetching out the statue which lies hidden in the block of marble, taking off a corner here, and a chip there, and a piece here—see how he smiles when he brings out the features of the form divine—so our Savior, as he proceeds with his graving tool, working through the operation of the Spirit, and making us like unto himself, finds much delight in us. The painter makes rough drafts at first, and lays on the colors roughly; some do not understand what he is doing, and for three or four sittings the portrait is much unlike the man it aims at representing; but the painter can discern the features in the canvass; he sees it looming through that mist and haze of color; he knows that beauty will yet beam forth from yonder daubs and blotches. So Jesus, though we are yet but mere outlines of his image, can discover his own perfection in us where no eye but his own, as the Mighty Artist, can perceive it. Dear friends, it is for this reason, because we are the work of his hands, that he taketh delight in us.

Know ye not that we are his brethren—and brothers should delight in brothers. Nay, we are his spouse—and where should the husband find his comfort but in his bride? We are his body—shall not the head be content with the members? We are one with him, vitally, personally, everlastingly one; and it is little marvel, therefore, if we have a mutual joy in each other, so that his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces of his Church, wherein he hath been made glad.

Let us think *how we can make him glad*. Brethren, *our love* to Christ—oh! we think it so cold, so little, and so, indeed, we must sorrowfully confess it to be, but it is very sweet to Christ. We can never compare our love to Christ with his love to us, and yet he does not despise it. Hear his own eulogy of his Church in the Song, "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirza, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners. Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me." See, see, my brethren, his delight in you. When you lean your head on his bosom, you not only receive, but you give him joy;

when you gaze with love upon his beautiful face, you not only receive comfort, but give delight. Our *praise*, too, gives him joy, when from our hearts we sing his name, and when gratefully, though silently, we breathe a song up to his throne. As princes are delighted with incense, so is Christ delighted with the praise of his people. And our *gifts*, too, delight him. As the son of our good Queen accepts rich tokens of kindness from the people of his land, so our Lord Jesus is charmed with the offerings of his people. He loves to see us lay our time, our talents, our substance upon his altar, not for the value of what we give, but for the sake of the motive from which the gift springs. He takes far more delight in what we do for him than our Queen's son could take in splendid arches, or in the glorious pageantry of yesterday. To Christ the shouts of his people are better than the cheers of the most enthusiastic populace, and to him the lowly offerings of his saints are more acceptable than thousands of gold and silver. Forgive your enemy, and you make Christ glad; distribute of your substance to the poor, and he rejoices; be the means of saving souls, and you give him to see of the travail of his soul; preach his gospel, and you are a sweet savor unto him; go among the ignorant and among the hopeless, and try to lift them up, and you have given him satisfaction. I tell you, brother, it is in your power this very day to break the alabaster box and pour the precious ointment on his head, as did the woman of old, whose memorial is to this day set forth. You can anoint him above all his fellows with the oil of gladness.

I think I see a great procession. It is Jesus Christ riding alone through the tens of thousands of souls whom he has redeemed with his own blood. I think I see him looking to the right hand and to the left as he rides along the centuries. See how every window of every age are crowded! Glorified spirits look down from the housetops of heaven: the Church militant looks up from the streets of earth, multitudes upon multitudes of souls that love him, and call him King, salute him as their Redeemer. I notice that, as he goes along in this great procession, his eyes are bright with joy. We liked to see the Prince and Princess happy yesterday but their joy could be nothing compared with that of Christ as he rides along in triumph. How the multitudes delight him; the ten thousand times ten thousand—who shall tell how many Christ has redeemed? Their number is beyond all human count; so many are they that, as they clap their hands and shout to his name, I hear a voice like many waters, or like great thunders, while they cry “Hallelujah, Sweet Prince! ride on triumphantly! and reign for ever and ever!” There is one thing Christ feels as he looks upon the crowd around him, which our Prince could not feel yesterday. He knows that everyone of these would lay down their lives for him. Of all those whom Jesus bought with blood; among those who are renewed in heart; there is not one who would not bleed for him. To the stake they walk, and sing amidst the flames. To the dungeon they go, and praise him while they rot in darkness. They are dragged at the heels of horses, they are stoned, they are sawn in sunder, they wander about in sheep-skins and in goat-skins, and they glory in all these things that they may show their love to Christ. Every eye in the vast throng which gathers about the triumphal chariot of Christ beams with intense love to him; and when they shout, each one shouts louder than his fellow; each one in the whole throng feels he owes more to the great King than anyone else; there is something special about each face the King looks on, and as he remembers the special circumstances, he perceives the reason for that special love. Either it is much forgiven, or else it is much trial averted, or much strength conferred by which to perform labor. I am sure that when you and I are in that throng looking upon him, we may truly say—

“Then loudest of the crowd I'll sing,

While heaven's resounding mansions ring

With shouts of sovereign grace.”

Ye did well to applaud your Prince yesterday, but what had he ever done for you? What debt did you owe to him? Owed he not far more to you? But our King as he rides along in the midst of the joyful hosts of the blood-bought, has this upon his mind—“I bought all these souls with my blood.” He recollects, as he looks upon them, where they would have been but for his grace, and the very pangs of hell must add joy to his soul, when he remembers that he saved them from passing into the pit. He recollects, too, what they once were—how full of sin, what enemies to God, how they crucified him, how they trampled on his precious blood, and now he sees them bowing, before him, too glad to catch but a glimpse of him as he rides by, too happy to be as the dust of his feet if he will but honor them by treading upon them that he might be lifted the higher. O my brethren, we love the Lord Jesus Christ, and our hearts give him a reception such as never was accorded to earthly Prince. Pile the arches! pile the arches! Let hearts pour forth their life-blood, if in no other way the banners can be dyed red! Strew the streets; strip off your garments if in no other way the pageant can be made illustrious! bring forth the royal diadem, and let every saint renounce wealth and comfort if by no other means Jesus can be crowned! Empty heaven, if by no other way Jesus can be attended with guards of honor. Come, all ye sons and daughters of his great family, and offer yourselves a living sacrifice, if there can be no other incense! We are all prepared—I speak for the sacramental host of God’s elect—we are all prepared by his grace to follow him through floods and through flames! We are prepared to give him all the honor that heart can conceive. We are prepared to kiss his feet as well as to crown his head. Bring forth the royal diadem to-day and crown him Lord of all; and each day as he rides along, till he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, let him be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords.

III. Now for another text, but not another sermon. It is in the fourth verse of the first chapter of the Song of Solomon:—“WE WILL BE GLAD AND REJOICE IN THEE.”

God has made the king glad, and his saints make him glad; let us be glad too. But let us mind that our gladness is of the right sort. “We will rejoice and be glad *in thee*.” That man is glad in his farm; that other in his merchandise; that one yonder in his wealth; that woman in her jewels; that other in her beauty; “*We will rejoice and be glad in thee*.” But in what? We will rejoice, more especially, *in his love to us*. You remember Jesus Christ said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” Interpreters read that two ways. Some think he meant, “Lovest thou me more that thou lovest these nets, and this fishery, and this thine earthly calling and these thy friends?” I think I hear Jesus Christ speaking this morning, and he says, “My people, I love you more than these.” He points to spirits that once stood around his throne, angels that have sinned; they fell like lightning from heaven, and there they lie in flames, and Christ says, “I loved you more than these; I let these perish, but I saved you.” Pointing to the kings and princes of this world, the great, the mighty, and the learned men, and to all the nations that sit in darkness, he says, “I love you more than these; I gave Ethiopia and Seba for you.” Then taking a higher range he joints to heaven. There sit the angels before the throne, and he says, “I loved you more than these; I left their company for yours.” He bids you listen to their harps and to their songs, and he says, “I loved you more than these; I left all these melodies that I might be able to meet your groans.” Yea, he points to his own throne, so bright with glory that mortal eyes scarce dare to rest upon it, and he says, “I loved you more than these, for I left the glory of my throne that I might redeem you with my blood.” Saint, will you not join with me? Shall we not both say, “Savior, blessed be thine unexampled love! We will rejoice and be glad in thee!”

But some interpreters read the text—"Lovest thou me more than these?"—"Lovest thou me more than these others love me?" Jesus speaks to-day to us, "I have loved thee more than these; thy mother loved thee; strong were her pangs when thou wast born, and anxious her cares when she nursed thee at her bosom; but I have loved thee more than these, and thy brethren loved thee, and thy sisters; born of the same parents they watched over thee with delight, and they have been ready to help thee in thy time of need, but I have loved thee more than these: and thy husband loved thee, loved thee as his own soul, he has cherished thee, and has been ready to lay down his life to give thee back health when thou hast been sick; but I have loved thee more than these: thy children, too, have loved thee; they have climbed thy knee and smiled upon thee for all thy kindness to them, and they have strengthened thine old age, and thou hast leaned upon them, as upon a staff, when thou hast been tottering with weakness; but I have loved thee more than these: and thou hast had a joyous companion, a dear friend who has been with thee from thy youth up, and has never lifted his heel against thee; and thou hast had thine intimates and thy familiars who went up to the house of God with thee, and talked cheerfully by the way, but I have loved thee more than these," I think I hear him say to me—"There are some in this congregation who would pluck out their own eyes to give them to thee; they love thee, for thou art their spiritual father, but I have loved thee more than these." And he points to all the good men that have ever tried to teach you, to all the comforters who have given you joy, to all the helpers that have aided you on the road to immortality; and he says, "I have loved you more than these." Well, if his love be matchless like this, we will rejoice and be glad *in him*. I have nothing, else to rejoice in, the Lord knoweth. I cannot rejoice in myself, there are so many sins and so many doubts; but I will rejoice and be glad in him if he loves me like this. He has finished the work for me, given me a perfect righteousness, washed me in his blood, taken off his robe to clothe me, given his life that he may make me live, entered the grave to bring me out of it, and said that I shall shortly be enthroned with him above the sky. I will rejoice and be glad in him. When King Solomon was crowned, all the people rejoiced; and shall we be mourners when Christ sits upon his throne? Let the heaviest heart begin to leap; and if you have to bear your burdens to-morrow, yet do throw them off to-day. "We will rejoice and be glad in thee." I should not like one Christian to go down these aisles this morning without some light of heaven's brightness on his cheek—without some note of heaven's music in his ear. "Oh!" says the Christian, "Yes. I will; the cross is heavy, but I will hope beneath it; the furnace is hot, but I will sing in it; the way is rough, but I will tread it with light footsteps, for I will rejoice and be glad in him who has loved me and given himself for me." Well, you see, there is a glad Christ in heaven, and here is a glad Church on earth; there is Christ anointed by his Father, here are his people sharing that anointing; here is Christ giving you joy, and you giving Christ joy. Belt the world with happiness; fire zodiac with joy. Lift up the ladder of your songs; while the bottom rests on earth, let the top reach to heaven; and ye angels of God, hold fellowship to-day with God and with us through the joy and peace which God the Father gives us, while we rejoice and are glad in him.

I would you all understood this subject, but some of you are strangers to it altogether! Remember, there is no joy anywhere but in Christ. It is all poor mockery which you get elsewhere. Jesus Christ is to be had, and whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

The Lord give you his benediction, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

The Clean and the Unclean

A Sermon

(No. 499)

By the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These are the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is clovenfooted, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.”—Leviticus 11:2, 3.

THE MOSAIC LAW ATTACHED great importance to meats and drinks: the Christian religion attaches none. The apostle Peter was shown by the vision of a sheet let down from heaven, not only that all nations were now to receive the gospel message, but that all kinds of food were now clean, and that all the prohibitions which had formerly been laid upon them for legal purposes were now once for all withdrawn. A Christian may, if he pleases, put himself under restrictions as to these matters. You will remember that the apostle Paul says, “I know and am persuaded of the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.” I wot our apostle was tender of weak consciences; but he could expostulate with the brethren somewhat thus, “If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye *dogmatize*—touch not this, taste not that, handle not the other—and all about things which perish with the using?” The doctrine of the New Testament is expressly laid down, “Every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.” And as for the practice enjoined upon believers, “All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient.” In the example of Paul we have full liberty; he would put no embargo upon the conscience. But in his example we have also fervent charity; he would put no stumbling-block in his brother’s way. “If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.” The levitical law enjoined many precepts as to meats and drinks; but those carnal ordinances were imposed until the time of reformation. Since then, this Mosaic institution was not designed to be perpetual, we feel certain that it must have had some use at the time when it was first established, and during the time in which it was sustained. As that was peculiarly a typical dispensation, we feel persuaded that we shall not exaggerate the uses of the text if we show that there was something instructive to us and something typical of the better covenant in the command that the people were to eat no creatures but those which divided the hoof and those which chewed the cud.

I. It is our firm belief that these distinctions of meats were laid down on purpose TO KEEP THE JEWS AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE, and that herein they might be a type of the people of God, who are also, throughout all ages, to be a distinct and separate people—not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world.

You that are conversant with the old Levitical rule, well know that it was quite impossible for the Hebrews to mix with any other nation, without violating the statutes they were commanded to keep. Their food was so restricted that they could not possibly enter into social intercourse with any of the neighboring peoples. The Canaanites, for instance, ate everything, even the flesh that had been torn by dogs, and the dogs themselves. Now, a Jew could never sit at a Canaanites table,

because he could never be sure that there would not be the flesh of some unclean and accursed thing upon it. The Jews could not even eat with the Arabs, who were near akin to them, for they frequently partook of the flesh of the camels, the hare, and the coney, all which, as we shall see presently, were forbidden to the Jew. The Arabs on the south, and the Canaanitish nations all round Palestine, were the most likely people with whom the Jews would associate, and this command about what they should and should not eat prevented them for ever from mingling with these people, and made them a distinct and isolated republic so long as they were obedient to the law. We are told by Eastern travelers that the Mohammedan regulations, which are far less strict than those of the Jew, prevent their becoming socially intermingled either with the idolaters or with Christians. It is a well-known fact that no people that have prescriptions about meats and drinks have ever changed their religion to that of another people, because the familiarity which seems necessary in order to proselyte is quite prevented by the barrier that precludes from intercourse at the table. It is at the social table men enjoy the most genial intercourse; it is there they pour out their souls with the least reserve, and mix their thoughts one with another in the greatest freedom of conversation. Check them there; prevent their sitting at the same board, and there is no likelihood that they will ever blend or intermingle in any kind of affinity, the races must be distinct. I believe, dear friends, though I have been somewhat prosy in explaining myself, that it was God's real intention, to keep the children of Israel, until the coming of Christ, separate from all the nations that were upon the face of the earth. They could not join in the worship of other nations, for other nations sacrificed to their gods the very animals which to the Jew were unclean. They could not join in social intercourse, as we have already seen; and hence marriage with any other nation would be, not only, as it was, prohibited by the law, but would be actually prevented by the possibilities of the case. It must in each instance put the transgressor beyond the pale of his own tribe. They would remain as much a distinct people, as if a great wall of brass had been built all around them, or as if they had been transported to some island, and an impassable gulf had been put between them and any other kindred upon earth. They were separated for ever. Now friends, you will say, "What is the use of this to us?" I answer, it is the earthly type of a heavenly mystery. When the Jews were put away as the people of God for a time, then the Gentiles were grafted into their olive, and though we did not inherit the ceremonies, we did inherit all the privileges to which those ceremonies point. Thus all of you who name the name of Christ and are truly what you profess to be, are solemnly bound to be for ever separated from the world. Not that you are to leave off your daily intercourse with men. Our Savior did not do so. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Yet, you know, he was always in the company of sinners, sitting at their table, seeking their good, and hunting after their souls. He was with them, but he was never of them; he was among them, but always distinct and separate from them; not conforming himself to them, but transforming them to himself. He hath set us an example. It is not the seclusion of a hermit, nor the exclusion of yourselves in a monastery, where you would be of no service to your fellow-men, but it is a higher and more spiritual separation which I claim of Christians to-night. You are to be in the world, and among the world, you are to mingle with all sorts and conditions of men, but still to maintain the dignity of your newborn character, and to let men see that you are among them as a speckled bird, as a light in the midst of darkness, as salt scattered over putridity, as heavenly angels in the midst of fallen men. So are ye to be a distinct people, a chosen generation.

But you will ask of me *in what respects are you to be distinguished?* In a pure consistency always, in a vain eccentricity never. This shall be my first reply. Not in your garments, my brethren.

All those inventions of broad-brimmed hats, and coats without collars, perish in the using. Let your dress be, nevertheless, so distinguished from that of some other men, that there shall be none of the pride and foppery in which they delight. The Apostle Peter has well laid down the regulations by which our sisters in Christ are to adorn themselves, but I need not mention what you know so well and practice so little—that chaste and becoming neatness which is always right in the sight of God, and beautiful in the assembly of Christians. Not by my peculiar Jargon in your speech are you to be known. For my part I abhor in any man that sanctimonious tone and sacred whine which many affect; even in the pulpit I despise it. I believe that the reason why the pulpit has lost so much of its former power is because men must needs muffle our blessed Saxon tongue, and talk as if everything natural were to be eschewed there, and men, metamorphosed into ministers, were to be as unnatural and grotesque in their modes of speech as possible. No, not these, not these; all such artificial separations we leave to the people whose vanity feeds on its own conceit. Nor need you make any straining effort to be distinguished by any stiff buckram of your own; do not try to make yourself look like a Christian. True Christians can do a great many things that sham Christians must not do. As for me, I am never afraid to laugh, for I shall never crack the paint on my face, laugh as I may. A sincere man may do a great many things that a hypocrite dare not do, for he will split the garments of his hypocrisy if he ventures to run as a Christian may. Heavenly realities within do not always need to be plastered up and labelled outside, so that everybody may see and recognize you, and say, “There goes a saint.” There are other modes of being distinguished from the world than any of these.

What are they then? Well, brethren, we ought ever to be distinguished from the world *in the great object of our life*. As for worldly men, some of them are seeking wealth, others of them fame; some seek after comfort, others after pleasure. Subordinately you may seek after any of these, but your main and principal motive as a Christian should always be to live for Christ. To live for glory? Yes, but for his glory. To live for comfort? Yes, but be all your consolation in him. To live for pleasure? Yes, but when you are merry, sing psalms, and make melody in your hearts to the Lord. To live for wealth? Yes, but to be rich in faith. You may lay up treasure; but lay it up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where thieves break not through nor steal. It is thought, you know, that ministers do live for God; merchants should do the same. I would, my brethren, that you would trade, and do your merchandise for his service; or do ye plough, and sow, and reap, and mow, do it for Christ! Would God you could do this quite as much in his service, as we do ours, when we preach for Christ! You can make the commonest calling become really sacred. You may take the highest orders by dedicating your daily life wholly to the service of Jesus. There is such a thing—and let those that deny the possibility stand self-convicted that they obey not the precept—“Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

By *your spirit* as well as your aim you should likewise be distinguished. The spirit of this world is often selfish; it is always a spirit that forgets God, that ignores the existence of a Creator in his own world, the land which he makes fat by his own bounty. Men with God’s breath in their nostrils forget him who makes them live. Now, your spirit should be one of unselfish devotion, a spirit always conscious of his presence, bowed down with the weight, or raised up with the cheer of Hagar’s exclamation—“Thou God seeest me;” a spirit which watcheth humbly before God, and seeketh to know his will and to do it through the grace of God given to you. Such a spirit as this, without the drab of one sect, or the phylacteries of another, will soon make you quite as distinct from your fellow men as ever meats and drinks could make the Jews a separate people.

Your maxims too, and the rules which regulate you, should be very different from those of others. The world says “Well, it is usual in the trade; there is no use in being over scrupulous; we must not be too Puritanic, or too severe; we shall never get on if we are picking at this and frowning at that.” A Christian never considers what is usual, but what is right; he does not estimate a wrong by its commonness; he counts that a fraud, and a falsehood will be as much fraud and falsehood, though all the world shall agree to practice it, as though but one man should do it in the dark. The believer reads things, not in man’s light, in the obscurity of which so many blind bats are willing to fly, but he reads things in the sunlight of heaven. If a thing be right though he lose by it, it is done; if it be wrong, though he should become as rich as Croesus by allowing it, he scorns the sin for his Master’s sake. We want our merchants on the Exchange, our traders in their shops, and our artisans in their factories; yea, and we want all masters, employers, and overseers too, to be distinguished, as the clean from the unclean, in the maxims that govern their daily life, and thus manifestly separate from the world.

This will naturally lead to the next point—the Christian should be separate *in his actions*. I would not give much for your religion unless it can be seen. I know some people’s religion is heard of, but give me the man whose religion is seen. Lamps do not talk, but shine; a lighthouse sounds no drum, it beats no gong, and yet far over the waters its friendly spark is seen by the mariner. So let your actions shine out your religion. Let your conduct talk out your soul. Let the main sermon of your life be illustrated by all your conduct, and it shall not fail to be illustrious. Have I not told you before that the only bit of ecclesiastical history we have in the whole New Testament is—what? The sermons of the Apostles? No, no, the “Acts of the Apostles.” So let your history be written, so that it may have this title—“The acts of such-and-such a man.” This will furnish the best proof that you have been with Jesus.

A Christian is distinguished *by his conversation*. He will often trim a sentence where others would have made it far more luxuriant by a jest which was not altogether clean. Following Herbert’s advice—“He pares his apple—he would cleanly feed.” If he would have a jest, he picks the mirth but leaves the sin; his conversation is not used to levity; it is not mere froth, but it ministereth grace unto the hearers. He has learned where the salt-box is kept in God’s great house, and so his speech is always seasoned with it, so that it may do no hurt but much good. Oh! commend me to the man who talks like Jesus, who will not for the world suffer corrupt communications to come out of his mouth. I know what people will say of you if you are like this: they will say you are straight-laced, and that you will not throw much life into company. Others will call you mean-spirited. Oh, my brethren! bold-hearted men are always called mean-spirited by cowards. They will admonish you not to be singular, but you can tell them that it is no folly to be singular, when to be singular is to be right. I know they will say you deny yourselves a great deal, but you will remind them that it is no denial to you. Sheep do not eat carrion, but I do not know that sheep think it a hardship to turn away from the foul feast. Eagles do not prefer to float on the sea, but I do not read that eagles think it a denial when they can soar in higher atmosphere. Do not talk of self-denial. You have other ends and other aims; you have welds of comfort that such men know not of. It would be a shame for you to be eating husks with swine, when your Father’s table is loaded with dainties. I trust, my dear brethren, that you know the value of the gold of heaven too well to pawn it away for the counterfeits of earth. “Come ye out from among them; be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing.” By a holiness which merely moral men cannot equal, stand as on a pedestal aloft above the world. Thus men may know you to be of the seed of Jesus, even as they knew the Jew to be the seed of Israel.

How shall I urge you to give more earnest heed to this holy separation? Let me add the voice of warning to that of entreaty. If we do not see to this matter we shall bring sorrow on our own souls; we shall lose all hope of honoring Christ, and we shall sooner or later bring a great disaster on the world. You know the world is always trying to nationalize the Church. What a mercy it is that there are some who will not have it! If you could once make the Church and the nation one, what would follow? It must be destroyed; it must fall. It was when the church and the world became one in Noah's day that the Lord sent the flood to destroy all people. No, the proper position of a Christian is not with the world, even in its best state and its most exalted condition. We are to be separated from this present evil world according to the will of God. Our position to-day is as much as in Christ's day, outside the camp, not in it; we are still to be protesters, still to be testifiers against the world. "Ye are of God, little children, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one." Scripture never supposes that the world will get better till the coming of Christ. It does not propose to lift the world up and marry it with the Church. It always supposes the Church to be as an alien and a stranger here until Christ, her husband shall come. On which side will you rank? Truce there cannot be, links between the two there must not be. God and mammon cannot go together. For which will you be—for God—for truth—for right? Or for Satan—for the he—for the wrong? Which shall it be? May the Spirit of God whisper in your heart to-night, and say, "Believe thou in Christ Jesus; take up thy cross and follow him, and be enlisted on his side henceforth and for ever."

II. We have now a second and an important matter to bring forward. The distinction drawn between clean and unclean animals was, we think, intended by God **TO KEEP HIS PEOPLE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS THAT THEY WERE IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF SIN.**

Just let me picture it. I have caught the idea from Mr. Bonar, though I fear I cannot paint it in words so well as he has done. An oriental Jew, sensible and intelligent, walks out in the fields. He walks along close by the side of the high-road, and what should he see but a string of camels going along? "Ah!" he says to himself "those are unclean animals." Sin, you see, is brought at once before his mind's eye. He turns away from the road and walks down one of his own fields, and as he goes along a hare starts across his path. "Ah!" says he, "an unclean animal again; there is sin in my path." He gets into a more retired place, he walks on the mountains; surely he shall be alone there. But he sees a coney burrowing among the rocks; "Ah!" says he, "unclean; there is sin there!" He lifts his eye up to heaven; he sees the osprey, the bald eagle, flying along through the air, and he says, "Ah! there is an emblem of sin there!" A dragon-fly has just flitted by him—there is sin there. There are insects among the flowers; now every creeping thing, and every insect, except the locust, was unclean to the Jew. Everywhere he would come in contact with some creature that would render him ceremonially unclean, and it were impossible for him, unless he were brutish, to remain even for ten minutes abroad without being reminded that this world, however beautiful it is, still has sin in it. Even the fish, in sea, or river, or inland lake, had their divisions; those that had no scales or fins were unclean to the Jew, so the little Hebrew boys could not even fish for minnows in the brook but they would know that the minnow was unclean, and so their young hearts were made to dread little wrongs and little sins, for there were little sins in the little pools even as there were leviathan sins floating in the deep and nude sea. Ah! friends, we want to have this more before our minds. Look at the fairest landscape that your eye has ever beheld; see the towering Alp, the green valley, and the silver stream

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty,"

but the slime of the serpent is on them all,
 “Keep me, O, keep me King of kings,
 Beneath the shadow of thy wings.”

When I walk abroad in this temple of nature, and seek to behold nature's God, I may not light upon a spot in the universe where the curse of sin has never inflicted a blight, or where the hope of redemption should not inspire a prayer. Sometimes, brethren you get all alone and quiet, but do not imagine that you are even there free from sin. As the most beautiful landscape, so the sweetest retirement cannot shut out uncleanness. As the fly or the insect would intrude into the arbour where the Jew would worship, so sin will haunt and molest us even in the closet of devotion. Get up Christians, and be upon your watch-towers. You may sleep, but your enemies never will; you may suppose yourselves safe, but then are you most in danger. See that you put on the whole panoply of God, and are armed from head to foot, and having done all, watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. Every morning we ought to ask the Lord to keep us from unknown sins, to preserve us from temptations that we cannot foresee, to check us in every part of life if we are about to go wrong, and to hold us up every hour that we sin not. You will say it must have been an unpleasant thing for the Jew always to have sin before his eye, nor would you wish every aspect of life to be thus fouled before your eye; but it will not be so unpleasant for you, my brother, because you know there is a redemption, and your faith can realize the end of the curse by sin being put away. Shut not your eyes to sin, but keep Christ always before you, and you will walk aright. I wish that some of my hearers had sin before their eyes now. Oh! you that trifle with it, you do not know what it is! Fools make a mock of sin. You laugh at it now; you do not understand what a fire it is that you have kindled to consume your soul! Oh! you that think it is such a little thing, its deadly poison will soon envenom all your blood, and then you will discover that he that plays with sin plays with damnation. May the Lord set sin straight before your eyes, and then set the cross of Christ there too, and so you will be saved. Two prayers I ask all my hearers to pray—they are very brief—“Lord show me myself.” If there is any man here who says he would pray but he does not know what to pray, for; pray that every night and morning—“Lord show me myself;” and if God hear you, you will soon be in such a wretched state that you will want another prayer, and then I give you this—“Lord show me thyself;” and then if he shall show you himself hanging on the tree, the expiation for guilt, the Great God become man that he might put away sin, your salvation will be accomplished. 'Tis all the prayer that is wanted—“Lord show me myself; Lord show me thyself; reveal sin and reveal a Savior.” Lord, do this for all of us for thy name's sake.

III. And now, I come to show you a third teaching of my text. As this injunction was meant to separate the Jews from other nations, and to keep the pious Israelite in constant remembrance of his danger of falling into sin, so it was also intended to be **A RULE OF DISCRIMINATION BY WHICH WE MAY JUDGE WHO ARE CLEAN AND WHO ARE UNCLEAN, THAT IS, WHO ARE SAINTS AND WHO ARE NOT.**

There are two tests, but they must both be united. The beast that was clean was to chew the cud: here is the inner-life; every truehearted man must know how to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the sacred Word. The man who does not feed upon Gospel truth, and so feed upon it, too, that he knows the sweetness and relish of it, and seeks out its marrow and fatness, that man is no heir of heaven. You must know a Christian by his inwards, by that which supports his life and sustains his frame. But then the clean creatures were also known by their walk. The Jew at once discovered the unclean animal by its having an undivided hoof; but if the hoof was thoroughly

divided, then it was clean, provided that it also chewed the cud. So there must be in the true Christian a peculiar walk such as God requires. You cannot tell a man by either of these tests alone; you must have them both. But while you use them upon others apply them to yourselves. What do you feed on? What is your habit of life? Do you chew the cud by meditation? When your soul feeds on the flesh and blood of Christ have you learned that his flesh is meat indeed, and that his blood is drink indeed? If so 'tis well. What about your life? Are your conversation and your daily walk according to the description which is given in the Word of believers in Christ? If not, the first test will not stand alone. You may profess the faith within, but if you do not walk aright without, you belong to the unclean. On the other hand, you may walk aright without but unless there is the chewing of the cud within, unless there is a real feeding upon precious truth in the heart, all the right walking in the world will not prove you to be a Christian. That holiness which is only outward in moral not spiritual; it does not save the soul. That religion, on the other hand, which is only inward is but fancy; it cannot save the soul either. But the two together; the inward parts made capable of knowing the lusciousness, the sweetness, the fatness of Christ's truth; and the outward parts conformed to Christ's image and character: these conjoined point out the true and clean Christian with whom it is blessed to associate here, and for whom a better portion is prepared hereafter.

If you read the chapter through you will find there were some two or three animals about which the Jew would have some little difficulty. There was the camel that did chew the cud, but did not exactly divide the hoof. Now this animal seems to me fitly to represent—though it may not have been so intended—those men who seem really to feed on the truth and yet their walk and conversation are not aright. Their feet have been formed rather for the sandy desert of sin than for the sacred soil of godliness. Oh! I know some of you—come, let us be personal—there are some of you if I would always preach the doctrine of predestination, or some other doctrine of that kind, how sweet it would be to you! But your lives are not what they should be. Thank God there are not many of that sort who come here. They get angry with me very soon, and go off to other places where they can get sweet and savoury morsels, which exactly suit their taste, and hear no admonitions about their lives whatever. May the Lord deliver my ministry from ever being comfortable and flattering to souls that live in sin. I hope you will sometimes have to say, "I must either give up that sin or else give up my seat there." I know one who said, "Well! it has come to this: I cannot go there on Sunday evening and keep my shop open in the morning; it will not do for me to go and sit there, and hear the Word, and sing with those people on Sunday evening, and then hear songs and join in revelries on week-nights." I hope the Word of God here will be such a searching Word to some of you that you will even gnash your teeth at the preacher. He would sooner for you to do that than for you to say; "Peace, peace, where there is no peace," sucking in sweet doctrine, and yet living in sin. God deliver us from Antinomianism! We do preach against Arminianism, but that is a white devil compared with the black devil of Antinomianism. God save us from that! If there is any religion that will drug conscience, stimulate crime, crowd jails, and turn this world into an Aeldema, it is the religion of the man who preaches divine sovereignty but neglects human responsibility. I believe it is a vicious, immoral, and corrupt manner of setting forth doctrine, and cannot be of God. It would undermine morality, and put the very life of society in peril if it were largely believed, or if it were preached by men of any great weight who should have any great numbers to follow them. Oh, dear friends! be not as the animal which cheweth the cud but yet divideth not the hoof. Seek not merely to get precious doctrine, comforting to yourselves, but see that your walk is such as it should be.

Then there was another animal. It did not chew the cud, still the Jews thought it did. This was *the coney*—the nearest approach to it is the rabbit of our land—“The coney, because he cheweth the cud but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean.” The coney was a very timid creature, which burrowed in the rocks. “The coneys be a feeble folk, but they make their dwellings in the rocks,” says Solomon. Now, there are some people who seem as if they like the gospel truth, and they may be put down in the class in which Moses puts the coney, which appeared to chew the cud, though it did not really do so. There are hundreds of this sort we know. They like the gospel, but it must be very cheap. They like to hear it preached, but as to doing anything to extend it, unless it were to lend their tongues an hour, they would not dream of it. The coney, you know, lived in the earth. These people are always scraping. John Bunyan’s muck-rake is always in their hands. Neither to dig nor to beg are they ashamed. They are as true misers, and as coyetous, as if they had no religion at all. And many of these people get into our Churches, and are received when thee ought not to be. Coyetousness ought to exclude a man from Church fellowship as well as fornication, for Paul says, “Coyetousness, which is idolatry.” He puts the brand right on its forehead, and marks what it is. We would not admit an idolater to the Lord’s table; nor ought we to admit a coyetous man; only we cannot always know him. St. Francis Sales, who had a great many people come to him to confession, makes this note, that he had many men and women come to him who confessed all sorts of most outrageous crimes, but he never had one who confessed coyetousness. It is a kind of sin that always comes in at the back-door, and it is always entertained at the back-part of the house. People do not suspect it as an inmate of their own hearts. Mr. Coyetousness has changed his name to Mr. Prudent-Thrifty; and it is quite an insult to call him other than by his adopted name. Old vices, like streets notorious for vice, get new names given them. Avaricious grasping, they call that only “the laws of social economy;” screwing down the poor is “the natural result of competition;” withholding corn until the people curse oh! that is “just the usual regulation of the market.” People name the thing prettily, and then they think they have rescued it from the taint. These people, who are all for earth, are like the coneys, who, though they chew the cud, burrow in the ground. They love precious truth, and yet they are all for this earth. If there are any such here, despite their fine experience, we pronounce them unclean—they are not heirs of heaven.

The next creature mentioned in the chapter is *the hare*—“The hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean.” See how he fhes with bounding step over the ground! A clapping of the hands, and how he starts and is away! The hare is such a timid creature; she leayeth her food, and fleeth before the passer-by. I would not say a hard thing, but there are some people who appear to chew the cud, they love to hear the gospel preached; their eyes will sparkle sometimes when we are talking of Christ, but they do not divide the hoof: Like the hare, they are too timid to be domesticated among the creatures whom the Lord has pronounced clean. They do not come out from the world, enter into the Church, and manifest themselves wholly on the Lord’s side. Their conscience tells them they should be baptized as believers—but they dare not; they should be united with the people of God, and confess Christ before men—but they are ashamed, ashamed, ashamed! One fears lest his wife should know it, and she might ridicule. Some start abashed lest their friends should know it, for the finger of scorn or the breath of raillery could frighten them out of their senses. Others of them are alarmed because the world might, perchance, give them an ill name. Do you know where the fearful go? Not the fearing, not the doubting—for there are many poor, humble doubters and fearers that are saved—but do you know where the *fearful* go? The fearful that are afraid of being persecuted, mocked, or even laughed at for Christ—do you know

where they go? You will find it in the Book of the Revelation—"But the fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Have you never read that sentence which says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels?" There you are, young men! you are ashamed of Christ. You have just come up from the country, and you did not pray to God the other night because there was another young man in the room, and you were ashamed of him! In the name of God I do entreat you, nay, I command you, be not ashamed of your Master, Christ, and of the religion which you learned at your father's knee. There are others of you who work in a large shop, and you do not want to be jeered at, as the other young fellow is who works with you, because he is a Christian. You keep your love as a secret do you, and will not let it out? What! if Christ had only loved you in secret, and had never dared to come here on earth to be despised and rejected of men, where would you have been? "No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel." Do you think that Christ has lit a candle in your hearts that you may hide it? Oh! I pray you, be not like the hare. Let your hoof be so divided from the rest of mankind that they may say, "There is a man—he is not as bold as a hon, mayhap, but he is not ashamed to be a follower of Jesus; he does bear the sneer and gibe for him, and counts it his honor to be thought evil of for Jesus' sake." Oh! be not, I pray you, like the timid hare, lest you be found among the unclean!

There is one other creature mentioned—"The swine, though he divide the hoof, and be cloven-footed, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you." Now, the swine is the emblem of those who do act rightly. They make a profession; before men they are the most upright and the most devout; but then the inner part is not right; they do not chew the cud. The foot is right, but not the inward part. There is no chewing, no masticating, no digesting the Word of Life. "But," says one, "why pick out a swine, because that does not seem to be a fair comparison." Yes it is, for there are no people in the world more like swine than those Pharisees who make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; whose hoof is divided enough, but whose inward part is very wickedness. I do not know an animal that might more filly picture out those vile, unclean Pharisees. You may say you think it is too hard a picture for you. You are put down thus in the catalogue, and I have no other place in which to put you. You are like swine, unless the grace of God be in you. What good does the swine do? Of what concern is life to him but to feed grossly and slumber heavily? And so your life, since the inward part is wrong, you bring no glory to God, you bring no good to your fellow-men. Oh! that the Lord would show you that dead morality, unattended by the love of God in the soul, will most certainly be of no avail! "You must be born again." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

My text seems to be a dividing one; it divides the house in two. Remember, dear friends, the day is coming when a greater division than that which description can give will occur to all of us. But the same rule will be enforced. We shall be assembled in one crowd, a mightier crowd than language can picture, or imagination grasp. The books shall be opened—books more terrible than this Book of Mercy. The Book of Life shall be unfolded and read, in which those washed in Jesu's blood, and so made clean, shall find their names recorded. They are borne to heaven. Listen to the music of the angels as they bear them up to God's right hand! Where will you be? Will you be with those who mount to heaven, or with yonder trembling, shrieking, screaming souls, who, as hell opens her mouth, descend alive into the pit? God help you if you are not on the righthand side! It is not too late. Jesus Christ is still preached to you. The way of salvation is very plain. It is

this—Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Believe thou in Jesus. Then make a profession of thy faith in God's own ordained way and method, and you have his promise for it that you will be saved. God help you to believe, and you shall be saved through Jesus, and unto him shall be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Ebenezer!

A Sermon

(No. 500)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, March 15th, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”—1 Samuel 7:12.

IT IS CERTAINLY A VERY DELIGHTFUL THING to mark the hand of God in the lives of ancient saints. How profitable an occupation to observe God's goodness in delivering David out of the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear; his mercy in passing by the transgression, iniquity, and sin of Manasseh; his faithfulness in keeping the covenant made with Abraham; or his interposition on the behalf of the dying Hezekiah. But, beloved, would it not be even more interesting and profitable for us to remark the hand of God in our own lives? Ought we not to look upon our own history as being at least as full of God, as full of his goodness and of his truth, as much a proof of his faithfulness and veracity as the lives of any of the saints who have gone before? I think we do our Lord an injustice when we suppose that he wrought all his mighty acts in days of yore, and showed himself strong for those in the early time, but doth not perform wonders or lay bare his arm for the saints that are now upon the earth. Let us review, I say, our own diaries. Surely in these modern pages we may discover some happy incidents, refreshing to ourselves and glorifying to our God. Have *you* had no *deliverances*? Have you passed through no rivers, supported by the Divine presence? Have you walked through no fires unharmed? Have you not been saved in six troubles? yea, in seven hath not Jehovah helped you? Have you had no *manifestations*? The God that spoke to Abraham at Mamre, hath he never spoken to you? The angel that wrestled with Jacob at Peniel, hath he never wrestled with you? He that stood in the fiery furnace with the three holy children, hath he never trodden the coals at your side? O beloved, he has manifested himself unto us as he doth not unto the world. Forget not these manifestations; fail not to rejoice in them. Have you had no *choice favors*? The God that gave Solomon the desire of his heart, hath he never listened to you and answered your requests? That God of lavish bounty, of whom David sang, “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's,” hath he never satiated *you* with fatness? Have you never been made to lie down in green pastures? Have you never been led by the still waters? Surely, beloved, the goodness of God of old has been repeated unto us. The manifestations of his grace to those gone to glory has been renewed to us, and delivering mercies as experienced by them are not unknown even to us, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

I beg you, therefore, dear friends, for a little time this morning, to fix your thoughts upon your God in connection with yourselves; and, while we think of Samuel piling the stones and saying, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,” let us lay the emphasis upon the last word and say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped US,” and if you can put it in the singular, and say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped ME,” so much the better.

Again, it is a very delightful exercise to remember the various ways in which the grateful saints recorded their thankfulness. Who can look without pleasure upon the altar which Noah reared after

his preservation from the universal deluge? Have not our eyes often sparkled as we have thought of Abraham building the altar and calling it “Jehovah-jireh, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen?” Have we not read with intense satisfaction, of Jacob setting up the stone which had been his pillow, and pouring oil upon it, and calling upon the name of the Lord, naming the place Bethel, though the name thereof was Luz at the first? Who has failed to rejoice in the martial music of Miriam’s timbrel, and the glorious notes of Moses’ song at the Red Sea? And have we not paused and looked at the twelve stones set up in the midst of Jordan by good old Joshua when Jordan was driven back, that the hosts of Israel might go through dryshod? Surely, brethren, we have rejoiced in this stone which Samuel set up and called Ebenezer? And, in looking upon all the various ways in which the saints of God have recorded his lovingkindness of old, we have felt a satisfaction in beholding the perpetuity of God’s glory, since one generation showeth forth to another all his mighty acts. Oh, would it not be quite as pleasant, and more profitable *for us* to record the mighty acts of the Lord as we have seen them? Should not we set up the altar unto his name, or weave his mercies into a song? Should we not take the pure gold of thankfulness, and the jewels of praise, and make them into another crown for the head of Jesus? Ought not our souls to give forth musics as sweet and exhilarating as ever came from David’s harp? Ought not the feet of our gratitude to trip as lightly as Miriam’s when she led the daughters of Israel? Have we not some means of praising God? Are there no methods by which we may set forth the gratitude we feel within? I trust we can make an offering unto our Lord. We can entertain our beloved with the spiced wine of our pomegranate, and the choice drops of our honeycomb. I hope that this day our souls may suggest unto themselves some way in which we may record the Lord’s mighty deeds, and hand down to coming generations our testimony of his faithfulness and of his truth.

In the spirit of these two observations then, looking at God’s hand in our own life, and acknowledging that hand with some record of thankfulness, I, your minister, brought by divine grace to preach this morning the five hundredth of my printed sermons, consecutively published week by week, set up my stone of Ebenezer to God. I thank Him, thank Him humbly, but yet most joyfully for all the help and assistance given in studying and preaching the word to these mighty congregations by the voice, and afterwards to so many nations through the press. I set up my pillar in the form of this sermon. My motto this day shall be the same as Samuel’s, “Hitherto, the Lord hath helped me.” And as the stone of my praise is much too heavy for me to set it upright alone, I ask you, my comrades in the day of battle, my fellow-laborers in the vineyard of Christ, to join with me in expressing gratitude, while together we set up the stone of memorial and say, “Hitherto the Lord hath helped *us*.”

This morning there are three things I want to talk about—three yet only one. This stone of help was suggestive as to *the place of its erection*, as to *the occasion of its setting up*, and as to *the inscription which it bore*.

I. First, then, much valuable instruction, much excitement to devout thankfulness may be found in THE SPOT WHERE THE STONE OF EBENEZER WAS SET UP.

Twenty years before on that field Israel was routed. Twenty years before, Hoplini and Phineas, the priests of the Lord, were slain upon that ground, and the ark of the Lord was taken, and the Philistines triumphed. It was well that they should remember the defeat they had sustained, and that amidst the joyous victory they should recollect that the battle had been turned into a defeat unless the Lord had been upon their side. Brethren, let us remember our defeats. Have we forgotten when we went out in our own strength determined to subdue our corruptions, and found ourselves

weak as water? Have you forgotten when you reposed in the ark of the Lord, when you rested in ceremonies and ordinances, and not in the rock of your salvation? Have you forgotten, I say, how you were discomfited before your sins and found no place of refuge from your adversaries? Have we forgotten our pitiful failures in preaching and prayer when we waited not upon God for strength? O those times of groaning, when none have believed our report because the Lord's arm was not revealed. I call to remembrance all my failures as I stand on this hill of joy. I doubt not, that on the field of Ebenezer there were the graves of thousands who had been slain in fight. Let the graves of our past proud notions, the graves of our self-confidence, the graves of our creature-strength and boasting, stir us up to praise the Lord who hath hitherto helped us. Perhaps on that spot there stood a trophy raised by the insulting Philistines. Oh, let the remembrance of the boasting of the adversary, when he said, "Aha! aha!" let that come into our ears to sweeten the shout of triumph while we glorify the God of Israel. Have you done anything for God? You would have done nothing without him. Look to your former defeats. Do you return victorious? You would have returned with your garments trailed in the mire, and your shield dishonored, if God had not been upon your side. Oh, ye that have proven your weakness, perhaps by some terrible fall, or in some sad disappointment, let the recollection of the spot where you were vanquished constrain you the more to praise the Lord who hath helped you even to this day to triumph over your adversaries.

The field between Mizpeh and Shen would also refresh their memories concerning *their sins*, for it was sin that conquered them. Had not their hearts been captured by sin, their land had never been captured by Philistia. Had they not turned their backs upon their God, they would not have turned their backs in the day of conflict. Brethren, let us recollect our sins; they will serve as a black foil on which the mercy of God shall glisten the more brightly. Egypt's fertility is the more wonderful because of its nearness to the Lybian sands, which would cover it altogether if it were not for the Nile. That God should be so good is marvellous, but that he should be so good to you and to me, who are so rebelhous, is a miracle of miracles. I know not a word which can express the surprise and wonder our souls ought to feel at God's goodness to us. Our hearts playing the harlot; our lives far from perfect; our faith almost blown out; our unbelief often prevailing; our pride lifting up its accursed head; our patience a poor sickly plant, almost nipped by one night's frost; our courage little better than cowardice; our love lukewarmness; our ardor but as ice—oh, my dear brethren, if we will but think any one of us what a mass of sin we are, if we will but reflect that we are after all, as one of the fathers writes, "walking dunghills," we should indeed be surprised that the sun of divine grace should continue so perpetually to shine upon us, and that the abundance of heaven's mercy should be revealed in us. Oh, Lord, when we recollect what we might have been, and what we really have been, we must say, "Glory be unto the gracious and merciful God who hitherto hath helped us."

Again, that spot would remind them *of their sorrows*. What a mournful chapter in Israel's history is that which follows their defeat by the Philistines. Good old Eli, you remember, fell backward and broke his neck; and his daughter-in-law in the pangs of her travail cried, concerning her child, "Call him Ichabod, for the glory has departed, because the ark of the Lord is taken." Their harvests were snatched away by the robbers; their vintage was gleaned for them by alien hands. Israel had twenty years of deep and bitter sorrow. They might have said with David, "We went through fire and through water; men did ride over our heads." Well, friends, let the remembrance of *our sorrows* also inspire *us* with a profounder thankfulness while we erect the stone of Ebenezer. We have had our sorrows as a Church. Shall I remind you of our black and dark day? Never erased from our

memory can be the time of our affliction and trial. Death came into our windows, and dismay into our hearts. Did not all men speak ill of us? Who would give us a good word? The Lord himself afflicted us, and broke us as in the day of his anger—so it seemed to us, then. Ah, God thou knowest how great have been the results which flowed from that terrible calamity, but from our souls the memory never can be taken, not even in heaven itself. In the recollection of that night of confusion, and those long weeks of slander and abuse, let us roll a great stone before the Lord, and let us write thereon, “Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.” Little I ween did the devil get by that master-stroke; small was the triumph which he earned by that piece of malice. Greater multitudes than ever flocked to listen to the word, and some here who otherwise might never have attended the preaching of the gospel, remain as living monuments of God’s power to save. Of all evil things out of which good has arisen, we can always point to the Surrey Hall catastrophe as one of the greatest goods which ever befel this neighborhood, notwithstanding the sorrows which it brought. This one fact is but a sample of others; for it is the Lord’s rule to bring good out of evil, and so to prove his wisdom and magnify his grace. O ye that have come from beds of languishing, ye that have been bowed down with doubt and fear, and ye that have been poverty-stricken, or slandered, or apparently deserted by your God, if this day the glory of God’s grace resteth upon you, pile the stone, and anoint the pillar, and write thereon, “Ebenezer, hitherto the Lord hath helped us.”

While dwelling upon the peculiarity of the locality, we must remark, that, as it had been the spot of their defeat, their sin, their sorrow, so now before the victory, it was the place of *their repentance*. You see, beloved, they came together to repent, to confess their sins, to put away their false gods, to cast Ashtaroth from their houses and from their hearts. It was there that they saw God’s hand and were led to say, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” When you and I are most diligent in hunting sin, then God will be most vohant in routing our foes. You look to the work within and overcome sin, and God will look to the work without and overcome your troubles and your trials for you. Ah, dear friends, as we pile that stone thinking how God has helped us, let us shed tears of sorrow to think how ungrateful we have been. On earth penitence and praise must always sing together. Just as in some of our tunes there are two or three parts, we shall always need repentance to take the bass notes while we are here, while faith in praise can mount up to the very highest notes of the divine gamut of gratitude. Yes, with our joy for pardoned guilt we mourn that we pierced the Lord, and with our joy for strengthened graces and ripening experience, we must mourn over ingratitude and unbelief. Hitherto the Lord hath helped thee, and yet thou didst once say, “My God has forgotten me.” Hitherto the Lord hath helped thee, and yet thou didst murmur and complain against him. Hitherto the Lord hath helped thee, and yet thou didst once deny him like Peter. Hitherto the Lord hath helped thee, and yet thine eye hath gone astray after vanity, and thy hand hath touched sin, and thy heart hath played the wanton. Let us repent, my brethren, for it is through our tears, that we shall best perceive the beauty of these grateful words, “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

You must remember, too, that Ebenezer was the place of *lamentation after the Lord*. They came together to pray God to return to them. We shall surely see God when we long after him. How delightful it is to see a Church earnest after revivals, crying, pleading for God to come into her midst. When you know, brethren, that without God your ordinances are nothing, when you cannot rest satisfied with the dead, dry letter, but really want to have the power and the presence of God, then it will not be long before you have it. So while you and I express gratitude for the past, let us

breathe another prayer to God for renewed grace. If you personally have lost the light of his face, pray this morning—

“Return, O holy Dove! return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.”

And if it be the entire Church, and in any measure our love has grown cold, and the converting and sanctifying spirit has departed, let us pray also the same prayer.

“Savior, visit thy plantation;
Grant us, Lord, a gracious rain!
All will come to desolation,
Unless thou return again;
Lord, revive us,
All our help must come from thee!”

The place of revival should be the place of gracious thankfulness.

On that day, too, Mizpeh was the place of *renewed covenant*, and its name signifies the *watch-tower*. These people, I say, came together to renew their covenant with God, and wait for him as upon a watch-tower. Whenever God's people look back upon the past they should renew their covenant with God. Put your hand into the hand of Christ anew, thou saint of the Most High, and give thyself to him again. Climb thy watch-tower and watch for the coming of thy Lord. See whether there be sin within thee, temptation without thee,—duty neglected or lethargy creeping over thee. Come to Mizpeh, the watch-tower; come to Mizpeh the place of the renewal of the covenant, and then set up your stone and say, “Hitherto, the Lord hath helped us.”

It seems to me that the spot where Samuel said “Ebenezer,” was exceedingly similar in many respects to the position occupied by us this day. I do not think the children of Israel could with heartier joy say “Ebenezer!” than we can. We have had many sins, a share of sorrows, and some defeats by reason of our own folly. I hope we have humbled ourselves before God, and lament after him, and desire to behold him, and to dwell very near him, and that our soul doth bless his name while we renew the covenant again this day, and while we come to the watch-tower and wait to hear what God the Lord will speak unto us. Come, then, in this great house which the Lord's favor has builded for us, let us sing together, “Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.”

II. We now change the subject to look at the OCCASION OF THE ERECTION OF THIS MEMORIAL.

The tribes had assembled unarmed to worship. The Philistines, hearing of their gathering, suspected a revolt. A rising was not at that time contemplated, though no doubt there was lurking in the hearts of the people a hope that they would somehow or other be delivered. The Philistines being as a nation far inferior in numbers to the children of Israel, they had the natural suspiciousness of weak oppressors. If we must have tyrants let them be strong ones, for they are never so jealous or cruel as those little despots who are always afraid of rebelhon. Hearing that the people had come together, the Philistines determined to attack them; to attack an unarmed company, mark you, who had come together for worship. The people were alarmed; naturally they might be. Samuel, however, the prophet of God, was equal to the occasion. He bade them bring a lamb. I do not know that the lamb was offered according to the Levitical rites, yet prophets in all ages had a right to dispense with ordinary laws. This was to show that the legal dispensation was not permanent, that there was

something higher than the Aaronic priesthood, so that Samuel and Elijah, men in whom God expressly dwelt, were mightier than the ordinary officiating priests of the sanctuary. He takes the lamb, puts it on the altar, offers it, and as it smokes to heaven he offers prayer. The voice of man is answered by the voice of God; a great thunder dismays the Philistines, and they are put to rout.

We, I think, have been in similar circumstances. Hear the parallel. The victory obtained was *by the lamb*. As soon as the lamb was slaughtered, and the smoke went up to heaven, the blessing began to descend upon the Israelites, and the curse upon the foes. "They smote them"—note the words—they "smote them until they came under Betlicar," which, being interpreted, signifies "the house of the Lamb." At the offering of the lamb the Israelites began to fight the Philistines, and slew them even to the house of the lamb. Brethren, if we have done anything for Christ, if we have achieved any victories, if in this house any souls have been converted, any hearts sanctified, any drooping spirits comforted, bear witness that it has been all through the Lamb. When we have pictured Christ slaughtered, have described the agonies which he endured upon the cross, when we have tried to preach fully though feebly the great doctrine of his substitutionary sacrifice, have set him forth as the propitiation for sins, then it is that the victories have begun. And when we have preached Christ ascending up on high, leading captivity captive, and when we have glorified in the fact that he ever liveth to make intercession for us, and that he shall come to judge the quick and dead, if any good has been accomplished it has been through the Lamb—the Lamb slain, or else the Lamb exalted. Hark you, dear friends, as we pile our Ebenezer this morning, we do it honoring him. "Unto the Lamb once slain be glory for ever and ever." You have overcome your foes, you have slaughtered your sins, you have mastered your troubles. How has it been? From the altar of that bleeding lamb, onward to the throne of him who is to reign for ever and ever, the whole road has been stained with the crimson blood of your enemies: you have overcome through the blood of the Lamb. The Lamb shall overcome thee. He that rides on the white horse goeth before us; his name is the Lamb. And all the saints shall follow him on the white horses, going forth conquering and to conquer. "Ebenezer; hitherto the Lord hath helped us." But the help has always been through the Lamb, the bleeding, the living, the reigning Lamb.

As in this occurrence the sacrifice was exalted, so also was the *power of prayer acknowledged*. The Philistines were not routed except by prayer. Samuel prayed unto the Lord. They said, "Cease not to cry unto the Lord for us." Brethren, let us bear our witness this morning that, if aught of good has been accomplished here, it has been the result of prayer. Often have I solaced my heart by the recollection of the prayers offered in our former house of meeting at New Park-street. What supplications have I heard there; what groans of wrestling spirits; times we have known when the minister has not had the heart to say a word, because your prayers to God have melted him—stopped his utterance, and he has been fain to pronounce a benediction and send you away, because the Spirit of God has been so present that it was hardly the time to speak to man, but only to speak to God. I do not think we always have the same spirit of prayer here, and yet in this I must and will rejoice—I know not where the spirit of prayer is to be found more in exercise than in this place. I know you hold up my hands, you that are like Aaron and Hur upon the mountains. I know that you intercede with God for the conversion of this neighborhood, and the evangelization of this great city. Young and old, you do strive together that the kingdom may come, and the Lord's will may be done. But, oh, we must not forget as we look upon this vast Church—two thousand and more members walking in the fear of God—we must not forget that this increase came as the result of prayer, and that it is in prayer still that our strength must be. I charge you before the Most High,

never depend upon my ministry. What am I? What is there in me? I speak, and when God speaks through me I speak with a power unknown to men in whom the Spirit dwells not; but if He leave me, I am not only as weak as other men, but less than they, for I have no wisdom of years, I have no human learning, I have taken no degree in the university, and wear no titles of learned honor. If God speak by me, he must have all the glory; if he saves souls by such a frail being, he must have all the glory. Give unto the Lord glory and strength; lay every particle of the honor at his feet. But do continue to pray, do plead with God for me that his power may still be seen, his arm still put mightily to his work. Prayer honored must be recollected when we set up the Ebenezer and say, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

Again, as there was prayer and sacrifice, you must remember that in answer to the sweet savor of the lamb and the sweet perfume of Samuel's intercession, *Jehovah came forth* to rout his foes. I read not that Israel shouted a war-cry. No, their shouts would not have been heard amid those great thunders. I find that they dashed to battle; but it was not their bow, their spear, their sword, that gained the victory. Hearken, my brethren, the voice of God is heard! Crash—crash! Where are you now, ye sons of Anak! The heavens shake, the earth rocks, the everlasting hills do bow, the birds of the air fly to the coverts of the forest to hide themselves, the timid goats upon the mountains seek the clefts of the rocks. Peal on peal the thunders roll till mountain answers mountain in loud uproar of affright. From crag to crag leaps the live lightning, and the Philistines are all but blinded by it, and stand aghast, and then take to their heels and fly. Quit yourselves like men, O Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews. Quit yourselves like men, but unless ye be gods ye must tremble now. Where are your bucklers and the bosses thereof? Where are your spears and the sheen thereof? Now let your swords flash from their scabbards; now send out your giants and their armor-bearers! Now let your Gohaths defy the Lord God of hosts! Aha! Aha! Ye become like women, ye quake! ye faint! See, see! they turn their backs and fly before the men of Israel, whom they counted but as slaves. They flee. The warrior fhes and the stout heart quails, and the mighty man fhes like a timid dove to his hiding-place. "Glory be unto the Lord God of Israel: his own right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory."

Beloved, if aught of good has been accomplished, or if you and I have routed sin, how hath it been? Not by *our* strength, not by *our* power, but by the glorious voice of God. When the gospel is truly preached it is God thundering. It may sound as feebly as a child's voice when we tell of Jesus crucified, but it is God thundering, and I tell you, sirs, the thunders of God never so smote the heart of the Philistines as the gospel of Christ does the heart of convinced sinners. When we preach and God blesses it, it is God's lightnings, it is God's flashes of divine fire, the glittering of his spear; for never were Philistines so smitten with the blaze of lightning in their faces as sinners are when God's law and gospel flash into their dark eyes. But to God be the glory—to God—to God—to God alone! Not a word for man, not a syllable for the son of man. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, unto him be glory." This is the song of perfect saints above; shall it not be the song of imperfect ones below? "Not unto us—not unto us," the seraphs cry as they veil their faces with their wings, and cast their crowns at Jehovah's feet. "Not unto us, not unto us," must we say while we exult in his power and magnify the God of our salvation.

III. This was the occasion then. I need not tarry longer, but turn at once to THE INSCRIPTION UPON THE MEMORIAL, "Ebenezer, hitherto the Lord hath helped us." The inscription may be read in three ways.

You must read first of all its central word, the word on which all the sense depends, where the fullness of it gathers. "Hitherto the LORD hath helped us." Note, beloved, that they did not stand still and refuse to use their weapons, but while God was thundering they were fighting, and while the lightnings were dashing in the foeman's eyes they were making them feel the potency of their steel. So that while we glorify God we are not to deny or to discard human agency. *We* must fight because God fighteth for us. We must strike, but the power to strike and the result of striking must all come from him. You see they did not say, "Hitherto our sword hath helped us, hitherto Samuel has encouraged us." No, no—"hitherto the Lord has helped us." Now you must admit that everything truly great must be of the Lord. You cannot suppose a thing so great as the conversion of sinners, the revival of a Church can ever be man's work. You see the Thames when the tide is ebbing what a long reach of foul, putrid mud, but the tide returns. Poor unbeliever, you who thought the river would run out till it was all dry and the ships be left aground, see, the flood comes back again, joyfully filling up the stream once more. But you are quite certain that so large a river as the Thames is not to be flooded except by ocean's tides. So you cannot see great results and ascribe them to man. Where there is little work done men often take the credit themselves, but where there is great work done, they dare not. If Simon Peter had been angling over the side of his ship and had caught a fine fish, he might have said, "Well done fisherman!" But when the boat was full of fish, so that it began to sink, he could not think of himself then. No, down he goes with "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The greatness of our work compels us to confess that it must be of God, it must be of the Lord alone. And, dear friends, it must be so if we consider the little with which we began. Jacob said as he came over Jordan, "With my staff I crossed this Jordan, but now am I become two bands." Surely his becoming two bands must be of God, for he had nothing but his staff. And do you not remember some few of you here present one morning when we crossed this Jordan with a staff? Were we a hundred when first I addressed you? What hosts of empty pews, what a miserable handful of hearers. With the staff we crossed that Jordan. But God has multiplied the people and multiplied the joy, till we have become not only two bands but many bands; and many this day are gathering to hear the gospel preached by the sons of this church, begotten of us, and sent forth by us to minister the word of life in many towns and villages throughout these three kingdoms. Glory be unto God, this cannot be man's work. What effort made by the unaided strength of man will equal this which has been accomplished by God. Let the name of the Lord, therefore, be inscribed upon the pillar of the memorial. I am always very jealous about this matter. If we do not as a Church and a congregation, if we do not as individuals, always give God the glory, it is utterly impossible that God should work by us. Many wonders I have seen, but I never saw yet a man who arrogated the honor of his work to himself, whom God did not leave sooner or later. Nebuchadnezzar said, "Behold this great Babylon that I have builded." Behold that poor lunatic whose hair has grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like bird's claws—that is Nebuchadnezzar. And that must be you, and that must be me, each in our own way, unless we are content always to give all the glory unto God. Surely, brethren, we shall be a stench in the nostrils of the Most High, an offense, even like carrion, before the Lord of Hosts, if we arrogate to ourselves any honor. What doth God send his saints for? That they may be demigods? Did God make men strong that they may exalt themselves into his throne? What, doth the King of kings crown you with mercies that you may pretend to lord it over him? What, doth he dignify you that you may usurp the prerogatives of his throne? No; you must come with all the favors and honors that God has put upon you, and

creep to the foot of his throne and say, What am I, and what is my father's house that thou hast remembered me. "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us."

I said this text might be read three ways. We have read it once by laying stress upon the center word. Now it ought to be read *looking backward*. The word "hitherto" seems like a hand pointing in that direction. Look back, look back. Twenty years—thirty—forty—fifty—sixty—seventy—eighty—"hitherto!" say *that* each of you. Through poverty—through wealth—through sickness—through health—at home—abroad—on the land—on the sea—in honor—in dishonor—in perplexity—in joy—in trial—in triumph—in prayer—in temptation—hitherto. Put the whole together. I like sometimes to look down a long avenue of trees. It is very delightful to gaze from end to end of the long vista, a sort of leafy temple with its branching pillars and its arches of leaves. Cannot you look down the long aisles of your years, look at the green boughs of mercy overhead, and the strong pillars of lovingkindness and faithfulness which bear your joys? Are there no birds in yonder branches singing? Surely, there must be many. And the bright sunshine and the blue sky are yonder; and if you turn round in the far distance, you may see heaven's brightness and a throne of gold. "Hitherto! hitherto!"

Then the text may be read a third way,—*looking forward*. For when a man gets up to a certain mark and writes "hitherto," he looks back upon much that is past, but "hitherto" is not the end, there is yet a distance to be traversed. More trials, more joys; more temptations, more triumphs; more prayers, more answers; more toils, more strength; more fights, more victories; more slanders, more comforts; more honors and bears to be fought, more tearings of the honor for God's Davids, more deep waters, more high mountains; more troops of devils, more hosts of angels yet. And then come sickness, old age, disease, death. Is it over now? No, no, no! We will raise one stone more when we get into the river, we will shout Ebenezer there: "hitherto the Lord hath helped us," for there is more to come. An awakening in his likeness, climbing of starry spheres, harps, songs, palms, white raiment, the face of Jesus, the society of saints, the glory of God, the fullness of eternity, the infinity of bliss. Yes, as sure as God has helped so far as to-day, he will help us to the close. "I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee; I have been with thee, and I will be with thee to the end." Courage, brethren, then; and as we pile the stones, saying, "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us," let us just gird up the loins of our mind, and be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be revealed in us, for as it has been, so it shall be world without end.

I want some oil to pour on this pillar—I want some oil. Jacob poured oil upon it and called upon the name of the Lord. Where shall I get my oil. Grateful hearts, have ye any oil? Prayerful spirits, have ye any? Companions of Jesus, have ye any? Ye that commune with him day and night, have ye any? Pour it out, then. Break your alabaster boxes, oh ye Mary's. Pour out your prayers this morning with mine. Offer your thanksgivings with my grateful expressions of thanks. Come each of you, pour this oil upon the top of this Ebenezer to-day. I want some oil, I wonder whether I shall get it from yonder heart. Oh, says one, my heart is as a flinty rock. I read in scripture that the Lord brought oil out of the flinty rock. Oh, if there should be a soul led to believe in Christ this morning, if some heart would give itself up to Christ to-day! Why not so? why not? The Holy Ghost can melt flint and move mountains. Young man, how long are we to preach to you, how long to invite you, how long to pain you, how long to entreat you, to implore you? Shall this be the day that you will yield? Dost thou say, "I am nothing?" Then Christ is everything. Take him, trust him. I know not a better way of celebrating this day of Ebenezer and thanksgiving, than by some hearts

this day accepting the marriage ring of Christ's love, and being affianced unto the Son of God for ever and ever. God grant it may be so. It shall be so if you pray for it, O true hearts.

And unto God be glory for ever. Amen.

“Great God, we sing that mighty hand,
By which supported still we stand:
The opening year thy mercy shows;
Let mercy crown it till it close.
By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still we are guarded by our God:
By his incessant bounty fed,
By his unerring counsel led.
With grateful hearts the past we own;
The future, all to us unknown,
We to thy guardian care commit,
And peaceful leave before thy feet.
In scenes exalted or depress'd,
Be thou our joy, and thou our rest;
Thy goodness all our hopes shall raise,
Adored through all our changing days.
When death shall interrupt these songs,
And seal in silence mortal tongues,
Our helper God, in whom we trust,
In better worlds our souls shall boast.”

Grace Abounding

A Sermon

(No. 501)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, March 22nd, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“I will love them freely.”—Hosea 14:4.

THIS SENTENCE IS A BODY of divinity in miniature. He who understands its meaning is a theologian, and he who can dive into its fullness is a true Master in divinity. “I will love them freely,” is a condensation of the glorious message of salvation which was delivered to us in Christ Jesus our Redeemer. The sense hinges upon the word “freely.” “I will love them *freely*.” Here is the glorious, the suitable, the divine way by which love streams from heaven to earth. It is, indeed, the only way in which God can love such as we are. It may be that he can love angels because of their goodness; but he could not love *us* for that reason; the only manner in which love can come from God to fallen creatures is expressed in the word “freely.” Here we have spontaneous love flowing forth to those who neither deserved it, purchased it, nor sought after it.

Since the word “freely” is the very key-note of the text, we must observe its common meaning among men. We use the word “freely” for that which is given without money and without price. It is opposed to all idea of bargaining, to all acceptance of an equivalent, or that which might be construed into an equivalent. A man is said to give freely when he bestows his charity on applicants simply on the ground of their poverty, hoping for nothing again. A man distributes freely when, without asking any compensation, he finds it more blessed to give than to receive. Now God’s love comes to men all free and unbought; without our having merit to deserve, or money to procure it. I know it is written, “Come, *buy* wine and milk,” but is it not added “Without money and without price?” “I will love them freely;” that is “I will not accept their works in barter for my love; I will not receive *their* love as a recompense for mine; I will love them, all unworthy and sinful though they be.”

Men give “*freely*” when there is *no inducement*. A great many presents of late have been given to the Princess of Wales, and ‘tis well and good; but the position of the Princess is such that we do not view it as any great liberality to subscribe to a diamond necklace, since those who give are honored by her acceptance. Now the freeness of God’s love is shown in this, that the objects of it are utterly unworthy, can confer no honor, and have no position to be an inducement to bless them. The Lord loves them freely. Some persons are very generous to their own relations, but here, again, they can hardly be said to be free, because the tie of blood constrains them. Their own children, their own brother, their own sister—if men will not be generous here, they must be mean through and through. But the generosity of our God is commended to us in that he loved his enemies, and while we were yet sinners in due time Christ died for us. The word “freely” is “exceeding broad” when used in reference to God’s love to men. He selects those who have not the shadow of a claim upon him, and sets them among the children of his heart.

We use the word “freely,” when a favor is conferred *without its being sought*. It can hardly be said that our King in the old histories pardoned the citizens of Calais freely when his Queen had

first to prostrate herself before him, and with many tears to induce him to be merciful. He was gracious, but he was not free in his grace. When a person has been long dogged by a beggar in the streets, though he may turn round and give liberally to be rid of the clamorous applicant, he does not give “freely.” Remember, with regard to God, that his grace to man was utterly unsought. He does give grace to those who seek it, but none would ever seek that grace unless unsought grace had first been bestowed. Sovereign grace waiteth not for man, neither tarrieth for the sons of men. The love of God goes forth to men when they have no thought after him; when they are hastening after all manner of sin and wantonness. He loves them freely, and as the effect of that love, they then begin to seek his face. But it is not our seeking, our prayers, our tears, which incline the Lord to love us. God loves us at first most freely, without any entreaties or beseechings, and then we come both to entreat and to beseech his favor.

That *which comes without any exertion on our part* comes to us “freely.” The rulers digged the well, and as they digged it they sang “Spring up, O well!” In such a case, where a well must be digged with much labor, the water can hardly be described as rising freely. But yonder, in the laughing valley, the spring gushes from the hill-side, and lavishes its crystal torrent among the shining pebbles. Man pierced not the fountain, he bored not the channel, for, long ere he was born, or ever the weary pilgrim bowed himself to its cooling stream, it had leaped on its joyous way right *freely*, and it will do so, as long as the moon endureth, *freely, freely, freely*. Such is the grace of God. No labor of man procures it; no effort of man can add to it. God is good from the simple necessity of his nature; God is love, simply because it is his essence to be so, and he pours forth his love in plenteous streams to undeserving, ill-deserving, hell-deserving objects, simply because he “will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom will have compassion,” for it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

If you ask an illustration of the word “freely,” *I point to yonder sun*. How freely he scattereth his life-giving beams. Precious as gold are his rays, but he scattereth them like the dust; he sows the earth with orient pearl, and bejewels it with emerald and ruby and sapphire, and all most *freely*. You and I forget to pray for the sun’s light, but it comes at its appointed season; yea, on that blasphemer who curses God, the day ariseth, and the sunlight warms him as much as the most obedient child of the heavenly Father. That sunbeam falls upon the farm of the miser, and upon the field of the churl, and bids the grain of the wicked expand in its genial warmth and produce its harvest. That sun shines into the house of the adulterer, into the face of the murderer, and the cell of the thief. No matter how sinful man may be, yet the light of day descends upon him unasked for and unsought. Such is the grace of God; where it comes it comes not because sought, or deserved, but simply from the goodness of the heart of God, which, like the sun, blesseth as it wills. Mark you the gentle winds of heaven, the breath of God to revive the languishing, *the soft breezes*. See the sick man at the sea-side, drinking in health from the breezes of the salt sea. Those lungs may heave to utter the lascivious song, but the healing wind is not restrained, and whether it be breast of saint or sinner, yet that wind ceaseth not from any. So in gracious visitations, God waiteth not till man is good before he sends the heavenly wind, with healing beneath its wings; even as he pleaseth so it bloweth, and to the most undeserving it cometh. Observe *the rain* which drops from heaven. It falls upon the desert as well as upon the fertile field; it drops upon the rock that will refuse its fertilizing moisture as well as upon the soil that opens its gaping mouth to drink it in with gratitude. See, it falls upon the hard-trodden streets of the populous city, where it is not required,

and where men will even curse it for coming, and it falls not more freely where the sweet flowers have been panting for it, and the withering leaves have been rustling forth their prayers. Such is the grace of God. It does not visit us because we ask it, much less, because we deserve it; but as God wills it, and the bottles of heaven are unstopped, so God wills it, and grace descends. No matter how vile, and black, and foul, and godless, men may be, he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and that free, rich, overflowing goodness of his can make the very worst and least deserving the objects of his best and choicest love.

Do understand me. Let me not leave this point till I have well defined its meaning. I mean this, dear friends: when God says, "I will love them freely," he means that no prayers, no tears, no good works, no almsgivings are an inducement to him to love men, nay, that not only nothing, in themselves, but nothing anywhere else was the cause of his love to them; not even the blood of Christ; not even the groans and tears of his beloved Son. These are the fruits of his love, not the cause of it. He does not love because Christ died, but Christ died because the Father loved. Do remember that this fountain of love has its spring in itself, not in you, nor in me, but only in the Father's own gracious, infinite heart of goodness. "I will love them freely," spontaneously, without any motive *ab extra*, but entirely because I choose to do it.

In the text we have *two great doctrines*. I will *announce the first one; establish it; and then endeavor to apply it.*

I. The first great doctrine is this, that **THERE IS NOTHING IN MAN TO ATTRACT THE LOVE OF GOD TO HIM.**

We have to *establish this doctrine*, and our first argument is found in *the origin of that love*. The love of God to man existed before there was any man. He loved his chosen people before any one of them had been created; nay, before the world had been made upon which man dwells he had set his heart upon his beloved and ordained them unto eternal life. The love of God therefore existed before there was any good thing in man, and if you tell me that God loved men because of the foresight of some good thing in them, I again reply to that, that the same thing cannot be both cause and effect. Now it is quite certain that any virtue which there may be in any man is the result of God's grace. Now if it be the result of grace it cannot be the cause of grace. It is utterly impossible that an effect should have existed before a cause; but God's love existed before man's goodness, therefore that goodness cannot be a cause. Brethren, the doctrine of the antiquity of divine love is graven as with the point of a diamond upon the very forehead of revelation; when the children were not yet born, neither having done good nor evil, the purpose of election still stood; while we were yet like clay in the mass of creatureship, and God had power to make of the same dump a vessel to honor or a vessel to dishonor, he chose to make his people vessels unto honor; this could not possibly have been because of any good thing in them, for they themselves were not, much less their goodness. Our Savior's words—"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," reveal not only the sovereignty but the freeness of divine affection.

Do you not know, dear friends, in the second place, that *the whole plan of divine goodness is entirely opposed to the old covenant of works*. Paul is very strong on this point, where he expressly tells us that if it be of grace it cannot be of works, and if it be of works it cannot be of grace, the two having no possibility of commingling. Our God, speaking by the prophet, says, "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them." The covenant of grace is as wide as the poles asunder from the covenant of works. Now the tenour

of the covenant of works is this—"This do and thou shalt live;" if, then, we do the thing which the covenant of works requires of us we live, and we live as the result of our own doing. But the very opposite must be the case in the covenant of grace. It can never be as the result of anything we do that we are saved under that covenant, or else the two are the same, or at least similar, whereas, the whole Bible through they are set in contradistinction the one against the other, as arranged upon opposite principles, and acting from different springs. Oh! you who think that anything in you can make God love you, stand at the foot of Sinai and learn the only thing that can lead God to accept man on the ground of law, and that is perfect obedience. Read the ten commandments through and see if you can keep one of them in the fullness of its spirit; and I am sure you will be compelled to cry out—"Thy commandment is exceeding broad. Great God, I have sinned." And yet if you would stand on the footing of what you are, you must take the whole ten, and you must keep them throughout an entire life, and never fail in the slightest point, or else abhorred of God you must certainly be. The covenant of grace does not speak on that wise at all. It views man as guilty, and having nothing to merit; and it says, "I will, I will, I will;" it says not "If they will," but "I will and they shall. I will sprinkle pure water upon them and they shall be clean, and from all their iniquities I will cleanse them." That covenant does not look upon man as innocent, but as guilty. "When I passed by I saw them in their blood, and I said live; yea, when I saw them in their blood I said, live." The first covenant was a contract: "Do this and I will do that;" but the next has not the shadow of a bargain in it; it is—"I will bless you, and I will continue to bless you; though you abound in transgressions, yet I will continue to bless till I make you perfect and bring you to my glory at the last." It cannot be, then, that there is anything in man that makes God love him, because the whole plan of the covenant is opposed to that of works.

Thirdly, *the substance of Gods love*—the substance of the covenant which springs from God's love—clearly proves that it cannot be man's goodness which makes God love him. If you should tell me that there was something so good in man that therefore God gave him bread to eat and raiment to put on, I might believe you. If you tell me that man's excellence constrained the Lord to put the breath into his nostrils, and to give him the comforts of this life, I might yield to you. But I see yonder, God himself made man; I see that God, that man, at last fastened to the tree; I see him on the tree expiring in agonies unknown, I hear his awful slliviek,—"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani; "I see the dreadful sacrifice of God's only-begotten Son, who was not spared but freely delivered up for us all, and I feel certain that it would be nothing short of blasphemy if I should admit that man could ever deserve such a gift as the death of Christ. The very angels in heaven with an eternity of obedience, could never have deserved so great a gift as Christ in the flesh dying for them; and oh! shall we who are all over foul and defiled, shall we look to that dear cross, and say, "I deserved that Savior?" Brethren, this were the height of infernal arrogance; let it be far from us; let us rather feel that we could not deserve such love as this, and that if God loves us so as to give his Son for us, it must be from some hidden motive in his own will, it cannot be because of any good thing in us.

Further, if you will remember *the objects of God's love* as well as the substance of it, you will soon see that it could not be anything in them which constrains God to love them. Who are the objects of God's love? Are they Pharisees, the men who fast twice in the week and pay tithes of all they possess? No, no, no. Are they the moralists who touching the law are blameless, and who walk in all the observances of their religion without a slip? No; the publicans and harlots enter the kingdom of heaven before them. Who are they who are the chosen of God? Let the whole tribe

now in heaven speak for themselves, and they will say, “We have washed our roses; (they needed it; they were black,) and we have made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Appeal to any of the saints on earth, and they will tell you that they never could perceive any good thing in themselves. I have searched my own heart I hope with some degree of earnestness, and so far from finding any reason in myself why God should love me, I can find a thousand reasons why he should destroy me, and drive me for ever from his presence. The best thoughts we have are defiled with sin, our very faith is mixed with unbelief; the noblest devotion which we ever paid to God is far inferior to his deserts, and is marred with infirmity and fault. Remember that many of those who are the true servants of God were once the very worst servants of Satan. Does it not surprise you that men who were the companions of the harlot are now saints of the Most high? The drunkard, the blasphemer, the man who defied man’s laws as well as God’s—such were some of us, but we are washed, but we are cleansed, but we are sanctified. I never did meet, and I never expect to meet with any saved soul that would ever for a moment tolerate the thought of there being any goodness in itself to merit God’s esteem. No; vile and full of sin I am, and if thou hast mercy on me, O God, it is because thou wilt, for I merit none.

Further, constantly are we informed in Scripture that *the love of God and the fruit of the love of God are a gift*. “The wages of sin is death, but *the gift of God is eternal life*.” Now, if the Lord stands bargaining with you and with me, and says, “I will give you this if—if—if—” then he does not love freely; but if, on the other hand, it is simply, and purely, and only a gift bestowed as such, not for any recompence afterwards to be given, then the gift is a pure and true gift, and so the text is warranted in saying, “I will love them freely.” Now, the *gift of God is eternal life*, and dear friends, if you and I ever get it, we must obtain it as a free gift from God, but by no means as wages which we have earned, for our poor earnings will bring us death; only God’s gift can yield us life.

Everywhere throughout the Word *the Lord’s love is greatly and wonderfully commended*. We are told that as high as the heavens are above the earth so high are his ways above our ways. Now, if the Lord loved men for some loveliness in them, there would be nothing wonderful in it; you and I can do the same. I hope I can love a man who possesses moral excellence. You feel, each of you, that if a man’s conduct towards you is grateful and good, you cannot but love him, or if you do not, it becomes a fault on your part. With reverence let me say it, if there be something good in man it is no wonder that God should love him; it would be unjust if he did not. If naturally in man there be any virtue, if there be any praise, if there be any commendable repentance, or any acceptable faith, man ought to be loved; this is not a thing to amaze the ages, nor to set the angels singing, nor to move the mountains and hills in astonishment; but for God to love a man who is bad all over; to love him when there is every reason for hating him, when there is not a trace of goodness in him, oh! this is enough to make the rocks break their silence and the hills burst forth into music.

This is the first doctrine. I cannot preach upon it as I would this morning, for my voice is very weak, and the pain of speaking distracts my mind; but it matters not how I preach upon it, for the subject itself is so exceedingly full of comfort to a really awakened soul, that it needs no garnishing of mine: choice dainties need no skill in the carver—their own lusciousness secures them rich acceptance.

But *what is the practical use of it?* To you who are going about to establish your own righteousness, here is a death-blow to your works, and carnal trustings. God will not love you meritoriously. God will love you freely. Wherefore go ye about, then, spending your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not. You may boast as you will,

but you will have to come to God on a par with the worst of the worst; when you do come you will have to be accepted, you that are the best of men, just on the same terms as if you had been the foulest of the foul. Therefore go not about, busy not yourselves with all this fancied righteousness, but come to Jesus as you are, come now, without any works of yours, for you must so come or not at all. God has said, "I will love them freely," and depend upon it he will never love you in any other way. You may think you are toiling to heaven, when you shall be only tunnelling your way through mountains of self-righteousness down to the depths of hell.

This doctrine offers *comfort to those who do not feel fit to come to Christ*. Do you not perceive that the text is a death-blow to all sorts of fitness? "I will love them freely." Now if there be any fitness necessary in you before God will love you then he does not love you freely, at least this would be a mitigation and a drawback to the freeness of it. But it is "I will love you *freely*." You say "Lord, but my heart is so hard." "I will love you freely." "But I do not feel my need of Christ as I could wish." "I will not love you because you feel your need; I will love you freely." "But I do not feel that softening of spirit that I could desire." Remember, the softening of spirit is not a condition, for there are no conditions; the covenant of grace has no conditionality whatever. These are the unconditional, sure mercies of David; so that you without any fitness may come and venture upon the promise of God which was made to you in Christ Jesus, when he said, "He that believeth on him is not condemned." No fitness is wanted; "I will love them freely." Sweep all that lumber and rubbish out of the way! Oh! for grace in your hearts to know that the grace of God is free, is free to you, without preparation, without fitness, without money, and without price!

Nor does the practical use of our doctrine end here. There are some of you who say, "I feel this morning that I am so unworthy; I can well believe that God will bless my mother; that Christ will pity my sister; I can understand how yonder souls can be saved, but I cannot understand how *I* can be; *I* am so unworthy." "I will love them freely." Oh! does not that meet your case? If you were the most unworthy of all created beings, if you had aggravated your sin till you had become the foulest and most vile of all sinners, yet "I will love them freely," puts the worst on an equality with the best, sets you that are the devil's cast-aways, on a par with the most hopeful. There is no reason for God's love in any man, if there is none in you, you are not worse off than the best of men, for there is none in them; the grace and love of God can come as freely to you as they can to those that have long been seeking them, for "I am found of them that sought me not."

Yet once more here. I think this subject *invites backsliders to return*; indeed, the text was specially written for such—"I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely." Here is a son who ran away from home. He enlisted for a soldier. He behaved so badly in his regiment that he had to be drummed out of it. He has been living in a foreign country in so vicious a way that he has reduced his body by disease. His back is covered with rags; his character is that of the vagrant and felon. When he went away he did it on purpose to vex his father's heart, and he has brought his mother's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. One day the young lad receives a letter full of love. His father writes—"Return to me, my child; I will forgive you all; I will love you freely." Now if this letter had said—"If you will humble yourself so much, I will love you; if you will come back and make me such-and-such promises, I will love you;" if it had said, "If you will behave yourself for the future, I will love you,"—I can suppose the young man's proud nature rising; but surely this kindness will melt him. Methinks the generosity of the invitation will at once break his heart, and he will say, "I will offend no longer, I will return at once." Backslider! without any condition you are invited to return. "I am married unto you," saith the Lord. If Jesus ever did love

you he has never left off loving you. You may have left off attending to the means of grace; you may have been very slack at private prayer, but if you ever were a child of God you are a child of God still, and he cries "How can I give thee up? How can I set thee as Admah? How can I make thee as Zeboim? My repentings are kindled together; I am God, and not man; I will return unto him in mercy. Return, backslider, and seek thine injured Father's face. I think I hear a murmur somewhere—"Well, this is very, very, very Antinomian doctrine." Ay, objector, it is such doctrine as you will want one day; it is the only doctrine which can meet the case of really awakened sinners. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly."

II. Since it is written. "I will love them freely," we believe that **NOTHING IN MAN CAN BE AN EFFECTUAL BAR TO GOD'S LOVE.**

This is the same doctrine put in another shape. Nothing in man can be the cause of God's love, so nothing in man can be an effectual hindrance to God's love—I mean such an effectual hindrance as to prevent God from loving man. How shall I prove it? If there be anything in any man which can be a bar to God's grace, then this would have been an effectual hindrance to its coming to any of the human race. All men were in the loins of Adam, and if there were a bar in you to God's love, that would have been in Adam; consequently, being in Adam, it would have been a block to God's love to the race altogether. If there be some sin in you, I say, which can effectually prevent God from showing grace to you, then that was in Adam, seeing you were in the loins of Adam, and it would therefore have been an effectual hindrance to God's grace from the race in any one of its members. Seeing God's grace found no barriers over which it could not leap, no floodgates which it could not burst, no mountains it could not overtop, I am persuaded there is nothing in you why God should not show his grace to you.

Besides, one would think that if there be a bar in any *it would have prevented the salvation of those who are undoubtedly saved.* Mention any sin you like, and I will assure you upon divine authority that men have committed such sins and have yet been saved. Talk of a deed that has blackened the man's character for ever, that deed of foul adultery and murder; yet that did not stop God's love from flowing to David; and even if you have gone that length, and I suppose there is no person here who has gone farther, even that cannot prevent divine love from lighting upon you. As God does not love because there is excellence, so he does not refuse to love because there is sin. Let me select the case of Manasseh; he shed innocent blood very much; he bowed before idols; what was worse, he made his children to pass through the fire to the son of Hinnom, put his own child to death as a sacrifice to the false god, and yet for all that God's love laid hold upon him, and Manasseh became a bright star in heaven, though once as vile as the lost in hell. If there be anything in you, then, that makes you think God cannot love you, I reply, Impossible, for surely your sins do not exceed those of the chief of sinners. Paul says he was the chief of sinners, and he meant it; he spoke by inspiration, and there is no doubt he was. Now if the biggest of sinners has passed through the strait gate, there must be room for the next biggest; if the greatest sinner in the world has been saved, then there is a possibility for you and for me, for we cannot be such great sinners as the very chief of sinners. But I will dare to say that even if we were, even if we could exceed Paul, yet even that could be no barrier; for man's sin, to say the most of it, is but the act of a finite creature, but God's grace is the act of infinite goodness. God forbid that I should depreciate your offenses, they are loathsome, they are hellish in themselves; still they are only a creature's deeds, the deeds of a worm that to-day is and to-morrow is crushed; but the grace, the love, and the pity

of God, oh! these are infinite, eternal, everlasting, boundless, matchless, quenchless, unconquerable, and therefore the grace of God can overcome and prove itself mightier than your guilt and sin. There is no bar, then, or else there would have been a bar in the case of others.

Would it not mar the sovereignty of God if there should be a man in whom there was something that would effectually prevent God's love from flowing to him? Then it would not be, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy;" no, it would be "I will have mercy on those I *can* have mercy on; but there is such-and-such a man, I cannot have mercy on him, for he is gone too far." No, glory be to God for that sentence—"I will have mercy upon whom *I will* have mercy." The devil may say, "What, on that man, on that man! He has gone too far." "Ah!" but says God, "if I will it, he has not gone too far; I will have mercy on him." I do not know that I ever felt more the boundless sovereignty of the grace of God than when I looked that text in the face and saw it—not "I will have mercy on those that are vialing to have it;" or, "I will have mercy on penitents," no—"I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." And so, if God wills to save you, there can be no bar to it, or else that would be a marring and a limiting of the sovereignty of God.

Would not this *be a great slur cast upon the grace of God*? Suppose I could find out a sinner so vile that Jesus Christ could not reach him; why then the devils in hell would take him through their streets as a trophy; they would say, "This man was more than a match for God; his sin was too great for God's grace." What says the Apostle? "Where sin abounded"—that is you, poor sinner;—"where sin abounded"—what sins you plunged into last night, and on other black occasions,—"where sin abounded"—what? Condemnation? Hopeless despair? No, "Where sin abounded *grace did much more abound*." I think I see the conflict in the great arena of the universe. Man piles a mountain of sin, but God will match it, and he upheaves a loftier mountain of grace; man heaps up a still huger hill of sin, but the Lord overtops it with ten times more grace; and so the contest continues till at last the mighty God plucks up the mountains by the roots and buries man's sin beneath them as a fly might be buried beneath an Alp. Abundant sin is no barrier to the superabundant grace of God.

And then, dear friends, *would it not detract glory from the gospel*, if it could be proved that there was some man in whom the gospel could not work its way? Suppose that the gospel which is "worthy of all acceptation" could not meet certain cases. Suppose I picked out twelve men who were so diseased that the gospel remedy could not meet their case; oh! then I think I should stop my mouth from all glorying in the cross. I could no more say with the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," for then it would not be the power of God unto salvation to every one that beheyeth. No, it would be the power of God to all except that dozen. But oh! as often as I come into this pulpit, it gives me joy to know that I have a gospel to preach which is suitable to every case. A friend told me the other day that many notorious characters stole in at times. Thank God for that. "Ah!" said some, "but they come only to laugh." Never mind; thank God if they come. "Oh! but they will make mockery of it." Nay, the Lord knows how to turn mockers into weepers. Let us hope for the worst, and labor for the most hopeless.

The love of God has provided means to meet the extremest case. They are twofold; the power of Christ, and the power of the Spirit. Do you tell me that sin is a barrier? I answer, "All manner of sin and of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men." "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin." The atonement of Christ is capable of removing from men, all sorts, sizes, and dyes of iniquity. "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as wool; though they be red like crimson they shall be whiter than snow." "Ah," cries one, "man's hard-heartedness stands in the way of

God's love." Beloved, the Holy Spirit is ready to meet the case of the hard heart. "Limit not the Holy One of Israel." Is anything too hard for the Lord? You tell me that unbelief is a bar. I answer "No," for cannot the Holy Spirit make the unbelieving believe, yea, if the Holy Spirit once comes into effectual contact with the most unbelieving and obstinate spirit it must believe at once. Look at the jailer, a few minutes ago he had been putting Paul in the stocks. What, what, what, what is this that comes over him? "What must I do to be saved?" "Believe," says the Apostle, and he does believe, and becomes as phant as a child. Out on the men who think that man is master over God! If he willed to stop at this moment the most bloody persecutor, the most filthy and licentious man, if he willed to turn the blackest-hearted atheist into one of the most brilliant of saints, there is nothing in his way to stop him; in a moment omnipotent love can do it; the means are provided, both in the blood of Christ for cleansing, and in the power of the Spirit for renewing the inner man. Therefore, I say it is established beyond doubt, that there is nothing in man which can conquer divine love.

"What is the practical use of this," says one. The practical use of this is to set the gate of mercy wide open. I like always to preach sermons which leave the door of mercy on the jar for the worst of sinners, but this morning I set it wide open. A man has dropped in here who has been thinking for years, "I gave myself up to sin in my youth, and I have gone astray ever since—there is no hope for me." I tell you, soul, all that you have ever done is no bar to God's love to you, for he does not love you because of anything good in you, and that which is black in you cannot prevent his loving you if he so wills it. I tell thee what I would have thee do. I have seen those like unto thee come to the foot of the cross, and they have said—

"Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come."

If thou in thy soul canst now trust the love of God in Christ, thou art saved; no matter whosoever thou mayest be, thou art saved this morning, and thou shalt go out of this house a regenerate soul, for thou hast believed in Jesus, therefore the love of God is come to thee, all thy past life is forgotten and forgiven; all thy past ingratitude, and blasphemy, and sin are cast into the depths of the sea; and, as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed thy transgressions from thee. I have known the time when, if I had heard the sermon of this morning, faint and feeble though it be, I should have danced for joy. I feel an intense inward satisfaction and delight while preaching it, for I believe it is the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Christ died not for the righteous but for sinners. He gave himself for our sins and not for our righteousness; this old Lutheran doctrine—this grand doctrine which shook old Rome to her very foundations, methinks must give poor sinners comfort and peace. I know that many will see nothing in it. Of course, none but the sick see any value in the healing medicine. I know there are some here who will think the sermon is not for them. Oh! may the Spirit of God make some accept of this comfort; but they will not unless the Spirit of God makes them. Too many of us are like foolish patients, who will not take the physician's medicine, and he has need to hold us, and thrust it down before we will take it. This is how the Lord dealeth with many, not against their will, but yet against their will as it used to be, he giveth them the medicine of his grace, and maketh them whole.

To sum up all in one, what I mean is this: there have straggled in here this morning the poor working man, the struggling mechanic, the gay young fop, the man who leads a fast life, the wretch who leads a coarse life, the woman, perhaps, who has gone far astray; I mean to say to such, you

are lost, but the Son of man is come to seek and to save you. I mean to say to you, sons and daughters of moral parents, who are not converted, but perhaps feel yourselves even worse than the immoral, I mean to say to you that you are not past hope yet. God will love you freely, and this is how his love is preached to you—"Whosoever believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." Come as you are; God will accept you as you are. Come as you are, without any preparation or fitness; come as you are, and where the cross is lifted high with the bleeding Son of God upon it, fall flat on your face, accepting the love manifested there, willingly receiving this day the grace which God willingly and freely gives.

As sinners, without any qualification, as sinners, as undeserving sinners, my Lord will receive you graciously and love you freely.

A Jealous God

A Sermon

(No. 502)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, March 29th, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“For the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.”—Exodus 34:14.

THE PASSION OF JEALOUSY IN MAN is usually exercised in an evil manner, but it is not in itself necessarily sinful. A man may be zealously cautious of his honor, and suspiciously vigilant over another, without deserving blame. All thoughtful persons will agree that there is such a thing as virtuous jealousy. Self-love is, no doubt, the usual foundation of human jealousy, and it may be that Shenstone is right in his definition of it as “the apprehension of superiority,” the fear lest another should by any means supplant us; yet the word “*jealous*” is so near akin to that noble word “*zealous*,” that I am persuaded it must have something good in it. Certainly we learn from Scripture that there is such a thing as a godly jealousy. We find the Apostle Paul declaring to the Corinthian Church, “I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy, for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” He had an earnest, cautious, anxious concern for their holiness, that the Lord Jesus might be honored in their lives. Let it be remembered then, that jealousy, like anger, is not evil in itself, or it could never be ascribed to God; his jealousy is ever a pure and holy flame. The passion of jealousy possesses an intense force, it fires the whole nature, its coals are juniper, which have a most vehement flame; it resides in the lowest depths of the heart, and takes so firm a hold that it remains most deeply rooted until the exciting cause is removed; it wells up from the inmost recesses of the nature, and like a torrent irresistibly sweeps all before it; it stops at nothing, for it is cruel as the grave (Cant. 8:6), it provokes wrath to the utmost, for it is the rage of a man, therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance (Proverbs 6:34), and it overthrows everything in the pursuit of its enemy, for “wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before jealousy?” For all these reasons jealousy is selected as some faint picture of that tender regard which God has for His own Deity, honor, and supremacy, and the holy indignation which he feels towards those who violate his laws, offend his majesty, or impeach his character. Not that God is jealous so as to bring him down to the likeness of men, but that this is the nearest idea we can form of what the Divine Being feels—if it be right to use even that word toward him—when he beholds his throne occupied by false gods, his dignity insulted, and his glory usurped by others. We cannot speak of God except by using figures drawn from his works, or our own emotions; we ought, however, when we use the images, to caution ourselves and those who listen to us, against the idea that the Infinite mind is really to be compassed and described by any metaphors however lofty, or language however weighty. We might not have ventured to use the word, “jealousy” in connection with the Most High, but as we find it so many times in Scripture, let us with solemn awe survey this mysterious display of the Divine mind. Methinks I hear the thundering words of Nahum, “God is jealous and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveyeth wrath for his enemies.” My soul be thou humbled before the Lord and tremble at his name!

I. Reverently, let us remember that THE LORD IS EXCEEDINGLY JEALOUS OF HIS DEITY.

Our text is coupled with the command—"Thou shalt worship no other God." When the law was thundered from Sinai, the second commandment received force from the divine jealousy—"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." Since he is the only God, the Creator of heaven and earth, he cannot endure that any creature of his own hands, or fiction of a creature's imagination should be thrust into his throne, and be made to wear his crown. In Ezekiel we find the false god described as "the image of jealousy which provoketh to jealousy," and the doom on Jerusalem for thus turning from Jehovah runs thus, "Mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompense their way upon their head." False gods patiently endure the existence of other false gods. Dagon can stand with Bel, and Bel with Ashtaroah; how should stone, and wood, and silver, be moved to indignation; but because God is the only living and true God, Dagon must fall before his ark; Bel must be broken, and Ashtaroah must be consumed with fire. Thus saith the Lord, "Ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves;" the idols he shall utterly abolish. My brethren, do you marvel at this? I felt in my own soul while meditating upon this matter an intense sympathy with God. Can you put yourselves in God's place for a moment? Suppose that you had made the heavens and the earth, and all the creatures that inhabit this round globe; how would you feel if those creatures should set up an image of wood, or brass, or gold, and cry, "These are the gods that made us; these things give us life." What—a dead piece of earth set up in rivalry with real Deity! What must be the Lord's indignation against infatuated rebels when they so far despise him as to set up a leek, or an onion, or a beetle, or a frog, preferring to worship the fruit of their own gardens, or the vermin of their muddy rivers, rather than acknowledge the God in whose hand their breath is, and whose are all their ways! Oh! it is a marvel that God hath not dashed the world to pieces with thunderbolts, when we recollect that even to this day millions of men have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. With what unutterable contempt must the living God look down upon those idols which are the work of man's hands—"They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: they have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat." God hath longsuffering toward men, and he patiently endureth this madness of rebelhon; but, oh! what patience must it be which can restrain the fury of his jealousy, for he is a jealous God, and brooks no rival. It was divine jealousy which moved the Lord to bring all his plagues on Egypt. Careful reading will show you that those wonders were all aimed at the gods of Egypt. The people were tormented by the very things which they had made to be their deities, or else, as in the case of the murrain, their sacred animals were themselves smitten, even as the Lord had threatened—"Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Jehovah." Was it not the same with ancient Israel? Why were they routed before their enemies? Why was their land so often invaded? Why did famine follow pestilence, and war succeed to famine? Only because "they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was Froth, and greatly abhorred Israel." (Psalm 78:58-59.) How was it that at the last the Lord gave up Jerusalem to the flames, and bade the Chaldeans carry into captivity the remnant of his people? How was it that he abhorred his heritage, and gave up Mount Zion to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles? Did not

Jeremiah tell them plainly that because they had walked after other gods and forsaken Jehovah, therefore he would cast them out into a land which they knew not?

Brethren, the whole history of the human race is a record of the wars of the Lord against idolatry. The right hand of the Lord hath dashed in pieces the enemy and cast the ancient idols to the ground. Behold the heaps of Nineveh! Search for the desolations of Babylon! Look upon the broken temples of Greece! See the ruins of Pagan Rome! Journey where you will, you behold the dilapidated temples of the gods and the ruined empires of their foolish votaries. The moles and the bats have covered with forgetfulness the once famous deities of Chaldea and Assyria. The Lord hath made bare his arm and eased him of his adversaries, for Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

With what indignation, then, must the Lord look down upon that apostate harlot, called *the Romish Church*, when, in all her sanctuaries, there are pictures and images, relics and slivines, and poor infatuated beings are even taught to bow before a piece of bread. In this country, Popish idolatry is not so barefaced and naked as it is in other lands; but I have seen it, and my soul has been moved with indignation like that of Paul on Mars' Hill, when he saw the city wholly to idolatry; I have seen thousands adore the wafer, hundreds bow before the image of the Virgin, scores at prayer before a crucifix, and companies of men and women adoring a rotten bone or a rusty nail, because said to be the relic of a saint. It is vain for the Romanist to assert that he worships not the things themselves, but only the Lord through them, for this the second commandment expressly forbids, and it is upon this point that the Lord calls himself a jealous God. How full is that cup which Babylon must drink; the day is hastening when the Lord shall avenge himself upon her, because her iniquities have reached unto heaven, and she hath blasphemously exalted her Pope into the throne of the Host High, and thrust her priests into the office of the Lamb. Purge yourselves, purge yourselves of this leaven. I charge you before God, the Judge of quick and dead, if ye would not be partakers of her plagues, come out from her more and more, and let your protest be increasingly vehement against this which exalteth itself above all that is called God. Let our Protestant Churches, which have too great a savour of Popery in them, cleanse themselves of her fornications, lest the Lord visit them with fire and pour the plagues of Babylon upon them. Renounce, my brethren, every ceremony which has not Scripture for its warrant, and every doctrine which is not established by the plain testimony of the Word of God. Let us, above all, never by any sign, or word, or deed, have any complicity with this communion of devils, this gathering together of the sons of Behal: and since our God is a jealous God, let us not provoke him by any affinity, gentleness, fellowship, or amity with this Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth.

With what jealousy must the Lord regard the *great mass of the people of this country*, who have another God beside himself! With what indignation doth he look upon many of you who are subject to the prince of the power of the air, the god of this world! To you Jehovah is nothing. God is not in all your thoughts; you have no fear of Him before your eyes. Like the men of Israel, you have set up your idols *in your heart*. Your god is custom, fashion, business, pleasure, ambition, honor. You have made unto yourselves gods of these things; you have said, "These be thy gods, O Israel." Ye follow after the things which perish, the things of this world, which are vanity. O ye sons of men, think not that God is blind. He can perceive the idols in your hearts; he understandeth what be the secret things that your souls lust after; he searcheth your heart, he trieth your reins; beware lest he find you sacrificing to strange gods, for his anger will smoke against you, and his jealousy will be stirred. O ye that worship not God, the God of Israel, who give him not dominion over your

whole soul, and live not to his honor, repent ye of your idolatry, seek mercy through the blood of Jesus, and provoke not the Lord to jealousy any more.

Even *believers* may be reprov'd on this subject. God is very jealous of his deity in the hearts of his own people. Mother, what will he say of you, if that darling child occupies a more prominent place in your love than your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Husband, what shall he say to you, and with what stripes shall he smite you, when your wife reigns as a goddess in your spirit? And wife, thou shouldest love thy husband—thou doest well in so doing; but if thou exaltest him above God, if thou makest him to have dominion over thy conscience, and art willing to forsake thy Lord to please him, then thou hast made to thyself another god, and God is jealous with thee. Ay, and we may thus provoke him with the dead as well as with the living. A grief carried to excess, a grief nurtured until it prevents our attention to duty, a grief which makes us murmur and repine against the will of Providence is sheer rebelhon; it hath in it the very spirit of idolatry; it will provoke the Lord to anger, and he will surely chasten yet again, until our spirit becomes resigned to his rod. “Hast thou not forgiven God yet?” was the language of an old Quaker when he saw a widow who for years had worn her weeds, and was inconsolable in her grief—“Hast thou not forgiven God yet?” We may weep under bereavements, for Jesus wept; but we must not sorrow so as to provoke the Lord to anger, we must not act as if our friends were more precious to us than our God. We are permitted to take solace in each other, but when we carry love to idolatry, and put the creature into the Creator’s place, and rebel, and fret, and bitterly repine, then the Lord hath a rod in his hand, and he will make us feel its weight, for he is a jealous God. I fear there are some professors who put their house, their garden, their business, their skill, I know not what, at seasons into the place of God. It were not consistent with the life of godliness for a man to be perpetually an idolater, but even true believers will sometimes be overcome with this sin, and will have to mourn over it. Brethren, set up no images of jealousy, but like Jacob of old cry to yourselves and to your families, “Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean.” Let me warn those of you who neglect this that if you be the Lord’s people you shall soon smart for it, and the sooner the better for your own salvation; while, on the other hand, to those ungodly persons who continue to live for objects other than divine, let me say, you not only smart in this life by bitter disappointments, but you shall also suffer eternal wrath in the life to come.

Come, let me push this matter home upon your consciences; let me carry this as at point of bayonet. Why, my hearers, there are some of you who never worship God. I know you go up to his house, but then it is only to be seen, or to quiet your conscience by having done your duty. How many of you merchants aim only to accumulate a fortune! How many of you tradesmen are living only for your families! How many young men breathe only for pleasure! How many young women exist only for amusement and vanity. I fear that some among you make your belly your god, and bow down to your own personal charms or comforts. Talk of idolaters! They are here to-day! If we desire to preach to those who break the first and second commandments we have no need to go to Hindostan, or traverse the plains of Africa. They are here. Unto you who bow not before the Lord let these words be given, and let them ring in your ears—“The Lord whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.” Who shall stand before him when once he is angry? When his jealousy burneth like fire and smoketh like a furnace, who shall endure the day of his wrath. Beware, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Dreadful shall it be for you, if at the last you shall behold an angry God sitting in judgment. Pause now and meditate upon your doom, and think you see the Almighty robed in tempest and whirlwind.

“His throne a seat of dreadful wrath,
Girt with devouring flame;
The Lord appears consuming fire,
And Jealous is his name.”
God save you for Jesus’ sake.

II. The Lord IS JEALOUS OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY.

He that made heaven and earth has a right to rule his creatures as he wills. The potter hath power over the clay to fashion it according to his own good pleasure, and the creatures being made are bound to be obedient to their Lord. He has a right to issue commands, he has done so—they are holy, and just, and wise; men are bound to obey, but, alas, they continually revolt against his sovereignty, and will not obey him; nay, there be men who deny altogether that he is lying of kings, and others who take counsel together saying, “Let us break his bands in sunder, and cast away his cords from us.” He that sitteth in the heavens is moved to jealousy by these sins, and will defend the rights of his crown against all comers, for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

This reminds us of *the Lord’s hatred of sin*. Every time we sin, we do as much as say, “I do not acknowledge God to be my sovereign; I will do as I please.” Each time we speak an ill-word we really say, “My tongue is my own, he is not Lord over my lips.” Yea, and everytime the human heart wandereth after evil, and lusteth for that which is forbidden, it attempts to dethrone God, and to set up the Evil One in his place. The language of sin is “Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice; I will not have God to reign over me.” Sin is a deliberate treason against the majesty of God, an assault upon his crown, an insult offered to his throne. Some sins, especially, have rebellion written on their forehead—presumptuous sins, when a man’s conscience has been enlightened, and he knows better, and yet still forsakes the good and follows after evil; when a man’s conscience has been aroused through some judgment, or sickness, or under a faithful ministry; if that man returns, like a dog to his vomit, he has, indeed, insulted the sovereignty of God. But have we not all done this, and are there not some here in particular of whom we once had good hope, but who have turned back again to crooked ways? Are there not some of you who, Sabbath after Sabbath, get your consciences so quickened that you cannot be easy in sin as others are and though you may, perhaps, indulge in sin, yet it costs you very dearly, for you know better? Did I not hear of one who sits in these seats often, but is as often on the ale bench? Did I not hear of another who can sing with us the hymns of Zion, but is equally at home with the lascivious music of the drunkard? Do we not know of some who in their business are anything but what they should be, yet for a show can come up to the house of God? Oh, sirs, oh, sirs, ye do provoke the Lord to jealousy! Take heed, for when he cometh out of his resting-place, and taketh to himself his sword and buckler, who are you that you should stand before the dread majesty of His presence! Tremble and be still! Humble yourselves, and repent of this your sin.

Surely, if sin attacks the sovereignty of God, *self-righteousness is equally guilty of treason*: for as sin boasts, “I will not keep God’s law,” self-righteousness exclaims, “I will not be saved in God’s way; I will make a new road to heaven; I will not bow before God’s grace; I will not accept the atonement which God has wrought out in the person of Jesus; I will be my own redeemer; I will enter heaven by my own strength, and glorify my own merits.” The Lord is very wroth against self-righteousness. I do not know of anything against which his fury burneth more than against this, because this touches him in a very tender point, it insults the glory and honor of his Son Jesus

Christ. Joshua said to the children of Israel when they promised to keep the law—“Ye cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; and he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.” So I may well say to every self-righteous person, “You cannot keep the law, for God is a jealous God,” carefully marking every fault, and just to mark your iniquities; nor will he forgive your iniquities so long as you attempt to win his favor by works of law. Throw away thy self-righteousness, thou proud one; cast it with all other idols to the moles and to the bats, for there is no hope for thee so long as thou dost cling to it. Self-righteousness is in itself the very height and crowning-point of rebelhon against God. For a man to say, “Lord, I have not sinned,” is the gathering-up, the emphasis, the climax of iniquity, and God’s jealousy is hot against it.

Let me add, dear friends, I feel persuaded that *false doctrine*, inasmuch as it touches God’s sovereignty, is always an object of divine jealousy. Let me indicate especially the doctrines of free-will. I know there are some good men who hold and preach them, but I am persuaded that the Lord must be grieved with their doctrine though he forgives them their sin of ignorance. Free-will doctrine—what does it? It magnifies man into God; it declares God’s purposes a nullity, since they cannot be carried out unless men are willing. It makes God’s will a waiting servant to the will of man, and the whole covenant of grace dependent upon human action. Denying election on the ground of injustice it holds God to be a debtor to sinners, so that if he gives grace to one he is bound to do so to all. It teaches that the blood of Christ was shed equally for all men and since some are lost, this doctrine ascribes the difference to man’s own will, thus making the atonement itself a powerless thing until the will of man gives it efficacy. Those sentiments dilute the scriptural description of man’s depravity, and by imputing strength to fallen humanity, rob the Spirit of the glory of his effectual grace: this theory says in effect that *it is* of him that willeth, and of him that runneth, and not of God that showeth mercy. Any doctrine, my brethren, which stands in opposition to this truth—“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” provokes God’s jealousy. I often tremble in this pulpit lest I should utter anything which should oppose the sovereignty of my God; and though you know I am not ashamed to preach the responsibility of man to God—if God be a sovereign, man must be bound to obey him—on the other hand, I am equally bold to preach that God has a right to do what he wills with his own, that he giveth no account of his matters and none may stay his hand, or say unto him, “What doest thou?” I believe that the free-will heresy assails the sovereignty of God, and mars the glory of his dominion. In all faithfulness, mingled with sorrow, I persuade you who have been deluded by it, to see well to your ways and receive the truth which sets God on high, and lays the creature in the dust. “The Lord reigneth,” be this our joy. The Lord is our King, let us obey him and defend to the death the crown rights of the lying of kings, for he is a jealous God.

While tarrying upon this subject, I ought also to remark that *all the boastings of ungodly men*, whenever they exalt themselves, seeing that they are a sort of claim of sovereignty, must be very vexatious to God, the Judge of all. When you glory in your own power, you forget that power belongeth only unto God, and you provoke his jealousy. When kings, parhaments, or synods, trespass upon the sacred domains of conscience, and say to men, “Bow down, that we may go over you”—when we make attempts to lord over another man’s judgment, and to make our own opinions supreme, the Lord is moved to jealousy, for he retains the court of conscience for himself alone to reign in. Let us humbly bow before the dignity of the Most High, and pay our homage at his feet.

“Glory to th’ eternal King,
Clad in majesty supreme!

Let all heaven his praises sing,
 Let all worlds his power proclaim.
 O let my transported soul
 Ever on his glories gaze!
 Ever yield to his control,
 Ever sound his lofty praise!"

Let us crown him every day! Let our holy obedience, let our devout lives, let our hearty acquiescence in all his will, let our reverent adoration before the greatness of his majesty, all prove that we acknowledge him to be King of kings, and Lord of lords, lest we provoke a jealous God to anger.

III. THE LORD IS JEALOUS OF HIS GLORY.

God's glory is the result of his nature and acts. He is glorious in his character, for there is such a store of everything that is holy, and good, and lovely in God, that he must be glorious. The actions which flow from his character, the deeds which are the outgoings of his inner nature, these are glorious too; and the Lord is very careful that all flesh should see that he is a good, and gracious, and just God; and he is mindful, too, that his great and mighty acts should not give glory to others, but only to himself.

How, careful, then, should we be when we do anything for God, and God is pleased to accept of our doings, that we never congratulate ourselves. The minister of Christ should unrobe himself of every rag of praise. "You preached well," said a friend to Jolin Bunyan one morning. "You are too late," said honest Jolin, "the devil told me that before I left the pulpit." The devil often tells God's servants a great many things which they should be sorry to hear. Why, you can hardly be useful in a Sunday School but he will say to you—"How well you have done it!" You can scarcely resist a temptation, or set a good example, but he will be whispering to you—"What an excellent person you must be!" It is, perhaps, one of the hardest struggles of the Christian life to learn this sentence—"Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory." Now God is so jealous on this point that, while he will forgive his own servants a thousand things, this is an offense for which he is sure to chasten us. Let a believer once say, "I am," and God will soon make him say "I am not." Let a Christian begin to boast, "I can do all things," without adding "through Christ which strengtheneth me," and before long he will have to groan, "I can do nothing," and bemoan himself in the dust. Many of the sins of true Christians, I do not doubt, have been the result of their glorifying themselves. Many a man has been permitted by God to stain a noble character and to ruin an admirable reputation, because the character and the reputation had come to be the man's own, instead of being laid, as all our crowns must be laid, at the feet of Christ. Thou mayest build the city, but if thou sayest with Nebuchadnezzar, "Behold this great Babylon which I have builded!" thou shalt be smitten to the earth. The worms which ate Herod when he gave not God the glory are ready for another meal; beware of vain glory!

How careful ought we to be *to walk humbly before the Lord*. The moment we glorify ourselves, since there is room for one glory only in the universe, we set ourselves up as rivals to the Most High. Penitent souls are always accepted, because they are not in God's way; proud souls are always rejected, because they are in God's way. Shall the insect of an hour glorify itself against the Sun which warmed it into life? Shall the potsherd exalt itself above the man that fashioned it upon the wheel? Shall the dust of the desert strive with the whirlwind? Or the drops of the ocean struggle

with the tempest? O thou nothingness and vanity, thou puny mortal called man, humble thyself and reverence thy Great Creator.

Let us see to it *that we never misrepresent God, so as to rob him of his honour*. If any minister shall preach of God so as to dishonor him, God will be jealous against that man. I fear that the Lord hath heavy wrath against those who lay the damnation of man at God's door, for they dishonor God, and he is very jealous of his name. And those, on the other hand, who ascribe salvation to man must also be heavily beneath God's displeasure, for they take from him his glory. Ah, thieves! ah, thieves! will ye dare to steal the crown-jewels of the universe! Whither go ye, whither bear ye the bright pearls which ought to shine upon the brow of Christ? To put them on the brow of man? Stop! stop! for the Lord will not give his glory to another! Give unto the Lord, all ye righteous, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto him the honor that is due unto his name! Any doctrine which does not give all the honor to God must provoke him to jealousy.

Be careful, dear friends, that you do not misrepresent God *yourselves*. You who murmur; you who say that God deals hardly with you, you give God an ill character; when you look so melancholy, worldlings say, "The religion of Jesus is intolerable;" and so you stain the honor of God. Oh, do not do this, for he is a jealous God, and he will surely use the rod upon you if you do.

A flash of holy pleasure crosses my mind. I am glad that he is a jealous God. It is enough to make us walk very carefully, but, at the same time, it should make us very joyful to think that the Lord is very jealous of his own honor. Then, brethren, if we believe in Christ, you and I are safe, because it would dishonor him if we were not; for his own name's sake and for his faithfulness' sake, he will never leave one of his people; since "His honor is engaged to save the meanest of his sheep." Now, if Christ could trifle with his own honor, if he had no jealousy, you and I might be afraid that he would suffer us to perish; but it never shall be. It shall be said on earth and sung in heaven at the last, that God has suffered no dishonorable defeats from the hands of either men or devils. "I chose my people," saith the Eternal Father, "and they are mine now that I make up my jewels." "I bought my people," saith the eternal Son, "I became a surety for them before the Most High, and the infernal hon could not rend the meanest of the sheep." "I quickened my people," saith the Holy Spirit; the temptations of hell could not throw them down; their own corruptions could not overpower them; I have gotten the victory in every one of them, not one of them is lost; they are all brought safely to my right hand." Hide yourselves, then, under the banner of Jehovah's jealousy. It is bloody red, I know; its ensign bears a thunderbolt and a flame of fire; but hide yourselves, hide yourselves under it, for what enemy shall reach you there? If it be to God's glory to save me, I am entrenched behind munitions of stupendous rock. If it would render God inglorious to let me, a poor sinner, descend into hell; if it would open the mouths of devils and make men say that God is not faithful to his promise, then am I secure, for God's glory is wrapped up with my salvation, and the one cannot fail because the other cannot be tarnished. Beloved, let us mind that we be very jealous of God's glory ourselves since he is jealous of it. Let us say with Elijah—"I am very jealous for the Lord God of hosts." May our lives, and conduct, and conversation prove that we are jealous of our hearts lest they should once depart from him; and may we smite with stern and unrelenting hand every sin and every thought of pride that might touch the glory of our gracious God; living to him as living before a jealous God.

IV. In the highest sense, THE LORD IS JEALOUS OVER HIS OWN PEOPLE.

Let me only hint, that human jealousy, although it will exercise itself over man's reputation, rights, and honor, hath one particularly tender place: jealousy guardeth, like an armed man, *the*

marriage-covenant. A suspicion here is horrible. Even good old Jacob, when he came to die, could not look upon his son Reuben without remembering his offense. "He went up to my couch," said the old man—and, as if the remembrance was too painful for him, he hurried on from Reuben to the next. The Lord has been graciously pleased to say of his people, "I am married unto you." The covenant of grace is a marriage-covenant, and Christ's Church has become his spouse. It is here that God's jealousy is peculiarly liable to take fire. Men cannot be God's favourites without being the subjects of his watchfulness and jealousy: that which might be looked over in another will be chastened in a member of Christ. As a husband is jealous of his honor, so is the Lord Jesus much concerned for the purity of his Church.

The Lord Jesus Christ, of whom I now speak, *is very jealous of your love*, O believer. Did he not choose you? He cannot hear that you should choose another. Did he not buy you with his own blood? He cannot endure that you should think you are your own, or that you belong to this world. He loved you with such a love that he could not stop in heaven without you; he would sooner die than that you should perish; he stripped himself to nakedness that he might clothe you with beauty; he bowed his face to shame and spitting that he might lift you up to honor and glory, and he cannot endure that you should love the world, and the things of the world. His love is strong as death towards you, and therefore will be cruel as the grave. He will be as a cruel one towards you if you do not love him with a perfect heart. He will take away that husband; he will smite that child; he will bring you from riches to poverty, from health to sickness, even to the gates of the grave, because he loves you so much that he cannot endure that anything should stand between your heart's love and him. Be careful Christians, you that are married to Christ; remember, you are married to a jealous husband.

He is very *jealous of your trust*. He will not permit you to trust in an arm of flesh. He will not endure that you should hew out broken cisterns, when the overflowing fountain is always free to you. When we come up from the wilderness leaning upon our Beloved, then is our Beloved glad, but when we go down to the wilderness leaning on some other arm; when we trust in our own wisdom or the wisdom of a friend—worst of all, when we trust in any works of our own, he is angry, and will smite us with heavy blows that he may bring us to himself.

He is also very *jealous of our company*. It were well if a Christian could see nothing but Christ. When the wife of a Persian noble had been invited to the coronation of Darius, the question was asked of her by her husband—"Did you not think the king a most beautiful man?" and her answer was—"I cared not to look at the king; my eyes are for my husband only, for my heart is his." The Christian should say the same. There is nothing beneath the spacious arch of heaven comparable to Christ: there should be no one with whom we converse so much as with Jesus. To abide in him only, this is true love; but to commune with the world, to find solace in our comforts, to be loving this evil world, this is vexing to our jealous Lord. Do you not believe that nine out of ten of the troubles and pains of believers are the result of their love to some other person than Christ? Nail me to thy cross, thou bleeding Savior! Put thy thorn-crown upon my head to be a hedge to keep my thoughts within its bound! O for a fire to burn up all my wandering loves. O for a seal to stamp the name of my Beloved indelibly upon my heart! O love divine expel from me all carnal worldly loves, and fill me with thyself!

Dear friends, let this jealousy which should keep us near to Christ *be also a comfort to us*, for if we be married to Christ, and he be jealous of us, depend upon it this jealous husband will let none touch his spouse. Joel tells us that the Lord is jealous for his land, and Zechariah utters the

word of the Lord, “I am jealous for Jerusalem, and for Zion with a great jealousy;” and then he declares that he will punish the heathen. And will he not avenge his own elect who cry unto him day and night? There is not a hard word spoken but the Lord shall avenge it! There is not a single deed done against us, but the strong hand of him who once died but now lives for us, shall take terrible vengeance upon all his adversaries. I am not afraid for the Church of God! I tremble not for the cause of God! Our jealous Husband will never let his Church be in danger, and if any smite her he will give them double for every blow. The gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church, but she shall prevail against the gates of hell. Her jealous Husband shall roll away her shame; her reproach shall be forgotten; her glory shall be fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, for he that is jealous of himself is jealous for her fair fame. The subject is large and deep; let us prove that we understand it, by henceforth walking very carefully; and if any say “Why are you so precise?” let this be our answer—“I serve a jealous God.”

Death and Life in Christ

A Sermon

(No. 503)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, April 5th, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Romans 6:8-11.

THE apostles never traveled far from the simple facts of Christ's life, death, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and second advent. These things, of which they were the witnesses, constituted the staple of all their discourses. Newton has very properly said that the two pillars of our religion are, the work of Christ for us, and his work in us by the Holy Spirit. If you want to find the apostles, you will surely discover them standing between these two pillars; they are either discoursing upon the effect of the passion in our justification, or its equally delightful consequence in our death to the world and our newness of life. What a rebuke this should be to those in modern times who are ever straining after novelties. There may be much of the Athenian spirit among congregations, but that should be no excuse for its being tolerated among ministers; we, of all men, should be the last to spend our time in seeking something new. Our business, my brethren, is the old labor of apostolic tongues, to declare that Jesus, who is the same yesterday to-day and for ever. We are mirrors reflecting the transactions of Calvary, telescopes manifesting the distant glories of an exalted Redeemer. The nearer we keep to the cross, the nearer, I think, we keep to our true vocation. When the Lord shall be pleased to restore to his Church once more a fervent love to Christ, and when once again we shall have a ministry that is not only flavoured with Christ, but of which Jesus constitutes the sum and substance, then shall the Churches revive—then shall the set time to favor Zion come. The goodly cedar which was planted by the rivers of old, and stretched out her branches far and wide, has become in these modern days like a tree dwarfed by Chinese art; it is planted by the rivers as aforetime, but it does not flourish, only let God the Holy Spirit give to us once again the bold and clear preaching of Christ crucified in all simplicity and earnestness, and the dwarf shall swell into a forest giant, each expanding bud shall burst into foliage, and the cedar shall tower aloft again, until the birds of the air shall lodge in the branches thereof. I need offer you no apology, then, for preaching on those matters which engrossed all the time of the apostles, and which shall shower unnumbered blessings on generations yet to come.

I. THE FACTS REFERRED TO IN THESE FOUR VERSES CONSTITUTE THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL WHICH WE PREACH.

1. The first fact here very clearly indicated is *that Jesus died*. He who was divine, and therefore immortal, bowed his head to death. He whose human nature was allied to the omnipotence of his divine nature, was pleased voluntarily to submit himself to the sword of death. He who was pure and perfect, and therefore deserved not death, which is the wages of sin, nevertheless condescended

for our sake to yield himself up to die. This is the second note in the Gospel scale. The first note is incarnation, Jesus Christ became a man; angels thought this worthy of their songs, and made the heavens ring with midnight melodies. The second note is this, I say, that, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. He died as *a sacrifice*. Methinks, after many lambs from the flocks of men had poured out their blood at the foot of the altar, it was a strange spectacle to see God's Lamb brought to that same altar to be sacrificed. He is without spot or blemish, or any such thing. He is the firstling of the flock; he is the only one of the Great Master; a right royal, heavenly lamb. Such a Lamb had never been seen before. He is the Lamb who is worshipped in heaven, and who is to be adored world without end. Will that sacred head condescend to feel the axe? Will that glorious victim really be slain? Is it possible that God's Lamb will actually submit to die? He does so without a struggle; he is dumb in the shambles before the slaughterers; he gives up the warm blood of his heart to the hand of the executioner, that he might expiate the wrath of God. Tell it. Let heaven ring with music, and let hell be filled with confusion! Jesus, the Eternal Son of God, the Lamb of Jehovah's Passover, died. His hands were pierced; and his heart was broken; to prove how surely the spear had struck the mark, the vital fluid flowed in a double flood, even to the ground:—Jesus died. If there were any doubt about this, there were doubt about your salvation and mine. If there were any reason to question this fact, then we might question the possibility of salvation. But Jesus died, and sin is put away. The sacrifice smokes to heaven; Jehovah smelleth a sweet savor, and is pleased through Christ the victim to accept the prayers, the offerings, and the persons of his people. Nor did he die as a victim only. He died as *a substitute*. We were drawn as soldiers for the great warfare, and we could not go, for we were feeble, and should have fallen in the battle, and have left our bones to be devoured of the dogs of hell. But he, the mighty Son of God, became the substitute for us; entered the battle-field; sustained the first charge of the adversary in the wilderness; three times he repulsed the grim fiend and all his host, smiting his assailants with the sword of the Spirit, until the enemy fled, and angels waited upon the weary Victor. The conflict was not over, the enemy had but retired to forge fresh artillery and recruit his scattered forces for a yet more terrible affray. For three years the great Substitute kept the field against continual onslaughts from the advance guard of the enemy, remaining conqueror in every skirmish. No adversary dared to show his face, or if he shot an arrow at him from a distance, our substitute caught the arrow on his shield, and laughed his foes to scorn. Devils were cast out of many that were possessed; whole legions of them were compelled to find refuge in a herd of swine; and Lucifer himself fell like lightning from the heaven of his power. At last the time came when hell had gathered up all its forces, and now was also come the hour when Christ, as our substitute, must carry his obedience to the utmost length; he must be obedient unto death. He has been a substitute up till now; will he now throw down his vicarious character? Will he now renounce our responsibilities, and declare that we may stand for ourselves? Not he. He undertook, and must go through. Sweating great drops of blood, he nevertheless flinches not from the dread assault. Wounded in hands and in feet he still maintained his ground, and though, for obedience sake, he bowed his head to die, yet in that dying he slew death, put his foot upon the dragons' neck, crushed the head of the old serpent, and beat our adversaries as small as the dust of the threshing-floor. Yes, the blessed Substitute has died. I say if there were a question about this, then *we* might have to die, but inasmuch as he died for us, the believer shall not die. The debt is discharged to the utmost farthing; the account is cleared; the balance is struck; the scales of justice turn in our favor; God's sword is sheathed for ever, and the blood of Christ has sealed it in its

scabbard. We are free, for Christ was bound; we live, for Jesus died. Dying thus as a sacrifice and as a substitute, it is a comfort to us to know that he also died as *Mediator between God and man*. There was a great gulf fixed, so that if we would pass to God we could not, neither could he pass to us if he would condescend to do so. There was no way of filling up this gulf, unless there should be found one who, like the old Roman, Curtius, would leap into it. Jesus comes, arrayed in his pontifical garments, wearing the breast-plate, bearing the ephod, a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec: his kingly character is not forgotten, for his head is adorned with a glittering crown, and o'er his shoulders he bears the prophet's mantle. How shall I describe the matchless glories of the prophet-king, the royal priest? Will he throw himself into the chasm? He will. Into the grave he plunges, the abyss is closed! The gulf is bridged, and God can have communion with man! I see before me the heavy veil which shields from mortal eyes the place where God's glory shineth. No man may touch that veil or he must die. Is there any man found who can rend it?—that man may approach the mercy-seat. O that the veil which parts our souls from him that dwelleth between the cherubims could be torn throughout its utmost length! Strong archangel, wouldest thou dare to rend it? Shouldest thou attempt the work, thine immortality were forfeited, and thou must expire. But Jesus comes, the King Immortal, Invisible, with his strong hands he rends the veil from top to bottom, and now men draw nigh with confidence, for when Jesus died a living way was opened. Sing, O heavens, and rejoice O earth! There is now no wall of partition, for Christ has dashed it down! Christ has taken away the gates of death, posts and bars, and all, and like another Samson carried them upon his shoulders far away. This, then, is one of the great notes of the Gospel, the fact that Jesus died. Oh! ye who would be save'd, believe that Jesus died; believe that the Son of God expired; trust that death to save you, and you are saved. 'Tis no great mystery; it needs no learned words, no polished plivases; Jesus died; the sacrifice smokes; the substitute bleeds; the Mediator fills up the gap; Jesus dies; believe and live.

2. But *Jesus rises*: this is no mean part of the Gospel. He dies; they lay him in the new sepulchre; they embalm his body in spices; his adversaries are careful that his body shall not be stolen away; the stone, the seal, the watch, all prove their vigilance. Aha! Aha! What do ye, men? Can ye imprison immortality in the tomb! The fiends of hell, too, I doubt not, watched the sepulchre, wondering what it all could mean. But the third day comes, and with it the messenger from heaven. He touches the stone; it rolls away; he sits upon it, as if he would defy the whole universe to roll that stone back again. Jesus awakes, as a mighty man from his slumber; unwraps the napkin from his head and lays it by itself; unwinds the cerements in which love had wrapped him, and puts them by themselves; for he had abundant leisure; he was in no haste; he was not about to escape like a felon who bursts the prison, but like one whose time of jail-deliverance has come, and lawfully and leisurely leaves his cell; he steps to the upper air, bright, shining, glorious, and fair. He lives. He died once, *but he rose again from the dead*. There is no need for us to enlarge here. We only pause to remark that this is one of the most jubilant notes in the whole gospel scale; for see, brethren, the rich mysteries, which, like the many seeds of the pomegranate, are all enclosed in the golden apple of resurrection. Death is overcome. There is found a man who by his own power was able to struggle with death, and hurl him down. The grave is opened; there is found a man able to dash back its bolts and to rifle its treasures; and thus, brethren, having delivered himself, he is able also to deliver others. Sin, too, was manifestly forgiven. Christ was in prison as a hostage, kept there as a surety; now that he is suffered to go free, it is a declaration on God's behalf that he has nothing against us; our substitute is discharged; *we* are discharged. He who undertook to pay our debt is suffered to

go free; *we* go free in him. "He rose again for our justification." Nay more, inasmuch as he rises from the dead, he gives us a pledge that hell is conquered. This was the great aim of hell to keep Christ beneath its heel. "Thou shalt bruise his heel." They had gotten the heel of Christ, his mortal flesh beneath their power, but that bruised heel came forth unwounded; Christ sustained no injury by his dying; he was as glorious, even in his human nature, as he was before he expired. "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy One to see corruption." Beloved, in this will we triumph, that hell is worsted; Satan is put to confusion, and all his hosts are fallen before Immanuel. Sinner, believe this; it is the Gospel of thy salvation. Believe that Jesus of Nazareth rose again from the dead, and trust him, trust him to save thy soul. Because he burst the gates of the grave, trust him to bear thy sins, to justify thy person, to quicken thy spirit, and to raise thy dead body, and verily, verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt be saved.

3. We now strike a third note, without which the gospel were not complete. Inasmuch as Jesus died, *he is now living*. He does not, after forty days, return to the grave; he departs from earth, but it is by another way. From the top of Olivet he ascends until a cloud receives him out of their sight. And now at this very day he lives. There at his Father's right hand he sits, bright like a sun; clothed in majesty; the joy of all the glorified spirits; his Father's intense delight. There he sits, Lord of Providence; at his girdle swing the keys of heaven, and earth, and hell. There he sits, expecting the hour when his enemies shall be made his footstool. Methinks I see him, too, as he lives to intercede. He stretches his wounded hands, points to his breastplate bearing the names of his people, and for Zion's sake he doth not hold his peace, and for Jerusalem's sake he doth not rest day nor night, but ever pleadeth—"Oh God! bless thy heritage; gather together thy scattered ones; I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." Believer, this it a cluster of camphire to thee, a bundle of myrrh—be thou comforted exceedingly.

"He lives! the great Redeemer lives!

What joy the blest assurance gives!"

Trembling penitent, let a living Savior cheer thee. Exercise faith in him who only hath immortality. He lives to hear thy prayer; cry to him, he lives to present that prayer before his Father's face. Put yourself in his hands; he lives to gather together those whom he bought with his blood, to make those the people of his flock who were once the people of his purchase. Sinner, dost thou believe this as a matter of fact? If so, rest thy soul on it, and make it shine as a matter of confidence, and then thou art saved.

4. One more note, and our gospel-song need not rise higher. Jesus died; he rose; he lives; and *he lives for ever*. He lives for ever. He shall not die again. "Death hath no more dominion over him." Ages shall follow ages, but his raven locks shall never be blanched with years. "Thou hast the dew of thy youth." Disease may visit the world and fill the graves, but no disease or plague can touch the immortal Savior. The shock of the last catastrophe shall shake both heaven and earth, until the stars shall fall like withered fig-leaves from the tree, but nothing shall move the unchanging Savior. He lives for ever. There is no possibility that he should be overcome by a new death.

"No more the bloody spear,

The cross and nails no more;

For hell itself shakes at his name,

And all the heavens adore."

Would it not be a strange doctrine indeed if any man should dream that the Son of God would again offer his life a sacrifice. He dieth no more. This, too, reveals another part of our precious

gospel, for now it is certain, since he lives for ever, that no foes can overcome him. He has so routed his enemies and driven his foes off the battle-field, that they will never venture to attack him again. This proves, too, that his people's eternal life is sure. Let Jesus die, and his people die. Let Christ leave heaven, and, O ye glorified ones! ye must all vacate your thrones, and leave your crowns without heads to wear them, and your harps untouched by fingers that shall wake them to harmony. He lives for ever. Oh! seed of Abraham, ye are saved with an everlasting salvation by the sure mercies of David. Your standing in earth and heaven has been confirmed eternally. God is honored, saints are comforted, and sinners are cheered, for "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Now I would to God that on one of these four anchor-holds your faith might be able to get rest. *Jesus died*, poor trembler; if he died and took thy griefs, will not his atonement save thee? Rest here. Millions of souls have rested on nothing but Jesus' death, and this is a granite foundation; no storms of hell can shake it. Get a good handhold on his cross; hold it, and it will hold you. You cannot depend on his death and be deceived. Try it; taste and see, and you shall find that the Lord is good, and that none can trust a dying Savior without being with him in Paradise. But if this suffice you not, *he rose again*. Fasten upon this. He is proved to be victor over your sin and over your adversary; can you not, therefore, depend upon him? Doubtless there have been thousands of saints who have found the richest consolation from the fact that Jesus rose again from the dead. He rose again for our justification. Sinner, hang on that. Having risen *he lives*. He is not a dead Savior, a dead sacrifice. He must be able to hear our plea and to present his own. Depend on a living Savior; depend on him now. *He lives for ever*, and therefore it is not too late for him to save you. If thou criest to him he will hear thy prayer, even though it be in life's last moment, for he lives for ever. Though the ends of the earth were come, and you were the last man, yet he ever lives to intercede before his Father's face. Oh! gad not about to find any other hope! Here are four great stones for you; build your hope on these; you cannot want surer foundations—he dies, he rises, he lives, he lives for ever. I tell thee, Soul, this is my only hope, and though I lean thereon with all my weight it bends not. This is the hope of all God's people, and they abide contented in it. Do thou, I pray thee, now come and rest on it. May the Spirit of God bring many of you to Christ. We have no other gospel. You thought it a hard thing, a scholarly thing, a matter that the college must teach you, that the university must give you. It is no such matter for learning and scholarship. Your little child knows it, and your child may be saved by it. You without education, you that can scarce read in the book, you can comprehend this. He dies; there is the cross. He rises; there is the open tomb. He lives; there is the pleading Savior. He lives for ever; there is the perpetual merit. Depend on him! Put your soul in his hand and you are saved.

If I have brought you under the first head of my discourse to a sufficient height; you can now take another step, and mount to something higher; I do not mean higher as to real value, but higher as a matter of knowledge, because it follows upon the fact as a matter of experience.

II. The great facts mentioned in our text represent THE GLORIOUS WORK WHICH EVERY BELIEVER FEELS WITHIN HIM.

In the text we see death, resurrection, life, and life eternal. You observe that the Apostle only mentions these to show our share in them. I will read the text again—"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once;

but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye yourselves also to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Well, then, it seems that as Christ was, so we also are *dead*. We are dead to sin because sin can *no more condemn* us. All the sins which God's people have ever committed dare not accuse, much less can they condemn those for whom Jesus died. Sin can curse an unbeliever, but it has no power so much as to mutter half a curse against a man in Christ. I cannot claim a debt of a dead debtor, and although I be a debtor to the law, yet since I am dead, the law cannot claim anything of me, nor can sin inflict any punishment upon me. He that is dead, as says the preceding verse, is freed from sin; being dead to sin we are free from all its jurisdiction; we fear not its curse; we defy *its power*. The true believer in the day when he first came to Christ died to sin as to its power. Sin had been sitting on a high throne in his heart, but faith pulled the tyrant down and rolled him in the dust, and though it still survives to vex us, yet its reigning power is destroyed. From the day of our new birth, if we be indeed true Christians, we have been dead to all sin's pleasures. Madame Bubble can no longer bewitch us. The varnish and gilt have been worn off from the palaces of sin. We defy sin's most skillful enchantments; it might warble sweetest music, but the dead ear is not to be moved by melodies. Keep thy bitter sweets, O earth, for those who know no better delicacies; our mouths find no flavour in your dainties. We are dead to sin's bribes. We curse the gold that would have bought us to be untruthful, and abhor the comforts which might have been the reward of iniquity. We are dead to its threatenings, too. When sin curses us, we are as little moved by its curses as by its promises. A believer is mortified and dead to the world. He can sing with Cowper—

“I thirst, but not as once I did
 The vain delights of earth to share;
 Thy wounds, Emmanuel all forbid
 That I should seek my pleasures there.
 It was the sight of thy dear cross
 First wean'd my soul from earthly things;
 And taught me to esteem as dross
 The mirth of fools and pomp of kings.”

I am compelled, however, to say that this mortification is not complete. We are not so dead to the world as we should be. Instead of saying here what the Christian is, I think I may rather say what he should be, for where am I to look for men that are dead to the world now-a-days? I see professing Christians quite as fond of riches; I see them almost as fond of gaiety and vanity. Do I not see those who wear the name of Jesus whose dress is as full of vanity as that of the worldling; whose conversation has no more savor of Christ in it than that of the open sinner? I find many who are conformed to this world, and who show but little renewing of their minds. Oh! how slight is the difference now-a-days between the Church and the world! We ought to be, in a spiritual sense, evermore Dissenters—dissenting from the world, standing out and protesting against it. We must be to the world's final day Nonconformists, not conforming to its ways and vanities, but walking without the camp, bearing Christ's reproach. Do some of you recollect the day when you died to the world? Your friends thought you were mad. They said you knew nothing of life, so your ungodly friends put you in the sepulchre, and others of them rolled a great stone against you. They from that day put a ban upon you. You are not asked out now where you once were everybody. The seal is put upon you; they call you by some opprobrious epithet, and so far as the world is concerned, you are like the dead Christ; you are put into your grave, and shut out from the world's life. They

do not want you any more at their merry-makings, you would spoil the party; you have now become such a Methodist, such a mean hypocrite, as they put it, that they have buried you out of sight, and rolled back the stone, and sealed it, and set watchers at the door to keep you there. Well, and what a blessed thing that is, for if you be dead with Christ you shall also live with him.

If we be thus dead with Christ, let us see that we *live with him*. It is a poor thing to be dead to the world unless we are alive unto God. Death is a negative, and a negative in the world is of no great use by itself. A Protestant is less than a nobody if he only protests against a wrong; we want a proclaimer, one who proclaims the truth as well as protests against error. And so, if we be dead to sin we must have, also, the life of Christ, and I trust, beloved, we know, and it is not a matter of theory to us—I trust we know that in us there is a new life to which we were strangers once. To our body and our soul there has been superadded a spirit, a spark of spiritual life. Just as Jesus had a new life after death, so have we a new life after death, wherewith I trust we rise from the grave. But we must prove it. Jesus proved his resurrection by infallible signs. You and I, too, must prove to all men that we have risen out of the grave of sin. Perhaps our friends did not know us when we first rose from the dead. Like Mary, they mistook us for somebody else. They said, “What! Is this Wilham who used to be such a hectoring, proud, ill-humoured, domineering fellow? Can he put up with our jokes and jeers so patiently?” They supposed us to be somebody else, and they were not far from the mark, for we were new creatures in Christ Jesus. We talked with some of our friends, and they found our conversation so different from what it used to be that it made their hearts burn within them, just as Jesus Christ’s disciples when they went to Emmaus. But they did not know our secret; they were strangers to our new life. Do you recollect, Christians, how you first revealed yourselves unto your brethren, the Church? In the breaking of bread they first knew you. That night when the right-hand of fellowship was given to you the new life was openly recognized, and they said—“Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?” I trust, in resurrection-life you desire to prove to all men that this is not the common life you lived before, a life which made you serve the flesh and the lusts thereof; but that you are living now with higher aims, and purer intentions, by a more heavenly rule, and with the prospect of a diviner result. As we have been dead with Christ, dear brethren, I hope we have also, in our measure, learned to live with him.

But now, remember, *Christ lives for ever, and so do we*. Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. The fourteenth verse is wonderfully similar—“Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Sin made us die once in Adam, but we are not to be slain by it again. If Christ could die now, we could die, but since Christ can never die again, so the believer can never again go back to his old sin. He dies to sin no more; he lives, and sin hath no more dominion over him. Oh! this is a delightful theme! I know not how to express the joy my own heart feels at the sense of security arising from the fact that Christ dies no more. Death hath no more dominion over him; and sin hath no more dominion over me, if I be in Christ. Suppose, my brethren, suppose for a moment that Christ could die again. Bring out your funeral music! Let the muffled drums beat the Dead march! Let the heavens be clothed in sackcloth, and let the verdant earth be robed in blackness, for the atonement, earth’s great hope, is incomplete! Christ must die again. The adversaries we thought were routed have gathered their strength again. Death is not dead; the grave is not open; there will be no resurrection! The saints tremble; even in heaven they fear and quake; the crowns upon glorified heads are trembling; the hearts that have been overflowing with eternal bliss are filled with anxiety,

for the throne of Christ is empty; angels suspend their songs; the howlings of hell have silenced the shouts of heaven: the fiends are holding high holiday, and they sliviek for very joy—"Jesus dies again! Jesus dies again! Prepare your arrows! Empty your Quivers! Come up, Ye legions of hell! The famous conqueror must fight, and bleed, and die again, and we shall overcome him yet!" God is dishonored, the foundations of heaven are removed, and the eternal throne quivers with the shock of Christ subjected to a second death! Is it blasphemy to suppose the case? Yet, my brethren, it were equal blasphemy to suppose a true believer going back again to his old lusts and dying again by sin, for that were to suppose that the atonement were incomplete. I can prove that it involves the very same things; it supposes an unfinished sacrifice, for if the sacrifice be finished, then those for whom it was offered must be saved. It supposes hell triumphant—Christ had bought the soul, and the spirit had renewed it, but the devil wipes away the blood of Christ, expels the spirit of the living God, and gets to himself the victory. A saint perish! Then God's promise is not true, and Christ's word is false—"I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish;" then the foundations are removed; eternal justice is a name, and the divine honesty is suspected; the purposes of God are frustrated, and the crown of sovereignty rolls in the mire. Weep angels! Be astonished, O heavens! Rock, O ye hills with earthquake! and hell come up and hold riot! for God himself has ceased to be God, since his people perish! "Because I live ye shall live also" is a divine necessity, and if dominion can ever be had by sin over a believer again, then, mark you, death can again have dominion over Christ; but that is impossible; therefore rejoice and be glad, ye servants of God.

You will notice, that as they live, so, like Jesus Christ, *they live unto God*. This completes the parallel. "In that he liveth he liveth unto God." So do we. The forty days which Christ spent on earth he lived unto God, comforting his saints, manifesting his person, giving forth gospel precepts. For the few days we have to live here on earth we must live to comfort the saints, to set forth Christ, and to preach the gospel to every creature. And now that Christ has ascended he lives unto God; what does that mean? He lives, my brethren, to manifest the divine character. Christ is the permanent revelation of an invisible God. We look at Christ and we see justice, truth, power, love; we see the whole of the divine attributes in him. Christian, you are to live unto God; God is to be seen in you; you are to show forth the divine bowels of compassion, longsuffering, tenderness, kindness, patience; you are to manifest God; living unto God. Christ lives unto God, for he completes the divine purpose by pleading for his people, by carrying on his people's work above. You are to live for the same, by preaching, that sinners may hear and that the elect may live; by teaching that the chosen may be saved; teaching by your life, by your actions, that God's glory may be known, and that his decrees may be fulfilled. Jesus lives unto God, delighting himself in God. The immeasurable joy of Christ in his Father no tongue can tell. Live in the same way, Christian. Delight thyself in the Lord! Be blessed; be happy; rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice. Our Redeemer lives unto God, that is he lives in constant fellowship with God. Cannot you do so too by the Holy Spirit? You are dead to sin; see to it that you live for ever in fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Now I have been talking riddles to some of you. How many of you understand these things? If any are troubled because they understood the first part and they do trust in Christ's death, but they do not understand the second part—ah! beloved, you shall comprehend one of these days; if you are resting on Christ's death, that death shall yet be made mighty in you. But you that have known something of this, I pray you struggle after more. Ask the Lord to mortify you altogether, to fill

you with the divine life, and to help you to persevere unto the end. Pray that you may live unto God and unto God alone.

III. Having brought you thus far, there is only one other step to take, and then we have done; let us notice that the facts of which we have spoken are PLEDGES OF THE GLORY WHICH IS TO BE REVEALED IN US.

Christ died. Possibly we shall die. Perhaps we shall not; we may be alive and remain at the coming of the Son of man; but it may be we shall die. I do not think we should be so certain of death as some Christians are, because the Lord's coming is much more certain than our dying. Our dying is not certain, for he may come before we die. However, suppose we shall die: Christ rose, and so shall we.

“What though our inbred sins require
Our flesh to see the dust,
Yet as the Lord our Savior rose,
So all his followers must.”

Do not, my brethren, think of the cemetery with tears, nor meditate upon the coffin and the shroud with gloomy thoughts. You only sojourn there for a little season, and to you it will not appear a moment. Your body will sleep, and if men sleep all through a long night it only seems an hour to them, a very short moment. The sleeping-time is forgotten, and to your sleeping-body it will seem no time at all, while to your glorified soul it will not seem long because you will be so full of joy that a whole eternity of that joy would not be too long. But you shall rise again. I do not think we get enough joy out of our resurrection. It will probably be our happiest moment, or rather the beginning of the happiest life that we shall ever know. Heaven is not the happiest place. Heaven at present is happy, but it is not the perfection of happiness, because there is only the soul there, though the soul is full of pleasure; but the heaven that is to be when body and soul will both be there surpasses all thought. Resurrection will be our marriage-day. Body and soul have been separated, and they shall meet again to be re-married with a golden ring, no more to be divorced, but as one indissolubly united body to go up to the great altar of immortality, and there to be espoused unto Christ for ever and ever. I shall come again to this flesh, no longer flesh that can decay, no longer bones that ache—I shall come back to these eyes and these ears, all made channels of new delight. Say not this is a materialistic view of the matter. We are at least one-half material, and so long as there is material about us we must always expect joy that shall not only give spiritual but even material delight to us. This body shall rise again. “Can these dry bones live?” is the question of the unbeliever. “They must live,” is the answer of faith. Oh! let us expect our end with joy, and our resurrection with transport. Jesus was not detained a prisoner, and therefore no worm can keep us back, no grave, no tomb can destroy our hope. Having he lives, and we shall rise to live for ever. Anticipate, my brethren, that happy day. No sin, no sorrow, no care, no decay, no approaching dissolution! Be lives for ever in God: so shall you and I; close to the Eternal; swallowed up in his brightness, glorified in his glory, overflowing with his love! I think at the very prospect we may well say—

“Oh! long-expected day begin,
Dawn on these realms of woe and sin.”

We may well cry to him to bid his chariots hasten and bring the joyous season! He comes, he comes, believer! Rejoice with joy unspeakable! Thou hast but a little time to wait, and when thou hast fallen asleep thou shalt leap

“From beds of dust and silent clay,
To realms of everlasting day;”
and thou,
“Far from a world of grief and sin
With God eternally shut in,
Shalt be for ever blest!”
May the Lord add his blessing, for Jesu’s sake. Amen.

I Know That My Redeemer Liveth

A Sermon

(No. 504)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, April 12th, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”—Job 19:25-27.

THE HAND OF GOD has been upon us heavily this week. An aged deacon, who has been for more than fifty years a member of this Church, has been removed from our midst; and a sister, the beloved wife of another of our Church-officers, a member for nearly the same term of years, has fallen asleep. It is not often that a Church is called to sorrow over the departure of two such venerable members—let not our ears be deaf to such a double admonition to prepare to meet our God. That they were preserved so long, and upheld so mercifully for so many years, was not only a reason for gratitude to them, but to us also. I am, however, so averse to the preaching of what are called *funeral sermons*, that I forbear, lest I appear to eulogize the creature, when my only aim should be to magnify the grace of God.

Our text deserves our profound attention; its preface would hardly have been written had not the matter been of the utmost importance in the judgment of the patriarch who uttered it. Listen to Job's remarkable desire: “Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!” Perhaps, hardly aware of the full meaning of the words he was uttering, yet his holy soul was impressed with a sense of some weighty revelation concealed within his words; he therefore desired that it might be recorded in a book; he has had his desire: the Book of books embalms the words of Job. He wished to have them graven on a rock; cut deep into it with an iron pen, and then the lines inlaid with lead; or he would have them engraven, according to the custom of the ancients, upon a sheet of metal, so that time might not be able to eat out the inscription. He has not had his desire in that respect, save only that upon many and many a sepulchre those words of Job stand recorded, “I know that my redeemer liveth.” It is the opinion of some commentators that Job, in speaking of the rock here, intended his own rock-hewn sepulchre, and desired that this might be his epitaph; that it might be cut deep, so that ages should not wear it out; that when any asked, “Where does Job sleep?” as soon as they saw the sepulchre of the patriarch of Uz, they might learn that he died in hope of resurrection, resting upon a living Redeemer. Whether such a sentence adorned the portals of Job's last sleeping-place we know not; but certainly no words could have been more fitly chosen. Should not the man of patience, the mirror of endurance, the pattern of trust, bear as his memorial this golden line, which is as full of all the patience of hope, and hope of patience, as mortal language can be? Who among us could select a more glorious motto for his last escutcheon? I am sorry to say that a few of those who have written upon this passage cannot see Christ or the resurrection in it at all. Albert Barnes, among the rest, expresses his intense sorrow that he cannot find the resurrection here, and for my

part I am sorry for him. If it had been Job's desire to foretell the advent of Christ and his own sure resurrection, I cannot see what better words he could have used; and if those truths are not here taught, then language must have lost its original object, and must have been employed to mystify and not to explain; to conceal and not to reveal. What I ask, does the patriarch mean, if not that he shall rise again when the Redeemer stands upon the earth? Brethren, no unsophisticated mind can fail to find here what almost all believers have here discovered. I feel safe in keeping to the old sense, and we shall this morning seek no new interpretation, but adhere to the common one, with or without the consent of our critics.

In discoursing upon them I shall speak upon three things. First, *let us, with the patriarch, descend into the grave and behold the ravages of death.* Then, with him, *let us look up on high for present consolation.* And, still in his admirable company, let us, in the third place, *anticipate future delights.*

I. First of all then, with the patriarch of Uz, LET US DESCEND INTO THE SEPULCHRE.

The body has just been divorced from the soul. Friends who loved most tenderly have said—"Bury my dead out of my sight." The body is borne upon the bier and consigned to the silent earth; it is surrounded by the earthworks of death. Death has a host of troops. If the locusts and the caterpillars be God's army, the worms are the army of death. These hungry warriors begin to attack the city of man. They commence with the outworks; they storm the munition, and overturn the walls. The skin, the city wall of manhood, is utterly broken down, and the towers of its glory covered with confusion. How speedily the cruel invaders deface all beauty. The face gathers blackness; the countenance is defiled with corruption. Those cheeks once fair with youth, and ruddy with health, have fallen in, even as a bowing wall and a tottering fence; those eyes, the windows of the mind whence joy and sorrow looked forth by turns, are now filled up with the dust of death; those lips, the doors of the soul, the gates of Mansoul, are carried away, and the bars thereof are broken. Alas, ye windows of agates and gates of carbuncle, where are ye now? How shall I mourn for thee, O thou captive city, for the mighty men have utterly spoiled thee! Thy neck, once like a tower of ivory, has become as a fallen column; thy nose, so lately comparable to "the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus," is as a ruined hovel; and thy head, which towered like Carmel, lies low as the clods of the valley. Where is beauty now? The most lovely cannot be known from the most deformed. The vessel so daintily wrought upon the potter's wheel, is cast away upon the dunghill with the vilest potsherds. Cruel have ye been, ye warriors of death, for though ye wield no axes and bear no hammers, yet have ye broken down the carved work; and though ye speak not with tongues, yet have ye said in your hearts, "We have swallowed her up, certainly this is the day that we have looked for; we have found, we have seen it." The skin is gone. The troops have entered into the town of Mansoul. And now they pursue their work of devastation; the pitiless marauders fall upon the body itself. There are those noble aqueducts, the veins through which the streams of life were wont to flow, these, instead of being rivers of life, have become blocked up with the soil and wastes of death, and now they must be pulled to pieces; not a single relic of them shall be spared. Mark the muscles and sinews, like great highways that penetrating the metropolis, carry the strength and wealth of manhood along—their curious pavement must be pulled up, and they that do traffic thereon must be consumed; each tunnelled bone, and curious arch, and knotted bond must be snapped and broken. Fair fabrics, glorious storehouses, costly engines, wonderful machines—all, all must be pulled down, and not one stone left upon another. Those nerves, which like telegraphic wires connected all parts of the city together, to carry thought and feeling and intelligence—these are cut. No matter how artistic the work might be,—and certainly we are fearfully

and wonderfully made, and the anatomist stands still and marvels to see the skill which the eternal God has manifested in the formation of the body—but these ruthless worms pull everything to pieces, till like a city sacked and spoiled that has been given up for days to pillage and to flame, everything lies in a heap of ruin—ashes to ashes, dust to dust. But these invaders stop not here. Job says that next they consume his reins. We are wont to speak of the heart as the great citadel of life, the inner keep and donjon, where the captain of the guard holdeth out to the last. The Hebrews do not regard the heart, but the lower viscera, the reins, as the seat of the passions and of mental power. The worms spare not; they enter the secret palaces of the tabernacle of life, and the standard is plucked from the tower. Having died, the heart cannot preserve itself, and falls like the rest of the frame—a prey to worms. It is gone, it is all gone! The skin, the body, the vitals, all, all has departed. There is nought left. In a few years ye shall turn up the sod and say, “Here slept so-and-so, and where is he now?”, and ye may search and hunt and dig, but ye shall find no relic. Mother Earth has devoured her own offspring.

Dear friends, why should we wish to have it otherwise? Why should we desire to preserve the body when the soul has gone? What vain attempts men have made with coffins of lead, and wrappings of myrrh and frankincense. The embalming of the Egyptians, those master robbers of the worm, what has it done? It has served to keep some poor shrivelled lumps of mortality above ground to be sold for curiosities, to be dragged away to foreign climes, and stared upon by thoughtless eyes. No, let the dust go, the sooner it dissolves the better. And what matters it how it goes! If it be devoured of beasts, if it be swallowed up in the sea and become food for fishes! What, if plants with their roots suck up the particles! What, if the fabric passes into the animal, and from the animal into the earth, and from the plant into the animal again! What, if the winds blow it along the highway! What, if the rivers carry it to the waves of ocean! It is ordained that somehow or other it must be all separated—“dust to dust, ashes to ashes.” It is part of the decree that it should all perish. The worms or some other agents of destruction must destroy this body. Do not seek to avoid what God has purposed; do not look upon it as a gloomy thing. Regard it as a necessity; nay more, view it as the platform of a miracle, the lofty stage of resurrection, since Jesus shall surely raise again from the dead the particles of this body, however divided from one another. We have heard of miracles, but what a miracle is the resurrection! All the miracles of Scripture, yea even those wrought by Christ, are small compared with this. The philosopher says, “How is it possible that God shall hunt out every particle of the human frame?” He can do it: he has but to speak the word, and every single atom, though it may have traveled thousands of leagues, though it may have been blown as dust across the desert, and anon have fallen upon the bosom of the sea, and then have descended into the depths thereof to be cast up on a desolate shore, sucked up by plants, fed on again by beasts, or passed into the fabric of another man,—I say that individual atom shall find its fellows, and the whole company of particles at the trump of the archangel shall travel to their appointed place, and the body, the very body which was laid in the ground, shall rise again.

I am afraid I have been somewhat uninteresting while tarrying upon the exposition of the words of Job, but I think very much of the pith of Job’s faith lay in this, that he had a clear view that the worms would after his skin destroy his body, and yet that in his flesh he should see God. You know we might regard it as a small miracle if we could preserve the bodies of the departed. If, by some process, with spices and gums we could preserve the particles, for the Lord to make those dry bones live, and to quicken that skin and flesh, were a miracle certainly, but not palpably and plainly so great a marvel as when the worms have destroyed the body. When the fabric has been absolutely

broken up, the tenement all pulled down, ground to pieces, and flung in handfuls to the wind, so that no relic of it is left, and yet when Christ stands in the latter days upon the earth, all the structure shall be brought together, bone to his bone—then shall the might of Omnipotence be seen. This is the doctrine of the resurrection, and happy is he who finds no difficulty here, who looks at it as being an impossibility with man but a possibility with God, and lays hold upon the omnipotence of the Most High and says, “Thou sayest it, and it shall be done!” I comprehend thee not, great God; I marvel at thy purpose to raise my moldering bones: but I know that thou doest great wonders, and I am not surprised that thou shouldst conclude the great drama of thy creating works here on earth by re-creating the human frame by the same power by which thou didst bring from the dead the body of thy Son Jesus Christ, and by that same divine energy which has regenerated human souls in thine own image.

II. Now, having thus descended into the grave, and seen nothing there but what is loathsome, LET US LOOK UP WITH THE PATRIARCH AND BEHOLD A SUN SHINING WITH PRESENT COMFORT.

“I know,” said he, “that my Redeemer liveth.” The word “Redeemer” here used, is in the original “goel”—kinsman. The duty of the kinsman, or goel, was this: suppose an Israelite had alienated his estate, as in the case of Naomi and Ruth; suppose a patrimony which had belonged to a family, had passed away through poverty, it was the goel’s business, the redeemer’s business to pay the price as the next of kin, and to buy back the heritage. Boaz stood in that relation to Ruth. Now, the body may be looked upon as the heritage of the soul—the soul’s small farm, that little plot of earth in which the soul has been wont to walk and delight, as a man walketh in his garden or dwelleth in his house. Now, that becomes alienated. Death, like Ahab, takes away the vineyard from us who are as Naboth; we lose our patrimonial estate; Death sends his troops to take our vineyard and to spoil the vines thereof and ruin it. But we turn round to Death and say, “I know that my Goel liveth, and he will redeem this heritage; I have lost it; thou takest it from me lawfully, O Death, because my sin hath forfeited my right; I have lost my heritage through my own offence, and through that of my first parent Adam; but there lives one who will buy this back.” Brethren, Job could say this of Christ long before he had descended upon earth, “I know that he liveth;” and now that he has ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, surely we may with double emphasis say, “I know that my Goel, my Kinsman liveth, and that he hath paid the price, that I should have back my patrimony, so that in my flesh I shall see God.” Yes, my hands, ye are redeemed with blood; bought not with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Yes, heaving lungs and palpitating heart, ye have been redeemed! He that redeemed the soul to be his altar has also redeemed the body, that it may be a temple for the Holy Ghost. Not even the bones of Joseph can remain in the house of bondage. No smell of the fire of death may pass upon the garments which his holy children have worn in the furnace.

Remember, too, that it was always considered to be the duty of the goel, not merely to redeem by price, but where that failed, to re-deem by power. Hence, when Lot was carried away captive by the four kings, Abraham summoned his own hired servants, and the servants of all his friends, and went out against the kings of the East, and brought back Lot and the captives of Sodom. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ, who once has played the kinsman’s part by paying the price for us, liveth, and he will redeem us by power. O Death, thou tremblest at this name! Thou knowest the might of our Kinsman! Against his arm thou canst not stand! Thou didst once meet him foot to foot in stern battle, and O Death, thou didst indeed tread upon his heel. He voluntarily submitted to this, or else,

O Death, thou hadst no power against him. But he slew thee, Death, he slew thee! He rifled all thy caskets, took from thee the key of thy castle, burst open the door of thy dungeon; and now, thou knowest, Death, thou hast no power to hold my body; thou mayst set thy slaves to devour it, but thou shalt give it up, and all their spoil must be restored. Insatiable Death, from thy greedy maw yet shall return the multitudes whom thou hast devoured. Thou shalt be compelled by the Saviour to restore thy captives to the light of day. I think I see Jesus coming with his Father's servants. The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. Blow ye the trumpet! blow ye the trumpet! Immanuel rides to battle! The Most Mighty in majesty girds on his sword. He comes! He comes to snatch by power, his people's lands from those who have invaded their portion. Oh, how glorious the victory! No battle shall there be. He comes, he sees, he conquers. The sound of the trumpet shall be enough; Death shall fly affrighted; and at once from beds of dust and silent clay, to realms of everlasting day the righteous shall arise.

To linger here a moment, there was yet, very conspicuously in the Old Testament, we are informed, a third duty of the goel, which was to avenge the death of his friend. If a person had been slain, the Goel was the avenger of blood; snatching up his sword, he at once pursued the person who had been guilty of bloodshed. So now, let us picture ourselves as being smitten by Death. His arrow has just pierced us to the heart, but in the act of expiring, our lips are able to boast of vengeance, and in the face of the monster we cry, "I know that my Goel liveth." Thou mayst fly, O Death, as rapidly as thou wilt, but no city of refuge can hide thee from him; he will overtake thee; he will lay hold upon thee, O thou skeleton monarch, and he will avenge my blood on thee. I would that I had powers of eloquence to work out this magnificent thought. Chrysostom, or Christmas Evans could picture the flight of the King of Terrors, the pursuit by the Redeemer, the overtaking of the foe, and the slaying of the destroyer. Christ shall certainly avenge himself on Death for all the injury which Death hath done to his beloved kinsmen. Comfort thyself then, O Christian; thou hast ever living, even when thou diest, one who avenges thee, one who has paid the price for thee, and one whose strong arms shall yet set thee free.

Passing on in our text to notice the next word, it seems that Job found consolation not only in the fact that he had a Goel, a Redeemer, but that this Redeemer liveth. He does not say, "I know that my Goel *shall live*, but that he *lives*,"—having a clear view of the self-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever. And you and I looking back do not say, "I know that he *did live*, but he *lives* today." This very day you that mourn and sorrow for venerated friends, your prop and pillar in years gone by, you may go to Christ with confidence, because he not only lives, but he is the source of life; and you therefore believe that he can give forth out of himself life to those whom you have committed to the tomb. He is the Lord and giver of life originally, and he shall be specially declared to be the resurrection and the life, when the legions of his redeemed shall be glorified with him. If I saw no fountain from which life could stream to the dead, I would yet believe the promise when God said that the dead shall live; but when I see the fountain provided, and know that it is full to the brim and that it runneth over, I can rejoice without trembling. Since there is one who can say, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," it is a blessed thing to see the means already before us in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look up to our Goel then who liveth at this very time.

Still the marrow of Job's comfort it seems to me lay in that little word "My." "I know that MY Redeemer liveth." Oh, to get hold of Christ! I know that in his offices he is precious. But, dear friends, we must get a property in him before we call really enjoy him. What is honey in the wood

to me, if like the fainting Israelites, I dare not eat. It is honey in my hand, honey on my lip, which enlightens mine eyes like those of Jonathan. What is gold in the mine to me? Men are beggars in Peru, and beg their bread in California. It is gold in my purse which will satisfy my necessities, purchasing the bread I need. So, what is a kinsman if he be not a kinsman to me? A Redeemer that does not redeem me, an avenger who will never stand up for my blood, of what avail were such? But Job's faith was strong and firm in the conviction that the Redeemer was his. Dear friends, dear friends, can all of you say, "I know that *my* Redeemer liveth." The question is simple and simply put; but oh, what solemn things hang upon your answer, "Is it *MY* Redeemer?" I charge you rest not, be not content until by faith you can say, "Yes, I cast myself upon him; I am his, and therefore he is mine." I know that full many of you, while you look upon all else that you have as not being yours, yet can say, "My Redeemer is mine." He is the only piece of property which is really ours. We borrow all else, the house, the children, nay, our very body we must return to the Great Lender. But Jesus, we can never leave, for even when we are absent from the body we are present with the Lord, and I know that even death cannot separate us from him, so that body and soul are with Jesus truly even in the dark hours of death, in the long night of the sepulchre, and in the separate state of spiritual existence. Beloved, have you Christ? It may be you hold him with a feeble hand, you half think it is presumption to say, "He is my Redeemer;" yet remember, if you have but faith as a grain of mustard seed, that little faith entitles you to say, and say now, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

There is another word in this consoling sentence which no doubt served to give a zest to the comfort of Job. It was that he could say, "I KNOW"—"I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth." To say, "I hope so, I trust so," is comfortable; and there are thousands in the fold of Jesus who hardly ever get much further. But to reach the marrow of consolation you *must* say, "I KNOW." Ifs, buts, and perhapses, are sure murderers of peace and comfort. Doubts are dreary things in times of sorrow. Like wasps they sting the soul! If I have any suspicion that Christ is not mine, then there is vinegar mingled with the gall of death. But if I know that Jesus is mine, then darkness is not dark; even the night is light about me. Out of the lion cometh honey; out of the eater cometh forth sweetness. "I know that my Redeemer liveth." This is a brightly-burning lamp cheering the damp of the sepulchral vault, but a feeble hope is like a flickering smoking flax, just making darkness visible, but nothing more. I would not like to die with a mere hope mingled with suspicion. I might be safe with this but hardly happy; but oh, to go down into the river knowing that all is well, confident that as a guilty, weak, and helpless worm I have - fallen into the arms of Jesus, and believing that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him. I would have you, dear Christian friends, never look upon the full assurance of faith as a thing impossible to you. Say not, "It is too high; I cannot attain unto it." I have known one or two saints of God who have rarely doubted their interest at all. There are many of us who do not often enjoy any ravishing ecstasies, but on the other hand we generally maintain the even tenor of our way, simply hanging upon Christ, feeling that his promise is true, that his merits are sufficient, and that we are safe. Assurance is a jewel for worth but not for rarity. It is the common privilege of all the saints if they have but the grace to attain unto it, and this grace the Holy Spirit gives freely. Surely if Job in Arabia, in those dark misty ages when there was only the morning star and not the sun, when they saw but little when life and immortality had not been brought to light,—if Job before the coming and advent still could say, "*I know*," you and I should not speak less positively. God forbid that our positiveness should be presumption. Let us try ourselves, and see that our marks and evidences are right, lest we form an ungrounded hope; for nothing can be more destructive than to say, "Peace, peace, where there is no peace." But oh, let

us build for eternity, and build solidly. Let us not be satisfied with the mere foundation, for it is from the upper rooms that we get the widest prospect. Let us pray the Lord to help us to pile stone on stone, until we are able to say as we look at it, "Yes, I *know*, I KNOW that my Redeemer liveth." This, then, for present comfort today in the prospect of departure.

III. And now, in the third and last place, as THE ANTICIPATION OF FUTURE DELIGHT, let me call to your remembrance the other part of the text. Job not only knew that the Redeemer lived, but he anticipated the time when he should *stand in the latter day upon the earth*. No doubt Job referred here to our Saviour's first advent, to the time when Jesus Christ, "the goel," the kinsman, should stand upon the earth to pay in the blood of his veins the ransom price, which had, indeed, in bond and stipulation been paid before the foundation of the world in promise. But I cannot think that Job's vision stayed there; he was looking forward to the second advent of Christ as being the period of the resurrection. We cannot endorse the theory that Job arose from the dead when our Lord died, although certain Jewish believers held this idea very firmly at one time. We are persuaded that "the latter day" refers to the advent of glory rather than to that of shame. Our hope is that the Lord shall come to reign in glory where he once died in agony. The bright and hallowed doctrine of the second advent has been greatly revived in our churches in these latter days, and I look for the best results in consequence. There is always a danger lest it be perverted and turned by fanatical minds, by prophetic speculations, into an abuse; but the doctrine in itself is one of the most consoling, and, at the same time, one of the most practical, tending to keep the Christian awake, because the bridegroom cometh at such an hour as we think not. Beloved, we believe that the same Jesus who ascended from Olivet shall so come in like manner as he ascended up into heaven. We believe in his personal advent and reign. We believe and expect that when both wise and foolish virgins shall slumber; in the night when sleep is heavy upon the saints; when men shall be eating and drinking as in the days of Noah, that suddenly as the lightning flasheth from heaven, so Christ shall descend with a shout, and the dead in Christ shall rise and reign with him. We are looking forward to the literal, personal and actual standing of Christ upon earth as the time when creation's groans shall be silenced forever, and the earnest expectation of the creature shall be fulfilled.

Mark, that Job describes Christ as *standing*. Some interpreters have read the passage, "he shall stand in the latter days against the earth;" that as the earth has covered up the slain, as the earth has become the charnel-house of the dead, Jesus shall arise to the contest and say, "Earth, I am against thee; give up thy dead! Ye clods of the valley cease to be custodians of my people's bodies! Silent deeps, and you, ye caverns of the earth, deliver, once for all, those whom ye have imprisoned!" Macphelah shall give up its precious treasure, cemeteries and graveyards shall release their captives, and all the deep places of the earth shall resign the bodies of the faithful. Well, whether that be so or no, the posture of Christ, in standing upon the earth, is significant. It shows his triumph. He has triumphed over sin, which once like a serpent in its coils had bound the earth. He has defeated Satan. On the very spot where Satan gained his power Christ has gained the victory. Earth, which was a scene of defeated goodness, whence mercy once was all but driven, where virtue died, where everything heavenly and pure, like flowers blasted by pestilential winds, hung down their heads, withered and blighted—on this very earth everything that is glorious shall blow and blossom in perfection; and Christ himself, once despised and rejected of men, fairest of all the sons of men, shall come in the midst of a crowd of courtiers, while kings and princes shall do him homage, and all the nations shall call him blessed. "He shall stand in the latter day upon the earth."

Then, at that auspicious hour, says Job, "In my flesh I shall see God." Oh, blessed anticipation—"I shall see God." He does not say, "I shall see the saints"—doubtless we shall see them all in heaven—but, "I shall see *God*." Note he does not say, "I shall see the pearly gates, I shall see the walls of jasper, I shall see the crowns of gold and the harps of harmony," but "I shall see God;" as if that were the sum and substance of heaven. "In my flesh shall I see *God*." The pure in heart shall see God. It was their delight to see him in the ordinances by faith. They delighted to behold him in communion and in prayer. There in heaven they shall have a vision of another sort. We shall see God in heaven, and be made completely like him; the divine character shall be stamped upon us; and being made like to him we shall be perfectly satisfied and content. Likeness to God, what can we wish for more? And a sight of God, what can we desire better? We shall see God and so there shall be perfect contentment to the soul and a satisfaction of all the faculties. Some read the passage, "Yet, I shall see God in my flesh," and hence think that there is here an allusion to Christ, our Lord Jesus Christ, as the word made flesh. Well, be it so, or be it not so, it is certain that we shall see Christ, and He, as the divine Redeemer, shall be the subject of our eternal vision. Nor shall we ever want any joy beyond simply that of seeing him. Think not, dear friend, that this will be a narrow sphere for our mind to dwell in. It is but one source of delight, "I shall see God," but that source is infinite. His wisdom, his love, his power, all his attributes shall be subjects for your eternal contemplation, and as he is infinite under each aspect there is no fear of exhaustion. His works, his purposes, his gifts, his love to you, and his glory in all his purposes, and in all his deeds of love—why, these shall make a theme that never can be exhausted. You may with divine delight anticipate the time when in your flesh you shall see God.

But I must have you observe how Job has expressly made us note that it is in the same body. "Yet, *in my flesh* shall I see God;" and then he says again, "whom I shall see for myself, and mine eye shall behold and not another." Yes, it is true that I, the very man standing here, though I must go down to die, yet I shall as the same man most certainly arise and shall behold my God. Not part of myself, though the soul alone shall have some view of God, but the whole of myself, my flesh, my soul, my body, my spirit shall gaze on God. We shall not enter heaven, dear friends, as a dismayed vessel is tugged into harbor; we shall not get to glory some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, but the whole ship shall be floated safely into the haven, body and soul both being safe. Christ shall be able to say, "All that the father giveth to me shall come to me," not only all the persons, but all of the persons—each man in his perfection. There shall not be found in heaven one imperfect saint. There shall not be a saint without an eye, much less a saint without a body. No member of the body shall have perished; nor shall the body have lost any of its natural beauty. All the saints shall be all there, and all of all; the same persons precisely, only that they shall have risen from a state of grace to a state of glory. They shall be ripened; they shall be no more the green blades, but the full corn in the ear; no more buds but flowers; not babes but men.

Please to notice, and then I shall conclude, how the patriarch puts it as being a real personal enjoyment. "Whom mine eye shall behold, and not another." They shall not bring me a report as they did the Queen of Sheba, but I shall see Solomon the King for myself. I shall be able to say, as they did who spake to the woman of Samaria, "Now I believe, not because of thy word who did bring me a report, but I have seen him for myself." There shall be personal intercourse with God; not through the Book, which is but as a glass; not through the ordinances; but directly, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be able to commune with the Deity as a man talketh with his friend. "Not another." If I could be a changeling and could be altered, that would mar my comfort.

Or if my heaven must be enjoyed by proxy, if draughts of bliss must be drunk for me, where were the hope? Oh, no; for myself, and not through another, shall I see God. Have we not told you a hundred times that nothing but personal religion will do, and is not this another argument for it, because resurrection and glory are personal things? “Not another.” If you could have sponsors to repent for you, then, depend upon it, you would have sponsors to be glorified for you. But as there is not another to see God for you, so you must yourself see and yourself find an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ.

In closing let me observe how foolish have you and I been when we have looked forward to death with shudders, with doubts, with loathings. After all, what is it? Worms! Do ye tremble at those base crawling things? Scattered particles! Shall we be alarmed at these? To meet the worms we have the angels; and to gather the scattered particles we have the voice of God. I am sure the gloom of death is altogether gone now that the lamp of resurrection burns. Disrobing is nothing now that better garments await us. We may long for evening to undress, that we may rise with God. I am sure my venerable friends now present, in coming so near as they do now to the time of the departure, must have some visions of the glory on the other side the stream. Bunyan was not wrong, my dear brethren, when he put the land Beulah at the close of the pilgrimage. Is not my text a telescope which will enable you to see across the Jordan; may it not be as hands of angels to bring you bundles of myrrh and frankincense? You can say, “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” You cannot want more; you were not satisfied with less in your youth, you will not be content with less now. Those of us who are young, are comforted by the thought that we may soon depart. I say comforted, not alarmed by it; and we almost envy those whose race is nearly run, because we fear—and yet we must not speak thus, for the Lord’s will be done—I was about to say, we fear that our battle may last long, and that mayhap our feet may slip; only he that keepeth Israel does not slumber nor sleep. So since we know that our Redeemer liveth, this shall be our comfort in life, that though we fall we shall not be utterly cast down; and since our Redeemer liveth, this shall be our comfort in death, that though worms destroy this body, yet in our flesh we shall see God.

May the Lord add his blessing on the feeble words of this morning, and to him be glory forever. Amen.

Grave, the guardian of our dust!
 Grave, the treasury of the skies!
 Every atom of thy trust
 Rests in hope again to rise.
 Hark! the judgment trumpet calls;
 Soul, rebuild thy house of clay,
 Immortality thy walls,
 And Eternity thy day.

The Warrant of Faith

A Sermon

(No. 531)

Delivered on Sunday Morning, September 20th, 1863, by the

Rev. C. H. SPURGEON,

At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.”—1 John 3:23.

THE old law shines in terrible glory with its ten commandments. There are some who love that law so much, that they cannot pass over a Sabbath without its being read in their hearing, accompanied by the mournful petition, “Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.” Nay, some are so foolish as to enter into a covenant for their children, that “they shall keep all God’s holy commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life.” Thus they early wear a yoke which neither they nor their fathers can bear, and daily groaning under its awful weight, they labour after righteousness where it never can be found. Over the tables of the law in every Church, I would have conspicuously printed these gospel words, “By the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified.” The true believer has learned to look away from the killing ordinances of the old law. He understands that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written: Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” He therefore turns with loathing from all trust in his own obedience to the ten commands, and lays hold with joy upon the hope set before him in the one commandment contained in my text, “This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.”

We sing, and sing rightly too—

“My soul, no more attempt to draw

Thy life and comfort from the law,”

for from the law death cometh and not life, misery and not comfort. “To convince and to condemn is all the law can do.” O, when will all professors, and especially all professed ministers of Christ, learn the difference between the law and the gospel? Most of them make a mingle-mangle, and serve out deadly potions to the people, often containing but one ounce of gospel to a pound of law, whereas, but even a grain of law is enough to spoil the whole thing. It must be gospel, and gospel only. “If it be of grace, it is not of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; and if it be of works, then it is not of grace, otherwise work is no more work.”

The Christian then, turning his attention to the one command of the gospel, is very anxious to know first, *what is the matter of the believing here intended*; and secondly, *what is the sinner’s warrant for so believing in Christ*; nor will he fail to consider *the mandate of the gospel*.

I. First then, THE MATTER OF BELIEVING, or what is it that a man is to believe in order to eternal life. Is it the Athanasian creed? Is it true, that if a man does not hold that confession whole and entire, he shall without doubt perish everlastingly? We leave those to decide who are learned in matters of bigotry. Is it any particular form of doctrine? Is it the Calvinistic or the Arminian

scheme? For our own part we are quite content with our text—believing on “his Son Jesus Christ.” That faith which saves the soul is believing on a person, depending upon Jesus for eternal life.

To speak more at large of the things which are to be believed in order to justification by faith, they all relate to the person and the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must believe him to be God’s Son—so the text puts it—“His Son.” We must grasp with strong confidence the great fact that he is God: for nothing short of a divine Saviour can ever deliver us from the infinite wrath of God. He who rejects the true and proper Godhead of Jesus of Nazareth, is not saved, and cannot be, for he believes not on Jesus as God’s Son. Furthermore, we must accept this Son of God as “Jesus,” the Saviour. We must believe that Jesus Christ the Son of God, became man out of infinite love to man, that he might save his people from their sins, according to that worthy saying, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” even the chief. We must look upon Jesus as “Christ,” the anointed of the Father, sent into this world on salvation’s errand, not that sinners might save themselves, but that he, being mighty to save, might bring many sons unto glory. We must believe that Jesus Christ, Coming into the world to save sinners, did really effect his mission; that the precious blood which is shed upon Calvary is almighty to atone for sin, and therefore, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, since the blood of Jesus Christ, God’s dear Son, cleanseth us from all sin. We must heartily accept the great doctrine of the atonement—regarding Jesus as standing in the room, place, and stead of sinful men, bearing for them the terror of the law’s curse until justice was satisfied and could demand no more. Moreover, we should rejoice that as Jesus Christ, by his dying, put away for ever the sin of his people, so by his living he gave unto those who trust in him a perfect righteousness, in which, despite their own sins, they are “accepted in the beloved.” We are also taught, that if we heartily trust our soul with Christ, our sins, through his blood, are forgiven, and his righteousness is imputed to us. The mere knowledge of these facts will not, however, save us, unless we really and truly trust our souls in the Redeemer’s hands. Faith must act in this wise: “I believe that Jesus came to save sinners, and therefore, sinner though I be, I rest myself on him; I know that his righteousness justifies the ungodly; I, therefore, though ungodly, trust in him to be my righteousness; I know that his precious blood in heaven prevails with God on the behalf of them that come unto him; and since I come unto him, I know by faith that I have an interest in his perpetual intercession.”

Now, I have enlarged the one thought of believing on God’s Son Jesus Christ. Brethren, I would not darken counsel by words without knowledge. “Believing” is most clearly explained by that simple word “trust.” Believing is partly the intellectual operation of receiving divine truths, but the essence of it lies in relying upon those truths. I believe that, although I cannot swim, yonder friendly plank will support me in the flood—I grasp it, and am saved: the grasp is faith. I am promised by a generous friend that if I draw upon his banker, he will supply all my needs—I joyously confide in him, and as often as I am in want I go to the bank, and am enriched: my going to the bank is faith. Thus faith is accepting God’s great promise, contained in the person of his Son. It is taking God at his word, and trusting in Jesus Christ as being my salvation, although I am utterly unworthy of his regard. Sinner, if thou takest Christ to be thy Saviour this day, thou art justified; though thou be the biggest blasphemer and persecutor out of hell, if thou darest to trust Christ with thy salvation, that faith of thine saves thee; though thy whole life may have been as black, and foul, and devilish as thou couldst have made it, yet if thou wilt honour God by believing Christ is able to forgive such a wretch as thou art, and wilt now trust in Jesus’ precious blood, thou art saved from divine wrath.

II. The WARRANT OF BELIEVING is the point upon which I shall spend my time and strength this morning. According to my text, the warrant for a man to believe is the *commandment* of God. This is the commandment, that ye “believe on his Son Jesus Christ.”

Self-righteousness will always find a lodging somewhere or other. Drive it, my brethren, out of the ground of our confidence; let the sinner see that he cannot rest on his good works, then, as foxes will have holes, this self-righteousness will find a refuge for itself in the warrant of our faith in Christ. It reasons thus: “You are not saved by what you do but by what Christ did; but then, you have no right to trust in Christ unless there is something good in you which shall entitle you to trust in him.” Now, this legal reasoning I oppose. I believe such teaching to contain in it the essence of Popish self-righteousness. The warrant for a sinner to believe in Christ is not in himself in any sense or in any manner, but in the fact that he is commanded there and then to believe on Jesus Christ. Some preachers in the Puritanic times, whose shoe latches I am not worthy to unloose, erred much in this matter. I refer not merely to Alleyne and Baxter, who are far better preachers of the law than of the gospel, but I include men far sounder in the faith than they, such as Rogers of Dedham, Shepherd, the author of “The Sound Believer,” and especially the American, Thomas Hooker, who has written a book upon qualifications for coming to Christ. These excellent men had a fear of preaching the gospel to any except those whom they styled “sensible sinners,” and consequently kept hundreds of their hearers sitting in darkness when they might have rejoiced in the light. They preached repentance and hatred of sin as the warrant of a sinner’s trusting to Christ. According to them, a sinner might reason thus—“I possess such-and-such a degree of sensibility on account of sin, therefore I have a right to trust in Christ.” Now, I venture to affirm that such reasoning is seasoned with fatal error. Whoever preaches in this fashion may preach much of the gospel, but the whole gospel of the free grace of God in its fulness he has yet to learn. In our own day certain preachers assure us that a man must be regenerated before we may bid him believe in Jesus Christ; some degree of a work of grace in the heart being, in their judgment, the only warrant to believe. This also is false. It takes away a gospel for sinners and offers us a gospel for saints. It is anything but a ministry of free grace.

Others say that the warrant for a sinner to believe in Christ is his election. Now, as his election cannot possibly be known by any man until he has believed, this is virtually preaching that nobody has any known warrant for believing at all. If I cannot possibly know my election before I believe—and yet the minister tells me that I may only believe upon the ground of my election—how am I ever to believe at all? Election brings me faith, and faith is the evidence of my election; but to say that my faith is to depend upon my knowledge of my election, which I cannot get without faith, is to talk egregious nonsense.

I lay down this morning with great boldness—because I know and am well persuaded that what I speak is the mind of the Spirit—this doctrine that the sole and only warrant for a sinner to believe in Jesus is found in the gospel itself and in the command which accompanies that gospel, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” I shall deal with that matter first of all, *negatively*, and then, *positively*.

1. First, **NEGATIVELY**; and here my first observation is that any other way of preaching the gospel-warrant is *absurd*. If I am to preach faith in Christ to a man who is regenerated, then the man, being regenerated, is saved already, and it is an unnecessary and ridiculous thing for me to preach Christ to him, and bid him to believe in order to be saved when he is saved already, being regenerate. But you will tell me that I ought to preach it only to those who repent of their sins. Very

well; but since true repentance of sin is the work of the Spirit, any man who has repentance is most certainly saved, because evangelical repentance never can exist in an unrenewed soul. Where there is repentance there is faith already, for they never can be separated. So, then, I am only to preach faith to those who have it. Absurd, indeed! Is not this waiting till the man is cured and then bringing him the medicine? This is preaching Christ to the righteous and not to sinners. "Nay," saith one, "but we mean that a man must have some good desires towards Christ before he has any warrant to believe in Jesus." Friend, do you not know what all good desires have some degree of holiness in them? But if a sinner hath any degree of true holiness in him it must be the work of the Spirit, for true holiness never exists in the carnal mind, therefore, that man is already renewed, and therefore saved. Are we to go running up and down the world, proclaiming life to the living, casting bread to those who are fed already, and holding up Christ on the pole of the gospel to those who are already healed? My brethren, where is our inducement to labour where our efforts are so little needed? If I am to preach Christ to those who have no goodness, who have nothing in them that qualifies them for mercy, then I feel I have a gospel so divine that I would proclaim it with my last breath, crying aloud, that "Jesus came into the world to save *sinner*s"—sinners as sinners, not as penitent sinners or as awakened sinners, but sinners as sinners, sinners "of whom I am chief."

Secondly, to tell the sinner that he is to believe on Christ because of some warrant in himself, is *legal*, I dare to say it—legal. Though this method is generally adopted by the higher school of Calvinists, they are herein unsound, uncalvinistic, and legal; it is strange that they who are so bold defenders of free grace should make common cause with Baxterians and Pelagians. I lay it down to be legal for this reason: if I believe in Jesus Christ because I feel a genuine repentance of sin, and therefore have a warrant for my faith, do you not perceive that the first and true ground of my confidence is the fact that I have repented of sin? If I believe in Jesus because I have convictions and a spirit of prayer, then evidently the first and the most important fact is not Christ, but my possession of repentance, conviction, and prayer, so that really my hope hinges upon my having repented; and if this be not legal I do not know what is. Put it lower. My opponents will say, "The sinner must have an awakened conscience before he is warranted to believe on Christ." Well, then, if I trust Christ to save me because I have an awakened conscience, I say again, the most important part of the whole transaction is the alarm of my conscience, and my real trust hangs there. If I lean on Christ because I feel this and that, then I am leaning on my feelings and not on Christ alone, and this is legal indeed. Nay, even if desires after Christ are to be my warrant for believing, if I am to believe in Jesus not because he bids me, but because I feel some desires after him, you will again with half an eye perceive that the most important source of my comfort must be my own desires. So that we shall be always looking within. "Do I really desire? If I do, then Christ can save me; if I do not, then he cannot." And so my desire overrides Christ and his grace. Away with such' legality from the earth!

Again, any other way of preaching than that of bidding the sinner believe because God commands him to believe, is a *boasting* way of faith. For if my warrant to trust in Jesus be found in my experience, my loathings of sin, or my longings after Christ, then all these good things of mine are a legitimate ground of boasting, because though Christ may save me, yet these were the wedding-dress which fitted me to come to Christ. If these be indispensable pre-requisites and conditions, then the man who has them may truly and justly say, "Christ did save me, but I had the pre-requisites and conditions first, and therefore let these share the praise." See, my brethren, those who have a faith which rests upon their own experience, what are they as a rule? Mark them, and

you will perceive much censorious bitterness in them, prompting them to set up their own experience as the standard of saintship, which may assuredly make us suspicious whether they ever were humbled in a gospel manner at all, so as to see that their own best feelings, and best repentances, and best experiences in themselves are nothing more nor less than filthy rags in the sight of God. My dear brethren, when we tell a sinner that foul and filthy as he is, without any preparation or qualification, he is to take Jesus Christ to be his all in all, finding in him all that he can ever need, when we dare on the spot to bid the jailor just startled out of sleep, "Believe in Jesus," we leave no room for self-glorification, all must be of grace. When we find the lame man lying at the temple gates, we do not bid him strengthen his own legs. or feel some life in them, but we bid him in the name of Jesus rise up and walk; surely here when God the Spirit owns the Word, all boasting is excluded. Whether I rely on my experience or my good works makes little difference, for either of these reliances will lead to boasting since they are both legal. Law and boasting are twin brothers, but free grace and gratitude always go together.

Any other warrant for believing on Jesus than that which is presented in the gospel is *changeable*. See, brethren, if my warrant to believe in Christ lies in my meltings of heart and my experiences, then if to-day I have a melting heart and I can pour my soul out before the Lord, I have a warrant to believe in Christ. But to-morrow (who does not know this?) to-morrow my heart may be as hard as a stone, so that I can neither feel nor pray. Then, according to the qualification-theory, I have no right to trust in Christ, my warrant is clean gone from me. According to the doctrine of final perseverance, the Christian's faith is continual, if so the warrant of his faith must be always the same, or else he has sometimes an unwarranted faith which is absurd; it follows from this that the abiding warrant of faith must lie in some immutable truth. Since everything within changes more frequently than ever does an English sky, if my warrant to believe in Christ be based within, it must change every hour; consequently I am lost and saved alternately. Brethren, can these things be so? For my part I want a sure and immutable warrant for my faith; I want a warrant to believe in Jesus which will serve me when the devil's blasphemy comes pouring into my ears like a flood; I want a warrant to believe which will serve me when my lustings and corruptions appear in terrible array, and make me cry out, "O wretched man that I am;" I want a warrant to believe in Christ which will comfort me when I have no good frames and holy feelings, when I am dead as a stone and my spirit lies cleaving to the dust. Such an unfailing warrant to belief in Jesus is found in this precious truth, that his gracious commandment and not my variable experience, is my title to believe on his Son Jesus Christ.

Again, my brethren, any other warrant is utterly *incomprehensible*. Multitudes of my brethren preach an impossible salvation. How often do poor sinners hunger and thirst to know the way of salvation, and there is no available salvation preached to them. Personally, I do not remember to have been told from the pulpit to believe in Jesus as a sinner. I heard much of feelings which I thought I could never get, and frames after which I longed; but I found no peace until a true, free grace message came to me, "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." See, my brethren, if convictions of soul are necessary qualifications for Christ, we ought to know to an ounce how much of these qualifications are needed. If you tell a poor sinner that there is a certain amount of humblings, and tremblings, and convictions, and heart-searchings to be felt, in order that he may be warranted to come to Christ, I demand of all legal-gospellers distinct information as to the manner and exact degree of preparation required. Brethren, you will find when these gentlemen are pushed into a corner, they will not agree, but will every one give a different standard,

according to his own judgment. One will say the sinner must have months of law work; another, that he only needs good desires; and some will demand that he possess the graces of the Spirit—such as humility, godly sorrow, and love to holiness. You will get no clear answer from them. If the sinner's warrant to come is found in the gospel itself, the matter is clear and plain; but what a roundabout plan is that compound of law and gospel against which I Contend! And let me ask you, my brethren, whether such an incomprehensible gospel would do for a dying man? There he lies in the agonies of death. He tells me that he has no good thought or feeling, and asks what he must do to be saved. There is but a step between him and death—another five minutes and that man's soul may be in hell. What am I to tell him? Am I to be an hour explaining to him the preparation required before he may come to Christ? Brethren, I dare not. But I tell him, "Believe, brother, even though it be the eleventh hour; trust thy soul with Jesus, and thou shalt be saved." There is the same gospel for a living man as for a dying man. The thief on the Cross may have had some experience, but I do not find him pleading it; he turns his eye to Jesus, saying, "Lord, remember me!" How prompt is the reply, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." He may have had ongoing desires, he may have had deep convictions, but I am quite sure he did not say, "Lord, I dare not ask thee to remember me, because I do not feel I have repented enough. I dare not trust thee, because I have not been shaken over hell's mouth." No, no, no; he looked to Jesus as he was, and Jesus responded to his believing prayer. It must be so with you, my brethren, for any other plan but that of a sinner's coming to Christ *as a sinner*, and resting on Jesus just as he is, is utterly incomprehensible, or, if it is to be explained at all, will require a day or two to explain it ill; and that cannot be the gospel which the apostles preached to dying men.

Yet again, I believe that the preaching of alarms of conscience and repentance as qualifications for Christ, is *unacceptable* to the awakened sinner. I will introduce one, as Saltmarsh does in his "Flowings of Christ's Blood Freely to the Chief of Sinners." Here is a poor brother who dares not believe in Jesus. I will suppose him to have attended a ministry where the preaching is "If you have felt this, if you have felt that, then you may believe." When you went to your minister in trouble, what did he say to you? "He asked me whether I felt my need of Christ, I told him I did not think I did, at least I did not feel my need enough. He told me that I ought to meditate upon the guilt of sin, and consider the dreadful character of the wrath to come, and I might in this way feel my need more." Did you do so? "I did; but it seemed to me as if while I meditated upon the terrors of judgment, my heart grew harder instead of softer, and I seemed to be desperately set, and resolved in a kind of despair to go on in my ways; yet, some-times I did have some humblings and some meltings of heart." What did your minister tell you to do to get comfort then? "He said I ought to pray much." Did you pray? "I told him I could not pray; that I was such a sinner that it was of no use for me to hope for an answer if I could." What did he say then? "He told me I ought to lay hold upon the promises." Yes, did you do so? "No; I told him I could not lay hold upon the promises; that I could not see they were meant for me, for I was not the character intended; and that I could only find threatenings in the Word of God for such as I was." What did he say then? "He told me to be diligent in the use of the means, and to attend his ministry." What did you say to that? "I told him I was diligent, but that what I wanted was not means, I wanted to get my sins pardoned and forgiven." What did he say then? "Why, he said that I had better persevere and wait patiently for the Lord; I told him that I was in such a horror of great darkness, that my soul chose strangling rather than life. Well then, he said, he thought I must already be truly penitent, and was therefore safe, and that sooner or later I should have hope. But I told him, a mere hope was not enough for

me, I could not be safe while sin lay so heavy upon me. He asked me whether I had not desires after Christ. I said I had, but they were merely selfish, Carnal desires; that I sometimes thought I had desires, but they were only legal. He said if I had a desire to have a desire, it was God's work, and I was saved. That did prop me up for a time, sir, but I went down again, for that did not do for me, I wanted something solid to rest on." And sinner, how is it now with you? where are you now? "Well, sir, I scarce know where I am, but I pray you, tell me what I must do?" Brethren, my reply is prompt and plain; hear it. Poor soul, I have no questions to ask you; I have no advice to give you, except this, God's command to you is, whatever you may be, trust to the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Will you do it or no? If he rejects that, I must leave him; I have no more to say to him; I am clear of his blood, and on him the sentence comes, "He that believeth not shall be damned." But you will find in ninety-nine Cases out of one hundred, that when you begin to talk to the sinner, not about his repentings and his desirings, but about Christ, and tell him that he need not fear the law, for Christ has satisfied it; that he need not fear an angry God, for God is not angry with believers; tell him that all manner of iniquity was Cast into the Red Sea of Jesus' blood, and, like the Egyptians, drowned there for ever; tell him that no matter however vile and wicked he may have been, "Christ is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him;" and tell him that he has a right to come, be he who he may, or what he may, because God bids him come; and you will find that the suitability of such a gospel to the sinner's case, will prove a sweet inducement in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to lead that sinner to lay hold on Jesus Christ. O my brethren, I am ashamed of myself when I think of the way in which I have sometimes talked to awakened sinners. I am persuaded that the only true remedy for a broken heart is Jesus Christ's most precious blood. Some surgeons keep a wound open too long; they keep cutting, and cutting, and cutting, till they cut away as much sound flesh as proud flesh. Better by half heal it, heal it at once, for Jesus Christ was not sent to keep open the wounds, but to bind up the broken in heart. To you, then, sinners of every sort and hue, black, hard-hearted, insensible, impenitent, even to you is the gospel sent, for "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners," even the chief.

I might here pause, surely, but I must add yet one other point upon this negative mode of reasoning. Any other warrant for the sinner's faith than the gospel itself, is *false* and *dangerous*.

It is *false*, my brethren, it is as false as God is true, that anything in a sinner can be his warrant for believing in Jesus. The whole tenour and run of the gospel is clean contrary to it. It must be false, because there is nothing in a sinner until he believes which can be a warrant for his believing. If you tell me that a sinner has any good thing in him before he believes, I reply, impossible—"Without faith it is impossible to please God." All the repentings, and humblings, and convictions that a sinner has before faith, must be, according to Scripture, displeasing to God. Do not tell me that his heart is broken; if it is only broken by carnal means, and trusts in its brokenness, it needs to be broken over again. Do not tell me he has been led to hate his sin; I tell you he does not hate his sin, he only hates hell. There cannot be a true and real hatred of sin where there is not faith in Jesus. All the sinner knows and feels before faith is only an addition to his other sins, and how can sin which deserves wrath be a warrant for an act which is the work of the Holy Spirit?

How *dangerous* is the sentiment I am opposing. My hearers, it may be so mischievous as to have misled some of you. I solemnly warn you, though you have been professors of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for twenty years, if your reason for believing in Christ lies in this, that you have felt the terrors of the law; that you have been alarmed, and have been convinced; if your own experience be your warrant for believing in Christ, it is a false reason, and you are really relying

upon your experience and not upon Christ: and mark you, if you rely upon your frames and feelings, nay, if you rely upon your communion with Christ, in any degree whatever, you are as certainly a lost sinner as though you relied upon oaths and blasphemies; you shall no more be able to enter heaven, even by the works of the Spirit—and this is using strong language—than by your own works; for Christ, and Christ alone, is the foundation, and “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” Take care of resting in your own experience. All that is of nature’s spinning must be unravelled, and everything that getteth into Christ’s place, however dear to thee, and however precious in itself, must be broken in pieces, and like the dust of the golden calf, must be strawed upon the water, and thou wilt be made sorrowfully to drink of it, because thou madest it thy trust. I believe that the tendency of that preaching which puts the warrant for faith anywhere but in the gospel command, is to vex the true penitent, and to console the hypocrite; the tendency of it is to make the poor soul which really repents, feel that he must not believe in Christ, because he sees so much of his own hardness of heart. The more spiritual a man is, the more unspiritual he sees himself to be; and the more penitent a man is, the more impenitent he discovers himself to be. Often the most penitent men are those who think themselves the most impenitent; and if I am to preach the gospel to the penitent and not to every sinner, as a sinner, then those penitent persons, who, according to my opponents, have the most right to believe, are the very persons who will never dare to touch it, because they are conscious of their own impenitence and want of all qualification for Christ. Sinners, let me address you with words of life: Jesus wants nothing of you, nothing whatsoever, nothing done, nothing felt; he gives both work and feeling. Ragged, penniless, just as ye are, lost, forsaken, desolate, with no good feelings, and no good hopes, still Jesus comes to you, and in these words of pity he addresses you, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” If thou believest in him thou shalt never be confounded.

2. But now, POSITIVELY, and as the negative part has been positive enough, we will be brief here. The gospel Command is a sufficient warrant for a sinner to believe in Jesus Christ. The *words of our text* imply this—“This is the commandment.” My brethren, do you want any warrant for doing a thing better than God’s command to do it? The children of Israel borrowed jewels of silver and jewels of gold from the Egyptians. Many, as they read the Bible, find fault with this transaction; but, to my mind, if God bade them do it, that was enough of justification for them. Very well; if God bid thee believe—if this be his commandment that thou believe—canst thou want a better warrant? I say, is there any necessity for any other. Surely the Lord’s Word is enough.

Brethren, the command to believe in Christ must be the sinner’s warrant, if you consider the nature of our commission. How runs it? “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” It ought to run, according to the other plan, “preach the gospel to every regenerate person, to every convinced sinner, to every sensible soul.” But it is not so; it is to “every creature.” But unless the warrant be a something in which every creature can take a share, there is no such thing as consistently preaching it to *every creature*. Then how is it put?—“He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.” Where is there a word about the pre-requisites for believing. Surely the man could not be damned for not doing what he would not have been warranted in doing. Our reaching, on the theory of qualifications, should not be,” Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;” but “Qualify yourselves for faith, be sensible of your sin, be regenerated, get marks and evidences, and then believe.” Why, surely, if I am not to sow the good seed on the stony places and among the thorns, I had better give up being a sower, and take to ploughing, or some other work. When the apostles went to Macedonia or Achaia, they

ought not to have commenced with preaching Christ; they should have preached up qualifications, emotions, and sensations, if these are the preparations for Jesus; but I find that Paul, whenever he stands up, has nothing to preach but “Christ, and him crucified.” Repentance is preached as a gift from the exalted Saviour, but it is never as the cause or preparation for believing on Jesus. These two graces are born together, and live with a common life—beware of making one a foundation for the other. I would like to carry one of those who only preach to sensible sinners, and set him down in the capital of the kingdom of Dahomey. There are no sensible sinners there! Look at them, with their mouths stained with human blood, with their bodies smeared all over with the gore of their immolated victims—how will the preacher find any qualification there? I know not what he could say, but I know what my message would be. My word would run thus—“Men and brethren, God, who made the heavens and the earth; hath sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world to suffer for our sins, and whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” If Christ crucified did not shake the kingdom of Dahomey, it would be its first failure. When the Moravian missionaries first went to Greenland, you remember that they were months and months teaching the poor Greenlander about the Godhead, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the doctrine of sin and the law, and no converts were forthcoming. But one day, by accident, one of the Greenlanders happening to read that passage, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God,” asked the meaning, and the missionary, hardly thinking him advanced enough to understand the gospel, nevertheless ventured to explain it to him, and the man became converted, and hundreds of his countrymen received the Word. Naturally enough, they said to the missionaries, “Why did not you tell us this before? We knew all about there being a God, and that did us no good; why did not you come and tell us to believe in Jesus Christ before?” O my brethren, this is God’s weapon, God’s method; this is the great battering-ram which will shake the gates of hell; and we must see to it, that it be brought into daily use.

I have tried, on the positive side, to show that a free-grace warrant is consistent with the text—that it accords with apostolic custom, and is, indeed, absolutely necessary, seeing the condition in which sinners are placed. But, my brethren, to preach Christ to sinners, as sinners, must be right; for all the former acts of God are to sinners, as sinners. Whom did God elect? Sinners. He loved us with a great love, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins. How did he redeem them? Did he redeem them as saints? No; for while we were yet enemies, he reconciled us unto God by the death of his Son. Christ never shed his blood for the good that is in us, but for the sin that is in us. “He laid down his life for our sins,” says the apostle. If, then, in election and redemption, we find God dealing with sinners, as sinners, it is a marring and nullifying of the whole plan if the gospel is to be preached to men as anything else but sinners.

Again, it is inconsistent with the character of God to suppose that he comes forth and proclaims, “If, O my fallen creatures, if you qualify yourselves for my mercy, I will save you; if you will feel holy emotions—if you will be conscious of sacred desires after me, then the blood of Jesus Christ shall cleanse you.” There would be little which is godlike in that. But when he comes out with pardons full and free, and saith, “Yea, when ye lay in your blood, I said unto you Live”—when he comes to you, his enemy and rebellious subject, and yet cries, “I have blotted out thy sins like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thine iniquities.” Why, this is divine. You know what David said, “I have sinned.” What did Nathan say? “The Lord has put away thy sin, thou shalt not die,” and that is the message of the gospel to a sinner as a sinner. “The Lord has put away thy sin; Christ has

suffered; he has brought in perfect righteousness; take him, trust him, and ye shall live.” May that message come home to you this morning, my beloved.

I have read with some degree of attention a book to which I owe much for this present discourse—a book, by Abraham Booth, called “Glad Tidings to Perishing Sinners.” I have never heard any one cast a suspicion upon Abraham Booth’s soundness; on the contrary, he has been generally considered as one of the most orthodox of the divines of the last generation. If you want my views in full, read his book. If you need something more, let me say, among all the bad things which his revilers have laid to his door, I have never heard any one blame William Huntingdon for not being high enough in doctrine. Now, William Huntingdon prefaced in his lifetime a book by Saltmarsh, with which he was greatly pleased; and the marrow of its teaching is just this, in his own words, “The only ground for any to believe is, he is faithful that hath promised, not anything in themselves, for this is the commandment, That ye believe on his Son Jesus Christ.” Now, if William Huntingdon himself printed such a book as that, I marvel how the followers of either William Huntingdon or Abraham Booth, how men calling themselves Calvinistic divines and high Calvinists, can advocate what is not free grace, but a legal, graceless system of qualifications and preparations. I might here quote Crisp, who is pat to the point and a high doctrine man too. I mention neither Booth nor Huntingdon as authorities upon the subject, to the law and to the testimony we must go; but I do mention them to show that men holding strong views on election and predestination yet did see it to be consistent to preach the gospel to sinners as sinners—nay, felt that it was inconsistent to preach the gospel in any other way.

I shall only add, that the blessings which flow from preaching Christ to sinners as sinners, are of such a character as prove it to be right. Do on not see that this *levels us all*? We have the same warrant for believing, and no one can exalt himself above his fellow.

Then, my brethren, how it inspires men with hope and confidence; *it forbids despair*. No man can despair if this be true; or if he do, it is a wicked, unreasonable despair, because if he has been never so bad, yet God commands him to believe. What room can there be for despondency? Surely if anything Could cut off Giant Despair’s head, Christ preached to sinners is the sharp two-edged sword to do it.

Again, how it *makes a man live close to Christ!* If I am to come to Christ as a sinner every day, and I must do so, for the Word saith, “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him;” if every day I am to come to Christ as a sinner, why then, how paltry all my doings look! what utter contempt it casts upon all my fine virtues, m preachings, my prayings, and all that comes of my flesh! and though it leads me to seek after purity and holiness, yet it teaches me to live on Christ and not on them, and so it keeps me at the fountain head.

My time flies, and I must leave the last head, just to add, sinner, whoever thou mayst be, God now commands thee to believe in Jesus Christ. This is his commandment: he does not command thee to feel anything, or be anything, to prepare thyself for this. Now, art thou willing to incur the great guilt of making God a liar? Surely thou wilt shrink from that: then dare to believe. Thou canst not say, “I have no right:” you have a perfect right to do what God tells you to do. You cannot tell me you are not fit; there is no fitness wanted, the Command is given and it is yours to obey, not to dispute. You cannot say it does not come to you—it is preached to every Creature under heaven; and now soul, it is so pleasant a thing to trust the Lord Jesus Christ that I would fain persuade myself thou needest no persuading. It is so delightful a thing to accept a perfect salvation, to be

saved by precious blood. and to be married to so bright a Saviour, that I would fain hope the Holy Spirit has led thee to cry, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

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