

# ORDER IS HEAVEN'S FIRST LAW

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A SERMON  
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***“Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk everyone in his path.”***  
***Joel 2:8.***

THOSE who have been able to observe the marching of an army of locusts have been amazed beyond measure with the marvelous regularity of their advance. Agur, who must surely have seen them, says, “The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands.” The wonder is that creatures comparatively so insignificant in size, and so low down in the scale of intelligence, should maintain such more than martial order, both in their long flights and in their devouring marches. The ablest commanding officers would be at their wits’ end if ordered to marshal a multitude numbering even a thousandth, or perhaps a millionth part of the countless hordes of these destructive marauders and yet, by instinct, the locust soldiery can and do keep rank better than the most veteran regiments of the line, as I can personally testify, from having seen miles of them in one of the Italian valleys. “They shall march everyone on his ways,” says the Prophet, “and they shall not break their ranks: neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk everyone in his path.”

I. As I considered this remarkable fact in insect life, my meditations led me to note THE ORDER WHICH REIGNS, not only among locusts, but THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE OF GOD’S WORLD. And then I said within myself—After this fashion should there be order and arrangement in the Christian Church. God has trained His great insect army and among them order reigns, but this is no exception to the general rule, for all the hosts of God are marshaled in rank and file and are never left to be a disorganized mob of forces. From the most minute to the most magnificent, all creatures feel the sway of order and they well observe the laws imposed by their Creator!

*Look up to the heavens and observe the innumerable stars that glisten there so plenteously that numeration fails.* Looked at through the telescope, stars are so abundant that the heavens appear to be covered with dust of gold and yet we have no record that one of these bodies has ever interfered with the orbit of its fellow sphere, or if such a catastrophe has ever been permitted, it has been part of the all-comprehending scheme. The majestic orbs move, each one in its own orbit, and all in perfect harmony. Even the aberrations, as we call them, are nothing but the result of regular law and the astronomer finds that he can calculate them with the greatest possible accuracy. There are no irregularities,

discords, or failures among the constellations! And if to the student of the heavens such should appear to be the case, he has but more fully to master the universal law and he discovers, with astonishment, that every eccentricity is a necessary incident in a system grander than he had thought. Mere amateurs in astronomy talked of irregularities, but Newton and Kepler found a mathematical precision manifest in all. At no point need we be afraid that the universe will be thrown out of gear! If a man had placed innumerable wheels in a machine, there would be, in due time, a breakdown somewhere. Oil would be needed here, a cog would be broken there, a band would be snapped in this place, or a piston would be immovable there—but God's great machine of the universe, whose wheels are so high that the sublime Ezekiel, when he saw them, felt that they were terrible, has continued to revolve these many thousands, perhaps millions of years, and has never yet been stopped for cleaning or repair because God has impressed upon every atom of it the most docile spirit of submission—and His powerful hands are at work every instant amidst the machinery giving force to His laws.

Nor is it so in the coarser inanimate forms of matter only, but *the same law holds good with the whole animal creation*. Not locusts alone, but the fish of the sea and the birds of the air all observe their Maker's bidding and both live and move according to rule and order, all forming portions of the perfect circle struck out by the Divine compasses. What a wonderful thing it is that mighty streams of fish should come, during certain seasons, from the North and swim near enough to our coasts to afford our citizens so large a portion of their daily food! If there is complaining in our streets, there need not be, for extended fisheries could supply all the inhabitants of Britain, even if they were multiplied a hundred times, and yet there would be no perceptible declining in the teeming population of all the sea, for God has so arranged it that there shall be most of those kinds which are most required for food. But what a marvel that at the fixed period, the unguided fish should migrate in such countless shoals and should return again, in due season, to their old abodes among the Arctic waves!

Mark, too, how every tribe of animals is necessary to all the rest. So beautiful is the order of Nature that we cannot wantonly destroy a race of little birds without suffering from their removal. When the small birds were killed in France by the peasantry, who supposed that they ate the corn, the caterpillars came and devoured the crops. Man made a defect in an otherwise perfect circle—he took away one of the wheels which God had made and the machine did not work perfectly. But leave it alone and no jars or grindings will occur, for all animals know their time and place and fulfill the end of their being. You spoil the harmony of Nature's concert if even the sparrow's chirrup is unheard. The stork and the crane fly at God's bidding, the swallow and the martin know their pathway—the prowling beasts and ravenous birds, as well as the domestic cattle, all hold their own in Nature's arrangements. Like the bejeweled breastplate of the high priest, Nature is full of gems, each one in its setting—and the glory is marred if one is lacking. Be assured that the

wild ass and coney, leviathan and behemoth, eagle and dove, gnat and lizard are all arranged for the highest good and are beautiful in their season. "Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk everyone in his path."

Rising a little higher, *there is also order in the Providence of God*. When you view the great world of human history, it looks like a skein of thread much twisted and tangled. When you study it, you see nations rise and fall, like boiling waves of a foaming sea. You read of horrible wars, wantonly commenced and wickedly continued. The human race seems to have destroyed its sons without a motive. Men rush upon each other with all the fury of fiends and tear each other like wolves—and yet they eat not that which they have killed! The history of mankind appears at first sight to argue the absence of God. We ask, "How is this? We expected to find, if God were in Providence, something more orderly and regular than we see here. Instead of a grand volume from a master-pen, we see words flung together without apparent connection. We expected to find a sublime poem, such as angels might love to read, but all this is confusion, void and unintelligible—strokes and dashes without meaning to us." Yes, my Brothers and Sisters, and so it is. But we are little children and do not yet understand God's hieroglyphics! We write in large text and have not the transcript of the celestial shorthand. Our limited field of vision only lets us see a brick or two of the great house—and straightway we begin to criticize the infinite Architect and His work. After all, supposing this world to have existed six thousand years, what is that? In God's sight, it is but as a day, or as yesterday when it has passed. We see but one thread of history, a raveling of life, and then we vainly fancy that we can form a fair judgment of the tapestry curiously fashioned by the finger of the Lord!

Coming down from these great things to ourselves, *depend upon it that all the events in our own little lives are marching straight on to a gracious consummation*. You, child of God, sometimes say, "What can be the design of this cross? What can be meant by that bereavement? Why am I perplexed by this dilemma? Why is this difficulty piled like a barricade across my path? Well, you know not *now*, but you shall know hereafter! Meanwhile, settle it firmly in your faith that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." Your affliction does not jostle your prosperity, but promotes it. Your losses do not cause your loss—they really increase your true riches! Onward still, laden with untold blessings, every event is marching for the righteous and for the humble spirit. God has His way in the whirlwind and the clouds are the dust of His feet. Only be patient and wait upon Him with childlike confidence and the day shall come when you shall wonder, and be astonished, that there should have been such order in your life when you thought it was all confusion—such love when you thought it unkindness, such gentleness when you thought it severity, such wisdom when you were wicked enough to impugn the rightness of your God! Brothers and Sisters, the events of our history march on as

rightly as a victorious legion under a skillful Leader. Do not let us arraign the wisdom of that which happens to us, or fancy that we could order our affairs in better style. Our good and ill, our joy and grief, all keep their places. "Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk everyone in his path."

**II.** But we must rise still higher. We have come from the world of matter to the world of living creatures and up to the world of intellectual beings—NOW LET US THINK OF GOD HIMSELF.

*We may say of all His attributes* that "neither does one thrust another, but each one walks in his path." Let us be careful at any time in thinking of God, that we indulge not in reflections upon one attribute to the forgetting of the rest. Many Christians are much soured in their disposition by considering God only in the light of Sovereignty. Now, that He is a Sovereign, is a great, deep, mysterious, but also most blessed Truth of God, and we would defend Divine Sovereignty with all our might against all comers. But, at the same time, absolute Sovereignty is not the only attribute of God and those who keep their eyes fixed upon that, to the exclusion of all other qualities and prerogatives, get an ill-balanced idea of God—and very likely they fall into errors of doctrine and, still more likely, they become hardhearted towards their fellow men and forget that the Lord has no pleasure in the death of sinners, but desires rather that they should turn unto Him and live.

On the other hand, many injure their minds very greatly by reflecting solely upon the one thought of God, that He is good. It is a blessed Truth that He *is* good and benevolent, and full of compassion—and Holy Scripture tells us that "the Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are over all His works." God forbid that we should seek to diminish the kindness of God, or think lightly of it, "for His mercy endures forever." Yet some look at that one emerald ray as though it were the whole of the spectrum! They gaze upon one star and regard it as the Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus, all in one. And, alas, worse results follow, for they are tempted to think sin to be a mere trifle since they ignore the Justice and Sovereignty of God. They so exclude God's righteousness and vengeance from their minds so that when they hear of Hell, and of the wrath that will come upon the impenitent, they shudder with inward unbelief and try to doubt it—and, perhaps, manage to find texts of Scripture which look as if they helped them in their perverted and jaundiced view of the Most High! They think they are glorifying God, but they are really dishonoring Him, for God is no more altogether Mercy than He is altogether Sovereignty! And He is no more altogether Sovereignty than He is altogether Mercy. The fact is that every glory meets in God! All that is good, excellent and great may be found in Him in complete perfection. God would have you so to think of Him, for, in the Atonement, which is His grandest Revelation of Himself, He has been pleased to show you—

***"How Grace and Justice strangely join;  
Piercing His Son with sharpest smart,  
To make the choicest blessings yours."***

This leads me one step further to observe that *the same order is perceptible in the Doctrines of the Word of God*. Doctrines, which look as if they contradicted each other, are nevertheless fully agreed. It is the defect in our mental vision which makes separate Truths of God appear to cross each other's orbit, for it is certain that the Truths of Scripture do not thrust each other, but each one goes on in its own path. Perhaps the fiercest of fights has been waged over the great fact that salvation is of Grace and the equally certain fact that man is responsible to God under the Gospel, and that, if he perishes, his ruin lies at his own door—and is not to be charged upon God in any sense whatever. This has been the arena in which intellectual gladiators have fought with each other age after age. If they had stood side by side and fought the common enemy, they would have done good service, for I believe in my soul that they both hold some Truth and that either of them will hold error unless he will yield something to his rival. There are some who read the Bible and try to systematize it according to rigid logical creeds, but I dare not follow their method and I feel content to let people say, "How inconsistent he is with himself!" The only thing that would grieve me would be inconsistency with the Word of God! As far as I know this Book, I have endeavored, in my ministry, to preach to you not a part of the Truth of God, but the whole counsel of God—but I cannot harmonize it, nor am I anxious to do so. I am sure all Truth is harmonious and to my ear the harmony is clear enough—but I cannot give you a complete score of the music, or mark the harmonies on the gamut—I must leave the Chief Musician to do that.

You have heard of the two travelers who met opposite the statue of Minerva and one of them remarked, "What a glorious golden shield Minerva has!" The other said, "No, it is bronze." They argued with one another. They drew their swords, they slew each other and, as they fell dying, they each looked up and the one who said the shield was made of bronze discovered that it had a golden side to it—and the other, who was so bold in affirming that it was gold—found that it also had a bronze side. The shield was made of two different metals and the combatants had not either of them seen both sides. It is just so with the Truth of God—it is many-sided and full of variety. Grand three-fold lines run through it—it is one yet three, like the Godhead! Perhaps you and I have only seen two of the lines—many persons refuse to see more than one—and there may be a third yet to be discovered, which shall reconcile the apparently antagonistic two, when our eye shall be clarified by the baptism in the last river and we shall ascend the Hill of the Lord to read the Truth of God in the light of the Celestial City!

However, it is clear that salvation is altogether of Grace and equally clear that if any man perishes, it is not for lack of invitations on God's side—honest invitations to come to Christ. We hear our Master saying, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Some friends are so afraid of that text that they generally quote it "weary and heavy laden," which is not the true reading—the *laboring* ones are invited to Jesus! Many such invitations did Christ give, yet did

He not also say, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draw him"? Amid the soft rain of tenderness we hear the thundering of those solemn Truths of God—"So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy." "Therefore has He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will, He hardens." As we listen to that thunder, we bow to the Sovereignty of God yet, amid the pauses, we hear the Master say, "Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely," and we also hear Him say, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled." Let us believe both sets of Truths and not oppose ourselves to friends who hold either the one or the other, but seek to bring them to believe both—for as the Bible is true, they are, both of them, the Truths of the living God! Observation leads me to think that those persons who are willing to hold the whole of revealed Truth, are generally Christians of a more active spirit and more desirous for the conversion of souls than those who contract their minds and only hold some one or two great theological dogmas. If we will but lay aside our Chinese shoes and allow our feet to grow as they should, we shall find it far better walking on the road to Heaven—and we shall be more ready for any work which our Master may call us to do!

### III. Now we turn to THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

Dear Friends, you and I who have entered into the Kingdom of Grace and have received a life which the worldling cannot understand, (for the carnal mind knows nothing of the spiritual life), *must remember that our thoughts, graces, and actions ought all to keep their proper position* so that it may be said of them, "Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk everyone in his path."

*As to our thoughts*, we ought to endeavor, as God shall teach us by His Spirit, to keep our thoughts of God's Word in their due harmony. Some Brothers and Sisters, for instance, are altogether doctrinal in their inclinations. Doctrinal study is admirable—may God send us much of it! Yet doctrine is not all that we are taught in the Sacred Word. There are also duties and promises—why despise these? Then again, other professors of religion are altogether of a practical turn and, while they value James, they depreciate Paul. They do not like an expository sermon, they cannot endure it! But if you give them a precept, they rejoice greatly. They are quite right as far as they go. The Lord send us much more practical Christianity! But this is not all. There are others who are altogether experimental and some of these will hear no sermon unless it treats upon the corruption of the human heart, or upon the dark frames of the child of God. Others will have no experience but the bright side—you must always preach to them out of the Canticles, inditing the good matter concerning the sweet love of Christ towards His spouse.

Now, each of these forms of preaching is good in its season, but he who would keep close to the Scriptures and preserve completeness in his thoughts must weigh well the doctrine and seek to get a clear view of the Covenant of Grace and the economy of salvation. He must study the

precepts and ask the Holy Spirit to give him the fleshy heart upon which those precepts may be written as upon living tablets. And then he must watch his experience, mourning over inbred sin, but also rejoicing in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, through whose blood we have the victory.

We must endeavor, as much as possible, to exercise our thoughts upon all the subjects which God has given us to think upon in His Word and has applied to our hearts by the workings of the Holy Spirit. Where this is done, we shall avoid one thought thrusting another, and each will go in its own path. I have heard of doctrinal preachers who hated the very sound of the word, "duty." I have also heard the practical Brother declare that he detested "election" while the experimental Brother has affirmed that the doctrinal preacher was merely "a dead-letter man." Oh, what naughty words for God's children to use to describe one another—bitter sentences which they only use because they know so little! Shame upon us that we say, "I am of Paul" and, "I am of Apollos" and, "I am of Cephas," for all these are ours to profit by if we are Christ's! Learn from the doctrinal, learn from the practical, learn from the experimental! Blend the whole together and let not one thrust another, but allow each to go straight on in its own path!

*The same should hold good in the graces which we cultivate.* The Lord Jesus Christ is pleased to put, by His Holy Spirit, into the hearts of those whom He has saved, certain lovely and precious things, but it is not always easy to get these in due harmony. For instance, I know a Brother who is very faithful. He does not mind telling you of your faults, but then, he is not affectionate in spirit—and so he never warns you of your infirmities in a way that does you good. Now, if that Brother could get affection to balance his fidelity, what an admirable man he would make! I remember well another Brother who was all affection and nothing else. He was so affectionate as to be effeminate and I, poor rough creature as I am, could never bear the sight of him. He always reminded me of a pot of molasses and his office appeared to be the anointing of everybody he met. If he could but have mixed a little fidelity with his sweetness, he would have been a much better and stronger man. Secker says that Christianity ought, first, "to make a man more of a man and then, more than a man"—and so it would if we sought, by the power of the Spirit, to cultivate all the graces!

The beauty of the human countenance does not consist exclusively in having bright eyes—no, the fine eyes help, but all the other features of the face must balance it. A man may have the finest possible forehead and yet he may be extremely ugly because his other features are out of proportion—so it is with character. Character must have all the graces, but all the graces in harmony. Take, for instance, the virtue of meekness. It is a lovely thing to be of a meek and quiet spirit, but then, my Brothers and Sisters, how could reforms ever be worked if all were so meek that they could not speak out against error? Where would you find your Luthers and your Calvins? Meekness must be balanced by the virtue

which is its compensating quality, namely, *courage*. Affection must be strengthened by fidelity. A man must be patient under affliction, but he is not to be so patient as to be idle. He must couple energy with his patience, in order to manifest a practical faith. When we have each of these, we shall be what Paul and James call, "perfect." Then shall we have come to be "entire, needing nothing," having reached "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Christian men should be men-Christians. If your child should have a rapid growth in its arms, but not in its legs, or if its legs should lengthen, but not its arms, what a strange being it would be! What a monster! It is the growth of each limb in proportion that brings a man to perfection. So, my Brothers and Sisters, when our heads grow faster than our hearts, it is an ill sign—yet how many know a great deal more than they feel, and criticize much more than they believe! It is also an evil thing when a man's tongue grows bigger than his head—when he has more to say than he knows or does—when, like Mr. Talkative, he can talk about the road to Heaven, but makes no progress on it!

*The same proportions and balancing should be found in our Christian duties.* This is too large and difficult a subject to go fully into, now, but we will have a word or two about it. A man is not in his outward action a complete Christian because he is attentive to one duty, for God would have His people attend to all. It will sometimes be a question with you as to how much time should be given to private devotion, how much to family worship and how much to worship—and you may easily make great mistakes here. I recollect a Brother, a very excellent man, too, who was always at Prayer Meetings and public services, but, unfortunately, being always away from home, his family was so neglected that the sons grew up, one after another, to be the most precocious specimens of depravity that the parish could exhibit! We thought and we hinted as much to our Brother that if he would be at home, sometimes, to teach the children, whose mother was as neglectful of them as the father was—and so the mischief became doubled—he would be far more in the path of duty than in attending public services to the neglect of family piety. I only wish he had been able to see the propriety of our advice, for he has had to smart for his folly. It is not often that a man's private devotions obtrude in this way, but I know one professor who used to spend so long a period in private prayer that he neglected his business and also the assembling of himself with God's people. It was, indeed, an unusual vice, but it came to be quite a sin in his case. This last is a very unusual fault and one that I could almost excuse because it is so unusual—but I recommend far more strongly the careful thinking of how much time is due to God in the closet, how much at the family altar, how much at the Prayer Meeting and how much to the weeknight services—for we must give to each according to its due proportion.

Again, the difficulty will often occur to you, my Brothers and Sisters, as to how much is due to diligence in business and how much to fervency in spirit. No one can draw the line for another. Each one must judge for himself, but this must be the law—"Neither shall one thrust



another; they shall walk everyone in his path.” There may be a season in which you may lawfully give all the hours of the day to business. Your business may require it and there are times with commercial men when to go to weekday services would be almost insanity—they must keep to their work, or else there will become a failure—and then the name of Christ will be evilly spoken of. There will be times, too, with workingmen, when if they were to insist upon coming to the Monday evening Prayer Meeting, or to the Thursday night lecture, they would be altogether out of the path of duty—there is a demand for labor just at some particular time and they must obey the call—and they are in the path of duty in so doing. I am afraid that there are not many who fail in that way, but crowds who err in the opposite direction. Some will keep the shop open so late that there is no time for family prayer! Others will confine their servants so strictly that they can never get out on weeknights to hear a sermon. It does not strike the employer's mind that some of the young people would perhaps like to be at the Prayer Meeting on Monday night, nor will the employer be there himself. Now, I cannot say to you, you must give so much time to God and so much to the business—you yourself must ask God the Holy Spirit to guide you! But remember, you must not let one thrust another. It is a good saying of an old Divine, “Never bring to God one duty stained with the blood of another.” As much as lies in you, give to each distinct duty its due proportion.

There is a still greater difficulty with regard to the arrangement of distinct duties *when they are likely to run counter to one another*. Here is a servant—his master expects him, after he has entered into an engagement with him, to do such-and-such unnecessary work on the Sabbath. The young man says, “No, I cannot do that. It is clearly unscriptural and I must obey God rather than man.” But there are certain things which come somewhere between the necessary and the unnecessary—and the servant may properly enquire, “What is my duty?” You must settle it carefully within your own mind. Have you any sordid or selfish motive for deciding in any particular way? If so, be very cautious how you decide, but seek the Lord's Glory, and the Lord's Glory, alone, and say, “While I am, as a servant, to serve man, yet I am the Lord's free man and I must walk both as a servant and the Lord's free man, and not forget either.”

Sometimes the matter of the conduct of children towards parents has come under our notice. A harsh parent has said, “My children shall not carry out their religious convictions.” In such cases we have had to occasionally recommend the child to wait until he has grown a little older. At other times, we have bid the child break through the parent's evil command, since we cannot hold that the parent can have any right to make his child disobey God. In the matter of the child's religion—when it is able to judge for itself—it is as free as its parents and has a right to choose for itself. And while the parent should seek intelligently to guide it, coercion must never be tried. If the parent is ungodly, the child is free from all obedience to wicked commands and must then act in obedience

to a higher Parent, and to a greater Law, namely, the Law of God. The same happens, at times, with regard to the husband and the wife. Of course, a good wife continually wishes to do that which will please her husband and she is happy to be subservient to him as far as may be. But when it comes to a point of conscience and the two relations clash, the relations of the Heavenly Bridegroom and the earthly husband—it is not always easy to decide upon a fitting course of action. But we may at least be certain that we must not be actuated by selfishness, nor by a desire to avoid persecution, nor to please men—we must stand on the side of honesty to God, fealty to the King of kings and a regard for the Truth as it is in Jesus. Do try, if it is possible, and I believe it is possible in every case, to harmonize all your relationships, so that neither one of them shall thrust another, but each shall walk in its own path.

**IV.** So, Brothers and Sisters, my concluding remark shall be that as this is to be true in the little commonwealth of the heart and the home—IT OUGHT TO ALSO BE TRUE OF THE CHURCH AT LARGE.

It is a great blessing when the members of the church do not thrust one another, but everyone goes in his own path. *There are different orders of workers and these must cooperate.* Alas, workers in a Sunday school do not always agree with one another. Then, workers in Sunday schools are not always so fond of workers in Ragged schools as they might be and, perhaps, the workers in Ragged schools may sometimes look down with coldness upon the distributors of tracts. It should never be so. We are like the different members of the body and the eye must not say to the foot, "I have no need of you," neither must the hand say to the ear, "I have no need of you." Every man must work according to the gift of the Holy Spirit. When a man steps out of his proper office into another, he makes a great mistake, both for himself and for the Church at large—and when one Brother envies another and picks holes in his coat, and finds fault with his service, he needs to hear that Inspired question, "Who are you that judges another man's servant? To his own master he stands or falls." I pray all the bands of workers to maintain a holy unanimity, being of one accord, minding the same thing, provoking one another to nothing but love and good works, striving for nothing except that they together may promote the Glory of the Lord Jesus!

And as it is true in any one church with regard to the laborers, so *it should be also with regard to the different ranks and classes of Christians.* The rich should never say, "We do not want so many poor in the church," neither should the poor man say, "Our minister favors the wealthy—there is more thought of the rich than there is of the poor." There is just as much fault on one side as there is on the other in these things. While we sometimes find the purse-proud man looking down on the poor, it quite as often happens that the poor man takes umbrage where there is no need for it and is much more wicked in his jealousies than the other in his purse-pride. Let it never be so among Christians, but let the Brother of high degree rejoice that he is exalted and the poor that he is brought low! We need both and cannot do without either—and

having both in the church, neither should one thrust another, but each should go in his own path.

So with the educated and the uneducated. I have been saddened, oftentimes, when I have heard a sneer against a Brother who cannot speak grammatically. The Brother who can speak grammatically, perhaps, does not try to speak at all—and yet he sneers at the other and says, “Well, really, I wonder that such fellows should preach! What is the good of them?” Now, until you have done better than he does, do not find fault with him! God uses him, so surely you ought not to despise him! The fact is, Brothers and Sisters, that the learned and educated minister is necessary and useful—we have no right to sneer at those who have gone through a College and earned a high degree of learning, for they are useful. But on the other hand, who among us hears of such men as Richard Weaver and Mr. Carter, and others who are laboring among the poor and dares to despise them? If I might have my choice, I should prefer to work with them rather than with the fine-spun gentlemen, but still, every man in his own order, each man after his own fashion—let the one take his position and the other take his position—and never say a jealous or an angry word of each other, neither let one thrust another, but each one go straight on in his own path.

*So it ought to be with all our churches.* In this great city of London, there is no excuse for anything like jealousy among the various Christian churches. If we were to build as many places of worship as would reach, set side by side, from here to London Bridge, on both sides of the road and without a single house or shop in all the distance—and if we were to put Gospel preachers into them all, I believe they could all be filled without any of them being a hindrance to another—for the millions in this city are so enormous that there is no chance of our being jostled by one another! We are like fishermen in the deep sea. Because there are a hundred boats, they need not, any of them, come off the worse. If there were 50,000 boats, they could all be full where the fish are so abundant. Perhaps you say, “I hear Mr. So-and-So, and what a dear man he is!” Very likely he is, but so is somebody else. It would be a great pity if everybody could hear only one man. It would be a very sad thing if everybody wanted to come to the Tabernacle, for we cannot make it any bigger than it is—and it would be a very wretched thing if everybody wanted to go somewhere else, for then we should have an empty house! But now, each one listening according as his own spiritual taste may guide him, or as his spiritual appetite may dictate to him, we are formed into different communities which prosper individually, but which would glorify God much more if all disunion were cast aside and if we sought each other's good, profit and edification.

*And so, to conclude, it ought to be with the different denominations.* I sometimes think that these will continue forever. They are of no hurt to the Church of God, but a great blessing, for some of them take up one point of the Truth of God which is neglected and others take up another—and so, between them all, the whole of the Truth of God is

brought out! And it seems to me that the Church of Christ is even more one than if all the various sections were brought together into one grand ecclesiastical corporation, for this would, probably, feed some ambitious person's vanity and raise up another dynasty of priestcraft, like the old Babylon of Rome! Perhaps it is quite as well as it is, but let each body of Christians keep to its own work and not sneer at the work of others. Let all feel, "We have this to do, and we will do it in the name of God." Let each body of Christians try to correct its neighbor in its errors and mistakes, but let each work hand in hand and stand foot to foot in the common battle and the common service, for, O my Brothers and Sisters, the time will come when our little narrow jealousies will all melt away like the hoar frost when the sun arises! When the King shall come in His Glory, or we are carried to the other side of the stream of death and see beyond the curtain which parts us from the invisible world, we shall look with very different eyes upon some things which seem so important now! We shall then see that God has forbidden us to glory in anything but the Cross of Christ and that the one thing necessary, after all, to contend for was, "By Grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

Now, may the Lord help us to go straight on in our own paths, not one thrusting another, but all working together for God. And if there are any among us who are not converted, let me remind them that they are out of order—and let me tell them what comes of that. When a man sets himself in opposition to God's Laws, they crush him as surely as he is there! Throw yourself from the Monument and the law of gravitation will not be suspended to save you. Even so, if you are out of order with God, there is no help for it—and your destruction is certain if you remain opposed to Him. Oh, that you may be led, by Divine Grace, to get into order with God—to be reconciled unto God by the death of His Son! He tells you the way to get into order. It is this—simply trust Jesus! That is the way to rectify all errors. He that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved! May God bless us all with that salvation, for His name's sake! Amen.

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

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

# TRUTH STRANGER THAN FICTION

## NO. 2081

**DELIVERED ON LORD'S DAY EVENING, MAY 30, 1886,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten.”  
Joel 2:25.***

LOST years can never be restored literally. Time once past is gone forever. Let no man make any mistake about this or trifle with the present moment under any notion that the flying hour will ever wing its way back to him. As well call back the north wind or fill again the emptied rain cloud, or put back into their quiver the arrows of the lord of day. As well bid the river which has hastened onward to the sea bring back its rolling floods, as imagine that the years that have once gone can ever be restored to us. It will strike you at once that the locusts did not eat the *years*—the locusts ate the *fruits of the years' labor*—the harvests of the fields.

So the meaning of the restoration of the *years* must be the restoration of those fruits and of those harvests which the locusts consumed. You cannot have back your time. But there is a strange and wonderful way in which God can give back to you the wasted blessings, the unripened fruits of years over which you mourned. The fruits of wasted years may yet be yours. It is a pity that they should have been eaten by your folly and negligence. But if they have been so, be not hopeless concerning them. “All things are possible to him that believes.” There is a power which is beyond all things and can work great marvels.

Who can make the all-devouring locust restore his prey? No man, by wisdom or power, can recover what has been utterly destroyed. God alone can do for you what seems impossible. And here is the promise of His Grace—“I will restore to you the years that the locust has eaten.” By giving to His repentant people larger harvests than the land could naturally yield, God could give back to them, as it were, all they would have had if the locusts had never come. And God can restore your life which has up to now been blighted and eaten up with the locust and sin, by giving you Divine Grace in the present and in the future. He can yet make it complete and blessed and useful to His praise and glory. It is a great wonder—but Jehovah is a God of wonders and in the kingdom of His Grace miracles are common things.

We shall go into this subject, which I think will be very interesting to those here present who have wasted years to mourn over, since they have up to now done nothing for God, nor even for themselves. The locust has eaten everything. The prospect of recovering the wreckage of a life must be full of interest to them.

**I.** I shall first speak upon locust-eaten years. YEARS WHICH THE LOCUST HAS EATEN—what sort of years are these?

First and darkest of all, there are the dead years of sin, of reprobation, impenitence and unbelief. Those years without God and without Christ. Those years without life as to *spiritual* things! What a condition to be in! Oh, how many, many years have some passed in this horrible state! We, all of us—those of us with whom God has dealt very graciously—always feel sorry that even our most early days should have been spent in sin. I was brought to know the Lord when I was fifteen years of age and I have often said that I could wish I had known Him fifteen years before. Oh, that one could, from the very earliest openings of one's eyes have seen the light of the Eternal!

Oh, that the first pulsing of life had been with Jesus! Oh, that the first flowing of the blood had been consecrated with the life of God within the soul! But yet I fear there are very many to whom the idea of conversion in boyhood and youth seems almost too good to be true. They have now reached thirty, forty, fifty years of age, and are still unregenerate, unrenewed. I could weep over you! We frequently meet with people older, still, whose many years have all been graceless, locust-eaten years. Ah me, how sad to be old and unsaved—feeble with age and yet without strength unto God!

Now remember. That eating of the locust—that devouring of everything by the caterpillars, meant a laborious year, because that year the people plowed and sowed and watched their crops, and their labor was all in vain. So, he that does nothing for God and has no spiritual blessing, still has to work and to labor. None toil harder than those who are the slaves of lust, pleasure, self and Satan. These people often labor as in the very fire. The way of transgressors is hard. They have to toil and slave and tug and strive. The yoke of the world is not easy and its burden is not light. And nothing comes of it. This is the gall of the bitterness. One does not mind working when there is a good reward for it. But to plow and sow and then to reap nothing because the locust has eaten it! This is misery.

The wage sweetens the toil. But when the wage is death, the toil is horrible. Yet this is the way of unregenerate men—they spend years in laborious rebellion and the harvest is not after their desire. They toil under the impulse of some strong desire and their desire perishes. They work, they slave—but nothing comes of it. It is a year of labor but it is labor in vain.

The locust year was particularly a year of great disappointment. The people looked for a harvest. In fact, they seemed to see it spring up and then it was devoured before their eyes. Even so, the ungodly man—the man who has no faith in Christ—is often charmed with the prospect of a happiness which he never reaches. A little more and he will be content. He gets a little more. And this increases his thirst for yet another draught from the golden cup. Run as we may when the heart shoots with its far-reaching bow, still the arrows are beyond us. The student must know a little more. The ambitious must climb a little higher upon the ladder of

honor and then he will be at ease. He learns, he reaches the honor—but the ease is still as distant as ever—perhaps it is even further off.

Earth's cups, when they seem most sweet, only hold salt water which beget a growing thirst. We swallow the horse-leech when we drain the chalice at the feasts of this world and an insatiable craving follows. The locust-eaten years of sin are years of labor and years of bitter disappointment.

And, alas, they are fruitless years. O Sirs, what have some of you ever done in this world? I heard of one who had made a half a million pounds of money and he died. A Christian man said, "Now, I call that man's life a dead failure. What has he done? He has accumulated what he could not enjoy. He has scraped it together and he has made no use of it whatever." Such persons remind me of crows who will hoard, I know not what—all kinds of treasures and trash. And what do they do but hide them in a hole behind the door? They cannot do anything with them. They have no sense to use them—whether they steal the abbot's ring or a bit of wire, it is all the same to them. And to misers what can be the difference between a thousand pounds or a thousand pins, since they use neither? Alas, many have the power to get, but have not the faculty to use what they have gotten. Their years are eaten with the locust.

Think again—are there not numbers of men that are just living strainers of bread and meat and beer and that is all that you can say of them? They go to and fro in the world but if they were tied neck and heels together and flung into the Atlantic nobody would miss them, except perhaps the poor wife and children who would be more comfortable without them than with them. I speak not too severely, for we meet with many such persons who are nature's blot—creation's blank. These are clouds without rain, wells without water—the wrapping and packing of what should have been useful lives. Why have they burdened the earth at all?

Others who are decent, respectable and quiet people—what does their whole life come to? It is like some of those sponge plants which appear very large when you have them in your hand but you can compress them into the tenth part of nothing. Are not many mere blown-up appearances? It is a biggish sort of life—especially when the man himself describes it. But if it comes to the reality of it, the good that is done is nothing. God is not glorified, broken hearts are not healed, holiness is not extended—nothing is in the whole performance but the very reverse of what should have been. It is a drawback rather than an addition to that which is good in the world.

What an awful thing for a man to have lived to be forty-five and to have done nothing! If we will not spare a fruitless tree in the orchard, which, year after year has brought forth nothing—if we quite understand the justice of the verdict, "Cut it down. Why cumberst it the ground?"—surely such a sharp sentence followed up by a swift blow of the axe, might go out against many here present! For up to now they have been wasters, cumberers, doing nothing worth the doing. The locust has eaten up every year that they have plowed and sown. Nothing has come of the whole of their

lives. Yet, listen to me—if you are led by Divine Grace to confess your sin and turn unto the Lord your God and “rend your hearts and not your garments”—even to you God can restore the years which the locust has eaten! I beseech you, hear this marvelous promise. And think of it and do not miss it from want of effort.

Now, very briefly let me mention that there is another sense in which the text can be used. There are some whose years have been eaten by the locust through great sorrow, depression and disappointment. They remember those happy springtide days when they greatly rejoiced in God. But for some reason they dropped their confidence and lost their hope. Their sky was darkened and the wintry winds of despair howled around them. I am grieved for dear friends on whom the chill of long depression has fallen with terrible power. I frequently meet with these sons and daughters of melancholy and my sorrow is that I am so often unable to deal wisely with them.

It has been my privilege in many cases to be the bearer of comfort but in the very act my own soul has often been heavily burdened. Very precious children of God may fall into the Slough of Doubt. Diamonds may be hidden away in dark mines. Some of God’s rarest pearls lie deep in the dark waters. Now you that are thus losing year after year and sighing—

**“Where is the blessedness I knew  
When first I saw the Lord?  
Where is the soul-refreshing view  
Of Jesus and His Word?”**

do not lose all heart about it. Prisoners who have been confined till it almost seemed that the moss would grow on their eyelids have yet been set free. Do not utterly despair, for here stands this gracious promise—“I will restore unto you the years which the locust has eaten.” God can give you back all those years of sorrow and you shall yet be the better for them.

You shall have to thank God for all this sadness of heart. It is a strange story that I tell you. Perhaps you will not believe me tonight, but you shall live to see it true—God will grind sunlight for you out of your black nights—in the oven of affliction Divine Grace will prepare the bread of delight. I said this to a friend with whom I have often conversed—an earnest Christian woman who for three years had defied all attempts to comfort her. We had prayed with her. Her godly, gracious husband, a minister of Christ, had laid out his heart to cheer her but she had refused to be comforted.

And yet to my great joy, the other day I received a letter saying, “The Lord has opened the gates of my dungeon. My captivity has ended. And though I am sick in body, that does not matter, for I am restored in spirit.” Yes, the Lord can loose the captives and He does it. There are dear children of God who have been ten or twenty years the victims of despair to whom, nevertheless, this promise has, in the fullness of time, been sweetly fulfilled, “I will restore unto you the years which the locust has eaten.”



And now, having given you those two versions of the text, let me give you another. I speak of those whose years have been wasted by their being in a low state of Grace. Many Christians are barely Christians. We may not be judges of our Brethren. But if some professors are Christians, it is in a very small way. They remind me of the answer given by the American boy when he went to Sunday school and the teacher asked him, "Is your mother a Christian?" "Yes, Sir," he said, "she is a Christian." "Is your father a Christian?" The boy answered, "Well, Sir, he may be a Christian but he has not worked at it much lately."

We know quite a company of that kind—perhaps they fear the Lord but they have not worked at it much. Their religion has no practical power over them. Salvation is not by works. But when a man is saved, then straightway he begins, by God's Grace, to work for the Lord. And therefore where nothing is done *for* Jesus we are apt to fear that nothing has been done *by* Jesus. There are talkers around us whose years are eaten up by the locust of idleness, the worm of worldliness, the worm of frivolous amusement. They seem to be like Hosea's "silly dove" without heart. I do not judge them—but I look at them with pitying wonder. How can they be content to be such useless things? How can they be satisfied to be so neutral, so double-minded, when all around them the stern conflict rages?

I wish they would give us a little more evidence upon which to judge whether they are for us or for our enemies. They attend a place of worship. They come to a Prayer Meeting once in twelve months if any friend calls in and asks them to do so. They are glad that there is a Sunday school connected with the Church—they do not know what it is doing. They have never entered it. They love their minister but do not contribute to his maintenance. They admire the Doctrines of Grace but never attempt to spread them. In fact they spend their time in diligently doing nothing and in quietly wearing the cloak of a profession which has nothing in it.

Well, now, dear Friend, this is a wretched kind of thing. If you are a Christian, be a Christian. Let your heart be warm towards holy things or else let them alone. Cold meats are well enough but cold religion is the sickliest diet upon which a man can live. Serve up religion hot, Sir, or not at all! If it grows lukewarm, neither God nor man will have it. For Jesus, who is both God and Man, has said, "I will spit you out of My mouth." He cannot endure it, who is the most patient of all beings.

The years which the locust has eaten in some professors are far too many. And I would earnestly exhort any Brother or Sister here who has had the locusts at him for a long time—remember the promise stands, if you will avail yourself of it, "I will restore unto you the years that the locust has eaten." It is high time that you saw to it, for your case is a bad one. It is ill to be trading so ill, when a merchandise so precious as time is being lost.

Once more only, lest by these varied instances I should weary you. There are some in whom their years have been eaten up by the locusts in a worse way than that of mere idleness, namely, by the sin of open backsliding. This is one of the plagues of the Church of God. Alas, for the

many who did run well but have suddenly stopped and run no longer in the Divine road! This is our frequent sorrow, even to heartbreak. We believe in the perseverance of the saints but many are *not saints* and therefore do not persevere.

Nominal saints exhibit no final perseverance. Saints who have only the *name* of saints last but for a time and then die away. In too many, the life of God rather lingers, than grows—their religion is so very weak that they exhibit the signs of disease rather than of health. They wander away from their Lord and Master because they do not sufficiently feel His attractive power. Oh, that the Lord would be gracious in restoring such wanderers! Do I address any who have almost given up attendance on the means of Divine Grace? I know you have no comfort in such a course. I am sure, if you are a child of God, you cannot be happy in the world—you cannot be content while leaving Christ, but are in a miserable way.

Grace has spoiled you for the world and it is of no use your attempting to get comfort out of it. Your only hope of happiness lies Godward. You must come back. You must come back to the good old way. Do not linger, but return at once. Every hour that you linger the locusts are eating up every green and fruitful thing within your spirit—why give the Destroyer so much space? You are *doing* no good. You are *getting* no good. Why remain as you are? You are doing mischief. You are grieving the Spirit of God—wake up from so deplorable a state. You are not winning souls but you are ruining souls by your inconsistency.

God have mercy upon you! Come, and receive His restoring mercy. He will not cast you away but He bids me say to you that if you turn to Him according to the teaching of this chapter, He will yet restore to you the years that the locust has eaten. It is a great wonder. But you shall see it—if you will seek the Lord yet again. So much then about locust-eaten years, for I want to get at a happier subject.

**II.** What does God say? “I will restore unto you the years that the locust has eaten.” This is our second head—LOCUST-EATEN YEARS RESTORED.

Notice, this is Divine Work, “I will restore unto you the years that the locust has eaten.” You cannot get them back. Nobody can give them back to you. But the Omnipotent Jehovah says, “I will restore them to you.” Can you believe that? All things are possible with God. Those dead years, those doleful years, those desponding years, those idle years, those back-sliding years—all the harvests of them, God can give them back to you. Look away from yourself and trust in the miracle-working God while you hear this word of promise, “I will restore unto you the years which the locust has eaten.”

But notice that this restoration follows upon a true and genuine repentance. Let me read the Words of the Lord to you and you listen to them and obey. “Therefore also now, says the Lord, turn you even to Me with all your heart and with fasting and with weeping and with mourning: and rend your heart and not your garments and turn unto the Lord your God: for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and

repents Him of the evil. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar and let them say, Spare Your people, O Lord and give not Your heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for His land and pity His people.”

Repent, then. This is the great teaching and operation of the Gospel at its commencement upon the heart. “Repent and be baptized everyone of you,” is its first cry from the wilderness. “Turn you every man from his evil ways.” “Turn you, turn you, why will you die, O house of Israel?” To go on in impenitence is to miss the blessing of my text. To go on in spiritual deadness—to go on in backsliding—will never bring the restoration of lost years. But he that shall genuinely confess his sin—shall heartily hate it and shall turn unto God through Jesus Christ, trusting in the precious blood of His atonement—shall receive the unspeakably precious benediction of the Lord, the Restorer. Such a man shall plead this promise with God and have it graciously fulfilled—“I will restore unto you the years that the locust has eaten.” It is a very remarkable promise but you see to whom it is given.

Yet linger a moment over this mystery of love. Picture the spirits of evil, year after year, bearing away from the fields of human life all their harvests. Where have they borne the precious products? Ask where has the fire carried the forests it has devoured? Or where has the flood borne away the navies it has swallowed up? To call back these harvests would be a task which only madness could attempt. Fly, swift-winged angels! But you cannot overtake the spoilers—neither could your eyes of fire detect the caverns in which the robbers have stored their wealth. The fruits of wasted years are gone, gone past hope. Yet, behold, the Lord who called light out of darkness and will yet bring forth life from the tomb, declares that these long-lost spoils shall be restored!

And shall it *not* be done? Is anything too hard for the Lord? Does not the very difficulty, yes, impossibility of the enterprise make it the more worthy of the Almighty? Here is a marvelous thing and here is, therefore, a work fit for Him who does great marvels. To him that believes all things are possible and this also is among the “all things.” Never was a fairy tale more strange, or a dream of Arabian nights more romantic. Yet here it stands in sober words and many a time in solid fact these words have been true. When we come into the region where the Lord works, we come at once into contact with miracles and walk in the midst of marvels. Then as we see Grace upon Divine Grace, we have to cry, “O world of wonders! I can say no less.”

This promise is only fulfilled by the exceeding Grace of God. And it shall be my business for a minute to show you how the Grace of God works it out. We take, for instance, a man or a woman who has been living for many years in known sin. Those years have all been wasted. How can God give us back the fruit of those wasted years? He can. He can. See that woman? She is a sinner, a common sinner of the town. She has spent her days and her nights in wantonness. She comes into the room where the

Savior lies reclining at the dinner table and His feet are not far from the door. She bears a choice box of ointment. She has, besides that, eyes full of tears and she stands behind Him weeping.

She washes His feet with those tears. She loosens the luxuriant tresses of her head, those nets in which she had entangled many a living soul and she bows down and wipes those feet which with her tears she washed. While she kisses them with her lips, she wipes them with her hair. Now, that woman, in that day, had through Grace restored to her the years which the locust had eaten. Who shall dare to say that she stands second to anybody in the service of her Lord and Master? She loves much because she has had much forgiven. And though I say not that the greatness of her sin could ever be an advantage, yet I do say that the greatness of her love that springs out of the greatness of her Lord's *forgiveness* did put her in the very front rank of those who served and loved Him.

She had been last but mighty Grace placed her among the first and she has never lost that leading position. And you, too, my Hearer, though you may have been so many years a sinner, can yet be so transformed as to overtake the saints. God can give you such a true repentance, such a burning love, such an enthusiastic consecration that during the rest of your days you shall make up for all those wasted years. The prey shall be taken from the mighty—years seized by evil shall be dragged back from the devil's den. And all the memory and outcome of them transformed by the action of Divine Grace and gratitude shall be laid as treasure at your Redeemer's feet. By giving you a deeper love, a more tense passion, a fuller consecration on account of the greatness of your sin, the Lord can restore to you the years that the locust has eaten. Did Paul lose those years in which he was a persecutor and injurious? Did not his quickened pace and his deeper self-knowledge make all the after years of his life ten times more full of power for good?

I will suppose the locust has eaten many years by your being in great sorrow—and I believe that the Lord can easily make up to you that grievous loss. The wear and fret of grief are very great but there is a remedy. Have I not seen some that have passed through years of deep soul distress who have been all their lifetime much the better for it? They have been more able to sympathize with poor, tried saints. They have had a truer, deeper, richer experience. And, as a rule, they have known the Gospel of Christ better and they have had a more tender love to Him who brought them up out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay.

Personally I have been much the gainer by my sad hours and my sick days. I reckoned those times lost in which I was unfit for service. But I think I was in error—for I perceive that the fields which have lain fallow repay the unfertile season sevenfold when the bearing time returns. Do not think, dear children of God, if you have been for years in despondency that it need turn out to be a total loss to you. It is a great evil and mischief. But God can restore to you the years that the locust has eaten. Your ills may become wells of comfort for *others*. The Lord can bring so much good out of the evil, so much light out of the darkness, so much joy out of

the sorrow that you shall one day say, "I thank God that I was shut up in Doubting Castle. I thank God I did sink in the deep mire where there was no standing for He has restored to me the years that the locust has eaten."

And if, again, the locust has eaten up your years through your being cold and indifferent and idle, God can recover you from this sad mischief. He will grant you Divine Grace to repent bitterly of this great sin. For a great sin it is to lose a moment which should be used for Jesus. But yet, if the Lord shall visit you with an intense hatred of such idleness and sting you into action and at the same time draw you by the cords of love into full consecration, you will, perhaps, by redoubled zeal, recover the lost seasons. Oh, that God would make it so with those who up to now have sadly loitered in the race! Oh, that our smoldering logs would become flaming firebrands! Oh, that our sluggards could be aroused into enthusiasts!

I have known men living orderly and regular lives for many years and yet they have done nothing for their Lord. Such sober people move on and on and on and on. But they make little progress. Steady, steady, steady, steady, jog—trot—life has no fire in it for them and they know no reason for ardor. They never get out of breath with zeal. They never exhaust themselves with excitement. They accomplish little from want of fire. I have known a great many Christians about whom I have never had any fear of their being consumed by their vehemence. They are such proper people that even if the Lord Himself were to come they would never cry "Hosanna!" in the street. They are never warmed into anything like enthusiasm—as soon hope to warm a marble statue.

These are the folks who, after a while, grow negligent and the locusts eat up the years of their regularity and all the gains of their sobriety. I am sorry, indeed, to hear of a broken reputation, or a profession openly disgraced. But what a mercy it is when, even by this terrible means, dead professors are driven to turn to God with full purpose of heart! When these, who slept in all the chill propriety of spiritual death are aroused to seek the Lord penitently, we see no more of their dull commonplace. If restored by a renewal of spiritual strength before they have openly declined into sin, the change is equally manifest.

Now they must fly like the wind, though before they could only creep like the snail. They must do everything at a great heat with all their heart and soul and strength. A month or so of such quickened, intense work full often effects more result than years of slow, feeble, formal routine. Oh, to live while we live! Once fully charged with the Divine Power we can achieve as much in a day as before we performed in a year! If you, as a preacher, come back to God and get the Holy Spirit to anoint you, one sermon preached in the power of the Holy Spirit will be worth ten thousand preached without it.

If you, as a worker, go to your Sunday school class with a Divine Anointing resting upon you, there will be more children brought to Christ by a little of your living, loving, teaching than ever would have been by

whole years of your unspiritual talk. Thus the Lord God can, by His endowing us with greater power and firing us with fuller zeal restore to us the years that the locust has eaten. The strong swimmer will soon recover the space through which he has drifted—when omnipotence is in every stroke the man is soon back to his right place, and before long he is ahead of where he would have been.

Do not invite the locusts to come, I pray you, in the hope of getting back that which they devour. No! No! No—a thousand times NO! We do not want the locusts at all—we cannot endure sin, or doubt, or trifling. We want every year to be fruitful—fruitful with a hundred-fold increase. But if the evils have come, let us turn to God with penitence and faith and He can yet restore to us the losses they have caused.

I think I said, also, that in certain cases the locust has eaten up much of the fruit of life through backslidings. Many are in this case. But if they will return from their backslidings, the Lord can give them back whatever they have lost. I have known persons backsliding very sorrowfully, very much to the grief of the Church. But God has visited them in Divine Grace and brought them back and they have been better men afterwards. Yes, I venture to say, even better men than before they actually offended. I have not been thankful for their open offense. But I have been very thankful for their restoration and for the humility and other graces which have been the result of their bitter experience.

They used to be very top-lofty once, but now they carry no flags and banners. Such grand fellows they were! But after their wandering, when they came back, they were willing to be in the rear rank and to do commonplace work. They were once very reserved—you could not get near them. But now they value a kind word and return a loving salutation very gratefully. They are now more like their Brethren and more willing to be on a level with them, and yet their religion is a great deal deeper and more sincere. They do not carry so much sail—but they have more cargo.

I have known some that, at first conversion, have not been very clear in the Gospel but who have been made evangelical by their discoveries of their own need of mercy. They could not spell the word “grace.” They began with a “G” but they very soon went on with an “F,” till it spelt very much like “free will” before they had done with it. But after they have learned their weaknesses—after they have fallen into serious fault and God has restored them—or after they have passed through deep depression, they have sung a new song. In the school of repentance they have learned to spell. They began to write the word “free,” but they went on from free, not to “will,” but to “grace” and there it stood in capitals, “FREE GRACE.”

By coming to know themselves they came also to understand what Divine Grace meant and they began to read their title written in the blood of Christ, instead of reading it in themselves. And they became clearer in their divinity and truer in their faith than ever they were before. I do not want you to know the locusts of backsliding but if they have ever come and you have been eaten up by them, I pray that God may restore to you

the years that the locust has eaten. I want you to lay hold of this promise and go home and plead with God that it may be fulfilled to you so that the rest of your life may be so bright and so clear, with the light of the Spirit of God, that as much as possible, you may make up for lost time. God grant that your desire may be fulfilled!

**III.** I have done when I have said just a word or two upon a third point. Here are locust-eaten years and here are those locust-eaten years restored—and now, WHAT IS TO COME OF IT? If God restores to us the years that the locust has eaten, He has done a great deal for us. But notice that He is able to do more and will do it, for what does He say? He says, in the twenty-sixth verse, “And you shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that has dealt wondrously with you: and My people shall never be ashamed.”

What a promise! You half-starved professors—you that are moping and mourning—who rise from the tables of the world unsatisfied—devoured with a griping hunger! If you turn to God with full purpose of heart He will fill you with heavenly bread and give you as real enjoyment as ever He gave to the best of His people. You, too, shall have your mouth satisfied with good things and your youth shall be renewed like the eagle’s. The Lord does nothing by halves—if He receives a prodigal back, He does not send him down into the kitchen to be fed with broken victuals—He receives him into the best parlor and puts on him the best robe and kills for him the fatted calf.

O you cast-down and troubled ones, you do not know how near you are to joy! O sad Hearts, the morning is breaking in the east for you! You are heavy tonight. And well you may be! You know your sin and that may well make you mourn. But ring the bells of Heaven, the sinner is repenting! And if he turns with repentance to God, the richest joy, the choicest Covenant blessings that belong only to the chosen family shall be his portion at once! Is it not written, “You shall eat in plenty and shall be satisfied and shall praise the name of the Lord”?

What shall come of it? Why this shall come of it—that you who have had the most to mourn over shall be among the loudest singers. You shall praise the name of the Lord your God that has dealt wondrously with you. You will cry, with tears running down your cheeks, “Who is a God like unto You, passing by transgression, iniquity and sin?” I was a sinner up to the neck in filth. A despairing soul shut up in the blackest darkness. But He has washed me and He has brought me out into the light and put a new song into my mouth. He is a glorious God—this God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I pray you may have intense enjoyment of His marvelous Grace and may pour forth your whole souls in His praise.

Next, you shall have most clear and sweet communion with God. Hear what the Prophet further says, “And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel and that I am the Lord your God and none else and My people shall never be ashamed.” Wonderful! Wonderful that a far-off outcast sinner should know his Covenant God and should say, “He is my God,” and

should enter into fellowship with Him and should enjoy all the privileges of a friend of God. Wonderful that all his fear should be gone and that he should, instead, be full of holy confidence and have a right to hold up his head and never be ashamed! It shall be so, dear Hearer. True repentance shall bring rest to you. Only trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and your fellowship shall be with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ henceforth and evermore.

And then, best of all, the anointing shall come upon you. You remember how the chapter goes on to say that God would pour out His spirit upon all flesh so that even the handmaiden and the servant, the very least of the people of God, should be moved by the Spirit of God to speak in God's name and should be enabled to realize things which before had been deemed mere visions and dreams? I hope that the Lord has some here, at this hour, who did not know Him when they came within these walls, who, at this time, shall be called by His Grace and before long shall begin to tell to others what the Lord has done for them.

O Lord, find ministers among these miserable sinners! Raise up for yourself witnesses from among these careless youths! I think I see the angel even now, and hear the voice from off the Throne, crying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for Us?" Oh, that one of the seraphims might take from off the altar the live coal and touch some unclean lip and inflame some cold heart and make the purified man to answer, "Here am I, send me." Then shall you be sent to tell abroad the riches of the Divine Grace of which you have tasted—the freeness of the love which has been manifested to you. May the Lord grant it!

May the locusts all be blown away by a strong north wind and never darken the air again! May these wasted years all be given back to you and may you become the Lord's living, loving servants from this time forth. Oh for the highest form of spiritual life! Oh for the greatest possible usefulness! Oh for grace to fill out our poor shriveled lives till they arrive at a heavenly fullness! Oh for the sacred breath of God to fill out all the canvas of our capacity! Lord, the sail flaps. The boat scarcely moves. We lie becalmed in indolence! Send us a breeze, my God! Grant us the wind of Your Spirit to fill out every sail that by Your Grace we may fly over the waves. Amen.

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# WONDERS

## NO. 1098

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 23, 1873,  
BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“And praise the name of the Lord your God, that has  
dealt wondrously with you.”  
Joel 2:26.***

IN the case which is particularly mentioned in this chapter, the nation of Israel had very grievously gone astray and therefore they were visited by a very remarkable chastisement. An unusual plague of locusts devoured all the fruit of the field and the people were vexed with a sore famine. The day of the Lord was very terrible and none of them could abide it. The Prophet Joel was commissioned to exhort them to repentance and if, indeed, they listened to his earnest entreaties their later history was bright with mercy. By God's good hand upon them, they were brought to repentance—they wept and cried to God and then the same God who with His left hand had been wondrous in chastisement, was, with His right hand, equally wonderful in blessing and enriching them.

He loaded their floors with wheat and made their vats to overflow with wine and oil. He restored unto them the years which the locust had eaten, so that they ate in plenty and were satisfied and praised the name of the Lord, who had dealt wondrously with them. He dealt with them by way of wonders when He smote them and by way of wonders when He returned to them in mercy. It was no unusual thing for the nation of Israel to meet with wonders—they were cradled in prodigies, they grew up amid miracles, they dwelt among marvels—the history of the favored tribes is a long list of miracles.

Do you not remember how the Lord brought them out of Egypt with a high hand and with an outstretched arm, what marvelous things He did among the sons of Ham and what wonders He worked in the fields of Zoan? By wonders they were led out of Egypt and brought through the Red Sea, upon whose shore they sang triumphantly, “Who is like unto You O Lord, among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” Their course in the great howling wilderness for 40 years was a march of wonders!

When the manna dropped from Heaven and the water leaped from the Rock, the Lord dealt wondrously with them. There was not a single day of the 40 years which did not open and close with wonders—the day was shaded by the cloudy pillar and the night glowed with the light of the fiery cloud! Nor when the desert journey was over did God's wonders cease. The river was divided before them. What ailed you, O Jordan, that you were driven back? They entered into their land and began its conquest by a

wonder, for the walls of Jericho fell flat to the ground—and they continued its conquest by the same marvelous power, for mighty kings fled before them and the sun and the moon stood still while they smote the hostile armies!

When they had driven out the Canaanites and were established in the land of promise, they sinned greatly, but what wonders of deliverance God worked for them when they cried to Him in their trouble! You have but to remember the names of Gideon and of Barak, of Jephtha and of Samson and you see before you wonder after wonder! The Lord dealt wondrously with them! In all this the Israelites were a type of true Believers, for with all His chosen ones the Lord has dealt wondrously. We frequently hear the complaint that we live in an age of dullness—we have no adventures now and events are few. Happy are we that it is so, for it has been well said—“Blessed are the times which have no history.”

If peace and prosperity are commonplace, long may the commonplace continue! But, indeed, no thoughtful man’s life is uninteresting or barren of marvels. A life real and earnest cannot be devoid of memorable occurrences. He who thinks so must either be unspiritual or he must be oblivious of his own inner history—he must be like the tribes in the wilderness, of whom it is written, “They forget the works of the Lord, and the wonders which He has showed them.” Foolish people run to fiction for wonders, but gracious men can tell far greater wonders, upon which the words, “NO FICTION,” might be written in capital letters.

The wonders which we can speak of far surpass the inventions of imagination—when we recount them we may appear unto men to dream, but in very truth no dreamer could dream after such a fashion! Speak of “Arabian Nights,” English days and nights have far exceeded them in marvel! “God does great things past finding out, and wonders without number.” I have seen a volume entitled, “The World of Wonders,” and another named, “Ten Thousand Wonderful Things.” The Believer is within *himself* a world of wonders and his life reveals 10,000 wonderful things. Mysteries, riddles, paradoxes and miracles make up Christian experience!

God has dealt wondrously with us! Of these wonders I shall try and speak at this time, according to that precept of David—“Talk you of all His wondrous works,” and I shall dwell upon them after the following manner—first, we shall testify that God’s dealings toward us have been full of wonder and lead us to praise Him as Jehovah, our God. Secondly, we shall remark that because of this, we ought to look for wonders in the future, and if I may speak so paradoxically, it should not be wonderful to us to see wonders. And, then, thirdly, we shall close by observing that in a future state we shall yet more clearly see that Jehovah has dealt wondrously with us.

**I. THE LORD’S DEALINGS WITH US UP TILL NOW HAVE BEEN FULL OF WONDER AND LEAD US TO PRAISE HIM.** Let us speak of what we know and have tasted and handled. The Lord has dealt wonderfully toward us. Begin at the beginning. It was no small wonder that He should

love us before the earth was. There were many other things to exercise Jehovah's thought besides thinking upon man—"What is man, that You are mindful of him?" And if He must think of man there were many kinds of thoughts that the Lord might have had towards man besides thoughts of love. Yet the Lord was mindful of us and though we are poor and needy, the Lord thinks upon us.

"How precious also are Your thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them!" Why were they thoughts of love? Admiring gratitude gives us the only reply. And if they must be thoughts of love, yet it is a wonder of wonders that they should be thoughts of love to *me*! Each Christian will feel it to be so in his own personal case—"Why did Divine love settle itself upon *me*?" Well might we say of our God what David said of Jonathan, "Your love to me was wonderful." The song of the Virgin may be upon each one of our lips, "He has put down the mighty from their seat, and has exalted them of low degree." He has thought of us who were inconsiderable, while the great ones of the earth have been passed by.

Eternal love in its sovereignty is a marvel and comes from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. That Divine love should have continued faithful notwithstanding our unworthiness of it and the provocations by which we have tried it, is another wonder! The immutability of His counsel calls for adoring wonder. Has there been a day since we have been responsible for our actions in which we have not tested the faithfulness of God by our transgressions? The children of Israel for 40 years provoked God in the wilderness—were they not most sadly the prototypes of ourselves? Yet never, never has the Lord paused or changed in His love. As it is said of our blessed Redeemer, "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end." And so is it true that the "Father Himself loves you," and rests in His love.

If the Divine love is, in itself, a wonder, Brothers and Sisters, it is equally a wonder that, in consequence of this love, God should enter into Covenant with us. He has promised us a thousand mercies and He has engaged Himself to the performance of those promises in a remarkable way which increases the consolation of the promise. He has given us His oath—"I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn unto David, My servant." Now, by David is meant the Lord Jesus Christ, and God has entered into covenant with us in the Person of the Son of David—a covenant ordered in all things and sure, confirmed by oath, and sealed by blood—by which He has bound Himself, by His own word and oath, that in blessing, He will bless us and glorify His Son in us.

Behold and wonder—the Infinite enters into covenant with the finite—the Holy engages Himself to sinners! We well may sit before the Lord as David did, in astonishment, and then say from our heart of hearts, "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that You have brought me up to now?" It is equally wonderful that a part of the Covenant should run thus—"I will be a Father unto them, and they shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord God Almighty." If God wanted sons, beside the

Only-Begotten, He might have chosen yon bright seraphs who outshine the sun! Why did He look here, upon this ant hill, to elect a seed out of such ants as we are? Why did He come down in the Person of His Son to make a match with our frail humanity?

O, matchless Grace, that God should adopt for His children those who were heirs of wrath even as others! Behold, of these stones He has not only raised up children unto Abraham, but unto Himself also—"Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Beloved, let us admire and wonder, that being His sons and daughters, the Lord should stake His honor upon the bringing of us securely to Heaven. For in the Covenant He has pledged all His attributes for His people's security. He cannot be a glorious God unless His people ultimately are a glorified people! He cannot be true unless His people are kept to the end, for He has pledged His honor for their safety.

Jesus has said, "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands." Yes, the Lord Himself has declared that, "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's Word shall not fail. Sun and moon shall cease their shining, but He will not alter the thing which has gone forth from His lips. Has He said, and shall He not do it? Has He spoken, and shall He not make it good? By shifting the kaleidoscope we shall get another view of the same matchless wonders. The Lord has acted wondrously for us. Having loved us and covenanted with us, He gave us His Only-Begotten Son to be born in our nature and, in that nature, to suffer even unto death!

I will not attempt to show you that this is a wonder. I believe that the angels, though they have known of the Incarnation nearly these 1,900 years, have never ceased from astonishment for one single moment. That God, the Word, should be made flesh and should dwell among us and that He, at last, should bleed and die, excels everything that is wonderful besides! That Jesus Christ, the King of kings, should be a Servant of servants! That He who wrapped the earth in the swaddling bands of ocean and spread upon the firmament its vesture of blue should gird Himself with a towel and wash His disciples' feet, is, beyond measure, a wonder!

Yet this sacred office He is virtually fulfilling every day in His perpetual intercession for His people and in all His acts of love towards them. This is, indeed, dealing wondrously with us! In the gift of the Lord Jesus we have obtained pardon, justification, sanctification and eternal life—all of which contain a mine of wonders! Perhaps to penitent hearts the chief of all these is the forgiveness of sin and of such sins as ours—

***"Great God of wonders!  
All Your ways  
Are matchless, God-like, and Divine!  
But the fair glories of Your Grace  
More God-like and unrivalled shine.  
Who is a pardoning God like You?"***

***Or who has Grace so rich and free?  
In wonder lost, with trembling joy  
We take the pardon of our God  
Pardon for crimes of deepest dye  
A pardon bought with Jesus' blood  
Who is a pardoning God like You?  
Or who has Grace so rich and free?"***

Having given us His Son, the Lord has also, in Him, given us all things!

I put these things into words and sum them up, but, indeed, there is an ocean of thought in every syllable I utter, for the Lord has given us this world and worlds to come! He has given us earth and Heaven! He has given us time and eternity! "All are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Believer, there is nothing in Providence but what is yours, for, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose." That which looks like evil is good to you and the good has a goodness in it which you do not yet perceive—an inner core of excellent mercy which will be opened up for you in due time through the abounding wisdom of God.

Walk now abroad like Abraham of old and lift up your eyes to the north and to the south, and to the east and to the west, for all this has God given you in giving you His Son! He has dealt wondrously with us in this respect. He has made the angels to be our servitors, glad to wait upon us and to bear us up in their hands lest we dash our feet against a stone. Making the angels to be our servants, He has made the angels' home to be our home, only He has brightened it with special glory for us. It is not written that many mansions are prepared especially for angels, but Jesus our Lord has gone before to prepare a place for us, made ready especially for our delight. Has He not said it—"I go to prepare a place for you?" To crown all, He has not given us merely the angels of Heaven, and Heaven itself, and Jesus to prepare a place for us, but He has given us Himself to be our God, for, "The Lord is my portion, says my soul," and He has confirmed it—"I will be their God, and they shall be My people." He has dealt wondrously for us, then.

Beloved, I shall now ask you to look at your own experience a little, you that know the Lord, when I remind you that the Lord has worked wonders in us. A little while ago we were dead. He made us live! We were loathsome lepers and He made us whole! We were blind and He gave us sight! We were lame and He made us leap! We were prisoners and He set us free! We were condemned and He justified us by His Grace! Marvelous were the changes which He worked in us—we marveled while we felt them! We wondered to feel the hardness of our heart removed! Years ago, nothing could move us, neither terrors nor love could stir us, but the Lord came and smote us as Moses smote the rock and straightway the waters of penitence gushed out—no, the rock itself became a standing pool!

What a change the Grace of God makes in the matter of repentance! The very man who was like adamant one day, becomes like wax the next. And he who never cared for God, nor wept for sin, loathes and abhors

himself in the deepest and most humble contrition! Then, blessed be God, another wonderful change comes over him, for the man whom you saw broken in heart for sin, unable to derive a grain of comfort from anything around him, all of a sudden believes on the name of Jesus as it is brought home with power to his soul by the Holy Spirit! And straightway he wipes his eyes and his mourning is turned to dancing! He becomes supremely happy through faith and breaks forth with such songs as this—

***“I will praise You every day,  
Now Your anger’s turned away;  
Comfortable thoughts arise,  
From the bleeding Sacrifice.”***

Have not your souls, at times, been as hard and cold as marble and yet all of a sudden they have dissolved as ice melts in the sun? Has not your soul been tossed up and down like the Atlantic in a rage and yet been suddenly made smooth as a “molten looking glass” by God’s wondrous hands? Your experience within you, I am sure, is a verification of the statement that Jehovah your “God has dealt wondrously with you.” What wonderful conflicts our souls have known! What wonderful victories we have won through Divine Grace! Immortal sins, as they seemed to be, have received their deadly wound—unconquerable lusts have been made to bite the dust. Our victories shall never be forgotten, but the crown of them shall be put upon the head of Him who enabled us to be more than conquerors.

And what wonderful Revelations God has granted to us! Has He not full often poured a flood of light upon a Truth we saw but dimly before and made our spirit leap for joy? He has opened our eyes to behold wondrous things out of His Law. Why, I bear witness that sometimes when my Lord Jesus Christ, Himself, has been revealed in my soul, I have been unable to collect my thoughts of joy, much less to put them into language that should make them intelligible to other people, for the glory and the beauty are transcendent, and the love and the fellowship of Christ are transporting, ecstatic, ravishing—they bear the soul away!

These wonders of Revelation bring with them wonders of consolation. Have we not seen Christians dying full of life? Have we not seen them sinking in body, but soaring in soul—sick, weak, feeble, panting for their breath—and yet full of glory, ready to burst with the near wine of the kingdom that has been poured into their frail vessels? Have we not heard some of them sing between their groans such songs as only God’s sweet love could have taught them? The angels could sing no sweeter songs and assuredly they know no sweeter themes! Yes, Beloved, our inner experience has been full of wonders. We have committed terrible sins and suffered awful sorrows, but we have received wonderful pardons and enjoyed wonderful raptures!

We have passed through bloody fights, but we have gained wonderful victories! Black has been our darkness, but we have seen marvelous light! Coleridge has said, “that in wonder all philosophy begins, in wonder it ends, and wonder fills the inner space.” Truly I may say the same of all vi-

tal godliness! Another has said that, “the wise man only wonders once in his life, but that is always.” The same may be affirmed of the man made wise unto salvation! It may be true that our first wonder is born of ignorance and, at any rate, much of ignorance mingles surprise with it. But certainly, afterwards, our wonder becomes the parent of adoration. We wonder when we grow in Grace, not because we do not know, but we wonder at what we do know of amazing love and Grace.

Our little children look up to the stars and think them little pinholes in the sky and they say—

***“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are.”***

But when the astronomer fits his glass to his eye and peers upon those mighty orbs, he says with greater truth, “How I wonder what you are!” Man’s wonder grows with his knowledge! As he wades into the river of wisdom he is less and less able to keep the foothold of calm reason and is more and more liable to be lifted up and carried off his feet by the current. It is so with Christian experience—the more we know of God, the more wonderful His dealings to us appear.

Now, Beloved, I must ask you, once again, to consider that, as the Lord has dealt wondrously towards us, wondrously for us, and wondrously in us, so He has also dealt wondrously *by* us. What a field of battle, what a throne of victory the person of a poor child of God often becomes! Why, in this narrow plot of human clay, this little Isle of Man, this United Kingdom of soul and body, the powers of Heaven and Hell have mustered all their armies on many a day for conflict and God and His Grace and Truth have fought with Satan in our hearts, and, blessed be God, on that battlefield God has won many a victory over the allied armies of the world, the flesh and the devil!

In the plains of Mansoul, Michael and his angels have fought against the dragon and his angels—and the old dragon has been defeated and led captive. We have been garrisoned against besieging sins, delivered by force of heavenly arms from the power of our corruptions and brought forth by Sovereign Grace to delight in the Lord our God. When we get to Heaven we shall be “men wondered at,” set for signs and wonders forever, immortal witnesses of boundless Grace! We shall publish abroad, in the celestial streets, the “deeds of infinite love,” to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places should be made known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Will they not—the angels—say to one another, “Here are men and women who were tempted in a thousand ways, who carried about with them bodies of sin and death, who were tried with all sorts of afflictions and passed through much tribulation—but see what they are! See how God has triumphed in them! See how He has defeated the Evil One and overcome the powers of evil—for these tempted ones have come through great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the

blood of the Lamb! There is not one in whom God has been defeated! There is not one in whom the eternal purpose has failed! There is not one in whom electing love has been baffled! There is not one in whom the power of Christ's blood has been ineffectual! There is not one unto whom the Spirit came without winning a complete victory! Let us praise our God anew and sing—"Worthy is the Lamb." "

Our God has also worked wondrously by some of us, fulfilling His promise, "the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits." His strength has been perfect in our weakness. There be some among us whose lips have fed many and yet they confess themselves to be emptiness itself—their word has brought life to the dead, yet in themselves they have no might—they have scattered the King's enemies although they are by nature weak as water. God's ministers are but trumpets of rams' horns, yet when God has blown through them the blast has made the walls of Jericho to rock, and reel, and even fall to the ground! They are but lamps enclosed in earthen pitchers and yet by them Midian has been routed. Glory be to the name of Jehovah our God for this!

Thus you see God has done wondrously by us. Praise Him! Praise Him! Shall we pause and sing a Psalm of praise now? Our time would fail for that, but O, you people, praise Him! O you that know His wonders praise Him! Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed out of the hand of the enemy! Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving and bless the name of the Lord—"You shall bless Jehovah your God, for He has dealt wondrously with you."—

***"Let the redeemed of the Lord  
The wonders of His Grace record  
How great His works! How kind His ways!  
Let every tongue pronounce His praise."***

**II.** Our second and practical point is this—THEREFORE WE OUGHT TO EXPECT WONDERS. I shall but be able to give hints here. Do you labor this morning, any of you, under a horrible sense of your sinfulness? Do you seem, to yourselves, to be the blackest of all unpardoned souls, the nearest to being damned, already, of all living beings? Do you think that it would be the greatest wonder that was ever worked since the world began if you were saved?

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I have a most precious thought to drop into your ear (may the Holy Spirit drop it into your heart)—"The Lord is a God of wonders: He only does wondrous things." He delights to find in our sin and misery, room and opportunity for wonders of Grace. Cast yourself upon the mercy of our matchless God and He will make you as much a wonder of Grace as you have been a wonder of sin! Possibly some are saying, "I do not *feel* my sin as I should. I wish I did. I feel stupid and insensible—if I feel anything, it is only a sort of regret that I do not feel at all."

My dear Brothers and Sisters, you will be a wonder, too, if God quickens you and makes you tender of heart. In you, too, He finds room for Divine Grace. He quickens the dead. He kills and makes alive. He wounds and He heals. Cry to the Lord to make you sensitive through His wound-



ing and killing work. If your heart is cold as ice, ask Him to melt it, for it is written, "He sends out His Word and melts them." Is it not promised in His own Covenant, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh?" The Lord of Love delights to work these transformations!

Do you feel dreadfully depressed in spirit? Have you been long so? Are you one of those who mourn without the light of the sun? Would it not be a great marvel if you should become one of the happiest of God's people? It would. Therefore I believe you will be, for God delights to work wonders. Out of the innermost prison He can bring His servants. He made Paul and Silas sing in the inner dungeon and then he brought them out! He can make you sing now and bring you out into clear full liberty, and that on a sudden and today—"The Lord looses the prisoners; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord raises them that He bowed down." The prisoners of the Lord shall not be prisoners forever. There is a jail delivery coming and they shall leap for joy.

Are you lying at death's door? Do you cry like Heman, "My soul is full of troubles and my life draws near unto the grave"? Perhaps you are sick in body. Possibly you are distracted in mind and you are ready to die—and therefore you think that it is all over with you. What a desperate case yours seems! It would be a wonderful thing if you should yet obtain light and comfort, would it not? Again, let me remind you that if it would be wonderful, it is all the more *probable* with the Lord. He is full of compassion and He delights in mercy! The Lord heals the broken in heart and binds up their wounds. Wonderful are His ways of consoling His mourners—great is His wisdom and prudence in devising ways to bring back His banished ones. Therefore, ascribe you greatness unto our God and look for much mercy. Believe in God for boundless loving kindnesses.

If I preached a little Christ for little sinners, some of you would be wise to go somewhere else. But since I have Divine warrant for preaching a great Savior for great sinners who is able to help us through great difficulties, and to overcome great sins—why, He is the very Savior for you! O, bless Him and love Him! Trust Him and He will work wonders in your spirit. Possibly I speak this morning to one who has desperately backslidden. It is years ago since you knew the Truth and you have, by your sins, fastened upon your soul fetters of iron. Well, the Lord whom you have grieved is full of compassion and can take those fetters off! Yes, He can break the gates of brass and cut in sunder the bars of iron. Wonders of deliverance can the Lord work for His imprisoned children!

"Ah," cries another, "but my case is merely a commonplace one! There is nothing remarkable about *me*." My dear Friend, would not it be a wonderful thing if God were to save such a commonplace and insignificant person as you are? Well, rest in Him! Trust in Him and there shall be wonderful works worked for you, also—you shall be one of the men wondered at—in whom God's Grace shall be fully revealed. Let me say in one word, if there is anything about any of you, Beloved, at this time which

seems to render your salvation difficult and even impossible. If there is anything in your case that renders it hopeless and desperate—whether it be in your temporals or your spirituals—I would recommend you go with your case to the God of Wonders and see whether or not He does not, before long, make you say, “The Lord has dealt wondrously with me.”

To sinners who believe in Jesus, salvation is promised! And they shall have it! And to saints who trust in the Lord, deliverance is promised—and delivered they must be! God will work 10,000 wonders and He will never allow His promise to fall to the ground! I would earnestly remind all God’s servants that we ought to expect wonderful answers to prayer and we should pray as if we expected the God of Wonders to hear us. We ought to expect, in times of trouble, to see wonderful deliverances! If we seem quite shut up, we should then be sure of escaping, for it would be a wonder if we did, and therefore God will work it. We have grounds for expecting wonderful consolations if we are about to endure great troubles. We should look for wonderful joys between here and Heaven—we ought to be on our watchtower looking for wonderful discoveries of Christ’s beauties and His love. In fact we should always be looking for wonders and should wonder if wonders do not happen!

In the Church we are permitted to expect wonders. We are too much in the habit of going to the assembly for worship and sitting down and hearing sermons—and if half-a-dozen are converted we are astonished—but we ought to expect *thousands* to be converted! If the Church ever has faith enough to *expect* great things, she will *see* great things. When the Church falls upon dark times and error mars her beauty, we may expect God to work wonders to purify and exalt her. In the darkest medieval times God found His witnesses—and when the light threatened to die out, then Luther came—a man raised up of God, and a train of glorious men followed behind him. Never tremble, never despair, never be afraid. “The God of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.”

Why, Brothers and Sisters, we worship the God of wonders, “Who only does wondrous things.” We have a Savior of wonders! Is not His name called The Wonderful? And did not Stephen say of Him, “Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by signs and *wonders*”? Then the Holy Spirit also works wonders! He came at first with rushing wind and cloven tongues and miraculous gifts—and even now His wonders have not ceased—they have only become *spiritual*, instead of physical! But the Spirit of God is working mightily! I bear my own personal witness that God has worked wonders for us, far beyond all human ability—wonders which we could not perform—no, wonders that we did not deserve!

What is more, He has worked wonders that we could not have expected. And what is more, wonders that we could not have imagined! What is more, wonders which even now that they have happened we cannot comprehend! And I may add, wonders which throughout eternity we shall never be able to praise God sufficiently for, though we spend our whole existence in wondering and adoring the wonder-working God! “How great

are His signs! How mighty are His wonders! His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and His dominion from generation to generation.”

**III.** Our last remark is this, that IN THE FUTURE STATE THESE WONDERS WILL BECOME MANIFEST TO US. If we were to read our Bibles attentively, we should be astonished to find how much there is about Heaven in them and how, after all, it is not true that we have mere gleams and glimpses. Studiously investigated, the Word of God tells us wondrous things concerning the world to come. Beloved, we shall, in the better land, wonder more than we do here, for we shall there understand far more than we do now and shall have clearer views and wider prospects.

Our present capacities are narrow. There is scant room within our mind for great things. But in yon bright world the veil shall be taken off and we shall know even as we are known, seeing no more in part and through a glass darkly—in the heavenly mansions our growing knowledge will excite in us increasing wonder—and we shall sing, there, the praise of Him who has dealt wondrously with us. I believe the poet was right when he said—

***“And sing with wonder and surprise  
Your loving kindness in the skies.”***

In the abodes of endless bliss we shall see what we escaped. We shall look down from Abraham’s bosom and see the sinner afar off in torment! It will be a dreadful sight, but O, with what hearts of gratitude shall we bless redeeming Love, knowing, each one of us, that were it not for Divine Grace that fate so desperate had been ours!

In the Heaven of perfect holiness we shall know the true character of sin. When we shall see the brightness of God’s Glory and the splendor of His holiness, sin will appear in all its hideousness and we shall adore that matchless Mercy which pardoned us. And we shall bless the precious blood which cleansed us though we had been defiled with such pollution. We think we praise God for forgiving our iniquities, and no doubt we do, in some measure, but, compared with the blessing that saints in Heaven render to God for deliverance from sin, our praise is as nothing! We do not know sin as they know it—we do not understand its blackness as they perceive it. Up in Heaven, too, we shall see our life as a whole and we shall see God’s dealings with us on earth as a whole. A great many matters which now appear mysterious and complex concerning which we can only walk by faith, for our reason is baffled, will be so clear to us as to excite joyous songs in Heaven.

“Now I see why I was laid aside when I wanted to be busy in God’s work. Now I see why that dear child, whom I hoped to have had spared to me as a stay for my old age, was taken away. Now I understand why my business was suffered to fail. Now I comprehend why that foul mouth was allowed to be opened against me. Now I comprehend why I was assailed with inward fears and was allowed to go tremblingly all my days.” Such will be our confessions when the day dawns and the shadows flee away. Then we shall say and sing—“He has dealt wondrously with us.” We shall

feel that the best was done for us that even Eternal Wisdom could devise and we shall bless the name of the Lord. Reflect a moment, dear Friends and see further reasons for everlasting wondering. In Heaven we shall see what God has lifted us up to be. We talk of being sons of God. Did we ever realize that? We speak of Heaven being ours—but do we know what we mean by that language? Truly, “it does not yet appear what we shall be,” neither has eye seen nor ear heard the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.

When we shall stand on the sea of glass and hear the harpers and join their endless music. When we shall see Him who laid down His life for us—yes, see Him as He is—when we shall behold the Lamb of God, who by His bowing to death, lifted us up from our deadly fall. When we shall see Him, who by stripping Himself of His royalties robed us with splendors—we shall be amazed, astounded and overwhelmed with wonder! Above all, when we shall see God Himself, what will be our wonder!

When our minds shall be able to behold the Infinite Jehovah and hear His voice. When we shall be brought to speak with God similarly and bow before that Throne whose brightness today would blind us if we could gaze upon it. When we shall know Him who fills all in all, I will not say we shall be amazed to think He loved us, there is no need to say that—I will not say we shall be filled with astonishment to think He ever saved us! I need not say that—but that He should permit us to be His sons and daughters and should, at such an expense, bring us to dwell with Him forever and make us partakers of His own Nature, one with His own Son—this will plunge us in adoring wonder forever and we shall, “praise the name of Jehovah our God, who has dealt wondrously with us.”

I beg you to begin the music here. I long, myself, to spend my time perpetually in adoring the God of wonders! I want, Brothers and Sisters, that we should rise above the spirit of discontent, the spirit that finds fault and mourns, and moans, and laments, and makes Massahs and Meribahs by which to provoke the Lord our God. Let it not be said of us, “They soon forget His wonders,” but let us go on singing unto Him, “who only does wondrous things,” speaking to one another of all His wondrous works and in our souls day by day and hour by hour admiring our God, world without end. Amen.

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# ONE MORE CAST OF THE GREAT NET NO. 1931

**A SERMON INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY,  
NOVEMBER 28, 1886,  
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,  
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 14, 1886.**

***“And it shall come to pass that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.”  
Joel 2:32.***

I THOUGHT within myself, “What shall be the topic for the last sermon before I depart to my quiet resting place?” Perhaps my sermons for the last day of this long stretch of work may be my last, altogether, for life is very frail. When I hear of first one and then another in strong health being suddenly taken away, I am made to know the uncertainty of life in my own case. It were wiser to trust a spider’s web than the life of man! Brothers and Sisters, we live on the brink of eternity and had need behave ourselves as men who will soon face its realities. We may have to do so far sooner than we think. So I said within myself, “Shall I feed the flock of God in the rich pastures of choice promise?” Truly it would have been well to have done so, but then I thought of the stray sheep—must I not go after them? The 99 are not in the wilderness and, therefore, I shall not be leaving them in any danger. They are well folded and the Chief Shepherd will not forget them. God has given them to have life in themselves and the green pastures are with them in plenty—they can afford to be left alone better than the perishing ones. But as for the wandering ones, can I leave them among the wilds and wolves? I have tried to bring them to the great Bishop and Shepherd of souls, but they have not yet returned—how can I forget them? How can I endure to think of their being lost forever?

So I thought I would go out once more after the lost ones hoping that the Lord would help me to find them, even now, and bring them to Himself! I earnestly ask your prayers that a very simple Gospel address may be blessed by God to the immediate conversion of those among us who have long halted and are hesitating even unto this day. I could not have chosen for such a purpose a more suitable text—it is one of the broadest declarations of Gospel doctrine that can be found in Holy Scripture.

I shall handle it in the plainest manner. In a book of practical surgery, you do not look for figures of speech—all is plain as a pikestaff—such will

my sermon be. I hand out the Bread of Heaven and you do not expect poetry from a bakery!

When the Apostle Peter was preaching what I may call the inauguration sermon of the evangelical era, he could do no better than go to Joel for his text. See the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. He explained the wonders of the Pentecost by a reference to this prophetic passage. When Paul, in his famous Epistle to the Romans, would set out the Gospel in all its plainness, he could not do better than quote in his 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, at the 13<sup>th</sup> verse, this same text—"For whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." If Apostles found this passage so suitable for the expression and confirmation of their Gospel message, what can I do but follow their wise example? How greatly do I hope that a blessing will rest upon all here present while I preach upon this precious portion of Scripture—even as a blessing rested upon the motley crowd in Jerusalem when Peter spoke to them! The same Spirit is with us and His sacred power is not in the least diminished. Why should He not convert 3,000 now, as He did on that occasion? If there is a failure, it will not arise from Him, but from ourselves.

Look at the connection of our text in Joel and you will find that it is preceded by terrible warnings—"I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the coming of the Lord." Nor is this all! This broad Gospel statement is followed by words of equal dread. "Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put you in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." It was true of the Prophets as of the Apostles that, knowing the terrors of the Lord, they persuaded men. They were not ashamed to use fear as a powerful motive with mankind. By the Prophet Joel, the diamond of our text is placed in a black setting and its brilliance is thereby enhanced. As a lamp is all the more valued when the night is dark, so is the Gospel all the more precious when men see their misery without it! To remove from men's minds the salutary fear of punishment for sin is to draw up the floodgates of iniquity. He who does this is a traitor to society. If men are not warned of the anger of God against iniquity, they will take license to riot in evil.

Certain modern teachers pretend that they are so delicate that if they believed in the Scriptural Doctrine of Eternal Punishment, they could never smile again. Poor sufferers! One is therefore led to suppose that they are persons of superior piety who are so deeply in love with the souls of men that they weep over them day and night and labor to bring them to repentance. We should expect to see, in them, a perpetual agony for the good of their fellows since they judge themselves to be so qualified to instruct others in the art of compassion! But, my Brothers and Sisters, we have not been able to discover in these sensitive persons any very hal-

lowed sympathy with the ungodly—no, we have heard of their having communion with the worldly in their sports rather than in their sorrow for sin!

I have not seen in these men who forswear the use of the terrors of the Lord any remarkable powers of attracting men to Jesus by love. I have not noted any special zeal in them for the conversion of men, either by tender arguments, or by any other means. I question if they believe in conversion at all! On the other hand, the seraphic Evangelists who have journeyed around the earth to preach the Gospel and have worn themselves down with evangelical earnestness, are, in all cases, men who feel the pressure of the wrath to come. These, though sneered at by the superfine delicates, have shown a tender love to which their judges are strangers!

He who speaks honestly concerning the judgment to come is the man of the most tender heart. He who pleads with sinners, even to tears, usually does so because he believes that they will be everlastingly ruined unless they repent. I do not believe that this modern zeal to conceal the Justice of God and hide the punishment of sin is accompanied by an overflowing compassion for souls. I fear that, on the contrary, it is little other than an incidental form of a flippant unbelief which treats all doctrines of God's Word as antiquated notions deserving to be jested at by men of advanced views. My brethren, the love of Jesus did not prevent His warning men of future woe! He cried aloud, amid a flood of tears, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children together!" And He did not withhold the dreadful fact—"Your house is left unto you desolate." The knowledge of the coming destruction of the city awakened His sympathy and He showed His pity, not by *concealing* the dreadful future, but by warning men of it!

I venture to say that, so far as I have observed, no man ever preaches the Gospel at all unless he has a deep and solemn conviction that sin will be punished in a future state in a manner most just and terrible. Preachers gradually get further and further away from the Gospel and its atoning Sacrifice, in proportion as they delude themselves with the idea that, after all, sin is a small matter and its punishment a questionable severity. Those, also, who look for a future opportunity for the impenitent may well consider it to be of small consequence whether men believe in Jesus, or remain in unbelief. Such a taking of things easy cannot suggest itself to me, for I believe in everlasting punishment! O my Hearers, if you do not flee to Jesus, you will be eternally lost and this urges me to entreat you to be saved! That blood and fire, that darkening sun and crimsoned moon of which Joel speaks, awaken me to exhort you to seek deliverance! That Great White Throne and the dread sentence of Him that shall sit upon it, when He shall say, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," all move me to persuade you to flee to Jesus! Therefore it is my delight to come to you with a free, broad, blessed Gospel promise, in the earnest hope that those of you who are now in danger may at once escape for your lives and flee from the wrath to come!

With that preface I come to the handling of my text, moved by a burning desire that God may bless it. First notice that it contains *a glorious*

*proclamation*—“It shall come to pass that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” But this is accompanied with *an instructive declaration*, to which we shall give a measure of attention as time permits—“In mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.”

I. Listen, first, to THE GLORIOUS PROCLAMATION. As we have no time to spare, we will proceed at once to our theme.

*The blessing proclaimed in our text is precious*—“Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered,” or “shall be saved.” Salvation is a very comprehensive blessing. It is, in fact, a constellation of favors—a mass of mercies condensed into a word. It is a gift which reaches from the door of Hell to the gate of Heaven. The salvation which we have to preach to you at this time is salvation from sin in all senses of that term. It is a diamond with many facets. You who dread the eternal consequences of iniquity will be glad to learn that there is salvation from the punishment of sin—complete and eternal salvation! This is no small matter to a soul crushed beneath a consciousness of guilt and the certainty that the necessary consequences of sin must be overwhelming. The results of sin are not to be thought of without trembling. Verily, dismay may well take hold of the stoutest heart while reflecting upon the judgment to come. We preach salvation from the unutterable woe which follows on the heels of sin. Whatever may be the terrors of that tremendous day, for which all other days were made, we proclaim, in God’s name, salvation from them all!

Whatever may be the gloom of that bottomless abyss into which the guilty shall sink forever, we are enabled to proclaim complete deliverance from that endless fall—salvation for every soul that believes in Jesus Christ the Lord! No form of accusation shall be drawn up against the Believer. No sentence of condemnation shall ever be uttered against Him. Salvation sends the prisoner out of court completely cleared. All the penal consequences of all sin shall be turned aside from all who, by Divine Grace, are led to call upon the name of the Lord!

Salvation also delivers from the guilt of sin. The Lord is able to justify the ungodly so that he shall be numbered with the righteous. Through the blood of Jesus, He makes the filthy whiter than the snow!

He will not merely put away the sin itself, but all the defilement that has come of it to your moral manhood. O my Hearer, all the injury which you have already inflicted upon yourself by sin, the Lord can repair! Sin, even if it led to no penal consequences, is a disease which destroys the beauty of your manhood and makes us loathsome in the eyes of God—yes, and shocking to the view of our own conscience when we see ourselves by the light of God’s Spirit in the glass of His Word. O you on whose foreheads the leprosy is white, we preach perfect healing for you, a salvation which shall renovate your nature and make your flesh even as the flesh of a little child—as Naaman’s was when he came up from the washing, having been obedient to the prophetic command. Brothers and Sisters, the salvation of the Lord removes every injurious result of sin upon heart and mind. Is not this a joy?



We also preach salvation from the power of sin. Sin finds a nest in the carnal nature, but it hides there as a thief. It shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under Law, but under Grace! O you slaves, whose fetters clank in your ears—at this moment you may be free! Whether the bonds are those of drunkenness, or licentiousness, or worldliness, or despair, the Lord looses the prisoners! Jesus has come to break the manacles from your wrists, the fetters from your feet. If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free, indeed. He has come to set you free for holiness, for purity, for peace, for love. He will bless you with newness of life—He will cause Grace to reign in you unto eternal life. Salvation from the power of evil is a gift worthy of God! This is the salvation that we preach—we proclaim immediate deliverance from the *curse* of sin, present rescue from the *power* of sin and ultimate freedom from the very *being* of sin! To every man born of woman is this salvation proclaimed, provided they will obey the Gospel command which says—look unto Christ and live. “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Happy herald who has such a proclamation to make! The blessing is incalculably precious.

Further, notice, in the next place, that *the time of this proclamation is present*, for Peter tells us that the time spoken of by the Prophet Joel began at Pentecost. When the rushing, mighty wind was heard, and the flaming tongues sat upon the disciples’ heads, then was the Gospel dispensation opened in all its freeness. The Holy Spirit, who then came down to earth, has never returned! He is still in the midst of the Church, not working physical wonders, but performing moral and spiritual miracles in our midst, even to this day! Today, through His power, full remission is preached to every repenting sinner. Today is complete salvation promised to everyone that believes in Jesus. This day the promise stands true, “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

I put aside as altogether unscriptural the notion that the day of Grace is past for any man who will call upon the name of the Lord. If you will call, you shall be heard, be the day what it may! Yes, though it goes to the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. The day of Grace is never past to any soul that lives, as long as it is willing to believe in Jesus! I am not told to go and say there is Grace for men up to a certain point and beyond that point there is none! No, there is no limit set to the willingness or ability of Christ to save those who call upon His name! Who dares to limit the Holy One of Israel in the deeds of His Grace? As long as faith is possible, salvation is possible. I have my Master’s order to preach the Gospel to every creature. He has said to His servants, “As many as you shall find, bid to the marriage.” We are bound to say to everyone, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.” Whether you are a child of 10, or a man of 50, I have the same message for you! If you have lived to be a hundred, the Gospel promise still holds good, despite the lapse of years. The times of your ignorance God has winked at, but He now commands all men everywhere to repent! He graciously declares of all who seek Him, “Him that comes to Me, I will in no wise cast out.” Day of Grace past, indeed! It is a whisper of Satan! Have nothing to do with that lie, for

the Savior still bids you come to Him and live! Even at the ebb of life He cries, "Come now, and let us reason together."—

***"Life is the time to seek His face—  
Through life He freely gives His Grace,  
And while that lamp holds out to burn,  
The vilest sinner may return."***

Whoever returns to the Father's house shall find a glad reception. If this very day, this 14<sup>th</sup> of November, you call upon the Lord, you shall be saved! God speaks by my mouth to you at this moment and declares that today, if you will hear His voice, your soul shall live! The proverb says, "there is no time like time present," and it speaks the truth. The present moment is the best moment in your possession! What other moment have you? Whoever, at this passing hour, calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. This is a Gospel well worth the preaching—blessed are our ears that we hear the joyful sound!

Next, notice that as the gift is precious and the time is present, so *the range of this proclamation is promising*. It is full of good cheer to all who hear me this day. "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Whoever! I am afraid lest anything I should say to express the width of this word should only narrow it—just as the man who tries to explain eternity always makes it seem much shorter than we thought it to be and so defeats his own purpose. "Whoever." There is, in this word, no fence, or ditch, or boundary line. You are out upon the open mountains of Grace. In riding through Switzerland you will find gates put up here and there along the road, for no reason that I could see but to tax and worry travelers—many of the limits which are set to the Gospel proclamation answer no other purpose! Down with these toll bars on the road to Heaven! We cannot and dare not discourage any man from calling on the name of the Lord! The promise is to you and to your children—but it is also to all "that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." In this matter there is no difference between Jew and Gentile! "Whoever" includes the slum people, even the poorest of the poor, but it does not *exclude* the carriage people, not even the richest of the rich! "Whoever" beckons to the educated and looks favorably upon the cultured and the refined—but, none the less, it invites the illiterate to whom all learning is an unattainable mystery. "Whoever" has a finger for babes and an arm for old men! It has an eye for the quick and a smile for the dull!

Young men and maidens, "whoever" offers its embrace to you! Good and bad, honorable or disreputable, this "whoever" speaks to you all with equal truth! Kings and queens may find room in it and so may thieves and beggars. Peers and paupers sit on one seat in this word! "Whoever" has a special voice for you, my Hearer! Do you answer, "But I am an oddity"? "Whoever" includes all the oddities! I always have a warm side towards odd, eccentric, out-of-the-way people because I am one, myself, at least so I am often said to be! I am deeply thankful for this blessed text, for if I am a lot unmentioned in any other, I know that this includes me—I am beyond all question under the shade of "whoever!" No end of odd people come to the Tabernacle, or read my sermons, but they are all within the range of "whoever."

“Alas!” cries one, “I am dreadfully desponding, I am too low-spirited to be intended by the promise of Grace!” Are you? I do not believe it! “Whoever” goes to the very depths of despair and up to the heights of Glory! “Alas!” murmurs another, “I am not sad enough on account of my sin. I am of too frivolous a nature!” Very likely, but, “whoever.” includes you—if you call on the Lord, you shall be saved! You may go round the whole Tabernacle this morning and “whoever” will include all the thousands in it! After that you may hasten down the streets and tramp from end to end of London’s mighty area and never find one left out! You may then take a tourist’s ticket and travel through Europe, Africa and Asia till you have even traversed China and Japan! You may sweep the southern seas and search Australia—and then come home by way of San Francisco—and in all that circular tour you will not have met man, woman, or child, whether white, or black, or red, or yellow, or blue, or green, but what is encompassed by the circle of this word, “whoever.” “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” I hope I have not diminished the range of the text! Certainly I have not intended to do so. Mind that none of you shut the door in your own faces. I want each one to come in and find salvation at once. I beseech you do not forget to come to Jesus, *yourself*. Come, for you may come, you should come, you must come—

***“None are excluded therefore but those  
Who do themselves exclude!  
Welcome the learned and polite,  
The ignorant and rude.  
While Grace most freely saves the prince,  
The poor may take their share!  
No mortal has a just pretense  
To perish in despair.”***

There is the text—“Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered,” or, “saved.” Believe it and obey it. It is a gracious gift—take it and be rich forever!

Furthermore, *the requirement is very plain*. “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord.” You do not need a library to explain to you how you can be saved. Here it is—“Call on the name of the Lord.” This is “The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven.” You will not need to go to the Sorbonne at Paris, nor to the University of Oxford to be tutored in the art of finding salvation. *Believe and live!* Is not that plain enough? “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” What does calling upon the name of the Lord mean? To call on the name of the Lord means, first, *to believe in God as He reveals Himself in Scripture*. His Revelation of Himself is His “name.” If you make a god of your own, you have no promise that he will save you—on the contrary, if *you* make him, he will be good for nothing, for he will be less than yourself! If you are now willing to come to the light and see the Lord as He displays Himself in His own Word, then you shall know a great God and a Savior. You are not merely to believe in a god, but in the living and true God—in Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob—the God and Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you accept Him as being what He states Himself to be, in Him you shall find salvation!

The pity of it is that the most of people in these days worship a god of their own invention. They do not make an image of clay, or of gold, but they construct a deity in their minds according to their own thoughts. They proudly judge as to what God ought to be and they will not receive God as He really is. What is this but a god-making as gross as that which is performed by the heathen? What can be more wicked than to attempt to imagine a better god than the one true and living God? As the deity of your fancy has no existence, I would not recommend you to trust in him. There is one living and true God and that living God has revealed Himself in the two Books of the Old and New Testament. In these He is more clearly seen than in His works of creation or of Providence. In this God you must trust—and if you trust Him, He will not deceive you. “Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.”

If you trust in “thought,” or, “progress,” or any other deity of your own making, you will perish! But if you rely upon the living God, He will not, cannot, forsake you. Trust in Father, Son and Holy Spirit and you shall be delivered! “He that believes on Him shall not be confounded.” A simple, child-like trust in God as He reveals Himself in His Word and especially as He unveils Himself in the blessed Person of the Lord Jesus Christ will save you! In the Lord Jesus dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily—trust in Him and you are saved.

*To call on the name of the Lord also means to pray.* That is the idea which naturally arises to the mind at the first sound of the word. You are lost in the woods. What are you to do? You are to call for help. “O God, hear my cry! Deliver me, for my trust is in You!” If I compare you to a wandering sheep, what can you do? You cannot find your way back to the fold—the brambles hold you fast and tear your flesh. Well, you can bleat and thus call for the Shepherd! Prayer—real, sincere, believing prayer will never fail! The Lord has said, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you.”

I recollect, in the time of my soul-trouble, how I lived on this text for months! It only looks like a lozenge, but it is made of the essence of meat and it will sustain life for many a day. Try the power of it. “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” I said to myself—“I do call on His name and I will continue to call on His name. Yes, if I perish, I will pray and perish only there!” Nor did I call upon the Lord in vain supplication. He heard me and saved me! Blessed be His holy name! Praying, believing, trusting—none can fail of salvation. The requirement is very plain—“Trust and pray.”

And when you have done this, then remember that *to call upon the name of the Lord means, also, to confess that name.* We read in the Old Testament, “Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.” Not that they then first prayed, but they then began to meet together avowedly to *worship* Jehovah. They came out from among men and named the sacred name as that of their God and Lord—declaring that whatever others did, they would serve Him. The Lord requires all saved ones to do this. You must confess that the Lord is your God and Jesus is your Savior. You must say, “This God is our God forever and ever.” Our Lord put it, “He

that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” Paul says, “With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” You must, in some way or other, confess your faith—and the best way is that which the Lord has, Himself, ordained, saying, “Thus it becomes us to fulfill all righteousness.” No longer wishing to live without God, no longer trusting to what you can see, hear and do, you must, from this day on, place your whole reliance upon God, alone, and acknowledge the Lord as your God and Father. No man doing this shall be left to perish! Out of temporal and eternal troubles you shall be delivered. God will help you all your life long if you trust Him. “He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust, His truth shall be your shield and buckler.” Whoever trusts, prays and avows Himself to be on the Lord’s side, shall be saved!

This requirement is simple enough and I do not see what less could be asked of any man. Would you have a man saved who will not trust his God? Would you have a man forgiven who will not obey his Lord? Has Christ come into the world to pardon our sin and save us while we continue in rebellion? God forbid! His Grace is manifested to make us loyal to God in everything and walk before the Lord in the land of the living! This, also, the Holy Spirit works in us to will and to do.

I will spend a minute or two in reminding you that, as the requirement is plain, so *the assurance of blessing is positive*. “Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered,” or, “saved.” In this there are no provisos and maybes. The text is not a bare hope, but a solemn assertion! If you believe, poor Soul, though you are altogether a mass of sin, you shall be saved! Do you not see how sure it is? God, who cannot lie, pledges His Word to you—risk your soul on it! Indeed, there is no risk. The only hope I have this day is in the promise of my faithful God which He makes to those who call upon His name. I dare not rest anywhere else, but on His bare Word. I gladly venture my eternal all. How can it be that a sincere trust in God’s own promise can ever be rejected by the Lord? Sitting by the bedside of a dying man who was resting in Christ even as I am, I said to myself—Suppose we, who trust alone in Jesus, should perish, what then? Why, it would be to the everlasting dishonor of the Lord in whom we trusted! We would lose our souls, certainly, but He would lose His honor! Think of one of us being able to say in Hell, “I trusted in the boasted Savior’s aid and rested myself on God, and yet I am lost.” Sirs, Heaven itself would be darkened and the crown jewels of God would lose their luster if that could once be the case! But it cannot be! If you trust in the Lord God Almighty, He will save you as surely as He is God! No one shall ever think better of God than He is. Open your mouth as wide as you will and He will fill it.

And now, to wind up as to the proclamation—remember that although it is so far-reaching as to embrace a wide world of Believers, yet *it is a personal message to you at this hour*. “Whoever” includes *yourself* and if you see it from the right angle, it peculiarly looks at *you*. *You*, calling upon God, shall be saved—*you*, even you! Friend, I do not know your name, nor do I need to know it, but I mean this word for *you*. *You* shall be saved if

you call upon the name of the Lord. "Ah!" you say, "I wish my name was written down in the Bible." Would it comfort you at all? If it were written in the Scripture, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon shall be saved," I am afraid I should not get much comfort out of the promise, for I should go home and fetch out the London Directory and see if there was not another person of that name, or very similar to it! How much worse would it be for the Smiths and the Browns! No, my Brothers and Sisters, do not ask to see your name in the Inspired volume, but be content with what you *do* see, namely, your *character*! When the Scripture says, "Whoever," you cannot shut yourself out of that! Since it is written, "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," call on that name and grasp the blessing! Despair, itself, can scarcely evade the comfort of this blessed text! O Holy Spirit, the Comforter, seal it upon each heart!

But perhaps you have not called upon the name of the Lord. Then begin at once. Cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" and cry after that sort immediately. If you have never prayed, pray now! May God the Holy Spirit lead you to call upon the name of the Lord at this exact moment, without waiting to go home, or to get into another room! Though you have never believed in the Lord Jesus before, believe in Him now! If this is the first breath of faith that you have ever breathed, the promise is as sure to you as it is to those of us who have known the Lord these 40 years. "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," is a word to a careless fellow who has never prayed in his life!

O my Hearer, the text speaks to you! How I wish I could get at you, take you by the hand and hold you till I had made you think! I remember when Mr. Richard Weaver preached at Park Street Chapel, in his younger days. He came down from the pulpit and ran over the pews to get at the people that he might speak to them individually and say, "you," and, "you," and, "you." I am not nimble enough on my legs to do *that*, and I do not think I would try it if I were younger! But I wish I could, somehow or other, come to each one of you and press home these glad tidings of great joy. You, my dear old Friend, it means *you*! You, young woman, over there to the right, it means *you*! You, dear child, sitting with your grandmother, it means *you*! "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." O Lord, bless this word to every unconverted person to whom it comes!

**II.** I could almost wish to close with this soft music, but I dare not maim a text. I will deal with the second part of it with exceeding brevity, but I dare not silence it altogether. The second portion of the text contains AN INSTRUCTIVE DECLARATION. "It shall come to pass that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." That was abundantly fulfilled at Pentecost, for on that day a great multitude believed, were baptized and were saved—thus those who called on the name of the Lord were delivered. But listen, "In mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance." This, also, was literally true—the first preaching of the Gospel was to the Jews at Jerusalem itself! Salvation came to mount Zion and to the city of the great King! The fountain for sin and for uncleanness was opened at Jerusalem!

There is something about that fact which strikes me very solemnly this morning, for though this deliverance came to some, yet the city was totally destroyed. The Kingdom of Heaven came near them, but they put it away and they were overthrown with a fearful destruction. The Jews had long been outwardly the Lord's chosen people, but in a measure He had cast them off, for the Romans ruled the land and they, in their willful blindness, crucified their King. The favored nation nailed the Messiah to the tree—and yet to Jerusalem sinners, salvation was first preached! Salvation was of the Jews and by Jews it was brought to us Gentiles. Sad calamity that they should bring us life and yet, as a nation, sink down to spiritual death!

Notice that the Prophet says, "In mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said." He promised deliverance and He sent it according to His Word—if *they* would not have it—He sent it as He said and their blood was on their own heads when they refused it. The Lord went to the full length of His mercy in sending salvation to those leaders of iniquity who, with wicked hands, had crucified their own Messiah!

As a result of the Lord's goodness, a remnant was saved. Notice it, "and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call." A remnant did call upon the Lord and live! Those 11 that stood up at Pentecost and bore witness to the Resurrection were all Jews! And those who met in the upper room, when the Holy Spirit came down, were Jews—this was the remnant. But the solemn thought is that *it was only a remnant of God's favored people*. Centuries of visitations, Prophets, miracles—and only a remnant saved! God's Shekinah shining out among them and yet only a remnant obedient! The very Christ of God born of their nation and yet only a remnant saved! To this day we utter the Truth of God when we sing—

***"You chosen seed of Israel's race,  
A remnant weak and small."***

The Jewish Church is a very insignificant portion of the Jewish people. The Apostle tells us that "at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of Grace." And Isaiah says, "Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Poor Israel, poor Israel! Most favored for many an age and yet only a remnant brought to call upon the saving Lord! Many come from distant lands and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God—but the children of the kingdom are cast out into outer darkness—all but a mere remnant!

To my mind it is most instructive to notice that even that remnant never called upon the name of the Lord until the Lord called upon them—"The remnant whom the Lord shall call." We, all of us, need a miracle of Grace to make us perform the simple act of calling upon God! This was manifestly true in the case of Israel, for as a nation it rejected Jesus of Nazareth and only a few were converted by the power of the Holy Spirit. But whether Jews or Greeks, we are similarly depraved—and unless effectual calling shall call us out of our natural state—the very last thing that we shall ever do will be to come to Jesus and to rest in Him! Unhappy condition, to refuse the highest good!

Believing Jews are a remnant to this day and only here and there is one called by Grace. You say, "What have we to do with that?" We have much to do with it! Let us pray for our Lord's own countrymen! Let us labor for them! This, also, let us do—let us learn from their fall. O you that are children of godly parents, you that habitually attend places of worship, you who sit in this House of Prayer year after year—you are much in the same position as Israel of old! Yours are the outward privileges—will you reject the hopes which they set before you? My fear is lest you should get so accustomed to hearing the Gospel that you should think that mere *hearing* is enough! I tremble lest you should grow so habituated to the *externals* of religion that you should be dead to all the internal parts of it and only a remnant of you should be saved! Think of the multitudes in England who hear the Gospel and of the comparatively few who are called by Grace to come and believe in Jesus Christ. It is sorrowful to think of the breadth of Gospel Grace and the narrowness of man's acceptance of it.

The feast is great! The guests are few! I see an ocean of mercy without a shore and on it there floats an ark wherein but few are saved. Shall it always be so? Oh, come, and receive the gift of Free Grace! Alas, I see men sunk in the darkness of unbelief and only a remnant rising to the light of faith! Altogether, in this London, out of four or five millions, we have not half a million at worship at any one time! Out of that half million, how many do you think are real Christians? Truly, it is still a remnant. Oh, that you and I may be of that remnant!

Let us further pray the Lord to gather in the multitude and so to accomplish speedily the number of His elect. Oh, that He would not only magnify the Sovereignty of His Grace, but reveal the largeness of it! Oh, that He would give the well-beloved Jesus to see of the travail of His soul till He is satisfied! O Lord, the oxen and the fatlings are killed, and all things are ready—let it not be again reported that those who are bidden are not worthy! Or, if it is so, enable us to go out into the highways and hedges and compel the outcasts to come in, that the wedding may be furnished with guests! Go forth, you messengers of Christ, into all the world! Rise up, my Brothers, from this service, and go forth, everyone of you, to call in as many as you find—yes, to compel them to come in! May the Lord cause that in London and in Britain there may be deliverance—yes, may His salvation be made known unto the ends of the earth! Amen.

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# **A FREE GRACE PROMISE**

## **NO. 2082**

**INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S DAY, MAY 5, 1888.**

**BY C. H. SPURGEON,**

**AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,**

**DELIVERED ON THURSDAY EVENING,**

**OCTOBER 11, 1888.**

***“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call  
on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”***

***Joel 2:32.***

VENGEANCE was in full career. The armies of Divine justice had been called forth for war—“They shall run like mighty men. They shall climb the wall like men of war.” They had invaded and devastated the land and turned the land from being like the garden of Eden into a desolate wilderness. All faces gathered blackness—the people were “much pained.” The sun itself was dim, the moon was dark and the stars withdrew themselves—the earth quaked and the heavens trembled. At such a dreadful time—when we might least have expected it, between the peals of thunder and the flashes of lightning—was heard this gentle word, “It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”

Let us carefully read the passage—“And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord comes. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” In the worst times that can ever happen there is still salvation for men! When day turns to night and life becomes death, when the staff of life is broken and the hope of man has fled, there still remains in God, in the Person of His dear Son, deliverance to all those who will call upon the name of the Lord.

We do not know what is to happen—reading the roll of the future we prophesy dark things. But still this light shall always shine between the rifts of the cloud—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”

This passage was selected by the Apostle at Pentecost to be set in its place as a sort of morning star of Gospel times. When the Spirit was poured out upon the servants and the handmaids and sons and daughters began to prophesy, it was clear that the wondrous time had come which had been foretold so long before. Then Peter, as he preached his memorable sermon, told the people, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” He thus gave a fuller and yet more evangelical meaning to the word “delivered.” “Whosoever shall call on the name of the

Lord shall be delivered”—from sin, death and Hell—shall, in fact, be so delivered as to be in Divine language, “saved”—saved from the guilt, the penalty, the power of sin. Saved from the wrath to come.

These Gospel times are still the happy days in which “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” In this year of Divine Grace we have reached a day and an hour in which “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” To you at this moment is this salvation sent. The dispensation of immediate acceptance proclaimed at Pentecost has never ceased—its fullness of blessing has grown rather than diminished. The sacred promise stands in all its certainty, fullness and freeness—it has lost none of its breadth and length—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

I have nothing to do tonight but to tell you again the old, old story of infinite mercy come to meet infinite sin—of FREE GRACE come to lead free will into a better line of things—of God Himself appearing to undo man’s ruin worked by man and to lift him up by a great deliverance. May the Holy Spirit graciously aid me while I shall talk to you very simply.

**I. First, THERE IS SOMETHING ALWAYS NEEDED.** That something is deliverance, or “salvation.” It is always wanted. It is the requisite of man wherever man is found. As long as there are men on the face of the earth there will always be a need of salvation. I could wish that some of you had the instructive schooling which I received last Tuesday when I was visiting enquirers. I had a very happy time in seeing a very large number of persons who had joyfully put their trust in Christ. But among them were some who could *not* trust. Poor Hearts, conscious of sin, though they did not think they were—these seemed bound hand and foot, shut up in the prison of despair and darkened in heart.

I tell you I felt dismayed as they baffled me—I felt a fool as they refused to be comforted. I could do nothing for them so far as argument and persuasion were concerned. I could pray with them—I could also set them praying and they *did* pray. But they were cases in which, unless the arm of God were revealed, I was as powerless with them as when a man stands weeping over the body of his dead wife.

Dear Friends, while we mingle only with those who are saved, we forget how much need there is still of Divine salvation. If we could go through London—into its dens and slums—we should think very differently of human need from what we do when we simply come from our own quiet domestic circle and step into our pew and hear a sermon. The world is sick and dying. The world is corrupt and rotten. The world is a ship in which the water is rising fast and the vessel is going down into the deep of destruction. God’s salvation is wanted as much today as when the Holy Spirit preached it in Noah’s day to the spirits in prison. God must step in and bring deliverance or there remains no hope.

Some want deliverance from present trouble. If you are in this need tonight through very sore distress, I invite you to take my text as your guide and believe that “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” Depend upon it—in any form of distress—physical, mental, or

whatever it may be, prayer is wonderfully available. “Call upon Me,” says God, “in the day of trouble: I will deliver you and you shall glorify Me.” If you are so down at the heel that your foot is on the bare pavement. If you have come to this place in bodily sickness and feel as if you should die on the seat in which you sit. If there be no physician to help you and no friend to stretch out a generous hand, I beseech you call upon God!

You have come to the end of men. You are now at the beginning of God. See whether your Maker will forget you. See whether the great, generous heart of God does not still beat tenderly towards the sorrowful and the afflicted. If I saw you lying wounded on a battlefield, bleeding to death, I would say, “Call upon God.” If I knew that you had not a house to go to but must walk these streets all night, I would say, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” I will take the text in the broadest sense and bid you, no, *command* you to test your good and gracious God in the day of your calamity.

This is true whenever you come into a position of deep personal distress, even though it should not be of a physical kind. When you do not know how to act but are bewildered and at your wits end—when wave of trouble has followed wave of trouble till you are like the sailor in the storm who reels to and fro and staggers like a drunken man—if now you cannot help yourself because your spirit sinks and your mind fails—call upon God, call upon God, call upon God! Lost child in the woods, with the night fog thickening about you, ready to lie down and die—call upon your Father! Call upon God, you distracted one. For, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”

In the Last Great Day, when all secrets are known it will seem ridiculous that persons took to writing tales and romances. For the real stories of what God has done for those who cry to Him are infinitely more surprising. If men and women could but tell in simple, natural language, how God has come to their rescue in the hour of imminent distress, they would set the harps of Heaven a-ringing with new melodies and the hearts of saints on earth a-glowing with new love to God for His wonderful kindness to the children of men! Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness! Oh that we could abundantly utter the memory of His great goodness to ourselves in the night of our weeping!

The text holds good concerning deliverance from future troubles. What is to happen in the amazing future, we do not know. Some try to startle and alarm you with prophecies of what will soon happen. I would warn you, concerning these to be well upon your guard. Take small heed of what they say. Whatever is to happen according to the Word of God—if the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood—if God shall show great wonders in the heavens and the earth—blood and fire and pillars of smoke—remember that though you will then assuredly want deliverance, deliverance will still be near at hand. The text seems to be put in a startling connection in order to advise us that when the worst and most terrible convulsions shall occur, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

The star Wormwood may fall but we shall be saved if we call upon the name of the Lord. Plagues may be poured out, trumpets may sound and judgments may follow one another as quickly as the plagues of Egypt but, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” When the need of deliverance shall apparently increase, the abundance of salvation shall increase with it. Fear not the direst of all wars, the bitterest of all famines, the deadliest of all plagues—if we call upon the Lord, He has pledged to deliver us. This word of promise meets the most terrible of possibilities with a sure salvation.

Yes, and when you come to die, when to you the sun has turned into darkness and the moon into blood, this text assures deliverance in the last dread hour. Call upon the name of the Lord and you shall be saved! Amid the pains of death and the gloom of departure you shall enjoy a glorious visitation which shall turn darkness into light and sorrow into joy. When you wake up amid the realities of the eternal future, there will be nothing for you to dread in resurrection, or in judgment, or in the yawning mouth of Hell. If you have called upon the name of the Lord you shall be delivered. Though the unpardoned are thrust down to the depth of woe, and the righteous scarcely are saved, yet you who have called upon the name of the Lord must be delivered. The promise stands firm. Whatever may be hidden in the great roll of the future, God cannot deny Himself—He will deliver those who call upon His name.

What is needed, then, is *salvation*. And I do think, beloved Brethren, that you and I who preach the Word and long to save souls must very often go over this grand old Truth of God about salvation to the guilty—deliverance to all who call upon the name of the Lord. Sometimes we talk to friends about the higher life, about attaining to very high degrees of sanctity. And all this is very proper and very good. But still the great fundamental Truth of God is, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” We urge our friends to be sound in doctrine and to know what they do know and to understand the revealed will of God. And very proper is this also. But still, first and foremost, this is the elementary, all-important truth—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

To this old foundation truth we come back for comfort. I sometimes rejoice in God and joy in the God of my salvation and spread my wings and mount up into communion with the heavenlies. But still there are other seasons when I hide my head in darkness and then I am very glad of such a broad, gracious promise as this—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” I find that my sweetest, happiest, safest state is as a poor, guilty, helpless sinner calling upon the name of the Lord and receiving mercy at His hands as one who deserves nothing but His wrath. Then I dare hang the weight of my soul on such a sure promise as this, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Get where you may, however high your experience. Be what you may, however great your usefulness—you will always want to come back to the same ground upon which the poorest and weakest of hearts must stand

and claim to be saved by almighty Grace—through simply calling upon the name of the Lord. Thus have I said enough upon what is always needed—this deliverance, this salvation.

**II.** Now, secondly, let us attentively observe THE WAY IN WHICH THIS DELIVERANCE IS TO BE HAD. Help us, Blessed Spirit, in this our meditation. It is to be had, according to the text, by calling upon the name of the Lord.

Is not the most obvious sense of this language prayer? Are we not brought to the Lord by a prayer which trusts in God—by a prayer which asks God to give the deliverance that is needed and expects to have it from the Lord as a gift of Divine Grace? It amounts to much the same thing as that other word, “Believe and live.” For how shall they call on Him of whom they have not heard? And if they have heard, yet vain is their calling if they have not believed as well as heard. But to “call on the name of the Lord,” is briefly to pray a believing prayer—to cry to God for His help and to leave yourself in His hands. This is very simple, is it not? There is no cumbersome machinery here, nothing complex and mysterious.

No priestly help is wanted except the help of that great High Priest who intercedes for us within the veil. A poor, broken heart pours its distress into the ear of God and calls upon Him to fulfill His promise of help in the time of need—that is all. Thank God nothing more is mentioned in our text. The promise is—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

What a suitable way of salvation it is to those who feel that they can do nothing! Ah, dear Hearts! If we had to preach to them a very difficult and elaborate salvation they would perish. They have not the mind, some of them, to follow our directions if they were at all intricate. And they have not enough hope to venture upon anything that looks at all difficult. But if it is true that, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved,” this method is simple and available and they easily understand it. He can pray to God who can do nothing else. Thank God he need not want to do anything else. For if he can call for help, he gets deliverance—and in that deliverance he gets all that he will ever want between this place and Heaven. He has called upon the name of the Lord, and all that is deficient in him will be supplied for time and for eternity. He will be delivered, not only now, but throughout all the future of his life until he sees the face of God in Glory everlasting!

The text, however, contains within it a measure of specific instruction—the prayer must be to the true God. “Whosoever shall call on the name of *Jehovah* shall be saved.” There is something distinctive here. For one would call on Baal, another would call on Ashtaroth and a third on Moloch. But these would not be saved. The promise is especial—“Whosoever shall call on the name of *Jehovah* shall be saved.” You know that triune name, “Father, Son and Holy Spirit”?—Call upon it! You know how the name of *Jehovah* is set forth most conspicuously in the Person of the Lord Jesus?—call upon Him!

Call upon the *true* God. Call upon no idol, call on no Virgin Mary, no saint, dead or living. Call on no image. Call on no impression of your mind! Call upon the living God—call upon Him who reveals Himself in the Bible—call upon Him who manifests Himself in the Person of His dear Son. For whosoever shall call upon *this* God shall be saved. You may call upon the idols but they will not hear you—“Ears have they, but they hear not. Eyes have they, but they see not.” You may *not* call upon *men*, for they are all sinners like yourselves. Priests cannot help their most zealous admirers. But, “Whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah shall be saved.” Mind, then, it is not the mere repetition of a prayer as a sort of charm, or a piece of religious witchcraft—you must make a direct address to GOD, an appeal to the Most High to help you in your time of need. In presenting true prayer to the true God you shall be delivered.

Moreover, the prayer should be intelligently presented. We read, “Whosoever shall call on the *name* of the Lord.” Now, by the word “name” we understand the Person, the Character of the Lord. The more, then, you know about the Lord and the better you know His name, the more intelligently will you call upon that name. If you know His power, you will call upon that power to help you. If you know His mercy, you will call upon Him in His Grace to save you. If you know His wisdom, you feel that He knows your difficulties and can help you through them. If you understand His immutability, you will call upon Him as the same God who has saved other sinners, to come and save you. It will be well, therefore, for you to study the Scriptures much and to pray the Lord to make Himself known to you that *you may know Him*. In proportion to your acquaintance with Him, will you with greater confidence be able to call upon His name.

But, little as you may know, call on Him according to the little you *do* know. Cast yourself upon Him, whether your trouble tonight be external or internal. But especially if it is internal, if it is the trouble of sin—if it is the burden of guilt, if it is a load of horror and fear because of wrath to come—call upon the name of the Lord, for you shall be delivered. There stands His promise. It is not, “He *may* be delivered,” but he “*shall* be.” Note well the everlasting “shall” of God—irrevocable, unalterable, unquestionable, irresistible. His promise stands eternally the same. Has He said and shall He not do it? “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

This way of salvation—calling upon the name of the Lord—glorifies God. He asks nothing of you but that you ask everything of Him. You are the beggar and He is the Benefactor. You are in the trouble and He is the Deliverer. All you have to do is to trust Him and beg of Him. This is easy enough. This puts the matter into the hands of the Lord and takes it out of your hands. Do you like the plan? Put it in practice immediately! It will prove itself gloriously effectual.

Dear Friends, I speak to some whom I know to be now present who are under severe trial. You dare not look up. You seem to have given up. At any rate you have given yourself up. And yet, I pray you, call upon the name of the Lord. You cannot perish *praying*—no one has ever done so. If

you could perish praying, you would be a new wonder in the universe! A praying soul in Hell is an utter impossibility. A man calling on God and rejected of God—the supposition is not to be endured! “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” God Himself must lie, He must quit His nature, forfeit His claim to mercy, destroy His character of love if He were to let a poor sinner call upon His name and yet refuse to hear him.

There will come a day but that is not now—there will come a day in the next state when He will say, “I called but *you* refused.” But it is not so now. While there is life there is hope. “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart,” but call upon God at once. For this warrant of Divine Grace runs through all the regions of mortality, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

I remember a time when if I had heard a sermon on this subject, putting it plainly to me, I should have leaped into comfort and light in a single moment. Is it not such a time with you? I thought I must do something, I must be something, I must in some way *prepare* myself for the mercy of God. I did not know that a calling upon God, a trusting myself in His hands an invocation of His sacred name would bring me to Christ the Savior. But so it stands and happy, indeed, was I when I found it out. Heaven is *given* away. Salvation may be had for the *asking*. I hope that many a captive heart here will at once leap to loose his chains and cry, “It is even so. If God has said it, it must be true. There it is—in His own Word. I have called upon Him and I must be delivered.”

**III.** Now I come to notice, in the third place, THE PEOPLE TO WHOM THIS PROMISE AND THIS DELIVERANCE WILL BE GIVEN. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”

According to the connection, the people had been greatly afflicted—afflicted beyond all precedent, afflicted to the very brink of despair. But the Lord said, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Go down to the hospital. You may select, if you please, the hospital which deals with the effects of vice. In that house of misery you may stand at each bed and say, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” You may then hasten to every door of every prison cell, yes, even at the grating of the condemned cell—there lie men and women given up to death—and you may with safety say to each one, “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”

I know what the Pharisees will say—“If you preach this, men will go on in sin.” It has always been so—that the great mercy of God has been turned by some into a reason for continuing in sin. But God (and this is the wonder of it) has never restricted His mercy because of that! It must have been a terrible provocation of Almighty Grace when men perverted His mercy into an excuse for sin. But the Lord has never taken even the edges off His mercy because men have misused it—He has still made it stand out bright and clear—“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Still He cries, “Turn and live.” “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts—and let him return

unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him. And to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

Undimmed is that brave sun that shines on the foulest dunghills of vice. Trust Christ and live. Call upon the name of the Lord and you shall be pardoned—yes, you shall be rescued from the bondage of your sin and be made a new creature, a child of God, a member of the family of His Grace. The most afflicted and the most afflicted by sin are met with by this gracious promise, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Yes, but there were some, according to Joel, who had the Spirit of God poured out upon them. What about *them*? Were they saved by that? Oh no! Those who had the Spirit of God so that they dreamed dreams and saw visions—they still had to come to the palace of mercy, by His Grace, by this same gate of believing prayer—“Whosoever shall *call on the name of the Lord* shall be saved.” Ah, poor Souls! You say to yourselves, “If we were deacons of Churches, if we were pastors, oh, then we should be saved!” You do not know anything about it—Church officers are no more saved by their *office* than you are by being without office. We owe nothing to our official position in this matter of salvation—in fact we may owe our damnation to our official standing unless we look well to our ways.

Pastors and officers of Churches have no preference over you plain folks. I assure you I am quite happy to take your hand, whoever you may be, and come to Christ on the same footing as yourself—

**“Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Your Cross I cling.”**

Often, when I have been cheering up a poor sinner and urging him to believe in Christ, I have thought, “Well, if he will not drink this cup of comfort, I will even drink it up myself.” I assure you I need it as much as those to whom I carry it. I have been as big a sinner as any of you, and therefore I take the promise to myself. The Divine cordial shall not be lost—I will accept it.

I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn, and faint and sick, and full of sin—and I trusted Him on my own account and found peace—peace on the same ground as my text sets before all of you. If I drink of this consolation, you may drink it, too. The miracle of this cup is that fifty may drink and yet it is just as full as ever. There is no restriction in the word “Whosoever.” You maidens that have the Spirit of God upon you, and you old men that dream—it is neither the Spirit of God nor the dreaming that will save you—but your calling on the sacred name. It is, “whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

Also, there were some upon whom the Spirit of God did *not* fall. They did not speak with tongues, nor prophesy the future, nor work miracles. But though they did none of these marvels, yet it stood true to them, too—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” What? Though no supernatural gift was bestowed, though they saw no vision and could not speak with tongues—they called upon the name of the Lord and they were saved! There is the same way of salvation for the little as



well as for the great, for the poorest and most obscure as well as for those that are strong in faith and lead the hosts of God to the battle.

But some were terribly afraid. I should think that a good many must have been sadly alarmed when there were in the earth blood and fire and pillars of smoke, the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood—but, afraid as they were—if they called upon the name of the Lord, they were delivered. Now, Mrs. Much-Afraid, what do you say to that? Mr. Ready-to-Halt! Did I hear your crutches sounding in the aisle just now, or was it an umbrella? Never mind. If you call upon the name of the Lord, you shall be saved. You that are so feeble in mind, so weak, so wounded that you hardly dare to trust—still it is written for *your* sakes also—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

“Ah,” says another, “but I am worse than that. I have no good *feelings*. I would give all that I have to own a broken heart. I wish I could even feel despair but I am hard as a stone.” I have been told that sorrowful story *many times* and it almost always happens that those who most mourn their want of feeling are those who feel most acutely. Their hearts are like hardened steel, so they say. But it is not true. And even if it were true, “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Do you think that the Lord wants you to give *yourself* a new heart first and *then* He will save you? My dear Soul, you *are saved* when you have a new heart and you do not need Him to save you then, since you are already saved.

“Oh, but I must get good feelings!” Must you? Where are you going for them? Are you to rake the dunghill of your depraved nature to find good feelings there? *Come without any good feeling*. Come just as you are. Come, you that are like a frozen iceberg, that have nothing about you whatever but that which chills and repels! Come and call upon the name of the Lord and you shall be saved. “Wonders of Grace to God belong.” It is not a small Gospel that He has sent us to preach to small sinners but ours is a great Gospel for great sinners. “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

“Ah, well!” says one, “I cannot think it is meant for *me*, for I am nobody.” Nobody, are you? I have a great love for nobodies. I am worried with somebodies and the worst somebody in the world is my own somebody. How I wish I could always turn my own somebody out and keep company with none but nobodies! Then I should make Jesus Everybody. Nobody, where are you? You are the very person that I am sent to look after. If there is nothing of you, there shall be all the more of Christ. If you are not only empty but cracked and broken, if you are done for, destroyed, ruined, utterly crushed and broken—to YOU is this word of salvation sent—“Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

I have set the gate wide open. If it were the wrong track, all the sheep would go through. But as it is the right road, I may set the gate open as long as I will but yet the sheep will shun it unless You, Great Shepherd, shall go around the field tonight and *lead* them in. Take up in Your own arms some sheep that You have purchased long ago with Your dear

heart's blood—take him upon Your gracious shoulders, rejoicing as You do it, and place him within the field where the good pasture grows.

**IV.** I want you to dwell for a minute upon THE BLESSING ITSELF. “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” I need not say much about it because I have already expounded it. It is a very good rule when a man makes you a promise to understand it in the narrowest sense. It is fair to him that you should do so. Let him interpret it liberally if he pleases. But he is actually bound to give you no more than the bare terms of his promise will imply.

Now, it is a rule which all God's people may well practice, always to understand God's promises in the largest possible sense. If the words will bear a bigger construction than at the first sight they naturally suggest to you, you may put the *larger* construction upon them. “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think.” God never draws a line in His promise, that He may go barely up to it. But it is with the great God as it was with His dear Son, who, though He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet spent the greater part of His time in Galilee, which was called, “Galilee of the Gentiles.”

He went to the very verge of Canaan to find out a Canaanite woman, that He might give her a blessing. You may put the biggest and most liberal sense, then, on such a text as this, for Peter did so. The New Testament is likely to give a broader sense to Old Testament words. And it does so most rightly—for God loves us to treat His Words with the breadth of faith. Come, then, if you are the subject of the judgments of God. If you believe that God's hand has visited you on account of sin, call upon Him and He will deliver you both from the judgment and from the guilt that brought the judgment—from the sin and from that which follows the sin. He will help you to escape. Try Him now, I beseech you.

And if your case should be different—if you are already a child of God and you are in trouble and that trouble eats into your spirit and causes you daily wear of spirit and tear of heart—call upon the Lord. He can take away from you the fret and the trouble, too. “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.” You may have to bear the trouble, but it shall be so transformed as to be rather a blessing than an evil—and you shall fall in love with your Cross since the nature of it has changed by God's Grace.

If sin is the great cause of your present trouble and that sin has brought you into bondage to evil habits. If you have been a drunkard and do not know how to learn sobriety. If you have been unchaste and have become entangled in vicious connections—call upon God and He can break you away from the sin and set you free from all its entanglements. He can cut you loose tonight with the great sword of His Grace and make you a free man. I tell you, that though you should be like a poor sheep between the jaws of a lion, ready to be devoured immediately by the monster, God can come and pluck you out from between the lion's jaws. The prey shall be taken from the mighty and the lawful captive shall be deliv-

ered. Only call upon the name of the Lord! Call upon the name of the Lord and you shall be delivered.

Yes, and I repeat what I said just now. If you have come under the power of disease, if you are near to death, if already death has written his name legibly upon your body and you are afraid of death and Hell—call upon the name of the Lord and you shall be delivered at this last moment. Even now, when the pit gapes wide for you and like Korah, Dathan and Abiram you are ready to go down alive into it—call upon the name of the Lord and you shall be delivered.

If I were telling you what I had made up, or hammered out of my own brain, I could not expect you to believe me. But as this Book is inspired, and as Joel spoke in the name of God, and as the Apostles spoke in the name of Jehovah, this is the very Truth of the God that made the heavens and the earth. “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered.”

**V.** In conclusion, I must remind you of one mournful thought. Let me warn you OF THE SADLY COMMON NEGLECT OF THIS BLESSING. You would think that everybody would call upon the name of the Lord. But read the text, “For in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said.” It shall be there as the Lord has said. Will they not have it then? Notice—“And in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.” It seems to shrivel me up altogether, that word “remnant.” What? Will they not come? Are they madmen? Will they not come? No, only a remnant. And even that remnant will not call upon the name of the Lord until first *God calls them by His Grace.*

This is almost as great a wonder as the love which so graciously invites them. Could even devils behave worse? If they were invited to call upon God and be saved, would they refuse? Unhappy business! The way is plain but “few there are that find it.” After all the preaching and all the invitations and the illimitable breadth of the promise—the only ones save are contained—“in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.” Is not our text a generous invitation? The setting open of the door, yes, the lifting of the door from off its hinges that it never might be shut? And yet “broad is the gate and wide is the way that leads to *destruction* and many there are that go in thereat.”

There they come, streams of them, hurrying impatiently, rushing down to death and Hell—yes, eagerly panting, hurrying, dashing against one another to descend to that awful gulf from which there is no return! No missionaries are wanted, no ministers are needed to plead with men to go to Hell. No books of persuasion are wanted to urge them to rush onward to eternal ruin. They *rush* to be lost—they are *eager* to be destroyed! As when the wild Bison of the prairie hasten onward in their madness, until they come to a great gulf and then rush down headlong—a waterfall of life leaping to death—so is it with the sons of men! They choose their own delusions and covet their own damnations and that without end. And so this is all that Sovereign Mercy rescues after all—a remnant—and that rem-

nant only because the arm of the Lord is revealed and a miraculous power exerted upon their wills.

This is the misery of it—that the guilty are not willing to be parted from their sins. They will not seek that which alone is their life, their joy, their salvation. They prefer Hell to Heaven, sin to holiness. Never spoke the Master a word which observation more clearly proves than when He said, “You will not come to Me, that you might have life.” You will attend your Chapels, but you will not call on the Lord. Jesus cries, “You search the Scriptures. For in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of Me. But you will not come to Me, that you might have life.” You will do anything rather than come to Jesus. You stop short of calling upon Him.

O my dear Hearers, do not let it be so with you! Many of you are saved. I beseech you intercede for those who are *not* saved. Oh, that the *unconverted* among you may be moved to *pray*. Before you leave this place, breathe an earnest prayer to God, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner. Lord, I need to be saved. Save me. I call upon Your name.” Join with me in prayer at this moment, I entreat you. Join with me while I put words into your mouths and speak them on your behalf—“Lord, I am guilty. I deserve Your wrath. Lord I cannot save myself. Lord, I would have a new heart and a right spirit, but what can I do? Lord, I can do nothing! Come and work in me to will and to do of Your good pleasure—

***‘You alone have power, I know,  
To save a wretch like me.  
To whom, or where should I go  
If I should turn from You?’***

“Lord, I now, by Your grace, from my very soul call upon Your name. Trembling, yet believing, I cast myself wholly upon You. O Lord I trust the blood and righteousness of Your dear Son. I trust Your mercy and Your love and Your power as they are revealed in Him. I dare to lay hold upon this Word of Yours that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Lord, save me tonight, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.”

***Portion Of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Joel 2:11-32.  
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN-BOOK”—282, 544, 275.***

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# PERFECT CLEANSING

## NO. 379

**A SERMON DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 7, 1861,  
DELIVERED BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON,  
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

***“For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed.”  
Joel 3:21.***

SOME think that this text has reference to the blood of the persecuted and martyred Israel. God had by terrible judgments avenged Himself of the different nations who had carried His people captive and according to some expositors, in this verse He threatens to make His vengeance complete. If there is any blood which still cries from the ground, if there are any martyrs whose murders have not been punished upon their persecutors, God vows that He will cleanse their blood which He had not as yet cleansed.

We shall however, this morning, take the text in a more simple and I think after a more spiritual sort. It is a great Truth which lies at the foundation of the Gospel system that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, cleans us from all sin. When a man is washed in the sacred laver which is filled with the blood of the atonement, he is not partially cleansed, but he is thoroughly cleansed. Not so much as the shadow of a spot remains upon the blood-washed. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

If that cleansing were partial it were unavailing. If it left but one sin still upon us in the sight of God it would have no power to save. It is only because when once applied by the Holy Spirit and received by faith it makes a total and complete cleansing from all past guilt that it is of any use whatever to the poor trembling conscience of the distressed sinner. Let us lay it down, then, in our own minds as a settled fact which neither our experience nor any of the teachings of many heretics shall make us let go—that he who by faith lays hold on Christ has his blood cleansed in that same hour and all his iniquities are put away.

But in what light, then, are we to understand the text? For it says, "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed." Well, this may refer perhaps to the uncalled among God's elect. They are not as yet cleansed. Their faith has not as yet descended into the sacred pool of blood. They still stand in their iniquities and in their transgressions, unconscious of their lost estate and now God gives an absolute promise to the rest of His chosen that they shall in due time be brought in. They shall repent. "A new heart also will I give them and a right spirit will I put within them and I will sprinkle pure water upon them and they shall be clean. From all their iniquities and from all their transgressions will I cleanse them."

It is not a matter of doubt as to whether the uncalled as yet shall or shall not be saved. If God has chosen them, He will call them, for whom He did predestinate, "them He also called and whom He called, them He also justified." This stands as a part of the Divine decree and as an absolute promise uttered by the lip of Divine sovereignty. "As for the rest of My

elect as yet unwashed, as yet unsaved from all their iniquities, I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed.”

But I think I shall only be speaking the mind of the Spirit, if I say this is not the first meaning of the text. I shall confine myself this morning to two thoughts which I think very naturally arise out of it. There are two senses in which Believers in Christ have blood which as yet has not been cleansed and to these two senses our text has especial reference.

First, there remains still on the minds of some of the regenerate *a certain consciousness of sin*—their conscience has not been thoroughly purged from dead works. And secondly, it is an undoubted fact, that in the nature even of the regenerate, there still remains the *black drop of the old depraved blood which needs to be cleansed away and which according to this promise shall soon be removed.*

**I.** We shall commence with the first sense—GUILT UPON THE CONSCIENCE.

The promise is given to Believers who have any guilt still remaining upon their troubled consciences, “I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed.” If our faith were what it should be, we should know that there is no condemnation against the man that believes in Christ. If our faith were always simple and had a clear eye to look alone to the Savior we should always view ourselves as being in the sight of God accepted in the Beloved. But our faith partakes of the frailty of our nature. It is often trembling. It sometimes staggers at the promise and then in such moods and in such hours there comes upon the conscience a sense of sin to a greater or less degree.

The soul is still justified, but doubts its justification. It is still accepted but that acceptance is not so clearly read by its eye as to be to it a matter of certainty and a cause of joy. Now, Brethren, I think I can soon prove that very many of us have some guilt remaining upon our conscience. Let me ask you in the first place what is it that makes us doubt our eternal salvation? We have believed in Christ—

***“Our hope is fixed on nothing less,  
than Jesus’ blood and righteousness,”***

and yet we doubt. We have come to the Cross—we look to it as being all our salvation and all our desire, yet we are troubled at heart—dark suspicions flit across our soul and we ask, “If it is so, why am I thus?”

Now what does this indicate but that there is some guilt still remaining on our conscience? If we knew ourselves to be what we really are, if we are Believers, guiltless, innocent, pure, clean in every way, do you think we should have any doubt of our salvation? If we could look upon ourselves in Christ as being without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing—and that is what we are if we believe in Him—do you think there would be a shadow of a shade of suspicion as to our eternal salvation? No. It is because the conscience knows some secret stain—because the black fingerprints of sin are not completely washed out—that we fear lest after all sin should involve punishment and punishment should cast us into Hell. Oh that this blood upon the conscience were cleansed away and we should never, never doubt again!

And then again, let me ask you, are there not times when you think very harshly of God? You think, perhaps, that He deals severely with you, that He will not deliver you out of this seventh trouble, that He will let you

sink at last and perish in the deep waters, where the floods shall overflow you. You come to think of Him, not as a tender Father, but as, to say the least of it, a severe Taskmaster. You come to think that one of these dark days He will shut His eye of love, withdraw His hand of power and suspend the sympathies of His heart. Do you suppose you would have any of these thoughts of God if you knew yourself to be perfectly cleansed by Him?

No, you would say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away and blessed be the name of the Lord." You would be willing to leave everything in His hands *BUT* the dark thought that there is sin in you and that God is punishing you for that sin—that in that chastisement there is mixed something penal—that in the smiting of the Father's rod there is something of the severity of the Judge's hand betrays the fact that your conscience is not thoroughly cleansed from sin. If it were, you would know that every affliction was but love, that every blow was but another form of a caress, that your troubles were not punishments, but chastisements. Not penal inflictions, but the loving deeds of a tender Father who longed to make you perfect like Himself.

Still further—why is it that so many of us dare not indulge in close access to our God? We pray, but it is often to a distant God, as to one who stands upon a mountain beyond our reach! How few of us come like a child to his Father and lay hold on God as one who is near to us by ties of Divine affinity. The most of Christians, I fear, are outer-court worshippers. They stand in the place of the priests, but they never come to stand where the high priest stood, within the veil. Luther was a man who used familiarities with God and if some of us had heard Luther praying we should have been shocked—"Oh," we should have said, "how dare he talk thus with God?" But Luther knew that he was completely justified, that there was no sin on him and therefore he did not tremble when he stood near to the Holy, the Perfect and the Just.

If I know that there is no sin remaining, but that all has been washed away, why need I fear? I may go the Throne of God and cry, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Not God, for He has justified, nor Christ, for He has died." Once let the soul have perfect peace through believing in its perfect purity in Christ and the nearness of our access will be perfectly wonderful. The boldness of our fellowship will make us look with wonder and even Christians will be astonished that we dare to indulge in such a holy familiarity with God and talk so plainly with our Father—with our *Friend*. There is guilt still upon the conscience of many professors and it is proved by the fact that they fear to have a near approach to God.

How frequently does this lurking evil betray itself in another form! There is a promise before you—an exceeding great and precious promise. Why do you not lay hold upon it? Why not receive it in all its length and breadth and call it your own? "Oh," you say, "but I am so unworthy. How shall I take such a promise? I, so unbelieving, so ungrateful, so unheavenly, how can I think that such a promise is made to me? It is too good, too great for such an one as I am." Do you not perceive that when you say, "unworthy," you are acting as though you were under the Covenant of Works, instead of being under the Covenant of Grace?

What has your worthiness to do with it, or your unworthiness either? God did not choose you for your worthiness—Christ did not purchase you from your goodness. The Holy Spirit did not call you because of your excellencies, nor will you be saved because of any inherent virtue in you. You betray at once, I say, the sad fact that there is some consciousness of evil still remaining upon you. Oh, if your heart knew itself to be wholly purged from dead works and freed from sin, you could walk at large.

If no more a criminal, but absolved, pardoned and acquitted, you have leave to roam throughout all the rooms of your Father's palace and to take hold upon all your Father's riches as His heir. Yes—joint-heir with Christ. You never need to stagger at the promise because of its greatness. You can account it all the more true because its greatness proves that it came from a great God who has great faithfulness and great power to fulfill. Precious, precious promise, "I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed." I will make your conscience yet so pure of sin that you can take the promise and believe it to be all your own.

Yet once more—there is another fact which demonstrates at once that the conscience of some believers is not totally purged from sin. Why is my Sister yonder afraid to die? Why does my Brother there tremble when he knows that he carries a disease about him which may on a sudden launch him into eternity? My Brother, if you will probe that fear of yours to the bottom you will find the old venom of some guilt upon the conscience still. Let us suppose that the promise of the text is fulfilled in you and that you know *today* that there is no sin against you in God's Book—that you feel *today* that you are perfectly freed from the consequences and the guilt of sin through the Substitution of Christ.

I defy you to be afraid of dying after that. The two things could not stand together. Sin is the sting of death and the strength of sin is the Law. But when sin is removed, what is it but a serpent without its fangs, a thing which a child may play with and not that a man must tremble at? What? When the dragon's teeth are broken and we know it, shall we be afraid? When death is no more the gate of gloom, but the portal of the skies and we know it, shall we tremble then? God forbid that I should allow the thought! No. Perfectly pardoned, with a conscience recognizing and rejoicing in that perfect pardon, all fears of death would be impossible.

There would even be a longing and a thirsting after death, not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life. We should have a *desire* to depart and be with Christ, which is far better! Do not think, my Brethren, after the five reasons which I have given, that any of you would be willing to say, "I am guiltless there." We have guilt, many of us, still upon our conscience, because we at times doubt our salvation. Often we have harsh thoughts of God. We sometimes neglect to approach near to the mercy seat. We often tremble to take the promise at the full. We are afraid of dying. All these prove that the blood is not entirely cleansed from off the conscience.

Having thus proved the *necessity* of the promise, let us sit still a moment, chew the cud of meditation, put the promise into our mouth and taste its preciousness. Great God! You will yet by Your grace take from my conscience and the conscience of all Your people every stain of sin. And what then, Beloved? What then? Let these thoughts charm you. When



once the last stain of sin is removed, then you will never have a doubt. You will triumph in full assurance. Who can doubt when sin is washed away? It shall not be partly day and partly night with you when this promise is fulfilled.

Your night shall be turned into day and the light of your day shall be as though there were seven suns. You shall sing with Toplady—

***“My name from the palm of His hands  
Eternity cannot erase;  
Impressed on His heart it remains  
In marks of indelible grace.”***

You shall know that Heaven might sooner pass away than your soul be imperiled. That for us the very Throne of God is a security of life. Because He lives you must live also and because He reigns you must reign with Him. I pray that promise over till I have it fulfilled to me, because I know that in that hour all my doubts shall be brought out to execution, shall be hung on Haman’s gallows and shall never trouble me any more.

And what next, Beloved, if this promise is fulfilled? Why, then, we shall praise the Lord with gladness. No more harsh thoughts of Him! Our life shall be one Psalm. We shall sing in our hearts and sing with our lips and each day shall be a note, when sin is pardoned—

***“How sweet the song there’s none can say,  
But those whose sins are washed away  
Who feel the same within.”***

I believe that the shouts of angels are not so glorious as will be the songs of the redeemed, because those songs shall warble from blood-washed lips. Oh, cannot you and I sing! We cannot get our praise out as we should. It is too big for expression when once we know beyond hesitation or suspicion that every sin is gone and can say, “Great God, I am clean. Through Jesus’ blood I am clean.”

But more than this—to put each point in opposition to those evil things which prove sin to be still on your conscience, let it be removed and what nearness to God will you have? Holy souls must come together, there is a mutual attraction between a holy God and a holy being. It were impossible for a perfect being to be far removed from Him who is perfection’s self and once let you and I know our perfect justification in Christ and far from God we could *not* live. Just as the needle seeks its pole, so should we seek our God. As the dove flies to the dovecot, so would our perfect spirit fly to the bosom of a perfect God. It were impossible for us to be far from God when purity has covered us and the righteousness of Jesus is plainly seen and then, my Brethren, enjoying this nearness of access to God we should never be afraid to take the promise.

Adam, I think, never trembled to pluck the pomegranate or to crush the grape. He was a perfect man and he knew that the bounties of God’s Providence in Eden’s garden were his own. And when you and I are perfectly justified and our conscience knows it we shall take God’s mercies with a thankful hand. We shall lay hold upon His promises with a firm grasp. The sin that made us tremble to lay hold being all withdrawn we shall take the promise with a grip that death and Hell can never loose and say, “It is mine, for I am cleansed in Christ.”

Then no fear of death will ever disturb us. Our cleansed spirit will not dread the Jordan, but long to pass through its streams. The fetter of sin broken, we shall never fear the loss of liberty. If the *great* enemy, Sin, has

been conquered, we shall not feel the *little* enemy, Death. If the Hell within us has been quenched, we shall know that there can be no Hell without for us. We shall long for evening to undress, that we may rest with God and having on the wedding garment we shall be ready to enter into the marriage supper with shouts and joy—with a heart full of thanksgiving! O Lord, fulfill unto us this Your promise whereon You have caused us to hope and from our conscience cleanse that blood-guiltiness which as yet has not been cleansed and so will we praise and magnify You forever and ever!

But secondly, I think the text has perhaps a yet more pointed bearing upon our *sanctification* than upon our justification. It is thrice blessed to live daily and continually under a system of grace which gives a perfect deliverance from the guilt of sin. But this can never be separated from the desire to know the dispensation in its deliverance from the *power* of sin. If any man hopes to be saved from punishment and yet to hold with sin as his friend, that man's hope is a delusion. The Lord Jesus came into the world to save His people *from* their sins, not *in* their sins. He who breaks the chain kills the tyrant master. When you and I are delivered from the taskmaster's lash, we must be delivered from the taskmaster's labor—but it is a fact that God's people though perfectly justified and clean—are none of them here on earth perfectly sanctified.

All dreams about perfect sanctification here are dreams, indeed. In fact, I find upon conversing with those Brethren who believe in perfection, that they only mean this—that men may come into such a state of grace that the spirit of God will keep them from the cross of sin and they shall finally persevere. I believe the *perfection* of the Wesleyan is nothing more than the *justification* of a Calvinist. He makes a mistake in the use of terms. If he were put to a school of a good theologian, he would speak more plainly what he meant and we should find that we did not differ.

In the sense many Wesleyans use the term "perfect," I do not hesitate to say that I know thousands of perfect men, completely justified men, whose lives outwardly are free from any sin which the world could detect and men whose private conversation is such, that if it were matched by any man, you would scarcely detect any flaw against which a worldling might exclaim. But my dear Friends, I think you and I, knowing a little about ourselves, are ready frankly to confess that there is much blood in us that is not yet cleansed.

The corruption of the flesh remains even in the regenerate. Let me in a sorrowful spirit show some of those signs which prove to us the indwelling of sin. Sometimes our old nature betrays us into great and sudden sin. Have you a hasty temper? Have you ever risen in the morning and prayed to have it subdued and you have gone on and everything has been as smooth as possible? But suddenly a squall has come and before you knew it you had lost your balance and had been carried away by the winds. I don't think I ever grieved one-millionth part as much from any hurt my feelings ever had for another man, as I have done when I have hurt another man's feelings. Another man may hurt me as much as he likes, I defy him to hurt me now, but when I have been betrayed into a hasty word in reply, I have often felt more sadness of spirit than I could tell. And yet each of us knows that with the very best intentions, resolving against

this evil nature of ours, there are seasons when suddenly it overwhelms us and takes us by storm.

Perhaps, however, your temptation is of another class, not with temper, but with some other frailty of your minds. Oh, have we not sometimes tossed on our beds sleepless because our eyes would not shut for they were bursting with tears? We have done that which our soul hated. We have said, "I would sooner have lost my right hand than have said what I have said, or have done what I have done. Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" If any of you can live without sin, I wish I knew your secret. If you can at all times maintain the same purity of heart, the same loveliness of disposition, the same charity of carriage, the same holiness of bearing, I would to God that I, too, might sit where you have sat to learn the lesson which you have learnt so well.

But I half suspect you have not seen yourself as you should have seen yourself, or else you would scarcely venture to boast of such proficiency in the Gospel school. But my brethren, when our old evil nature does not throw us into the ditch and muddied us from head to foot, yet how every day it stains us! That everyday sin. That sin which gets into the closet, that evil which creeps into our very bed, which has a chair for itself at all our tables. That evil which goes with us into the market, haunts us in the street, follows us into the family, sits at the fireside, or goes with us into the throng—that evil which penetrates the house of God, gets into the Church meeting, follows us even in prayer and in praise and tries to spoil all that we do.

Oh, I am sure if you have watched yourself with but half an eye, you must feel that in those daily acts which the ungodly call "trifles," but which you know to be solemn things, there are signs that there is blood in you which has not been cleansed. How often does this evil come upon us so as to disable us when we need the most spiritual strength! There is the angel and I would wrestle with him, but sin has cut my sinew and I cannot wrestle as I could. There is the Throne and I would sing, but sin has made my voice hoarse and my spirit dull. The strings of my harp are loose, so that I cannot send forth music as I would. There are sinners to be saved. My heart will not melt with compassion, my eyes will not flow with tears. There are many to be addressed in the ministry, but sin takes away our power to plead for God as we would. We can't be Baxters. We can't feel that soul-moving compassion for the redemption of sinners which we would feel.

Have not you, each of you, felt that if you did not hate sin for anything else, you must hate it because it would not let you serve God and serve His Church as you could desire? When you want to be Davids, in comes Satan. He steals your sling and your stone. When you would be like Jael, sin mislays the hammer and hides away the nail. When you would smite the Philistines with the ox-goad of Shamgar, there may be the ox-goad but you have not strength or courage to wield it. Sin! Sin! You accursed thing, you have desecrated the house of God, you have climbed the sacred heights of Zion. You have spit your venom upon the burnt offerings of David's self. Yes, you have gone up to Tabor's summit and when we have been rapt and transfigured, even then we have heard the moving of your wings and the dark shadow of your evil influence has crept over our spir-

its. Oh we have plenty of reasons in our best frames as well as in our worst to confess that there is blood in us that is not as yet cleansed.

More arguments you do not want, but if you wanted one more I might give it you in this. Why do we ever doubt our God? Some men make light of doubts as though they were little sins. To doubt God is the most damnable of crimes. There is no iniquity which has in it a greater blackness of rebellion against God than mistrustful thoughts of His goodness and His faithfulness. Unbelief stabs at every attribute of God. Pride does but smite His crown. Lust does but tread upon the pure whiteness of His garment. But unbelief would snatch from His hand His scepter—from His head His crown—no, it would shake the very foundation of the Throne itself.

Now why is it that we ever doubt God? We have no *cause* to doubt Him. He has never been ungenerous or unkind. The only answer we can give is that we have still an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. There is still the house of Saul within our coasts. There is still the old Adam, still the deadly principle which needs to be cut up root and branch and to be eradicated totally. And so may God cleanse in us the blood which He has not cleansed.

**II.** Having thus endeavored to prove that there is blood in us in the matter of sanctification which is not cleansed, I take the promise just as we find it and read it through again. “For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed. For the Lord dwells in Zion.” So then, one of these days, there will be no propensity to sin left in any one of God’s people. Then it is true, after all, that perfection is possible and is attainable, for it is *guaranteed* to us in that verse! And God will as surely give what He promises, as He has greatly given what He promised in the old time.

It is a great doctrine of the Christian religion which ought always to be kept prominent, that everyone who believes in Christ, by believing, receives a promise of being totally set free from the indwelling of sin in his nature. But how is this to be done? There is a great dispute about progressive sanctification. Some of us take one view of it and some another. I will endeavor to give you mine. And first the purging of true nature will not be done in the Antinomian way, by calling good evil and evil good. That theory, as I have heard it expounded by some, is something like this—let a child of God do what he will, what was sin in another man, is no sin in *him*. That is to say, in other terms, that darkness in a child of God is light—that bitter in a child of God is sweet. That injustice—what would be injustice in another man—is justice in him. What would make another man a rogue, still leaves him honest.

If any of you believe such villainous blasphemy as that, the sooner you drive it out of your mind the better. There is a dreadful woe against that man who removes his neighbor’s landmark—how much more against the man who, under pretense of Gospel teaching, would sap the foundations which divide morality from immorality and righteousness from vice. Sin, in a child of God, is sin—as damnable a sin as it would have been in the most accursed of the profane. The reason why it does not destroy you is not because it has ceased to be a deadly poison itself, but because of the grace of God which has given Christ to be the propitiation for our sins, which is a most blessed antidote.

Neither is the way in which the blood of Believers is cleansed, as some say, by the changing of their old nature. The old nature never did change

and never will. Old Adam, ever since he fell, was earthly, sensual, devilish. He will be the same as long as we live, depend on it. Brethren, the common experience of Christians proves that their *nature* does not get any better. You know how our aged friends pray at the prayer meeting. They generally ask that the young may be kept in the slippery paths of youth. I do not hesitate to say that the paths of youth, though slippery, are not more slippery than those of old age.

Look at Scriptural history! Who were the great sinners mentioned there in the Church of Christ? Not a solitary young man is there mentioned as having disgraced his profession. See David. While he was a young man, he stood. 'Twas in his declining years that he committed that great sin with Bathsheba. I do not read of Noah that he was ever drunken as a young man. It was when he was old and his children were all grown about him that he fell into that iniquity. Was Peter a lad? Was Judas a child? No. Bible history goes to show this, that if there is one period of human life more dangerous than another, it is when men think themselves to be out of danger—dreaming that their *nature* is improved.

Ask the venerable men to speak for themselves. It ill becomes the youth to bring an accusation against the hoary head. But let them be their own witnesses. They will tell you that the fires they have seen to tremble in ashes are still as full of power to devour as they were when they blazed up in the first flames of early youth. They will assure you—for I know and often hear their testimony, that they need as much to be kept by the aid of Divine grace at the age of seventy, as they did at seventeen—that at eighty, they will become, unless grace keeps them, as fit fuel for the flame as they might have done at eight-and-twenty. Oh, yes, my Brethren, ask the Church and they will tell you that the fiction of the old nature getting better is a fiction without a foot to stand upon. They will tell you that old Adam always is and always will be an enemy to the Cross of Christ, the friend of ill and the hater of all that is good.

And yet once again—the way in which God cleanses our blood is not by making the new *nature* any better. Believers are partakers of the Divine nature. That Divine nature as Divine cannot be improved. The new principle which God implants in regeneration is as good as it can be. It is a seed we are told. That seed which cannot sin because it is born of God. The old nature *cannot be good*. The new nature *cannot be bad*. The new nature can by no means sin, for it is a spark of the Divine purity. It can by no means fall, for it has in it immortality and life of perfection.

“But,” you say to me, “how then, how then is our blood to be purged?” You have perceived in yourself that daily these two principles come into collision. The old Adam wants his way, the new Adam will have his way. They fight, they struggle, they are contrary the one to the other. We are afflicted, we mourn and weep, “When we would do good, evil is present with us.” How to will we find, but how to perform we find not. The evil that we would not, that we do and the good that we would do, we often do not. So then we find a law in our members warring against the law of our members. This will go on to the last and on your dying bed it may be you will have as sore a conflict as you ever had while you were in health.

John Knox said his sharpest spiritual struggle was his last. The old nature said to him, “John Knox, you have never feared the face of man, you have worked a great work in Scotland, you have some merits of your own.”

And the new nature said, "No, John Knox, you must be saved as a sinner resting simply on the merits of Christ and it was as much as the new nature could do to tread out the last spark of the self-righteousness of the old Adam. But it did, by God's grace and blessed be God, it shall be done in each of us and in the last moment when we leave our body, we shall leave our sin behind. When we shall leave off this mortal coil, the dust that is in the garment shall be shaken off, too. When we are disembodied, we shall be disembodied of the body, of this death of sin.

When we stand in Heaven, we shall bear the image of the heavenly and cease to bear the image of the earthy. We shall be changed, we shall be made like unto the quickening Spirit and no more be merely as the living soul. We shall receive our second nature in all its fullness, while the first and fallen nature shall be shaken off and done with and put away as filthy rags—only fit for the destroying dunghill—and we shall be *clean*. "I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed."

Brethren, I was dreaming, dreaming of what would be the consequence if now our blood could be cleansed. We are assembled here as a mighty congregation. Oh, if the minister's blood were wholly cleansed! A perfect minister! What a pulpit! What a power! What a very incarnation of the love of Christ would there be! No fear of discord then. The shepherd's presence in the midst of his flock would surely prevent all divisions. No hard words would ever come from his lip. All would be kindness, sympathy and Christ-like affection. And what preaching! What exhortations to Christians! What solemn earnestness and what pleading with sinners! What tearful eyes! What a melting heart! What moving periods! What rousing thunders! What cheering syllables of consolation!

Oh God, I would Your promise were fulfilled to *me*! "I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed." And what a consequence if the deacons and elders had their blood cleansed, too! No mistakes then. We are fallible now because we are sinful men. What priests of the flock! What overseers of God's house! What examples to you all! What pillars of light! What flaming torches of devotion! How they would be like the horses of Pharaoh's chariot, glorious as they were strong and strong as they would be pure. Oh, would that the prayer were fulfilled in *them*, "I will cleanse their blood which is not cleansed."

And what a Church we should be! Perfect members, freed from sin! No denominations would break up into sections. There would be no denominations. Christ would be the one Head and there would be no party names. A perfect Believer! What a power would he be against the darkness and the iniquity of this vast city! A perfect Church! What joy! What peace! We only need this, we sometimes think, to make a millennium. But indeed, it would not make a millennium. It would make an Aceldama. For the world would be in arms to put to death the perfect ones as they did Christ. It is only Christ's coming that can make a millennium. And when He shall come with power as well as purity, with reigning sovereignty as well as with wooing love, then shall the Church have her Sabbath and it shall be said, Hallelujah! the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ!"

But as I was dreaming, I thought how different everything would be if our blood were wholly cleansed. How sweet would be the bread upon our tables! Is it scant and is there little of it? What blessed contentment would

there be to impart to it a manna-like flavor! Is our house ill-furnished, narrow and ill-ventilated? If grace were in our hearts to perfection would not that very hovel become a palace and the dungeon itself glitter with the gems of Paradise? How different would our trials be! How light! How light! How easily should we endure them! How different our joys—not flashes in the pan, meteors that are and are gone, but as suns shining both by day and night!

Oh, if we were perfect, what a different world this would look. We should not be standing on our dignity towards our Brethren, we should not be cut up because we were not enough respected. We should not be troubling ourselves because we were not made much of and fussed over. Perfect men would hate such as that and be ready to be the least among saints that they might so become the greatest of all. Oh, if we were perfect what forbearance we should have! What forbearance towards the imperfect ones. Hard words we could afford to smile at. Dark sentences—we should be deaf to them and the sharpest cuts of sarcasm would only just touch our armor to blunt theirs.

With the perfect, this would be a new world, indeed, and if perfect, how new would Heaven seem to be to us. There would be rents in the firmament through which we should see the Glory of God. There would be windows without curtains or blinds to shut out the vision of angels and of the King of kings. A perfect eye would see through clouds and mists and see God Himself and all the glories of the court. And how different would Hell itself seem to a perfect man. How awful and tremendous! What thoughts would he have of the sin which had dug the pit and of the iniquity which piled the fuel and of the justice which like a stream of fire had kindled it.

Let us but mount to perfection and we come to the highest degree of intellectual and spiritual attainment. We should not be what we are blind, deaf, dumb, halt, weak, dead—we should be full of all that life can mean. A quickened eye, a purified pulse would surely bring forth perfection in every other faculty—

***“O happy hour, O blest abode!  
I shall be near and like my God;  
And death and Hell no more annoy  
The solid pleasure of my joy.”***

Hasten this, oh God, hasten it in Your own time.

Well now—there is one of you who says, “Well, I shall never get there—perfection is too high for me. No, Sir, I can never think that I shall be perfectly free from sin.” You shall be though and that for these reasons. First, Christ purposes to do it. He loves His Church and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a *perfect* Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. That is His purpose and He’ll do it. But, next, the Spirit has engaged to do it. He has come into this world like purifying rain. He has come to take the flint away that would not be refined and put into your soul a new and heavenly mind.

Now what Jesus purposes and what the Spirit works can surely be accomplished. Beside that, Heaven requires it. “There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles.” You must be perfect, then, to enter there. More than this, God’s honor needs it. Unless He utterly destroys the works of the devil, His honor is not perfect. If He does not make you completely free from all sin of every kind, then Christ has not completed His

work and, "It is finished!" was but an empty brag. His honor requires it. Put your hand upon that promise and say, "His promise certifies it." I cannot see how. I can scarcely tell why. It seems impossible. My soul can scarcely get the thought into its mind. But, great God! With my finger this day upon that promise I do believe that You will cleanse my blood which You have not cleansed and I shall at length be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, accepted in the Beloved.

Now, Brethren, how shall I conclude except with a practical exhortation? What then? If it is promised to us that the old nature shall thus be removed and we shall be purged, what then? Why, then, let us struggle against our corruption poor soldiers feel that it is of no use, then they are only too glad to hear the trumpet sound a retreat. But when they are confident of victory, how they draw their swords, how they hasten to the struggle, how they weary not of the fight! Even now today my soul takes hold upon her sword. Sin, death and Hell I defy you, for I shall bear the palm as surely as I bear the sword. I shall wear the crown as certainly as I agonized unto death. Struggle with yourselves, strive daily to get the mastery of your passions. The victory is sure. Let no discouragement weaken you. "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," for He is able to give you the victory through Jesus Christ your Lord.

And what next? Why, today pray against your corruptions more than ever you have done. You have got a promise to plead. Take it, salt it with your tears. Lay it upon the altar—put your hands upon the horns of the altar and say—"Great God, I will not rise, I will not let You go until I know by Divine assurance that this promise shall be fulfilled to me." So shall you go forth to your daily struggle with temptation wearing a smile upon your face and smoothing those wrinkles on your brow. Sorrow does not become the man who has so rich a promise. Be glad! The joy of the Lord shall be your strength. You shall at last win the victory!

Sinner! He that believes in Christ may claim this text for himself. Do you Believe? Then this text is yours as well as mine and shall be fulfilled to everyone of us today and in the last day and in day without days in glory everlasting. Amen.

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