

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ

NO. 994

**DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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***“Oh that You would bless me, indeed!”
1 Chronicles 4:10.***

WE know very little about Jabez except that he was more honorable than his brothers, and that he was called Jabez because his mother bore him with sorrow. It will sometimes happen that where there is the most sorrow in the antecedents, there will be the most pleasure in the sequel. As the furious storm gives place to the clear sunshine, so the night of weeping precedes the morning of joy. Sorrow the forerunner—Gladness the prince it ushers in. Cowper says—

***“The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the place where sorrow is unknown.”***

To a great extent we find that we must sow in tears before we can reap in joy. Many of our works for Christ have cost us tears. Difficulties and disappointments have wrung our soul with anguish.

Yet those projects that have cost us more than ordinary sorrow have often turned out to be the most honorable of our undertakings. While our grief called the offspring of desire, “Benoni,” the son of my sorrow, our faith has been afterwards able to give it a name of delight, “Benjamin,” the son of my right hand. You may expect a blessing in serving God if you are enabled to persevere under many discouragements. The ship is often long coming home because detained on the road by excess of cargo. Expect her freight to be the better when she reaches the port.

More honorable than his brothers was the child whom his mother bore with sorrow. As for this Jabez, whose aim was so well pointed, his fame so far sounded, his name so lastingly embalmed—he was a man of *prayer*. The honor he enjoyed would not have been worth having if it had not been vigorously contested and equitably won. His devotion was the key to his promotion. Those are the best honors that come from God—the award of Grace with the acknowledgment of service.

When Jacob was surnamed Israel, he received his principedom after a memorable night of prayer. Surely it was far more honorable to him than if it had been bestowed upon him as a flattering distinction by some earthly emperor. The best honor is that which a man gains in communion with the Most High. Jabez, we are told, was more honorable than his brothers. His prayer is recorded, as if to intimate that he was also more prayerful than his brothers. We are told of what petitions his prayer consisted. It was all through very significant and instructive. We have only time to take one clause of it—indeed, that one clause may be said to comprehend the rest—“Oh that You would bless me, indeed!”

I commend it as a prayer for yourselves, dear Brothers and Sisters—one which will be available at all seasons—a prayer to begin Christian life with. A prayer to end it with, a prayer which would never be unseasonable in your joys or in your sorrows.

Oh that you, the God of Israel, the Covenant God, would bless me, indeed! The very essence of the prayer seems to lie in that word, "indeed." There are many varieties of blessing. Some are blessings only in name—they gratify our wishes for a moment, but permanently disappoint our expectations. They charm the eye, but pall the taste. Others are mere temporary blessings—they perish with the using. Though for awhile they regale the senses, they cannot satisfy the higher cravings of the soul. But, "Oh that You would bless me, indeed." I know whom God blesses shall be blessed.

The thing good in itself is bestowed with the goodwill of the Giver, and shall be productive of so much good fortune to the recipient that it may well be esteemed as a blessing, "indeed," for there is nothing comparable to it. Let the Grace of God prompt it, let the choice of God appoint it, let the bounty of God confer it, and then the endowment shall be something godlike, indeed—something worthy of the lips that pronounce the benediction—and verily to be craved by everyone who seeks honor that is substantial and enduring. "Oh that You would bless me, indeed."

Think it over, and you will see that there is a depth of meaning in the expression. We may set this in contrast with human blessings—"Oh that You would bless me, indeed." It is very delightful to be blessed by our parents and those venerable friends whose benedictions come from their hearts, and are backed up by their prayers. Many a poor man has had no other legacy to leave his children except his blessing. But the blessing of an honest, holy, Christian father is a rich treasure to his son. One might well feel it were a thing to be deplored through life if he had lost a parent's blessing. We like to have it.

The blessing of our spiritual parents is consolatory. Though we believe in no priest-craft, we like to live in the affections of those who were the means of bringing us to Christ and from whose lips we were instructed in the things of God. And how very precious is the blessing of the poor! I do not wonder that Job treasured that up as a sweet thing. "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me." If you have relieved the widow and the fatherless, and their thanks are returned to you in benediction, it is no mean reward.

But, dear Friends, after all—all that parents, relatives, saints, and grateful persons can do in the way of blessing falls very far short of what we desire to have. O Lord, we would have the blessings of our fellow creatures, the blessings that come from their hearts—but, "Oh that *You* would bless me, indeed," for You can bless with authority. Their blessings may be but words, but Yours are effectual. They may often wish what they cannot do, and desire to give what they have not at their own disposal but Your will is Omnipotent. You did create the world with but a word. O that such Omnipotence would now bespeak me Your blessing!

Other blessings may bring us some tiny cheer, but in Your favor is life. Other blessings are mere tittles in comparison with Your blessing. For Your blessing is the title "to an inheritance incorruptible" and unfading, to "a kingdom which cannot be moved." Well might David pray in another place, "With Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever."

Perhaps in this place Jabez may have put the blessing of God in contrast with the blessings of men. Men will bless you when you do well for yourself. They will praise the man who is successful in business. Nothing succeeds like success. Nothing has so much the approval of the general public as a man's prosperity. Alas, they do not weigh men's actions in the balances of the sanctuary, but in quite other scales. You will find those about you who will commend you if you are prosperous. Or like Job's comforters, condemn you if you suffer adversity.

Perhaps there may be some feature about their blessings that may please you because you feel you deserve them. They commend you for your patriotism—you have been a patriot. They commend you for your generosity—you know you have been self-sacrificing. But after all, what is there in the verdict of man? At a trial, the verdict of the policeman who stands in the court, or of the spectators who sit in the courthouse amount to nothing. The man who is being tried feels that the only thing that is of importance at all will be the verdict of the *jury*, and the sentence of the *judge*.

So it will little avail us, whatever we may do, how others commend or censure. Their blessings are not of any great value. But, "Oh that You would bless me," that You would say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Commend the feeble service that through Your Grace my heart has rendered. That will be to bless me, indeed.

Men are sometimes blessed in a very insincere sense by flattery. There are always those who, like the fox in the fable, hope to gain the cheese by praising the crow. They never saw such plumage and no voice could be so sweet as yours. The whole of their mind is set, not on you, but on what they are to *gain by you*. The race of flatterers is never extinct, though the flattered usually flatter themselves it is so. They may conceive that men flatter others, but all is so palpable and transparent when heaped upon themselves that they accept it with a great deal of self-complacency, as being, perhaps, a little exaggerated, but after all, exceedingly near the truth.

We are not very apt to take a large discount off the praises that others offer us. But were we wise, we should press to our bosom those who censure us. And we should always keep at arm's length those who praise us—for those who censure us to our face cannot possibly be making a market of us. But with regard to those who extol us—rising early and using loud sentences of praise—we may suspect. We shall very seldom be unjust in the suspicion that there is some other motive in the praise which they render to us than that which appears on the surface.

Young Man, are you placed in a position where God honors you? Beware of flatterers. Or have you come into a large estate? Have you abundance? There are always flies where there is honey. Beware of flattery. Young Woman, are you fair to look upon? There will be those about you that will have their designs, perhaps their *evil* designs, in lauding your beauty. Beware of flatterers. Turn aside from all these who have honey on their tongue because of the poison of asps that is under it. Think of Solomon's caution, "meddle not with him that flatters with his lips."

Cry to God, "Deliver me from all this vain adulation which nauseates my soul." So shall you pray to Him the more fervently, "Oh that You would

“bless me, indeed!” Let me have Your benediction, which never says more than it means—which never gives less than it promises. If you take, then, the prayer of Jabez as being put in contrast with the benedictions which come from men, you see much force in it.

But we may put it in another light and compare the blessing Jabez craved with those blessings that are temporal and transient. There are many bounties given to us mercifully by God for which we are bound to be very grateful. But we must not set too much store by them. We may accept them with gratitude, but we must not make them our idols. When we have them we have great need to cry, “Oh that You would bless me, indeed, and make these inferior blessings real blessings.” And if we have them not, we should with greater vehemence cry, “Oh that we may be rich in *faith*, and if not blessed with these external favors, may we be blessed spiritually, and then we shall be blessed, indeed.”

Let us review some of these mercies, and just say a word or two about them. One of the first cravings of men’s hearts is wealth. So universal the desire to gain it that we might almost say it is a natural instinct. How many have thought if they once possessed it they should be blessed, indeed! But there are ten thousand proofs that happiness consists not in the abundance which a man possesses. So many instances are well known to you all, that I need not quote any to show that riches are *not* a blessing, indeed. They are rather *apparently*, than *really* so. Hence it has been well said that when we see

how much a man has, we envy him. But could we see how little he enjoys, we should pity him.

Some that have had the most easy circumstances have had the most uneasy minds. Those who have acquired all they could wish—had their wishes been at all sane—have been led by the possession of what they had to be discontented because they had not more—

***“Thus the base miser starves amidst his store,
Broods over his gold, and griping still at more,
Sits sadly pining, and believes he’s poor.”***

Nothing is more clear to anyone who chooses to observe it—riches are not the chief good at whose advent sorrow flies, and in whose presence joy perennial springs. Full often wealth deceives the owner.

Dainties are spread on his table but his appetite fails. Minstrels wait his bidding, but his ears are deaf to all the strains of music. Holidays he may have as many as he pleases, but for him recreation has lost all its charms. If he is young, fortune has come to him by inheritance, and he makes pleasure his pursuit till sport becomes more irksome than work, and dissipation worse than drudgery. You know how riches make themselves wings—like the bird that roosted on the tree, they fly away. In sickness and despondency these ample means that once seemed to whisper, “Soul, take your ease,” prove themselves to be poor comforters.

In death they even tend to make the pang of separation more acute, because the more there is to leave, the more to lose. We may well say, if we have wealth, “My God, put me not off with these husks. Let me never make a god of the silver and the gold, the goods and the chattels, the estates and investments, which in Your Providence You have given me. I be-

seech You, bless me, indeed. As for these worldly possessions, they will be my ruin unless I have Your Grace with them.”

And if you have not wealth, and perhaps the most of you will never have it, say, “My Father, You have denied me this outward and seeming good—enrich me with Your love. Give me the gold of Your favor, bless me, indeed. Then allot to others whatever You will, You shall divide my portion, my soul shall wait Your daily will. Do bless me, indeed, and I shall be content.”

Another transient blessing which our poor humanity fondly covets and eagerly pursues is fame. In this respect we would gladly be more honorable than our Brethren, and outstrip all our competitors. It seems natural to us all to wish to make a name for ourselves and gain some note in the circle we move in. At any rate we wish to make that circle wider if we can. But here, as of riches, it is indisputable that the greatest fame does not bring with it any equal measure of gratification. Men, in seeking after notoriety or honor, have a degree of pleasure in the *search* which they do not always possess when they have gained their object.

Some of the most famous men have also been the most wretched of the human race. If you have honor and fame, accept it. But let this prayer go up, “My God, bless You me, indeed, for what profit were it, if my name were in a thousand mouths, if You should spew it out of Your mouth? What matter, though my name were written on marble, if it were not written in the Lamb’s Book of Life? These blessings are only *apparent* blessings, windy blessings—blessings that mock me. Give me Your blessing—then the honor which comes of You will make me blessed, indeed.”

If you happen to have lived in obscurity and have never entered the lists for honors among your fellow men, be content to run well your own course and fulfill truly your own vocation. To lack fame is not the most grievous of ills. It is worse to have it like the snow that whitens the ground in the morning, and disappears in the heat of the day. What matters it to a dead man that men are talking of him? Get the blessing, indeed.

There is another temporal blessing which wise men desire and legitimately may wish for rather than the other two—the *blessing of health*. Can we ever prize it sufficiently? To trifle with such a benefit is the madness of folly. The highest eulogies that can be passed on health would not be extravagant. He that has a healthy body is infinitely more blessed than he who is sickly, whatever his estates may be. If I have health—my bones well set and my muscles well strung—if I scarcely know an ache or pain, and can rise in the morning, and with elastic step go forth to labor. If I can cast myself upon my couch at night and sleep the sleep of the happy—oh let me not glory in my strength! In a moment it may fail me.

A few short weeks may reduce the strong man to a skeleton. Consumption may set in. The cheeks may pale with the shadow of death. Let not the strong man glory in his strength. The Lord “delights not in the strength of the horse: He takes not pleasure in the legs of a man.” And let us not make our boast concerning these things. Pray, you that are in good health, “My God, bless me, indeed. Give me a healthy *soul*. Heal me of my spiritual diseases. Jehovah Rophi, come and purge out the leprosy that is in my heart by nature. Make me healthy in the heavenly sense, that I may not be put aside among the unclean, but allowed to stand among the con-

gregation of your saints. Bless my bodily health to me that I may use it rightly, spending the strength I have in Your service and to Your glory. Otherwise, though blessed with *health* by Your Grace, I may *not* be blessed indeed.”

Some of you, dear Friends, do not possess the great treasure of health. Wearisome days and nights are appointed you. Your bones have become an almanac in which you note the changes of the weather. There is much about you that is fitted to excite pity. But I pray that you may have the blessing, indeed. And I know what that is. I can heartily sympathize with a sister that said to me the other day, “I had such nearness to God when I was sick, such full assurance, and such joy in the Lord! I regret to say I have lost it now—I could almost wish to be ill again, if I might have a renewal of communion with God.”

I have oftentimes looked gratefully back to my sick chamber. I am certain that I never did grow in Divine Grace one half so much anywhere as I have upon the bed of pain. It ought not to be so. Our joyous mercies ought to be great fertilizers to our spirit. But not infrequently our griefs are more salutary than our joys. The pruning knife is best for some of us. After all, whatever you have to suffer of weakness, of debility, of pain, of anguish—may it be so attended with the Divine Presence that this light affliction may work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory—and so you may be blessed, indeed.

I will only dwell upon one more temporal mercy, which is very precious—I mean *the blessing of home*. I do not think anyone can ever prize it too highly, or speak too well of it. What a blessing it is to have the fireside, and the dear relationships that gather round the word, “Home”—wife, children, father, brother, sister! Why there are no songs in any language that are more full of music than those dedicated to “Mother.” We hear a great deal about the German “Fatherland”—we like the sound. But the word, “Father,” is the whole of it. The “land” is nothing—the “Father” is key to the music. There are many of us, I hope, blessed with a great many of these relationships. Do not let us be content to solace our souls with ties that must before long be sundered. Let us ask that over and above them may come the blessing, indeed.

I thank You, my God, for my earthly father. But oh, be *You* my Father—then am I blessed, indeed! I thank You, my God, for a mother’s love. But comfort *You* my soul as one whom a mother comforts, then am I blessed, indeed. I thank You, Savior, for the marriage bond. But be *You* the Bridegroom of my soul! I thank You for the tie of brotherhood. But be *You* my Brother born for adversity, bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh. The home You have given me I prize, and thank You for it. But I would dwell in the House of the Lord forever. I would be a child that never wanders, wherever my feet may travel, from my Father’s house with its many mansions.

You can thus be blessed, indeed. If not domiciled under the paternal care of the Almighty, even the blessing of home, with all its sweet familiar comforts, does not reach to the benediction which Jabez desired for himself. But do I speak to any here that are separated from one’s acquaintances and relatives? I know some of you have left behind you in the temporary encampment of life graves where parts of your heart are buried—and

that which remains is bleeding with so many wounds. Ah, well, the Lord bless you, indeed! Widow, your Maker is your Husband. Fatherless one, He has said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Oh, to find all your relationships made up in Him—then you will be blessed, indeed!

I have perhaps taken too long a time in mentioning these temporary blessings, so let me set the text in another light. I trust we have had human blessings and temporary blessings to fill our hearts with gladness, but not to foul our hearts with worldliness, or to distract our attention from the things that belong to our everlasting welfare.

Let us proceed, thirdly, to speak of *imaginary blessings*. There are such in the world. From them may God deliver us! "Oh that You would bless me, indeed." Take the Pharisee. He stood in the Lord's House, and he thought he had the Lord's blessing, and it made him very bold, and he spoke with insincere self-complacency, "God, I thank You that I am not as other men are," and so on. He had the blessing, and well, indeed, he supposed himself to have merited it. He had fasted twice in the week, paid tithes of all that he possessed, even to the odd farthing on the mint, and the extra halfpenny on the cummin he had used. He felt he had done everything.

His the blessing of a quiet or a quiescent conscience. He was a good, easy man—a pattern to the parish. It was a pity everybody did not live as he did. If they had, they would not have wanted any police. Pilate might have dismissed his guards and Herod his soldiers. He was one of the most excellent persons that ever breathed. He adored the city of which he was a citizen! Yes. But he was *not* blessed, indeed. This was all his own arrogant conceit. He was a mere windbag—nothing more—and the blessing which he fancied he had, had never come.

The poor publican whom he thought accursed, went to his home justified rather than he. The blessing had not fallen on the man who thought he had it. Oh, let everyone of us here feel the sting of this rebuke, and pray—"Great God, save us from imputing to ourselves a righteousness which we do not possess. Save us from wrapping ourselves up in our own rags and fancying we have put on wedding garments. Bless us, indeed. Let us have the true righteousness. Let us have the true worthiness which You can accept, even that which is of faith in Jesus Christ."

Another form of this imaginary blessing is found in persons who would scorn to be thought self-righteous. Their delusion, however, is near akin. I hear them singing—

***"I do believe, I will believe
That Jesus died for me,
And on His Cross He shed His blood,
From sin to set me free."***

You believe it, you say. Well, but how do you *know*? Upon what authority are you so sure? Who told you? "Oh, I believe it." Yes, but we must mind what we believe. Have you any clear *evidence* of a special interest in the blood of Jesus? Can you give any spiritual *reasons* for believing that Christ has set you free from sin?

I am afraid that some have got a hope that has not got any ground, like an anchor without any barbs—nothing to grasp, nothing to lay hold upon.

They say they are saved—and they stick to it that they are—and think it wicked to doubt it. But yet they have no reason to warrant their confidence. When the sons of Kohath carried the ark and touched it with their hands, they did rightly. But when Uzzah touched it he died. There are those who are ready to be fully assured. There are others to whom it will be death to talk of it.

There is a great difference between presumption and full assurance. Full assurance is reasonable—it is based on solid ground. Presumption takes for granted and with brazen face pronounces that to be its own to which it has no right whatever. Beware, I pray you, of presuming that you are saved. If with your heart you trust in Jesus, then are you saved. But if you merely say, “I trust in Jesus,” it does not save you. If your heart is renewed, if you shall hate the things that you did once love, and love the things that you did once hate. If you have really repented. If there is a thorough change of mind in you. If you are born again—then have you reason to rejoice—but if there is no vital change, no inward godliness—if there is no love to God, no prayer, no work of the Holy Spirit, then your saying, “I am saved,” is but your own assertion. It may delude, but it will not deliver you.

Our prayer ought to be, “Oh that You would bless me, indeed, with real faith, with real salvation, with the trust in Jesus that is the essential of faith. Not with the conceit that begets credulity. God preserve us from imaginary blessings!” I have met with persons who said, “I believe I am saved because I dreamt it.” Or, “Because I had a text of Scripture that applied to my own case. Such-and-Such, a good man, said so-and-so in his sermon.” Or, “Because I took to weeping and was excited, and felt as I never felt before.” Ah, but nothing will stand the trial but this, “Do you abjure all confidence in everything but the finished work of Jesus, and do you come to Christ to be reconciled in Him to God?”

If you do not, your dreams, visions and fancies are but dreams, visions and fancies—and will not serve your turn when most you need them. Pray the Lord to bless you, indeed, for of that sterling verity in all your walk and talk there is a great scarcity. Too much, I am afraid, that even those who are saved—saved for time and eternity—need this caution! They have good cause to pray this prayer that they may learn to make a distinction between some things which they *think* to be spiritual blessings, and others which are blessings, indeed. Let me show you what I mean.

Is it certainly a blessing to get an answer to your prayer after your own mind? I always like to qualify my most earnest prayer with, “Not as I will, but as You will.” Not only ought I to do it, but I would like to do it, otherwise I might ask for something which it would be dangerous for me to receive. God might give it me in anger and I might find little sweetness in the grant, but much soreness in the grief it caused me. You remember how Israel of old asked for flesh, and God gave them quails. But while the meat was yet in their mouths the wrath of God came upon them.

Ask for the meat, if you like, but always put in this—“Lord, if this is not a real blessing, do not give it me.” “Bless me, indeed.” I seldom like to repeat the old story of the good woman whose son was ill—a little child near death’s door. She begged the minister, a Puritan, to pray for its life. He did pray very earnestly, but he put in, “If it be Your will, save this child.” The

woman said, "I cannot bear that—I must have you pray that the child shall live. Do not put in any ifs or buts." "Woman," said the minister, "it may be you will live to rue the day that ever you wished to set your will up against God's will."

Twenty years afterwards, she was carried away in a fainting fit from under the Tyburn Gallows tree, where that son was put to death as a felon. Although she had lived to see her child grow up to be a man, it would have been infinitely better for her had the child died, and infinitely wiser had she left it to God's will. Do not be quite so sure that what you think an answer to prayer is proof of Divine love. It may leave much room for you to seek unto the Lord, saying, "Oh that You would bless me, indeed."

Sometimes great exhilaration of spirit, liveliness of heart—even though it is religious joy—may not always be a blessing. We delight in it, and oh, sometimes, when we have had gatherings for prayer here, the fire has burned, and our souls have glowed! We felt at the time how we could sing—

***"My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this,
And sit and sing herself away
To everlasting bliss."***

So far as that was a blessing we are thankful for it. But I should not like to set such seasons up as if my enjoyments were the main token of God's favor. Or as if they were the chief signs of His blessing.

Perhaps it would be a greater blessing to me to be broken in spirit and laid low before the Lord at the present time. When you ask for the highest joy, and pray to be on the mountain with Christ, remember it may be as much a blessing—yes, a blessing, indeed—to be brought into the Valley of Humiliation, to be laid very low and constrained to cry out in anguish, "Lord, save, or I perish!"—

***"If today He deigns to bless us
With a sense of pardoned sin,
He tomorrow may distress us,
Make us feel the plague within—
All to make us
Sick of self, and fond of Him."***

These variable experiences of ours may be blessings, indeed, to us, when, had we been always rejoicing, we might have been like Moab, settled on our lees, and not emptied from vessel to vessel.

It fares ill with those who have no changes. They fear not God. Have we not, dear Friends, sometimes envied those persons that are always calm and unruffled, and are never perturbed in mind? Well, there are Christians whose evenness of temper deserves to be emulated. And as for that calm repose, that unwavering assurance which comes from the Spirit of God, it is a very delightful attainment. But I am not sure that we ought to envy anybody's lot because it is more tranquil or less exposed to storm and tempest than our own. There is a danger of saying, "Peace, peace," where there is no peace—and there is a calmness which arises from callousness.

Dupes there are who deceive their own souls. "They have no doubts," they say, but it is because they have little heart searching. They have no

anxieties, because they have not much enterprise or many pursuits to stir them up. Or it may be they have no pains because they have no life. Better go to Heaven lame and maimed, than go marching on in confidence down to Hell. "Oh that You would bless me, indeed." My God, I will envy no one of his gifts or his Graces, much less of his inward mood or his outward circumstances, if only You will "bless me, indeed."

I would not be comforted unless You comfort me, nor have any peace but Christ, my Peace, nor any rest but the rest which comes from the sweet savor of the sacrifice of Christ. Christ shall be All in All, and none shall be anything to me save Himself. O that we might always feel that we are not to judge as to the manner of the blessing—but must leave it with God to give us what we would have! Not the imaginary blessing—the superficial and apparent blessing—but the blessing, indeed!

Equally, too, with regard to our work and service, I think our prayer should always be, "Oh that You would bless me, indeed." It is lamentable to see the work of some good men, though it is not ours to judge them, how very pretentious, but how very unreal it is. It is really shocking to think how some men pretend to build up a Church in the course of two or three evenings. They will report in the corner of the newspapers that there were forty-three persons convicted of sin, and forty-six justified, and sometimes thirty-eight sanctified. I do not know what besides wonderful statistics they give as to all that is accomplished. I have observed congregations that have been speedily gathered together and great additions have been made to the Church all of a sudden.

And what has become of them? Where are those churches at the present moment? The dreariest deserts in Christendom are those places that were fertilized by the patent manures of certain Revivalists. The whole Church seemed to have spent its strength in one rush and it ended in nothing at all. They built their wooden house and piled up the hay, and made a stubble spire that seemed to reach the heavens—and there fell one spark, and all went away in smoke. And he that came to labor next time—the successor of the great builder—had to get the ashes swept away before he could do any good. The prayer of everyone that serves God should be, "Oh that You would bless me, indeed."

Plod on, plod on! If I only build one piece of masonry in my life, and nothing more, if it is gold, silver, or precious stones, it is a good deal for a man to do. Of such precious stuff as that, to build even one little corner which will not show, is a worthy service. It will not be much talked of, but it will last. There is the point—it will *last*. "Establish You the work of our hands upon us. Yes, the work of our hands establish You it." If we are not builders in an established Church, it is of little use to try at all. What God establishes will stand—but what men build without His establishment will certainly come to nothing. "Oh that you would bless me, indeed."

Sunday school teacher, be this your prayer. Tract distributor, local preacher, whatever you may be, dear Brother or Sister—whatever your form of service—ask the Lord that you may not be one of those plaster builders using sham composition that only requires a certain amount of frost and weather to make it crumble to pieces. Be it yours, if you cannot build a cathedral, to build at least one part of the marvelous temple that God is piling for eternity, which will outlast the stars.

I have one thing more to mention before I bring this sermon to a close. The blessings of God's Grace are blessings, indeed, which in right earnest we ought to seek after. By these marks shall you know them. Blessings, indeed, are such blessings as come from the pierced hand—blessings that come from Calvary's bloody tree, streaming from the Savior's wounded side—your pardon, your acceptance, your spiritual life—the bread that is meat, indeed, the blood that is drink, indeed—your oneness to Christ, and all that comes of it—these are blessings, indeed.

Any blessing that comes as the result of the Spirit's work in your soul is a blessing, indeed. Though it humbles you, though it strips you, though it kills you—it is a blessing, indeed. Though the harrow go over and over your soul and the deep plow cut into your very heart—though you are maimed and wounded, and left for dead—yet if the Spirit of God does it, it is a blessing, indeed. If He convicts you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment—even though you have not up to now been brought to Christ—it is a blessing, indeed. Anything that He does, accept it. Do not be dubious of it. But pray that He may continue His blessed operations in your soul.

Whatever leads you to God is, in like manner, a blessing, indeed. Riches may not do it. There may be a golden wall between you and God. Health will not do it—even the strength and marrow of your bones may keep you at a distance from your God. But anything that draws you nearer to Him is a blessing, indeed. What if it is a cross that raises you? If it raises you to God, it shall be a blessing, indeed. Anything that reaches into eternity, with a preparation for the world to come. Anything that we can carry across the river—the holy joy that is to blossom in those fields beyond the swelling flood—the pure cloudless love of the brotherhood which is to be the atmosphere of the Truth of God forever—anything of this kind that has the eternal broad arrow on it—the immutable mark—is a blessing, indeed.

And anything which helps me to glorify God is a blessing, indeed. If I am sick and that helps me to praise Him, it is a blessing, indeed. If I am poor, and I can serve Him better in poverty than in wealth, it is a blessing, indeed. If I am in contempt I will rejoice in that day and leap for joy, if it is for Christ's sake—for then, it is a blessing, indeed. Yes, my faith shakes off the disguise, snatches the visor from the fair forehead of the blessing, and counts it all joy to come into various trials for the sake of Jesus and the recompense of the reward that He has promised. "Oh that we may be blessed, indeed."

I send you away with these three words—"Search." See whether the blessings are blessings, indeed, and be not satisfied unless you know that they are of God, tokens of His Grace and earnest of His saving purpose. "Weigh"—that shall be the next word. Whatever you have, weigh it in the scale, and ascertain if it is a blessing, indeed, conferring such Grace upon you as causes you to abound in love, and to abound in every good word and work. And lastly, "Pray." So pray that this prayer may mingle with all your prayers, that whatever God grants or whatever He withholds you may be blessed, indeed.

Is it a time of joy with you? O that Christ may mellow your joy and prevent the intoxication of earthly blessedness from leading you aside from

close walking with Him! In the night of sorrow pray that He will bless you, indeed, lest the wormwood also intoxicates you and makes you drunk. Lest your afflictions should make you think harshly of Him. Pray for the blessing, which having, you are rich to all the intents of bliss—or which lacking, you are poor and destitute, though plenty fill your store. “If Your Presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.” But, “Oh that You would bless me, indeed.” Amen.

Letter from Mr. Spurgeon, read at the Tabernacle on Sunday, June 11—

BELOVED FRIENDS—Whom I have in constant and affectionate remembrance. I am obliged again to take up the note of mourning, for I have been all the week suffering, and the most of it confined to my bed. The severe weather has driven me back and caused a repetition of all my pains. Nevertheless, the Lord’s will be done. Let Him have His way with me, for He is Love. I have been wearying to preach again, but it may be my dumb Sundays are appointed for my chastisement, and their number is not yet fulfilled. We must work for God while we can, for not one of us knows how soon he may be unable to take a share in the service. At the same time, how unimportant we are! God’s work goes on without us. We all need Him, but He needs no one of us.

Beloved, up to now I have had much solace in hearing that the Lord’s work among you goes on. I pray you make earnest intercession that this may continue. I hope weeknight services will not droop. If you stay away, let it be when I am there, but *not now*. May the Deacons and Elders find themselves at every meeting for worship surrounded by an untiring band of helpers.

May abundance of Grace rest on you all, especially on the sick, the poor, and the bereaved. Pray for me, I entreat you. Perhaps if *the Church* met for prayer I should be speedily restored. I know thousands do pray, but should not the Church do so as a Church? I fear I must give up all hope of preaching on the 25th. But I trust the Lord will be merciful to me and send me among you on the first Sunday of July.

Next Sunday there should be a collection for the Association, an object very dear to me.

With deep Christian love,

Your suffering Pastor,

C. H. SPURGEON.

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

WITH THE KING FOR HIS WORK!

NO. 1400

(A slogan for Sunday school teachers).

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 1, 1877,
BY C.H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“These were the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges: there they dwelt with the king for his work.”
1 Chronicles 4:23.***

ALL labor is honorable. No man ever needs to be ashamed of an honest calling. Whether a potter or a gardener, or whatever else his occupation may be, the workman need never blush at the craft or toil by which he earns his honest wage. “In the sweat of your face shall you eat bread,” belongs to us all. The sluggard may well be ashamed of his sloth, but not the diligent man of his industry. It is quite certain that the Word of God does not disparage the most humble calling. I suppose that there is scarcely a trade or occupation which is not mentioned in sacred Scripture. The rough hand and the rugged face of the peasant are to be preferred before the dainty finger and the sleek form of the Pharisee.

And the election of Divine Grace has comprised men of all sorts—herdsman and fisherman, brick maker and tent maker—those who plowed the soil and those who plowed the sea. From all ranks and classes and conditions of men God has been pleased to call forth His own and He has loved them, none the less, because they have had to soil their hands with potter’s clay, or bend their backs to till the field. Wretched is the clown who sits in the shade while his comrades work in the sun! There is an honor, then, and a dignity, too, in humble honest toil. The Bible itself does not disdain to record the humble craftsman’s name.

To serve a *king* always was and still is deemed a thing to be desired. Those who do such duties claim some deference from their fellows. Work done well, however common, is accounted worthy of its wage, but work done for royalty generally has some special attraction to commend it. Such a man is privileged by appointment to be purveyor of this or that to Her Majesty, the Queen, and he takes good care to let us know it. It is published in his shop window. It is painted over his door. It is printed on his cards. It is pointed out on his invoices—he is, “By appointment to the Queen.” Royalty seems to dignify him.

But, Beloved, there is a King whom it is a *real* honor to serve—an honor which angels appreciate—which archangels delight in! That King is the King of kings and of Him we shall speak tonight—and of His service. Earthly kings have many servants and so has the King Eternal. I trust that many of us count it to be the very joy of our life that we call Jesus Christ our Lord and Master and that, to us, it is the highest pleasure to

serve Him—to render to Him all that our strength can possibly yield because we feel that we are debtors to Him and are bound, from here on, in bonds of love to His Divine service forever and for evermore!

Looking at my text, I see three or four observations springing from it.

I. The first is this. Since we have mention, here, of potters and those that dwelt among the plants and hedges with the king for his work, we infer that OUR KING HAS MANY KINDS OF SERVANTS. Other kings have servants of different sorts and it would be the extreme of folly if one royal servant should say to another, “You are a nobody. You are of no use because you cannot perform the offices which *I* am called to discharge.” No brother must exult over his neighbor. He that is appointed to one office must fill it and he ought to sympathize with the friend who fulfils any other office, but he should never exalt himself above him. The king has many kinds of servants.

Look at any one of our kings and you find that they have soldiers. Until the halcyon days of peace shall arrive—may God speedily send them—I suppose there will always be standing armies and regiments of soldiers. Certainly, our great King, the King of kings, has many soldiers! It is their duty to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. They have to put on the panoply of God and to contend, not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world—and against spiritual wickedness in high places! Full often they have to draw the sharp sword of controversy against doctrinal errors which might come in to destroy the city of our God.

Do not find fault with the Christian because he has soldierly qualities. There has been no time since Christ went to Heaven in which soldiers of Christ were not needed. Until the last enemy shall have laid down his weapons and infidelity and superstition shall be chased out of the world, we shall need these fighting men, who, with sword and shield, go forth to the conflict. They are your Master’s servants. Pray for them. But a king has his watchmen, too, who do not go forth to fight, but stay at home and move about the city, especially by night. And do you know, I think the Lord’s watchmen are mostly found among the sick. During the day, I suppose, there is little fear lest the incense of prayer should cease to rise up to the Throne of Heaven. But were we all in good health we might be all asleep and no prayer might be ascending.

From this island, at a certain hour of the night, if all were locked in slumber, there would be no petitions going up! And so it seems to me that as a part of heavenly ordinance, that every hour shall be sanctified by prayer—as well the dead of night as the blaze of noon—so He keeps some of His watchmen awake. They must pray. Their pains, their sleeplessness, keep them devout. They lift up their hearts to the Most High. And so with a blessed cordon of prayer the night watches are surrounded and the Lord keeps His flock safe from the wolf. I like to think of those who cannot come out to the assembly and cannot take part in any of the active exercises of evangelism, can, on their beds, keep watch for the Lord. “You that make mention of the Lord keep not silence and give Him no rest until He

establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” These are His remembrancers—these consumptives, these sick folk—who in the gloomy hours of night keep awake and pour out their heart like water before the Lord!

Now, let not the soldier despise her that tarries at home, for she divides the spoil. Let not Barak exult over feeble Jael who keeps the tent, for it may be that her prayer shall drive the nail through the adversary’s brow and it shall not fall to Barak to be honored, but unto the humble stay-at-home. Oh, watch, you watchers! Plead much, you intercessors! You are the Lord’s servants! Active and passive duties are, alike, valuable, and God accepts them! Let no one, therefore, exalt over another.

There are some of my Master’s servants that are His heralds. You know that great kings have their trumpeters to go and proclaim for them. This is an honorable office and one to which I trust many a young man here will aspire—to be a herald of the Cross to publish salvation. Get up to the high mountains and lift up your voice! Lift them up. Lift them up with strength. Say unto the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” And in every court there are scribes as well as heralds—the king’s registrars that have to keep the chronicles and the records. So our great King has His scribes—the men of Isachar that can handle the pen—they whose hearts indite the good matter, for they speak of the things which they have made touching the king as the pen moves across the page.

Well, whether it is by the spoken utterance of the tongue, or by the silent but vigorous expression of facts, thoughts and feelings—we must be equally grateful for every opportunity to do anything for Jesus! And instead of beginning to question, “Which is the more valuable?” let each one seek to make his own department of the Master’s service as complete and efficient as he can. Our King, too, has His musicians, as other monarchs have, who play before them to make a goodly sound upon an instrument. And I delight in those of my Master’s servants who can dedicate musical talents to Him and give us, first of all, the sweet poetry with which we adore Him in Psalm and song. And after that the sweet tunes which help us with united voice to magnify the Lord.

Then there are sweet voices which help us of gruffer note in some way to keep harmony and so together to praise God. God be thanked for the Brothers and Sisters who have voices of melody! Let them consecrate it to their Lord and train it and use it always with discretion, not perhaps too loudly, and yet sometimes not too softly, either. Still, in a king’s house they do not all sing. They cannot. There are some that make no melody. Servants are there in the royal palace that make no music unless it is with the brush and the broom, or whose music consists of the motion of their willing feet as they wait at the table, or as they go from chamber to chamber upon the royal errand.

Now, let not those who can sing His praises exalt themselves above those who can only perform the lowest service for the Lord. And let not those who are performing the real service of life think that there is something about their labor that is more acceptable than the singing of Jeho-

vah's praise, for it is not so. Each one in his own order, all acting with the right motive, all helping to take their part in the right spirit—all shall be equally acceptable with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Here is a great variety of servants. I cannot stop to go through them all, but you see the text mentions some of them called potters. I do not know but they may supply a very good example for Sunday school teachers. Let them not be ashamed of the metaphor, for I cheerfully put myself with them, as I hope the minister may have some claim to be classed among the King's potters. What do the potters do but take the clay while it is yet pliable and soft—and put it on the wheel and make the wheel revolve—and then with thumb and finger fashion the clay as it revolves before them, to make a vessel fit for royal use? Well, dear Sunday school teachers, if ever at any time the human mind is pliable, it is while a child is young! We would, all of us, find it hard to learn who never had studious habits till we reached the age of 30 years or upward!

Many a man is willing enough to be a student, but he has not the faculty for it. His skull has become set and hard and tight—and he cannot make his brain work as he could have done if he had begun earlier! But with the younger folk—oh what an opportunity there is to do a world with them! We cannot fashion them unless the hand of the Lord is with our hands—unless God makes their hearts soft—unless He puts them on the wheel for us! But if He does *that*, oh how a mother's hands can mold her boy! How a teacher's heart can mold the boy or girl committed to him or her and how throughout life the men and women of the future will bear about them the marks of the teachers of today! You are the King's potters! May He help you to do the work aright.

And then there is another class of workers mentioned, and those, I think, are like Sunday school teachers, too—those that dwell among plants and hedges. These were the king's *gardeners*. They dwelt in sheltered places—in enclosures that were protected by hedges to keep off the wind and so retain the heat. They lived in pleasant retreats where rare plants could grow. Now this is just what the Sunday school teacher should be. He tries to get the plants out from the wild waste and bring them into the—

***“Garden walled around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground.
The little spot enclosed by Grace,
Out of the world's wide wilderness.”***

He knows the Church is the garden of the Lord and he longs to plant many little slips in it. And I bless God that there are some teachers that my eyes rest upon who have planted many little slips that have been growing well. I thanked God when I saw them first take root! I bless the Lord when it is my business to water them as it is mine, now, and still that of their teachers. And I hope it will be the business of the teacher and the pastor, too, to gather much fruit from these little plants that we dwell among, that we plant, that we water and we tend.

Dear Friends, if you are engaged in this service, it is a right honorable one. The first man was a gardener and the Second Man—the Lord from

Heaven—was supposed to be a gardener and the supposition was not untrue, for never was there such a garden as He planted! It is He who makes the wilderness to rejoice and blossom as the rose. Because of His own excellency and because of the plants that He has nurtured, the Church is a garden of unparalleled renown! Thus there are many servants of our great Master and I will only say this much more concerning them—how blessed it is to be included in the number! Oh, one does not mind what department he takes so long as he may but serve Christ! I have often prayed by myself a prayer like this—“Lord make me the doormat of the Church. Let everybody wipe his boots upon me. Let me bear the mud and the mire so long as my Master’s temple may be kept clean by me.”

And I think any Christian man will wish to take the lowest and most menial place so that he may be accounted of by our Lord as among “His servants who serve Him.” The dishwashers in Christ’s kitchen are more honorable than the counselors of an imperial court! They that have to do the worst and blackest work, if such there is to be done for the great Master, have a higher esteem in the judgment of perfect spirits than those that rule empires, conduct armies, but know not the fear of God!

II. I proceed to our second observation—ALL WHO LIVE WITH OUR KING MUST WORK. Read the text. “There were the potters, and those that dwelt among plants and hedges: there they dwelt with the king for his work.” They did not live on the king’s bounty and dwell on the king’s country estates to do nothing—they dwelt there for his work. I do not know whether all that call my Master, “Lord,” have caught this idea. I have thought that some of our Church members imagine that the cause of Christ was a coach and that they were to ride in it—and that they would prefer the box seat—or else a very comfortable seat in the center.

Nor do they wish to be crowded by too many fellow travelers—they do not like to be pressed for room even in the pews—they would rather sit at ease, solace themselves with their own dignity and ride to Heaven in a quiet, respectable, comfortable sort of way. In fact, it would appear to me as if some of our friends imagined that when a man becomes a Believer he may repose on a silken couch and be carried to Glory in a palanquin, never needing to do anything afterwards, but simply to dream himself into everlasting happiness! They get a nice creed that drugs their conscience. They settle down in some snug corner where they defy anybody to disturb their security. They select a sound minister who runs on one line that he never leaves. They listen sometimes, not often too earnestly, to the plan and promises of the Gospel and when they have listened they say they are fed.

And if they ask about a minister, the question is, “Are you fed?” When it has got as far as the *feeding* their interest is exhausted. With the work of faith and the labor of love they never meddle. But let me assure you, as a matter of fact, that they that live with *our* King must work! They do not work that they may live with Him, but they work *because* they live with Him. Because His Grace has admitted them into His courts, therefore from that time they begin to work with all diligence. And why is this?

What motive prompts them? Well, first, because *He* works. Jesus said, "My Father works to this day and I work." The most wonderful Worker in the universe is God Himself—and His dear Son, when He was here—never had an idle hour. "He went about doing good."

He began life as a carpenter and, I do not doubt, worked hard at it. Then as a Savior He surveyed on the outset His great charge, "to fulfill all righteousness." With untiring zeal He pursued His arduous mission to the end and He finished His work. Until He said, "It is finished," He did not relax His ardor or lay down His toil. Brothers and Sisters, we cannot dwell with the great working God and yet be sluggards! He will not put up with it! He will not have communion with us unless we are agreed with Him. "How can two walk together unless they are agreed?" Are you an active-minded person and have you had a servant that you could not stir or hasten or make her move with agility? Or have you had a workman who took one step today and another tomorrow?

Why, it gives you the fidgets! It makes your flesh creep! You do not know what to do. You cannot bear it. You take hold of the broom, or whatever else he is pretending to handle, and start using it—for you would sooner do the work yourself! Your patience is exhausted. Now, a glorious and active-minded God will not walk with sluggards! He cannot endure them. If you are to *dwell* with God you must be His *servant*. You must have something to do in His name. In whatever occupation it may be, you must lay yourself out, for His Glory is essential and imperative.

The next reason why those that dwell with Him must work is that His company always inspires us with the desire to do something for Him. You never spent a happy hour alone in private prayer holding privileged communion with God when you did not feel constrained to say, "Lord, show me what You would have me do." You never enjoyed full assurance of faith without the question coming to you, "What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?" You cannot look at Him, bleeding on the Cross, pouring out His soul unto death for us, without feeling that the couch of inglorious ease would ill befit a faithful disciple's favored fellowship with Him. You crave that your hands should find something to do and that your tongue should have something to say. You yearn for some opportunity of sounding forth His dear praises!

You may go where you will if you want to be idle, but you cannot go to the Cross and come away a sluggard. The nails of it prick us into sacred industry. They are the spurs of Christian duty. The agonies of our self-sacrificing Lord inspire us with such ardor that we feel we *must* serve Him and take it as a favor, not as a tax. It is a delight rather than a duty to lay ourselves out for Him! When you get into Christ's courts, there is so much to do that you cannot help doing something! If you are a member of an active Church, you find yourself called upon this way and that way to spend and to be spent for Christ. In such a hive, drones are despicable! If you live where there are young converts, where there are tried Believers, where there are backsliders, where there are hopeful penitents—as these come under your notice you perceive that your Master's house is full of ser-

vice—you cannot refrain from taking some share in it and taking it eagerly, anxiously and cheerfully.

No, a true Christian cannot stroll outside his Master's house without feeling calls to service! Can you walk these streets and have your ears assailed, as I grieve to say you must, with the filthiest language from working men—who seem, to my mind, to have become more coarse in their talk the last 10 years than they used to be—can you, I ask, go down a street and have your blood curdle at the frequent oaths without feeling that you must be up and doing? Can you see these streets swarming with children and not come forward to help the Sunday school? Can you watch the multitudes of boys and girls streaming out of the Board School and not say to yourself “What is done with these on the Lord's Day? Others must be hard at work with them, why am I not doing something?”

Everywhere, on all hands, work is suggested and especially by the activity of our adversaries. See how they compass sea and land to make one proselyte! See how the devil incessantly goes about seeking whom he may devour! He appears to have lost his eyelids! He never sleeps! He is intent upon devouring the souls of men and all the incidents and accidents we meet with say to us, “Are you Christians? Then bestir yourselves! Are you the King's servants? Then be up and doing, for there are thousands of things that must be done at once, if done at all, without waiting to discuss the best way of doing them.” At any rate, of this thing you may be quite certain—the professor of true religion who is negligent in his Lord's service must and will lose the comforts of his Lord's Presence.

I speak not, of course, of those who are sick, infirm, or helpless—for as I have already explained—by their patience and resignation and intercession they are exercising a very important part of the work of the Lord's Kingdom. But I speak of those of you who might be actively engaged and I regard it as a rule without exception that sluggish Christians become uncomfortable. When you meet with a Brother or Sister in Christ who is always grievous, complaining of doubts and fears, sighing and groaning, crying and moaning over an experience that puzzles, rather than profits, you need not ask many questions, for you may safely interpret all the symptoms. That person does not teach in the Sunday school. That person does not go out preaching in the villages. That person is very likely doing nothing!

An earnest worker may be occasionally beset with temptations, but he will not be perpetually bewildered with these throes of anxiety. If that is the regular, habitual condition of the man, it looks as if he had a need of something to do. There are many flies, moths, spiders and cobwebs in the chambers of the lazy! Surely they would be brushed away if there were more activity for Christ. I think any minister will tell you it is the people who do nothing, themselves, in a Church that find fault with those who do the work. With great discernment they can always discover flaws in the policy and practice of the earnest Brothers and Sisters who take the pains and do the drudge of office. Bless their hearts, why do they not do it better

themselves? No, not they! They seem to think that their department in the sacred household is to find fault with their Master's servants.

Now I have looked all over His house, for I have been in it for years, occupying an official position. I have pried over my Master's books and I have been into His record office, but do you know I have not found anywhere that He has ever issued appointments to any ladies or gentlemen to be the supervisors and censurers of His servants? I believe they act without commission and that they will probably go without any wages. Or if all service rendered meets with an equitable retribution and the wages of sin is death—their carping will bring them no comfort and their reviling will be requited with bitter remorse. O Brothers and Sisters, there is no excuse for your culpable inactivity! Christ walks at a quick pace. If you want to walk with Him you must not loiter! He is no friend to the sluggard!

I cannot always tell you where fellowship with Him may be found, but I can tell you where it can *never* be enjoyed. He is not where idlers lounge and congregate to gossip with gibe and jeer, with slur and sneer, railing at the very men whose conduct proves their conscience so pure that they would blight their own interests to bless the Lord's cause. He is with His people who are diligently devoted to His service and seek Him for strength to do that service well. Those that live with our King must work.

III. Now, thirdly, **THOSE THAT WORK FOR OUR KING OUGHT TO LIVE WITH HIM.** That is the other side of the coin, for these potters and these gardeners *dwelt* with the king for his work. I offer to the Sunday school teachers of the south side of London a slogan which may last them for life—"With the King for His work!" Put that up, now, over your mantelpieces. "With the King for His work!" Work, by all means, because you are with the King! But get with the King, by all means, because you want to do His work!

Oh, how important it is that every good servant of our heavenly Master should be with Him! Why? Do you ask me, why? Because you cannot know His will if you do not live with Him! He that lives with Christ gets his orders every day and oftentimes from moment to moment! He gets guidance from his great Lord's eyes. He says, "You shall guide me with Your eyes." You know how a servant in the house watches her mistress. The mistress does not always need to speak. Perhaps it is at a dinner. There is a number of guests. She does not keep calling, "Mary," and instructing her in measured sentences to attend to the various requirements, but by a simple movement of her head, or a quiet glance of her eyes, Mary can understand all her mistress wishes.

Now, those who live with Jesus Christ have a sort of secret alphabet between themselves and Him. Oftentimes when a Christian man does the right thing, you read as a story, or as an anecdote that enlivens a book, how strangely wise he was—how he dropped the right word at the fitting moment—how he had a knack of giving the right answer to one who wrongly assailed him. Do you know why he had that knack? He lived with his Master, so he knew what you knew not! He knew the meaning of his Master's eyes and it guided him! Oh, I believe if Sunday school teachers

and ministers live with their Lord they will be made wise to win souls! Oftentimes things they never thought of saying, they will say *exactly* at the right time to the right persons—and so surprising will it be to the persons addressed that they will almost think that you must have been told about them! Keep close to your Master and then you will know your Master's will.

Why should workers live with the Lord but that they may gather strength? Every hour of communion with Christ is an hour of increased vigor. In the old fable, when Hercules fought with the giant, he could not kill him. He flung him down with all his might and Hercules could fling a fellow about. He thought he had dashed him to pieces, but every time he got up, he was stronger than before! So down he flung him again. "Surely," he thought, "if I have destroyed the hydra and the lion, I can kill this *man*—this giant." But up the giant sprang again because the old fable said that the *earth* was his mother—and every time that he fell, he touched his mother and got new life from her.

So every time a Christian falls on his knees and draws near to his God, he gets a touch of his great Father and he gets new strength! When the devil throws a Christian to his knees—throws him down with such force, too, that he thinks, "I will crush him," he gets up again and is stronger than the devil! Over he goes again. He trips him up, flings him down, but every time the Christian falls to praying, he rises from before the Mercy Seat like a giant against the foe! Oh, then, dwell near the Lord, for that is the source of your strength as well as your knowledge! Why should workers dwell with the King? Surely it is to keep up their enthusiasm! Humanly speaking, the very soul of Christianity is enthusiasm. Cold religion—well, there are some cold things that give one a chill to think of. Cold *religion*? It is the most ghastly spectacle on which a pure and fervent heart can look! Cold religion? Ugh! It is nauseous!

There is only one thing worse and that is a cool, listless profession, for Jesus Christ tells us that the lukewarm made Him outright sick. To the Laodicean said the faithful and true Witness, "I would you were cold or hot." "So then because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of My mouth." Let your faith be at furnace heat! Religion cannot long be lukewarm—it will either die out or it will kindle and set you all on fire. If it consume a man, then it only reaches the heat at which Jesus Christ lived. Somebody has very properly said, "Blood heat is the healthy heat for a Christian's soul." So it is. But what is the blood heat? The heat of our great atoning Sacrifice—the blood heat of our blessed Redeemer when He sweat great drops of blood and gave Himself for us! Would God we were filled with such flaming zeal. But ah, you never can attain unto it unless you live with Him! The world is cold and ice-bound and the Church is chill and pierced with the east wind. Would you get into the tropics where luxuriant fruits grow? Live near Christ! Then you will become enthusiastic and pursue your work with a fervor all Divine!

We must live with our King, too, that we may be inspired with courage. I suppose some teachers are timid. I know some preachers are haunted

with strange fears. The way to quicken courage is to look the King in the face. When you see how patiently He endured reproach and how resolutely He proceeded with His ministry of love, even to die for us, you will not be afraid of the faces of men, nor will you shrink from duty because nervous friends warn you of danger. And you need to live with the King if you would cultivate the soft Grace of patience. Sunday school work is very trying. It often vexes the soul and you get weary. But when you go and look at Him and see how He failed not, neither was discouraged, but went through with the work which He undertook till He could say, "It is finished," you will chide your soul for all its futile excitement and feverish unrest. By your patience and perseverance you will approve yourselves as children of God and followers of Christ.

In short, dear Friends, I do not know that a person can do anything for our Lord Jesus Christ aright without living in communion with Him. I am persuaded that Martha got into trouble about that dinner of hers because she did not mix with her serving, the sitting at the Savior's feet with Mary. I am sure that we can attempt too much and accomplish too little, for we can apparently do a great deal, but because we have not had power with God, very little may come of it. Steeped seed is the best for Sunday school teachers. It is always well to take care that the good seed you bring to the little plots—your children's little minds—has been soaked the night before in earnest prayer. It is wonderful how quickly it sprouts and what a deal of vitality it manifests if you soak it! The dry seed—dry teaching without any praying—without any communion with God may be productive, but it is a long time in coming up and yielding a reward for your labor.

Believe me, my dear Brothers and Sisters, that to abide near to Jesus is the very life of Christian service! I would have you feel and speak like this, "I am engaged in the service of the King. Fifty little children I have under my charge—all infants—and I am trying to teach them something, but they are all full of fun and I cannot get anything into their little heads! But it would never do to think of giving it up because I am doing it for Jesus! I would not do it for anybody else." Or, "I have got half-a-dozen unruly boys in the ragged school. I would not undertake the work of this school for the biggest salary that could be offered me, but I can do it for Jesus Christ and I will do it for the love and gratitude I feel to Him. In fact, I am happy in doing it because I know that He is looking on—that He sees all that I do—if nobody else appreciates my service, He does. And He will accept me and I know with His help some blessed result will come of it, so I will tax all my energies to the task as the workman wakes up when there is a king watching.

With what care and diligence he will exercise his highest skill! So let your task be performed with all your might, for if done for Him it ought to be done well. Nothing should be slurred over in a slovenly fashion that is done for Jesus! This thought, that I am with the King, is animating and helpful to me. I can assure you beyond any description of its influence that I can convey to you.

IV. Now to our last point, upon which only a few words. That which should encourage us to *live* in any place is that we may work for the King in it. And that which should encourage us to any *work* is that WE ARE WORKING FOR THE KING. “These were the potters that dwelt among plants and hedges: there they dwelt with the king for his work.” In any place where you dwell you can dwell with the King! These pottery men and gardeners were on the king’s estate. You need not live next door to a church. You need not live with a pious family to have God with you. Oh, bless the Lord, I have met with my Lord and Master by the bedsides of the sick in Kent street many a time! My friend Mr. McCree has met the Lord many a time in a cellar in St. Giles’s—and He is often to be found in Bethnalgreen and Shoreditch—in the very worst habitations that ever human beings dwelt in!

Dwell wherever you may—on the land or on the sea, in the hospital or in the workhouse—you may still dwell there with the King! He does not need any carpets. He does not care about rich furniture. In fact, He does not often come where the floors are covered with Oriental carpets. I think the scarcest place for Christ is with the rich—they seldom have much to say about Him. I speak not of them all, but of very many. If for my part I need half an hour’s real talk about Jesus Christ, I must visit the poor man. I do not know how others find it, but it is so, it is sadly so in my experience. Well, wherever you dwell and whatever your rank, you may have the Lord dwelling with you and this ought to encourage you to dwell anywhere if you can serve the Lord.

I always find that when men are converted, if they live in a very bad neighborhood, they try and get out of it. That is right enough. I think if I were living in some neighborhoods, the sooner I could change my residence the better pleased I should be. At the same time, in a bad locality a good man is a great gift. Where is a bright lamp more needed than down in a dark alley? Where is the pure light most needed? Is it not among the depraved and profligate? Sometimes I almost fear that the repugnance with which Christian people fly away from a bad district is a misfortune for the population, especially for the young who are left behind. Of the sympathy that might be felt and the good that might be done by their being there, the inhabitants are henceforth bereft.

My dear Brother, if you are placed in the very midst of ribald wickedness, an opportunity to serve the Lord where Satan’s seat is might induce you to stop there awhile with the self-denial of a missionary among the heathen. It may be that it is cowardly to run away. Rather should it become you to say, “I am put into this fort in the midst of the enemy and I mean to stay—my fixed purpose is to hoist the flag of Christ on the top of it! Instead of deserting the post, I will strive incessantly to win souls for Him.” At any rate, if you are compelled to live in neighborhoods that you do not like, it ought to be some comfort to you that the King will live there with you and that perhaps He has placed you there to try your faith, to honor His name and to bless the outcasts.

Go, Beloved, wherever you reside and realize that your abode is a station you are appointed to occupy for His work. Let the nurse girl in the family, with the little ones about her, live for Christ and lose no opportunity of letting her light shine. Let the artisan, thrown into the large workshop where there are none like himself, be encouraged that he is put there for the King's work. The tradesman, dealing with many who like to have a word across the counter, should order his conversation for the glory of Christ. The merchant who will be sure to make many friends in business, should not forget his Lord, but bear a faithful testimony as often as he can. The employer of many hands should take care that he seeks the welfare of their *souls* and consider by what manifold agencies he can promote the King's work. You that have leisure, dear Friends, should feel that your spare time is a sacred trust never to be squandered, but to be consecrated always to the King's work.

You that have talents should feel the same imperative obligation—yes, and especially you that have only one talent! It was the man of one talent that buried it. So it commonly is. You have not much talent, you think—nothing brilliant. Then the temptation is to go and bury your bit of bronze because you cannot display any glittering gold. Your conscious weakness produces a wicked conceit. Do not withhold your mite from the treasury because you have not a million to contribute. Still live with the King for His work.

Doubtless I have been addressing some who have never served the King, who do not know Him, who do not love Him. I am not going to ask you to work for Him. No, no. My Lord needs none to work for Him who do not believe in Him. "Come and trust Him." Our soldier friends over there, a sprinkling of whom I am pleased to see and proud to salute, know how to enlist in the service. How does a man first become a soldier? Well, he receives a shilling. He *receives* and then he is a soldier. He that will receive Christ is made a soldier of Christ! It is *receiving* you have to begin with. And after you have received Christ, then you shall go forth and serve Him! Put out an empty hand and receive Christ into it by a little faith and then go and serve Him—and may the Lord bless you from that time and forever. Amen.

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RECRUITS FOR KING JESUS

NO. 1770

**A SERMON PREACHED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 17, 1884,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

“And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David. And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If you have come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you: but if you have come to betray me to my enemies, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our father look thereon, and rebuke it. Then the Spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, ‘Yours are we, David, and on your side, you son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto you, and peace be to your helpers; for your God helps you. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.”
1 Chronicles 12:16-18.

AT this time David was in the hold—I suppose in the stronghold of Ziklag, which the king of the Philistines had given to him. It was in that fortress-town that he received a welcome addition to his band. David was an exile and it is not every man who cares to cast in his lot with a banished nobleman. He was outlawed and his sovereign would have slain him with his own hands if he had found opportunity—few care to stake their all with a man in such a condition. The many who were on Saul's side spoke very bitterly of David and, wishing to curry favor with the king, they slandered him to the blackest degree—few respectable people care to associate themselves with a person who is in ill-repute. Many to whom David had done no ill were eager to betray him and sell him into the hands of his enemy, for men sought their own gain and cared not whom they sold, so long as they clutched the reward—it was no small thing for a band of men to unite with a man upon whose head a price was set.

David had to stand upon his guard, for traitors were all around—the men of Keilah would have delivered him up when he went in all simplicity of heart within their gates. The fortunes of David were at a low ebb and, therefore, when these men came to David, they did a valorous action—an action which he would be sure to remember in the later days of his triumph. I want to run a parallel between the case of David and that of our Lord Jesus Christ. At the present moment our Lord Jesus, the Son of David, is still in the hold. Among the men of this world, He is not yet enthroned—their hearts go after another prince—and as yet the kingdom has not come to the Son of David. I know that He reigns in Heaven and

that He is, in very deed, King of kings and Lord of lords—but before the eyes of the mass of men He is still despised and rejected.

His people, as yet, are but a feeble folk and often hard put to it. His kingdom is ridiculed, His claims are derided and His yoke is scorned. The doctrines which He preached are tossed to and fro like a ball. And men at the present time are glorying in science or tradition, in reason or in speculation! Yes, they speak as if human wisdom would soon wipe out the very name of Christianity! It is not so in truth before God, but it is so in *appearance* before men. This is an age of blasphemy and of rebuke for our Lord the King! Brave are they who will stand for Christ in this, the day of His exile! They shall be right royally rewarded who will now take up His cause and will go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach. He is the man for the Lord Jesus who can now run the gauntlet of miles of scoffers and be willing to be called a fool, a madman, or an idiot for His name's sake.

Blessed are they who are not ashamed, this day, to bear the name of Christ written out large and to confess that, after the way which men call, "orthodoxy," so worship they the Lord God of their fathers! The philosophic Christian may escape if he will drown the Christian in the philosopher; but this is not to stand out square for Christ. It does our heart good, nowadays, to meet with a few Brothers and Sisters who are not ashamed to believe in the merit of the Redeemer's precious blood and in the power of His Spirit to regenerate. We feel at home when we drop in with a few who believe in prayer and expect the lord to interpose on the behalf of His people. I say, blessed are they who, like these men of Benjamin and Judah, are willing to go to the King in the hold and take up His cause though it is at a low ebb—and stand up for Him when the many are ready to trample Him down—and are ridiculing His work and His cause. For my own part, I never loved my Lord more than now, that He is defamed! And His Truth is all the dearer to me because it is flouted by the worldly-wise.

It is to those who will volunteer for Jesus that I am about to speak, and our first head is that using the text as a parable, we have here *a commendable example*. It is a commendable example for men to join themselves with Christ while He is unpopular. Secondly, here is *a cautious inquiry*. When David sees these men come, he does not, at once, receive them with open arms, but there is a reserve about him till he has asked them a question or two. He wants to know who they are before he writes down their names in his muster-roll. And, thirdly, here is *a very cordial enlistment* as they answer to his question, and say, "Yours are we, David, and on your side, you son of Jesse; for your God helps you."

I. First, then, here is A VERY COMMENDABLE EXAMPLE. May the Holy Spirit lead many of my dear Hearers to follow it. Many of these men of Benjamin and Judah, in the first place, went to join themselves to David because *they had heard that he was the Lord's anointed*. They understood that Samuel had gone down to Ramah and, in the days of David's youth, had anointed him in the name of the Lord to be king instead of Saul. Therefore they said, "Whom God anoints, we will follow," and they came after David. It was fit that they should be loyal to David if they would be obedient to God. Now, it is within the belief, I trust, of all

assembled here, that the Lord God Almighty has anointed “one chosen out of the people” to be His King in Zion—the King of His Church forever and ever—and that One chosen out of the people is Jesus of Nazareth, of the house of David, who is Himself, as Man, the servant of God, but who is also Divine, and counts it not robbery to be equal with God.

We have, I trust, all of us, drunk in this doctrine, that the Lord Jesus is the Anointed of God, the very Word of God, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Now, it seems to me that if it is so, the next inevitable step for men who fear God is to go forth and follow the Lord’s Anointed! If Jesus is the Messiah, the Sent One of God—in the name of everything that is gracious and right, let us follow Him! God has given Him to be a leader and a commander to the people—let us rally to His banner without delay. If the Lord has anointed Jesus to be a prince and a Savior, let Him be our prince and our Savior at once! Let us render Him obedience and confidence, and openly acknowledge the same. Our Lord puts it thus—“If I tell you the truth, why do you not believe Me?”

The argument is irresistible with true-hearted men. If any of you believe that Jesus is anointed to be the Savior of men, I say that you are unreasonable if you do not practically accept Him as such. But if you are willing to come right straight out and say, “Let others do as they will; as for me, I will be the loving servant of the Anointed of the Lord,” then you act rightly and render a reasonable service. What better argument can I find with just and reasonable persons than this? You believe that God has anointed Jesus, therefore accept Him for yourself! If these men followed David because God had anointed Him, infinitely more binding is it upon you and upon me, believing that God has anointed Jesus of Nazareth to be the King, for us to follow Him, that we may be found faithful to His cause and Kingdom.

Oh, my dear Hearers, I am perplexed about some of you! You call Jesus Lord and yet you do not obey Him! You acknowledge that He is the Savior and yet you do not trust in Him for salvation! Think this over and may the Holy Spirit lead you to a sensible decision. If Jesus is God’s Anointed, led Him be your Beloved.

Next, these men, no doubt many of them, followed David because of *his personal excellencies*. They had heard of him—of what he was in his youth, what he had been at home, at court—and in the army and in the day of battle. He had behaved admirably everywhere and these warriors had heard of it. I should not wonder if some of them remembered that when he was a youth and ruddy, he came forth with his sling and stone and smote the giant foe of Israel on the forehead. Perhaps they had heard of all his mighty acts that he did when, as Saul’s captain, he went in and out before the host and did valiantly in the name of the Most High. And when they heard of his gentleness, of his courtesy and of all the many virtues which adorned him, making him so greatly different from those leaders of free-looting bands who were so common in that land, I do not wonder if they enthusiastically gave themselves up to be the loyal followers of this David, the son of Jesse.

A good soldier should have a good captain—a good captain deserves good soldiers. These men of war argued well when they enlisted under

David. But how shall I commend the Lord Jesus Christ to you that are of a noble spirit? Was there ever any like He? Who among the good, the great, the brave, the beautiful can be likened unto Him? He left the courts of Heaven that He might save men! Love brought Him from Glory to be the Redeemer of His enemies! Being found in fashion as a Man, He gave Himself up to death, even the death of the Cross for love of men! All His life long he did valiantly for the Lord, His God! In all holiness and righteousness He defeated every temptation and overcame all evil! And He ended His labor by going up to the Cross to enter into personal duel with Death and Hell, therein overthrowing all the powers of evil on the behalf of His people!

Oh, could I paint His face, and could you see it as it is beheld by the eyes of God, you would all be enamored of Him! Oh, could all men know how good He is, how gracious He is, as some of us know, even if they only went to that partial extent, surely no men would stand out, but the Prince Immanuel would win all hearts! All these young men and all the vast multitude who gather in this Tabernacle would gladly take up their cross and follow after Jesus at once, if they had any idea of His surpassing excellence! O my Soul, how would you rejoice if men would come at once to Jesus! Oh to hear you all say, "We, also, will be with Jesus in the day of His derision and His scorn—for we see what He is and there is none like He. He shall be our King and our Captain, for He is the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely."

He, being such an One, and so worthy of the anointing which He has received of God, I, as His recruiting sergeant commend Him to everyone here! Oh, that you would all become His true followers at once! He deserves the love and loyalty of every one of you! If you would be safe and happy, come to my Lord, and be His servants! If you would fight a good fight, enlist beneath this glorious, "Captain of our salvation."

There was a third reason why brave spirits resolved to enlist under David, and that was that he was so cruelly persecuted by Saul—so *misrepresented and abused by his enemies*. There are some cringing, fawning spirits in this world who must always go with the majority. What everybody says they say—they take their cue from those who lead the fashion of the hour. They ask leave of common custom to breathe or eat. They dare not swallow down their spit till they have obtained permission to do so. Cringing, fawning sycophants of all that is great and all that is fashionable, scarcely could a soul be found in them if they were searched through and through with a microscope! These will never come to David when he is in the hold, nor need he wish that they would.

On the other hand, there are brave spirits who rather prefer to be in the minority. They do not even care if they have to stand *alone* for truth and righteousness! They could have ventured to say with Athanasius, "I, Athanasius, against the world," for they know the right and they cling to it. It is not to them a question whether the truth walks in silver slippers or whether she plods barefoot through the mire. It is the truth they care for—not the habiliments with which she may be adorned or disfigured. Such men took up David's side chivalrously because it was the right side

and the despised side—and they liked it, none the less, because so many spoke evil of it.

Sadly true is it that the Lord Jesus Christ is still of so little account in this world. His name, ah, I am sick of the way in which they use His name today! Shame on some that are called Christian ministers! They believe in Christ, but it is a Christ without His crown, His Atonement, His Judgment Seat, or even His Godhead! They mock us with orthodox phrases, from which the essential Truth of God is gone. They pretend that they believe in the Atonement—and when we listen to *their* atonement we find that it does not effectually atone for anyone! It is a mere fiction and not a fact. It saves nobody—it is a mere sham. They have eviscerated the Gospel and then they hold up the empty carcasses and claim that they are still Christians! Christians who have murdered Christianity! Believers who doubt whether there is anything to be believed! Yet we are entreated in our charity to hug such traitors to our bosom!

We shall do nothing of the kind! We would sooner believe in infidels outright than in those who pretend to be Christians and are infidels at heart. “Modern thought” is a more evil thing than downright atheism—even as a wolf in a sheep’s skin is worse than a wolf in his natural form. There are pretty things said of our Lord Jesus by those who deny the faith which are sickening to me! I loathe to hear our true Lord praised by false lips! They deny the doctrines which He taught and yet make a great boast about *believing Him*. It is a shallow trick, but yet it deceives shallow souls. Poor, weak minds say, “The man speaks so beautifully of Jesus, surely *he* cannot be in error.” I tell you it is the old Judas trick—the Son of Man is betrayed with a kiss!

How nauseating their praises must be to Him whom they are betraying! Think not that they are honest—their designs are far other than appear upon the surface. They laud Him as Man that they may dishonor Him as God! They cry up His life and His example, that they may cast His atoning Sacrifice into the ditch. They lift up one part of the Divine Revelation with no other intention than that they may dash down the other! They crouch at His feet that they may stab at His heart! I avow myself, at this hour, the partisan of Christ, and of the whole truth of Christ in its old-fashioned form—the more old-fashioned the better for me. I am for Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. I am for the Gospel of martyrs and confessors who gave their hearts’ blood as the seal of their faith! New gospels and new theologies I abhor! I am for that same ancient Gospel which, today, is said to be absolutely defunct. Science has wiped out the evangelicals—we are dead—we are gone. So they say of us. Yet in our graves we turn—even in our ashes live our routine fires—we expect a resurrection! The Truth of God may be crushed down, but it cannot be crushed out!

If there survived but one lover of the Doctrines of Grace, he would suffice, by God’s Spirit, to sow the world, again, with the Truths of our holy faith. The eternal Truth which Christ and His Apostles taught is not dead but sleeps! At a touch of the Lord’s hand, she shall rise in all her ancient power and look round for her adversaries and they shall not be—yes, she shall diligently consider their place and they shall not be. Blessed are they

who at this time are not afraid to be on the side that is ridiculed and laughed at! The Truths of God will have their turn and though they now grind the dust, they shall be at the top, before long, and they who are loyal to them shall share their fortunes. Let us be bold enough to say, "Put down my name among the fools who believe and *not* among those whose wisdom lies in doubting everything." God save us from the wisdom which believes in itself and give us more of the wisdom which believes in *Him!*

Once more. These men came to David because *they believed that David had a great future before him.* He was very poor when they came to him. He was an exile—as we have said, an outlaw—one who could not return to his land because the king, himself, had a personal feud with him. But they said, "It does not yet appear what he shall be. This son of Jesse will be king, yet, and his enemies shall beg for their lives of him." So, looking to the great future that awaited him, they determined to take shares with him in his present low estate that they might be raised with him in his exaltation. Now, I think that I can say to everyone here, "I would that you would come over to David's side—to Jesus' side—for there is a future awaiting Him, a glory, a triumph, even here on earth, such as shall make those men gnash their teeth who throw away this opportunity of enlisting in His host."

How will souls lament forever their neglect of joining themselves to Jesus! It shall be their everlasting regret that they lost the opportunity of standing straight out for truth, right and love, as they are seen in the Person of the Son of God. Oh, it will be an endless loss to have refused to stand upon the pillory of scorn and avow Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God and the Savior of men! "Behold He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." Woe to those who pierced Him by refusing to believe in Him! The Lord shall reign forever and ever, and the shout of, "Hallelujah, hallelujah," shall come up from earth and descend from Heaven! He shall sit upon the Throne of His father, David, and of His kingdom there shall be no end! Who does not desire to be with Him and to behold His Glory?

Cast in your lot with Him, then, O you undecided! Let His cause be as it may in the eyes of worldlings—espouse it at once right heartily—for they that are with Him in His humiliation shall be with Him in His triumph! Those are the reasons why, at this time, I stand here, and exhort, beg, beseech, entreat everyone among you to be on the side of Jesus Christ our Lord! Woe unto you if you turn your backs upon Him! Woe unto you if you attempt to be neutral! Woe unto you if you are lukewarm followers! Remember, he that is not with Him is against Him. He that takes not up his cross and follows not after Him is not worthy of Him and shall not be counted among His disciples!

Oh, that this whole company here tonight were distinctly and avowedly, perfectly and continuously, on the side of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, the coming King! O my Friend, yonder, I speak to you, personally! I would to God that you would at once put on the livery of my Lord Jesus and become His sworn servant forever!

II. Now, I have just a few words to say upon the second head. CAUTIOUS INQUIRY. These men of Benjamin and of Judah came to David and

David met them as a warrior standing upon his guard. The times were not such as to allow a negligent confidence in all who professed friendship. The Benjamites were of the same tribe as Saul and it was singular that they should come and join with David, the rival of their own leader! The men of Judah belonged to the same tribe as those men of Keilah who had betrayed David—therefore the hero was cautious and made careful inquiry. Your Lord Jesus Christ is never so eager after disciples as to enroll those who cannot bear to be questioned! He did not go abroad sweeping up a heap of nominal followers who would increase His apparent strength and prove a real weakness to Him!

He said to those who offered themselves, “Count the cost.” “Lord, I will follow You wherever You go,” says one. Jesus does not, then and there, enlist him, but calmly replies, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head.” He wants followers, but He wants them to be of the right kind and, therefore, He does not delude them and excite them to enter suddenly upon a course which they will, before long, renounce. He does not act as, I am afraid, the recruiting sergeant does when he tells the brave boys of all the glories they will enjoy and crosses their hands with a shilling, so that they may take Her Majesty’s money and become her servants. The sergeant does not say much about the wounds of battle and the pains of hospitals—he does not dwell very long upon wooden legs, and broken arms, and lost eyes, and all that. No! He dwells on pleasure, victory, pension, glory!

Our great Captain does not, in this manner, entrap allies, but He sets the worst part of His service first and bids men consider whether they will be able to carry out that which they propose to do. I would in this matter imitate my Lord—I have pressed you to come to His banner, but at the same time I would cautiously inquire of you. Now, see what David said to them. He set before them *the right way*. He said, “If you have come peaceably unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you.” If you wish to join with Christ’s people and have your name numbered with them, one main question is—Do you come unto *Him*? Do you first give yourselves to the Lord and afterwards unto His people? “If you have come *unto me*,” says David. It would have been useless for them to answer, “We have come because we are fond of some of the people that are with you.” “No,” he says, “if you have come *to me*, then my heart shall be knit to you. No way else.”

Do you come to Christ, dear Friend? Are you sure that Jesus is your Leader? Do not profess to be a Christian if you have not come to Christ, for Christ is the soul of Christianity! To come to Christ is this—confessing your sin, looking to Him as the Sin-Bearer, trusting Him with your future—trusting Him with your soul altogether. By a sincere, simple, undivided faith, you really come to Jesus—have you such a faith? Let Jesus Christ be first and last with you! Take Him to be your Savior altogether! Do not be your own Savior even in part! Let Him save you from beginning to end, from top to bottom, in all ways and respects. If it is so, come along with you, for our host will be glad to have its number increased by your coming! If you do not thus come to our Lord, pray do not come to *us*, for you will neither do good, nor get good thereby.

Then David puts the question, "If you have come *peaceably* unto me," and this was necessary, for some are critical and quarrelsome. Some profess to come to Christ, but they quarrel with Christ at the very first. They would make terms with Him and they come intending to dispute with His people. From the first they are discontented and fault-finding, rather patronizing Christ and His cause than humbly uniting with Him and His people. They do not think half as much of God's people as God thinks of them. When I hear people say, "Oh, there is So-and-So, who is not what he ought to be, and he is a member of the Church," and then they begin finding fault with this and with that, I say to myself, "That critic is no true friend." The Church is not perfect, but woe to the man who finds pleasure in pointing out her imperfections!

Christ loved His Church, and let us do the same. I have no doubt that the Lord can see more fault in His Church than I can. And I have equal confidence that He sees no fault at all, because He covers her faults with His own love—that love which hides a multitude of sins—and He removes all her defilement with that precious blood which washes away all the transgressions of His people! I dare not find fault with those whom the Lord has loved from before the foundation of the world! More especially since I find that I need all my time to find out my own faults and to get rid of them. If you are a faultless man, I do not ask you to join the Christian Church, because I am sure that you would not find anybody else there like yourself. It is true that if you do not join a Church till you find a perfect one you will not be a Church member this side of Heaven, but I may add, that if there *were* such a Church, the moment your name was written in the list it would leave off being a perfect Church, for your presence would have destroyed its perfection!

If you are coming to pick holes, and quiz, and question, and find fault, and talk about inconsistencies and so forth, then you may pass on and join some other army. But if you have come peaceably to our Lord and to us, then I offer you a hearty welcome. We are not anxious to enlist men who love to have the pre-eminence, nor men of fierce temper, nor unforgiving spirits, nor proud, envious, lovers of strife—we want only those who have the mind of Christ! Come peaceably, or come not at all.

Again, David puts the question, "If you have come peaceably to me *to help me.*" Mind this and mark it well—they that join with Christ must join in His battles, join in His labors, join in His self-sacrifice. We must come to His Church not only to *be* helped, but *to* help. It is of no use your entering the army if you do not mean to fight. And it is of no use your uniting with the host of God unless you mean to take your share in the holy warfare. Many forget this and look upon a religious life as one of sanctified selfishness. A great many stop the Gospel plow. "Stop!" they say, "stop!" They want to ride on one of the horses. Yes, but the plowman has no opinion of such friends. Let them *lead* the horses or hold the plow handles, or do *something*—or else let them stay away.

Of course, I do not mean the sick and faint—but all fit for war must go to the war. There is something for every Church member to do as well as to receive. They that join the Church of Christ must come to pull as well as to be pulled—come to work as well as to eat—and usually the rule is

true in Christ's house as it ought to be in everybody else's, "He that will not work, neither shall he eat." They that do not labor in the cause of Christ will very soon find that they are not fed in the house of God. Why should they be? I count it no office of mine to carry bread and meat to sluggards and lie-a-beds—I would sooner feed swine! They who never do a hand's turn among us ought to be turned out from us. If you have come peaceably to help us, then I speak for my Captain and bid you welcome! But if you do not mean real service, please march on.

There are the three questions, then. Do you come to Christ and accept Him? If so, come along! Do you come with a desire to maintain peace among your Christian Brothers and Sisters? If so, come! Do you come with the intent of helping the Lord Jesus Christ to spread abroad His Truth? Then come, and welcome, and the Lord be with you and with us! Do you know what Jesus says to you who come to Him aright? "My heart shall be knit unto you." Oh, I think that if I had been Amasai, I should have felt the spirit come upon me to speak just as Amasai did when he so heartily declared that he and his brothers came to join heart and soul with David! With all that loving warmth which was so natural to him, David said, "My heart shall be knit to you."

Now when the Lord Jesus Christ says, "Will you espouse My cause? Will you accept Me for your Leader? Will you come and join with My people? Then My heart shall be knit unto you"—do not your hearts leap within you? What a charming promise it is! What union of soul it sets forth! I do not know much about knitting, but some of you do. Things knit together are not merely joined in one, but they *are* one. They are not merely sewn together by a machine, so that you can draw out a thread and the pieces divide, but they are knit together and are of one piece, one fabric, one substance. Come, then, you truly faithful—you shall be knit together with Christ! His heart with your heart! You shall never be separated from Him any more. It is a great thing when the hearts of God's people are knit together—but the greatest of all—when their hearts are knit with Christ's heart and His heart is knit with theirs! Come here, you true-hearted—cast in your lot with your Lord! Is it not reward enough for coming into His host that His heart shall be knit to you? I count this my Heaven upon earth, to have my Lord's love! Do you not agree with me?

Notice how David put the other side of it, and set before them *the wrong way*—"But if you have come to betray me to my enemies, seeing there is no wrong in my hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it." Will persons ever join the Church to betray the Lord Christ to His enemies? I say not that such is their present purpose, but a great many have acted as if it were—from the beginning the were traitors to Him and to His Truth! They have come into the Church and yet they have betrayed Christ to His enemies! Yes, they have been aided in their treachery by having been admitted within our ranks. Some have done this by giving up the Doctrines of the Gospel. Falling into this error and that, they have denied the Gospel, overthrown the weak and shaken the strong.

Some have proved themselves the enemies of the Cross of Christ by their inconsistent lives. People have pointed at them and said, "Those are followers of Christ, you see. They can lie, cheat and get gain as the basest

rogues do.” They say that they are Christians and yet you cannot trust them in trade. They are just as worldly and false as if they were not Christians at all. Why, then I suspect that they are *not* Christians at all, but, like Judas Iscariot, they are children of perdition! Then there are some in all ages who betray the Lord Jesus by apostasy. They run well, for a time, and then they are hindered. Being armed and carrying bows, they turn back in the day of battle! They are trees twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Such sorrowful heart-breaking cases occur in all churches, where men come to the very front and appear to do great service for Christ—and yet forsake Him, and walk no more with His people, nor in His ways—even denying that they ever were associated with Him and with His cause.

They open His wounds! They put Him to an open shame! Woe unto them! Sorrowfully, yet sternly, I say, if there should be one here who will, in some future day, willfully betray the Savior on any account whatever—the Lord have mercy upon such and prevent his joining with our Church lest we be overwhelmed with shame and sorrow! True-hearted men, we invite you! Half-hearted, fickle men, we would avoid you! Yet such do come and will come—and what can we say of them? “The God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke them”—yes, rebuke them so as to *prevent* them—that they may not be as thorns in our side.

III. But time fails me and, therefore, I must finish up, thirdly, by describing from the text A CORDIAL ENLISTMENT. The captain of these brave men felt the Spirit come upon him and he spoke up as warmly as David had spoken, saying, “Yours are we David, and on your side, you son of Jesse: peace, peace, be unto you, and peace be to your helpers; for your God helps you.” He began thus—“Yours are we, David.” Now, that is the first thing I want of those who are going to join the Church—“Yours are we, Jesus! We are not our own; we are bought with a price.” Well may that man avow himself to belong to Christ who has been bought with the blood of Christ! “For you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.”

Now, if you are, indeed, redeemed by Him, I pray you confess that you are altogether and absolutely your Lord’s. Sing with your whole heart—

**“All that I am, and all I have
Shall be forever Yours.”**

Don’t only sing it, but practice it! Let your lives say—“Yours are we, Jesus. Neither count we anything that we possess to be our own; but all is dedicated to Your royal use.” Then Amasai added, “and on your side, you son of Jesse,” for, if we belong to Christ, of course we are on Christ’s side, whatever that side may be! In religion, morals, politics—we are on Christ’s side. Here is the side of the learned. There is the side of the ignorant. We are on neither the one, nor the other—we are on Christ’s side! In every political question we desire to be and ought to be on Christ’s side—we are neither of this party nor of that, but on the side of justice, peace, righteousness!

In every moral question we are bound to be on Christ’s side. In every religious question we are not on the side of predominant thought, nor on the side of fashionable views, nor on the side of lucre, but on the side of Christ! Make this your slogan—“What would Jesus do?” Go and do *that*.

“How would Jesus think?” Go and think *that*. “What would Jesus have me to be?” Ask God to make you just *that*. “Yours are we, David, and on your side, you son of Jesse.” Then he added, “Peace be to you.” “Peace, peace, be to you.” Double peace to you! So say we to our Lord Jesus Christ—our heart salutes Him and invokes peace upon Him! Blessed Master, we are at peace with You so completely as to be at one with You. What You say we believe. What You do we admire. What You command we obey. What You claim we resign. What You forbid we forego. We yield ourselves up to You wholly and are at perfect peace with You in all Your purposes, designs, and acts. Peace, peace, to You.

“And peace be to your helpers.” We desire all good for all good men! We pray for the peace of the peaceful! The day that we were converted, we felt that we loved every Christian. I used to say of the little village where I first preached, that I had such an attachment to every inhabitant in it that if I had seen a dog that came from Waterbeach I would have given him a bone! Do you not feel the same towards all the Lord’s people? The proverb has it, “Love me, love my dog.” And when you love Christ, you love the very lowest of His people. Yes, if Jesus had a dog, you would love that dog for Christ’s sake! I am sure that it is so.

When a man is always quibbling, I fear he has not the spirit of Christ, and is none of His. We know some people who might be compared to porcupines—they cannot be touched by anybody—they are all spines and prickles. Such people may think well of themselves, but it is to be feared that the loving Jesus does not think well of them. The man with a hot head and a bitter heart, is he a friend of Jesus? I cannot imagine that such a head as that will lie in Jesus Christ’s bosom! Oh, no, dear Friends—he that loves is born of God, but not the man of hate and spite! Give me the eyes of the dove and not those of a carrion crow. When the dove soars aloft into the air, what does she look for? Why, for her dove-cote! And when she discovers the beloved abode, she uses her wings with lightning speed, for there is her delight. If you were to throw a raven or a carrion crow into the air, it would be looking for something foul which it could feed upon—and there are men and women in every Christian Church who are always trying with far-reaching and greatly-magnifying eyes to find out some wretched scandal or another.

If you want to go to your bed uncomfortable and to lie awake all night, if you are a pastor of a Church, have a few minutes’ talk with a friend of this order! These are the folks who have just sniffed out a matter that ought to be inquired into. When it is inquired into, there is nothing to discover, and great heartburning is caused in the process of investigation. These same scandalmongers will have something fresh tomorrow morning to keep their dear tongues going. May we be favored with very few of these irritating beings. May those that come among us always be those that can say, “Peace be to your helpers.” Whatever helps Christ, I wish to help. Wherever I see anything of Christ, there my heart shall rest. Oh, to have a large increase to this Church and all the Churches of hearty, loving, peacemaking people!

The last word that they said to David was, “For your God helps you.” And I shall keep that last sentence very much to myself—I want to feed

upon it as my portion of meat! You must not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treads out the corn—and I am that ox at this time. “Your God helps you.” How I do rejoice to think that God is helping the Great Son of David! All the powers of the God of Nature and Providence are working to aid the Lord of Grace! The stars in their courses are fighting for our Immanuel! Everything is being overruled for the advance of Christ’s Kingdom. We are all on edge as to the Sudan and Egypt—but could we see all things, we would rejoice! None of us know what is coming. I am no Prophet, nor the son of a Prophet, but I venture to foretell that mountains will be leveled for the coming of our Lord even by calamities and disasters!

There will be a speedier dissolution of the empire of the false Prophet and of the false Prophet’s imitator because of all this mixing up of the west and the east in an unwilling conjunction. I say not how or when, but the Lord’s purpose shall stand and He will do all His pleasure! When the ocean roars at its utmost fury, the Lord puts a bit into the mouth of the tempest and reins up the storm. Jehovah makes a way for Himself amid the tumult of great waters. When confusion and uproar predominate everywhere and old chaos seems to be coming back, again—all this is but a phase of unbroken order! How swift and sure are the revolutions of the wheels which are bringing nearer the chariot of the Son of God! Cast in your lot with “the Leader and Commander of the people,” who has God with Him! It is the glory of Christ’s cause that the Lord God is involved in it.

Mr. Wesley’s dying words were, “The best of all is, God is with us!” As I repeat the Truth of God, my heart cries, “Hallelujah! Blessed be the name of the Lord!” The Lord Your God helps You, O Christ of God! The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in Your hands. You must reign—Your Father swears it to You! You shall divide a portion with the great and You shall share the spoil with the strong, for You have given up your soul unto death and permitted Your Glory to be rolled in the dust—and You have risen and gone into Glory—therefore You must reign! O Anointed of the Lord, Your Throne shall endure forever! Tonight Your servants salute You again, You Son of David!

Wounded Christ, we lay our fingers in the print of the nails and say, “My Lord and my God!” Risen Christ, we look upward as the heavens receive You, and we adore! Ascended Christ, we fall at Your dear feet, and say, “Yours are we, O Son of David, anointed to be a Prince and a Savior.” Coming Christ, we wait and watch for Your appearing! Come quickly to Your own! Amen and amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—John 1:29-51.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—639, 670, 674.**

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DAVID AND HIS VOLUNTEERS

NO. 3297

A SERMON
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“And of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David into the hold to the wilderness men of might, and men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains; Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, Jeremiah the tenth, Machbanai the eleventh. These were of the sons of God, captains of the host: one of the least was over an hundred, and the greatest over a thousand. These are they that went over Jordan in the first month when it had overflowed all his banks; and they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east, and toward the west.”
1 Chronicles 12:8-15.

DAVID, compelled to flee from his own country, and to hide himself from the malice of Saul, was eminently a type of our Lord Jesus Christ who, in the days when He dwelt here among men, was despised and rejected of men. And at this moment it is well known to the true Church of God and it becomes palpably evident to every earnest Believer in the Gospel that Jesus, the Son of David, is not received, acknowledged, or tolerated in this present evil world. He has gone forth outside the camp. All who would repair to Him must go forth likewise, bearing His reproach. These eleven Gadites—all of them remarkable men—espoused the cause of David when he was in his very worst condition—they left the ease and comfort, the honors and elements of their own homes to associate themselves with him when he was regarded as an outlaw under the ban of society. And to this day, every Christian who is faithful to his profession must separate himself from his fellow men to be a follower of the despised Jesus. In that way and with that faith which men still count heresy, must he join himself with that to which is everywhere spoken against, running the gauntlet of the age if he would espouse the cause of the Lord's Anointed!

In tracing out the parallel, let me now draw your attention, first, to *the leader* who commanded the voluntary homage of good and valiant men. And then to *the recruits* who joined themselves to him, of whom we find a graphic description in our text.

I. THE LEADER, whom we regard as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ, was David, the son of Jesse. And in tracing out some points of analogy, we begin by noticing that like David, *our Lord was anointed of God to be the Leader of His people*. Hence the words of prophecy concerning Him, “I

will make an Everlasting Covenant with You, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given Him for a Witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people.” The Spirit of God is upon Jesus of Nazareth, for Him has God the Father anointed. “Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” We may well be ready to follow a Leader whom God has appointed and commended to us with such high praise! “I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people. I have found David My servant; with My holy oil have I anointed him: with whom My hand shall be established: My arm also shall strengthen him.” The Lord, in His own Sovereignty, with wisdom and prudence, has been pleased to fix His choice upon the Man Christ Jesus to be our federal Head, our King and our Commander. What other justification do we need for following Christ than that God Himself thus sets Him forth? To this choice of God our soul agrees. Never be afraid, young man, of acknowledging Christ! Never let any of us blush to acknowledge the blessed impeachment that we are followers of the Lamb! It is an honor to follow One who has the highest sanction of Heaven in taking the command and exercising the authority that pertains to Him!

Jesus was like David, too, in that *He was personally fit to be a Leader*. David, alike by his character and his deeds of prowess, had become the foremost man of his times. So our blessed Lord, as to His Person, is just such a King as one might desire to obey. And as for His achievements, O tell what His arm has done—what spoils from death His right hand won! Let His fame be spread over all the earth! He stood in the gap when there was none to help. He vanquished the foe who threatened our destruction. He set His people free. He led their captivity captive. In point of courage and in feats of war He so outstripped David that I may safely say, “David has slain his thousands, but Jesus His tens of thousands! He is a Man of war. The Lord is His name.” He has defeated all the principalities and powers and put to rout all the hosts of Hell that came against His people. Therefore let Him be acknowledged as King. Who else should be exalted among the people but He who has done such wonderful things for the people? It is no marvel that the men of Israel gathered around David with a glowing enthusiasm and proved their patriotism by their allegiance to his sovereignty. Nor need we wonder that the children of God should shout—

***“All hail the power of Jesus’ name
Let angels prostrate fall,
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all!”***

Right well does He deserve all the homage we can ever ascribe to Him!

But our Lord, though anointed of God, and meriting the distinction which He gained, was, nevertheless, like David, rejected of men. Poor David! Saul thirsted for his blood and put him upon dangerous missions, in the hope that he might die. And when he saw that God was with him, he hated him yet more—till he hunted him like a partridge upon the mountains! He could find shelter nowhere. If he went to the priests of Nob, the king sent and slew all the inhabitants of the city. Or if he went to Keilah,

and fought with the Philistines, and saved the inhabitants of Keilah, yet by-and-by they were willing to give him up to his enemies! He was safe nowhere. Now, our Lord Jesus Christ here upon earth was in the same manner despised and rejected of men—nor has the offense of His Cross ceased to this day. You may be a nominal Christian and have the good esteem of all men, but if you are a true disciple of Jesus, obeying Him from the heart, openly avowing His cause and diligently testifying His Truth, you will meet with bitter hostility in all sorts of places and among all sorts of people! Rest assured that until Christ comes again, it will be true that if you were of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but Christ has chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

There may be Christians placed in such sheltered nooks and living among such godly families that they do not come into collision with the outside world—but if you do come into connection with the world in any way, you will be sure to prove its enmity! As the world is in rebellion against God and hostile to Christ, it will be intolerant of you. So Ishmael persecuted Isaac even in Abraham's own household! So the seed of the serpent hates the Seed of the woman. So, too, those that are under the Law own no kindred with those that are the children of the promise. Marvel not, then—it scarcely becomes you to murmur, though it sometimes appears to you a hard lot—Jesus Christ is still as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness to the mass of mankind! True religion is not to be found in fashionable circles. It finds little favor among the great and mighty, though today it does not hide its head in the clefts and caves of the rocks. While the violence of persecution is abated in its outward manifestations of terror, the malice out of which it grew still survives and the people of God are harassed by it in a thousand ways. The iron is made to enter into their soul. Thus the cruel jealousy and the galling animosity with which David was driven forth and hunted from place to place, find a counterpart in the treatment that Christ, Himself, received—and that all His faithful followers have in their measure to endure!

But notwithstanding the pains and penalties they incurred in those dark days, the really good and pious people in Israel rallied to the standard of David. I know it is said that those who were in debt, those who were in distress and those who were discontented came to David. That is quite true and well it typifies the abject condition of those poor sinners who come to Christ for refuge! But many of those Israelites were reduced in circumstances and brought into debt through the bad government of Saul. Probably the very best people in the country were to be found among those who gathered around David. And certainly there was with David, Abiathar the priest. He came to David as the representative of the godly, the Puritan Party! With David, likewise, there was Gad the Prophet. And you know how, in the early days of David's persecution, he resided with Samuel, the Prophet of the Lord, so that the gracious party was always on David's side. Does not the same thing happen among

those who ally themselves with the Son of David at this day? Although He whom we worship is despised and rejected of men, yet unto you who believe, He is precious! They that fear the Lord, love Christ and embrace His Gospel. Those that have a new heart and a right spirit are not at all dubious which side to take. They have lifted up their hands to the Crucified One and they are sworn to do battle for His cause as long as they live! We need not be ashamed to side with Jesus, for we shall be in good company—not in the company of the nobles of the earth, those who bear its titles, own its wealth, or enjoy its empty fame—but in the company of the pure in heart, of the heirs of the promises, of those to whom God has been pleased to reveal Himself, yes, of the babes out of whose mouths He has perfected praise! Oh, we may well be content to cast in our lot with God's elect, be they who they may in the world's esteem, or be their lot what it may in their pilgrimage to the better country! With them would we be numbered! With them would we be associated! With them would we go! Let Christ's people be our people. Where they toil, we would toil. With them would we live. With them would we die. With them would we be buried, in the glad hope that with them we shall rise again to live forever in the fellowship of the saints!

Mark one thing more. Despised as David was among men, yet, being anointed of God, *his cause in the end was successful*. He did come to the throne—and so it is with our Lord Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding all the opposition that still rages against His cause, it must prosper and prevail. “He shall see His seed. He shall prolong His days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” Well may the enmity of the wicked provoke the irony of Heaven. “Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?” “He that sits in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.” It is Jehovah Himself who says it, “Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.” God's decree has placed Him there! Do you think the conspiracy of kings and rulers can unseat Him? No—there must He sit till all His enemies are beneath His feet! Oh, it is good to be with Christ, today, for then we shall be with Him tomorrow! It is good to be with Him in the stocks, for if we can bear the reproach, we shall one day be with Him on His Throne to share the Glory! If you will walk with Christ through the mire when He goes barefoot, you shall be with Him in the golden streets when He puts on the golden sandals and the angels fall down and worship Him! If you can foot it with Him in His deeds of service when He grows weary and footsore, you shall ride with Him when He rides on His white horse of victory, when all the armies of Heaven shall follow Him in His great achievements! If you are with Him in His humiliation, you shall be with Him in His triumph!

I think I have told you before a little parable which I will venture to repeat in this place. There was a certain king whose son was set upon an errand to a far country. And when he came into that country, although he was the lawful prince of it, he found that the citizens would not acknowledge him. They mocked him, made fun of him and took him and set him in the stocks! And there they scoffed at him and pelted him with

filth. Now, there was one in that country who knew the prince—and he alone stood up for him when all the mob was in tumult raging against him. And when they set him on high as an object of scorn, this man stood side by side with him to wipe the filth from that dear royal face. And when, from cruel hands, missiles were thrown in scorn, this man took his full share of them and, whenever he could, he thrust himself before the prince to ward off the blows from him if possible—and to bear the scorn instead of him. Now it came to pass that after a while the prince went on his way and, in due season, the man who had been the prince's friend was called to the king's palace. And on a day when all the princes of the court were roundabout and the peers and nobles of the land were sitting in their places, the king came to his throne and he called for that man, and said, "Make way, princes and nobles! Make way! Here is a man more noble than you all, for he stood boldly forth with my son when he was scorned and scoffed at! Make way, I say, each one of you, for he shall sit at my right hand with my own son. As he took a share of his scorn, he shall now take a share of his honor." And there sat princes and nobles who wished that they had been there, yes, envied the man who had been privileged to endure scorn and scoffing for the prince's sake!

You need not that I interpret the parable. May you make angels envious of you if envy can ever pierce their holy minds! You can submit for Christ's sake to sufferings which it is not possible for seraphim or cherubim to endure!

II. Having thus drawn your attention to the Leader, whom David, the son of Jesse, prefigured, let me turn now to speak a little OF THOSE WHO GATHERED ROUND HIM AND ENLISTED IN HIS SERVICE. The recruits who came to David were eleven in number.

The first characteristic we read about them is that *they were separated*. "Of the Gadites there separated themselves unto David" eleven persons. Observe that they separated themselves. They seem to have been captains of the militia of their tribe. The very least among them was over a hundred, and the greatest over a thousand, but they separated themselves from their commands over their tribes—separated themselves from their brethren and their kinsfolk. I daresay many of their friends said to them, "Why, what fools you are! You must be mad to espouse the cause of a fellow like David!" And then they would call David all manner of foul, opprobrious names. "Are you going to be among those who associate with him—a troop of bandits with that ragged regiment?" I'll be bound to say they had terms for David and his men which, in polite ears, it would not be meet to quote! It is a mercy that the language of those men of Belial has not been recorded. But these men all said, "Yes, we will separate ourselves." And, for that matter, they did not merely tear themselves away from their friends, but from their kinsfolk, too! David needed their right arms and he would have them! He needed valiant men—and they would go and fight for David—whatever fond connection should be sundered thereby!

Dear Friends, in these times it is most important that everyone who is a Christian should understand that he must separate himself from the world. You cannot serve Christ and the world, too. You cannot be of the world and of Christ's Church. You may be nominally of the Church and really of the world—but really of the world and really of the Church you cannot possibly be! The Christian must differ from the world in many things. His language must not be the speech of Babylon, but the chaste, pure language which Christians use. His actions, his customs, his manners, his habits, must not be like those of other men. He is not to be full of affectation and eccentricity. He need not adopt a peculiar garb, or discourse in quaint phrases or speak with an unnatural twang. All that may be mere formalism! Still, there is ample room for separateness in that which meets the eye and addresses the ear of the observer. We need not display vanity in our attire. In dress, Christians will be simple and chaste, not ornate and gaudy. In their speech, too, the children of God will certainly never use an oath, or lend their tongue to the semblance of a lie! And from foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient, they will rigidly abstain! The tongue of a Believer, my Brothers and Sisters, ought to be as a fountain which sends forth sweet water—in our conversation there should be the meekness of wisdom! And when we cannot speak to profit, our silence must bear witness to our sincerity. But it is in his dealings with the world that the Christian shows the moral force of his character. There it comes out because it cannot be hid. If his trade has become used to tricks and stratagems which will not bear the Light of God, he cannot conform to them! He will shrink from them with abhorrence! He must keep a clean conscience. Other men may do the thing without compunction. It may have become “the custom.” But no antiquity or universality of custom will authorize that which is obviously wrong—so he cannot do it and will not do it, for he is a Christian! He counts that a higher morality is required of him than of an ordinary man and after this higher morality he diligently seeks!

From the world's religion the man of God will likewise stand aloof. He never asks himself, “What kind of religion does the present age consider most expedient?” Nor does he wish to find out the fashionable taste in Doctrine, or the order of devotion which is most agreeable to the undevout! He seeks after God. He diligently enquires for God's Truth. He joins himself to God's Church and earnestly promotes its welfare. Moreover, he loves God's ways and desires to be under the power of God's Spirit. After this manner he separates himself. Does not the Church in these days need to hear sounded every day, as a thunder clap, that Divine Commandment, “Come out from among them, and be you separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty”? Oh, the shameful conformity of some professors with the world! It degrades the Church and it debases themselves! God grant that we may be staunch in our nonconformity to the world! To whatever

church we may belong, may we be “holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners.”

But, observe that *these people separated themselves unto David*. You may separate yourself and yet not separate yourself unto Christ! And if not, you only change from one form of worldly-mindedness to another. We are not to separate ourselves unto self-righteousness, or unto affectation, or unto a sect, but unto Christ! The people got away from their friends that they might get to David—we are to get away from the world that we may get closer to Christ! We often sing—

“Oh, for a closer walk with God!”

But if our walk is to be close with God, it must be a long way from the world! We must separate ourselves, by Divine Grace, unto Christ! And then, as you read that they separated themselves unto David in the wilderness, let me entreat you to ask yourselves if you are ready to take part with a rejected, Crucified Christ! Tens of thousands would separate themselves to David if he were in Hebron on the throne of Israel. They would go there to crown David in the day of his prosperity—but the thing was to separate themselves unto David in the wilderness! That is the work of real Divine Grace in the heart which leads us to take sides with a despised Christ. It is a blessed thing when God teaches you to say, “I will follow the Truth wherever it leads me. I will follow it though some shall say to me, ‘You are inconsistent.’ I do not care about that. Though they shall say, ‘Why, you have landed, now, in fanaticism.’ I do not care about that. I will be a fanatic. If the Truth of God leads me there, I will separate myself unto Christ in the wilderness.” Though they should tauntingly say, “You only go to some ‘Little Bethel’ which is frequented by a few ignorant and vulgar people,” be it so! If Christ goes there, what matters that to us? If the Truth of God should lead us down into a hovel where we could only associate with the very lowest of the low—if they were the Lord’s people, they should be our delight! I wish this spirit were in all Christians—that they would be loyal to the Truth of God and not pander to the world! Do not be continually asking yourselves, “What will So-and-So think? And what will So-and-So say?” Do the right and fear not! Believe the Truth of God, let what will come of it! Follow the straight line and do not trim your way. Go not round about for the sake of policy, but take sides with Jesus Christ in the day of scoffing, on the ground of principle!

Do I speak to some men here who work in factories? Oh, acknowledge Christ when other men laugh at Him! Stand up for Jesus when the whole shop is full of jesting and jeering against religion! If your religion is worth having, it is worthwhile enduring a little banter for it. He that is a friend must be a friend in need. If you would be a friend of Jesus, you will defend His name when it needs a defender and everybody is raging at Him. To come to the Tabernacle and join your fellow Christians in praising Jesus is very easy and involves no self-denial. But the thing is, you merchants, to praise Jesus among your fellow merchants who are ungodly—to bear witness, you working men, among others who fear not the Lord—

to separate yourselves unto David in the wilderness, to cleave to Christ where He is scoffed at and despised! That is a true Christian! I beseech you, test yourselves by this, for if you are ashamed of Him in this evil generation, He will be ashamed of you when He comes in His Glory. But if you, out of a pure heart, can confess Him before a godless world, He will acknowledge you in the day when He comes in the Glory of His Father and all His holy angels with Him! Oh, for Grace to be separated unto Christ in this way!

Note, next, about these men that *they were men of might*. It is said of them that they were “men of might. . . whose faces were like the faces of lions, and they were as swift as the roes upon the mountains.” All who came to David were not like that. David had some women and children to protect, but he was glad to receive others who were men of might. Now there came to Jesus, the Greater David, in His day, the weak ones of the flock—and He never rejected them. He was glad to receive even the feeblest! But there also came to our Lord and Master eleven men who, by His Grace, were like these Gadites. Truly, I may say of His Apostles, after our Divine Lord had filled them with His Spirit, that they had faces like lions and feet like hinds’ feet, so swift were they for service and so strong for combat! How wondrously they ran to and fro to the very ends of the earth, like the roes of the mountains! And how bravely they faced persecution and opposition, like lions that could not flinch from their prey! And what grand works they did for Jesus! Would to God that we were like they, Beloved! The Grace God can make us like they were. The Grace of God can make us brave as lions, so that wherever we are, we can hold our own, or rather can hold our Lord’s Truth and never blush nor be ashamed to speak a good word for Him at all times! He can make us quick and active, too, so that we shall be like the roes upon the mountains! I am afraid that, often, we are like the donkey that couches down. We need the whip and the spur to make us move! We are like bulls unaccustomed to the yoke of service. Yet it ought not to be so. Loved as we have been with such great love and having tasted, as some of us can testify, of such choice favors from our Lord, being indulged with such intimate fellowship with Him and sustained as we are now with such joy and peace in Him, we ought to serve Him with quickness and activity, with courage and confidence! We really should outlive the lion for his bravery and the hinds and the wild goats of the rock for their swiftness. I pray that it may be so. May God send to this Church men—and women, too—of this order—“strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might!” To whom the joy of the Lord shall be their strength, who shall go about their Father’s business with all their might—that might which is given them of God—and do great exploits for our greater David while He is in the wilderness and needs their aid!

But it is worth noticing that *they were men of war, conditioned to discipline*—“men of war fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler.” Now there are some men of might who do not seem to be good men of war because they cannot keep rank. What exploits they may do, they

must do alone, for they cannot march with the army. There are some Brothers and Sisters I know who are most excellent people as individuals, but they seem never to be meant to march in the ranks—they must, everyone of them, *lead*—they feel they must, they cannot be second to anybody! Neither can they be under any discipline or rule. Instead of taking their place in Christ's Church, they seem to consider themselves independent of the Church and its organization. However, the men Christ needs in the Church—and I pray Him to multiply their number in our midst, and enlist all of us among them—are such as can keep step, observe the rule and preserve order in the march, or in the fight or the service of the Lord! Men who can smite the foe, who can handle the sword and buckler, and ward off the arrows of the enemy—who can use the shield of faith and withstand the assaults of the adversary—we need these! May God teach us how to keep our places and to do our work!

Some men have swords, but their swords seem to be more dangerous to their friends than to their foes. They are the people one wishes to keep clear of. They are, no doubt, very zealous, but if they had a little love as well as a lot of zeal—and were endowed with a capacity for fellowship—it would greatly improve their character! This, however, seems to be their defeat—they have such an excess of individuality and they are, therefore, so exclusive that we can hardly imagine how they could pray, "Our Father, which are in Heaven," or recognize anybody else as belonging to the family of the Most High! May God make us men of might, but may He also make us men of discipline! While we keep our place and do our own work, may we delight to see others do their share of the work, too! When we smite the foe, may we delight to see others use the weapons of Christian warfare with skill and success! Do not shrink from the drill or revolt against discipline, for it is a great trait of a good soldier that he should know how to keep rank.

These Gadites, likewise, furnish us with *a noble example of strong revolution*. When the eleven men determined to join David, they were living on the other side of a deep river which at that season of the year had overflowed its banks—so that it was extremely deep and broad. But they were not to be kept from joining David when he needed them by the river. They swam across the river that they might come to David. Oh, I would like to hold up my Master's banner and be His recruiting sergeant tonight, if I could entertain the hope that out of this company there would come men of such mettle whose hearts the Lord has touched to join themselves to the Lord and fight for His Cross, whatever might impede and block their way! Do you stand back and shrink from avowing your attachment to the standard of God's Anointed because it would involve loss of reputation, displeasure of friends, the frowns of your associates in the world, or the heartbreaks of anguish of those you tenderly love? Know, then, that our Lord is worthy of all the troubles you incur and all the risks you run! And be assured that the peace which a soul enjoys that once joins Christ in the hold and abides with Him in the wilderness, well repays a man for all that he has to part with in getting to his Lord

and Master! We have known some of the rich who have joined Christ's Church who have had to swim through overflowing rivers of contumely—the unkindness they have braved has indeed been cold and chilling. We have known many a poor woman who has had to suffer from her husband's brutality—and many a poor man who has had to run the gauntlet of a thousand cruel tongues! But who is afraid of such treatment as that? Once see the King in His beauty and your fears will vanish like smoke! Did you ever see His face stained with spit and black and blue with the blows of mailed hands? Did you ever see that head surrounded with the crown of thorns and mark the painful agony that was upon His visage, more marred than any man's? And have you not said, "Savior, since You endured all this for me, there is nothing that I will count too difficult to endure for You. I will count shame for You to be my glory, and Your reproach shall be greater riches to me than all the treasures of Egypt"? Have you not said that? If you have said so from your very soul, God the Holy Spirit writing it upon your heart, I know you have resolved to endure any pain or shame if you could but get to your Lord and stand side by side with Him! They swam the river to get to David, so, Believer, swim the river to be with Christ!

Now, it would appear that after they had got across the river, they were attacked, but we are told that "they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the East, and toward the West." They were men of such resolution that if they had to fight to be on David's side, they would fight! And, notwithstanding the position of those on the right hand and the opposition of those on the left, they still pushed their way, lion-like men as they were, through all the forces that would impede them! O you that love our Lord and Master, I beseech you, in this evil day, this day of blasphemy and rebuke—stand not back—be not cowards! Cast in your lot with Him and with His people! Come to the front, hide not away like cowards, for this is the day when he shall be accursed that comes not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty! See you not everywhere how the Truth of God is fallen in the streets—how the old idols of Rome are once more set up in the high places of this land? The whole nation seems to have gone after the idols which our fathers removed! O you that love Christ, come out and separate yourselves from all acquaintance, all association with this evil thing! Come and join yourself unto the Son of God by a holy covenant! If He is your Beloved, and if His Grace is in your heart, fear not! What have you to fear? Greater is He who is with you than all they that are against you! Fear not. The battle is not yours, it is the mighty God's! If truth is with you, you must conquer! If Christ the Incarnate Truth is with you, you are already more than a conqueror through Him that has loved you! Never be ashamed! Never turn aside from Him who gave Himself to you! Be steadfast, immovable. For this steadfastness you need to pray much and often to God, for many are the seductions of the world—

***"Can you cleave to your Lord, can you cleave to your Lord,
When the many turn aside?
Can you witness that He has the living Word,***

***And none upon earth beside?
Do you answer, 'We can'? Do you answer, 'We can,
Through His love's constraining power'?
But do you remember the flesh is weak,
And will shrink in the trial hour?
Yet yield to His love, who around you now
The bands of a man would cast
The cords of His love, who was given for you,
To His altar binding you fast."***

Examine yourselves. Prove your own hearts. Consider what manner of men you ought to be. Let the precepts of the Word admonish you. Let the *esprit de corps* stimulate you. Never let disciples of Christ fall behind followers of David in warmth of attachment, or in order of service. The nearer you get to the Person of your Lord, the more you will catch of His Spirit! I think, Beloved, you need direction more than exhortation. The more you live under His eyes and the more often you listen to His voice, the better, truer, nobler men and women you will prove to be and the happier recognition you will find in the day of His appearing!

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 56.**

To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim, Michtam (a golden Psalm) of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.

Verse 1, 2. *Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up: he fighting daily oppresses me. My enemies would daily swallow me up: for they are many that fight against me, O You Most High.* David was in such peril from man that he cried to God to come to his rescue. Man was merciless to him, so he prayed, "Be merciful unto me, O God." His enemies were many and mighty, so he appealed to the One who was Almighty—who could destroy them or put them all to flight.

3. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in You.* He is a happy man who can trust in God when he is afraid. But he is still happier who can say, "I will trust, and not be afraid."

4. *In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.* The trusting soul is a singing soul and it soon becomes a courageous soul! Faith in God drives out the fear of man—"In God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."

5, 6. *Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil. They gather themselves together, they hide themselves, they mark my steps when they wait for my soul.* David had many enemies—Saul, Doeg the Edomite, the Philistines and some even in his own household—but all their malice and craft were in vain since the Lord was on his side! We, too, have enemies who wrest our words, whose thoughts against us are evil, who lay traps for us and lie in ambush to take us unawares. But

we need not fear any of them, not even the great adversary, himself, if we are trusting in the Lord!

7. *Shall they escape by iniquity? In Your anger cast down the people, O God.* They sought to cast him down, so he prayed to the Lord to cast them down, and we know how graciously the Lord answered his supplication.

8. *You number my wanderings: put my tears into Your bottle: are they not in Your book?* David was such a wanderer at that time that he might not remember all the places where he had hidden away from Saul. But God had a record of them and even of his tears—“are they not in Your book?” There is nothing that concerns the Lord’s chosen people that is not noted and remembered by Him.

9. *When I cry unto You, then shall my enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.* David’s confidence in God was not misplaced! He who can truthfully say, “God is for me,” need not fear however many may be against him!

10, 11. *In God will I praise His word: in the LORD will I praise His word. In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.* He repeats the declarations he made in verse four—such holy confidence may rightly be published again and again! It is most pleasing and honoring to the Lord and it is most likely to lead other tried Believers to follow such a worthy example! The praising and trusting man fears not what man can do to him.

12. *Your vows are upon me, O God I will render praises unto You. David had not forgotten the vows that he had made unto the Lord. Vows should not be lightly made, but once made, they should be sacredly remembered, and faithfully performed.*

13. *For You have delivered my soul from death: will not You deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?* So the Psalm ends, as it began, with prayer—a prayer that was most graciously answered, as we can see if we turn to Psalm 116:8, 9—“You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears and my feet from falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”

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

**PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON
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THE LESSON OF UZZA

NO. 2855

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1903.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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*“And David and all Israel played before God with all their might,
and with singing and with harps and with psalteries,
and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.”*
1 Chronicles 13:8.

*“And David was afraid of God that day, saying,
How shall I bring the Ark of God home to me?”*
1 Chronicles 13:12.

*“So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands,
went to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord
out of the house of Obed-Edom with joy.”*
1 Chronicles 15:25.

DAVID had, in his heart, an intense love to God. During Saul's reign, God had been well-nigh forgotten in the land. The ordinances of His house had been almost, if not entirely, neglected, and when David found himself firmly seated upon his throne, one of his first thoughts was concerning the revival of religion, the reestablishment of that form of worship which God had ordained in the wilderness by the mouth of His servant Moses. So he looked about him to see where the Ark of the Covenant, that most sacred of all the ancient symbols, was, and he wrote, "We heard of it at Ephratah: we found it in the fields of the wood." Out of pure love and reverence to God, he called the people together, consulting with them so that the thing might not be done by himself, but by the nation. It was agreed that the Ark should be brought up and placed upon Mount Zion, near the palace of the king, in a conspicuous position where it should be the center of religious worship for the entire nation. It was to be placed near that sacred spot where Abraham had, of old, offered up his son, Isaac, that, in the great days of assembly, the Israelites might wend their way there and worship God as He had commanded them.

David's intention was right enough, no fault can be found with that. But right things must be done in a right way. We serve a jealous God, who, though He overlooks many faults in His people, yet, nevertheless, will have His Word revered and His commands obeyed. "Be you clean," He says, "that bear the vessels of the Lord." He will be honored by

those that attempt to draw near to Him. So it came to pass that, though David had a good intention and was about to do a right thing, yet, at the first, he had *a great failure*. When we have considered the cause of that failure, we shall note that this failure worked in David *a great fear*. And when we have meditated for a while upon that fear, we shall see that when David set to work to honor his God after the due order, he did it with such a great joy that, perhaps, we have scarcely another instance of such exuberance of spirit in the worship of God as we have in the case of David who leaped and danced before the Ark of the Lord with all his might!

I. First, then, we are to consider DAVID'S GREAT FAILURE. It followed almost immediately after "David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets." This was David's first attempt to bring up the Ark of the Covenant into the place appointed for it.

Observe, dear Friends, that *there was no failure through lack of multitudes*. It is, to my mind very delightful to worship God with the multitude that keep holy day. I know some people who think themselves the only saints in the whole world. They do not imagine that any can be the elect of God if there are more than seven or eight, "because," they say, "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leads unto life, and few there are that find it." And, therefore, simply because they are few in number, they straightway conclude that they have passed through the strait gate into the narrow way. It needs far better evidence than *that* to prove that they are on the right road and, for my part, I love, as David did, to go with the multitude to the House of God—to keep time and tune with many hearts and many voices all on fire with holy devotion as they lift up the sacred song in a great chorus of praise unto the Most High! There was no failure, in that respect, on this occasion, for, "David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the Ark of God from Kirjath-Jearim." Thus they came, from all parts of the land, in their hundreds and their thousands—an exceedingly great multitude—yet their attempt to bring up the Ark proved a sad failure. So, you see that it is of little value merely to gather crowds of people together! However great the multitude of nominal worshippers may be, it is quite possible that they may offer no worship that is acceptable to God. We, ourselves may come and go in our thousands, yet that alone will not guarantee that the Presence of God is among us. It would be far better to be with a few, if God were in the midst of them, than to be with the multitude and yet to miss the Divine blessing.

Neither was there *any failure so far as pomp and show were concerned*. It seems that these people paid very great honor, in their own way, to this Ark—putting it on a new carriage and surrounding it with the princes, the captains and the mighty men of the Kingdom, together with the multitudes of the common people of the land. I doubt not that it

was a very imposing array that day and, truly, the solemn worship of God should be attended to with due decency and order—yet it may be a failure for all that. Sweet may be the strain of the sacred song, yet God may not accept it because it is sound and nothing more. The prayer may be most appropriate so far as the language of it is concerned, yet it may fail to reach the ear of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Something more is needed beside mere outward show. Something beyond even the decent simplicities of worship in which we delight.

Neither was there any failure, apparently, *so far as the musical accompaniment was concerned*. We are told in our text that, “David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets.” I like that expression, “with all their might.” I cannot bear to hear God’s praises uttered by those who simply whisper, as though they were afraid of making too much noise. No, but—

**“Loud as His thunder, sound His praise!
And speak it lofty as His Throne,”**

for He well deserves it. Let the sea roar and the fullness thereof in praise of its great Creator! Let all the winds and the waves join in the concert! There cannot be any sound too jubilant for Him who is worthy of the highest praise of Heaven and earth! It is right to sing unto the Lord with all your might, yet there may be a certain kind of heartiness which is not acceptable to God because it is natural, not *spiritual*. There may be a great deal of outward expression, yet no inward life. It may be only dead worship, after all, despite the noise that may be made. I do not say that it was altogether so in David’s case, but, certainly, all the multitude, all the pomp and all the sound did not prevent its becoming an entire failure! What was the reason for that failure?

If I read the story aright, it seems to me, first, that *there was too little thought as to God’s mind upon the matter*. David consulted the people, but he would have done better if he had consulted *God*. The co-operation of the people was desirable, but much more the benediction of the Most High! There ought to have been much prayer preceding this great undertaking of bringing up the Ark of the Lord, but it seems to have been entered upon with very much heartiness and enthusiasm, but not with any preparatory supplication or spiritual consideration. If you read the story through, you will see that it appears to be an affair of singing, harps, psalteries, timbrels, cymbals, trumpets and of a new cart and cattle—that is about all there is in it. There is not even a mention of humiliation of heart, or of solemn awe in the Presence of that God of whom the Ark was but the outward symbol. I am afraid that this first attempt was too much after the will of the flesh and the energy of nature—and too little according to that rule of which Christ said to the woman at Sychar, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

Yes, Beloved, all worship fails if that is not the first consideration in it. Let the singing be hearty and melodious, let everything in our services be in proper order, but, as the first and most important thing, let the Holy Spirit be there, so that we may draw near to God in our heart and have real spiritual communion with Him! The outward form of worship is a very secondary matter—the inward spirit of it is the all-important thing. There appears, to me, to have been too little attention paid to that in the first attempt that David made to bring up the Ark and, therefore, it was a failure.

One very important omission was that *the priests were not in their proper places*. They appear to have been there, but they were, evidently, not treated as their position entitled them to be. The men of war were brought to the front and the men of worship were pushed aside. Now, in all true worship, the priest is of the first importance. “What,” you ask, “do you believe in a priest?” Yes, in the Great High Priest of whom the Aaronic priesthood was the type—all my hopes for time and eternity are centered in Him who is “a Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” If you do not put Him into the first place, I care little what sort of worship you render—you may be very intense and very devout, after your own fashion—but it is all in vain. There is no way of coming unto God except through the “one Mediator between God and men, the Man, Christ Jesus.” There is no way of approaching God except through the one Great High Priest, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! You may cry unto God, but your prayers cannot reach His ears until Christ presents them to His Father. You may bring your sweet spices, but they will never have any fragrance before the Lord until the Great High Priest puts them into the golden censer and mingles with them the precious incense of His own merits and so makes them acceptable before the Lord. A prayer without Christ in it will never reach Heaven! Praise which is not presented through the merits of Christ, is but a meaningless noise which can never be well-pleasing unto God.

These people not only had not the priests in their proper places, but *they also had a cart, instead of Levites, to carry the sacred Ark*. The laboring oxen took the place of the willing men who were appointed by God for this service. David and all the people appear to have forgotten the appointments which God made concerning the Ark, so they fell into trouble—and all their efforts proved to be a failure.

Next, I notice that, the first time, *there were no sacrifices*. They put the Ark upon the cart and went before it, and behind it, and around it with their instruments of music, but there was no sacrificial bloodshed. They had been so long out of the habit of worshipping God in His appointed way that they had forgotten very much. I wonder that David did not notice this fatal omission and I am not surprised that Uzza died as there is no mention of the sprinkling of blood upon the Mercy Seat that day. And, Beloved, if we leave the blood of Atonement out of our worship, we leave out that which is the very life of it, for the blood is the life thereof! If you

have no respect unto the atoning Sacrifice of Christ, God will have no respect unto you. If you have no regard for the great Propitiation which Christ has made for sin, the Lord will not accept either prayers or praises at your hands. Without the shedding of Christ's blood, there is no remission of sin!

All through this incident we see that there was no taking heed to the commands of God and to the rules which He had laid down. *The people brought will-worship to God* instead of that which He had ordained! What do I mean by will-worship? I mean any kind of worship which is not prescribed in God's own Word. It has sometimes been pleaded, as an excuse for the observance of some rite or ceremony which is not commanded in the Scriptures, that it is very instructive, or very impressive. That is no excuse or justification for disobedience! The First Commandment may be broken, not only by worshipping a false god, but by worshipping the true God in another way than that which He has ordained. If you set up a mode of worship not warranted by His Word, whatever you may plead for it, it is idolatrous and the Lord may well say to you, "Who has required this at your hands?" Mark this, if it is not of His appointment, neither will it meet with His acceptance. Inasmuch, therefore, as these people did not show any reverence for God by consulting His record of the rules which He had laid down for their guidance—seeming to think that whatever pleased them must please Him, whatever kind of worship they chose to make up would be quite sufficient for the Lord God of Israel—it therefore ended in failure.

Beloved, take care how you worship God! If you are to take heed how you hear, you are also to take heed how you pray, and to take heed how you praise, and to take heed how you come to the Communion Table. Take heed how, in any way you seek to draw near unto the living God, for He is not to be approached in any slipshod fashion that you may choose to invent! He has His own way by which alone He can be approached. His august court has rules, even as the courts of earthly kings have their regulations and laws—and if you transgress the King's command, it may be that He will smite you as He slew Uzza, or, at the least, your worship will be unacceptable to Him.

II. Now we turn to our second text, to the second head of our discourse, namely, DAVID'S GREAT FEAR. "And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the Ark of God home to me?"

What changeable creatures we are! From a careless, and almost criminal lack of thought, David's mind speedily travels to great seriousness of thought, attended with a very terrible dread. Do you wonder that *the death of Uzza caused David to fear greatly?* The procession is going along and the harps, psalteries, timbrels, cymbals and trumpets are sounding the high praises of God when, on a sudden, the oxen come to the threshing floor of Chidon and, perhaps, tempted by the sight of the grain, they turn aside, or, at least, they stumble and the Ark is likely to be upset. One mistake usually leads to another. If they had not put the Ark on that

cart, this trouble would not have happened. And now young Uzza, who had been living in the house where the Ark had been kept so long, perhaps not thinking he is doing wrong, puts out his hand to steady the Ark and instantly falls dead! A thrill of horror goes through the crowd. The music stops and David stands aghast. At first sight, it does appear to be a very severe punishment, yet we must remember that this is not the only time that God acted thus toward those who profaned the service in which they were engaged. Nadab and Abihu, instead of taking the proper fire to light their censers, took strange fire. There did not seem much difference—is not one kind of fire very much like another? Those two young men went in before the Lord with their censers kindled by strange fire and they fell dead in a moment before God! They had only broken the law in a small matter, as it seemed, but God has His ways of measuring things and His method is very different from ours.

David ought also to have remembered how more than *fifty thousand* of the men of Beth-Shemesh were slain when the Philistines brought back the Ark and the men of Beth-Shemesh looked into it. Truly “our God is a consuming fire.” He will not be trifled with! This was His Ark and He would make them know that it was His! And albeit that with good intentions they had surrounded it, yet since they had not reverently obeyed His commands, He would let them see that He was not to be trifled with, nor that His Ark could be touched with impunity! Do you wonder that, in the presence of that corpse, David was afraid of God that day?

He was also afraid of God for another reason, namely, that *he himself had been in a wrong frame of mind*, for we read in the 11th verse, that “David was displeased because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzza.” He does not seem to have been displeased with Uzza, but he was displeased with God. It seemed to him a hard thing that he had gathered all that crowd of people together and that they had been doing their best as he thought, for the honor of God, and now the whole proceedings were spoilt by the outstretched hand of an angry God in their midst! So David was angry. And when he remembered that such wicked thoughts had crossed his mind, he began to feel afraid of God for his own sake.

Then, I daresay, *his own sense of worthlessness for such a holy work* made him cry, “How shall I bring the Ark of God home to me?” He feared lest, in some unguarded moment, he might be guilty of irreverence and so perish as Uzza had done. I have often had, in a measure, that kind of fear upon me which came over David that day. To be a child of God is the most blessed experience in the world, but it also involves stern discipline. When God makes you His child, you are sure to feel His rod. Others may escape it, but you will not, “for whom the Lord loves, He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.” If you live very near to God and you get many tokens of His favor, you will find that you must watch every step you take and every thought you think, for the Lord is a jealous God—and where He gives the most love, there will be the most jealousy.

He may leave a sinner to go to great lengths in sin, but not His saints. He may let ordinary Christians do a great deal without chastening them, but if you are privileged to lie in His bosom, if you have high fellowship with Him, you will soon know how jealous He is. I have often heard men, while praying, quote as if it were a text of Scripture, “God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire.” The Bible does not say anything of the kind—it says, “Our God is a consuming fire.” So, the Prophet Isaiah asks, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” And what is his answer? “He that walks righteously, and speaks uprightly.” He is the only man who can live amid such burnings—the sacred salamander from whom the fire only burns out any remaining sin. When you ask to live near to God, see in what a terrible place and in what a supremely blessed place, you ask to live! You want to live in the fire of His Presence, even though you know that it will consume your sin and that you will often have to suffer much while that sin is being consumed! I have said, again and again, “My Lord, burn as fiercely as it may, I do aspire to dwell in this sacred spot. Let the fire go through me till it has burned up all my dross, but, oh, do let me dwell with You!”

Yet I am not surprised if someone starts back and says, “I can hardly ask for such a trial as that.” Like James and John we want to sit on the right and left hand of our Master in His Glory, but when He asks, “Can you drink of the cup that I drink of? And be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” It will need much more Grace than they had if we are able to say, from our hearts, “‘We can.’ By Your Grace, we shall be able and willing to endure anything if we may but dwell with You.” For, Beloved, if you have ever had even a glimpse of God in His innermost tabernacle, if He has made His Glory to shine upon you, you have felt willing to die—have been almost *eager* to die—that you might have yet more of that beatific vision and never have it clouded again! One of the good old saints said, when he had very much of the love of Christ poured into his soul, “Hold, Lord, hold! It is enough! Remember that I am but an earthen vessel. If I have more, I shall die.” If I had been in such a case, I think I would have said, “Do not hold, Lord! I am but an earthen vessel, so I shall die in the process and glad enough shall I be to die if I may but see Your face, and never, never, lose the vision anymore.”

We need not wonder that David was afraid after such a manifestation of the Divine displeasure. He did the best thing he could do under the circumstances, He left the Ark with Obed-Edom for a while, determined to set about its removal in a different fashion another time.

III. Now we come to our third subject, that is, DAVID’S SACRED JOY. “So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of the house of Obed-Edom with joy.” Obed-Edom took the Ark into his house and *God blessed him*. Then it occurred to David that there was not much, after all, to be afraid of in the Ark. That awful thing that had smitten Uzza had

been in this other man's house and been a blessing to him. That fact has often made my heart rejoice. I have said, "Well, I know that it is a solemn thing to live near to God, but I have seen a poor, bed-ridden woman live in the Light of God's Countenance, year after year, as happy as all the birds of the air—then why should not I do the same? I have seen a plain, humble, Christian man walking with God, as Enoch did, and happy from the first day of January to the last day of December, and God blessing him in everything, so, come, my Soul, though your God is a consuming fire, there is nothing for His children to dread." So, after David had seen that God blessed Obed-Edom for three months, he thought to himself, "Well, now, Obed-Edom has had his turn, and I may have mine. I will set to work to see if I cannot worship God rightly, this time, and bring up the Ark unto my house in the right way."

So he began thus. *He prepared a tent for the Ark.* I do not read that he did that before, but, in the 1st verse of the 15th Chapter we read, "David made him houses in the city of David and prepared a place for the Ark of God, and pitched for it a tent." Now you see that he is thoughtful and careful in preparing a place for the Ark of God. And if I want God's Presence, I must prepare my mind and heart to receive it. If I want to enjoy communion with my Lord at His Table, I must obey that injunction, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." I must not observe the ordinances of the Lord's House without proper thought and solemnity. As the priests washed themselves before they ministered at the altar, so would I come, cleansed and sanctified by the purifying Word, that I may acceptably appear before God.

Then, next, *the mind of the Lord was considered.* In the 2nd verse of this 15th Chapter, David says, "None ought to carry the Ark of the Lord but the Levites: for them has the Lord chosen to carry the Ark of God." And he asserts that the breach upon them had been made because they "sought Him not after the due order." Now is David anxious to obey God! He will not do what he thinks proper, but what *God* thinks proper—and that is the right way for us to worship the Lord! How I wish that all professing Christians would revise their creed by the Word of God! How I wish that all religious denominations would bring their ordinances and forms of worship to the supreme test of the New Testament! "To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." But, alas, they know that so much would have to be put away that is now delightful to the flesh, that, I fear, we shall be long before we bring all to worship God after His own order! But, my Soul, if you are to be accepted of God, you must see to it that in all your approaches to the great King, you strictly observe the etiquette of His court. What is the rule for courtiers who come into the Presence of the King of kings? What dress are they to wear? With what words can they approach the Throne? In what spirit are they to draw near to God? Answer all these questions and see that you ask the Lord to make you obedient in all things to His gracious commands.

Further, you see that this time *the priests were put into their proper places*. David said, “Because you did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order.” Now they are where they should have been at the first—in the front of the procession and, Brothers and Sisters, when God accepts us, Christ will take the first place! Our Great High Priest will be in the front and we shall do nothing except through His name and in the power of His precious blood!

Then, on this second occasion, *sacrifices were presented unto the Lord*. Scarcely had the Ark rested upon the shoulders of the Levites than they offered seven bullocks and seven rams as a sacrifice unto God. So, we should never think of doing anything in the worship of our God without the seven bullocks and seven rams which are all summed up in the one perfect offering of our ever-adorable Lord. O Brothers and Sisters, keep Christ always before you! Let all your good deeds be done through the strength you receive from Him, for, “of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.” Nothing can be right that is apart from Him. But if He is our Alpha and Omega, and all the letters between, there is no fear that we shall not bring up the Ark of the Lord aright. In this spirit of loving obedience and holy awe, relying upon the sacrifice which they had presented, they seemed like hinds let loose and David, especially, who I suppose was a representative of the whole of them, seemed as if he did not know how he could adequately express the joy that he felt. He had his harp, of which he was a master-player, so, with his skillful fingers moving among the familiar strings, he began to sing. And as he sang, he leaped like some of our Methodist friends do when they get so excited that they must begin to jump and to dance! I suppose that all the crowd cried, “Amen!” as David sang some of his most joyous songs of praise unto the Lord, and that a great shout went up to Heaven, for everyone was glad that day, and especially David, as he danced before the Lord with all his might!

We must not forget that this carrying up of the Ark was a type of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. If there is anything that should make a Christian’s heart leap for joy, it is the fact of His Lord’s return to Heaven. Look! He has risen from the dead and now He is rising from the midst of His disciples. He continues to ascend till a cloud receives Him out of their sight and angels fly to meet Him as He nears the pearly gates. Squadron after squadron salutes the conquering Prince and bids Him welcome Home! And who, I pray you, is this Lord of Hosts who now ascends His Father’s Throne and sits down at His Father’s right hand forever, as the acknowledged King of kings and Lord of lords? It is the man that died on Calvary, the great representative Man who is also God! Lo, at His chariot wheels He drags sin, Satan, death and Hell! He leads captivity captive, and gives gifts unto men—

***“Sing, O heavens! O earth, rejoice!
Angel harp and human voice,***

**Round Him, as He rises, raise
Your ascending Savior's praise."**

Now may you who love Him dance with all your might! Now may you let your souls revel in intense delight and plunge themselves in the bottomless sea of ineffable bliss! God grant you to do so for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 CHRONICLES 13, 15:1-4, 11-16, 25-29.**

1 Chronicles 13:1-3. *And David consulted with the captains of thousands and hundreds, and with every leader. And David said unto all the congregation of Israel, If it seems good unto you, and that it is of the LORD our God, let us send abroad unto our brethren everywhere, that are left in all the land of Israel, and with them also to the priests and Levites which are in their cities and suburbs, that they may gather themselves unto us: and let us bring again the Ark of our God to us: for we enquired not at it in the days of Saul. It had lain neglected at Kirjath-Jearim, "in the fields of the wood," as David writes in the 132nd Psalm.*

4-8. *And all the congregation said that they would do so: for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people. So David gathered all Israel together, from Shihor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the Ark of God from Kirjath-Jearim. And David went up, and all Israel, to Baalah, that is, to Kirjath-Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up thence the Ark of God the LORD, that dwells between the cherubim, whose name is called on it. And they carried the Ark of God in a new cart out of the house of Abinadab: and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart. And David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets. A stately array of all the leaders of the tribes, with all sorts of music, to do honor to the Ark of God.*

9, 10. *And when they came unto the threshing-floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the Ark; for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzza, and He smote him, because he put his hand to the Ark: and there he died before God. I suppose that Uzza, through the Ark having been so long in his father's house, had grown unduly familiar with it and, therefore, touched it. Yet it was an express law that even the Levites should not lay a hand upon the Ark. They carried it with staves. Only the priests might touch it for necessary purposes. It was for this profanation that Uzza "died before God."*

11, 12. *And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez-Uzza to this day. And David was afraid of God that day, saying, How shall I bring the Ark of God home to me? He was afraid lest he, also, might die.*

13. *So David brought not the Ark home to himself to the city of David, but carried it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. He must have*

been a brave, believing man, to be willing to receive the terrible Ark into his house. But he probably knew that as long as he behaved reverentially to it, he would have a blessing, and not a curse, through taking it under his charge.

14. *And the Ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that he had.*

1 Chronicles 15:1, 2. *And David made him houses in the city of David, and prepared a place for the Ark of God, and pitched for it a tent. Then David said, None ought to carry the Ark of God but the Levites: for them has the LORD chosen to carry the Ark of God; and to minister unto Him forever. It should not be carried upon a new cart and dragged by unwilling oxen—it should be borne upon the cheerful shoulders of the God-appointed bearers, the Levites.*

3, 4. *And David gathered all Israel together to Jerusalem, to bring up the Ark of the LORD unto its place, which he had prepared for it. And David assembled the children of Aaron, and the Levites.* Then follows the list of them, which we need not now read.

11-13. *And David called for Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites, for Uriel, Asaiah, and Joel, Shemaiah, and Eliel, and Amminadab, and said unto them, You are the chief of the fathers of the Levites: sanctify yourselves, both you and your brethren, that you may bring up the Ark of the LORD God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because you did it not at the first, the Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order.* They had sought Him, but they had not done it “after the due order.” They had been in too great a hurry and they had followed their own notions instead of looking to the written Law of God wherein everything was prescribed for them.

14-16. *So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the Ark of the Lord God of Israel. And the children of the Levites bore the Ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon, as Moses commanded according to the Word of the LORD. And David spoke to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy.* Before, there had been a great medley of musical instruments, but little singing, and there had not been a proper choice as to the persons who were to sing. But now, this service was put into the right hands. Then follows a list of the singers and the players upon the various kinds of instruments that went forth to bear the Ark. Let us pass on to the 25th verse.

25, 26. *So David and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obed-Edom with joy. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites.* For, though the Ark was by no means a great load, yet they must have felt some measure of alarm at the very idea of going near to it. But

when God strengthened them, they took up their burden with delight. “When God helped the Levites”—

26. *That bore the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams.* There is no mention of any sacrifice on the previous occasion. If there had been a proper offering of beasts unto the Lord, there might not have been the death of Uzza. But now, they do everything in the right order and the sacrificial blood is sprinkled. Without that, there is no acceptance before God.

27, 28. *And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bore the Ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen. Thus all Israel brought up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the cornet and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps.* David himself, while playing on his harp, leaping and dancing through the intensity of joy which filled his soul.

29. *And it came to pass, as the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came to the city of David, that Michal the daughter of Saul, looking out at a window saw King David dancing and playing: and she despised him in her heart.* So have I known it, when a rich person has been converted and has been found in the first flush of his Christian joy, mixing with the poorest of the brethren, full of delight—and somebody of his own rank has sneered at him. Yet Michal was less honorable than David, though she thought so much of herself. God forbid that we should ever blush to manifest enthusiasm even with the poorest of God’s saints while we are glorifying the Lord! Let Michal sneer, if she will—it matters little what she does. We will only reply as David did, “I will yet be more vile than thus.”

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—98, 186, 317.

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IMPORTANCE OF SMALL THINGS IN RELIGION

NO. 307

**DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, APRIL 8, 1860,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT EXETER HALL, STRAND.**

***“The Lord our God made a breach upon us, for that we sought Him not after the due order.”
1 Chronicles 15:13.***

LET me explain the events of which a summary is to be found in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13:15—the ark of the covenant was a kind of chest made of shittimwood and lined within and without with gold. Within this ark were preserved the tables of stone which were received from Heaven by Moses when he was upon the mount. There also lay the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron’s rod that budded. Upon the lid of it were represented cherubic figures of angels. And between the wings of the cherubim, when the ark was at rest, there was seen that miraculously bright light, called the Shekinah, which was the token of the Presence of the Most High God.

The lid of the ark, as you will remember was called the mercy seat. The whole ark was one of the most sacred things in the symbolic worship of the Jews because if they understood rightly, it was to them the expression of God’s dwelling with them, for where that ark was, God specially rested. Its lid being called the mercy seat, was the representation of Jesus Christ who is our Ark—the Ark of the Covenant in which God dwelt among men and He is our Mercy Seat by whom we have access to our Father, God.

You will remember that after this ark was made in the wilderness, it was carefully kept in the secret place of the tabernacle, into which no man ever entered, except the high priest once a year. And, then, not without blood. With his censor smoking, he made a thick cloud of incense and then sprinkling the blood upon the mercy seat, he ventured near to it—but not without blood. That ark, when it was removed was covered over, so that no human eye should ever see it. And it was carried by golden staves upon the shoulders of the Levites. It was by the presence of this ark that Jordan was driven back and an easy passage was made for the children of Israel when they entered into Canaan.

The ark was in an evil day captured by the Philistines. But when they took it away into their country, wherever the ark went, it smote the Philistines with pestilence, until they were compelled to bring it back, for they cried, “Send away the ark of the God of Israel and let it go again to His own place, that it slay us not and our people—for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city, the hand of God was very heavy there.” Placing the terrible captive upon a new cart, they left the oxen to bear it as they pleased and by Divine Providence the ark was carried to Bethshemesh.

The men of Bethshemesh, struck with an evil curiosity, lifted up the lid and looked therein and there fell many thousands of them dead for the impious presumption. The ark was then removed to Kirjath-jearim and

taken into the house of Abinadab, where it was preserved till the days of David, who desired to bring it up to the tabernacle which he had erected for it on the top of Mount Zion. The messengers hastened through all the land carrying the royal message, "Come up, you tribes of Israel and you sons of Judah, gather yourselves together and bring up the ark of the covenant of your God with music and with joy." They came from every city, from the remotest ends of Judea and from the borders of Egypt. But forgetful of the Divine Law, they took up the ark and put it on a new cart or chariot which they had made for it. They thought, doubtless, it was too heavy for the priests to carry so many miles.

Or else, forgetful altogether of the Divine Law, they imitated the example of the Philistines. It is an evil hour for the people of God, when they set up their own judgment and fail to yield implicit obedience to Divine Law. The ark is dragged by the oxen. But as there are no roads in the East, but only here and there a cart rut, the cart shakes and the ark totters. Just when they come to the threshing floor of Chidon, there is a peculiarly boggy place in the road and the car is almost upset. The ark is about to fall in the mire, so Uzzah thinks and he puts out his hand, touches the ark to stop it, is rent in pieces and falls a mangled corpse. The procession stops. They begin to weep. They cast dust into the air. The king himself is angry, angry with his God. He thinks God is dealing harshly with them. And the ark is taken into Obededom's house and all their joy is suspended.

You have before you now the picture. I shall want you to look at it, first, in detail, to bring out certain truths which I think it teaches to us. And then, I shall want you to regard the picture as a whole, to run your eyes along the whole length of the canvas and see the fullness of its meaning.

I. First, then, we shall take THE PICTURE IN IT'S DETAIL.

1. The first observation I make upon it is this, that God's judgment of sin must differ exceedingly from ours. Who among us when he has read this narrative has not thought that Uzzah was treated harshly? What? Was he not actuated with a proper motive? He could not bear the idea that the ark should fall into the mire and therefore he put out his hand. Why, to our mode of thinking, it seemed to be but a small offense and the motive so excellent that it might almost be justified. I am sure there is a disposition in us to excuse Uzzah and to think that this judgment which came upon him was not deserved.

Let me remark here that I am not sure Uzzah suffered any eternal punishment as the result of it. Perhaps he was a gracious man. God may smite even His own children with death as a chastisement and yet their souls may be saved eternally. We have nothing to look at except what God did with him in this world. He struck him dead in this world for touching the ark. Verily, my Brethren, the Lord sees not as man sees. We cannot readily perceive the evil, but there was sin or else He would not have punished it. He is too good, too just to smite any man more severely than he deserves. God never exaggerates our sins. He looks at them as they are.

And what do you think, my Hearers, if the mere sin of touching the ark brought death upon the man, what would our sins have brought on us if God had "laid justice to the line and righteousness to the plummet?" Why, we have all of us done ten thousand times worse than Uzzah. No, some of you are living in the commission of sin this very day. You have never

repented of your sins, but you love your evil ways and, though warned many times, (not like Uzzah, who was taken away with a stroke), though warned many times, you still persevere in your iniquities. Oh, must not God's patience be pressed down under your sins? Must He not have become as Amos has it, like a cart that is full of sheaves, the axles ready to break—and then you sink and sink forever into the pit of eternal wrath?

It seems strange that Eve's taking the apple should be the ruin of the entire world. That the mere violation of a sacred tree should bring death into the world, with all its train of woe. But this arises from the fact that we do not know how black a thing sin is. The least sin is so great an evil, so excessively black an abomination, that God were just if He smote us all to Hell the moment we had thought an idle thought, or had uttered a single wrong word. Sin is an immeasurable evil. Man cannot weigh it. It is a gulf without a bottom. It is a desperate evil, the desperateness of which we shall never know, unless, as God forbid, we should ever come to feel its terror in the pit of Hell.

I think this lesson lies upon the very surface of the narrative—that we do not know how bad a thing sin is—for if the mere act of touching the ark brought death on Uzzah, what a desperate evil sin must be!

2. But, again, we learn, in the second place from this narrative—that all changes from the written revelation of God are wrong. There has sprung up in the Church of Christ an idea that there are many things taught in the Bible which are not essential. That we may alter them just a little to suit our convenience—that provided we are right in the fundamentals, the other things are of no concern and of no value whatever. Now, look at our picture and let your mistake forever be driven away.

It did seem to the people of Israel but a very indifferent matter whether the ark was carried on men's shoulders, or whether it was dragged upon a cart. Why, they said, "It cannot matter. It is true God has told us that it is to be borne by the Levites, but what does that signify as long as it is carried? It will be all right. We will do the thing and if we alter the mode, it will be no great thing." Yes, but it was, for it was through this alteration which they made in God's Law that the ark first began to shake and to totter and then Uzzah was tempted to put forth his hand and touch it. The death of Uzzah was the punishment upon the whole people for having neglected to observe the minute laws of God in every particular.

My Brethren, when Moses built the tabernacle, he was not left to build it after his own whim and taste. Every clasp and every loop, every board and everything was marked down in the Divine plan and Moses must build everything according to the pattern which he had seen in the Mount. Now, this is the pattern for a Christian—this Book of God which lies before me. The New Testament of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is our only rule of practice.

And you think, do you, that you may alter some few things, that you may change them to suit the climate, or to indulge your own ideas of taste or convenience? You fancy that doctrine, for instance, is not of such sublime importance—that if a man does but preach the fundamentals, he may preach any other things he likes and yet all will be well—that ceremonies, that Baptism and the Lord's Supper, for instance, are to be cut and hacked and fashioned, to suit modern fancies and that they are

not to be retained in their integrity according to apostolic rule and precedent? But know this, the slightest violation of the Divine Law will bring judgments upon the Church and has brought judgments and is even at this day withholding God's hand from blessing us. For within a few years we might see all the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, if we would but carry God's ark as God would have it carried, instead of marring the Gospel by human inventions and leaving the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I am not going, this morning, to enter into particulars, but just lay down the general fact, that whatever God has commanded is important and that I have no right whatever to alter anything—no, not the least thing—but to take the word just as it stands, just as God has revealed it to me, to be my rule of faith and practice. Yes, but there are some of you who never read your Bibles. You have a second-hand religion which you have borrowed from other people. You do not come to this Book to drink at the fountain head. Your grandmother thought so and so and you think the same. Your great grandfather went to Church or to Chapel and that is your reason for going.

But you have not come to God's Word to submit your judgment to it. The reason why there are so many sects nowadays is just this—If we all come straightway to the Bible, we should come far nearer together than we are now. It is not likely we should all see eye to eye. You cannot make a dozen watches all tick to the same time, much less make a dozen men all think the same thoughts. But, still, if we should all bow our thoughts to that one written Word and would own no authority but the Bible—the Church could not be divided, could not be cut in pieces as she now is. We come together when we come to the Word of God.

But I am always answered when I talk about these things, "Well, but they are not essential." Who told you they were not? "Now," says one, "we'll admit that the Baptism of infants is not in the Bible, but it is not an essential thing. We may practice it and no harm will come of it." No, Sirs. You have no right to alter a word of God's command—you have no right to turn them aside in any respect, or in any manner. God's doctrines are to be preached as God delivers them and His ordinances are to be practiced after His own mode and law. Woe was the day when God's ark was put upon the chariot and dragged by oxen, instead of being carried upon the shoulders of men. We must read God's Word and take it as it stands and then follow what God commands. We must not be led by the sleeve or by the nose by any man or set of men.

Forget not this lesson Brethren, for it is of the greatest importance to the Church.

3. Now, there is a third thing and that is, that whenever the practices of Christians differ from Scripture they are sure to incur inconvenience. When the ark was carried on the shoulders of men, it did not matter whether it went uphill or downhill, rugged road or smooth, there was the ark carried in state like the litter of a king. But once put it on the cart—although they thought it would look better—*then* it went jolting here and jolting there and threatened constantly to tumble into the mire.

Whenever we alter one Word of Scripture, we shall get ourselves into trouble. We may not see it at first, but we surely shall find it out by-and-by. A minister, for instance, thinks, "Well, now, I must not preach all the doctrines of the Gospel. It would not suit my people—there is a great

deacon sitting in the green pew in the corner—there is the squire of the parish, he would not like it if I were to be too severe on him.” Ah, my Friend, alter one word and you have fallen into a snare, you have entered a labyrinth and God help you to find your way out again—for you will never be able to get through it alone.

Stand to God’s Word and you stand safely. Alter one dot of the i, one cross of the t and you are nowhere at all. You are in an enemy’s country and you cannot defend yourself. When we have got Scripture to back us up we defy the world. But when we have nothing but our own whims or the work of some great preacher, or the decree of a council, or the tradition the Fathers, we are lost. We are trying to weave a rope of sand, we are building a house of cards, that must totter to the ground. The Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible is the religion of Christ’s Church. And until we come back to that the Church will have to suffer. She will not carry the ark up to the hill of Zion. She will not see His kingdom come, or His will done in earth as it is in Heaven, till she has done with those bullocks and that new cart and goes back to the New Testament plan of keeping consistently to the Truth of God as it is in Jesus and contending earnestly for the faith.

4. Furthermore, another thing lies upon the surface of this passage—namely, that one innovation upon sacred writ leads to another. A little error leads to a great one. Nobody ever intended that Uzzah should touch that ark. They had not a thought when they lifted it up and put it on the cart that it would lead to poor Uzzah’s death and that he would commit the sin of violating the ark, else surely they would have kept to the Scriptural plan. So there are some of you, my dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, who are not quite right in your views of Scripture. Well, perhaps you think the same of me!

We will speak of somebody else, then. There is a man in the world, whose views are not quite in consistency with Scripture. He says, “Well, it does not matter, it is a little thing, a very little thing.” Yes, but that little wrong thing leads to a great wrong thing. The sinner’s path is downhill and when you take one step in violation of Scripture precept, your next step is not only easy, but seems even to be forced upon you. Doubt election, you will soon doubt perseverance and you may soon come to deny redemption.

Where did the errors of the Church of Rome come from? Were they all born in a day? No, they came by slow degrees. It happened thus—I will trace but one error, against which as a denomination we always bear our protest and I only take that as a specimen of the whole. Among the early Christians, it was the practice to baptize those who believed in Christ Jesus, by immersing them in the water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Well, the first wrong doctrine that started up was the idea that perhaps there was some efficacy in the water.

Next it followed that when a man was dying who had never been baptized he would perhaps profess faith in Christ and ask that he might be baptized—but as he was dying they could not lift him from his bed, they therefore adopted sprinkling as being an easier method by which they might satisfy the conscience by the application of water. That done, there was but a step to the taking of little children into the Church—children, unconscious infants, who were received as being members of Christ’s body. And thus infant sprinkling was adopted. The error came in

by slow degrees—not all at once. It would have been too glaring for the Church to receive, if it had shown its head at one time with all its horns upon it. But it entered slowly and gradually, till it came to be inducted into the Church.

I do not know an error which causes the damnation of more souls than that at the present time. There are thousands of people who firmly believe that they shall go to Heaven because they were sprinkled in infancy, have been confirmed and have taken the Sacrament. Sacramental efficacy and Baptismal regeneration all spring from the first error of *infant Baptism*. Had they kept to the Scripture, had the Church always required faith before Baptism that error could not have sprung up. It must have died before the light of the Truth of God, it could not have breathed, it could not have had a foothold in the Christian Church.

But one error must lead to another—you need never doubt that. If you tamper with one Truth of Scripture, he that tempts you to meddle with one, will tempt you to tamper with another and there will be no end to it, till, at last, you will want a new Bible, a new Testament and a new God. There is no telling where you will end when you have begun. I am speaking very pointedly and very plainly this morning, on a subject which very seldom comes in my way. But I must be clear in my language when I do speak about it, for I do not often make allusions to this truth.

Judge me as I judge others. You tell me, if I make one step in error, you do not know how far I may go. I believe you. Believe me also when I say the same. Let us both go to Scripture—let us stand only by this. I like your Prayer Book well enough, but not so well as my Bible. I respect your Church decrees, but not so as I venerate this Book. I believe what your minister says, so far as it is consistent with this Book. Believe me so far, but not one inch further. Have done with me when I have done with my Master. Think no more of any man you hear, when he goes from the Scripture and when he errs, than you would think of Satan himself—except this—pity him for his errors, but pin not your faith to his sleeve. Scripture, Scripture only, is the model doctrine, the model practice, the model experience of a Christian. And whatever is more than this comes of evil.

5. Having now dwelt upon these points, I will take one more and then I will leave this looking at the picture in detail. It strikes me that on the very surface of this passage there is a refutation of a very common error—that if we do a thing from a right motive God accepts it—even though it is a wrong thing. The common error of the time is this, “Well,” says one, “I have no doubt that if a man is a good Mohammedan and keeps up to what he knows, he will go to Heaven.” “Ah,” says another, “and if he is a good Roman Catholic and if he keeps up to what he knows he is safe.” “Yes,” says another, “we must not judge one another harshly—no doubt those who bow before Juggernaut—if they live up to what they know will be saved.”

Do you take in the devil-worshippers and the snake-worshippers, too? You must let them all in. You have opened your door wide enough to let them all come in. And the Thugs who are going about India cutting men’s throats—they do it as a matter of principle—it is a part of their religion, they consider it to be right—do you think they will go to Heaven because they have done what they thought is right? “No,” says one, “I will not go

that far.” Yes, but if the principle is right in one case it is right in the other.

A principle will go the whole way. It will stretch in any direction and be as applicable to one as to another. But it is all deception and falsehood. God has revealed to us the one true religion—and other foundation no man can lay than that which is laid. We are responsible to God for our faith. We are bound to believe what He tells us to believe and our judgment is as much bound to submit to God’s Law as any other power of our being. When we come before God, it will be no excuse for us to say, “My Lord, I did wrong, but I thought I was doing right.” “Yes, but I gave you My Law. But you did not read it, or, if you read it, you read it so carelessly that you did not understand it and then you did wrong and you tell me you did it with a right motive. Yes, but it is of no avail whatever.”

Just as in Uzzah’s case—did it not seem the lightest thing in the world to put out his hand to prevent the ark from slipping off? Who could blame the man? But God had commanded that no unpriestly hand should ever touch it. And inasmuch as he did touch it, though it were with a right motive, yet Uzzah must die. God will have His Laws kept. Besides, my dear Brethren, I am not sure about the rightness of your motives, after all. The State has issued a proclamation, it is engraved, according to the old Roman fashion, in brass. A man goes up with his file and he begins working away upon the brass—erases here, and amends there. Says he, “I did that with a right motive, I didn’t think the law a good one, I thought it was too old-fashioned for these times and so I thought I would alter it a little and make it better for the people.”

Ah, how many have there been who have said, “The old Puritan principles are too rough for these times, we’ll alter them, we’ll tone them down a little.” What are you doing, Sir? Who are you that dare to touch a single letter of God’s Book which God has hedged about with thunder in that tremendous sentence, wherein He has written, “Whoever shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And whoever shall take away from the Words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life and out of the holy city.”

It becomes an awful thing when we come to think of it, for men not to form a right and proper judgment about God’s Word. It is an awful thing for man to leave a single point in it uncanvassed, a single mandate unstudied, lest we should lead others astray, while we ourselves are acting in disobedience to God. The fact is, there is one way to Heaven—there are not fifty ways. There is one gate to Heaven—there are not two gates. Christ is the way. Trusting in Jesus is the path to Paradise. He that believes not in Jesus must be damned. The religion of Christ is intolerant.

Not that it ever touches man in his flesh and blood, even if he rejects it, but it does not allow of a second method of salvation. It demands your full obedience—your child-like faith—or else it threatens you with the direst penalty, if you refuse to yield to it. That idea of free-thinking and the like, and the right of man to think as he likes has no countenance in Scripture. We are bound to believe what God tells us. As He tells it to us—bound not to alter a single word, but to take the Bible as it is, or else deny it and take the consequence.

All this seems to me to lay in the picture which we have before us of the death of Uzzah.

II. But leaving these points, which I thought to be very necessary for the warning of all Christians—for judging with charity we cannot believe that the errors which prevail among us can have sprung up from attention to the Word—they must have sprung up from the idea that the little things of Christ were of no importance whatever. I now come to the second point, which is to LOOK AT THE PICTURE AS A WHOLE. Here I have two pictures. One for the people of God, the other for the ungodly. I shall dwell but briefly upon the first and at length on the second.

Brethren in Jesus, despite our mistakes—and we are mistaken in some things, God forgive us—despite our mistakes, we are one in Jesus. Yet, though one in Christ Jesus, we should not think our errors to be unimportant, but should every one of us on his knees seek Divine teaching, that we may be purged from every false way and that we may be led in the way of Divine obedience, even unto the end. I am sure, my Brethren in Jesus, that the one object of your life, as I can say it is the object of mine, is the bringing about the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We want to bring up the ark from its obscurity, into the place of glory. Every time we bend our knee, there is one prayer we never can forget—“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” Now, for eighteen hundred and sixty years, the Church of Christ has been seeking to bring the kingdom of Christ on earth. Has it come? Has it come? Yes, blessed be God, it has in its measure. Here in this land and across the Atlantic and in other nations, there are found many who love and serve our Master.

But have we had full fruit for the eighteen hundred and sixty years of labor? I think not. Two hundred years after the death of Christ, I think I may say, the religion of Jesus was almost as powerful in numbers upon the face of the earth, as it is now. And all the time between—God forbid that I should say it has been wasted—has, nevertheless, been a period of going back, rather than advancing—of retreat, rather than rushing victory.

Now, how is this to be accounted for? Was there not that in the religion of Christ which would push its enemies to the very ends of the earth? Let but Paul stand up in Rome—and though after awhile, his head is severed from his body—yet the very empire of the seven hills is made to totter while he speaks. Let others of the Apostles pass the pillars of Hercules and come to Britain and the Druid loses its power. Those who bow before bloody gods that delight in human sacrifice renounce their idolatries and Churches are founded throughout England, Ireland and Scotland—Christianity has but to enter a country and that country yields.

It is true the martyrs bleed and the Apostles die and the confessors are burned—but the Truth of God lives and conquers and overcomes. Within two or three centuries, the name of Jesus is better known than that of any man and His religion has greater power than any other on the face of the earth. And here are we, now, sending out our missionaries everywhere and what is the success? Thank God for what it is—it is an excellent reward for all our labor and far more than we deserve. But there is not the power in our missionaries that there was in the Apostles. Our victories of the Church have not been like the victories of the olden times.

Why is this? My theory to account for it is this—in the first place, the absence of the Holy Spirit in a great measure from us. But if you come to

the root of it to know the reason, my fuller answer is this—the Church has forsaken her original purity and, therefore, she has lost her power. We must be done with everything erroneous. If by the unanimous will of the entire body of Christ, every evil ceremony, every ceremony not ordained of Scripture were lopped off and done with—if every doctrine were rejected which is not sustained by Holy Writ—if this Church were pure and clean, her path would be onward, triumphant, victorious.

She would set her feet on Brahma and crush Vishnu beneath her feet. She would say to the moon of Mahomet, “Set forever!” She would dash from his throne the Pope. She would rend up false religions by the roots. She would sit as empress of the earth, and Christ, her husband, would reign with her and the tabernacles of God would be among men. But we are not pure. We are not clean. We cannot bring up the ark of God. Blessed be God, it still abides in Obededom’s house. True religion is to be found in the hearts of God’s people and in some Churches the Truth of God is still preserved. But till the whole Church shall come forth clear as the moon, fair as the sun, she will never be terrible as an army with banners.

This may seem to you to be of little consequence, but it really is a matter of life and death. I would plead with every Christian—think it over, my dear Brothers and Sisters—when some of us preach Calvinism and some Arminianism, we cannot both be right. It is of no use trying to think we can be—“Yes,” and “no,” cannot both be true. When some of us hold a Christian free of all authority but Christ—and others hold a state Church—we cannot both be right. We may be both right in the grand things, but we cannot be right in everything, one or other of us must be wrong.

When some sprinkle the infant and others baptize the Believer, we cannot both be right. It is idle for us to think so. Christ has not made a nondescript religion that will hold all sorts of people in it and yet all shall be alike obedient. Truth does not vacillate like the pendulum which shakes backwards and forwards. It is not like the comet, which is here, there and everywhere. One must be right, the other wrong. It is not for me to pronounce who is right, or who is wrong. I am not infallible. It is for me to judge of Scripture, as in the sight of God, for myself. I beg you do the same, Do not think any error to be an unimportant one, but try the spirits, prove whether these things are so.

I am quite sure that the best way to promote union is to promote the Truth of God. It will not do for us to be all united together by yielding to one another’s mistakes. We are to be united heartily, I hope we are. We are to love each other in Christ. But we are not to be so united that we are not able to see each other’s faults and especially not able to see our own. No, purge the House of God and then shall grand and blessed times dawn on us.

And now—having done with that subject, I turn to those of you who are not converted, but who are longing to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached. I think what I have already said to be important, but this last part of the service is all-important. My dear Hearer, I will suppose that in your heart there is an anxious desire to be saved, but you do not understand the plan of salvation—I grieve for you. For if you do not understand it, even though you seek Christ, you will make many mistakes and you will suffer much inconvenience. It was a right thing in David to

wish to bring up the ark, but perhaps he was ignorant of the way to bring it and see what inconvenience he had to suffer?

Now if you are not clear as to the plan of salvation, you will have many jolts, much shaking, many doubts, many fears. Let me ask and entreat you, then, to search the Scriptures. For in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of Christ. And let me beg you to endeavor, by God's help, always to keep in mind a clear view of the fact that you are to be saved, if saved at all, by trusting in Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ, alone. The plan of salvation is, "Trust in Jesus."

Make mistakes about other things, you will suffer inconvenience. But make a mistake here and it will be fatal to you. Methinks I hear some man saying, "Sir, I have longed to be saved, but I am still uneasy and troubled in my mind. I think if I were to do good works and then to save myself by them, I might trust in Christ." Stand back, Uzzah, stand back! You are about to touch the ark of God, beware, lest you should die while you are doing it. Other mistakes will make you uneasy—that mistake will be fatal to you. Touch the atonement of Jesus Christ and there is no salvation if you touch it with a legal hand, seeking to add to it your own self-righteousness—

***"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."***

He wants no help from you. Leave Him to do it all. Take Him as He is and go to Him just as you are—do not seek to bring anything—but go as you are and you will be saved. Seek to help Christ and saved you cannot be. Until you have done with that thought, you must abide in your sorrow and in your death. No mixing with Jesus. He never came to be a makeweight. Christ must be All and you must be nothing at all. If you attempt to patch His perfect robe, that robe shall never cover your nakedness. It is covered with jewels—put one paste jewel of yours upon it and it is not yours. You must have a whole Christ and nothing but Christ.

You know the old proverb, "Betwixt the two stools he came to the ground." When a man hopes to rely partly on Christ and partly on himself, he will come to the ground with a vengeance. Rest on Jesus simply and you are saved. Rest on Christ *and* self and you are like Uzzah—you have touched the ark, you have sought to mingle man's works with God's works—man's merits with Christ's merits. And tremble, lest the wrath of God should come forth against you and destroy you.

But after all, my dear Friends, you have no merits. Christ freely offers Himself to you, if you will take Him for nothing. You thought to buy Him with your merits. Why you have no merits! Shall I tell you a little parable which shall show you your position. There was a rich man who had a generous heart and once upon a time he resolved to give a large estate to a poor neighbor, so he sent for him and said, "My friend, I am willing to give you a large estate for nothing." The man felt grateful and retired home, but as he lay in his bed he thought, "I should like that estate, but I should not like to be beholden to anybody for it. I think I will pay for it."

So he set out the next morning with a heavy bag on his back and when he came to the rich man's door and the friend came out, he said, "Sir, I value your estate very highly. You promised to let me have it for nothing—but I do not want to be obliged to you—so I have brought a bag all full of gold to buy it with." The rich man said, "I never offered to *sell* it to you. I said I would *give* it to you. But come, let us look at your bag of gold." So the poor man opened wide the mouth of the sack. He blushed and

stammered and said, "Oh, Sir, be not angry with me. Now that I see it, it is nothing but a bag of silver."

The friend said, "Look at it again." He looked again and blushed and cried, "Let not my lord be angry, but I find it is nothing but a bag of copper." "Look once more," said he. He looked once more into it and he fell down on his knees and said, "Forgive me, forgive me. I find, Sir, it is a bag of filth. You see I have brought you a bag of filth with which to buy your rich estate." You know the meaning of that parable, do you not? You have brought to God what you thought were good works, golden works—look at them—you will see them pale before you and you will say, "My Lord, they are not so good as I thought they were, they are only silver works after all."

Look at them again and they will become dirty, brown, copper works. "Oh," you say, "they are not worth more than a farthing now." Look again and you will see that your prayers, your tears, your good works, are nothing better than filth, after all. They are only another form of sin, another shape of iniquity. Oh, Sinner, take Christ as He is—take Him now—just as you are. The Gospel is just this—trust Christ and you are saved. Rely on what *He* did and you are delivered. Just leave off trusting to any ceremonies, to any doctrines, to any forms, to any works, but rely on Jesus and you are saved.

"Well," says one, "but what if I go on in sin." After you have relied on Jesus, you cannot go on *living* in sin—believing in Jesus will stop you—nothing else can. "No," says another, "but I have nothing in the world; no *reason* why I should be saved, I have no good thing." Just so, I know you have not. But still you are *told* to trust Jesus whether you have any good thing or not. Methinks I hear someone say, "I must not trust Jesus, I have no right to do it." But, my dear Friend, you are *commanded* to do it. "God commands all men everywhere to repent."

This is the commandment—that you believe on Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Is not this the very Gospel—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved"? Now what God commands me to do I have a right to do! It cannot be wrong for me to do what God tells me to do. The minister who tells a man he has a right in his own sense of need, makes the sinner look to himself. But if he tells him, "Feel or not feel, God has commanded you to believe," that makes the sinner turn to Christ and Christ, only. This turns his eye from himself to the Savior.

To conclude, I will tell you a little anecdote which I have often told before—it brings to mind more clearly than any other—our right to believe in Christ. I am speaking to those who say, "I have no right to trust Christ." But if Christ *commands* you to do it and if, moreover, He tells you, "you are condemned already because you do not believe," you certainly have a right to believe.

Sitting one day in Court with a Judge, interesting myself with some trials that were going on, there was wanted a witness. I am not clear about his name, but I think it was Brown. So it was said from the bench that Brown was wanted next. The usher down in the Court cried out "Brown!" Someone nearer the door cried, "Brown!" and I could hear them calling out in the street two or three times, "Brown! Brown! Brown!"

The Court was very crowded. By-and-by there came in at the Court door with a great deal of difficulty, a little, ugly, mean-looking creature. He came pushing and elbowing his way. There was a fine tall gentleman

standing in the Court, looking on. He did not like to be pushed about and he said in a very peremptory manner, "Who are you?" "Brown," said the man, "I am Brown." "Well," said the other, "Who is Brown?" "Nobody," said he, "only I was told to come."

It was wonderful how everybody made way for Brown, because he was told to come. They just cleared a lane for him and I do not suppose for my lord and duke they would have made room—they were so tightly packed—but Brown must come in anyhow, because he was wanted. It did not matter how poor he looked, how ragged, how greasy, how dirty—Brown was wanted and he had a right to come.

So now, God commands you to trust Christ. But you say, "I have committed a great big sin." And He says, "Who are you?" You say, "A poor sinner." "And what is a poor sinner?" says He. "Nothing at all," you say, "but Jesus Christ told me to trust in Him. If He is wrong I leave the blame with Him, I will not keep back from Him." He says, "Leap into My arms." I am at the top of a burning house, Jesus Christ cries, "leap and I will catch you." Then down I go. Dashed to pieces, or saved, I have no other way of salvation—down I go into His arms.

I am sinking, the floods are ready to swallow me up. Christ says, "Lay hold of that rope." It looks like a frail rope, but I lay hold of it. Sink or swim I will not lay hold of anything else—but that and that alone—and I am safe. Do that, poor sinner, whoever you may be. If you have not entered a place of worship for the last six months, trust Christ now. Now, I beseech you, while the accepted hour is here, may God the Holy Spirit enable you to trust Christ.

And, though you have come in here covered with sin, you may go out with your sin washed away, peace and joy in your hearts, because the Spirit of God has sweetly led you to trust Jesus and you are saved.

May God now add his blessing, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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THE RECORDERS

NO. 1308

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JUNE 25, 1876,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“To record, and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel.”
1 Chronicles 16:4.***

DAVID took care of every part of Divine worship. He saw to it that nothing was neglected in the service of the God in whom he delighted. Let this stand as an example to us to be careful about everything which concerns the honor of God. Do not allow any of the duties of your holy faith to be forgotten, but seek to exhibit harmonious and entire obedience to the Divine will. Do not merely attend to what are called religious duties, but with equal religiousness regard your *social* duties and present to the Lord, as far as you can, a complete service. Such David desired to do.

You observe that he had those about him who offered burnt offerings unto the Lord continually, morning and evening, as God had commanded—these things were not to be left undone. And then he set apart certain others to attend to the service of song. Theirs it was to sound the trumpets and to call the people together—theirs to touch the harmonious strings of harps, or to sound with cymbals of brass, or to lift their voices on high in the sweet praises of Jehovah, for God is to be served with sacrifice and praised with song. Our God accepts us when we labor for Him and when we praise Him—let both be done heartily. It were a pity if we worked so hard that we could not sing! It were equally unhappy if we sang so much that we idled away our time! There must be a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, music and fruit, service and song.

There was also a third company set apart for a somewhat extraordinary work, namely as our text tells us, *to record*. They were to take notes of what God had done and was doing. They were to be the chronicles of the nation and, out of their chronicles, they were to compose the Psalms and songs. Perhaps that is the meaning of the word, “record,” here, but the original bears another meaning—“to bring to remembrance.” If they were not to act as historians to record, they were as minstrels to *proclaim* what had been written in old times and bring it to remembrance. I rather prefer the idea that their duty was to do both—to record the loving kindness of the Lord and to bring to the remembrance of the people what the Lord’s right hand had done in former times.

Now, if you think a minute, this third class of people, who are placed between the Levites before the Ark and the singers who thanked and praised the Lord, would be useful both to those who went before and to those who followed. Those who had to serve before the Ark of the Lord are mentioned first. Now, what could so cheer them in their service as to read of the goodness of the Lord? What could so inspire them to attend reverently to the service of the Lord’s house as to remember the former loving

kindnesses of the Lord? What arguments could they have for fidelity that would be more powerful than the record of His mercy which endures forever?

Those who were to conduct the praising and the thanksgiving are mentioned *after* these recorders. But what is the raw material of which praise is made but the record of what God is and of what He has done for His people? I think whenever they wanted to sing, they would turn to these remembrancers and recorders and say to them, "Tell us something of what God has done, for the simple record of Jehovah's acts is the noblest Psalmody." Do you notice that whenever we praise God best, we simply declare what He is, for the bare fact about God is the highest praise—you have only to mention what He does in order to produce the most sublime poetry—the grateful mention of His glorious acts is, in itself, adoration! You cannot adore the Lord better than by devoutly rehearsing His mighty acts—so good is His name, so blessed are His deeds. "Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all His praise?"

Now, from the fact that David set apart certain Levites to record, I gather three or four thoughts of which I am going to speak tonight. The first is—it is implied that *there is a fault in man's memory*. It is equally clear, in the second place, that *we ought to endeavor to assist memory*. Thirdly, it is certain, too, from the appointment of recorders, that *there is a good deal worth remembering*. And, fourthly, from the connection of these recorders with the singers, we see that, *to right-minded persons memory will always produce praise*. When we have recorded the great mercies of the Lord, then we shall be sure to thank and praise Him.

I. First of all, we may gather, I think, without any straining of the text, that if recorders were appointed, THERE IS SOME FAULT IN OUR MEMORY TOWARDS THE LORD. What faults there are in our memory touching the work and Word of God! Perhaps some of you have very powerful memories and may be able to treasure up whole volumes as some have done. It might be said of you as it was of Dr. Lawson, that if the whole Bible had been destroyed, he could have reproduced it from memory. This is a great gift and a worthy use for it, but I fear that few of us have it. It is not likely that men could say of us, as of the famous Grecian, that out of 10,000 soldiers he knew every one of his men by name.

I do not find fault with short memories, but with memories which are treacherous towards Divine things. What I complain of is that memory may be very strong concerning self-interest, grievances and trials—yet towards God's mercies it may be very weak. I am not going to speak about memory in general. I speak only of that faculty as it is exercised towards the favors and loving kindnesses of the Lord—and I am sure there is a fault in it, for, first of all, *it has been prejudiced by the Fall*. Do you not know that if anything bad ever reaches your ear you cannot forget it? That lewd song which you heard in your youth—in your unregenerate times. You would give everything to forget it, but it will come up—a snatch of it has, perhaps, been suggested by a hymn sung in worship, or even by the language used in prayer!

What a grasp memory has for things that never ought to have crossed the mind at all and which, though they have crossed the mind, ought to be forgotten! Well said an old Divine, "Man's memory is a pond in which all the fish die and all the frogs live." I am sure it is so. The bad remains, but the good—ah, how you have to charge and constrain yourself to remember a tenth of it! The filth of Sodom is drawn to shore by memory, but the fair products of Jerusalem are permitted to glide down the stream to the ocean of oblivion.

The Fall has given a sad bias to memory—like a strainer, it lets the good liquor run through and only retains the dregs. Again, memory towards God's mercy has been *very much impaired by neglect*. Any part of the body left unused will lose power—and any faculty of the mind which is never exercised will gradually become weak. You may have very powerful memories, as I said before, towards *earthly* things, but I will venture to say that some of you have never sought to remember the mercies of the Lord. No, you have not seen them to be God's mercies! It has never occurred to you to try and remember what God has done for you.

I would not bring a harsh impeachment, but I suggest the question—Have you not lived as if there were no God? As if the mercies of everyday were, indeed, of your own procuring? As if you had no indebtedness to God and were under no obligation to be grateful to Him? I do not wonder that your memory towards Divine things is weak, for you have never exercised it—never *thought* of exercising it—and consequently, my Friend, if ever you *are* to learn to praise the Lord, you will have need of great help in the work, for your memory will not furnish you with materials. It has no store of good things with which to feed your devotion! You have kept its chambers empty by neglect.

Memory, concerning God's mercy, is often *overloaded with other things*. Memory can only carry a certain amount, but, oh, what wagonloads of mischief memory is freighted with! Some of us can remember so little that it is a pity for us to try to remember anything trifling or of minor importance. It might be well to dedicate that faculty to the weightiest things only—to things imperative for this life—to things essential for the life to come. How foolishly some will stuff up their memory with rubbish that is not worth harboring. There are songs and pieces of "poetry," so called, and scraps taken from novels and I know not what besides, with which poor memory is gorged till it is blown out as a balloon with foul gas! It is fed upon mere husks till it is surfeited, stuffed and crammed and labors under indigestion!

I think Aristotle used to call memory the stomach of the soul in which it retains and digests what it gathers. But men cram it full of everything that it does not need—upon which the soul cannot really feed—and thus they ruin it for remembering the best things. Some people can hardly carry home the text of the discourse. Is it likely they would? Other thoughts choke up the memory and put the good thing, the gracious thing, the grateful thing, the right thing, entirely out of the mind! Unload your memory tonight, if you can, even of your necessary cares!

It is good when a sermon helps to unload you. You remember the man who said that generally, when he went to Church, he used to calculate how many looms the building would hold and how many workmen might be employed in it? “But,” said he, “when I heard Mr. Whitefield, I forgot that there was a loom in the whole world.” I wish it was always so in God’s House! But there, the good woman remembers her household—she does not know whether she put the guard on the fire—she wonders what may have become of the baby while she is away. Another misses a ring from her finger—did she leave it in the basin when she washed her hands before she came to worship?

The merchant is worrying about that bill which is coming due tomorrow. He wishes that he could forget it, but the thing will come in. And this is why you cannot remember God’s mercy, because your memory is occupying itself with a host of earthly things which ought not to intrude into God’s day and into God’s worship. Or if they do, should be treated as Abraham treated the carnivorous birds when they came down upon his sacrifice. The ravens and the kites came to defile and eat what he had offered unto God, but we read that, “when the birds came down upon the sacrifice Abraham drove them away.” So must you try to do. When the time has come to remember God’s mercies and to worship Him, you must keep the birds away, or else they will devour the ripe fruit of your praise before you can gather it.

Memory has also suffered from another cause, namely, from *its connection with the other faculties*. Every power of the mind has been injured by sin. The evil results of the Fall went through the entire system and weakened and perverted our entire nature, so that the whole head is sick. *The understanding*, among the rest a very noble power, has been very much darkened and, as every single part of a man operates upon the rest, the darkening of the understanding has caused a grievous weakening of the memory with regard to Divine things. You will see this in a minute, for what a man does not understand he does not readily remember.

Many forget God’s mercies because they do not appreciate them when they have them. They do not see the mercy of them. They have not the power to see how much love there is in them and how little they deserve them and, therefore, they are not impressed by them so as to make a note of their being received. When daily favors come, such men take them into stock as wholesale dealers receive parcels of goods and send them out, again, without so much as opening them, or checking their quantity. They scarcely know the meaning of the loving kindness of the Lord, for He is not in any of their thoughts!

And, of course, a man does not remember what he does not understand! If you set a boy to learn a passage without any meaning in it, he may be able to repeat it to you the next time he says his lesson, but before long it must glide out of his memory because he does not understand it. Becloud the light of the understanding and the image formed upon the memory will be dull and indistinct, and very apt to vanish in time.

Again, *the affections* have been perverted, as well as the understanding. Man, by nature, does not love God. I tremble when I think of that sad

truth, for it seems to me the most awful thing that can happen to an intelligent being is not to love God. That would be *my* Hell! I count it the Hell of Hell not to love God—to be in such a condition that the infinitely lovable One—so perfect both in His character and His actions, so fitted to be adored—should not be loved is horrible! It is death and worse than death! I will not say it is blindness, deafness and the loss of every honorable moral power—it is utter *death* not to love God. It is partly because we do not love Him that we forget His mercies.

Reflect a moment, and you will soon see. Here is a present which has been given you by a complete stranger, and though it may be of some value, you do not think much of it. But there is a ring that was given you by your mother—your mother now among the angels. Ah, you will not forget *that* gift! Love has registered it among your richest possessions. I have many things that have been given to me by friends and I value them all. I never forget them—I never can because of my esteem and affection for those who gave them to me. And so when you view Divine mercy as given you by your dear and ever-blessed Father in Heaven, then you do not forget it! But if it is merely regarded as a passing stranger's gift, you care not for it.

If you think of a blessing as “the gift of fortune,” as the world generally does, or look upon it as a windfall from the tree of luck, you will not remember it. See in the bread you eat a Father's hand supplying you. See, even, in the cup of cold water the bounty of your God. See in the comforts of home and health and the sparing of your reason, the goodness of Him who loves you and whom you love—and memory will put forth her strength! Lack of love breeds lack of recollection in us and so the memory grows faulty. And, alas, one thing more. Our memory of God's goodness is often *crushed down by a sense of present pain*. When you suffer from sharp pains and weary aches and a fevered brow, you are prone to forget the days of health and strength—and only remember the sharp intervals of weakness and sorrow.

When you stand over the grave of one you love, you are apt, in the loss, to forget he was a loan from God. When a dear one is taken away, the right way to look at it is that a precious loan has been called in by its Owner. We ought to be very grateful to have been allowed to borrow the comfort so long. We ought not to repine when the Owner takes back what He so kindly lent. The husband to whom you have been married these 10 years, or the child that has nestled in your bosom two years, or the friend that communed with you half a lifetime, or the brother who was such a comfort all his days—when these are gone, do not look at the going, only, but thank God that you ever had them. Be honest enough to acknowledge the good as well as to lament the evil. Bless a taking as well as a giving God, for He takes but what He gave.

It is not so with us as a rule. We are living in the present too much. We strike a mark of oblivion across the happy past. We look with dread upon the unknown future and dwell on the troublous present—and so we forget the Lord's mercy to us. You are getting old, now, and you are feeble, but bless the Lord you had 50 years of manly vigor! You cannot, now, do what

you once did and your mind is enfeebled, but bless God there was a time when you could serve Him with body and soul without fatigue!

Perhaps you are brought low in estate and are afraid of poverty. Be grateful that you have had enough and to spare for many long years. Perhaps you are now a little sad. Yes, but remember the days when you use to praise the Lord on the high-sounding cymbals and stood upon the high places of the earth! Do not let memory fail you because of the present crushing sorrow, but bless the name of the Lord for what He has done. May the Holy Spirit help your infirmities and bring the loving kindness of past years to your remembrance. Memory is defective—this is our first inference—and I think it is clear enough.

II. Now, secondly, as David appointed recorders, this proves, in the second place, that WE OUGHT TO DO ALL THAT WE CAN TO ASSIST OUR MEMORIES TOWARDS GOD. We should not allow the mercies of the Lord to lie forgotten in ingratitude and die without praises, if we can help it. How can we strengthen memory? I conceive that sometimes it is a good thing *to make an actual record* of God's mercy—literally to write it down in your pocketbook, so as to look at it another day. I am sure it is a proper thing to do and it will often prove to be a very useful memento. I do not believe in keeping diaries and putting down everyday what you feel, or what you think you feel but never did feel.

I fear it would become a mere formality, or an exercise of imagination to most of us, for when I read very pious people's diaries they always seem to me to have had an eye to the people who would read them and to have put down both more and less than the truth. I am a little frightened at the artificial style of experience which it must lead to. The fact is that we have not a great deal to put down everyday if we lead an ordinary life! But there are days which ought to have a memorial. Days of sore trouble and of great deliverance, days of sharp temptation and of wonderful help—these need to be chronicled.

Some days of brilliant mercy are like seven days in one. There are days which seem like chips of Heaven, fragments of eternity, stray days of delight which have broken loose from the days of Heaven and wandered down to earth. Make a note of the favored days. Put the event down in black and white just as it occurred. Never mind if nobody else ever reads it—you will read it one of these days and thank God that it stands recorded for the strengthening of your faith. Therefore make a record. "I cannot express myself well in writing," says one. Well, you know, Jacob used to set up a stone and pour oil on the top of it. That was his way, though he knew little or nothing about pen and ink. You can invent some way, surely, by which you can remember choice favors!

You can make a notch somewhere, a mark on an old tree, a line on the margin of the Bible over against the text that blessed you. You can put a scratch somewhere of which you shall say afterwards, "I know what that means. I did not want to forget the Divine goodness—and there is the record. Glory be to God, it comes fresh to my soul, again, as I look upon it!" Another help to memory is to *be sure to praise God thoroughly at the time you receive His goodness*. You will not forget it if, when it has come, your

mind is in a suitable condition of gratitude and, indeed, if you use the mercy, at once, to God's Glory, you will do better, still! Days that are full of thanksgiving will be remembered and those mercies around which we burned the incense of praise will leave their fragrance in the heart's secret chambers.

Take care that if your memory is weak, you praise God while the mercy is newly born in your house. Frequently it will help memory much to *set apart a little time for meditation*. A godly man and his wife were accustomed to take half-an-hour on Saturday evening to go over the mercies of the week—this is a good example. But, says one, "I could not spare so much time." No, no, I do not suppose you could, but you spare hours to grumble over the *miseries* of the week! Oh, yes, we talk freely, when we get together, about our pains and our losses and about the bad times. They are very bad now, are they not? And you have all talked about them seven days a week for many a long week together. You have said 50 times, "I never saw such a season, there is no business, there is nothing stirring—there never was such stagnation."

Now, as we all know all about that and are pretty well agreed that it is true, could we now go on to something else, and could not the time which we waste in telling out our troubles be spent in meditating on our mercies? See if you cannot spare half-an-hour with your wife for such an exercise as I have mentioned, and I believe that you would never spend 30 minutes more happily and profitably. Say, "Come, Wife, and help me. Help my memory and I will help yours. Let us remember what God has done for us this week." Then go over your own story and listen to her pleasant annotations.

I do not hesitate to say that my life story is as full of mercy as a honeycomb is full of sweetness when it drips with honey. How God has treated you, I do not know, but He has indulged me with such love that if He will only let me get into a corner in Heaven and praise Him to all eternity, I will scarcely ask Him for anything else but the opportunity to adore Him. I mean to bless Him whatever comes to me—I cannot help it. I have been so favored of Providence and Grace that if I were crushed into mortar, I think every little bit and fragment of me would bless and praise His holy name, "for He is good and His mercy endures forever." This is my advice, then, and I have not given it without having tried it myself—often meditate on what the Lord has done and that will help your memory.

Then, again, *often rehearse His mercy in the ears of others*. I like to get with dear Brothers and Sisters who talk about God's loving kindness—they are good company. I have noticed the difference between two farmers, for instance. One of them never did have a good crop, though, to my knowledge, he had a "middling" one, once, and that was at the time that he could hardly gather it, for it was too heavy for the reapers! But then it was a "middling" one. He has never made any money. I know he was a poor man when he began and I know he has brought up a large family and is rich, now, but he never made any money—never! Nobody ever does by farming, or by any other business, as you all know by common report.

Well, I heard the grumbler's story and I turned to another friend. *This* farmer says, "Well, it may not have been a very good year for wheat, last year, but then there is a capital crop coming on to make up for it." Another year he said, "Well, I do not think the grain will pay, but the sheep are turning out uncommonly well." He has always something to say by way of honoring God's mercy! And is not that as it ought to be? He says, "Blessed be God, I have always had bread to eat and clothes to put on. I am a great deal better off, now, than I thought I would be, and I have my portion to give to the work of the Lord who has dealt so well with me." That is the way to talk, for it is truthful and it praises God—and it is the talk that God should hear from us! If you tell others of your mercies you will not be so likely to forget them.

Sometimes it will help you to remember your mercies *if you use everything about you as a reminder*. How can that be? Have you got a boy? Look at him and think of what mercy is bound up in that child—remember when he was little and sickly—and you prayed that he might live. Remember when he met with an accident and yet he was not killed, as he might have been. Remember when he went out into life and God kept him out of temptation. Remember when you saw the first sign of piety, when you heard his first prayer, when you found that he was trying to be useful.

Remember when you heard his first address as he tried to speak to others about the Lord Jesus. I know the joy of such mercy and I cannot hold my tongue when I think of it, for I am highly favored! And I hope that you either have had the same blessing on your growing lads or will have it. Well, the boy will be a reminder of God's mercy. Look at anybody's child and say, "I, also, was a child once," and then think of the mercies of God to you from childhood to the present time. Go into the street and meet a beggar. Should not *that* make you thank God that you are not forced to beg for your bread, and wear rags, but are provided for?

Turn down by Bethlehem hospital and as you pass that institution, thank God that you have not lost your reason. Look at the Blind School and thank God that you have not lost your eyesight. Pass by the hospital and thank God that you are not stretched upon a bed of agony, having lost a limb. Go into a churchyard and thank God that you are yet alive. Reflect upon the judgment to come and thank God that you are not in Hell. Oh, my dear Friends, everything ought to make us praise God! From the little birds that wake the morning to the twinkling stars that gladden the night! Every breath of air, drop of rain and gleam of sunlight ought to refresh our memory and awake us to praise the Lord! That is the second point—we ought to do our best to assist our feeble memories.

III. Thirdly—and here I shall ask you to preach to yourselves—WE HAVE ALL HAD MERCIES TO REMEMBER. I am going to include everybody in these remarks, first, whether they are converted people or not. We have all had *common* mercies. I have already hinted at them in speaking of those who are suffering from their losses. From our childhood until now we have had bread to eat and clothes to put on. Some of us have enjoyed an *abundance* of common mercies. We have not had to live from hand to

mouth, nor labor like slaves. Others, who have had a harder lot, should thank God that there has always been deliverance in the hour of need—bread has been given and water has been sure. They have not always had what they might have liked, but there has been enough to keep them alive, and here they are in good health to prove it!

Oh, to have your reason! To have the use of your limbs! To have your children about you! Even though you are poor, these are great blessings! Even these ordinary mercies should awaken your gratitude. Then, in addition to common mercies, we have had those of *special Providence*. Is there one person here who has not been, at times, favored with remarkable interpositions of God's Providence? Flavel used to say, "Those who notice Providences will not be long without Providences to notice." I think it is so. I could remember scores. If I had time to write them I could mention dozens of remarkable Providences which have occurred to myself, some of which would not be believed by anybody else and, therefore, shall not be told, but they are true for all that. There are matters known only to the Master and His unworthy servant for which I praise His name in my heart of hearts.

Have you not had some such secrets between you and God—remarkable things, special things which, if you could write them, men would not believe? Well, praise His name for the peculiar favors, but do not forget the more usual ones! Remember what the Puritan said. He and his son had to ride some 20 miles, each, to meet each other. And when his son came in, he said, "Father, I have had a most remarkable Providence. My horse stumbled badly three times and yet he did not fall." "I am grateful," said the old gentleman, "but I have had a remarkable Providence, too, for my horse never stumbled all the way." We do not think of that. If there is a railway accident and we just escape by the skin of our teeth, we say, "What a wonderful mercy!" Ought you not to be quite as grateful when you travel *without* an accident? Should you not see, as much, the hand of God in your perfect safety as in your rescue from danger? Remember the hourly Providence of God which watches over you when you observe it not!

I should like to remind every unregenerate man and woman here present of *the long-suffering mercy of God*. You have not loved Him, but He has blessed you. You have sometimes spoken very sad things against His Gospel, but He has not resented it. Possibly I speak to some who have even cursed His name, but He has not cursed you. You have defied Him and oh, it often seems to me to be an amazing thing that a man should lift his hand to Heaven and defy God and that God remains quiet in pitying patience! Do you think that God—the infinite God—is going to be put into a passion by such a puny thing as you are?

No, He has appointed a day in which He will settle these matters with you through His son Jesus Christ who will judge the quick and the dead. He will not stir Himself out of His sublime compassion for you. But what an amazing thing it is that He does not! Why there are thousands of men who, if we had done a hundred thousandth part as much evil towards them as they have done towards God, they would have fallen upon us

with a word and a blow—or rather there would not have been any word—there would have been two blows! And if it had been in their power to take our lives, they would not have hesitated! Men could not have borne such provocation as sinners heap upon the Lord! You have provoked Jehovah to His face and thrust your finger into His eye.

“No,” you say, “how is that?” Why, when you mock religious people—when you make jests and mirth about those who fear Him, you do this. Remember that text, “He that touches you touches the apple of My eye”? That is an irritating thing enough, is it not? And yet you have touched the apple of Jehovah’s eye—and instead of smiting you into nothingness in return, or sending you down to Hell, He has still had mercy upon you! Let us gratefully remember this almighty patience and bless His name, whoever we may be—

**“Lord, and am I yet alive?
Not in torment, not in Hell?
Still does Your good Spirit strive—
With the chief of sinners dwell?
Tell it unto sinners, tell,
I am, I am, out of Hell!”**

Furthermore, we should all praise God, or at any rate the most of us, here, that we have enjoyed *Gospel privileges*. If you have not *believed* in Jesus, yet you have *heard* of Him. If you have rejected His Grace, yet the kingdom of God has come near unto you. The door has been set open even if you have not entered. And the call of the Gospel has been given though you have not accepted it. You are still on praying ground and pleading terms with God. You are still where you are wooed by a Savior’s love. Thank God for this! Thank God that you are not living in the dark ages, or in a far-off heathen land where the saving name is not known! Thank God you are where the bronze serpent is lifted high and the message comes to you—“Look and live!” “To you is the Word of this salvation sent.”

Dear Brothers and Sisters, though I have thus spoken to everybody in the place, there is a special class to whom I must address myself. You, my Brothers and Sisters in Christ—you have, above all others, ten thousand times ten thousand reasons for remembering the past and blessing the name of the Lord! Look back to the hole of the pit from where you were raised! Remember Him who raised you from there! Look to the blood that bought you! Look to the Holy Spirit who renewed you! Look at the pardon which absolved you! Look to the Divine Grace that changed you! Look to the love that saved you! Look to the wisdom that has guided you! Look to the power that has upheld you!

The life of a Christian should be unbroken gratitude, for it is a life of unceasing mercy! While others should praise God as creatures, we must praise him as *new* creatures. They can praise Him because He made them—we must praise Him because He has “begotten us, again, unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” Therefore, lift up your hearts and voices, Beloved, and praise the Lord at the remembrance of His goodness!

IV. The last thing is this—that ALL OUR MEMORIES SHOULD TEND TO MAKE US PRAISE AND BLESS GOD. We can rest but a minute here. Remember mercies. Remember there is not one you have *deserved*. That bread which does not choke the sinner might justly do so, for he is an unworthy recipient of it. The earth which does not open to swallow you up must often wonder why it is not commissioned to do so, for you are so rebellious against God. We do not deserve the air we breathe, or the water we drink. Everything we have is sweetened with unspeakable mercy!

All the good that we enjoy comes from God. Remember that! Alas, most men forget it. Rowland Hill used to say that worldlings were like the hogs under the oak which eat the acorns, but never think of the oak from which they fell, nor lift up their heads to grunt out a thanksgiving. Yes, so it is. They munch the gift and murmur at the Giver. Would God we did begin to remember that *every* good gift comes to us from the Divine hand and that, therefore, the Lord is to be praised. We have received mercies at times, when, if we had not had them, the absence of them would have ended our lives, or would have involved us in misery worse than death.

Do not, some of you, remember when you said in your soul, “O Lord, if You do but help me this time, I will praise You as long as I live”? Yet, when you received the benefit you rendered no fit return. You were grateful for a time, after a sort, but, as eaten bread is soon forgotten, so your remembrance of the mercy of God passed away. It ought not to be so!

I am now going to put a few questions to all present. First, *have you ever lived in gratitude?* Are you now living to God’s praise? Are you now conscious of your obligations and anxious to show that you feel them? If not—if not, I would like you to *feel how evil you are*. Does that offend you? I would like you to be offended with yourselves! What do you think of those who are ungrateful *to you* when you have been kind to them? Ah, you look upon them with indignation! Sometimes when I know that a man has been ungrateful to a *friend* of mine, very ungrateful, I cannot help looking upon him with contempt. If you have lived in this world for 50 years and have never shown any gratitude to God in life, *feel evil*. Feel what a miserable wretch you are to be living wholly for yourself while the God who has fed you and blessed you all your life has not had the turn of a penny from you in the way of real praise and true gratitude!

I say again, feel evil, and then go to Jesus’ feet and tell Him that you feel it, and cry, “God be merciful to me, a sinner!” If you have never been a drunk or a swearer, or unjust, think it bad enough to have been *ungrateful*. If you have lived without serving your God, think it sin, enough, to have made yourself as base as the dirt beneath your feet and, at the thought of it, humble yourself before your gracious God!

Next if you are able to say, “Through Divine Grace I have praised God and I do desire to live entirely to His Glory,” yet, dear Brothers and Sisters, *have you or I ever praised Him enough? Have we ever praised Him as we ought?* “Oh, no,” you say, “and we never shall.” And I agree with you—we never shall. The poet stretched the words a little, but his meaning was right enough, when he said—

“But, oh, eternity’s too short,

To utter all Your praise.”

We must feel, we *ought* to feel the happy burden of the Lord’s praise to be too heavy for us. We confess that we cannot bless the Lord enough, either as to heartiness, frequency, or service. No human strength can praise God sufficiently, but still, let us be doing something more for God than we have ever done!

We sang just now, and we sang, I think, very fairly. But let us *act* as well as sing! Let us consecrate ourselves and our substance far more fully to God. What are you doing for God? What are you doing for my Lord Jesus? Have you a precious alabaster box at home which you would like to break, that you might pour the ointment on His head? Do it, and do it soon! Some are very protective about their alabaster boxes and keep them under lock and key. They take their friends upstairs and show them their rare treasures. They ask them to visit their houses to see their alabaster boxes and they even talk of what will be done with their choice things when their estate shall go through the Probate Court.

That is what they are talking about, but as to actually pouring the costly perfume on the head of the Lord Jesus *personally*, in their own lifetime, it has not entered into their heads! God lead you to honor your Redeemer at once with the best you have! Give God your best—your very best! Give God *yourself*—your *all*—He is worthy of it. And, oh, count it a high honor if He accepts it at your hands through Jesus Christ your Savior!

Lastly, if anybody here says, “I would like to begin to remember the Lord’s mercies and to praise His name,” then you must begin at the Cross! The center of everything that is good is the Cross of Christ! No man begins a life of praise, or a life of prayer, or a life of holiness aright unless he begins within sight of the Crucified Savior, led there by the Holy Spirit! Go there with your ingratitude like a burden on your heart—and look to the flowing of the Redeemer’s precious blood—and the load of ingratitude will roll into His sepulcher and will never be laid to your charge! And then when you get rid of the guilt you can begin—yes, you *will* begin—from that time on, to praise Him and magnify His name!

God give you a memory capable of treasuring up His favors. May He enrich you with the benedictions of His Covenant that you may have much to treasure up. And may the whole of the sweet canes and precious spices which memory has laid up be used as fuel for the flame of thanksgiving in life, in death and through eternity! Amen. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Chronicles 16:1-36.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—130, 229, 720, AND THE DOX-
OLOGY.**

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GOOD TALK

NO. 3399

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

“Talk you of all His wondrous works.”
1 Chronicles 16:9.

This sentence stands in connection with exhortations to offer thanksgiving unto the Lord and to make known His deeds among the people. Thus it runs, “Sing unto Him; sing Psalms unto Him; talk you of all His wondrous works.”

The old typical religion of the Jews and the perverse superstition of the heathen made some places sacred and some places unclean—some actions holy and other actions, performed however well they might be—common and not to be connected in any degree with holiness. But the religion of Jesus Christ has once and for all swept away all holy places—wherever man is holy, every place is hallowed! Jesus Christ has consecrated the world by His Presence and wherever man chooses to worship, there is a house for God. The religion of Jesus Christ has also swept away those distinctions which men make as to actions being necessarily religious or irreligious. Some will have it that to sing a Psalm is to worship God—a sacred thing—but to feed the sparrows is, according to them, a secular matter. To come up to a place that shall be set apart for worship and there to bow the knee in prayer is adoration of the Most High—but, according to them, to perform acts of mercy and righteousness is not a tribute of homage to God! Now, the very essence of the Christian religion is just this—that it is not a thing confined to hours, times and places, but it is a thing of *spirit*. It lies not in outward garbs or in mere words, but pervades the whole spirit of man and makes him turn his entire life into worship! Then every action he performs in its spirit and under its influence is holiness unto the Lord! God is worshipped by servants who fulfill the duties of their station. By judges who decree righteousness. By merchants who deal justly. By children who obey their parents, and by parents who train up their children in the fear of the Lord. There is not a line to be drawn anywhere, so that you can say, “Outside of that you go beyond the sanctuary of religion and get into the outer courts frequented by the multitude.” Here has been the great mistake which some Christians have made with regard to politics. They have supposed that a man could not be a Christian and a politician, too.

Hence much injustice has been done. The fact is, when a man feels, "There is nothing that belongs to man but what may be consecrated to God," and when he says, "I, being God's servant, may take all that belongs to man and devote it as holiness unto the Lord," he reaches the highest order of manhood and illustrates the highest style of Christianity. We cannot fully exhibit the spirit of Jesus Christ till we have learned that we must carry out in every place—and in every sphere—the spirit of His religion.

I make these remarks because while we are first bid to sing unto God's praise, we are next told to talk about His wondrous works. There is a praising for the assembly. There is a talking for the fireside—and both are to be holy! The praise is to be hearty, sincere, unanimous, full of animation—the talk is to be equally sincere, equally earnest, equally sacred. You are not to say, "I have done with praising God," when the hymn is over and you begin to open your mouths upon ordinary topics! But in your ordinary conversation, in the fields, by the wayside, in the streets and in your chambers, you are still to go on praising God and talking of all His wondrous works.

Shall there be a connection established between such a common word as, "talk," and such grand swelling words as "the wondrous works of God"? We wonder to find the little monosyllable in such a place! "Preach you of all His wondrous works," would seem well enough. "Show them," would seem sound theology, but *talk* you, talk you—in your ordinary, common, everyday conversation—make the wondrous works of God to be your conversation, your familiar talk! We must talk. We seem *born* to talk! We were, wretched, indeed, if we were forbidden to speak to our fellow creatures! Why, the world seems to be enlivened by continuous, not to say, incessant, talking—from the first blush of morning, on through all the bustling day and far into the shades of drowsy night—how our tongues are occupied! They run more quickly than our feet and carry less, though much mischief, sometimes, comes from their babble. They are sharper than razors, some of them, and cut deeper than swords, and kindle fire enough to set the world in a blaze! Now, this talking to which women are proverbially disposed and in which men indulge as freely as inclination prompts them—to be heard in every street, in every house and in every workshop—this it is which is to be consecrated unto God! The streams of conversation are everywhere to be drawn off from the gutters and channels in which they gather defilement—to be strained, cleansed and purified till they become fresh, clear and sparkling! Then the speech of humans—man with man, saint with saint, redeemed from the beggarly elements of common slander, envy, foolishness and vanity shall be lifted up as on eagles' wings till it is like the fellowship of the angels realizing the prediction of the Psalmist to the praise of the Lord—"They shall speak of the glory of Your Kingdom and talk of Your power." Now, first—

I. THE SUBJECT HERE SUGGESTED FOR OUR COMMONPLACE TALK—HIS WONDROUS WORKS—invites notice!

Brothers and Sisters, we ought to talk more about God's wondrous works *as we find them in Holy Scripture*. Do you read them? Alas, in how many a case the Bible is the least read book in the house! I am inclined to think that although there may be more Bibles in England than any other book, there is less of Bible reading than anything else in literature! The sacred volume seems to be scarcely known to many, except from Chapters read in the public services, and the quotations of the minister, while alas, alas, for us, our conversation has very little in it of the records of the mighty acts of the Lord! But the old saints were known to speak to one another about the historical parts of Scripture. They dwelt full often, and never seemed happier than when they were dwelling upon it—on that story of the Red Sea, when the Lord smote Rahab and broke the head of the dragon. How they would stand together and speak of the Books of the wars of the Lord, of what He did by the brook Arnon, and how He led His servants through Jordan and brought them into the Promised Land, cast out the Canaanites and slew their kings! They talked of these things, not merely as historical events, but as seeing the Lord in them all! And they so spoke and so read of them as to see in them subjects worthy of their study. I do not know how it is, but we do not get at the history of our own country in anything like the way in which one might desire, for really, the wondrous works of God which He has done here in this land are such as we ought to speak of at our fire-sides! We should look upon the events of history and the chronicles of each day in this light. And if, as we scanned the ample pages of history, rich with the spoils of time, we saw God's hand fashioning its contingencies and molding them into destiny—and the impress of His footsteps upon all its stupendous revolutions—we should not lack for topics of conversation, but our memories would be stored, our interest excited, our minds elevated with noble passions and our social conversation ennobled by the inexhaustible resources of wisdom as we talked of all the wondrous works of the Lord!

But, Brothers and Sisters, *our own history* will enable us to relate such a multitude of tender mercies as may well become incentives to gratitude and praise. How much might we tell of what the Lord has done for us personally! Here is a subject that shall never be exhausted. Talk to one another—especially to those who can understand you because they have felt the same—of the long-suffering of God when you were in your ungodly estate—the wonders of that love which tracked you with its many warnings while you were still strangers to yourselves and to God. Talk of that Almighty Power which, when the predestinated hour had come, laid hold upon you and made you yield! Speak of what the Lord did for you when you were in the low dungeon of your own self-

abhorrence—how He met with you when you were brought to death's door—how Jesus appeared for you and clothed you with His Righteousness—and your spirit revived and your heart was glad. Shall the slave ever forget the music of his chains when they dropped from his wrists? And will you ever cease to speak of that happy day, the happiest of all days, when all the chains of your transgression were forever broken off at the love touch of your Redeemer? Oh, no! Talk still of the wondrous works of God as connected with your conversion. And since that time, however quiet your life may have been, I am sure there has been much in it that has tenderly illustrated the Lord's Providence, the Lord's guidance, the Lord's deliverance, the Lord's upholding and sustaining you! You have been, perhaps, in poverty—and just when the barrel of meal was empty—then you were supplied. Talk of His wondrous works! You have been in great temptation and when you were reeling under it, or when you were slandered and no name was thought bad enough for you, His sweet love has appeared to you and helped you to rejoice in this, also, for Christ's name sake. Talk of this! You have gone, perhaps, Christian, through fire and through water—yours has been a very checkered life. You have fought with lions, or have stood in the Valley of the Shadow of Death—but in it all God's aid has been very wonderful! There have been miracles, heaped upon miracles along your pathway! Perhaps you are like the Welsh woman who said that the Ebenezers which she had set up at the places where God had helped her were so thick that they made a wall from the very spot she began with Christ to that she had then reached! Is it so with you? Then talk—talk you of all His wondrous works! I am sure you would find such talk most interesting, most impressive, and most instructive, for the things we have seen and experienced, ourselves, generally wear a novelty and abound in interest beyond any narrative we get from books, or any unauthenticated story we pick up secondhand. Tell them how God has led you, fed you and brought you to this day—and would not let you go!

There is a topic for you—and you never shall know how large it is.

II. THE EXCELLENCY OF THIS SUBJECT IS BOTH NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE.

Were we to talk more of God's wondrous works, there would be this negative good, that *we should talk less about our own works*. A man never lowers himself more than when he tries to lift himself up. There are some whose propensity is to use vain swelling words about their own doings—and they seem to be never better pleased than when they are bragging and saying, "I did this. I did that. I did the other." "Talk you of all His wondrous works." As for your puny actions, if you judge and estimate them properly, you will find more to mourn over than to boast of! Give to the Lord the glory that is due unto His name and your discretion shall not be periled.

If we talked more of God's wondrous works, *we would be free from talking of other people's works*. It is easy to criticize those we cannot rival, and carp at those we cannot emulate. He who could not carve a statue, or make a single stroke of the chisel correctly, is quick to point out where the handicraft of the greatest sculptor might have been improved. It is a poor, pitiful occupation, that of picking holes in other people's coats—and yet some people seem so pleased when they can perceive a fault that they roll it under their tongue as a sweet morsel! Why should this be? Why should you find fault with God's servants in this way? They are not your servants, but His servants—He will call them to account. He does not ask you to be thus officious. Talk you of His wondrous works and you will not speak so unkindly of His servants!

Did we talk more of God's wondrous works, *it would keep us from the ordinary frivolities of conversation*. In the olden times they that feared the Lord spoke often, one to another, and the Lord listened and heard—and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon His name. Suppose for a moment that our ordinary conversation were taken down by an eavesdropper, as in the case mentioned by Malachi? I do not know what your conversation was about at tea-time this evening, but supposing that somebody had been listening and hearing—and that you knew for certain that it was going to be put into a book and printed—would you feel quite easy? Suppose we could have put down in a book the talk of all our people during the day—and could have it all read out? I am afraid we would find that our talk is not always such as edifies and not always seasoned with salt! In fact, some Christian people never thoroughly talk good Gospel talk unless somebody is present in whose esteem it is likely to raise them, or until they get into such company as they suppose will relish it—and then they feel compelled to accommodate themselves to the occasion. The habit of thoroughly good godly talk is not common among professors. I wish it were. I wish that not only sometimes our talk were what God would have it to be, but that it were *always* so, that our common conversation were like salt ministering Divine Grace unto the hearers.

As there is a negative excellence about this subject of conversation, so there is also a positive excellence. Supposing we were to talk more of God's wondrous works—when the habit was acquired, *it would necessitate stricter habits of observation and of discrimination in watching the Providence of God*. Memory, the treasure house of the mind, must have its goods assorted and its records indexed so that the things of which we hear and read might not only be well retained, but easily referred to. As Cowper says—

***“But conversation, choose what theme we may,
And chiefly when religion leads the way,
Should flow like waters after summer showers,
Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.”***

Alas, the mercies of God flow by us like a river! We forget to count their multitudinous waves. We receive the mercies fresh every day and take but slight account of them! Too often they are—

***“Forgotten in unthankfulness,
And without mention, die.”***

The spirit of observing God in all things was prevalent among our Puritan ancestors. They saw God in every single drop of rain and in every ray of sunlight. They were known to talk about the most common changes of the atmosphere as coming from the hand of God! They speak of incidents which we might account trivial as connected with the decrees of Him who orders all things after the counsel of His own will. Oh, that we, too, amidst the various maze of life, could thus learn to track the course “of boundless wisdom and of boundless love”! Such conversation, Brothers and Sisters, would be very ennobling. Why, it would liken us to the ancient saints and the spirits before the Throne of God! What is their conversation there? How they talk of God’s wondrous works, God’s works in Creation, God’s works in Providence, God’s works in Grace! They are too taken up with the splendor of the Divine Presence to suffer their pure conversation to degenerate into any meaner theme. Yes, and living as we do in the Presence of God, professing to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us and to have been lifted up from the world into communion with Jesus Christ, it ought to be our holy ambition to let our conversation be of things that are like our standing—things that are worthy of our high calling and profession—things that have to do with our election and will help us onward to our eternal portion! We would not be so groveling, as we are, if we talked more of the wondrous things of God.

And Beloved, while holding this lofty fellowship of heart and tongue, *how would our gratitude glow and what an impulse would be given to our entire life!* I do not know how you find it, but with me it is no easy matter to maintain spiritual life in the fullness of its vigor. To go week after week, month after month, and year after year, plodding on in the pilgrimage is hard work! It needs no small degree of strength, resolve and skill. If it were one tremendous leap, we could soon perform it. If it were but a spurt in the race, we might soon win the prize—but to go on, on, on—and still to keep up our zeal, still to be awake, still to be earnest—here it is one feels the need of the mercies of God to be means of Grace to us, to refresh our gratitude and put fresh fuel upon the altar. Oh, Brothers and Sisters, we have not lived yet! We do not seem to recognize what the Christian life really means! When I instanced our conversation just now as being poor, and mean, and barren, I did but cull one mildewed leaf out of the whole field, for I fear our whole life is much alike. Lord, revive us! What means is He likely to use except He employs the rod of chastisement as the renewal of our memory of His great loving kindness, that we may be constrained to dedicate ourselves more fully unto Him? But times flies. Let me proceed, therefore—

III. TO URGE THIS TALKING, ORDINARILY AND COMMONLY, ABOUT GOD'S WONDROUS WORKS.

I have already said that it would prevent much evil and do us much good. May I not safely add that *it would be the means of doing much good to others?* If we spoke often of God's wondrous works, we might impress the sinner. We might enlighten the ignorant. We might comfort the desponding. You say, "But how are we to do it?" I reply, "How is it you have *not* done it before?" If we began early in our Christian course to make Jesus Christ our companion in the family and everywhere we went—and to take Him always with us—we would never leave off! It would become the business of our life! I have noticed that many Christian people delay in this matter for years. They cultivate habits of retirement and reticence more upon this subject than upon any other! Perhaps it is a long time after they have believed that they come forward to obey the second great command of Baptism—and the same shyness happens with regard to their talking about Christ in all companies. They do love Him—at least in the judgment of charity, we trust they do. We acknowledge them, but having never begun at the first to acknowledge Him openly, they cannot break the ice now. If they had then had the courage to say, "I have given Christ my tongue and mean to use it for Him. I am His servant and I mean to serve Him wherever I go," they would still have continued the profession and the practice! Brothers and Sisters, is it shyness that restrains you? Take care it is shyness and not cowardice! Say to yourselves, each one of you—

***"Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His name?"***

What? In the presence of the noble army of martyrs who feared not to die, do you fear to speak? What? If they stood on the burning firewood for Christ, cannot you bear, if so it must be, a jeer or sarcasm? Must you be wickedly dumb when you might do so much for Christ in the circle where His Providence has cast you? Oh, be ashamed of having been ashamed! Ask the Master that whatever fear you have, you may be delivered from the fear of man which brings a snare! "Talk you of all His wondrous works."

But some will object, "I have no gifts or ability." No, my Brother, my Sister—it does not need any ability to talk, or else there would not be so much talk in the world as there is—talk in the ordinary strain, the commonplace prattle which breaks the silence of the world. It is what everybody is doing. There is no gifted tongue requisite. There are no powers of eloquence invoked. Neither laws of rhetoric nor rules of grammar are pronounced indispensable in the simple talk that my text inculcates, "Talk you of all His wondrous works." I beg your pardon when you say you cannot do this. You cannot because you will not! If you would, you

could speak well of His name. Because there is no need of ability in anyone to say something for Jesus after an ordinary sort, I press it upon you!

Are you a nursemaid? Talk of His name to the little prattlers with whom you are entrusted. Or are you a crossing-sweeper? Friend, there are some you can get at that I could not! I will be bound to say the crossing-sweeper has a friend who would be frightened if I were to speak to him. "But I am so poor," you reply. "I work in the midst of such a ribald, blaspheming set." Ah, Friend, but you can talk! I know you can! There are times when you can talk even to those blasphemers! It is little use talking to a drunk—it is like casting pearls before swine. But he is not always drunk! There is a time of sobriety—and then it is that you are to go to work. You are not so to talk of Christ as to stop the mill, or to interpose your religion in the way of business. That were indiscreet. But there are leisure times, there are hours for dinner, there are times when they talk to you—and then is your time to talk to them. As the profane take the liberty to force their irreligion upon you, so you take the liberty to force your religion upon them! Use your wits. Find out the proper times and then turn them to the best account. "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening withhold not your hand, for you know not which shall prosper, this or that."

I have only one aim tonight—if I can succeed in it, I shall be very thankful—that Christian people shall talk more of the love of God at the table! At the breakfast table, at the tea table, at the dinner table—that domestic companionship and social hospitalities may be hallowed! And this without depriving them of their genial conviviality, but rather infusing into them a *higher* entertainment. That we who are masters shall talk of the things of God so that our servants shall hear of them and that servants shall so speak of Christ that their fellows shall hear about Him. The great weapon of the Christian religion has been the public preaching of the Word, nor would I disparage it, but it will never evangelize the nations unless there is attendant with it a constant reiteration of the preached Truth of God till it flows through innumerable little conduits into every circle of society! Wycliffe was but one man, but he taught others to read. One page of Matthew's Gospel and the Epistle to the Romans was given to each. They went out and read it in the streets. And so was the Truth of God spread until it was said that you could not meet two men on the roadside, but one of them would be a Lollard! In Luther's day it was not merely the preaching of Luther, it was the singing of the hymns and the Psalms at the spinning-wheel! It was the occupation of the solitary colporteur—it was the general chit-chatting with everybody at the blacksmith fire, in the farmyard, on the Exchange! Curiosity was excited, enquiry was prompted, the popular conversation was inoculated! The fever of that healthful sickness—repentance toward God—was spread abroad and communicated from one to another! "Have you heard

the news? Have you heard that Luther has proclaimed that men are justified by faith and not by works?" It was this that shook Rome! It is this which will shake her yet again. The waking up of Christian life throughout the entire body of the Church of God—and the enlisting of the entire life of the Christian Church in the cause of Christ is an enterprise to be consummated by the individual agency of each—and the general action of all who seek the Glory of God and the welfare of man! Talk you, therefore, of all His wondrous works!

Oh, that there should be any here who never thought of God, much less talked of His wondrous works! Wondrous, indeed, is God's patience that has kept you alive! Marvelous His long-suffering that, after having neglected Him all these years, He has not cut you down! The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib, but you have not known God! You would not keep a dog that would not follow you. You would soon dispose of an ox that was of no service to you. Oh, why has God kept you? It is a wonder! Here is another wonder—He bids us entreat you, allure you, encourage you with a saving promise, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved." Take heed of this Gospel! May the Holy Spirit make you yield to it. Trust Christ! Obey Him by avowing your faith in Him, and you shall be saved!

The Lord grant it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALM 142; 143.**

"Maschil of David." An instructive Psalm of David, for we speak to one another in Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and they are a means of instruction as well as a means of utterance of praise. "A prayer when he was in the cave" and, therefore, likely to suit any of you who are in trouble—a prayer when he hid away from Saul and was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains—"A prayer when he was in the cave."

Verse 1. *I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication.* Of course, the essence of his prayer was in his *heart*, but it often helps the heart to use the voice! It is much better to pray in silence if you will be heard by others, for we are not to pray to be heard of men, but if you have opportunity to pray aloud, I am sure you will feel it very helpful to devotion to do so. "I cried unto the Lord with my voice; with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication."

2. *I poured out my complaint before Him.* As if it were in a vessel and he turned the vessel upside down and poured it all out. That is true prayer—it is the pouring out of what is really in—not an utterance of words which may, perhaps, go no farther than the mere lips. But the pouring out of whatever is within, whether it is praise or complaint."I

poured out my complaint before Him”—realized His Presence and then told Him my complaint.

2. *I showed my trouble before Him.* We must believe that God is, and that He is the hearer of prayer. We must be conscious that we are not only using proper words and feeling proper thoughts, but that we are doing it before Him. “I showed my trouble before Him.”

3. *When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path.* I did not know it. I was so puzzled—so in a maze, like a man at his wits’ end. My spirit seemed turned bottom upward, like a thing that is overwhelmed.

3. *In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me.* I could not find out where the snare was, but “You knew my path.” I knew the trap was cunningly laid, but I could not see it. “You knew my path.” We are not ignorant of Satan’s devices, but sometimes we are completely ignorant as to what devices he is using just now, but “then You knew my path.”

4. *I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul.* It is always a bad time when friendship seems to have died out when those who we rely upon turn their backs upon us and refuse to sympathize with us in any degree. It is a sad case to be in. “No man cared for my soul.”

5. *I cried unto You, O LORD.* Ah, that is the thing to do! When no man will know you, God will know you! When no man cares for you, God will care for you! Prayer is an unfailing resort! “I cried unto You, O Lord.”

5. *I said, You are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.* See how he clings to his God? We never cling to God as well as when everything else fails us! To a greater or less extent, all those who yield us comfort do, in some little measure, take our heart off our God. But when it comes to being lonely, friendless, helpless, forgotten, despised, rejected and outcast, oh, then it is a blessed thing, with a two-handed faith, to lay hold on God and say, “You are my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.”

6. *Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low.* What a blessed argument! Nothing can move God’s pity like it! “I am brought very low.” It is not your height that God will respect—it is your lowliness. O Soul, it is not your excellence that God regards—it is your need! Not your goodness, but your lack of His goodness that He looks at! Not your fullness, but your emptiness—not your strength, but your weakness! Nothing that you have—it is your lack of everything that moves His heart! “Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low.”

6, 7. *Deliver me from my persecutors: for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name.* He asks for deliverance so that he may praise God in it! So ought we always to desire mercies with this in view—that we may praise God the better for them!

7. *The righteous shall compass me about; for You shall deal bountifully with me.* Lord, if You are kind to me, all Your people will hear of it. When I get out of prison, they will say, one to another, “Such-and-such a Brother has been cheered and comforted. His face has changed. He is no more sad.” And they will come round me. They will begin to ask me how it came about. Thus I shall tell out Your praises—encourage others and get to You a great and glorious name, if You shall deal bountifully with me. Now, the next Psalm, much after the same fashion.

PSALM 143.
“A Psalm of David.”

Verse 1. *Hear my prayer, O LORD, give ear to my supplications: in Your faithfulness answer me, and in Your righteousness.* It is a theory held by some persons of skeptical minds that the only benefit of prayer is the good it does to *us*. That was not David’s theory. Here, three times he begs to be heard and to be answered! Oh, do they think us such idiots that we would go on speaking in a keyhole with nobody to hear us? Do they think us brought so low—so destitute of wit—that we think it worth our while to speak out what is in our heart if God does not hear and does not answer? I reckon prayer to be the most idiotic of all occupations unless there is really a God to hear and a God to answer! And the benefit of prayer is not in itself so much as in the full confidence that it is a real thing—and an effective thing—that God does hear and does interpose on our behalf!

2. *And enter not into judgment with Your servant.* “I am Your servant. I am not one of the ungodly whom You will judge and cast away, but still, even though I am Your servant, enter not into judgment with me. I know You will not judge me now as a rebel and condemn me, for You have put away my sin, but even as Your servant I fear Your chastising rod if You enter into judgment with me.”

2. *For in Your sight shall no man living be justified.* I have heard some living that think they would! They have said that the very root and branch of sin have been cut up in them and that they walk in the fear of God perfectly well! Ah, but I think they have not, but that these are mistaken, for still it is very true concerning the very best of men that they have need to pray, “Enter not into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight shall no man living be justified.”

3, 4 *For the enemy has persecuted my soul: he has smitten my life down to the ground; he has made me dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.* Children of God, do not expect to be always happy, or else you will be disappointed! You will have more troubles, if nobody else does. Depend upon it, that adversity is one of the Covenant

promises—“In the world you shall have tribulation,” is your Master’s own words to you, and you must not expect to find it untrue. You will find it true to the letter! And sometimes the troubles of life will penetrate even to your heart and make you feel desolate. When you are so, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial as though yours were a new path in which nobody ever walked before you. Ah, no! David was there! Many others have been there!

5, 6. *I remember the days of old. I meditate on all Your works. I muse on the work of Your hands. I stretch forth my hands unto You: my soul thirsts after You, as a thirsty land. Selah.* As a child puts out its hand to its mother, so did he stretch out his hands to his God. As a thirsty land chaps—becomes dry—turns to dust in its longing after rain, so did his whole being thirst for his God!

7. *Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit fails: hide not Your face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into a pit.* “Lest I swoon away—lest I die—lest my hope should utterly expire! Come, Lord! Come, Lord and rescue me!”

8. *Cause me to hear Your loving kindness in the morning; for in You do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto You.* Very heavy, but I lift it up. With all my might, as though it were a dead lift, I seek to raise it out of its doubt, and out of its sorrow.

9, 10. *Deliver me, O Lord from my enemies: I flee unto You to hide me. Teach me to do Your will; for You are my God: Your Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.* Or, “lead me in a straight path.” So it is rendered by the best scholars.

11. *Quicken me, O LORD, for Your name’s sake.* He felt as if he would die and, therefore, he says, “Quicken me: put new life into me.” To whom should we go for life, but to the living God? And who can communicate with us but the same God who first made us live in His name?

11, 12. *For Your righteousness’ sake bring my soul out of trouble. And of Your mercy cut off my enemies and destroy all them that afflict my soul, for I am Your servant.*

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

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

THE THRESHING FLOOR OF ORNAN NO. 1808

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 9, 1884,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“At that time, when David saw that the Lord
had answered him on the threshing floor
of Ornan, the Jebusite, he
sacrificed there.”
1 Chronicles 21:28.*

*“Then David said, This is the house of the
Lord God, and this is the altar of
the burnt offering for Israel.”
1 Chronicles 22:1.*

DAVID was, for many years, searching for a site for the great temple which he purposed to build for Jehovah, his God. It had been ordained that the sacrifices offered to the one God should be offered by all Israel upon one altar, but as yet the Ark of the Lord was within curtains, near David's palace, and the altar of burnt offering was situated at Gibeon. Where should the one altar be erected? Where should the Ark find its permanent dwelling place? David said, “Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” Yet for a long time he received no indication as to the exact spot where the Lord's altar should be reared, save only that he was told that the Lord had chosen Zion and desired it for His habitation.

David watched, and waited, and prayed and, in due time, he received the sign. God knew the spot and had consecrated it long before by His appearance unto Abraham. The other Lord's Day, you remember, our text was, “Jehovah-jireh,” [Volume 30, No. 1803] and we then learned that in the mountain the Lord would be seen. Upon Mount Moriah, on or near that particular spot which had been named Jehovah-jireh, was the temple to be built. Abraham had there unsheathed the knife to slay his son. Wondrous type of the great Father offering up His Only-Begotten for the sins of men! The scene of that grand transaction was to be the center of worship for the chosen people. Where Abraham made the supreme sacrifice, *there* should His descendants present their offerings! Or if we look into the type and see God, there, presenting Jesus as a Sacrifice for men—it was most suitable that man should forever sacrifice to God where God made a sacrifice for him!

As yet it was not known to David that this was the chosen place. Now it is indicated by memorable signs—the Angel of Justice stands above the spot and his sword is sheathed there in answer to the cries of the afflicted

king, according to the long-suffering mercy of God. Then David clearly saw the mind of the Lord and said, "This is the house of Jehovah my God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel." Then He commenced at once with double speed to prepare the materials for the temple. Though he knew that *he* might not build it, since his hands had been stained with blood, yet he would do all that he could to help his son, Solomon, in the great enterprise.

This problem which David had, at last, worked out by the good hand of God upon him, is one which, in a deep spiritual sense, exercises our hearts often. Where is it that man may meet with God? How is it that man may speak with His offended Lord and be reconciled to Him? Is there not some meeting place where the sinner may express his repentance and where mercy may grant full absolution? Many are saying, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" Hearts touched by the Spirit of God are still seeking after God if, haply, they may find Him. In what condition and by what means may man be at peace with God and dread no longer the sword of His justice?

For the heart of some of us, that problem takes a further shape—we know *where* man may meet with God, but we need to know *how* the careless, proud, rebellious heart shall be induced to come to God in His appointed way. We know it is by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the preaching of the Word of God, and the uplifting of the all-attracting Cross—but we would like to know the state of mind which will lead up to reconciliation—for now we often have to go back to Him that sent us and cry—"Who has believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" We would lead men to God by Jesus Christ if we could—we stretch out the finger and we point the way—but they will not see! We stretch out both hands and entreat them to come, but they will not yield!

Our heart breaks for the longing that it has to present every man in Christ reconciled unto the living God—but how shall it be? How shall the sinner come to God? We may get some light from the type before us upon that question—where shall God's temple be? How shall men be brought to it? We speak not, at this time, upon *natural* things, but upon the things of the Spirit! Therefore let us pray the Holy Spirit to enlighten and instruct us, for only by His aid shall spiritual Truth enter our hearts! And, first, I remark that *externally there was and there is nothing in any place why it should be the peculiar meeting place of God with man*. But, secondly, that *spiritually the place which God did choose was most suitable*, for in it we read the true ground upon which God does actually meet with men in a way of Grace. When we have lingered over these two subjects, we shall then have to exhort you after this fashion—*heartily let us use the place which God has set apart to be our meeting place with Himself*.

"O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker."

I. First, then, this Truth of God is believed by you, though, alas, not by all men, that EXTERNALLY THERE IS NOTHING IN ANY PLACE WHY GOD SHOULD THERE MEET WITH MEN. The Lord chose the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite as the spot whereupon for many a day His holy worship should be openly celebrated according to the outward cere-

monies of a typical dispensation. There the Temple was built and, for a thousand years it stood as the center of Divine worship, so far as it was visibly presented according to His ordinance. What that mountain may yet become, we will not, at this time, consider. Prophets give us bright hints of what shall yet be even on Mount Zion, which has so long been trod under foot by the adversary.

But why was the threshing floor of Ornan to be the meeting place of David with his God and the spot where prayer was to be heard? Certainly it was *a very simple, unadorned, unecclesiastical place*. The threshing floor of Ornan boasted no magnificence of size, or beauty of construction. There was just the rock and, I suppose, a composition spread upon it of hard clay or cement—that the feet of the oxen might the better tread out the corn. That was all it was, yet when the Temple with all its glory crowned the spot, God was never more conspicuously present than on that bare, ungarnished threshing floor! “Meet God in a barn?” cries one. Why not? Does that astonish you? God met Adam in a garden, Abraham under a tree and Noah in an ark! There is less of man in the open field than in the cathedral—and where there is least of man, there is, at least, an opportunity to find most of God.

“Meet God on a threshing floor?” Why not? It may be a thousand times more sacred than many a chancel, for there, simple minds are likely to pay their homage in hearty truthfulness—while in the other, the artificialness of the place may foster formality. God has met with man in a dungeon, in a cave, in a whale’s belly! When you have displayed all your skill in architecture, can you secure any more of the Divine Presence than the disciples had in the upper room? Can you get as *much* of it? A tasteful building may be a way of showing your pious regard for the Lord and, so far, it may be justifiable and acceptable—but take care that you do not regard it as *essential*, or even *important*—or you will make an idol of it! If the Church or Chapel is esteemed for its form or tastefulness, it will become a mere exhibition of skill and industry—and be no more sacred than the house of a greedy merchant, or the palace of a profligate prince!

No chisel of mason, or hammer of carpenter can build a holy place! Without either of these, a spot may be none other than the house of God and the gate of Heaven! God chose a threshing floor for His audience with David, just as, before, He had chosen to reveal Himself in a *bush* to Moses. His Presence had been glorious on the sandy floor of the wilderness, in the midst of the curtains of goats’ hair and now it was gracious among the sheaves and the oxen! How can He that fills all things care about a house which is made with hands? You know how curtly Stephen dismisses even Solomon’s Temple with a word—“But Solomon built Him a house. Howbeit, the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands.” What was that golden arch to the Infinite Majesty? Is not His own Creation far more sublime? No arch can compare with the azure of Heaven! No lamps can rival the sun and moon! No masonry can equal that City whose 12 foundations are of precious stones!

Thus says the Lord by the Prophet—“Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool: where is the house that you build unto Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things have My hands made.”

Why, then, should He not choose the hill whereon Ornan had made a hardened floor whereon to thresh his corn? At any rate, that was the Lord's meeting place with David, His audience chamber with the suppliant king—as if to show that He cares not for tabernacles or temples, but, by His own Presence, makes that place glorious wherein He reveals Himself!

Moreover, it was *a place of ordinary toil*—not merely a floor, but a *threshing* floor in present use—with oxen present and all the implements of husbandry ready to hand. It was so ordinary and so everyday a place, that none could have been more so—as if the Lord would say to us, “I will meet you anywhere; I will be with you in the house and in the field; I will speak with you when you till the ground, when you thresh your corn, when you eat your bread.” Every place is holy where a holy heart is found! This ought to gladden the solitude of godly men. God is with you, therefore be of good cheer! If you are on board ship, or if you are wandering in the woods, or are banished to the ends of the earth, or are shut out from the Sabbath assemblies of God's house, yet—

**“Wherever you seek Him, He is found,
And every place is hallowed ground.”**

On the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite, God did meet with David. And in your workroom, at your bench, or upon your bed, or behind the hedge, or in the corner of a railway carriage, the Lord will hear you and commune with you!

My heart rejoices when I think that this was not only a very unadorned place and one that was given up to common uses, but it was also in the possession of a Jebusite. The Jebusites were among the nations doomed for their iniquities! They were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the Covenants of promise—and this vast rock on which the Temple is to stand, beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth—belongs, at first, to one of the accursed seed of Canaan! Herein the Lord shows that He is no respecter of persons—He would meet the king, not on the land of an Israelite, but on the threshing floor of a Jebusite! The Jews wrapped themselves up within themselves and said, “The temple of the Lord; the temple of the Lord are we”—but the Lord seemed to rebuke their national pride by saying, “And your Temple is built upon the threshing floor of a Jebusite.” If they would but have remembered this, the Jews might, in our Lord's day, have been more tolerant of the conversion of the Gentiles to God.

Moreover, Gentile blood flowed in the veins of that very king who established their empire and who was now prostrate before his God, interceding for Jerusalem! Remember Ruth and from where she came! She put her trust under the wings of Jehovah, God of Israel, and became the great-grandmother of David! David never seemed to forget that fact, for his Psalms are full of far-reaching desires and good wishes for all the peoples of the earth. Remember his words—“Let the whole earth be filled with His Glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.” He looks back upon his birth, as the son of Jesse and the great-grandson of Ruth—and a large heart beats within his breast, desiring that Jehovah may be the God of the whole earth! Let us, therefore, not consider our own peculiar nationality or condition, or rank among men as if salvation came by natural descent. The blood of fallen Adam is in the

veins of every man and there is neither Jew nor Gentile in Christ Jesus! If you happen to have been born of parents who did not train you in the fear of God, yet do not despond, for as the Temple was built upon the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, so shall the great God dwell in your heart though your fathers knew Him not! Say in your soul, "The Lord shall have a dwelling within my heart, Jebusite though I am."

Once more, there was one matter in reference to Ornan's threshing floor which it would be well to mention—before it could be used *it had to be bought with money*. I frequently meet with impossibly spiritual people who hate the mention of money in connection with the worship of God. The clatter of a collection grates upon their sublime feelings! The mention of money in connection with the worship of God is more dreadful to them than it is to God, Himself, for He says, "You have bought Me no sweet cane with money." And again, "None shall appear before Me empty." To these pious persons, money saved and hoarded is abundantly pleasant—their *only* objection is to *giving* it! In this they somewhat differ from David, who paid 600 shekels of gold by weight to Ornan for the place. Before he would offer a sacrifice, he paid down 50 shekels of earnest money, for he said, "I will not offer burnt offerings unto Jehovah, my God, of that which does cost me nothing." It is a very curious thing, is it not—that one man should prove his spirituality by his liberality, and another should pretend to do it by the reverse method?

In connection with all true worship of God in the olden times, there was always the offertory and frequently the sound of gold or silver. Beneath the drawn sword of the Avenging Angel, money is given and land is bought! The solemnity of the transaction is not marred thereby. Yet there was no absolute need for money, since Ornan said, "Take it to you, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give you the oxen, also, for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all." David cannot endure to worship at another man's expense and so he answers, "No; but I will verily buy it for the full price." That religion which costs a man nothing is usually worth nothing. Under the old dispensation, when men went up to worship God, it was with a bullock or with a lamb—even the poorest brought at least a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. Do you think that this bringing of cattle and birds into the sanctuary would spoil your spirituality? It would do so if you had no spirituality—but if you have Grace in your heart, your spirituality will choose just such a practical way in which to show itself.

Some men's godliness is a thin, misty, ghostly, ghastly nothing! True adoration is a thing of substance and of truth. The highest act of adoration that was ever paid on earth was when that woman, whose name is to be mentioned wherever this Gospel is preached, emptied upon the head of our blessed Lord an alabaster box of precious nard. That gift was known to have cost her at least 500 pence. It might have been sold for much, but the costliness of the perfume entered into the very essence of the act in the mind of the holy and grateful woman. The Lord Jesus Christ, when He sat over against the treasury, not only read the hearts of the givers, but

He noticed the actual offering of the woman who dropped into the box two mites that made a farthing—which were all her living.

Some people would sneeringly allude to the two dirty half-farthings and condemn the collection as spoiled by Alexander the coppersmith! But the Lord is not so dainty as His servants, for He accepts the poor gifts of His people. The rattle of the coins did not take away from the heavenliness and the spirituality of that woman's *worship*. Far otherwise! The top of Moriah, where God appoints that His Temple should be built, saw the weighing out of gold and silver and was all the fitter for Divine communion because of it!

From the whole, learn that it is not necessary for meeting with God that you should be aided by persons arrayed in special robes—oxen will do as well! Neither do you need a holy pavement—a threshing floor may be holiness unto the Lord! Neither do you need stained glass and vaulted roofs—the open air is better, still! Do not believe, for a moment, that visible grandeur is necessary to the place where God will meet with you. Go to your threshing floor and pray. Yes, while the unmuzzled oxen take their rest, bow your knees and cry to the Lord of the Harvest, and you shall meet with God there among the straw and the grain! Fear not to draw near to God in these streets, but consecrate all space to the Lord your God. Study simplicity and plainness of worship. Remember how the Lord hated altars of brick and how He would have His people build an altar of earth or of unhewn stone to keep His worship simple and natural. “If you lift up your tools upon it, you have polluted it.”

II. But now, secondly, SPIRITUALLY THIS THRESHING FLOOR OF ORNAN WAS AN ADMIRABLE TYPE OF HOW GOD MEETS WITH MEN. I think, first, *its extreme simplicity enters into the essence of the type*. So far from thinking that a threshing floor was a bad place to pray in, if I look a little beneath the surface, I think I can see the reason for it. Golden grain is being separated from the straw by the corn drag—where did this corn come from? From Him who opens His hands and supplies the need of every living thing! Here, then, God meets me in the kindest way. Where can I meet Him better than where He gives me food? Where can we better adore than in the midst of His rich gifts by which He sustains our life? Why, I think if I had gone out to gather manna every morning with my omer, I would have kept on praising God every moment as I collected the heavenly bread!

Never could a spot be more propitious than where the gracious Preserver of Men spread out necessary food for His children! We cannot do better than praise God when we are in our daily service earning our daily bread, or gathered at our meals refreshing our bodies. At the gate of God's almonry let us wait with worship! Where better a temple out of which the Bread of Eternal Life shall come, than on a threshing floor where the bread of the first life is to be gathered? The two things seem to meet right well together. The temporal and the eternal join hands in common consecration. That same prayer which teaches us to say, “Our Father which are in Heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven” leads us on to cry, “Give us day by day our daily bread.” There is a spiritual significance in the type.

Would it be fanciful if, with a glance, I indicated that the *threshing floor is the exact type of affliction*? Tribulation signifies *threshing* in Latin—and the saints, through much tribulation, enter the Kingdom. One of the titles of the people of God is, “My threshing and the corn of My floor.” Now it is well known that the Lord is with His people in their trials. When He smites with one hand, He holds with the other. In the lion of trial we find the honey of communion! The temple of glory is built on the threshing floor of affliction! I do not thrust forward this observation as though it were of great weight, but even if it were a fancy so far as the *type* is concerned, the thought conveys a Truth of God in a pleasing manner.

But much more, *this was the place where justice was most clearly manifest*. Above Ornan’s threshing floor, in mid-air, stood a dreadful apparition. A bright and terrible figure, a mysterious servant of God, was beheld with a drawn sword in his hand, which he brandished over the guilty city of Jerusalem. Deaths were constant. The people fell as forest leaves in autumn. Then was it that David went out to meet with his God and make confession before Him. Oh, Sirs, the problem with many of you is that you have never yet beheld sin in its consequences, sin in its guilt, sin in its doom! God is angry with the sinner every day! Men do not fly to God till fear puts wings on their feet. Take away the dread of the wrath to come and you have removed the great impulse which makes men seek mercy! Men will not meet God till they see the angel with the drawn sword! They will trifle and play with sin and neglect the invitation of God—and even doubt His *existence*—till conviction comes home to them and they are made to feel that sin is an exceedingly evil and bitter thing.

Conviction of sin worked by the Spirit of God is more powerful than argument! I had religiousness, but I never drew near to God in spirit and in truth till I had seen and almost felt that drawn sword. To feel that God must punish sin, that God will by no means clear the guilty, is the best thing to drive a man Godward! To feel that sword, as it were, with its point at your own breast, its edge ready to descend upon your own being—this it is that makes the guilty plead for pardon in real earnest! Men cry not, “Lord save me,” till they are forced to add, “or I perish!”

I could wish for certain preachers that I hear of, that they were made more vividly to realize the terror of the Lord in their own souls. He who has felt the hot drops of despair scald his throat, has had it cleared for the utterance of Free Grace doctrine! If some men had more fully felt that they were sinners, they would have made better saints. David meets with God at the place where he sees that sin necessitates deserved punishment and I do not believe that any man can be in fellowship with God and be blind to that Truth! David saw the result of his own sin and dreaded what would further come if, day after day, the Lord should visit him and his people with judgment. He had grown proud of the number of his subjects and had begun to act as the independent potentate, instead of loyally remaining the viceroy of Jehovah! But now he sees that he has been guilty of high treason and beholds the sword at his neck. There he bows himself and *there* the God of all Grace meets with him!

Perhaps the point which brought David out into complete brokenness of heart was a clear view of the deadly effect of his sin upon *others*. Sev-

enty *thousand* people had already died of the black death through his sin and still the pestilence raged—this brought the matter home to David’s heart. Every ungodly man ought to reflect upon the mischief which he has caused others by his evil life—his wife has been hindered from good things, his children have grown up without the fear of God, his companions with whom he has worked and traded are hardened in their wickedness by a sight of his wickedness—youthful minds have been seduced from virtue by his vice, simple hearts have been led into infidelity by his unbelief!

O men, you know not what you do! You let fly sparks, but what the conflagration may have already been, none of you can tell! Carelessly, O man, have you cast the thistledown to the wind—but what harvests of the ill weed have come, and may yet come, from your single handful, who can tell? Are there not some in Hell through your influence? Are not others going there through your unhallowed teaching? O you whose hair is snow-white with 60 or 70 winters, how much of ruin have you worked already! How much more is still to come! This came home to David and he stood aghast at it, crying to God about it and pleading as for his life that the evil might be stopped!

Thus, you see, when the deadly fruit of sin is clearly perceived, then the soul turns to God and the Lord meets that soul. The Cross is the place of doom—under its shadow we admit our guilt and vividly see it—and thus put ourselves into a truthful position where the God of Truth will meet with us. God will meet with sinners when they come to Him as sinners—but He will not listen to them while they refuse to see their sin and will not believe in the vengeance due to it.

Furthermore, that place where God met with David and made it to be His temple forever, was the place *where sin was confessed*. David’s confession is very frank and full. David says, “Is it not I? Even I it is that have sinned.” Go you, Sinner, to the Lord, with your own personal confession! Shut yours eye to your fellow man, and say, “Father, *I* have sinned.” Cry with the publican, “God be merciful to me, a sinner!” Make private *personal* confession, without comparing yourself with your fellow men—and the Lord has promised to forgive you and all those who confess their transgressions.

Set forth in your confession the aggravated nature of your sin. David said, “I it is that have sinned and done evil *indeed*.” He emphasizes the evil, “I have done evil *indeed*.” You will not find God in a way of Grace till you begin to put an, “indeed,” at the end of the evil which you confess. Have you not sinned against light, sinned against knowledge, sinned against love, sinned against warnings, sinned against entreaties? Then go and tell the Lord that you have sinned with grievous aggravations. “Father,” said the prodigal, “I have sinned against Heaven and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son.” Where such a confession as this is offered, God will meet the sinner!

That confession also had within itself an admission of the justice of the punishment, for he says, “Let Your hand be on me and on my father’s house.” He does not quibble against the sword of the Lord and its deadly blows. That sinner truly repents, who feels—

“My lips, with shame, my sins confess

***Against Your Law, against Your Grace—
Lord, should Your judgment grow severe,
I am condemned, but You are clear.
Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,
I must pronounce You just in death.
And if my soul were sent to Hell,
Your righteous Law approves it well.”***

That repentance which questions the justice of God in the punishment of sin is a repentance that needs to be repented of! But when the penitent does, as it were, lays his head upon the block, yields his neck to the rope and gives himself up to God, saying, “I have sinned,” then Mercy feels free to display herself! As long as a man quarrels with Justice, he cannot be at peace with Mercy. We must accept God as King, even though He bears not the sword in vain, or else He will never put that sword into its sheath. Condemn yourself and God will acquit you! Come penitently and submissively—and the just God will be a Savior unto you.

But this is only the beginning of it, for Ornan’s threshing floor was then the place *where sacrifice was offered and accepted*. Hastily they piled the altar of unhewn stones! They brought up to it ox after ox that had been lately threshing out the corn—the blood flowed in plentiful streams and the sacrifice was laid upon the wood. God meets with men not where the blood of bulls and of goats flows in rivers, but where the glorious Person of His own dear Incarnate Son is offered up once and for all for guilty men. Calvary is the trysting-place between God and penitents! Now we have reached it. This is the site of the Temple—this is the Temple “not made with hands,” once destroyed, but built up in three days. The Person of the Lord Jesus, crucified and raised from the dead, is that place where God meets guilty, confessing man and shakes hands with him—yes, eats and drinks with him in peace as was indicated by the peace offering which David presented—and the Lord accepted! Oh, Souls, you need to see this, for if you do not see it, you will never see God! A reconciled God is only to be seen through the smoke of the great Sacrifice! The wounds of Christ are the windows of the heart of God! If you can believe in Jesus Christ, by faith, presenting Him, again, to God as your Sacrifice, then God will meet with you.

But what did David see, before long, when he had laid his bullock on the altar? A flame descended from the Lord! Like a flash of lightning it came and the sacrifice was consumed—sure token that the Lord had accepted it and was well-pleased because of it. Even thus has the Lord accepted the one great Sacrifice for sin. When our Lord Jesus offered Himself, He came under the judicial sentence and cried, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” He was consumed with sorrow. “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.” The Lord Himself put Him to grief and made His soul a Sacrifice for sin. “He was made a curse for us, as it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree.” And now the Lord has placed His Mercy Seat where the blood is sprinkled. He accepts us in the Beloved whose Sacrifice He accepted long ago when He raised Him from the dead! We have access by the blood of Jesus. Come, poor trembling Sinner! Come with your eyes on Jesus crucified and you shall be welcomed of the Lord!

As soon as David had seen the sacrifice, he had only one more sight to see, and that made the threshing floor of Ornan more glorious than ever. *He beheld the sign of peace.* Above the threshing floor stood the Angel of the Lord—but what a change! The drawn sword, which threatened death to the city and to the nation, was suddenly thrust into its scabbard and all was still! Not another soul in Jerusalem would die of the pestilence! The sword of the Lord rested and was quiet. Oh, the joy of David's spirit when he saw this! What a solemn but joyous melting of heart he felt as his soul gushed forth in streams of gratitude. Learn from this that the point of full communion with God, today, is the place where we see the angel with the sheathed sword. Oh, how sweet to know that God has nothing against us! He has blotted out our transgressions and will never remember them! He cannot smite us, for He has justified us in His Son! How shall He destroy those for whom Christ has shed His blood? He has a sword, but it is for those who are the adversaries of our souls, even for the arch-fiend who would destroy us! Its edge is not for *us* who are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus!

Many of you cannot draw near to God and I do not wonder at it because you have not yet seen that sin was, in very deed, put away by the Sacrifice of Jesus. You have seen the drawn sword and that is something. But you have not yet beheld that sword *sheathed*, nor heard the voice of Jehovah saying, "It is enough." The place where love meets love, where your little tiny stream melts into the great river of God's love, is where we sing, "O Lord, I will praise You; for though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away and You comforted me." Henceforth our life flows with the life of Jesus in one deep, peaceful stream—onward and onward forever! You cannot rest in the Lord and live in Him till you have seen the Sacrifice and its eternal results in peace with God. May God bring you there! Atonement is the basis of worship. The sacrifice of Christ and His righteousness, these are the Jachin and the Boaz, the two sublime pillars of the Temple gate! God communes with men where Jesus becomes man's rest. You cannot pass to the Mercy Seat to speak with God except through the veil of the Savior's body which was torn on our behalf!

Thus I think I have made you familiar with the threshing floor of Ornan, the Jebusite, and showed you wherein it was felt to be a place of Divine manifestation and a fit site for the permanent Temple of God.

III. And now I am going to close by HEARTILY EXHORTING YOU TO USE THIS PLACE. Brothers and Sisters, if we have found out where to meet with God, then let us meet with Him continually! Do you feel guilty this morning? Is your sin heavy upon you? Do you see the sworded angel? Well, you have to meet God even there! Therefore, gird up your loins! "What garments shall I put on?" Put on sackcloth! I mean not *literally*, but while there is any guilt upon you, come to God with lowliest penitence, mourning for sin, as David and the elders that were with him did. You may not come now in the silken garments of your luxury, nor in the purple robes of your pride, nor in the mail of your hate. Put these away from you and come with sackcloth and ashes, weeping for your transgressions—and God will meet with you—for He will meet with sinners who come to Him mourning because of their sin!

When you thus come, I want you to be quiet a while. Stand still! Listen! Suppose you had been with those elders of Israel—what would you have heard? You would have heard your shepherd-king pleading for his flock—“These sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand be on me and on my father’s house.” But now David is dead and buried and his sepulcher is in his own land. But another King of the house of David, one Jesus, is standing before the Lord pleading for mercy! While you are clothed in the sackcloth of your repentance, you may hear Him cry, “As for these sheep, let them live! You have awakened the sword against Me, their Shepherd, therefore let My sheep be spared! Your hand has been on Me, therefore let these go their way!” Do you hear that intercession? Jesus is pleading in that fashion right now! He is “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them.” Oh it is blessed to come to God that way—with the sackcloth on your loins, but with the prevalent intercession in your ears—confidently believing that Jesus makes intercession for the transgressors and that He must and will so prevail that by His knowledge He shall justify many!

Further, when you are coming to God, dear Hearts, always take care that you come to the Sacrifice. We frequently miss communion with God, I am persuaded, because we do not remember, enough, that precious blood which gives us access to God! When you go upstairs to pray and you cannot get near to God, then do not speak, but sit in silence and muse upon the agony and bloody sweat, the Cross and passion of the Lord—and all the circumstances of His wondrous death—and say, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” There is a matchless power in the Lord’s Sacrifice to remove the stone out of the heart and pluck away selfishness from the affections! Come, come, come, come to the Sacrifice! There shall you dwell with God in sweet delight.

If you would come still *nearer* to God, do not forget the effect of the Sacrifice and intercession in the sheathing of the sword of justice. I have already set forth this Truth. Now I entreat you to turn it to practical use by enjoying it—

***“Oh how sweet to view the flowing
Of my Savior’s precious blood,
With Divine assurance knowing
He has made my peace with God!”***

Do not say, “I hope that the sword is sheathed”—it either is so, or it is not so. Do not be content with questionable hopes, but aim at certainties. Rest not till you obtain a solid assurance of your peace with God! If Jesus Christ was punished for your sin, you *cannot* be punished for it! If He bore your sin, He bore it and that is the end of it! And if you have believed on Him, you have the full proof in the Word of God that you are justified before God! What more do you need than God’s own Word for it? And that Word declares that you, as a Believer, have eternal life and shall never perish, neither shall you come into condemnation! Do not continue to mutter, “Well, I hope I may yet realize it.” Why these debates? It is so! “He that believes in Him is justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses.” God has turned away His wrath from the Believer and the sword is sheathed! Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And lastly, if this is so, and you realize it, go away and begin to build a temple! You say, “Do you want us to build a new place of worship?” No, I speak only of a *spiritual* house. Of course, build as many Meeting Places as you can where people may come together to hear the Word of God, for many are needed in this growing city, but the peculiar sort of building which I urge upon you is of the *heart* and *spirit*. Make your entire *being* a *living temple* for the living God! Begin now—the foundations are laid—you would not dream of building on any other, for, “other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid.” The Divine Moriah of Christ’s Person, the sacred place of His Sacrifice, is the mountain wherein God shall be seen! Jesus Christ has, Himself, become the Foundation of your hope—go and build on Him!

Set up the pillars of earnest supplication and arch them over with lofty praises. Remember, your God “inhabits the praises of Israel.” Build Him a house of praise, that He may dwell in *you*! Make your bodies to be the temples of the Holy Spirit and your spirits the priests that sacrifice therein! Spend all your days in acts of holiness, piety, charity and love! Let your houses be churches dedicated to His fear and love—and let their chambers be holy as the courts of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Let each morning and evening have its sacrifice. Be, *yourself* a priest at the altar! Let the garments of your daily toil be as vestments, your meals as sacraments—let your thoughts be Psalms, your prayers incense and your breath praise!

Let every action be a priestly function, bringing glory unto the Lord from this day forth and forever! He that died for you reckons you to be dead to all things but Himself and so it becomes you to be! “You are not your own, for you are bought with a price.” And from this day forward your motto should be—“Yours entirely! Yours entirely, O my God, I am!” Begin to build this living temple and the Lord help you to complete it to His praise. A poor edifice it will be when you have finished it, compared with the Lord your God, but yet if you have labored sincerely and earnestly, it will turn out to be compacted of gold and silver and precious stones! And it will be found in the day of Christ to honor and glory. So may the Lord bless you, Beloved, now and forever. Amen and amen!

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 Chronicles 21; 22:1-5.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—302, 553, 551.**

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ARAUNAH'S THRESHING FLOOR NO. 3477

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1915.

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

*"This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the
altar of the burnt offering for Israel."
1 Chronicles 22:1.*

IT Will be fresh in your recollection that David had committed a great sin against the Lord. In truth, all the people of Israel had, for some years, gone astray from God—and when He determined to punish them, He made the sin of their ruler an occasion for visiting their iniquities upon their head. David had determined to number the people. He carried out his purpose in the teeth of precept, precedent and protest. It would seem that thereby he trespassed on the prerogative of the priests and violated the Levitical Law. Thereupon Gad, the Prophet, came to him with the choice of three punishments. He selected, as the lesser evil, and preferable to famine or the sword of the foe, the pestilence, saying, "It is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of man." Jerusalem was, therefore, for three days, ravaged by a terrible plague. The strong men fell down in the streets and the women died at the mill. The little children perished from the breast and the aged were smitten down with a stroke. For three days the fatal disease had proceeded with its ravages, when suddenly the angel of the Lord, who had caused this slaughter, appeared before David. David beheld the messenger of judgment standing in bodily form on the threshing floor of a man galled Araunah. David was summoned by God to attend upon this angel—and when he approached, he saw him with the sword drawn in his hand—as though he were about to smite even till the going down of the sun! David, moved by the Spirit of God, slays a bullock, piles up an altar, kindles a fire and, as the smoke of the bullock ascends to Heaven, the angel who was visible before their eyes, to the joy of every one of them, thrust back the sword into its scabbard, saying, "It is enough."

Now, David seemed to have been moved by an inward impulse to consider that this spot, though nothing but a piece of ground beaten hard for the threshing of corn by the feet of bulls, must be, henceforth, a sacred place—and he said, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel." I scarcely need remind you of a coincidence which may probably have been known to David, that on this

very spot Abraham had, many generations before, drawn the knife to slay his son, Isaac. The mountain was thus doubly typical of that Sacrifice of Christ which marks the place where God founds His Temple and where all sacrifice rendered by the saints of God to their God must be offered. At first the Lord only showed the fact that He would give His Son. Yon hoary Patriarch, with his only-begotten, dearly-beloved child of promise all bound and lying on the wood, unsheathing the knife to slay him, was a graphic picture of the Eternal Father who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all. Abraham taught the fact of the sacrifice, while to David the reason of that Sacrifice of Christ was explained. He was Sacrificed to stop the plague—the plague of sin, the punishment of our iniquities! Just as the bullock at Araunah's threshing floor, when hewn in pieces and laid smoking upon the altar, stopped the pestilence, so Christ, bleeding upon Calvary, the Lamb of God's Passover, the sacred First-Born of Jehovah's choice and dedication, makes Atonement, and the plague is stopped. David then selected this spot as henceforward the place of the Temple, and the spot where the one altar should stand. To me this looks very significant. I hope, in a few words, to make you think it interesting and instructive. First, I shall try to explain *the occurrence, itself, spiritually*, and then to explain *the consecration of the floor mystically*.

I. THE OCCURRENCE, ITSELF, AND THE VARIED SYMBOLS IT UNFOLDS.

David sins and an angel smites—David offers sacrifice and the angel stops! Four lessons are suggested. First, *there is such a thing as sin*. Men fight hard to try and prove that there is not. In vain they strive, for as long as the Inspired Book is extant, and so long as there is one man on the face of the earth with a clear conscience, healthy and undrugged, to bear witness with that Book, sin will be discovered to be exceeding sinful! A breach of the Divine Law, though it is committed by a man after God's heart, is not overlooked or counted venial. Sin cannot be winked at by the Most High! Though it receives the sanction of the very best of men, it has as much virus as when committed by the most debased. The sin of ignorance is as disastrous as the sin of willfulness. The wrong act performed with a right motive would still be deadly. Sin is exceedingly sinful. When I see David and the elders of Israel with sackcloth on their loins and ashes on their heads, bowing before this angel, I discern that there is a something in sin which ought to make us hide our heads and weep, and wail, and humble ourselves before the Most High! Let us wake up to a sense of the dire reality of transgression—it is a frightful fact, not a foolish fancy. In the presence of the angel, this admits of no doubt.

That *sin must be punished* is taught here with equal distinctness. This looks like a platitude, but it is so often disputed, that we are constrained to assert it and to reassert it. Yes, we sound it forth as with a trumpet,

that wherever there is an iniquity, there must be a penalty, for sin must be punished! The good order of the universe requires it! The justice of God demands it! The Book of God threatens it! The hand of God continually executes it! The supposition that because God is merciful, He will, therefore, overlook sin, is as delusive as it is dangerous! It is one of Satan's lies. In like manner, the theory that God is a Universal Father, and that the punishments He awards are not judicial, but corrective—the mild chastening of a gentle discipline, import only with a view of winning back His erring children, and not the terrible, denunciation of an angry Sovereign, or the inevitable comes of a violated Law—that theory, palatable though it may be to the fallen creature, is but a poisonous drink wherewith Satan would drug the souls of men who are bent on indulging their lusts till they are drowned in Hell! Ah, no, though God is merciful, He is just! Though He can pardon the sinner, sin must be punished! The two facts are made consistent in the Cross of Christ, where the sin was expiated, where the sinner was represented. But be assured, O Sinner, that if you build your hope on any theory which denies that debt must be paid, that crime must be avenged, that sin must be punished—you are misjudging the Law of God by which you must be judged! You are arguing on premises which have no basis but dreams! You are dallying with disappointment and death!

I remember a poor man interrogating me thus. "Sir," he said, "I want to know how my sin can be forgiven." "By the blood of Christ," was my answer. "Yes," he said, "but I do not understand that. What I need to know is this"—and he put it plainly—"if God does not punish me for what I have done, all I have to say is, He ought." I explained to him how he could punish Christ instead of us, and so be just, and, by finding a Substitute, provide a pardon. He understood the plan of Grace and rejoiced in the Gospel! That way of putting it—which I am sure the conscience of every man must make him feel to be true—struck me as forcible. The Judge of all the earth, the Author of the Law of God, must vindicate His own prerogative. In order to do this, every transgression must receive its recompense—as the sin, so the penalty! It is not meet and fit that I should enjoy the sweets of sin without partaking of its bitters. As I gaze on yonder angel, with flaming sword, I hear God say to me—addressing my eyes rather than my ears—"Sin must be punished!" As he smites right and left, as dead corpses lie in his awful pathway, as he passes on and his breath is pestilence and before him burn hot coals of fire, I see in that dreadful vision the tremendous fact that vengeance pursues crime, that vindictive punishment follows vicious practices! God will by no means spare the guilty! Cursed is everyone that has broken the Law of God!

Yet, were this all, we could only see in this vision an increase of our miseries! But, blessed be God, we discern in the vision which David beheld a *sacrifice for sin*. The sword will not return to the scabbard through the force of prayer. Not the pleadings of David combined with the humiliation of the elders of Israel, though sackcloth and ashes are on their loins, can prevail to avert the vengeance or appease the wrath! Sin had unsheathed the sword and, without a sin-offering there was no sheathing it again! Had David and those senators wept until their eyes were dry, had they lacerated their flesh till the wounds began to mortify, it had availed nothing! Or had they brought forth all the priests with smoking incense and paraded the Ark with solemn pomp, yet had not the angel stirred! Nothing sufficed until the guileless Victim appears on the scene, the warrant of death is carried into execution, and the life-blood is shed on the threshing floor. Not till the bullock, cut in pieces, was laid high on the altar, and the wood was heaped on the offering, and the fire coming straight from Heaven in a mass of flame arose before the Most High, were the signals reversed and the message announced, "It is enough. Sheathe your sword." Call this type, parable, or illustration, but know, O Sinner, that *nothing* can ever prevent God from punishing your sins! Your reformation, your prayers, your tears will not do it! Though your penitence be ever so humiliating. Though your resolutions for the future be ever so determined. Though your zeal for an universal reformation be ever so glowing, the outlook is hopeless!

Could you give rivers of oil or ten thousand of the fattest of fatted beasts, your property or your profits would be of no account. Should you give your children for your transgression—the fruit of your body for the sin of your soul—still does the inexorable decree stand fast. Sin must have punishment! There is only one method whereby the sword can be sheathed—by Christ's suffering in your place! The Son of the Virgin, who was also the Son of God, must go to Calvary! You nails, you must pierce Him! Wood, you must uplift Him! Soldiers, you must bruise Him! Death, it is necessary that you should kill Him. There, Sinner! There! There is that which can make the angel sheath his sword! In Gethsemane and on Calvary rest your eyes—there God is teaching you—look! He must punish sin. How dreadfully He punishes it in Christ! Listen to the groans that come from His heart! Hear His death-shriek and His awful cry, "*Lama Sabacthani?*" God is just, for He is punishing Christ! Believe in Christ. Trust Him! Then shall you know that God has punished your Savior instead of you—by His chastisement you are made free! He cannot punish two for one offense. He will not first smite your Surety, and then smite you!

Rejoice in this, that if Jesus died for you, He released you from condemnation, and He secured for you eternal redemption!

Christ has paid the whole penalty! Your utmost liability He has discharged. The wrath of God, retribution in full, or its equivalent, has Christ endured for you, absolved you from sin and delivered you from the curse of the Law by His vicarious Sacrifice. He has robed you in His righteousness and washed you in His blood! Such Grace have you received who have believed in His name and taken shelter beneath His Cross. Such truth was David taught concerning sin, punishment and substitution.

And mark it, Beloved, as soon as the bullock smoked and the angel put back his sword, the plague was stopped—not one more died in Jerusalem—no, not one! They might be sick, but the fever left them. Some might be on their beds given up by the physician, but the sheathing of the sword restored them to health! It was not the physician's healing art, it was the mystic virtue of the Sacrifice that saved their life. Consider this, O guilty, terror-stricken Sinner. When Jesus died, from that day forward no sinner that believed in Him ever perished, or ever could! The redeemed are distinguished by their faith in the Redeemer. Disciples may be recognized by their allegiance to the Lord. Christians are identified by their conformity to Christ. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him! Hell does not hold a soul that ever trusted Christ. You might as well expect to find a rebellious apostate in Heaven, as a penitent Believer in Hell. It cannot be! The moment you trust Christ, at that moment the sword is sheathed for you. Cast yourself on Jesus—it is a simple, but a saving act! As soon as you have come to rest on Him alone, without other prop or pillar, you are surely saved! Were you already on the plains of Glory, with the white robe about you, and the golden harp in your hand, your salvation would not be more certain! Cheer up, Beloved! Let gladness fire your heart and rapture flame your tongue. Be of good courage, you timid, downcast Seeker. If Jesus died for you, you have no cause for fear. Believe in Him—you have the witness in yourself. Your faith is the key of your fellowship. Your sins, which are many, are all forgiven. No angel can kill you—you are exempt from the commission of the Destroyer—you are saved! Such, I think, was the teaching which God communicated to David. Now grant us a moment's pause, and we turn to—

II. THE REASON OF DAVID'S CONSECRATING THE SPOT TO BE THE SITE OF THE TEMPLE.

The Temple, be it remembered, was the designed meeting place between God and man. It is highly suggestive, therefore, that David consecrated *the floor of sacrifice*, for there the sword was sheathed, the anger appeased and the Grace made conspicuous. There, therefore, should the sanctuary be reared. Is there a spot of ground, or is there a ground of reconciliation where you or I can safely meet with God, except where the Atonement of Christ has prevailed to avert the penalty of our transgres-

sions? We often meet with people who neglect our solemn assemblies, accounting church or chapel, alike, objectionable, while they profess to find in their private gardens, or on the open heath, a nobler temple. They prefer the songs of the birds to the Psalms of the saints—and the murmur of the river to the melody of worship. Their love of Nature is so absorbing, that the spiritual has no charms for them. They tread the clods and gaze on the clouds with a gratification akin to the beasts that perish! On their Sabbath they are like a horse turned out into the meadow—they cease from labor and enjoy the interval of repose. Do they tell you that they worship the God of Nature? Their self-deception is too transparent! You are not stupid enough to believe them! Did you follow them, I expect you would find that their idol was Bacchus, and the god they honored on these days was their own belly. So far from really seeking quiet retirement to worship the Almighty, they spend the Lord's-Day in wanton pleasure and sensual riot! We don't believe in such worship as these professed votaries of Nature affect to offer. We hear of the piety, but we have never seen anything but the profanity. Besides, could we give a man credit for his sincerity in worship, we would be disposed to ask what sort of a divinity it is they accredit, admire and adore! The God of Nature, they tell us, is all benevolence without alloy, and they flatter themselves that He does not punish sin, avenge guilt, or condemn the evildoer! Pardon me, but by your leave, I would correct your misapprehensions! What Law of Nature do you think you can violate with impunity? When of old our forefathers sinned against sanitary laws, did not God punish them? What do you think of the Plague of London—and the multitudes dying in every house, till Aldgate Pit was crammed and there was scarcely place to bury the bodies? The God of Nature did that, be it remembered! Men violated His laws and straightway He smote them. Can you trespass against what are called natural laws without fear? I cannot! Have you forgotten the terrible experiences of America when she denied to the black population its natural rights and sinned against the slaves? How did God smite that vast continent? Do you remember not the Northern and Southern States in deadly conflict, and the battlefields red with blood? What though a brother's hand was lifted against his brother, it was no less God's punishment of sin! Among your own selves, when a man defiles himself with vice, does not the penalty he incurs make you shudder to think of it? Yes, and will not it be visited upon his children? Shall they not feel it to the third and fourth generation? Surely it is the God of Nature who thus openly punishes sin! "The God of Nature," as Byron puts it, "mirrors Himself in tempests as well as in green fields, and is as much to be seen riding the whirlwind and making the clouds His chariot amidst the storm, as He is in the fair flowers and the sweetly singing birds." If you will make your appeals to the God of Nature, look what sort of God He is. I aver that the God of Nature is the God of Judgment, nor is there a

meeting place between a conscious, reasonable, awakened rebellious man and the God that rules the universe, except through a Sacrifice—that Sacrifice the Cross! Assuredly I know that my soul could never realize a possibility of communion with my Creator except at the foot of the Cross, where justice was honored and mercy manifested—

***“Till God in human flesh I see
My thoughts no comfort find.”***

Young men, members of this Church, I want you to be thoroughly initiated into this Doctrine of Redemption. Understand it clearly, and then contend for it manfully, I pray you. If once you give up this fortress, you will be exposed to the most dismal skepticism—no, you will be open to stark atheism! Should you discredit the Atonement of Christ, young man, you will have pulled up your anchors and you must drift before the wind. You cannot draw near to God without the Cross! Only an Araunah's threshing floor can furnish the site of a Temple. If you forsake the altar and the sacrifice, you will be forsaken of God and, before long, you will relinquish the Truth of God and His righteousness! From holiness and happiness you will then be estranged! In any pulpit where the Doctrine of the Atonement is kept back, the tide of teaching drifts to Socinianism—and there is small margin left, but a narrow line to separate the Unitarian from the infidel! The Temple is not only the meeting place for man with his God—no less is it the meeting place for man with his fellow man. There is never such unity as that which comes through the Cross. The Baptismal Pool is not the rallying place for all Believers, as full many are there baptized into the waters of controversy! Oh, my Soul, come not into their secret! Certainly no doctrinal confession or orthodox creed supplies a *locus standi* where all see eye to eye, for good people hold very different views—yet the children of God are of one family, notwithstanding their diversity of opinions. Whenever we come to talk about the Cross, we sheath our swords. There is no fighting there. John Wesley sings—

***“Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Your bosom fly.”***

And Toplady sings—

***“Rock of ages cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”***

Wesley denounces Toplady in the pulpit! Toplady calls John Wesley, “the old fox, tarred and feathered.” But when they come here to Christ Jesus, their bitterness is all laid aside! They meet, as you clearly see, in harmony, and their sentiments are the same. Lift high the Cross, then, preacher! Lift high the Cross, Sunday school teacher! Here, and here only, righteousness meets with peace, embraces man and man embraces his Brothers and Sisters—and we become one with each other and then one in Christ Jesus!

We shall now turn to a second reason for his dedication. *The Temple was the manifesting place.* The Jew never dreamed of seeing God anywhere but in the Temple. He went up to its sacred courts that in the various services of God's house he might behold the beauty of the Lord. The High Priest, on the Day of Atonement, saw God in the mysterious light which glistened between the wings of the Cherubim—the light called the Shechinah, the only manifest indwelling of Deity, the only Light of God which human eye could clearly behold. The Temple, I say, was God's unrobing place. To every High Priest, a favor akin to that accorded to Moses, was given. Moses was put into the clefts of the rock that He might see the skirts of Jehovah's robe—so every High Priest of the Jews, and every Jew in his High Priest, saw in the Temple as much of God as could be seen under that dispensation. See then, Friends, it is fitting that the place where Christ makes the Sacrifice should be the place of manifesting God to man! We declare, without fear of controversy, that there is more Divinity in the wounded body of Christ than in all the round world besides! If any man would see God unto perfection, let him behold yon bleeding Man! If he would see God's love, let him behold the Son of God, Incarnate, suffering in the sinner's place! If he would see God's justice, let him behold the Only-Begotten of the Father, pierced with every arrow out of Heaven's quiver, wounded in every part and particle of His spirit and His body, that He may bear the curse for guilty men! If he would see God's Omnipotence, let Him behold it in Christ, bearing the sin of the world, and yet with unbroken bones. If he would see the wisdom of God, let him discover it in the ignominious Cross where the Savior expiates the sin of man! There is no attribute of God which is not clearly seen in the Cross! It is not one solitary star, but it is like the Pleiades—a constellation of the brightest stars—all in Christ! I see not the stars, but the sun in Christ! I see not the robes of Deity, but *Deity* itself! Here I see not Heaven's pearly gates, but Heaven unfolded to each eye. Here I see not merely God's works, but verily God's heart—not so much the attributes of the Almighty, as Almighty God, Himself! Turning aside from the burning bush of Calvary, where Jesus burns with fire and is not consumed, I say, "We have seen God! We have seen Him face to face!" I must repeat it—that nowhere else is God to be so clearly seen as on the Cross. Those who refuse to see God in Christ, presently become callous to the evidence of the eternal power and Godhead anywhere!

"Charity" is the cry I hear. "Charity" is lauded everywhere! Yes, more charitable than Christ, I suppose, some would have us to be in our toleration of heresy! But what says the Scripture? It says, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid." What does it say? "There is none other name given under Heaven among men whereby we must be saved." Do you remember the emphatic saying of the Apostle Paul? "If any man preaches any other Gospel than that you have received, let him be ana-

thema maranatha.” This new charity, I know nothing of, nor did our fathers before us! The Puritans and the Covenanters could bleed and die, but they could not yield the blood-red flag of the Cross of Christ! Our blessed ancestors, the Albigenses and Waldenses, from whom, in a direct line, we sprang, could dare the snows of the mountains and stain them crimson with their bloody feet, but they could not surrender the Truth of God! Those early confessors of the faith, from whom we have sprung, could suffer at the harlot’s hand—the harlot of *Rome*—and shed their blood like water for the Lord God of Hosts! This was the rallying cry, from which they could never depart. “We can see in Christ the only way of salvation.” Without controversy God was manifested in the flesh. He has worked out an Atonement for His people. By that blood-besprinkled path we enter into Heaven. Yes, dear Friends, the Doctrine of the Atonement, or rather the Atonement, itself, is God’s only meeting place with man! And it is God’s only place of Revelation to man, if man would see Him rightly and distinctly!

Now thirdly, *the Temple was the home of joy*. Oh, what song, what sacred harmony went up to Heaven from Mount Zion! I have sometimes been in this house when my willing soul desired to stay and sing herself away to the celestial plains. When I have heard the songs of the thousands of God’s saints here, I have thought no rapture could exceed it! But our songs, I reckon, were poor compared with the multitudes of Israel coming from the North, South, East and West—from Dan, from Beersheba and from beyond Jordan—they came up like rivers of harmony, and when they got a sight of the golden roof of the Temple, their hearts beat high and their voices grew jubilant! With golden trumpets and silver trumpets they sounded forth volumes of melody! And then, with divers instruments and vocal notes, sent up their joyful sound of grateful praises to the Most High. Priest and elders led the tune, and ten thousand times ten thousand of all the tribes cried, “Hosanna!” or chanted some of the glorious strains of David! Oh, how good and pleasant a thing it must have been in those days to go up to the Temple of the Lord! And oh, how marvelous that just that threshing floor, where first an Atonement was made for Jerusalem, should be the spot where all this song should gather! The music abounds where the blood freely flowed—where wrath stopped, there sacred mirth begins! Beloved, the richest joy that earth and Heaven could know springs from the crystal fount of Jesus’ side! Heaven was never so glad as when He ascended up on high. Then they tuned their harps anew—

***“They brought the chariot from on high
To bear Him to His throne,
Clapped their triumphant wings, and cried,
‘The glorious work is done.’”***

You and I are never so happy as when we see our pardon, our full redemption there! Then I think we can sing—

**“Oh, for such love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Savior's praises speak.”**

If you want to be very happy, sit down under the shadow of the Cross. Would you be supremely blest? Remember the threshing floor of Araunah! There the pestilence raged, the angel stood, the bullock smoked and the plague was stopped! That is the place where song finds its focus—abide there and be glad all your days!

Yet a fourth thought may be worthy of your remembrance. *The Temple was a type of the Church* and, therefore, the Temple must be built where the Sacrifice stopped the plague. The foundation stone of the Church is the Person of Christ. The Doctrine of Atonement is the interpretation of His work on the earth. If any man believes in the Atonement of Christ and trusts himself to its fact and its issues, he is a Christian. He that believes not in our Redeemer's wondrous passion, and His complete satisfaction to the justice of God, may call himself what he likes, and assert his profession by what name he pleases—he is *not* a Christian! Where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is a church. But the richest corporation, with the highest dignities that a nation can confer, will never make a church unless the Doctrine of the Atonement is strongly maintained and clearly taught! I would not judge harshly or speak rashly, but most solemnly I do believe there are hundreds of pulpits in London that never speak a sound about the Atonement of Christ. That Christ did something on the Cross they admit—what He did, they cannot determine! Popular books published by learned divines tell us we ought not to enquire, nor need we wish to know. A certain mythical reconciliation was effected, but as to His really suffering vicariously for sinners, the Just for the unjust, this is left to such weak intellects as popular evangelists may possess!

As for these refined gentry, so learned that nobody can understand them, and so attractive that they have more spiders than hearers in their places of worship, they are far too philosophical to preach an Atonement! Oh, no, it only suits the common mind, they say! Do you know, Sirs, I have heard that at a college where young men are being trained to preach, after a discussion held upon the question, “Has the modern revival of Puritan Doctrine done more good than harm?” the affirmative was carried by a majority at *one*—barely of one! Well now, as Puritan Doctrine is neither more nor less than a consistent exposition of the Gospel, with a corresponding demand for simplicity and sincerity of life, we are prone to ask what is to be expected of the instructors of the rising generation? Are these the gentlemen in training to teach the sons of toil?

What kind of spiritual food will they dispense to those who wait on their ministry? Will these gentlemen preach Christ Crucified, or will they strain and dilute the Gospel till their sermons echo nothing but the sentiments of the age and the utilitarian morals that pass current in their times? Rather may this house be utterly consumed with fire, and not so much as one stone be left upon another that shall not be cast down, than the day should come when here there should be given an uncertain sound about the Atonement! This is not merely a Doctrine of the Church, it is *the* Doctrine of the Church! Leave this out and you have no truth—you have no Savior, no Church! As Luther said of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, that it was the article of a standing or falling Church, so we affirm of the Atonement—the complete efficacious Atonement—the *substitutionary* Sacrifice of Christ for the sins of men! Cling to it you that would build up the saints on their most holy faith. For life, or for death, cling to it! Be this your cornerstone! Be this your vermilion cement with which you bind your members to one another! Be this your trowel! Be this your hammer and be this your sword! Be this your one essential—account it your indispensable implement—if you would honor God and if you would build up His Church!

And finally, as this was to be the place for the foundation of sacred fellowship, *so it must be the altar on which all the offerings were to be made to Jehovah*. Brethren, it was meet that the place where Christ died—the place, I mean, where the Sacrifice stopped the devastating sword of judgment—that this Mount Zion should be the spot where the people of God offered their sacrifices and peace offerings. Mere exhortations to propriety are of no avail. You may preach ever so eloquently on sobriety without rescuing a single drunk! You may eulogize chastity to the admiration of the lascivious. You may extol honesty in the midst of knaves and thieves who will praise your fair speech. Precept has no regenerative power! People do not get good by having goodness preached at them! Pure Christianity is not propagated by the Law. And in the community of saints, legality is of no avail. Whips are for the backs of fools. Saints need more sacred stimulus. Threats may keep simpletons in check, but for Christians, promises are of more account. If I want to stir you to action, and to promote among you some good work, I must preach up Christ, feed your souls with the Bread of Heaven and then, after that, Divine Grace will work in you effectually and the goodness will flow out of you instantaneously! Behold the place where Jesus shed His blood! Here, then, bring your offerings! Dedicate yourselves as whole burnt-offerings unto God—your time, your talents, your substance! No man brings his offering to Sinai, but thousands bring their sacrifices to Calvary! No man goes for a missionary, I hope, from stress of duty, except it is the man who found Zulu Kaffirs too much for him. We go as missionaries not

from a sense of duty, but from a sense of love to Christ! Love will make a man do and dare. He will carry his life in his hands! He will go to savages, among them to endure privations, or to die. Not from duty's imperious call. That is a spur that Christians do not always feel. But love—love to Jesus, love to men, gratitude to God for what He has done for them—zeal for man and desire to benefit his race will prompt devout and heroic action. Preach the Cross, minister, and you never need doubt that your sermons will be practical! The Atonement is the most practical of all Doctrines. Those who preach up works, play with projects and produce no profits—while those who preach up Christ cultivate holiness and reap fruits of righteousness unto life eternal!

Ask yourself, good Friend, have you ever found Christ to be a place for you to meet with God? If you have not, if you would meet God, go straightway to Christ, trust Him, and so shall you find God. "He that has seen Me has seen the Father," is His own declaration! Go to the Cross, O you who feel your burden of sin! There, all is done for you! The site of the Cross is the place where the Temple of joy is reared. Do you want to be at peace with your neighbor? Go you both to the altar where Jesus died—there your peace shall be cemented. Do you want to build up a Church in your neighborhood, any of you? Go to Christ and lean on His promise! He is the Rock on which you shall be made strong. None but Jesus—none but Jesus! Strive not to make yourselves better. Seek not to get to Heaven by merit—give up your foolish reasons and resolves. You may work at the treadmill, but you will get no higher—not an inch nearer to the stars will you be with all your efforts. Flat before the Cross, cast yourself, Sinner—rags and all, hard heart and all—

***"Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid myself of one foul blot!
To Him whose blood can cleanse each spot,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come."***

And coming thus to Christ you have come to happiness, to safety, to Heaven! So may your heart incline you. So may the Spirit lead you. So may Jesus save you! So may God, even the Father, accept you! And to the triune Jehovah shall be the praise forever! Amen.

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

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

ONE WORKER PREPARING FOR ANOTHER

NO. 2261

INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JUNE 19, 1892.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, AUGUST 14, 1890.

“Now behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the House of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight: for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and you may add thereto.”
1 Chronicles 22: 14.

[This sermon is intended for reading on *the first anniversary of the beloved preacher's birthday since his death*. While he was with us, he always looked for special contributions for the Stockwell Orphanage at this season. He did not seek birthday presents for himself, but he desired that all friends who wished to show their love to him would do so by helping to maintain his fatherless family of 500 children. We trust that no one will allow this useful institution to suffer because *his* voice can no longer plead for it, but that through this sermon each reader will hear him saying, “Dear Friend, the Orphanage still needs your loving and generous assistance. You have often helped it by your gifts in the past *and you may add hereto*—or if you have not given to it, others have—*and you may add thereto*.” Contributions will be gratefully received by the Treasurer, Spurgeon's Orphan Home, Stockwell Orphanage, Chapman Road, London. Collecting-cards and boxes may be obtained from the Secretary. The *Annual Festival* will be held on *Wednesday afternoon and evening, June 22nd*. All friends are invited to be present.—Postscript at bottom of first page of this sermon.]

THE building of the Temple is an admirable type of the building of the Church of God. I am afraid that there are some present with us at this time who have never helped to build the *spiritual* Temple for Christ. They are not, themselves, living stones. They are no part of God's spiritual house and they have never helped to bring their cedar, or iron, or gold to the great Builder of the Church. In fact, there may be some here who have rather helped to pull it down—some who have delighted to throw away the stones—and who have tried to hide from the Divine Builder the precious material which He intends to use in the sacred edifice. Judge your own hearts and if you cannot say that you are a living stone—if you have not helped to build up the Church of Christ—may you be granted Divine Grace to repent of your sin and may the Grace of God convert you! But if you are workers for the Lord. If your hearts are right with God, I think that I shall be able to say some things that will encourage you to work on,

even if you should not, for a time, see any immediate results from your work.

There were many who helped to build the Temple—David gathering the materials; Solomon, the master mason, by whose name the Temple would afterwards be called; the princes helping him in the great work; strangers, foreigners and aliens who dwelt throughout Israel and Judah—these all took their share and even the Tyrians and Zidonians had a part in the work! Now we have here many ministers of God and students, Davids and Solomons, but I pray that many who are strangers, as yet, may be enlisted in this holy service by our great Lord and King, and that some, who are farthest off from Christ—Tyrians and Zidonians who have gone far away from God—may be enabled, by Divine Grace, to contribute their share to this glorious work of building a house for the living God, a house not made of gold, silver, stone and timber, but a spiritual house for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit!

I. In considering our text, let us notice, first, that DAVID HAD ZEALOUSLY DONE HIS PART although he might not build the Temple. There are many servants of God whose names are little known, who, nevertheless, are doing a work that is essential to the building up of the Church of God. I have known many such who have never lived to realize any great success—their names have never been written upon any great temples that have been built—but, nevertheless, they have worthily done their part, even as David did.

You see, then, first, that *David had gathered the materials*. Many a man collects people together and yet he has not the fashioning of them. He is the founder of a Christian congregation, but he does not live to see many conversions. He gets together the raw materials upon which another shall work. He plows and he sows, but it needs another man to come and water the seed and, perhaps, another to gather the harvest. Still, the sower did his work and deserves to be remembered for what he did. David did his part of the work, in getting together the materials for the Temple.

Besides which, *he fashioned some of the materials*. He had the stone cut from the quarry and many of them shaped to take their places, by-and-by, in silence in the Temple, when it should be reared without sound of hammer or axe. So there are teachers and preachers who help to form the characters of their scholars and hearers by working away upon their minds and hearts. They will never build up a great Church, but they are knocking the rough edges off the stones. They are preparing and fashioning them and, by-and-by, the builder will come and make good use of them.

David had prepared the way for Solomon's Temple. It was by his fighting that the time of peace came in which the Temple could be erected. Though he is called a man of blood, yet it is necessary that the foes of Israel should be overthrown. There could be no peace till her adversaries had been crushed and David did that. You do not hear much about the men who prepare the way for others. Somebody else comes along and, apparently, does all the work—and *his* name is widely known and honored! But God remembers the heralds, the pioneers, the men who prepare the way, the men who, by casting out devils, routing grievous errors and working

necessary reforms, prepare the way for the triumphal progress of the Gospel.

Moreover, *David found the site for the Temple*. He discovered it. He purchased it and he handed it over to Solomon. We do not always remember the men who prepare the sites for the Lord's Temples. Luther is rightly remembered, but there were Reformers before Luther. There were *hundreds* of men and women who were burned for Christ, or who perished in prison, or who were put to cruel deaths for the Gospel. Luther comes when the occasion has been made for him and when a site has been cleared for him upon which to build the Temple of God. But God remembers all those pre-Reformation heroes! It may be your lot, dear Friend, to clear a site and to make the occasion for others—and you may die before you see even a cornerstone of your work laid—but it will be yours when it is finished and *God will remember what you have done!*

Further, *it was David who received the plans from God*. The Lord wrote upon his heart what He would have done. He told him even to the weight of the candlesticks and lamps—everything that was to be arranged. Solomon, wise as he was, did not plan the Temple. He had to borrow the designs from his father who received them directly from God. Many a man is far-seeing—he gets the plan of the Gospel into his heart, he sees a way in which great things can be done—and yet he is scarcely permitted to put his own hands to the work! Another will come, by-and-by, and will carry out the plan that the first one received—but we must not forget the first man who went into the secret place of the Most High and learned in the place of thunder what God would have His people do!

David did one thing more before he died—*he gave a solemn charge to others*. He charged Solomon, the princes and all the people to carry out the work of building the Temple. I revere the man who, in his old age, when there is weight in every syllable that he utters, concludes his life by urging others to carry on the work of Christ! It is something to gather about your last bed young men who have years of usefulness before them and to lay upon their consciousness and their heart the *duty* of preaching Christ Crucified—and winning the souls of men for the Lord.

So you see that David had done his part toward the building of the Temple. I should like to ask every Believer here, *Have you done your part?* You are a child of God. God has loved you and chosen you. You have been redeemed with precious blood. You know better than to think of working in order to save yourself. You are saved—but have you diligently done all that you can for your Lord and Master? It was well said, in the Prayer Meeting before this service, that there are several thousand members of this Church who could not preach—and there are some who do preach of whom the same thing might be said, for it is poor preaching, after all! And our Brother said in prayer, “Lord, help us who cannot preach to pray for the man who does!” Have you, dear Friend, who cannot preach, made a point of praying for the pastor of the Church to which you belong? It is a great sin on the part of Church members if they do not daily sustain their pastor by their prayers!

Then there is much else that you can do for Christ in your family, in your business, and in the neighborhood where you live. Could you go to

bed tonight and close your eyes for the last time, feeling, "I have finished the work which God gave me to do. I have done all that I could for the winning of souls"? I am afraid that I address some who have a talent wrapped in a napkin hidden away in the earth. My dear man, go home and dig it up before it gets altogether covered with rust, to bear witness against you! Take it up and put it out to heavenly interest, that your Lord may have what He is entitled to receive. O Christian men and women, there must be very much unused energy in the Church of God! We have a great dynamo that is never used! Oh, that each one would do his own part, even as David did his!

We shall soon be gone—our day lasts not very long. "The night comes when no man can work." Shall it be said of you, or of me, that we wasted our daylight and then, when the evening shadows came, we were uneasy and unhappy and, though saved by Divine Grace, we died with sad expressions of regret for wasted opportunities? It is not very long ago that I sat by the bedside of one who was wealthy—I might say *very wealthy*. I prayed with him. I had hoped to have found him rejoicing in the Lord, for I knew that he was a child of God, but he was a child of God with a little malformation about the fingers. He could never open his hand as he ought to have done. As I sat by his side, he said, "Pray God, with all your might that I may live three months, that I may have the opportunity of using my wealth in the cause of Christ." He did not live much more than three hours after he said that. Oh, that he had woke up a little sooner to do for the Master's Church and cause what he ought to have done! Then he would not have had that regret to trouble him in his last hours. He knew the value of the precious blood and he was resting in it—and I had great joy in knowing that all his hope and all his trust were in his Lord—and he was saved—but it was with a great deal of regret and trembling. I would spare any of you who have wealth such trouble on your dying bed.

If there is a young man here who has the ability to preach the Gospel, or to be doing something for Christ, but he is doing nothing, I am sure that it will be a pain to him one of these days. When conscience is thoroughly awakened and his heart is getting nearer to God than it has been, he will bitterly regret that he did not avail himself of every occasion to talk of Christ and seek to bring souls to Him. I should like these practical thoughts to go round these galleries and through this area, till some men and women shall say, "We have not done our part, as David did. But, by God's Grace, we will do so and He shall have all the praise."

That is my first head, then—David had zealously done his part.

II. But, secondly, there is a remarkable fact in the text, DAVID HAD DONE HIS PART IN TROUBLE. Read it—"Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the House of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold" and so on. In the margin of your Bibles you will find the words, "in my poverty." It is strange that David should talk about *poverty* when his gifts amounted to many millions of pounds!

David thought little of what he had prepared. He calls it poverty, I think, because it is the way of the saints to count anything that they do for God to be very little. The most generous men in the world think the least of what they give to God's cause. David, with his millions that he gives, says,

“In my poverty I have prepared for the House of the Lord.” As he looked at the gold and silver, he said to himself, “What is all this to God?” And the brass and the iron that could not be reckoned, it was so much and so costly—he thought it was all *nothing* to Jehovah who fills Heaven and earth, whose grandeur and Glory are altogether unspeakable! If you have done the most that you can for God, you will sit down and weep that you cannot do 10 times as much! You that do little for the Lord will be like a hen with one chick—you will think a great deal of it. But if you have a great number of works and you are doing much for Christ, you will wish that you could do a hundred times as much. Your song will be—

**“Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise!”**

Oh, to be multiplied a thousand-fold, that we might, anywhere and everywhere, serve Jesus with heart, mind, soul and strength! So, David here considers that what he did was very little.

Yet, *it was proof of his sincerity*—that he should be saving all this wealth and preparing for the House of his God in the time of trouble, was a proof of great sincerity. Some Christians need to have all sunshiny weather and the birds must sing all day and all night to please them. If they receive a rebuke or somebody seems a little cold to them, they will do no more. I have seen many who called themselves Christians, who were like a silly child at play, who says, when something offends him, “I won’t play anymore.” They run away at the first rough word that they hear! But David, in the day of his trouble, when his heart was ready to break, still went on with his great work of providing for the House of God.

Some who have attended this House of Prayer have been absent, and when we have enquired the reason, they have said that they had become so poor that they did not like to come. Oh, dear Friends, we would like to see you, however poor you are! Why, if you are in trouble, you should come all the more, for where could you go to find comfort better than to the House of God? Never, I pray you, stay away on account of poverty! David said that he had prepared for the House of his God in the time of his trouble—and that proved his sincerity. One said to me, “Ever since I have been a Christian, everything has seemed to go wrong with me.” Suppose that everything should be taken away from you—should you not be grateful that you have an eternal treasure in Heaven and that these losses, which might have broken your heart if you had not known the Savior, are now sent in heavenly discipline to you and are working for your good? It shows that a man is right with God when he can walk with Christ in the mire and in the slough! God does not want you to wear silver slippers and to walk on a well-mown, well-rolled grassy lawn all the way to Heaven.

David prepared for the House of the Lord in his trouble and I have no doubt that *it was a salve to his sorrow*. To have something to do for Jesus and to go right on with it is one of the best ways to get over a bereavement, or any other mental depression! If you can pursue some great objective, you will not feel that you are living for nothing. You will not sit down in despair, for, whatever your trouble may be, you will still have this to live for, “I want to help in building the Church of God, and I will do my part in it whatever happens to me. Come poverty or wealth, come sickness

or health, come life or death—as long as there is breath in my body—I will go on with the work that God has given me to do.” Do I speak to any who are in great trouble? If you are a Christian, the best advice that I can give you is this—get to work for Christ and you will forget your trouble. If you are not a Christian, I advise you to trust the Savior at once, for He is the only solace for spiritual sorrow.

Again, *it was an incentive to service* when David, in his trouble, prepared for the House of the Lord. There were many things in trouble that would tend to dampen his ardor and make him feel as if he could not hold on any longer. But he said to himself, “I must go on with this work for God. His Temple must be ‘exceedingly magnificent,’ and my son, Solomon, must build it, so I must go on gathering the materials.” So he just roused himself afresh and went on with his work with new earnestness whenever his trouble would otherwise have depressed him.

It must also have given an elevation to David’s whole life. To have a noble purpose and to pursue that purpose with all your might prevents your being like “dumb driven cattle,” lifts you out of the mist and fog of the valley and sets your feet upon the hilltop where you can commune with God. I would suggest to our younger friends that they should begin their Christian life with a high purpose and that they should never forget that purpose. And if trouble should come, they should say, “Let it come; my face is set like a flint to do this work to which my Lord has called me, and I will pursue it with all my might.” It may seem as if there were no spiritual help in such advice as this, but, believe me, there is. If God shall give you Grace to go on with your lifework, He will thereby give you Grace to overcome your life trouble.

You should be like your Master—ask not to have a smooth path and great success. Remember what a life of sorrow He lived. He was grief’s close acquaintance. Yet although He saw but a small Church rising before His bodily eyes, He knew that He was doing the work that God had given Him to do and He went on with it through agony and bloody sweat, through shame and spitting. He was not more in earnest when He rode in state through the streets of Jerusalem than He was when he hung on the Cross of Calvary! He was resolved to do His work and, in trouble, He did it, and He amassed treasure beyond all conception for the building of His Church. Riches of Grace and wonders of Glory He gathered together by His suffering and His death. If you would be like your Lord, you must be able to say with David, “Behold, in my trouble, I have prepared for the House of the Lord.” God give His troubled ones to enter into fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ in this respect!

III. I am glad that I have come to my third point, for my strength well-near fails me. What I have to say here is this—**DAVID’S WORK FITS ON TO THE WORK OF ANOTHER.** That should be a great joy to some of you who do not see much coming of what you are doing. Your work is going to fit on to somebody else’s work!

This is *the order of God’s Providence* in His Church. It does not happen that He gives a whole piece of work to one man, but He seems to say to him, “You go and do so much; then I will send somebody else to do the rest.” How this ought to cheer some of you—the thought that your work

may be no failure though, in itself, it may seem to be so—because it fits on to the work of somebody else who is coming after you and so it will be very far from a failure! You have sometimes seen a man take a contract to put in the foundations of a house and to carry it up to a certain height. He has done that. But he will not be the builder of that house—that will be the work of the next contractor who carries up the walls, puts on the roof, and so forth. Yes, but he who did the foundation work did a great deal, and he is as much the builder of the house as the man who carries up the walls! So, if you go to a country town or village and you preach the Gospel to a few poor folk, you may never have seemed very successful, but you have been preparing the way for somebody else who is coming after you.

I am told that my venerable predecessor, Dr. Rippon, used to often, in his pulpit, pray for somebody of whom he knew nothing—who would follow him in the ministry of the Church and greatly increase it. He seemed to have in his mind's eye some young man, who, in later years, would greatly enlarge the number of the flock—and he often prayed for him. He died and passed away to Heaven about the time that I was born. Older members of the Church have told me that they have read the answer to Dr. Rippon's prayers in the blessing that has been given to us these many years. If you keep your eyes open, you will see the same thing happen! You will notice how one shall do his work which shall be necessary to some larger work that somebody else will do after him! This is God's way, so that the second man, the Solomon coming after David, may do his work all the better because of what his father has done before him.

Solomon had not to spend years in collecting the materials for the Temple—he might not have got through the building if he had that task. His good old father had done all that for him—all that he had to do was to spend the money that David had gathered, work up the gold, silver, brass and iron, bring in the big stones and put them in their places, and build the House for God! I daresay that Solomon often thought gratefully of his father, David, and what he had done! And you and I, if God blesses us, ought always to think with thanksgiving of the Davids who went before us. If you have success in your class, my Sisters, remember that there was an excellent Christian woman who had the class before you. You come, young man, into the Sunday school, and you think that you must be somebody very great because you have had several conversions in your class. How about the Brother who had given up the class through ill-health? You took *his* place—who knows which of you will have the honor at the Last Great Day?

I was about to say, Who cares? For we do not live for honor, we live to serve God! And if I can serve God best by digging out the cellar and you can serve God best by finishing out that ornamental bay window, my Brother, you go on with your bay window and I will go on with my cellar, for what does it matter what we do so long as the house is built and God is glorified? It is the way of God in Providence to set one man to do part of a work which pieces on to that of another man!

But *this is a terrible blow at self*. Self says, "I like to begin something on my own and I like to carry it out. I do not want any interference from other people." A friend proposed, the other day, to give you a little help in

your service. You looked at him as if he had been a thief! You do not need any help. You are quite up to the mark—you are like a wagon and four horses—and a dog under the wagon as well! There is nothing about you that is needed—you need no help from anybody—you can do all things almost without the help of God! I am very sorry for you if that is your opinion. If you ever get into God's service, He may say to you, "You shall never begin *anything*, but shall always come in as the second man." Or, "You shall never *finish* anything. You shall always be getting ready for somebody else." It is well to have an ambition not to build upon another man's foundation, but do not carry that idea too far! If there is a good foundation laid by another man and you can finish the structure, be thankful that he has done his part and rejoice that you are permitted to carry on his work. It is God's way of striking a blow at your personal pride by allowing one man's work to fit on to another's.

I believe that *it is good for the work to have a change of workers*. I am glad that David did not live any longer, for he could not have built the Temple. David must die. He has had a good time of service. He has gathered all the materials for the Temple. Solomon comes, with young blood and youthful vigor, and carries on the work. Sometimes the best thing that some of us old folks can do is to go home and go to Heaven—and let some younger man come and do our work. I know that there are a great many lamentations about the death of Dr. So-and-So, and Mr. So-and-So, but why? Do you not think that, after all, God can find as good men as those that He has already found? He made those good men and He is not short of power—He can make others just as good as they have been!

I was present at a funeral where I heard a prayer that rather shocked me. Some Brother had said that God could raise up another minister equal to the one that was in the coffin. But prayer was offered by another man who said that this preacher had been eyes to his blindness, feet to his lameness and I do not know what beside. And then he said, "Your poor unworthy dust does not think that You ever can or will raise up another man like him." So *he* had not an Omnipotent God! But you and I have—and with an Omnipotent God, it is for the good of the work that David should go to his rest and that Solomon should come in and carry on the work!

Certainly, *this creates unity in the Church of God*. If we all had a work of our own and were shut up to do it, we should not know one another. But now I cannot do my work without your help, my dear Friends, and, in some respects, you cannot do your work without my help. We are members, one of another, and one helps the other. I hope that I shall never have to do without you. God bless you for all your efficient help! In many Christian works you will have to do without me, one of these days, but that will not matter. There will be somebody who will carry on the work of the Lord and, so long as the work goes on, what does it matter who does it? God buries the workman, but Satan, himself, cannot bury the work! The work is everlasting, though the workmen die. We pass away, as star by star grows dim, but the Eternal Light is never fading. God shall have the victory! His Son shall come in His Glory! His Spirit shall be poured out among the people and though it is neither this man, nor that, nor the

other, God will find the man to the world's end who will carry on His cause and give Him the Glory!

This leaves a place for those who come after. One thing David said to Solomon I like very much, "You may add thereto." I have quoted that, sometimes. When the collection has been rather small, I have said to each of our friends who were counting the money, "You may add thereto." It is not at all a bad text for a collection sermon, but it may also be used in many other ways!

Here are certain preachers of the Gospel. Cannot I put my hand on some young man's shoulder and say to him, "You may add thereto. You have a good voice—you have an active brain—begin to speak for God. There are numbers of godly men in the Gospel ministry! If you are called of God, you may add thereto." We have a good Sunday school, though some of you have never seen it. We have a number of loving and earnest teachers—"you may add thereto." Go and teach likewise—or engage in some other work for which the Lord has qualified you.

I wonder whether there is an unconverted man here this evening, or an unconverted woman whom God has ordained to bless, and to whom He will speak tonight—some stranger whom He will bring in by His almighty Grace, some servant of the devil who shall, tonight, be made a servant of Christ? My Master has a large number of servants—"you may add thereto." If you will yield yourself to Christ, you may come and help God's people. We need recruits! We are always needing them. May God lead some who have been on the side of sin and self to come out and say, "Set my name down among God's people! By the Grace of God I am going to be on Christ's side and help to build His Temple." Come along, my Brother. Come along, my Sister. We are glad for your help! The work is not yet all done—you are not too late to fight the Lord's battles, nor to win the crown of the victors! The Lord has a large army of the Soldiers of the Cross, but, "you may add thereto." God save you! Christ bless you! The Spirit inspire you! May it be so with very many, for Christ's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **1 CHRONICLES 21:25-30; 22.**

David was commanded to go to Ornan, or Araunah, the Jebusite, to raise an altar unto the Lord on his threshing floor. There had been a terrible plague in Jerusalem in consequence of David's great sin in numbering the people. They were falling by the thousands by the sword of the Angel of Vengeance. David went up to the threshing floor of Ornan on Mount Moriah. Ornan was willing to *give* it to him, but he determined to buy it. We read in the 25th verse—

Verses 25-28. *So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD; and He answered him from Heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. There was the place for the Temple—where the angel sheathed his sword!*

Christ Jesus, in His great Atonement, is the Cornerstone of the Temple where Divine Justice sheathes its sword. There let the House of God be built! Every true Church of God is founded on the glorious doctrine of the atoning Sacrifice. It was a threshing floor, too, and God has built His Church on a threshing floor. Depend upon it, the flail will always be going in every true Church to fetch out the wheat from the chaff. We must have tribulation if we are in the Church of God. The threshing floor will always be needed until we are taken up to the heavenly garner above.

29, 30-22:1. *For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at the season in the high places of Gibeon. But David could not go before it to enquire of God; for he was afraid because of the sword of the Angel of the LORD. Then David said, This is the House of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.* Now he knew where the Temple was to be built and, of a certainty, he had discovered that long-predestined site of which God had said, "Here will I dwell." This was the very hill whereon Abraham offered up his son Isaac—a hill, therefore, most sacred by Covenant to the living God! He delighted to remember the believing obedience of His servant, Abraham, and there He would have His Temple built.

2. *And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel; and he set masons to hew worked stones to build the House of God.* Observe, here, a very gracious eye to us who are Gentiles. The Temple was built on the threshing floor of a Jebusite—Ornan was *not* of the seed of Israel—but one of the accursed Jebusites! It was his land that must be bought for the Temple and now David would employ the strangers who lived in the midst of Israel, but were not of the chosen race, to quarry the stones for the House of God. There was a place for Gentiles in the heart of God and they had a share in the building of His Temple!

3, 4. *And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joinings; and brass in abundance without weight; also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.* Here are the Gentiles, again—the Zidonians and the men of Tyre—those who went down to the sea in ships, who had no part nor lot with Israel. These were to bring the cedar wood to David. What an opening of doors of hope there was for poor castaway Gentiles in that fact!

5. *And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the House that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it.* This was beautiful and thoughtful on David's part. It might be too great a strain upon the young man to collect the materials for the Temple as well as to build it. Therefore David will take his part and prepare the materials for the House of the Lord. If we cannot do one thing, let us do another! But, somehow, let us help in the building of the Church of God. The Church today seems but a poor thing, but it is to be "exceedingly magnificent." The glory of the world is to be the Church of God and the Glory of the Church of God is the Christ of God! Let us do as much as we can to build a spiritual house for our Lord's indwelling.

5-7. *So David prepared abundantly before his death. Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD God of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God. And it was well that it was in his mind. God often takes the will for the deed. If you have a large-hearted purpose in your mind, cherish it and do your best to carry it out. But if for some reason you should never be permitted to carry out your own idea, it shall be equally acceptable to God, for it was in your heart.*

8. *But the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, You have shed blood abundantly, and have made great wars: you shall not build an house unto My name, because you have shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. In very much of that fighting David had been faultless, for he fought the battles of the people of God. Still, there are some things that men are called to do for which they are not to be condemned—but they disqualify them for higher work. It was so in David's case. He had been a soldier and he might *help* to build the Temple by collecting the materials for it, but he must not build it.*

9. *Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest. God's Church is to be a place of rest. God's Temple was built by "a man of rest."*

9. *And I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quietness unto Israel in his days. Then the House of the Lord would be built and no stain of blood would be upon it. The only blood therein should be that of holy sacrifices, symbolical of the great Sacrifice of Christ.*

10, 11. *He shall build an house for My name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever. Now, my son, the LORD be with you; and prosper you, and build the House of the LORD your God, as He has said of you. May such a blessing come upon every young man here! May the Lord be with you, my sons! May the Lord prosper you and may He make you a builder of His House in years to come!*

12. *Only the LORD give you wisdom and understanding and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the Law of the LORD your God. How much wisdom will be needed by the young Brothers present who hope to be builders of the House of God? When the Lord says to you, "Ask what I shall give you," ask for Divine wisdom, ask to be taught of Him, and ask that you may have Grace to do His will in all things.*

13. *Then shall you prosper, if you take heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses and concerning Israel: be strong and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. It is a great thing for a Christian to keep his courage up—and especially for a builder of the Church of God to be always brave—and with a stout heart to do God's will, come what may.*

14. *Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the House of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and you may add thereto. We are unable to tell exactly the amount of precious metal prepared by David. We have to take into account the value of gold and silver in his day—it was*

probably not so great as it is now. We know this much—it was an enormous sum which David had gathered for the building of the House of God.

15. *Moreover there are workmen with you in abundance.* We must have the workmen! They are more precious than the gold! They cannot be put down at any sum of silver—“there are workmen with you in abundance.”

15. *Hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.* God will find for His Church enough men and the right sort of men, as long as He has a Church to be built. But He would have us pray Him to send forth laborers. We forget that prayer and, therefore, we have to lament that there are so few faithful servants of God. Cry to the Lord about the lack of laborers—He can soon supply as many as are needed!

16. *Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise therefore, and be doing, and the LORD be with you.* A very nice text for stirring up idle Church members who are well content with being spiritually fed, but who are doing nothing for the Lord—“Arise therefore, and be doing, and the LORD be with you!”

17, 18. *David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon his son, saying, Is not the LORD your God with you?* What a good reason for working! What an admirable reason for giving! What an excellent reason for helping with the work! “Is not the LORD your God with you?”

18. *And has He not given you rest on every side?* If He gives you rest, you are to take no rest, but to get to His work. He is the best workman for God who enjoys perfect rest. It is always a pity to go out to preach or teach unless you have perfect rest towards God. When your own heart is quiet, and your spirit is still, then you can work for God with good hope of success.

18. *For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand; and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before His people.* The fighting is over—now go ahead with your building!

19. *Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God.* Do not go to build a House for God and think that is all that is required. You need spiritual communion with God and you will not do even the common work of sawing and planing and building aright unless you seek God and are in fellowship with Him!

19. *Arise therefore, and build you the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the House that is to be built to the name of the LORD.*

May God teach us some lessons by this reading! Amen.

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THE BEST OF ALL—GOD IS WITH US

NO. 2471

A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, AUGUST 23, 1896.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, AUGUST 5, 1886.

“Is not the LORD your God with you?”
1 Chronicles 22:18.

WHILE we were reading this chapter you must all have been struck with the melting of one man's life into another. Here is David most anxious about the building of the Temple at Jerusalem—he is not permitted to erect it, himself, and, therefore, he sets to work with diligent care to gather together the gold and the silver, the brass and the iron, the timber and the stone that would be required. He also instructed the workmen who would be needed so that, when he was gone, and his son, Solomon, had ascended the throne, the Temple might be built. Did David live in vain? Can it be truly said that he failed in the grandest project of his life? Assuredly not! He did all that he was *permitted* to do and, by making those elaborate preparations, he was really the means of the building of the Temple.

Let every man and every woman among us judge of our life, not merely from that little narrow piece of it which we, ourselves, live, for that is but a span, but let us judge it by its connection with *other lives* that may come after our own! If we cannot do all we wish, let us do all we *can*, in the hope that someone who shall succeed us may complete the project that is so dear to our heart. That is a blessed prayer which Moses wrote in the 90th Psalm, “Let your work appear to your servants, and your glory to their children.” We shall be quite satisfied to do the work and scarcely see the glory if we may but know that in another generation the work that we shall have done shall produce glory to God which shall be seen among the sons of men! No, Elijah, you must not do all the Lord's work—but your mantle must fall upon Elisha and with it shall come a double portion of your spirit—and he shall work twice as many miracles as you did and shall do greater things for the Lord God of Israel!

I do not think it ought ever to be any question of ours what people will do after we are dead and gone. The God who did very well without us, before we were born, will do very well without us after we are dead! It is enough for us to do to-day's work in the day—let somebody else do to-morrow's work if we are not spared to do it. Today do that which comes to your hand and be not dreaming of the future. Put down that telescope—you have nothing to do with peering into the next hundred years! The important matter is not what you spy with your eyes, but what you *do* with your hands! Do it, and do it at once, with all your might, believing that God will find somebody else to go on with the next piece of the work when you have finished your portion.

There is also another delightful thought, here, and that is the continuity of the Divine blessing. God was with David in the gathering together of the great stores of treasure for the building of the Temple, but then God was also with Solomon. Oh, what a mercy it is that God did not give all His Grace to other people before we came into the world! The God of Grace did not empty the whole horn of Grace upon the head of Whitefield or Wesley! He did not pour out all the blessings of His Spirit upon Romaine and John Newton, so as to leave nothing for us! No, and to the end of time He will be the same God as He was yesterday and as He is today. There is no break in the Lord's blessing—He has not ceased to be gracious—His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, nor is His ear heavy that He cannot hear. God buries His workmen, but His work goes on and He, the Great Worker, wearies not of it, nor shall He ever fail or be discouraged! All His everlasting purposes shall be accomplished and Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Therefore, let us be of good heart if we have been apt to look upon the future with fear. The Lord Jesus still lives and He will take care that His Church shall live and work on until He, Himself, shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God!

This text seems to me, dear Friends, to have a very immediate bearing upon ourselves. David is talking to Solomon and the princes of Israel about the building of a temple. *We* are not building a material temple, but we are building a *spiritual* temple. We do not believe in gorgeous architecture, nor in the expenditure of needless gold and silver upon the house wherein we meet to worship God, for we still hear our Lord and Master say, "The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We sing with Cowper—

***"Jesus, wherever Your people meet,
There they behold Your Mercy Seat.
Wherever they seek You, You are found,
And every place is hallowed ground."***

We believe that God is as much present beneath the blue sky, and out there in the street, as He is in any kind of building that we can erect for Him. It is very amazing that as soon as the Temple was built, true religion began to decline—the day when Solomon opened it was the culmination of the glory of true godliness in Israel—and from that hour it began to darken down into an awful night! Yet it was proper that there should be a Temple which, in its magnificence, should call for the respect of men towards God, being typical of that far greater Temple not made with hands, even the glorious Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We, however, are engaged in the building of a temple in a *spiritual* sense. God has sent His servants into the world to gather together for His beautiful house, stones hewn out of the quarry of nature to be shaped, polished and prepared for building into the Temple of His Grace. The Church is the living Temple of God, "exceedingly magnificent." It is a wondrous idea that men's hearts and souls can be blended together and built up into a spiritual Temple wherein God will dwell. This Temple is to be built of stones taken from the quarry of nature and, God being with

us, you and I are to go out and to hew out and shape and prepare the stones for the building of this house of the Lord which shall endure forever.

In order to do this, we certainly need the Presence and the help of God, for what can we do without Him? In the work of conversion, what can be done without the Spirit of God? I would like anybody who thinks he can convert another person without Divine help, to try and do it, and see what a wretched failure he will make of it, or what a dire hypocrisy he will produce by his apparent success! We must have God with us for this work—we cannot create a spark of Grace—how, then, can we create a new heart and a right spirit? Conversion is an absolute creation, regeneration is a miracle of Divine Grace, the works of the Spirit of God—and altogether beyond our power! We need the Spirit of God to aid us in the building of a Temple for God, but, Brothers, with the Lord's Presence, we can do it!

The text says, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" I will go any length with the Brother who likes to preach upon the incapacity of man, the utter and entire weakness of the creature apart from the Creator. You cannot, I think, exaggerate there, but do not always keep dwelling upon your own weakness—remember that when you are weak, you are strong if you do but fall back upon the Omnipotence of God! "Is not the Lord your God with you?" Has He sent us into the world with the Gospel and will He not be with us in the preaching of it? Has He sent us to be the means of seeking souls and made our hearts to ache because of the sins that men have committed against Him—and will He not be with us? Do not let us talk as if we had to live and labor without our God! We have been brought to know Him, we have been made members of the mystical body of Christ. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, if we are what we profess to be—the Church of the living God—will He not occupy the house that He has built? "Is not the Lord your God with you?" Then, what can be too difficult for you?

Now, dear Friends, I shall treat our text, first, as *an assertion*, for, oftentimes in Scripture, a question is one of the strongest modes of assertion when it is anticipated that to that question there can be no other reply than, "Yes." Secondly, I shall treat it as a *question*, for there are some here to whom it is a question—some doubting, trembling ones to whom we must say, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" When I have handled it, first as an assertion, and then as a question, I will briefly use it as an *argument*—"Is not the Lord your God with you?" Therefore, arise and do something! Something great and glorious ought to be done by men who have so Divine a Helper with them!

I. First, then, this is AN ASSERTION.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, the Lord our God is with us! I do not entertain any doubt upon that point and I hope you do not. Is the Lord your God? Is He your God by a holy Covenant? Have you entered into bonds of fellowship with Him? Have you taken Him to be your God by trust, by love and by the consecration of your body, soul and spirit to Him? Can you say of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, "This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our Guide even to death"? Very well, then, if He is your God, He is with you. Do you ask how I know that?

Well, I know it, first, because *He has pledged Himself to be with His people*. “He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” Is not the Lord your God with you, then? Assuredly He is, if He keeps His promise! And you do not doubt His fidelity, do you? Can He forget His promise, or, remembering it, will He treat it as if it were mere verbiage, words without meaning? There are men who can do that, we know—but does God act so? Can you suppose it possible? No, not for an instant! Then, as He has said, “I will never leave you, nor forsake you,” He will keep His word! We say, “Never is a long day,” and so it is, for it covers all time. And the Lord has said, “I will never leave you”—in poverty, in sickness, in slander and reproach, in depression of spirit, in the hour of death, in the day of judgment—“I will never leave you, nor forsake you.” He has pledged Himself to this and God forbid that we should, for even a moment, doubt that He will keep His word! To Believers in their Church capacity, there is a pledge given by the blessed Lord Jesus, Himself, which refers especially to His work—“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go you, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen.”

“Lo, I am with you,” says Christ! As much as to say, “Not only do I *promise* to be with you, but I *am* with you, I am already fulfilling My promise to you! For the past, for the present and for the future, ‘Lo, I am with you always.’” Let not any Church of God hesitate to answer this question, “Is not the Lord your God with you?” If He is your God, He is with you as individuals and He is *especially* with you as a Christian community going forth to preach His Gospel to every creature! That ought to be enough, surely? He has pledged Himself to be with us.

Next, *He is pleased to be with us*. It is the good pleasure of God to be with His people. He is our Father and do not fathers love to be with their children? The loving father says, when he has little ones at home, “I will get back from my business early that I may spend my evening with the family.” We feel ourselves happiest when, laying aside external cares, we leave the world and rest with our loved ones at home. And so is God at home with His people! As a Father, He delights in His children. Remember how Divine Wisdom said, “My delights were with the sons of men.” It is a wonderful thing to be able to say, but God takes a great deal more pleasure in us than we do in Him! Yet there seems in us nothing that can give Him pleasure, while in Him there is everything that can afford us delight. The Lord so loves His people that He is never far away from them. You know that dear relationship into which our Lord has entered with His Church—she is His bride, He loves her as He loves His own soul! In some respects, He loves her better than He loves Himself, for He gave Himself for her, and do you think that He is happy away from His bride, His spouse? It is not so! He says to her, “Let Me see your countenance, let Me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice and your countenance is comely.” And whenever she calls for Him, saying, “Let my Beloved come into His garden,” His quick answer is, “I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse.”

He so loves us that when we shut the door against Him, He stands and knocks and cries to us, “Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled, for My head is filled with dew and My locks with the drops of the night.” Do not think that He has gone from you when He loves you so as your Father and as the Husband of your soul! Moreover, He will be with His Church in her work because her work is His work—and wherever there is a heart on the earth, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, in sympathy and harmony with the heart of Christ, depend upon it—He is assuredly there, for that sympathy and that harmony are created by His very Presence. Well, then, as He has pledged Himself and He is, Himself, pleased to be with His people, we believe the assertion which is implied in the enquiry, “Is not the Lord your God with you?”

I hope also, beloved Brothers and Sisters, we can say that *we have had proofs that God is with us*. In this house we have had many plain proofs of the Lord’s Presence. If you could have been with me last Tuesday week and the Tuesday before that, it might have made your hearts ring for joy! All the bells of your soul would have given forth blessed chimes as you heard how God had saved one and another who had strolled in here as if by accident, and others who had come in great heaviness of heart, but who, here, found the Lord! Our ministry is nothing, but the Lord makes it something! He makes it everything to many souls and, blessed be His name for that! And you, Brothers and Sisters, in your labor and service for the Master, have brought many souls to Christ. Therefore I say to you, “Is not the Lord your God with you?” Assuredly He is, or you would not have beheld all this blessedness!

The Lord has proved His Presence with us by preserving us in the hour of temptation. Some of you who have been lately converted to God have had very fierce temptations since then. In this wicked city our young people—but I do not know that I need say *only* our young people—have been exposed to a furnace of temptation which has been seven times heated! The days in which we live are grievous to the last degree and if the Lord had not been with us, our soul would not have escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowler! Often our feet have well-near slipped and we would have fallen if the Lord had not been with us to preserve us. “Is not the Lord your God with you” when you have been kept alive with death so near? Assuredly He is!

Some of you also know that the Lord is with you because you have been so greatly comforted in time of trouble. A Sister said to me, the other day, “I could not have thought that I could have lived through the bereavements I have lately endured. When I used to think of the possibility of my husband’s death, it seemed to me that I must die with him.” Yet she is not dead and she does not despair—though she had to endure that bereavement and another as well, she said, “Oh, how good God was to me to sustain me as He did!” “Is not the Lord your God with you?” I know some dear friends who have experienced very great temporal trouble through heavy losses in these trying times, yet they are as happy as when they had 10 times as much! The little birds still sing at the window, the blue sky hovers overhead and the heart’s-ease still grows in their garden—and they love it well. Yes, dear Friends, the comforts that God gives us in times of deep trouble are a sufficient proof that He is with us!

Beside that, there have been times when we have been in the House of Prayer, or when we have been alone in our chamber, yes, in the middle of the night, sometimes, when pain has kept us from sleeping—when we have felt that we did not need to sleep—for we have been flooded with delight! Did you ever feel that deep calm which sometimes comes over a Believer when there seems to be no evil in the world, when we could not *invent* a doubt if we tried? When we could not have a dark thought concerning our Lord? After our Savior had been tempted in the wilderness, angels came and ministered to Him. Do you know what that experience is when there seem to be angels upstairs, downstairs and all through the house ministering to you? And your life seems set to the tune of a gentle Psalm and, instead of the sound of the trumpet calling you to battle, there is only the dulcet music of an instrument of 10 strings praising the God who has given you rest? So, when the question is put, “Is not the Lord your God with you?” you can answer, “Yes, that He is, and blessed be His holy name!”

Oh, what a blessing it is to live with a present God! If anyone says to me that there is no God, he might as well tell me that there is no air! I cannot see it, but I know that I am living in it, and that I could not live without it, so, “in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” The Lord is Life, Light, Love, Liberty and All in All to some of us. “Is not the Lord your God with you?” is no question to *us*, for we know that He *is* with us and we glorify His holy name that it is so!

II. Now, secondly, we must devote a few minutes to those poor weary souls to whom this is A QUESTION—“Is not the Lord your God with you?”

“Oh,” says one, “I have no joy! I have very little rest! I have nothing but trouble—deep calls to sleep at the noise of his waterspouts and I am so weak, so feeble, so faint, I cannot imagine that the Lord is with me! I see no signs of His Presence, neither do I perceive even a star of hope amid the dense darkness of the night.” Listen, dear Friend, have you taken Him to be your God? Are you trusting Him? Are you determined to rely on nothing but the finished work of Christ? Then He *is* with you though you do not perceive His Holy Spirit—in the deepest darkness He is with you!

If the Lord had not been with you, *your despondency might have become despair*. If He had not been with you, your despair might have gone still further. You are yet alive, remember! You have not laid violent hands upon yourself, as you might have done if you had been left to yourself. God is with you, keeping you, even while you live on the very brink of despair. I know that there are some here who were sure God was with them in their darkness because it did not grow any darker. It was a black night, but still, it was not altogether dark—there was a gleam of light left. Ah, yes, it was your gracious Lord who gave you that little ray of hope!

Tell me, sad Heart, what is it that causes you to hate sin and makes you so wretched without the Presence of the Savior? It is because *you have His Presence though you do not know it*. You have, perhaps, seen your boy play with a magnet and a needle—the needle is above the table and the magnet, though out of sight, acts upon it—the needle *feels* the attraction of the magnet and moves after it. and those desires, those

groans, those cries, that inward anguish, that self-despair, that horror of great darkness—all these *prove* that God is secretly working with you and drawing you to Himself. He is with you and if you take Him afresh to be your God—if you come and trust in His promises, I should not wonder but that, even now, your midnight shall burst into a glorious meridian! The Lord send it to you right speedily! Only, rest in Him.

The Lord is not far from any of us—a cry will fetch Him—He will hear even a groan and He will quickly come to the rescue of those who call upon Him. Do but trust Him, do but take Him to be yours and then He cannot leave you! “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you.” There is such love in God’s heart towards the very feeblest of His people that He *cannot* turn away from them! Mother, is it not so in your family, that the child who is most ill, most weak, most full of pain, is the one who is best remembered by you? While you have been sitting here, this evening, you have not thought of John and Thomas, who have grown up and gone out into the world, and are strong and healthy, but you have thought of poor little Jane, whose spine is injured, or of the little boy who has to lie still so many hours a day and who suffers so much. I am sure that while I have been preaching, your thoughts have been trotting home to that dear child and you have been thinking much of him. Well, remember that, “Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him.”

And remember, also, how the Lord takes the mother’s part as well as the father’s and says, “As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.” These are cheering Truths of God for those who raise the question! I wish they could enable you to get rid of that question and to know assuredly that the Lord is with you. I remember how Mr. Joseph Irons used to say of some who were always hoping, “It is all very well to have hope, but do not keep on hoping and hoping, or hopping and hopping, but put both feet down and begin to run.” I trust you may do the same and get beyond the “hoping” and the “hopping” to the full assurance of faith—

***“And are You with us, gracious Lord,
To dissipate our fear?
Do You proclaim Yourself our God,
Our God forever near?”***

Then, as Doddridge continues to sing—

***“Why droop our hearts, why flow our eyes,
While such a voice we hear?
Why rise our sorrows and our fears,
While such a Friend is near?”***

III. Our last point is that here is AN ARGUMENT—“Is not the Lord your God with you?”

It is a reason for us to *arise and be doing something*. You observe how it is put in the 16th verse, “Arise therefore, and be doing something, and the Lord shall be with you”—so it is in the original. Let all true Christian people arise and be doing something, because the Lord is with them! Perhaps, I need not say much to my own people about that matter, for most of you are doing what you can for your Lord. There is a Brother who is going out to Australia—when he came to bid me farewell, he gave me a

little sketch of his life during his 23 years here. It has been a time of incessant activity in the Church and he said to me, “Yes, Sir, you drove me out to work for Christ. You would not let me be idle. You said, ‘The worst kind of lazy people are lazy Christians.’ And you also said, ‘To come here twice on a Sunday and hear me preach, and to be doing nothing for the Master, is not at all the right thing.’” Then the good man added, “I do not often get to hear you, now. I have been secretary of a Sunday school for some time and I often go out preaching, so I cannot come to the Tabernacle.”

I delight in so many of the members not coming to hear me because they are doing the Master’s work elsewhere! I know that in many churches the main thing is to sit down in a corner pew and be fed. Well, of course, every creature needs to be fed—from the pig upwards! You must excuse my mentioning that unclean animal, for he is the creature whose principal business is to eat and he is not a nice creature at all—and I do not at all admire Christian people whose one business is to eat and eat! Why, I have heard them even grumble at a sermon that was meant for the conversion of sinners because they thought there was no food for them in it! They are great receptacles of food, but, dear Christian people, do not any of you live merely to eat—not even on heavenly food! If God is with you, as you say He is, then get to His work!

“What shall I do?” asks one. That is no business of *mine*—you have to find work for yourself! He who works for God does not need to go to this man, or that man and enquire, “What shall I do?” Why, do the first thing that comes to hand, but get to work for your Master! Many Christians live in country villages where there is no preaching of the Gospel—then, preach it yourself, Brother! “Oh, but I could not!” Well then, get somebody who can! “But we have no Chapel,” says one. What do you need with a Chapel on these bright days? Preach on the village green, where the old trees that were cut down a year or two ago are still lying and will serve for seats. “I could not preach,” says one, “I would break down.” That would be a capital thing to do—break-down sermons are often the best for breaking down other people as well as the preacher! Some of the greatest enterprises in the world have sprung from very little causes—the forest of the mightiest oaks in the world was once only a handful of acorns! Oh, that we might all do what we can for Him who laid down His life for us and who still continues to abide in us, to be our joy and our strength!

David also exhorted these people to *set their hearts upon what they had to do*—“Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God.” Oh, how much there is of our religion that is a kind of celestial going to sleep! The preacher preaches as if he had not really awakened yet—and the people hear in the same fashion! Are there not, even in our Churches, many who, if a guinea were to jingle, would be sufficiently wide awake to look for it—but when the Gospel is being preached, they are not thoroughly awakened? As to speaking to strangers and saying a word for the Master, that has not yet occurred to them!

“I do not know what I can do,” says one. Brother, *if the text is true, I do not now know what you cannot do!* The text says, “Is not the Lord your God with you?” “Well, I could not.” “Could not—could not”—do you put

God and “could not” together? I think it would be infinitely better to put God and, “can,” or God and, “shall,” together! If God is with us, what can be impossible, what can be even *difficult* for us? God being with His people, “he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them.”

I cannot speak longer to you, nor is there any need that I should do so. If you Christians will all go out and seek to save sinners, you will be prolonging my sermon—not only for a few minutes, but for many a day and many a year to come! God be with you, Brothers and Sisters, in this holy service! And if any to whom I am speaking are obliged to say, “No, God is *not* with *me*, I am not saved,” remember that the way of salvation is to trust the Lord Jesus Christ! If you trust Him, He is with you and you are saved, for, “he that believes on the Son has everlasting life.” God is with you if you are trusting Him—and you may go forth in His might to serve the Lord who has redeemed you! God bless you, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—46 (VERSION II), 338, 766.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
1 CHRONICLES 21:7-30; 22.**

Chapter 21:7. *And God was displeased with this thing.* This numbering of Israel which David had carried out in spite of Joab’s protest—“God was displeased with this thing.”—

7-15. *Therefore He smote Israel. And David said to God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech You, do away the iniquity of Your servant; for I have done very foolishly. And the LORD spoke to Gad, David’s Seer, saying, Go and tell David, saying, Thus says the LORD, I offer you three things: choose one of them, that I may do it to you. So Gad came to David, and said to him, Thus says the LORD, Choose you either three years famine; or three months to be destroyed before your foes, while that the sword of your enemies overtakes you; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise yourself what word I shall bring again to Him that sent me. And David said to Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hands of the LORD; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hands of man. So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and He repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now your hand.* See the power of the mercy of God? Even when the angel has drawn his sword and is already executing the Lord’s just judgments, God’s mercy interposes and holds back the blade of death. Should we not love the Lord for His great long-suffering toward us? “He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.”

15, 16. *And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between the earth and the Heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel,*

who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. This was the very best clothing and the very best posture for men who were under the chastising hand of God! They had put on sackcloth and they had fallen upon their faces. O guilty Sinner, if God's sword of vengeance is drawn against you, you cannot do better than put sackcloth upon your soul, if not upon your body, and prostrate yourself before the Most High!

17. *And David said to God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that has sinned and done evil, indeed, but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray You, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on Your people, that they should be plagued.* Here we see David at his best—and what a true patriot he is! He interposes himself, willing, rather, that *he* should be destroyed than that the people should die. This was the spirit of Moses when he said to the Lord, “If you will forgive their sin...but if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written.” And this was the spirit of Paul when he wrote, “I could wish that I, myself, were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” There are times when our great love for others will overflow all bounds of moderation—when we shall say, and say from our hearts—what we would not have *dared* to utter in cooler moments!

18-27. *Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD. And Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground. Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar therein to the LORD: you shall grant it to me for the full price: that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Ornan said to David, Take it to you, and let my lord the king do that which is good is his eyes: lo, I give you the oxen, also, for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all. And king David said to Ornan, No; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD, and He answered him from Heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. See what was done by David's intercession and sacrifice? And remember that there is a greater David who, with a richer Sacrifice and mightier intercession, sheathes the sword of God, so that His people are spared!*

28-30. *At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon. But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.*

Chapter 22:1. *Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel.* From that moment this place was set apart as the site of the future temple and the center of the hopes of the people of God. And, dear Friends, what better site could have been selected than the spot where the angel sheathed his sword, where prayer was heard and where sacrifice was accepted? And now, today, you and I have only one Temple, and that Temple is the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Well-Beloved, for in Him the sword is sheathed! In Him the Sacrifice is accepted and in Him intercession still prevails!

2-4. *And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel and he set masons to hew worked stones to build the House of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joints and brass in abundance without weight; also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.* See, a great deliverance brings a great offering! Because God had bid the angel sheath his sword, there is to be a Temple commenced and David is busy preparing for it. O you who have been saved from death and Hell, what can you render to God for all His benefits toward you?

5. *And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death.* If he might not build the Temple, he would, at least, gather the materials for it. So, let us try to do all we can in the cause of God. There is said to have been a king who felt so grateful to God for some special favor that he determined to build a great temple and pay for it all himself—no one was to help at all in it. One night, in his dreams, he was told that the honor of building that temple would not belong to him as he desired, and he thought within himself, “To whom, then, can it be, for I have not allowed any person to work for me without full wage and I have done it all?” At last he discovered that there was a poor woman in his kingdom who also loved his God and, not daring to help in the temple building, she had brought little handfuls of hay to give to the horses that had dragged the stones, so hers was to be the greater honor! If you may not do all you would, do all you *can*, for God will accept it of you if it is rendered by a willing mind and a loving heart.

6-9. *Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD GOD of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My Son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house to the name of the LORD my God; but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, You have shed blood abundantly and have made great wars: you shall not build an house to My name because you have shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon—* That is, peaceful, or peaceable—

9-14. *And I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.*

Now, my Son, the LORD be with you; and prosper you, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said of you. Only the LORD give you wisdom, and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you take heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. Now, behold in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber, also, and stone have I prepared; and you may add thereto. At the very lowest calculation, David had laid up eighteen millions of money for the building of this house for the Lord! It was an enormous sum and he must have been long in saving it, yet he gives Solomon leave to increase it—"You may add thereto." I like that way of putting the matter! And when some of you see good help rendered to the cause of God by others who are able to do more than you can, do not, therefore, say, "I need not give anything," but remember what David said to Solomon, "You may add thereto." There is room in the treasury of God for your mite as well as David's millions!

15. *Moreover there are workmen with you in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. God will always find the right man in time for His own work! In His Church there are "all manner of cunning men for every manner of work."*

16-19. *Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise therefore, and be doing something, and the LORD be with you. David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon, his son, saying, Is not the LORD your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hands and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before His people. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God. Arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.*

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

**THE PASTOR'S RETURN.
THREE SPECIALLY-SELECTED SERMONS TO HIS
CHURCH, CONGREGATION, READERS AND FRIENDS,
CONSISTING OF
A RETROSPECT [No. 1882]
A PROSPECT [No. 1883]
AND AN
EXHORTATION.**

**EXHORTATION—“SET YOUR HEART”
NO. 1884**

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

*“Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God.”
1 Chronicles 22:19.*

THIS exhortation may be most fitly directed to those who are already saved. It was first given to the elders of Israel and we would gladly hope that they were already good men and true, but, secondly, the language might be very fitly addressed to the unconverted. There may be a little straining in this latter case, for we can hardly call the Lord, their God as yet, but still we shall venture to say to the unconverted who have come up with God's people, “Set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God.”

I. Let us take it, first, in ITS REFERENCE TO GOD'S OWN PEOPLE. You have already found the Lord. There is a sense in which you have not to seek Him, for you already know Him, but, in another sense, you are still to seek Him, for seeking the Lord is a description of the whole of the Believer's life. After he has found God as his salvation, he has to seek him as his Friend, as his Sanctifier, as his Example. Until they come to that glorious perfection which belongs to the better world, Christian men have something, still, to seek.

Our first enquiry is, “*What are they to seek?*” Beloved Friends, I say to you, as David said to the princes of Israel, “Seek the Lord your God.” *Do it by endeavoring to obey Him in everything.* Let it be our study to test everything that we do by God's Holy Word. Let us not willfully sin, either in commission or in omission. Let us be very particular to seek out the will of the Lord so as to fulfill not only commands which are plain, but those about which there is a question. In the service of God nothing is little and, loyalty to the great Royalty of God comes out in tenderness of conscience concerning little things. He that carelessly offends in trifles, shall fall by little and little. The greatest catastrophes in moral life come not usually all of a sudden, but by slow degrees. The dry rot enters into the timbers of

the house of human character—and when it has silently worked its mischief—the house falls with a shock.

It is not the wind of temptation that brings it down—that may be the apparent instrument—but the sly, secret rot that has all the while been going on, is the real destroyer. Therefore let us pledge ourselves unto God to live more and more watchfully, seeking the Lord with our heart and soul in everything—in private, in the family, in business and in the House of God. He that walks hastily without consideration will assuredly err, but he that takes counsel of God and watches to know what the will of the Master may be, shall walk uprightly and surely. O Christian, set your heart to this, that the Lord Jesus is your *absolute* Lord and Master and that, at every point, you will scrupulously endeavor to do His will, yielding a cheerful obedience as the fruit of the Spirit within your soul!

Seek the Lord, also, as David wanted these princes to do, in *the building up of His Temple*. He says, "Set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God. Arise, therefore, and build the sanctuary of the Lord." Beloved, it ought to be the main business of the life of every Christian to build up the Church! It ought to be mine and I trust that it is. I know that this is the main business of many of my Brothers and Sisters here, since for its sake they forego many an hour of leisure and to it they give the best of their faculties. We are sent here on purpose to build the city of God which is His Church. The foundations have been laid in the fair vermilion of our Savior's precious blood. Stone upon stone, the walls have risen. It is ours to help with the construction, in quarry or in forest, with saw or with axe. If we cannot do great works, we must weave the hangings, or fashion the pins, or twist the cords. It should be the main objective of our life to seek the Lord by building up His Church. Oh, how I wish that all Christians thought so! Alas, many fancy that the work of the Church is to be left to a dozen or two of us—that the minister is to do his best with a few friends—but the bulk of the people are to be excused the glorious liberty of the service of the blessed God! Come, my Brothers and Sisters, one and all, seek the Lord with all your heart and soul in the building up of His Church! Let nothing be lacking to the Church of God in the Tabernacle which is as a city set upon a hill!

Let all you do, whether it is of personal obedience or in connection with the Church, be done with a single eye to God's Glory. O Christian men and women, what have you to do with worldly honor? What have you to do with ease? The target towards which your life's arrow should speed is the Glory of Him who made you, who has redeemed you with His precious blood and has created you a second time that you may be for Him, and for Him alone! Know you not that the Lord's portion is His people? Jacob is the lot of His inheritance. How heartily we ought to respond to the Lord's choice of us by glorying that we are Christ's chosen servants and that *now*, the one thing for which we live is to reflect the Glory of His blessed name! To this are you called, O you elect and redeemed of the Most High! This is your high destiny! Answer to it on earth as you hope to fulfill it in Heaven! Seek the Lord! That is what is intended in the text—to render obedience and to labor for the building of His Temple and the honor of His name.

Next, let us enquire, *how are they to seek?* Here is the text—"Set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God." Does not that intend a

fixity of purpose? "Set your heart and your soul." There are plenty of flimsy creatures about—whose manhood has long ago evaporated—who are "everything by turns and nothing long." These fritter away life like fluttering butterflies of the garden. They stay not long enough in any place to gather sweetness even from the choicest flowers. The genuine man of God who is going to serve the Lord, puts his foot down and you might as well hope to pluck up the North Pole as to move him from his chosen sphere! He has looked ahead and he sees on what tack he ought to steer—and he will hold the tiller to that point—over mountain waves, or through the trough of the billows, he still will speed his way! He has looked to his chart, settled his course and he is not to be turned aside. You who are men must now serve your God with a determination that cannot be shaken. Resolve that you will glorify God by holding fast His Truths and by following in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, for the times are flippant and only the resolute can master them.

You see that David says, "Set your *heart*." That is, have an intense affection towards God's service and Glory. A man never does a thing well if his heart is not in it. No painter has attained to excellence unless he has mixed his colors, not only with his brains, but with the life-blood of his heart! Success comes not to heartless efforts. Certainly it is so in the service of the living God. He will not accept a sacrifice which lacks the life-blood of a warm, affectionate intent. Brothers and Sisters, nobody is good by accident. No man ever became holy by chance. There must be a resolve, a desire, a panting, a pining after obedience to God or else we shall never have it! Set your heart, then, to seek the Lord your God.

There are other parts of your nature besides your heart. Your soul has in it, among other things, an intellect. I would that all who serve God would serve Him with their intellect, for many seem to jog on in the service of God like old horses that have gone their round so often that they now crawl over the road in their sleep! Alas, the first big stone in the road throws them over! Let us resolve neither to leave our heads nor our hearts at home when we come into God's House. The whole man should be present and energetic when God is to be honored! We ought to plot and plan how to win a soul as earnestly as we contrive to make a profit in our trade. We ought as much to speculate and scheme to glorify God as we meditate how to advance our business. Our inventive genius should be more concerned to set jewels in the Redeemer's crown than to perfect the most beautiful work of art. Let our motto be—"All for Jesus"—for He has redeemed us altogether. Every thought of throbbing brain, every affection of beating heart, every movement of cunning hand—all should be for Him at its best—and kept well at work for His royal service. The yoke of Christ should be laid not merely on the shoulder, but on every part, power and passion of our entire manhood. So should it be. God grant it may be so!

And then, if I am again asked the question, "How ought we to seek the Lord?" I answer—by the union and concentration of all our faculties. Our life should be comparable to sunlight—and holy zeal, like a magnifying glass—should focus upon a given spot and cause it to burn its way to success. He will never do much for God who attempts to serve a dozen masters. I have been called upon this week by several persons to give my aid in trifling matters of politics, finance and social arrangement. "Why," I said to the applicants, "there are hundreds of people who can attend to

these matters quite as well as I can." "Yes, Sir, but we want your weight and influence." I replied, "My weight and influence belong to Another. I am very willing to help you in any good thing if I can do it without diverting my attention from the service of my Master, but my time is not my own. I have to preach the Gospel—you can get any blind fiddler to canvass for your candidate. I must attend to my Master's business and let the dead bury their dead."

I would have you Christian people, while you attend to everything that is just, right, kind, proper and of good repute—everything that can benefit your fellow men, or help the cause of liberty and righteousness—yet, still keep your souls undivided and entire for the service of your God! Throw your life into your religion! Do not be like the man whose child at Sunday school was asked, "Is your father a religious man?" "Yes, Sir," she said, "Father has religion, but he has not done much at it lately." I am afraid there are many of that sort. They have not taken their coats off at it! They have not thrown their whole souls into it! Brothers and Sisters, if you follow Christ, follow Him fully! If you mean to be Christians, be Christians! If you are worldlings, give your hearts to the world, or you will make nothing of it—it would be a pity to halt between two objects so as to miss both! If Jehovah is God, serve Him with your heart, with the concentrated energy of your entire nature at its best! See, Christian people, to what you are called.

But the text also tells us *when we are to seek the Lord*. It has a little word in it—a golden monosyllable it is! It is a word which comprehends the whole almanac, every day in the week, all the year round. "*Now* set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God." *Now* is the only time worth having because, indeed, it is the only time we ever have! While I speak, it is gone and another, "now," has come up. Take your moments on the wing and use them as they fly. Now, now, now! Let us give ourselves, heart and soul, to the service of the Lord our God NOW!

When did David mean by his, "*now*"? I think he meant, first, when the people had an efficient leader. "I am dying," he said, "but there is Solomon, my son. He is a man of peace and God has said that he shall build His Temple; therefore arise and seek the Lord." It is a grand thing for any Church when God sends them one who can lead them, about whom they are united in judgment and with whom they can hopefully march to the conflict. Alas, I know several Churches that have been sadly troubled by the deaths of faithful ministers. I pray you, if you are members of a Church which has a God-sent minister still alive and at its head, set your heart and your soul *now* to serve God! While He spares His servant to lead you on to success, take care that you follow with holy enthusiasm. "*Now*" is the time for activity!

He means, also, when God is with you. Read the 18th verse, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" When God is with you, get to work! What can you do if God is gone? And how soon you will drive Him away unless you work while you are in His company! God never came upon earth to live among sluggards and to have communion with drones. Two cannot walk together unless they are agreed and *one thing* they must assuredly be agreed on is the rate at which they mean to walk—they cannot walk together except at the same pace! Jesus Christ never travels slowly. It is quick marching with Him! Ho, you laggards, quicken your steps or He will

leave you far behind! Serve the Lord with greater diligence, or you will lose delight in His ways. While God is with you, O gracious men, set your hearts and your souls to seek Him!

Note, again, that David says, "Has He not given you rest on every side?" That is another set time when we ought to serve the Lord with all our might. When we have rest from care, then our care should be to please the Lord. You, my Brother, are released from all that affliction which wearied you a few weeks ago—therefore praise the Lord! Your enemies are quiet, your anxieties do not harass you as they used to do—therefore extol your God! Serve God with all your might when He deals out His favor to you. When there has been dull weather and no wind, how eagerly the mariner hails the first breath of air! If there is but a capful of wind, he labors to make headway with it. He uses every movement that would flutter a handkerchief! So it ought to be with God's people—they should turn the least favor to advantage—and much more the greater. When God gives us rest, joy and peace, let us make a Sabbath of it and consecrate the glad-some hours to His highest Glory.

But, indeed, this "now," as I have said, is of general acceptation. *Now*, you young men in the prime of your vigor, set your heart and your soul to the service of God! We need more men for our Evangelists' Association. We are very short of preachers—preachers to go to rooms, mission halls and suburban villages to declare Christ to the people. Now, then, set your heart and soul to the service of God while you are young. Sunday schools around us are pining for lack of teachers. Young men and women, you are the people to undertake such service as this! Do not stand back. There is nothing like serving God in your youth. As soon as you are saved, yourselves, seek to rescue others! The Christian man who does not give God the morning of his days is not very likely to give Him much of the evening. He who does not rise with the lark is not likely to sing like he does!

If I speak thus to the young, I would speak with equal force to the middle-aged. Now, *my Brothers and Sisters*, we have had some experience—we are no longer children—we know a little of the good way and some of that little was learned in a painful school. I have had my knuckles rapped very often to make me learn how to make simple up-strokes and down-strokes—and now I desire to fill my page with my Master's name. If we have learned anything, let us set our heart and our soul to serve the living God with all the wisdom and experience which Grace has given us.

You, upon whose heads I see the snows of many a winter—you whose bare heads show how often the rough winds of age have swept over your brows—surely with so short a time to live it becomes you to set your heart and your soul to serve the Lord! If men knew how brief their time is, how much would they quicken their service if they really loved Christ as He ought to be loved! At this hour this is my one message to old and young, to myself and to you—let us be up and doing!

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, you who have been with me these many years and you who have lately come among us, let us begin again! Let us set our hearts and our souls with dogged determination to serve the Lord. If the work is difficult, a hard thing can always be cut with something harder. You can cut a diamond with a diamond. Oh, to have a divinely hardened resolution that will cut through anything for Christ! Comrades,

we will win souls for Jesus, or we will break our hearts over it! God help us, for His name's sake!

II. Brothers and Sisters in Christ, I have done with you now. You can sit still and pray while I talk to the others. I have now to SPEAK TO THOSE WHO ARE UNCONVERTED, just whispering to you, dear Friends, that I should like to spread the big net and take many in it—and they *will* be taken if the Holy Spirit is here in answer to our prayers.

To you who are unconverted, I would earnestly say set your hearts on true religion and be not content with the outward form of it. Observe that David had gathered these noblemen and gentlemen around his bed to urge them to build a Temple, but he was a spiritual man and he knew that Temple building was not everything, although he valued it highly. He knew that there was something better than outward service and so he said to these men, "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God." By all manner of means attend the House of God, though you are not a Christian—but go with the *desire* that God will bless the Word and make you a Christian! While you diligently attend to the outward ordinances of God's House, I pray you *do not trust in them*, but seek the Lord your God, Himself.

Baptism is the duty of every Believer, but it is not the duty of anybody except a Believer—I pray you do not put the sign in the place of the thing signified! Do not trust in Baptism! Why, if you were not only immersed, but immersed in a thousand seas, this would not help you to salvation! You must be born again! You must seek the Lord. There is no salvation in an outward ceremony! If any of you come to the Lord's Table, I pray you do not come with any view of getting Grace by coming, or finding salvation in the eating of a morsel of bread and the taking of a sip of wine. The elements upon the table cannot help you! The communion will be injurious to you if you are not a true Believer. Examine yourself whether you are in the faith and so eat of that bread—but do not *dare* to eat of it unless in your very heart you have first known the Lord and are feeding upon Him!

I put this to every person who is not yet converted. Do not rest in hymn singing, Church going, Chapel going, bending your knees in private prayer, or in anything else that comes of yourself. Your salvation lies outside of yourself, in Christ Jesus. Fly away to Jesus! Tarry not in any outward signs or symbols. Build the Temple, by all means, but first of all set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord!

Now observe that the end which we would persuade you to, by God's good Spirit, is that you seek the Lord Himself. Do not merely seek to know doctrine, or to learn precepts. Seek the Lord! There is such a Person as Jesus Christ the Lord. Seek Him. The keynote of the Gospel is from the lips of Jesus, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." Seek not your minister, your hymnal, your prayer book, or even your Bible—seek the Lord! Some think to find salvation in the Bible and fancy that Bible reading is the way of salvation, but it is not. "You search the Scriptures," says Christ, "for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And you will not come to Me, that you might have life." If you put Bible reading in the place of coming to Christ by faith, you will miss the mark! You must come to a personal Savior in your own person by putting your trust in Him. Trust in Jesus, not in a doctrine, nor in a command, but in Him—and then you will be saved. You must trust in

Him of the five wounds; in Him of the bloody sweat; in Him of the crown of thorns; in Him of the deadly Cross. Trust in Him at once! This, alone, is the way of salvation. "Set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord," for He says to you by my mouth, "Look unto Me and be you saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside Me there is none else."

But now observe—for I want to force this home, as God shall help me—that you must seek Him at once with all your heart and soul. That is to say, I believe that when a man is awakened, the first thing he ought to do is to find assured salvation. I have heard of a man who went upstairs to seek the Lord, with the desperate resolve that he would do no business till he was right with God. He did not open his shop shutters, for he had resolved to find a Savior before he took another penny across the counter. I cannot judge that man to have been unwise in the reckoning of God and the holy angels, for the first necessity of life is a renewed heart! If I thought that I was struck with a serious disease, I would not wait until it grew incurable, but I would go to a physician and have the matter attended to before it went further. Wouldn't you?

Act with the same speed as to your souls. Oh, men and women, there is but a step between you and Hell unless God's mercy shall interpose! How can you trifle! It is no trifling matter. A lost soul—what mourning can equal the sorrow of it? Hang the heavens in sackcloth! Darken the sun; extinguish the moon! Silence all mirth! Hush all music! Harps of Heaven, be still! You angels, cease your sonnets! The funeral of a lost soul is the most awful solemnity that can be conceived. Such a funeral may be needed for you within an hour! What did I say? There may not remain a *minute*! Your breath fails and you are lost. Oh, Sirs, I pray you, make short work of your rebellious delays! Put everything aside and seek the Lord with heart and soul!

And does not that mean that if anything hinders your finding salvation, you must have done with it? Does certain company hinder your religious thought? Do not go into such society! Is an allowable pursuit detrimental to your finding Christ? Do not follow it! It might be death to you, though it is sport for others. You must have Christ—see that you do have Him. That prayer of our hymn—

"Give me Christ, or else I die,"

ought to be in your heart and on your lips. Put everything else away until you get an answer to that petition. Follow after everything that may help you to find Christ. When I was seeking Christ, I was in the House of God whenever the doors were opened. I heard a preacher who did not speak home to my heart and, therefore, I went to hear another. I did not care who the preacher was, or what he was, if I could but find Christ under him.

Neither was I particular whether I stood or sat, or whether I had a soft cushion to sit on, or none at all! I wanted Christ and I declare that if I had been forced to sit on the gallery front, I would not have minded where I was so that I could have found the Savior! Any hayloft would have done for me, if I could have found forgiveness. Prayer Meetings, little gatherings of godly people—why I was sure to be at them if I knew of them—for I wanted to find the Savior. You will have the Savior when your whole heart and soul are after Him. Remember, the Lord will not save you while you are dreaming or dancing. He took Eve out of the side of Adam when Adam

slumbered, but He will not take sin out of you when you are asleep. You must be awakened up in some way or other. You must be startled, if not with thunderbolts, yet with the sweet heart-searching love of Christ. You must be thoroughly awake and, when you are so, then, seeking the Lord in that fashion, you shall not be long before you find Him!

Lastly, *when are we to seek Him?* The text says, "*now.*" I forget what day of the month this is. It does not matter. You will never forget the day of the month in which you seek the Lord and find Him. Who among us ever forgot his natural birthday? Yet you are more likely to remember the day in which you begin to live unto God. A friend writes to me, and says, "Dear Sir, my birthday was on such a day and such another day." For the minute I thought, "Dear man! Has he been born twice?" Then I guessed his meaning. Is not the *second* birthday much the better of the two? Born to sorrow the first time—born to bliss the second time! Born in sin the first time—born in Christ the second time. Born in depraved nature at first—born in the image of Christ Jesus at last! Oh, how happy the men who have that better birthday! May it come to you at this good hour! There is never a better time in which to seek the Savior than just now. Stop not for anything. "I must get better," cries one. Must you? Is that what you do when you seek a surgeon? Do you say, "I must get a little better before I go"? You will never go at all if you wait to be better, for when you feel better, you will say, "I need not go now." Is not that the style? No time is like time present.

There is an old saying that, "Half a loaf is better than no bread," but that saying is not true *spiritually*. A man who has half a loaf of his own never seeks the Bread which came down from Heaven. The man who has no bread at all is in a better case, for he is more likely to come to the banquet of Divine Grace. Come, you starving ones, and eat of the Bread of Heaven! Believe and live! Faith brings God to you and you to God! Therefore believe and seek—seek and believe!

The Lord send all of you home with my text ringing in your ears, "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God."

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GOD'S HANDWRITING UPON DAVID

NO. 2280

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***“All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing
by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern.”
1 Chronicles 28:19.***

THE Temple was not to be built according to the designs of David, or Solomon, or any other man. It was to be built according to a pattern which God, Himself, had formed. In the things of God we are not left to follow our own judgments and devices—we are to look to the Law and to the Testimony for our instructions. To God's Word we must always come for our orders. What God has commanded is binding upon us in His Church. What He has *not* commanded, we may safely leave undone.

You will notice that David here says that he received the designs and the details of the Temple from God, who wrote them, not on tablets of stone, but on His servant's heart by His own hand. Now, it was very necessary that everything should be arranged and planned for the Temple, and that it should be built according to a pattern, for it was to be a *type*, an eminent *type of Christ*, and also a type of His Church, which is a Temple for God's own indwelling. Now, no man knew what God meant to teach by that Temple and, consequently, if the building had been left to human judgment, it would not have been a true type—for who can make a type if he knows not what it is to typify? Only God knew what He intended to teach by this building, so the Temple, that it might convey Divine teaching, must be arranged according to Divine command!

Moreover, the Temple was for God's own dwelling. Should not the Most High have a house after His own mind? If He was to be the Tenant, should it not be built to suit Him? And who knows what God requires in a habitation but God, Himself? The best that can be built is too poor for Him. Stephen said, “Solomon built Him an house. However, the Most High dwells not in temples made with hands.” Yet, if even in *type* it was to be the dwelling place of God, it must be built according to God's own requirements.

Besides, the Temple was to be the Throne of the great King and if the very principle on which that throne was built was the will-worship of man's own judgment, there would have been a violation of the great principle of obedience at the fountainhead! I take it that, in the Church of God, I have no right to decree *anything*, nor John Wesley, nor John Calvin, nor any greater than they. God, alone, is supreme. Christ is the one

Head of His Church and we must, in all that we do in the building of His Church, consult with Him, or else we act upon lawless principles and cast off the authority of the Church's true King and Head and come under some other law. This would be, at the very center of our holy service, setting an example of lawlessness and rebellion against God! That must never be—His Temple must be built according to a pattern of His own design—and His Church and all holy work must be carried on according to His direction if we are to expect a blessing.

The point to which I call your attention is this, that God gave the directions to David by impressing them upon his mind, upon his heart, by His own hand. He did not so much draw a plan and hand it to David, and say to him, "Build the Temple according to that design," but He made him think carefully and prayerfully over the whole matter. Perhaps, in the visions of the night, and often, as he turned the subject over in his thoughts by day, God's Spirit came and revealed to David what he needed to know as to how this house was to be built—"All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern."

I shall, tonight, first, call your attention to *the amazing instructions given to David*. Then, coming home to ourselves, I shall speak upon *the spiritual intuition of the saints in the Truth of God*, which is very similar to this instruction given to David. And, before I close, I shall have a word or two to say as to *the duty of the transmission of what we have received*. If God has taught us, we are bound to do what David did—commit the same to faithful men, that, before we go forward, we may have started others in work for the Lord and not ourselves retire, leaving God's work undone.

I. First, then, dear Friends, I call your attention to THE AMAZING INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO DAVID.

David received his instructions by the writing of God upon his heart with God's own hand! Note this. David did not receive them by consultation with others. David did not send to Hiram, king of Tyre, to ask his judgement. Nor did he call in a Bezaleel, or some other skillful man, to give him advice. God Himself taught him! This reminds me of what Paul said, "I consulted not with flesh and blood." "The Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the Revelation of Jesus Christ." Depend upon it, if you learn anything aright, you will have to learn it from God and, although consultation with others may often be very serviceable upon some points, yet you must not take them into consultation on the question whether you shall believe God's Word or not! That is to have supreme authority and, albeit there are some who are deeply taught in the things of God, who may, at times, be helpful to you, you must not defer to what they say so as to miss the instructions that the Lord, Himself, gives you. No man's voice is to be Sovereign to you—only the voice of God, the Holy Spirit, speaking out of this Book, which contains all things that you need for life and godliness. May God the Holy Spirit give you Grace to fetch all your instructions from it! David did not consult with others about building the Temple and we are not to obtain our creed by consultation with

other men, but go to God, Himself, and to pray Him to write it upon our hearts with His own hand.

Observe, also, that David did not slavishly follow the former model. In the wilderness Israel had a tent covered with skins as the meeting place between Jehovah and the people. It was a simple structure, easily moved. But now the tabernacle was to be swallowed up in the Temple and, albeit that the general shape of the Temple reminds you strongly of the tabernacle, yet David had a fresh Revelation and fresh guidance in what he was to do. I like to see a man keep to the old things, but even in doing so he may make a mistake, for there may be old things that can be supplanted by newer and better things. Keep your eyes lifted up to God, with whom nothing is old, and nothing is new! Wait at His footstool. Submit your heart, like a tablet, for Him to write upon it all His instructions. And then do as He has says!

According to the context, God gave to David instructions about the details of the work. I commend the reading of this chapter to you—it may at first seem to have little in it—but the more you study it, the more will it teach you. Among other things, God revealed to David, “the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the Mercy Seat.” God will teach you, if you will wait upon Him, the details of your work, the details of His Gospel, the detailed explanation of your experience. “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” As one said to me, the other day, and I thought very wisely, “God directs His servants’ steps and also His servants’ stops when they are not able to take any steps, but feel bound to stand still.” God directs them in *not* acting as well as in acting! You may go to Him for detailed guidance and especially in the matter of His service. If you would know what is His mind, yield yourself to the teaching of the Holy Spirit and consult this Book, for it will tell you everything about the porches, and the houses, and the treasuries, and the upper chambers, and the inner parlors, and the place of the Mercy Seat—and everything else you need to know!

Further, the directions given were extremely minute. You noticed, in our reading, that there was gold by weight for the lamp stands, and for the lamps which stood upon them. Now, no man, unless he had made a candelabrum or lamp-stand of the kind before, could tell how much gold it would take! The most skillful tradesman here, though himself a dealer in such things, would not readily know *exactly* the weight of gold required! But if the one who needs the knowledge has never made such things—if he has been a king used to the sword—how can he know how much silver is needed for a candlestick, how much gold is needed for a seven-branched lamp stand, and how much for the lamps to stand thereon? It is a wonderful instance of what Inspiration can do, how the Spirit of God could teach His servant David all the little ins and outs of this wonderful making of the vessels for the House of the Lord—even down to the basins—“for the golden basins he gave gold by weight for every basin and,

likewise, silver by weight for every basin of silver." All was arranged exactly.

If we will follow the Word of God closely, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we shall find that it enters into the details of our private life, into the details of our Church life, into the details of our troubles, our needs, and our joys. God will direct you in everything if you are willing to be directed. "Be you not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle," but be willing to be directed by God and you shall not be without direction even in the smallest matter!

And, yet again, the innermost things were laid bare to David. Nobody saw the cherubim—I speak broadly, for once in a year the High Priest went into the Holy Place, but then he scarcely saw the cherubim, for, with the smoke of the incense which went up around him before the Mercy Seat, everything in that place must have become dim. They were almost unseen objects, yet David had seen them in his mind's eye. He had had a representation of them written on his heart by the hand of God, for so we read, "and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord." There was a pattern of this printed on the understanding and heart of David. Oh, yes—the Lord will let you see everything that can be seen—there is no limit in His Revelation to the man who is willing to see. There are unspeakable words, yet Paul heard them, though he could never repeat them, for it was not lawful for him to utter them. There are secrets of the Lord, but they are "with them that fear Him, and He will show them His Covenant." There are things that are within the veil so far as most men are concerned, but to the man who is in Christ, the veil is torn, and the veil which was on his own heart and mind has been taken away by the Spirit of God and he can see the things of God, and rejoice therein, even as David did!

Now, we are told in the text, and I must come back to the very words of it, "The Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me." David not only knew the details, but he *understood* them. He had a clear insight into what God meant by the instructions given. Now, dear Friends, the hardest thing in the world is to give a man understanding! It is our duty, in our preaching and teaching, to make things very clear to the understanding, but if people have not any understanding, we cannot give it to them. But God can. When the understanding, itself, is darkened, and ceases to be an understanding, God can so renew it that it shall be all clear and bright, and it shall be able to comprehend the things of God. "The Lord made me understand." Oh, what a privilege! Not merely, "made me hear," but, "made me understand." And how did the Lord do it? "In *writing*," says David, "by His hand upon me." The writing was written on David's own mind—he had not to go upstairs to fetch it! He had not to say, "I cannot always carry it about with me," but he did always carry it about with him wherever he went, for God had written upon David, *himself*.

And it was written there by the hand of God. Now, I am coming to my chief point. "The Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me." God writes His Law in the Bible, but we do not understand it. God writes it on our *heart* and then we *do* understand it! There it lies in the letter and we may be dull of understanding and not comprehend it. But if it comes here in the *spirit of it*, our heart is no longer dull, but being quickened of God, it receives the things of the Spirit of God! The carnal mind cannot know spiritual things! But God gives us a spiritual mind and then we begin to understand spiritual things. "The Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me." We learn much from the *gifts* of God's hand, but not so much as from the hand itself. Sometimes God lays His hand upon His child very heavily. You can forget His gifts, but you cannot forget the pressure of that hand! At times He will press His hand upon us till He seems to crush us to the very heart—till we stagger and anguish breaks our spirit! There is no writing like that which God writes with a steel pen right into the soul! And sometimes He makes very heavy down-strokes, and very sharp, cutting up-strokes when He writes upon the fleshy tablets of the heart, His mind and will, as He wrote upon the heart of David all the details about the building of the Temple at Jerusalem!

II. That brings me, then, to my second point, which is this, THE SPIRITUAL INTUITION OF THE SAINTS IN THE TRUTH OF GOD.

I remark, first, that God still writes upon the heart of men. He prefers fleshy tablets and His own Spirit to any paper and ink. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "You are our Epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as you are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone, but in fleshy tablets of the heart." God makes a new heart to write upon and when He has made a new heart, then He takes His pen and writes, there, the Law of His House. Have you ever had God's Word written on your hearts? I know that some of you have, but I am afraid that some of you have not, because I know how easy it is to hear a sermon, to read the Bible, and say, "Oh, that is wonderful!"—and then go out into the world and act contrary to what you heard from the preacher, or found written in the Word of God.

Now, let me show you in a little in detail how God writes the great Truths of His Word on our hearts. We come to this blessed Book and we find that man is fallen, that man is ruined by sin. Did you ever feel that it was so with you? Can you remember a time when you knew that you were fallen, when you could see your heart to be corrupt, and felt yourself to be lost, ruined and undone? Ah, then the Lord made you understand in writing by His hand upon you! This Book tells us that without Christ we can do nothing. We are dead. We are without strength. Did you ever find it so? Why, when you began to seek the Lord, some of you, you found that your boasted strength had all evaporated! You could not feel aright, nor think aright, nor act aright and, though you tried hard, yet you were like Samson when his hair was shorn—you were too feeble to accomplish any good thing.

Then you learned a doctrine in this way—I may have preached it to your ears, but God laid it on your heart. You knew that it was so, for the Lord had taught it to you by His Spirit and now *nobody* can ever beat it out of you! Then there came a time when you read in the Scriptures that Christ is the Savior of His people and that whoever looks to Him shall live. You believed that to be true as you heard it preached and read it in the Book—and you did look—you looked to Christ. You gazed upon Him as He hung upon the accursed tree for you. Now, tell me, did you not, when you looked, find immediate and glorious salvation? Did not the burden roll from your shoulders? Did not the disease depart from your heart? Can you not say tonight—

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

And then the Doctrine of the Atoning Sacrifice, the Doctrine that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses us from all sin—that, also, you were made to understand in writing by the hand of the Lord upon you—and no power on earth or in Hell can take that Doctrine from you! Since then, you have learned other doctrines, possibly the Five Points of Calvinism, or the 50 points of any other system, but you never learned them from merely reading them in the Scriptures! You never really knew them till the pen of God began to move up and down upon your inward nature and your heart received the impression the Lord intended to convey to it!

It may be that there are more Truths of God to be written on your heart, but we shall not know them all until we get Home to our Father's House. Meanwhile, let us keep on reading more of God's Word and making more of its Truths our own! But, depend upon it, this is the main thing—to get, by real personal experience, what we perceive to be written by the Revelation of God. “The Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me.” May the Lord make it to be so with every minister of Christ here, and every Sunday school teacher and every Christian worker of every kind! May we know what is written in the Book by what is written on our heart!

Now I believe that the Lord does this with regard to our great Pattern—“even all the works of this pattern.” We have one great Pattern whom we are all to imitate. You know who it is to whom we sing very often—

***“Be You my Pattern; make me bear
More of Your gracious image here!”***

May the Lord Himself write upon us according to that glorious Pattern! Who but the Holy Spirit can work in us the humility of Christ, the courage of Christ, the self-denial of Christ and full obedience to the Father's will such as He rendered? Who can give us all this but the Christ to whom we sing—

***“Cold mountains, and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of Your prayer
The desert Your temptation knew,
Your conflict and Your victory, too”?***

Let none of us think that we cannot be like Christ! Let nobody say, “The Pattern is too difficult for us to copy.” No, no, my Brothers and Sisters! Let us weep our eyes out that we fall so short of it, but let us strive after it ac-

ording to His striving, who works in us mightily, and never be content till we are, indeed, like He. What did the Psalmist say? "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Your likeness." We shall never be satisfied till then! Therefore let us sit in the Light of Christ till He is photographed upon us, and we go forth as living portraits of the Divine Pattern.

I want, for a minute or so, to show you how the Lord can reveal to you, His servants who love and fear Him, everything you need to know about the great work of salvation. In the Word of God we have a model of salvation and you who want to teach others had better conform all your teaching to this model. The Lord can teach you and *will* teach you all things that you need to know about His Church and the Temple of His salvation. Read the 11th verse of this chapter again—"David gave to Solomon, his son, the pattern of the porch." O you young men who are going to be ministers, mind that you get a good clear view of the pattern of the porch! Tell the sinner to come to Christ just as he is! Do not begin setting up some fine porch of feelings or preparations. Set up the pattern of the porch, the wicket gate, with the light shining through it, and these words written over it, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Preach a full Christ to empty sinners and tell them that all the fitness He requires of them is that they should feel their need of Him! And tell them that He even *gives them that*—they are not to look within themselves for it! If they do not feel their need, they must come to Him to get the feeling of their need, for from the very beginning it is all of Grace, and all of Christ! So, my Brothers, get a clear view of "the pattern of the porch."

"And of the houses thereof," the places where the priests and Levites dwelt. Get a clear view of the houses that Christ gives His people to dwell in, how they should dwell in *Him*, how they should abide in *Him* and go no more out forever. I cannot enlarge on this, but you can think it out for yourselves, and explain it to your hearers and scholars. Think of those mansions of present joy and future bliss which they shall have who come in by the true and living Way, even by Christ Jesus, who is the only Way of entrance into the Temple of Salvation!

"And of the treasuries thereof." When you preach Christ, pray to have written upon your heart, as well as in this Book, something about the treasuries of God's House. Oh, the infinite riches of the Covenant of Grace! Oh, the all-sufficiency of Christ Jesus, our Lord! Oh, the fullness of power that is to be found in the Holy Spirit! Oh, the heaps of blessedness which are stored away for Believers in the Person of their Divine Lord and Master! Get in your own heart a good clear view of the treasuries of the Temple of Salvation—and then go and preach about them to others!

And what next? "And of the upper chambers thereof." Have you ever been in those upper chambers where you get a view of the Glory yet to be revealed? Then you have been near to Heaven, and near to your God! Perhaps you have not attained to that height yet. If not, may the Lord write on your heart the plan of the upper chambers!

"And of the inner parlors thereof." I thought, as I read this over, and tried to look deeply into it, that I knew a little about the inner parlors thereof. Oh, there are sweet fellowships, there are communings which no-

body knows but the man who has dwelt where Jesus is and who continues to abide in Him! He shall ask what he will, and it shall be given him. And he shall continually joy in God through Jesus Christ. Get a good view of the inner parlors thereof. May the pattern of them be written on your own heart—and then go and tell others about them!

And here is one thing more—“And of the place of the Mercy Seat.” You often sing—

***“There is a place where Jesus sheds
The oil of gladness o’er our heads!
A place, than all beside more sweet,
It is the blood-stained Mercy Seat.”***

May you have written on your heart the pattern “of the place of the Mercy Seat!” It was inside the veil, you know, above the Ark of the Covenant, and under the wings of the cherubim, the place where God met with Moses and Aaron, and shone forth in the light of the Shekinah, making glad their willing eyes. God grant that you may know, by daily experience, the power of prayer at the place of the Mercy Seat! Then go and tell poor sinners about it! And tell poor saints about it, too, according as the Spirit of God has written it with His own hand upon your heart!

III. But now the time has almost gone, so I must briefly finish with my third point, that is, THE DUTY OF THE TRANSMISSION TO OTHERS OF ANYTHING THAT GOD WRITES ON YOUR HEARTS. Tell others what God has told you. Our Lord said to His disciples, “What you hear in the ear, that preach you upon the housetops.” He says the same to us. “To whom shall I go?” you ask. Well, take David as your example.

First, David told Solomon all about it. “Ah,” you say, “*My* boy is no Solomon.” That is all the more reason why you should teach him! Perhaps David might have been excused from teaching Solomon, as he was already so wise, but the fact that he *did* instruct him teaches us that the wisest child needs to be taught the things of God! If your boy is not a Solomon, you will need to teach him twice over, or many times, if necessary. Teach, him 19 times over and, if necessary, teach him 20 times over. If anybody asks, “Why do you teach him 20 times?” say that it is because you found that 19 times did not bring him salvation and you mean to keep on till he is saved. Tell Solomon about it. Say to him, “My son, come here and listen to what your father has tasted and handled of the good Word of the Lord. Hear what your father has experienced of Divine Grace.”

Well, perhaps you say, “Yes, I will talk to my boys about the Savior. Shall I speak to anyone else?” Next, dear Friend, talk about Christ to chosen companions. I count it a high privilege if I can get a little personal conversation with a choice young man, one who has great ability, and one whom we have reason to believe God has called to do a great work for Him. David knew that God had chosen Solomon to build the Temple and, therefore, he was very particular to give him the details that he had received from the Lord. Perhaps a Christian woman here says, “You would not have *me* talk to a young minister, would you?” Well, my dear Sister, you know what we read about Priscilla and her husband, Aquila. They were not very great people, they were simply tent-makers, but they talked to Apollos in such a way that he was, for the rest of his life, indebted to

that humble man and woman! Some of those whom God has used, and *will* yet use still *more*, will tell you that they owe a great deal to humble people who have talked to them about Christ. The godly women who sat spinning and darning stockings in the sunshine at Bedford talked with one another about the things of God, and John Bunyan stopped and listened to what they said—and he profited all the rest of his days by their holy talk! If you have the opportunity and come across any choice young minds, be sure to tell them what God has told you about His great plan of salvation!

Then, lastly, David gathered all the people together and told them about the Temple. In the next chapter we read, “Furthermore, David the king said unto all the congregation, Solomon, my son, whom alone God has chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God.” They soon began to give the gold, and the silver, and the brass, and the wood, and the precious stones for the Temple. See that you tell to all you can what God has told you! I am afraid that some here have not yet found out their life-work. We get into the habit of wanting so much “talent” in preachers. May “talent” be thrown into the bottomless pit! It has done more harm to the Church of God than it ever did good! If plain Christian men would begin to talk about Christ wherever they have opportunity, it would usher in a golden age!

Perhaps there has come in here a troubled sinner wanting to find a Savior. Try to speak to him. “Oh,” you say, “he might be offended!” So he might, but that would not kill you. Tell him about Jesus Christ—and if he gets to Heaven through what you tell him—he will forgive you for not having given him a handsome card with your name on it to introduce yourself! If you get a soul to Heaven, the rudeness of an impromptu address will never occur to that soul! God help us to be up and doing, telling out what He has written in our hearts! And unto His name shall be the praise!

Perhaps you have never had anything written on your heart, my dear Hearer. Then lay your heart before the Lord, tonight, with this simple prayer, “Lord, write on it!” And if He writes on it that one word, “Jesus,” it will be all that you can need! God bless you, everyone, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON **1 CHRONICLES 28.**

Verse 1. *And David assembled all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possession of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem. David, in his old age, and soon to die, summoned a great representative assembly of the notables of his kingdom.*

2. *David the king stood up upon his feet.* He was ill and obliged to keep to his bed, but he left his couch for this solemn occasion. He did not even remain seated, although extremely weak. He stood up upon his feet.

2. *And said, Hear me, my brethren, and my people.* Those who read carefully will notice the sweetness of David's style, now that he is about to die. It was after the great sin of his life and after he and his subjects had suffered because of his numbering the people, that he calls the men before him, "my brethren." He had sometimes spoken of them as his servants, but now he adopts a very humble style and, putting himself on a level with them, he says to them, "Hear me, my brethren, and my people."

2, 3. *As for me, I had in my heart to build an house of rest for the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building: but God said unto me, You shall not build an house for My name because you have been a man of war, and have shed blood.* Admire the frankness of David in telling the people what God had said to him. There is no other biography in the world like the Bible, for it tells the faults and follies of those whose history it records. David was a man after God's own heart, yet, as he had been used as a sword for the defense of God's people, and the destruction of their enemies, he could not be permitted to build the Temple. He frankly tells the people all that God had said—it would not reflect any honor upon himself—but it was true and, therefore, he kept nothing back. One falls in love with David for the frankness of his utterance. When a king and an aged man—and just about to die—he tells the people all this story.

4. *However the LORD God of Israel chose me before all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever: for He has chosen Judah to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father He liked me to make me king over all Israel.* He delights to dwell upon the *election of God*. It was not by the right of ancestry that he was chosen king—it was by the will and good pleasure of God! Judah was one of the younger tribes, and yet it was made the royal tribe. In Judah, the house of Jesse was of no great importance—yet God chose it as the royal family—and in the household of Jesse, David was the youngest, yet the Lord "liked" him, and chose him to be king over all Israel!

5. *And of all my sons, (for the LORD has given me many sons), he has chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.* David seems to harp upon this sweet string of the Divine choice. I wonder that so many good people are afraid of this blessed Doctrine! They fight shy of it! They seem to run away at the very sound of the word, "election." Yet is it the very joy of saints. God has chosen them and ordained them to be His servants!

6-8. *And He said unto me, Solomon your son, he shall build My house and My courts: for I have chose him to be My son, and I will be his father. Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, if he is constant to do my commandments and my judgments, as at this day. Now, therefore, in the sight of all Israel the congregation of the LORD, and in the audience of our God, keep and seek for all the Commandments of the LORD your God: that you may possess this good land, and leave it for an inheritance for your*

children after you forever. Thus he talked with the great number of the nobility and chief men of his kingdom who were gathered round him.

9. *And you, Solomon my son, know you the God of your father.* God is very dear to us, but perhaps under no aspect is He more tenderly near us than as the God of our father—"My son, know you the God of your father."

9. *And serve Him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts: if you seek Him, He will be found of you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.* What a Covenant this was under which Solomon stood! Alas, he was not as true to God as he should have been and though we hope he was not cast away forever, yet under his rule Israel began to decay and he pierced himself through with many sorrows in his latter days.

10. *Take heed now; for the Lord has chosen you to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.* It is fine to hear this old man, in his weakness, stirring up the young man! We generally expect to see the youths full of zeal and the old men somewhat slow, but Divine Grace can turn the tables against nature! Here the old man, feeble as to his body, is vigorous as to his spirit.

11. *David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the Mercy Seat.* He had it all ready in his mind and, before he died, he passed over the plans of that wonderful piece of architecture to his son Solomon.

12, 13. *And the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the House of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the House of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the House of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the House of the LORD.* Everything was laid down, cataloged, and arranged so that Solomon had only to follow the plans given to him by his father and all would be right. Think of the love of David to his God. Though he might not build the Temple, he would draw the plans for it—and though he might not live to see it completed, yet he would, in his own mind, arrange all the courses of the priests and the Levites, and every detail, even to the placing of the vessels of service in the courts of the Lord's House.

14, 15. *He gave of gold by weight for things of gold, for all instruments of all manner of service; silver, also, for all instruments of silver by weight, for all instruments of every kind of service: even the weight for the candlesticks of gold.* Or, the candelabra.

15. *And for their lamps of gold, by weight for every candlestick, and for the lamps thereof: and for the candlesticks of silver by weight, both for the candlestick, and also for the lamps thereof, according to the use of every candlestick.* They were not for the burning of candles, but for oil lamps. There was a lamp stand, with seven lamps upon the stand, and there were 10 of these in the Temple. There was only one in the tabernacle, but there were 10 in the Temple. David arranged everything. Those seven-branched golden candlesticks stood like pastors of the Church, and the

little silver candlesticks were carried about like evangelists, who go from place to place that the whole House of God may be served with light! Everything was by weight. God knows what He would have in His House and He measures out to each one according to its need.

16, 17. *And by weight he gave gold for the tables of showbread, for every table; and likewise silver for the tables of silver: also pure gold for the flesh hooks, and the bowls, and the cups: and for the golden basins he gave gold by weight for every basin; and likewise silver by weight for every basin of silver.* I like to think of David planning all these little things, first receiving instruction from God, then waiting upon God for further direction, and thinking not only about the great golden candelabra, but about the silver candlesticks, and the flesh hooks, and the bowls, and the cups, and the basins. They who love God love everything that has to do with Him—they have a holy concern, even, for the smaller matters pertaining to the House of the Lord.

18-20. *And for the altar of incense refined gold by weight; and gold for the pattern of the chariot of the cherubim, that spread out their wings, and covered the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD. All this, said David, the LORD made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern. And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it. Do not talk about it! Do not sit down and dream over the plans and think how admirable they are, and then roll them up—but, “Be strong and of good courage, and do it.”*

20. *Fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with you.* What a pretty touch that is! “The LORD God, even my God, will be with you.”

20. *He will not fail you, nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the House of the LORD.* Therefore, be of good courage, you that are working for God, for He will not fail you, nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the House of the Lord.

21. *And, behold, the courses of the priests and the Levites, even they shall be with you for all the service of the House of God: and there shall be with you for all manner of workmanship every willing skillful man, for any manner of service.* God always finds men for His work. We sometimes see a lot of cowards run away and we say to ourselves, “What will happen now?” Why, God will find *better men than they are!* And when there seems to be a scarcity of really valiant men in Israel, God has them in training! And that awkward squad out there will yet become a band of brave men for the service of the House of God!

21. *Also the princes and all the people will be wholly at your commandment.* Thus the grand old man finished up his life by starting another to carry on the work which he was obliged to leave.

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INTELLIGENT OBEDIENCE

NO. 3263

A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 1911.

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

***“Keep and seek for all the commandments of the LORD your God.”
1 Chronicles 28:8.***

Is the Lord your God? I must put this question very pointedly to you at the onset, otherwise I shall not be speaking to you in expounding the words of my text. Were I to address the ungodly and the unconverted, and say to them, “Keep God’s commandments,” they would, perhaps, misunderstand such an exhortation and consider that I intend to set before them as the way of life a strict observance of the commandments. It is no such thing. “By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified.” So far as the sinner is concerned, by the Law comes the knowledge of sin! The Law can do nothing more for him than convince him that he needs a Savior and drive him out of himself to find in Christ what he cannot find in himself.

I am now about to address those who are saved—those who are saved through the merits of the Lord Jesus—those who have rested in Him and are now trusting in Him, and in Him, alone. These have taken God to be their God. They are in Covenant relationship with Him and now, being introduced into the family of God, they become like children under parental influence and parental discipline, bound to “keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord their God.”

David says, first of all, “*Keep the commandments,*” that is to say, such of them as you know, such as are clear from your reading of Scripture, such as have been pressed upon your conscience—keep these. Keep them always. Ask for more Grace to keep them better. Or when you feel that you have not kept them, go with holy repentance to the foot of the Cross to get rid of past sin and look up for sanctifying Grace that through the Holy Spirit’s power, you may keep them better for the future. For, “in the keeping of them there is great reward.” The path of *obedience* is a path of safety and of happiness.

But David says more than that, and it is to this I call your attention. He says, “*Keep and seek for all the commandments of the Lord your God.*” There are precepts, the nature of which you have never understood, the obligation of which you have never felt—seek these out. Try to know all God’s will concerning you. Keep what you do know, but wherein

you are at fault through lack of knowledge, do not content yourself with ignorance any longer, but search out the matter. Read the King's proclamations. Study the code of the King's Laws. Ask Him to teach you and to make you wise in the way of His commandments, that in nothing you may be chargeable with indifference, or be guilty of neglecting the ordinances of the Most High.

It shall be my endeavor, then, for a little while, as God shall help me to command such an obedience and show you the excellence of that earnest pursuit which seeks out God's commandments.

I. Such AN OBEDIENCE IS DEEPLY SPIRITUAL.

Were I simply to do that part of the Divine will which everybody else does. If, being a member of a certain Christian Church, I take my cue from my fellow members, or pin myself to the sleeve of my pastor and act precisely according to the fashion which everybody else is setting, I may be merely conforming to religious usages in a mechanical, dreamy, unspiritual, unacceptable way. It may not be the worship of God at all! It may be but a physical exercise following in the rut as the cart that is dragged there by the horse. Does it profit my character that I make proof of nothing but these grooves through which I am drawn by custom? But you will see at once that when a man bestirs himself to find out what the will of the Lord is, there is an exercise of the mind at once! The spirit is then, even before any action is taken, in a state of obedience—it is bowing itself reverently before the Most High and saying to Him, "What would You have me to do?" The man who seeks to know the Lord's will is never likely to become a mere formalist. His mind will be aware. Why, some of you, I dare say, have come here a good many times and you have sat through the service and have gone away again none the better because it has grown into a regular thing with you! I have sometimes noticed this in our worship. Dissenting worship is simple enough, but yet for all that there gets to be a formality about it. If it has been the habit of people to sit during the singing of the hymn, when they have been asked to stand up, they have felt that it was a dreadful innovation—quite a departure from the old mechanism! And should a verse be given out—have you not noticed it?—with a doxology or a chorus at the end, how many have dropped into their seats before we have got to the last line, and risen up again wondering what the preacher can be doing because their minds are not awake in the service of God! We are all prone to get into that kind of routine. Sitting in the same seat, or even standing on the same platform and going through the same form of worship produces in us mechanical service. But if we seek to know the Lord's will, it is evident that in that thing, at least, we have broken through the mechanical and got into that which is spiritual—worship which God says He will accept, for, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

II. The obedience which seeks to know the Lord's will also INDICATES THE TRUEST SINCERITY.

A man who is not sincere in his obedience may conform to the regular order of that which he knows to be prescribed, but only the sincere man will seek to find out matters he is not yet acquainted with. Which is the better servant—the man who must always have his orders written for him every morning and who at night excuses himself for the neglect of many an obvious duty because, as he says, “It was not down on the paper, Sir. I have followed your instructions”—is he the better servant, or the other man who thinks after he has obeyed his orders, “What ought I to do for my master? Is there not this thing, or that thing which, though it may not be absolutely recorded or written down, yet is intended in the spirit of my instructions?” Do you not love the child who looks out for occasions and opportunities to please you? Do you not feel a satisfaction in accepting from a friend a kindness which may be almost unexpected and which manifests to you that he must have been thinking about you and has, perhaps, lain awake at night to consider how he could gratify or serve you? You feel that this is sincere friendship! So it is with your service for God. If you do only those duties which I stand here and write out to you so plainly that you cannot help seeing them, why, is there any great forwardness or fidelity of purpose in it? But if you go to that grand old Book and on your knees say to your Lord and Master, “I want to do all that I can to show how my heart loves You—teach me what You would have me do,” this manifests a sincerity which is indisputable!

III. Again, is not the seeking out of the Divine commands A PROOF OF AN INTENSE AFFECTION?

Common affection will do what it must, but intense affection will do all it can. A vehement enthusiasm, a constraining love, such as that which Jesus Christ deserves of us, says—

“Oh, what can I do for my Savior to praise?”

“Is there an alabaster box of precious ointment that I can break, that I may anoint His head? Wherein can I be of service to any members of His family? How can I show forth the Glory of His name?” The glow of affection would be always prompting us to seek here, there and everywhere to know what we can do! We are far from believing in works of supererogation. No man can ever do more than it was his duty to have done. When we have done all, we are but unprofitable servants! Still the earnest Christian, if he could, would do even more than he should. Instead of wishing to stand still and stop short on this side of the path, he would exceed both in service and in sacrifice, as Dr. Watts sings—

***“Yet if I might make some reserve,
And duty did not call!
I love my God with zeal so great,
That I should give Him all!”***

Diligent enquiry in seeking out the Divine will manifests that holy intensity of affection which becomes the disciple of such a Lord as our Savior, Jesus Christ, and which I trust and pray always gleams, and shall gleam in the bosoms of many of us who have been redeemed by His precious blood!

IV. Further, this searching after the Divine Commandments indicates THE MATURE MANHOOD OF GRACE.

The babe in Grace does that which is simply and obediently plain, but it is not to be expected that he will begin to search and pry into things which are not so clear until he has grown and had his senses exercised. At any rate, it is more excusable if the babe in Grace is more ready to be led by his fellow Christian than to be on his own account a deep searcher into the Divine Word. But the man who is a man in Christ, having grown in Grace, takes the Book and he says, "My Lord, I desire to serve You to the utmost stretch of my manhood. You have been pleased to give me an understanding, not that I may cringe at the foot of the priest and lower myself into a beast of burden to be driven wherever those incarnations of evil spirits may goad me on! No, but You have made me a man and given me mind, thought, capacity—and You have put into my hands a Book which I can understand, and here I am—assist me while I bow this judgment to Your sway, and teach me what Your mind is." God would have us all educated for the skies. We are here but minors. I trust, however, we have, many of us, passed our infancy! We are getting something beyond the mere first childhood of Grace and now we seek to know, and to practically know, the Lord's will and mind respecting us! If you would always be babes, then sit still and have this word and that put into your mouths, forms of prayer composed for your use and unintelligible creeds compiled for you to repeat! But if you would grow into men in Christ Jesus, come to the Book and keep and seek out the commands of God with full purpose of heart to obey them!

V. I KNOW THERE WILL BE A GREAT MANY EXCUSES MADE.

In these days, people do not read their Bibles much. One reason why Romanism is popular is because it allows a man to get a deputy to do his thinking for him—and to do his praying for him. But what a poor affair it is with the man who keeps his brains in somebody else's head and carries his heart in somebody else's bosom! Are there not many of you who do not read the Word of God? We stand up as Protestants and say, "The Bible, and the Bible, alone, is the religion of Protestants!" And yet what multitudes never think of reading it! They hear a Chapter read in public service and, perhaps now and then, read a chapter at home. But as to downright *study* of the Word and searching out the Divine meaning, I do believe that is an exercise to which many professors are totally unaccustomed! They do not engage in it regularly and constantly, nor come to it as a daily duty and a daily privilege. Indeed, their great theme is unsec-

tarianism. Unsectarianism! That is the correct thing nowadays—unsectarianism! Which, being translated means—it does not signify which is which, whether it is right or wrong, it matters not one atom whether you obey God or obey man, whether you belong to a Church which is apostate from the Truth, or one that holds the Truth of God! Unsectarianism, my Friends, is treason to God and to God's Word!

It is only the strong sectarian who can be true—I mean only the man who follows out the Divine Word in every jot and tittle and feels, “I must hold to this Truth even if I stand alone.” I mean not that we are to say, “I cannot love the Christian Brother who does not see what I see.” No, my Brothers and Sisters, I wish to push liberty of conscience further than that, so far as to feel that you have no right to judge your Brother about what he sees or does not see, but that you stand solely and wholly on your own feet before God! You have there to exercise your own mind and it does not matter to you whether you belong to any one section, or whether you are a sect to yourself, as long as you can but call Him Lord and Master and keep all His Word and all His way. But the giving up of this and that Truth of God—denying one ordinance and compromising another, shirking some Doctrines and dexterously turning the angles of other Doctrines, giving up any particular practice which is clearly of God's appointment and tolerating any other practice of human device with a vindication of its harmlessness—this is nothing but flat treason against the Majesty of Heaven in order to win the approbation of men!

The world points its finger at the rigid Puritan and declaims against him—but the rigid Puritan is the man whom God accepts! Nor can he be too rigid in everything in which he believes the Divine will is concerned. “How liberal,” says one. Yes, but let a servant be liberal with his own money, not with his master's. I have no right to liberality in principle. Principles and duties are things which I have no more right to touch than I have to take pains to alter the statute law of the realm! Yes, let the canons of law be altered and Acts of Parliament be burned in the fire, but let the Word of God stand fast forever! If any man preaches any other Gospel than that we have received, instead of saying, “No doubt he is an excellent, but a mistaken man,” let us say with Paul, “Let him be accursed!” And until we get back the old spirit of following out the Master's mind in all things—personally, scrupulously, rigidly, our conscience keeping close to the Divine mind—we shall scarcely know what true obedience is! The Church greatly needs to be brought back to her true standing of obedience to her Lord and King!

VI. Taking this for granted, admitting that it is our duty to search out the Divine Command in all respects and to yield in nothing, whatever, you may ask, **HOW ARE WE TO DISCOVER THE DIVINE MIND?**

Let me say at once, *only by searching the Word of God, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.* Brothers and Sisters, let me warn you against

the many ways in which men have sought to discover God's will apart from His Word—all foolish and some of them wicked! I have known some who have opened the Book as if the passage on which they should alight at haphazard became their oracle, or if another passage of a different complexion, irrespective of the context, should open or turn up, that should guide them. Do you not know that this was an old heathen custom? The Romans, using Virgil or some other poet, as you use your Bible, did just the same thing. When you are so doing, you are simply guilty of idolatry and might just as well go to the shrine of Delphi and consult the Pythian oracle, as thus tempt the Lord your God! We have known some cast lots to know what they should do—as if the most precarious hazard could interpret God's will which is clear and plain! I marvel how any civilized man can be so besotted as to do such things—and yet I know that this is an evil pastime and practice which lingers among some Christians!

Others judge of the Divine Mind by Providence . But what do you mean by Providence? Is it the current of the wind, the drifting of the tides, the aspect of the clouds, or the fortuitous coincidences that have arrested your attention? Such Providence , you know, will guide you any way if you follow that. Jonah went to go to Tarshish and he found a ship—of course he did, but was it a Providence? Yes, he might have said, "I should never have gone, but the finger of Providence seemed so clear." Many people have got into prison through such Providence! Your rule is not to be Providence, but the command of God! Who are you that you should interpret Providence? Is that Providence, when a man means to rob another, that he finds the house neglected? If a man means to cheat, is it a Providence that he meets some easy customer in the course of business? Yet many talk so and try to lay their sins upon the Providence of God! My Brothers and Sisters, never do this—you will either be the victims of infatuation or the perpetrators of wicked folly if you do anything of the kind.

Others, too, judge of their duty by impressions. "If I feel it impressed upon my mind," says one, "I shall do it." Does God command you to do it? This is the proper question. If He does, you should make haste, whether it is impressed upon your mind or not! But if there is no command to that effect, or rather, if it diverges from the line of God's statutes and needs apology or explanation, hold your hand, for though you have ten thousand impressions, yet must you never dare to go by them! It is a dangerous thing for us to make the whims of our brain instead of the clear precepts of God, the guide of our moral actions. "To the Law and to the testimony"—this is the lamp that shows the Christian true light! Be this your chart! Be this your compass! But as to impressions, and whims, and fancies, and I know not what besides which some have taken—these are more wreckers' lights that will entice you on the rocks!

Hold fast to the Word of God and nothing else! Whoever he shall be that shall guide you otherwise, close your ears to him! If at any time, through infirmity or weakness, I should teach you anything which is contrary to this Book, cast it from you! Hurl it away as chaff is driven from the wheat—if it is mine and not my Master's, cast it away! Though you love me, though I may have been the means of your conversion to God, think no more of what I say than of the very strangers in the street if it is not consistent with the teachings of the Most High. Our guide is His written Word, let us keep to this.

VII. MANY ARGUMENTS MIGHT BE STATED FOR SUCH OBEDIENCE AS THIS, but we shall only mention three or four of them.

Remember, Beloved in the Lord, that *our duty as Christians is not to be measured by our sense of that duty or by our knowledge*. What? Is it my duty to do anything that I do not know to be my duty? Certainly it is! Do you not know that even among men in the ordinary courts of law, if you break a law of which you were not cognizant, you are still amenable to punishment? Only last week a case in point occurred. In the new Act for Regulating the Traffic in the Streets, there are clauses which are quite unknown to some of the drivers. Some of these persons were prosecuted for breaking the law. They pleaded that they did not know it and, very rightly, they were dealt with leniently—but the magistrate told them that Parliament looked upon the law as binding upon men whether they knew it or not—it was their business to know it and they were to find it out! If it could be proved that a man did not try to know the law and went on breaking it through willful ignorance, he would soon learn that the judicature would not treat him with leniency, but would rather consider it a double offense, that the man who violated the law also persistently showed contempt for the law he violated and would not search it out! There are many such professing Christians. They do not know their duty because they do not *want* to know it. If they found out such-and-such a commandment of the Lord to be imperative, it would be very inconvenient, therefore they walk on the other side of the road rather than face the public notice! They take care to read some other passage of Scripture. I recollect a good man, a very good man, who, whenever he came to that passage in the Acts about Philip and the eunuch, took care not to read it, for it is a very awkward passage and reads so wonderfully like Believers' Baptism! As he could not bear that ordinance, and did not wish to trouble his conscience about it, he passed that passage by! But was he therein excusable? Assuredly not! God's ordinances are not according to our notions of those ordinances. Either a thing is right or not! If it is right, it is right and cannot be wrong! And I sin in not being obedient to it. My conscience cannot excuse me. If my conscience errs, I therein commit two sins—first, the error of my conscience and secondly, the error against the law which I have not properly read, and have not

understood as I ought to have done. The Fall spoiled our understanding so that we do not know the Divine Will as we should know it, but the flaw in our understanding is no excuse for the flaw in our life—otherwise all the corruptions of nature might be urged as an excuse for the corruptions of practice—which they certainly are not! Our rule, then, is not our sense of duty, nor what we think to be our duty, but this Book. There it is, the whole of it, and we must come to *that* and seek to set right our sense of duty and our conscience by the dictates of the Word of God!

And recollect, Christian, that *sin is to you, if you really are what you say you are, evermore a thing of horror*. Is it not, therefore, horrible even to suspect that you may be living constantly in sinful omission and every day engaged in the commission of some action hostile to God? Would you not be alarmed if it were whispered that there was a cancer somewhere in your body and you did not know where it was, but only that it was there somewhere? Would you ever rest till you had found out where it was? And if at night it should be said that somewhere in the house there was a thief, would you say, “Well, I do not know where he is and, therefore, I am justified in going to sleep”? No, but you would search until you drove him out. If you were in a room where there was a deadly viper and you got just an inkling of its being there, would you say, “I do not know, but I am almost sorry that I ever heard about the viper. I wish somebody had left me alone”? No, but you would thank him for telling you it was there and you would never rest till you had got rid of it! So, each one of us may be doing what we think is right, but which may be wrong. We may be living each day in the neglect of something which we ought to be doing. Will we not, therefore, make it this very night one of our earnest prayers, “Lord, teach me Your commandments and give me Grace to keep them! Do not allow me even one solitary day to live willingly disobedient to the will of so kind and loving a Lord”?

Beloved, *to the keeping of every command there is a reward appended, not of debt, but of Grace*. In keeping His commandments there is great reward, while, on the other hand, he that knows his Master’s will and does it not, shall be beaten with many stripes! He that knew not his Lord’s will and, therefore, did not do it, was he therefore excused? No, he, too, was beaten—beaten with fewer stripes, but still beaten. There is a reward which God gives, not that we have any merit, but out of His own Grace and love to those who keep close to Himself. And, dear Friends, we never neglect a duty without at once suffering for it—whether we perceive the suffering or not, we are losers by the neglect. Oh, that we could walk after the perfect pattern of the life of our Lord Jesus, without flaw and in perfection! And if that is not possible, yet at any rate let us struggle after it, seeking each day for the power of the Holy Spirit to work in us that we may be conformed unto the mind of Christ. O Spirit of God, leave us not!

Clay vessels as we are, You have made us vessels for honor—let us be fit for the Master's use!

The best argument, after all, that I can use with you is this—*when our Lord Jesus became a Servant on earth, He did not wait for instructions, but He sought out what He could do for us.* O my Brothers and Sisters, all that spontaneous service of affection which He rendered to us flowed from His inmost soul with a marvelous force! He did not say, “How little can I do for these poor sinners? How little can I suffer and yet let them be saved? How little can I give and yet bring them to Heaven?” No, but He emptied out the full treasure of His soul for us, bounding or limiting Himself in nothing! The Infinite Savior, Infinite in all that He did for us, in the boundless affection of His heart! Let us not serve Christ after a narrower sort than this, but let us ask Him to take our whole heart, to take us as disciples into His school, to teach us to write according to His copy, to amend the errors that we make, to correct the lines wherein we have been mistaken, that we may come, day by day, nearer and nearer to the perfect copy—and make up our minds to give up the dearest thing we have seen when we find it to be wrong and to follow out the hardest practice when we know it to be right! I think that, even with regard to our Doctrinal views, firmly established as we should be in the present Truth of God, we should always feel this when we are in prayer—that if there is something new that we do not know, but is quite contrary to what we do know, we are ready to learn it! And if some cherished opinion which we have held all our lives, should be found to be contrary to the mind of God, let us hold ourselves ready to give up that opinion at all costs and hazards as willing, obedient and true soldiers of our great Master and Captain!

I have thus tried to address the children of God. I have done it very, very feebly. The Lord forgive our weakness!

To the ungodly there is this word. I have not spoken to you up to now because I could not lay down the actions of the living to the dead—but to you there is a word. We are bid to preach to everyone in all the world, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.” To believe is to trust the Lord Jesus. It is that which saves you! Faith alone saves. After you have believed, then come and declare your death and burial with Christ through Baptism, according to His Word. That will not save you—you have no right to it until you are saved—but when you are saved, then that ordinance, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper become instructive and useful to you, but they are of no service to you until you are completely saved through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ!

The Lord give you Grace to believe, and to follow in His ways, and to Him be the Glory! Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
ROMANS 8:23-39.**

[Concluded from Sermon #3255, Volume 57—THE PEARL OF PATIENCE—read/download
the entire sermon free of charge at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .]

Verse 23. *And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.* That is what we are waiting for—"the redemption of our body"—and we shall not wait in vain for it, for Christ is the Savior of our body as well as of our soul, and the day shall come when even our bodies shall be free from pain, weakness, weariness, sin and death. Happy day! We may well look forward to it with the loftiest anticipations.

24, 25. *For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.* This is our present position—patiently waiting for "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ"—patiently waiting for "the manifestation of the sons of God," for "it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like He, for we shall see Him as He is."

26. *Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself make intercession for us with groans which cannot be uttered.* There is much in this Chapter about groaning and that is but natural, for it so largely concerns our present imperfect state. But, by-and-by, there will be—

***"No groans to mingle with the songs
Which warble from immortal tongues."***

27. *And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit because He make intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* This explains what to many is the mystery of prayer. The Holy Spirit, being Himself God, knows the secret purposes of the Divine Will and, therefore, moves the saints to pray in accordance with that will—and makes their supplications effectual through His own prevailing intercession. [See Sermons #788, Volume 14—CREATION'S GROANS AND THE SAINTS' SIGHS and #1616, Volume 27—SAVED IN HOPE—Read/download both sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>]

28. *And we know*—Paul, like John, was no Agnostic! He did not even say, "We think, we imagine, we suppose." No—"we know"—

28. *That all things work together for good*—We must not stop there, otherwise the statement will not be true, for all things do *not* work together for good to all men, but only—

28. *To them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.* How are we to know who they are who are the called according to God's eternal purpose? The previous clause informs us, for both relate

to the same individuals—“them that love God” are—“them who are the saved according to His purpose.” We cannot peer into the pages of the Lamb’s Book of Life, yet we can tell by this simple test whether our names are recorded there—do we truly love the Lord? If so, all things are working for our present and eternal good—all things visible and invisible, all things friendly and unfriendly, all things in Providence and Grace!

29. *For whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.*” What an eternal honor for all Believers—that they might be among the “many brethren” of Christ, God’s first-born and well-beloved Son! Here, too, we see the purpose of God’s foreknowledge and predestination, that we should be “conformed to the image of His Son.”

30. *Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.* You see that these great declarations relate to the same persons right through the whole series—“Whom He did foreknow, He did also predestinate...whom He did predestinate, them He also called...them He also justified...them He also glorified.” There is not a single link missing from the eternal purpose and foreknowledge of God to the everlasting Glory in which the saints’ bliss shall be consummated! The practical questions for each one of us to answer are just these—have I been “called” by Grace out of Nature’s darkness into God’s marvelous Light? Have I been “justified” by faith and have I peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ? Then, being called and justified, I may rest assured that I have been predestinated and that in due time I shall be glorified!—

**“There, where my blessed Jesus reigns,
In Heaven’s unmeasured space,
I’ll spend a long eternity
In pleasure and in praise.”**

31, 32. *What shall we then say to these things? If God is for us who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also give us all things? After having given us His own Son, what is there that He can withhold from us if it is for our real good? No, He has already virtually given us all things in giving Him to us!* [See Sermons #159, Volume 3—THE TRUE CHRISTIAN’S BLESSEDNESS; #355, Volume 7—PORTRAITS OF CHRIST; #1043, Volume 18—GLORIOUS PREDESTINATION; #241, Volume 5—PREDESTINATION AND CALLING and #627, Volume 11—JUSTIFICATION AND GLORY—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

33, 34. *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifies. Who is it that condemns? It is Christ that died, yes rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also make intercession for us.* Well might the Apostle ring out these confident challenges to Heaven, earth and Hell! As it is God that justifies, who can bring any charge against His elect? Who can condemn those for whom

Christ died, for whom He has risen, and for whom He is now making intercession at the right hand of God?

35-37. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for Your sake we are killed all the day long, we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. No in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.* “All these things” have only made the saints cling the more closely to their Lord, instead of separating them from Him! Their persecutors thought they were triumphing over them, but it was the martyrs who were the victors all the while!

38, 39. *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Paul had good reason for being persuaded that there was no separation for those for whom there was no condemnation! May we be among them by God’s Grace! Amen. [See Sermons #256, Volume 5—THE BELIEVER’S CHALLENGE; #2240, Volume 38—A CHALLENGE AND A SHIELD; #751, Volume 13—MORE THAN CONQUERORS and #2492, Volume 42—PAUL’S PERSUASION—Read/download all these sermons, free of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org>.]

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A SERMON
PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1915.

DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 26, 1871.

“If you seek Him, He will be found of you.”
1 Chronicles 28:9.

ALTHOUGH this was addressed to Solomon, it may, without any violence to the Truth of God, be addressed tonight to every unconverted person here present, for there are a great many texts of Scripture of a similar import which apply to all ungodly ones, such, for instance, as that, “Seek you the Lord while He may be found; call you upon Him while He is near.” And that other, “He that seeks, finds; to him that knocks, it shall be opened.” I should like to go round, if it were possible, and say to every hearer here, as I put my hand upon his shoulder, “If you seek your God, He will be found of you”—even of you. May I ask you to take it as spoken to each individual—not to your neighbors, not to one who is better or worse than yourselves, but to you? You, young man, and you of riper years, you of all ages, classes and sexes, “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” I know that those who think at all about religion and do not understand it, are very apt to conceive that there is something wonderfully mysterious about it. That a man should follow it, and may, perhaps, attain the blessing of it towards the end of life, or on a dying bed, though some conceive that then nobody is quite sure that he is saved unless it is some extraordinarily good man! Oh, is not this strange, that with a book so plain as this, and with a Gospel preached by so many in these days, yet the mass of mankind are in a cloud and a fog about the blessed Revelation of God? Jesus Christ is salvation! He is to be had—He is to be had now! You may know you have Him. You may be saved now—completely saved, and live in the full enjoyment of that knowledge! “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.”

The notion is that there are a great many very mysterious preliminaries, a great deal to *do*, and a great deal to *be*, and all quite beyond our power. It is not so, but seek Him. We will tell you what that means and he that seeks Him finds Him. “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” It has been supposed that we should need a good deal of help in seeking after salvation—certain persons who step in to be absolutely necessary priests between us and God. A great delusion, but there are thousands

who believe it and who fancy that God won't hear them if they pray, except they have some respect for these human mediators. Away with the whole lie! Away with any pretence for anyone to stand between the soul and God, except Jesus Christ! "If you seek Him, He will be found of you." Though you bring no other man with you, but come empty-handed as you are to God, here, without paraphernalia, or altar, or "sacrifice of the Mass," He will be found of you! Take the text in its simplicity and sublimity. It is just this—that if any heart really seeks God in His way, it shall find Him! If any man really wants mercy from God and seeks it as God tells him to seek it, he shall have it! Any man of woman born, be he who he may, if he comes to God in the way laid down, and sincerely asks for salvation, that salvation he shall surely have! The matter is simple enough—our pride alone obscures it! The way to Heaven is so plain that "a wayfaring man, though a fool, may not err therein." We do but muddle it because we dislike it! We do but add this and that and the other to it because, like Naaman, the Syrian, we need to do some great thing, and we are not content to take the Prophetic word, "Wash and be clean." I aim at nothing tonight, therefore, but that some here present may be brought to see the way of salvation and may be led to run in it. Oh, may God grant that, out of this company, there may be some at least who will be willing to seek and to find! While we shall cast the net, may the Master grant that some may be taken in it to their own eternal welfare! We shall try to do three things, four perhaps. First, to notice *that there is a promise here explained. We will then give directions. Thirdly, we will answer objections.* And, if time serves us, we will *offer a stimulant to the pursuit of this.* First, then, there is—

I. A PROMISE TO BE EXPLAINED.

"If you seek Him, He will be found of you." I have almost completed my explanation already. We have lost our God by the Fall—by our own sin. We have alienated ourselves from Him, but our case is not hopeless. Since Jesus Christ has come into the world and given the Gospel, and provided an Atonement, it is a certainty that if we desire the Lord and seek Him, He will be found of us. Now God has told us the way in which to seek. It is by coming to Him as He is revealed in Christ Jesus and trusting our souls with Jesus. If we do this, we have found God—and we are saved! The sum and substance of the promise is this—any soul that, by prayer, seeks God, desires salvation through Jesus, through faith in Jesus—such a soul shall be heard, shall get the blessing it desires, shall find its God! You shall not pray in vain! Your tears, cries and longings shall be heard. Christ shall be revealed to you and, through your believing in Christ, you shall certainly be saved! There is not, and never will be, in Hell, a single person who dares say that he sought the Lord through Christ and could not find Him. There is not living a man who dares say that, or if he did, his own conscience would call him a liar!

They that seek Him may not find Him at once, but they shall, ultimately. Delays from God are not denials. I will repeat what I said. There is not, and there never shall be, in the pit of Hell, a soul that shall dare to say, "I earnestly sought mercy of God through Jesus Christ, and did not find it." They who never found mercy in Christ never sought it, or never sought it correctly and earnestly! The seeker will become a finder. Seeking in God's way, heartily and earnestly, God will not reject him. "How do you know who I may be?" asks one—"you speak at large of all." I do not know who you may be, but I do know this, that if "the wicked forsakes his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turns unto the Lord, He will have mercy upon him, and our God will abundantly pardon" him! I also know this, concerning you, my Friend, that "whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved," and be you who you may, I am bidden to preach this Gospel to every creature under Heaven—and surely you are a *creature*! And what is this Gospel? Why, "He that believes and is baptized, shall be saved." Therefore, however peculiar your case or circumstances, there stands the one grand, glorious promise—"if you seek Him, He will be found of you." The only, "if," there is, is with you! If you seek Him—no, "if," about His being found of you! Oh, shall it be an, "if"? Shall it be an "if"? The Lord convert that "if" into certainty, and may you be compelled to say, tonight, "I will seek Him, and I will never cease my seeking until in my case the promise is true, and I have found Him of whom it was written, 'If you seek Him, He will be found of you.'" I have thus explained the text, though it scarcely needed it. Now let me give—

II. SOME DIRECTIONS.

What is it to seek the Lord? To seek the Lord is, in one way, simply this—the readiest way to seek Him is *to believe that Jesus is the Christ* and to trust Him who Jesus, the Savior, is God's Anointed—and to trust Him as God's Anointed to save your soul! You shall find peace the moment you do that. "But," says one, "I need to get this faith you speak of—this trust which you explain." Well then, let me help you somewhat. How do we get faith in anything? Why, surely by trying to know what it is! It would be very idle for me to stand here and say to you, "Believe, believe, believe"—but not tell you what to believe—what is to be believed! A man cannot command his faith about a something that he knows nothing of! Therefore, let me say to every soul that is seeking mercy, "Acquaint yourself with God and be at peace." "Study the Scriptures." Try to understand God's way of salvation. See who Christ is. What He did. What was the result of what He did. Get a clear view of His Person and His work and this will materially help you to believe.

Next to that, remember, *faith comes by hearing*. Frequent, therefore, the hearing of the Word and be careful that you seek not after the gaudy

words of man's eloquence, which may feed your pride and vanity, and tickle your ears, but can never save your soul! Seek a Christ-exalting ministry. Desire to be where your soul will be handled with fidelity and where Christ will be held up before you with simplicity and earnestness—for the hearing that God blesses is not the hearing of every man that speaks, but the hearing of the Word of God that, "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." "That Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the very chief." Listen with all your ears when Christ is being talked of, and pray while you are hearing, and say, "Lord, bless that message to me." Open your soul to the message—pray the Lord to open it, that you may be like Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened to attend to the things which were spoken to her by Paul. Then when you think you understand the Gospel, and have heard it so as to pretty plainly see it, if there should remain some difficulties which do not seem to be opened up to you by the ministry, *seek some earnest Christian*, to whom you may confide your soul on such points. You shall find that what is very difficult to you will be very easy to some Believers and they will be able, in God's hands, to be the means of removing the scales from your eyes. It was so with Paul when he was converted—he must go to Ananias, and when Ananias would come in, then should the scales fall from Paul's eyes. Meanwhile, take care *to be constantly in prayer*. Cry unto God to show you the way! Ask Him to do it, for, remember, He can do for you what you can never do for yourself. Understand that you cannot save yourself—that you have no right to be saved—that if saved, it will be by His Sovereign Grace—therefore, cry humbly, but oh, note the value of the blessing you need and, therefore, pray earnestly! Do not let Him go except He blesses you. Rob yourself of sleep, Sinner, rather than rob your soul of Christ! Search the Word again and again—and turn each promise into a prayer—and if you can only get a hold on the edge of a promise, go with it to the Mercy Seat and plead it! Be thankful for the smallest degree of hope! Trust that the first beams of day will soon expand and deepen into dawn, and into noonday. Grieve not the Holy Spirit by going on with your old sin. Part with your old companions. Seek the House of God. Seek the people of God—*addict yourself to holy company and holy pursuits*—and although I would not put all this together in the place of my first word, which was, "Believe now—believe now in Christ," yet if there are difficulties in the way, they will yield under such an earnest mode of seeking as I have tried to point out to you! Oh, if a soul is resolved, "I will not perish if mercy is to be had. I will stoop to anything. I will have Christ for nothing! I will be nothing! I will let Him do what He wills with me, if I may but be saved! I will make no terms and no conditions, only let my sins be blotted out"—my Friend, you are already not far from the Kingdom of God! Already Grace is at work in your soul and "if you seek Him, He will be found of you." Continue in that blessed search!

Let nothing take you away from it—it is your life—your soul hangs on it! Heaven and Hell tremble in the balance for you—give your heart to God, your faith to Christ, your whole soul to the purpose of seeking your salvation, and say, “It is my only business, with holy faith and holy fear, to make my calling and election sure while here I stand upon this narrow neck of land, betwixt the two unbounded seas.” I have thus given you some directions, but I am not going to linger over them, but pass on to—

III. ANSWER A FEW OBJECTIONS.

I cannot anticipate them all, and objection-hunting from sinners is an endless work, for when you have destroyed 50 objections, they will be ready with 50 more! But still there are a few common ones, and one is, “*I am too guilty*. Why should I seek, when it is impossible I should ever be pardoned?” Oh, if your soul rested with a man like yourself, or even with an angel, great Sinner, I would not encourage you—but who is the Savior? Think for a little. He is the mighty God! He that made the heavens and stretched them out like a tent to dwell in—He who speaks and it is done—the everlasting Father—is anything too hard for Him? Look to Him! He becomes a Man and yields Himself up to death! With sufferings that can never be understood or fully described—

**“He bears that we might never bear
His Father’s righteous ire.”**

Is anything impossible for the Savior? Oh, conceive not so! The idea that any guilt is too great for Christ to pardon scarcely deserves to be replied to! It is so absurd when you are dealing with the Infinite Mercy of a Savior who is God Himself! It was said some years ago that the city of Peking in China suffered greatly from severe climate at one part of the year, and paid much for fuel, and yet underneath it, or close to it, there were large coal mines. And when the Chinese were asked why they did not work them, they said that they were afraid of disturbing the equilibrium of the globe—perhaps the world might turn over and the celestial empire—which had always been at the top, might be at the bottom! Nobody thought it worthwhile to answer so absurd a theory! And when any say, “My sins are too great for Christ to pardon,” I could almost smile in the same way at a conception so ignorant! Can *anything* be too great for the Infinite Mercy of the Eternal God who took our sins upon Himself upon the Cross? Sinner, think not so!

There is another objection far more common, however, which is not put into words, but it means this—“*I am too good to seek Christ*. Why, have I not always been brought up religiously? I am not as those poor sinners are that have been drunks and the like. I have not any need of seeking Him.” Oh, Soul, if there is one that is least likely to be saved, it is you, for they that go about to establish their own righteousness are the last to submit to the righteousness in Christ Jesus—and verily, the pub-

licans and the harlots enter into the Kingdom of Heaven before some of you, for you can be sure of this—no man shall ever enter Heaven by his own works! There is but one gate to Heaven—one for queen or beggar, for the best order or the worst—and that is through the blood and righteousness of the one only Redeemer! And if you have not this, be you ever so good, you are utterly undone! Oh, lay aside that thought! You are neither too good nor too bad, but, “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.”

But I hear somebody in the corner saying, “It is no use my thinking of seeking Christ, *I am too poor.*” Oh, my dear Friend, your mistake, indeed, is a strange one, for did not Jesus say, “To the poor the Gospel is preached”? I’ll be bound to say you are not poorer than the Savior, Himself, for He said, “Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay My head.” Gold and silver have no value in His Kingdom! The poorest is as wealthy as the wealthiest if He comes to Christ!

“Ah, yes,” says another, “but I am *too ignorant.* I scarcely can read. Unhappily for me, I was brought up where I got no learning. I can never understand these things.” Friend, if you are not able to read a word in the Bible, yet may you read your title clear to mansions in the skies! You need not have all this learning—it were a good thing for you if you had it—serviceable for a thousand purposes, but not necessary to the entering of that Kingdom! If you know yourself as a sinner, and if you will trust Christ as a Savior, you shall be as welcome into the Kingdom as doctors who have taken their degree at the Universities, or the wisest men that have ever sat at the feet of Gamaliel. Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Let not this keep you back.

But I have heard one say, “I would gladly seek the Lord, but *I have no place to seek Him.*” What do you mean? “I have no chamber into which I can go and pray alone.” That is a sad deprivation, I grant you, but do not think for a moment that you need any special place in which to seek the Lord! I remember a sailor who used to be much in prayer, and he was asked where he went to pray. “Oh,” he said, “I have been many a time alone with Christ up on the mast.” Why not? It is as good a prayer room as a cathedral! Another man, when he was converted, used, while under conviction of sin, to make use of an old coach that was in his master’s yard. Why not? Why not? I know one whose prayer place used to be a saw pit, and another a hayloft! What does it matter?—

**“Wherever we seek Him, He is found,
And every place is hallowed ground!”**

Every place is consecrated where there is a true heart. In that seat you may seek and find Him. Standing there, up in the corner of the gallery, your soul may find her God. In Cheapside, walking in the busiest street, or at the plowshare amidst the fields, let your soul but cry, “Jesus, pity a

sinner”—let your heart trust in that Jesus—no place is needed—any place suffices. Raise not that excuse!

“*I have not the time,*” says another. Not the time? What time, pray tell, does it require? But if it did require it, oh, Man, are you mad to say, “I have no time”? You have time enough to dress your body—you stay for that other pin, that other ribbon and that adornment of your person. Not time to put on the Robe of Righteousness? You have time to feed your bodies, to sit down to your meals. Not time to eat the Bread of Heaven? Time to cast up your accounts to see how your business stands, and not time to see to your soul’s affairs? Oh, Sirs, be ashamed to make such an excuse! I charge you, give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids till you are saved! A man wakes up in the night and finds his house is on fire. There is a noise in the street. The fireman is calling to him. The ladder is at the window! “I have not time,” he says, “to go down the ladder and escape. I have little enough time for rest, and I must have my sleep while I can.” The man is mad, Sir, and so is every man who says, “I have not time to seek my God”! Perhaps, however, you speak the truth, for before the next word leaves my lips you may fall down a corpse! God sometimes makes our base excuses turn into solemn truths. Oh, while you have time, use it! “Escape for your life! Look not behind you!” Stay not, but hasten till you find the Savior and never think of resting till Christ is yours!

Another reason that some bring is one which occurs to them as if it were very satisfactory, and that is, “*I cannot.* No man can come, except he is drawn, and I cannot.” Yes, but you may put a truth into such a shape that it is a lie! Will you let me put that into the right shape? Every time when a sinner cannot, the real reason is that he *will not*. All the cannots in the Bible about spiritual inability are tantamount to will nots! But when you say, “I cannot repent,” you mean, “I *will not*—I will not seek, I will not believe.” Now put it honestly to your own soul, for that is what you mean, for if you would, you could! If the will were conquered, the power would be sure to come with it, but the first difficulty is, “You will not”—and this is it, you will not seek eternal life! You will not escape from Hell! You will not have Heaven! You will not be reconciled to God—you will not come to Christ that you might have Christ. You make it as an objection, but I charge it upon you as crime—a crime which aggravates all the rest, and is, in itself, greater crime, perhaps, than all the rest put together! You will not come.

“Do you want to come?” “Yes, but there is much I cannot do.” “Yes, but there is means provided to help you.” God the Holy Spirit helps you, yes, works mightily in you! Have you never heard of that Negro servant who was sent by his master on an errand? He did not particularly like to go there. He was sent with a letter. He was back in a short time and his

master said, Sam, you have not gone with that letter.” “No, Massa.” “Why not?” “Massa couldn’t expect Sam to do impossibilities.” “What impossibilities, Sir?” “I went on as far as I could, Massa—came to river—couldn’t swim across river—very wide river—couldn’t swim across it.” “But there is a ferry.” “Ferry on t’other side, Massa—ferry t’other side.” “Did you call to the ferry, Sir?” “No, Massa; didn’t.” “Oh, you rascal,” he said, “that is no excuse at all! Why didn’t you call for the ferry? Why didn’t you call for it?” Now if that Negro had only just said, “Boat, ahoy there!” the ferry would have come to him and all would have been well. It was an idle thing to say, “I cannot.” It was true, but it was false. So when I come to a point where there is something in the matter of my being saved which I cannot do, yet if I pray the Holy Spirit to work in me that which I cannot work in myself, He will do it. Jesus Christ will give me “true belief and true repentance—every Grace that brings me near.” I have only to ask for all that I need and I shall have it! It is idle for me to say, “I cannot do it.” Nobody asked you to! Christ will *give* it to you! Only stand and call—call mightily, and cry with all your soul until the blessing comes! But now I must close. I need to offer only a few sentences.

IV. A STIMULANT, to lead you to seek Him who will be found of you. And the first is, “*Is it not our duty to God that we should seek Him?*” With some persons this reflection may be important. You remember the Countess of Huntingdon, one of the most remarkably gracious women that ever lived—a mother in Israel. Her conversion was, to a great degree, caused by this—she was a happy and worldly lady of noble rank, excellent and amiable, and all that, but she had no thought of the things of God. She was at a ball and the amusements of the evening were engrossing all attention, and suddenly the answer to the first question of the assembly’s catechism, which she appears to have learned when she was a child, came forcibly into her mind, “The chief end of man is to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever.” She thought to herself, “Why, here am I, a butterfly among a lot of butterflies! All *our* chief end is to enjoy *ourselves*, to spend the evening merrily making ourselves agreeable, and so on.” She went away smitten in her soul with that thought, “The end that God made me for I am not answering.” Now there are some minds that have sufficient Divine Grace in them to think of such a thing as that, and I shall leave that to fall into some honest and good ground. Perhaps some young man will say, “Well, after all, I am not serving my Creator as I should.” You remember the conversion of Colonel Gardiner? He had lived a wild soldier’s life and he had appointed that very night of his conversion to perpetuate a gross sin. He was waiting an hour before he went to his appointment, and he thought he saw, I think upon the wall, the Savior on the Cross, and underneath the representation of the Crucified, he read these words—

“I have done this for you; what have you done for me?”

He never kept that sinful appointment! He became a soldier of the Cross! Oh, I wish that some here might feel something of nobility within them that would make them feel, “It is mean to act so unjustly to God, as to prefer the trivial things of time to the weighty matters of eternity.”

The next stimulus I would offer is one of *hope*. “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” “Oh,” says one, “if I could find Him, I would seek Him.” When persons go to South Africa, they search for diamonds, but if any man could be assured that he would find a Koh-I-Noor, I guarantee you he would be one of the hardest workers there! Oh, there are some here tonight that little dream it—that they will yet, before long, be telling others what Eternal Love has done for them! They are very ready to sneer at it, perhaps, at this moment. They think it is impossible. The Lord does great marvels! He brings down the mighty from their seat, and exalts them of low degree. Oh, Soul, the gate may not open at the first knock to you, it may be, but it will open! Let me encourage you. You shall yet rejoice. Your eyes shall see the King in His beauty, for there is a harp in Heaven that no finger shall ever play on but yours! And there is a crown there that will fit no head but yours! And a throne on which no one must sit but you! The Lord has chosen you, and, therefore, this night He calls you! “I have loved you with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness have I drawn you.” Go, poor Soul, to Christ, and you shall find it so!

But if that does not move you, let me give you another stimulant, and that is the opposite one, of *fear*. Suppose you should never seek your Lord? Suppose you should die without a Savior—what then? “I shall die,” you say, “my soul will go before God.” What then? Why, it must be condemned! And by-and-by your body shall rise up from the grave, your body shall spring, and you in body and soul shall stand before the bar of that great Savior whom you, tonight, despise! Beware, for the books will be opened and your rejection of Christ written there shall be read before the assembled world! And then when the earth does rock and reel and the ungodly in their terrors ask for the mountains to cover them—when the stars fall like withered figs from the trees and all Creation gathers up her skirts to flee away from the face of Him who comes in terror, oh, what will you do? What will you do? Expire, you cannot! Be extinguished, you will not—live on, you will! And in anguish that shall never abate, in despair that shall never be enlightened with a hope! “Turn you, turn you! Why will you die?” Why will you reject Him? “If you seek Him, He will be found of you.” Oh, seek Him! Reject Him not! “How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” Oh, who shall give me tears? Who shall teach me to speak with pathos? How shall I reach your consciences and stir your hearts? Eternal Spirit, do You this mighty work, and win this night to Yourself! O Jesus, save many a heart by this testimony of the

Grace, which again and again we reiterate, “If we seek Him—if you seek Him—He will be found of you.” God bless you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
JOHN 3:13-36.**

Verse 13. *And no man has ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man who is in Heaven.* We are in the stairway, now, between Heaven and earth. Christ has come down. Christ has gone up, and yet He was always there—a mystery, but one that is true, and new. Today we can go up by thought and prayer, and blessings can come down, but Christ is always there. “He is at the Father’s side, the Man of Love, the Crucified.”

14, 15. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: That whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.* What a glorious word! Here is the Gospel in a verse, the whole Bible in a line or two! If we believe in Him this morning, we have eternal life—not merely life, but life similar to the very life of God Himself—*eternal life!* We have in us that which will outlast the world, the sun, the moon and the stars! We have a life which, being like the life of God, we shall live forever and ever!

16, 17. *For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.* Condemnation does come to the world through Christ, because the world rejects Him, but that was no part of God’s design in sending Him. His design is salvation—salvation only. Oh, that we might so believe as to answer to the Divine Purpose in the sending of His Son. “He that believes on Him is not condemned,” not even now, notwithstanding every sin he has committed, he is not condemned. “But he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” Unbelieving is the condemning sin—it seals upon us the condemnation of every other sin. If you do not believe in Christ this morning, my Hearer, you are not in a state of probation, you are condemned already! He that believes on Him is not in a state of probation, he is not condemned! He is already acquitted, he is at this moment free from condemnation before the Judgment Seat of God!

18-21. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are worked in God.* You see why men do not come to Christ—they do not want to give up their

sin—they do not want to be made uneasy in it. They are afraid of being reproved. You see why saintly men come to Christ, for they take a delight in beholding Him, and in having their faith and their Divine Grace made manifest, both to themselves and to onlookers.

22-24. *After these things came Jesus and His disciples into the land of Judea: and there He tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized. For John was not yet cast into prison.* So John was busy until he was cast into prison. He would not waste an hour while he had an opportunity of doing good. He did it with all his heart. John, are you here in this sanctuary at this moment, not yet laid up, not yet obliged to stay in your bed? Work while you can, then—spend every moment in your Master's service.

25. *Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.* Is it not a come-down—from reading about looking to Christ and loving, to a contention about purifying? There always are in the Church more or less idle quarrels about the dress of the preacher, about the mode of administering sacraments and so on—a discussion about purifying.

26. *And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with you beyond Jordan, to whom you bore witness, behold, the same baptizes, and all men come to Him.* "They are leaving you." They felt an envy on behalf of John because his influence appeared to be declining. John was quite a stranger to this feeling! He loved to see his Master grow, even at the cost of his own effacing.

27. *John answered and said, A man can receive nothing except it be given him from Heaven.* No spiritual power, no power to bless his fellow men, except it comes from God. Shall I quarrel with God, therefore, if He gives to this man more power than He gives to me? Shall I dispute it? It is God's sovereign will and He does as He pleases!

28, 29. *You yourselves bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. He that has the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.* They were vexed, but John was joyful! He loved to hear of Jesus prospering.

30. *He must increase, but I must decrease.* So he did. This is John's one song, almost the last of his utterances. He preaches no more sermons that are recorded. He must now go to prison, and there lie in a silence which he could scarcely bear. It was very hard for John to be quiet. He had an active, noble mind, and he became the victim, we fear, of doubts when he was shut up in prison. The breezy air of the wilderness suited him much better than the dull, heavy atmosphere of a prison. I

daresay some of you may feel this at this time—do not set it down to spiritual results, to spiritual causes—set it down to the atmosphere, for so it is. We often feel dull and heavy, but heaviest when the heart is in a heavy air. Every wind that rises blows away despair. So we must not think too much of our feelings, which even the wind can change.

31. *He that comes from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaks of the earth: He that comes from Heaven is above all.* However good a man may be, he is earthly—there is flesh and blood about him akin to the earth—and even if he handles heavenly things, the earthiness of the preacher peeps out every now and then. Christ had nothing of that about Him—He was above all.

32. *And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no man receives His testimony.* Sad note! The news that all men went to Christ pleased John, but the fact that none received His testimony, comparatively none, grieved his heart.

33, 34. *He that has received His testimony has set to his seal that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the Words of God: for God gives not the Spirit by measure unto Him.* There is an Infinite spiritual power about the Words of Christ—they are the Words of God, and the Holy Spirit concentrates all His energy in those Words!

35, 36. *The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hands. He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and He that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him.* So John's last words are thunder! His dying speech has in it the words most terrible to all of you who believe not in Christ, "The wrath of God abides on him."

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

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TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.**