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## UNUSUAL OCCASIONS

*by Charles H. Spurgeon*

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C. H. SPURGEON'S SERMONS PREACHED ON

UNUSUAL OCCASIONS

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON

**BORN 1834, DIED 1892**

**SERMONS COMPILED FROM SPURGEON'S MAGAZINE,  
"THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL"**

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# INTRODUCTION

BY ERIC W. HAYDEN

It has been said that “Spurgeon was never topical but always textual.” In point of fact C. H. Spurgeon, the Prince of Preachers, frequently preached topical sermons, although in all cases he expounded a text of Scripture in the same sermon. A glance at the textual and subject index of The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit will prove that Spurgeon took the opportunity of using such occasions as a Coronation, a Trade Recession, a Mining Disaster, or the Outbreak of War, for a gospel address based upon Scriptural exposition.

In his introduction to *The Bible and the Newspaper*, Spurgeon informs us that he copied the practice of John Newton and spent three months reading the Bible and newspaper side by side “that I may see how my heavenly Father governs the world.” He discovered that in the world of nature and providence there were moral and spiritual parallels and so he used newspaper “scoops” of his time to base a spiritual message: upon.

During a ministry of thirty-one years at the Metropolitan Tabernacle (apart from absence through illness), C. H. Spurgeon must have preached something like three to four thousand sermons on Sunday mornings and evenings and at the Thursday night service. Before that he must have preached over nine hundred sermons on similar days of the week during his New Park Street ministry.

This does not, of course, take into account the outside engagements which he had in many parts of the British Isle. It is thus impossible to assess the correct amount of sermons he must have preached during his ministerial life.

Many of the New Park Street sermons were printed in *The New Park Street Pulpit*. and many of the Tabernacle sermons in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*. The latter ran into fifty-six volumes, from 1861 to 1917, for after his death in 1892. there were sufficient unpublished sermons, and sermon notes for the publishers to continue producing volumes of sermons each year. These fifty-six volumes have been reprinted (and are still being reprinted) sometimes in full, sometimes in expurgated form, on both sides

of the Atlantic and in several other countries throughout the world, even behind the “iron curtain.”

But what of the “outside engagement” sermons! The Tabernacle sermons were taken down by what was then called a stenographer. Many of the “outside” sermons were reported by local press representatives or students from Spurgeon’s college who were then ministering in the place where Spurgeon was preaching..

Many of these “outside engagement” sermons Spurgeon himself edited and published in his monthly magazine *The Sword and the Trowel*. Some were quite short prayer-meeting addresses, others were sermons delivered at the opening of new churches, or at the annual conference of his Pastors’ college. A great many, however, were given on far more striking and unusual occasions, as a glance at the Contents of this book will reveal. Sometimes these sermons were also included in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* volumes, and sometimes they were included in smaller publications such as *The Bible and the Newspaper*, but many of them were only printed in *The Sword and the Trowel* and read by the subscribers to that magazine.

Today, few possess either a full set of the sermons or the magazines. The present writer is happy to have a complete set of both, and the late Dr. Wilbur M. Smith of America once told him that he believed he was the only minister in the United States who possessed nearly a full set of sermons. *The Bible and the Newspaper* is rather a rare booklet, so many of these striking sermons and the unusual occasions to which they refer (some of them very pertinent to our present time) are unread by twentieth-century Christians.

The characteristic feature of *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* is that these printed sermons were all delivered to the vast congregations that crowded into the Tabernacle, between 5,000 and 6,000 people. What is so special about the sermons preached on striking occasions is that they were often preached to a small congregation: twenty people in the preacher’s sick room at Mentone, France, or twenty students in his study at “Westwood,” Beulah Hill, Norwood, London, or a hundred or so orphans at Spurgeon’s Stockwell Orphanage.

One of the neglected aspects of Spurgeon’s life and ministry is the fact that he often preached to small congregations, and was quite happy doing so.

Sir W. Robertson Nicoll in *Princes of the Church* takes pains to point out how many of the so-called “pulpit giants” of his day were happy (or happiest) when addressing small country congregations. Spurgeon was one of them and repeatedly said that if God had not placed him in London he would far rather be shepherd of a country flock.

The Revelation A. Cunningham-Burley (a descendant by marriage of the Spurgeon family) once wrote an article on “Spurgeon and the Empty Pew.” He pointed out that in *Messages to the Multitude* the preacher said that it was the queues at the Tabernacle that harassed him. He was never discouraged or downcast by empty pews. Converted in a Methodist chapel that was almost empty, Spurgeon never thought: that the convicting; and converting power of the Holy Spirit was confined to crowded congregations. He faced many empty pews in his initial days at New Park Street Chapel. His Thursday night meeting was never as crowded as the Sunday services at the Tabernacle, but this concerned only his deacons, never himself! Some of his best addresses were given to less than two thousand or, a Thursday and less than five hundred at the Monday evening prayer-meeting. He believed he was preaching to the “cream” when people came out on a Monday night to pray, and so he always gave of his best, and some of these striking sermons on unusual occasions were first given to the Tabernacle prayer-meeting before they were printed in *The Sword and the Trowel*. A crowd draws a crowd, and a crowded building is said to draw the best out of any preacher. It is not always so, and certainly was not so for C. H. Spurgeon.

In 1892, the year of Spurgeon’s death, The Spurgeon Memorial Sermon Society was formed. The late Spurgeon’s faithful secretary and “armor bearer.” Mr. J. W. Harrald, read a paper to an assembly of ministers, urging them to circulate as many of Spurgeon’s sermons as they could. A layman, Mr. William Taverner, of Brighton, made this his life’s work. Beginning with but a few sermons, he put them into wrappers and sent them out to a number of friends. Like the proverbial mustard, seed his work began to grow and the “Sermon Society” went on from strength to strength. Other friends had to be called in to help Mr. Taverner with the work. Mr. Taverner resigned from his daily work at the local Post Office and gave himself full-time to the work of circulating Spurgeon’s sermons. Within two years the sermons were being circulated in Africa, Australia, Canada, Ceylon and India! Distributors everywhere were reporting conversions as a result of the reading of the sermons.

It is the prayer of the present writer that as this selection of striking and unusual sermons is circulated, some, perhaps in similar unusual occasions (a court witness, one married to an unbeliever, a holiday-maker in a foreign land, and so on), might be spoken to by God the Holy Spirit and be brought to the feet of Spurgeon's Savior.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL,

NOVEMBER, 1869.

# A SERMON FROM A SICK PREACHER.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

MY brethren, I am quite out of order for addressing you tonight. I feel extremely unwell, excessively heavy and exceedingly depressed, and yet I could not deny myself the pleasure of trying to say a few words to you. I have taken a text upon which I think I could preach in my sleep, and I believe that, if I were dying and were graciously led into the old track, I could, with my last expiring breath pour out a heart-full of utterance upon the delightful verse which I have selected. It happens to be the passage from which I first essayed to speak in public when I was but a boy of fifteen years of age; and I am sure it contains the marrow of what I have always taught in the pulpit from that day until now. The words are in the second chapter of the first epistle of Peter, and the seventh verse; “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.”

We might find “ample room and verge enough” if we were to enlarge upon the preciousness of Christ; in his person as God and perfect man; his preciousness to his Father, his preciousness to the Holy Spirit, his preciousness to angels and glorified men. We might next speak of him in the preciousness of his work; showing his preciousness as the Mediator of the new covenant, and as the incarnate messenger of that covenant on earth; his preciousness as working out a perfect righteousness, and as rendering a complete expiation. We might dwell upon his preciousness in all his offices, whether as Prophet, Priest, or King, and in all his relationships as friend, brother, or bridegroom. Indeed, we have before us a subject as inexhaustible as the river of God, and as bright as the sapphire, throne. If we should endeavor to show how precious the Well beloved is in all respects, we should need eternity in which to complete the task.

*“Precious, Lord, beyond expression,  
Are thy beauties all divine;  
Glory, honor, praise, and blessing,  
Be henceforth for ever thine.”*

The wording of the text binds our thoughts to one point. “Unto you that believe he is precious,” it is not so much how precious he is, as how precious he is to you. If you be a believer, the text affirms that Jesus Christ will, without any adverb to limit the extent of the descriptive word, be precious to you.

We shall, first, talk awhile upon the truth that Jesus Christ is now precious to believers.

Notice attentively how personally precious Jesus is. There are two persons in the text: “Unto you that believe he is precious.” “You” and “he.” You — you are a real person, and you feel that you are such. To yourself you must ever be the most real of existences. You do not think of yourself as a person of whom you have read in history, or heard of in discourse, or seen from a window years ago. You have (to use an ugly word, since I do not know any substitute for it), you have realized yourself; you are quite clear about your own existence; now in the same way I pray you strive to realize the other Person. “Unto you that believe he is precious” Jesus just as really exists as you do, and you must not regard him as a personage who was here one thousand eight hundred and sixty-nine years; ago, or one of whom you have heard, and whom you like to think of as a poetical conception; but there is a real Christ now existing; in spirit existing here; in real flesh and blood now standing at the right hand of the Father; and between him and you, if you be a believer, there exists a bond of unity which, though invisible, is nevertheless most matter-of-fact and positive. You believe in him, he loves you; you love him in return, and he she is abroad in your heart a sense of his love. You twain are bound together fastly and firmly; there is neither myth, nor dream either in him or in your union to him. He is and you are, and he is in very deed most precious to you.

Notice, too, that while the, text gleams with this vividness of personality, to which the most of professors are blind, it is weighted with a most solid positiveness: “Unto you that believe he is precious.” It does not speak as though he might be or might not be; but “he is precious.” There are some things about myself as a Christian which are frequently matters of question. I may gravely question whether I am growing in grace; and under such a

doubt I may search my heart to see whether I love my Lord better, or whether I have more fully conquered my sins; but one thing I do not question, namely, that being a believer in him, Jesus Christ is unutterably precious to my soul. If thou doubttest thy faith, thou mayst doubt whether Christ is precious to thee, but if thy faith be, certain, the preciousness of Christ to thy heart is quite as certain. “He is precious.” If the new life be in thee, thou art as sure to love the Savior as fish love the stream, or the birds the air, or as brave men love liberty, or as all men love their lives. Tolerate no peradventures here; allow no debate upon this vital point of thy religion! Jesus must be precious to thee. Cleanse thine eye if any dust hath dimmed thy sight of Jesus’ preciousness, and be not satisfied till, in the language of the spouse, thou canst say, “He is the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely.”

Mark, further, the absoluteness of the text; “Unto you that believe he is precious.” It is not written how precious. The text does not attempt by any form of computation to measure the price which the regenerate soul sets upon her bosom’s Lord. There is no hint that he is moderately precious; it does not even say positively or comparatively precious. I infer therefore that I may if I choose insert the word “superlatively,” and certainly if I did so there would be no exaggeration. for more dear than light to the eyes, or life to the body, is Jesus to the sanctified beam Each saint can truthfully sing,

*“Yes, thou art precious to my soul,  
My transport and my trust:  
Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,  
And gold is sordid dust.”*

Since no sparkling gems or precious metals, regalia, or caskets of rare jewels can ever equal the value of Jesus, the comparison is vain. We therefore place him by himself alone, and say that he is absolutely precious to believers. Gold is precious; but the diamond is more so, and in comparison with the diamond the gold is of small account. The diamond is precious; but give a man a bag full of diamonds of the first water, and put him down in a desert, or let him be out on the wild waste of ocean, he would give all his diamonds for a draught of pure water to drink, or a crust of bread to eat; so that in certain cases even the excellent crystal wealth lose its value. In fact, mineral substances are merely arbitrary signs of value, they have but little, worth in themselves; gold in itself is less useful than iron, and a diamond of little more account than a piece of glass. They

have no absolutely intrinsic value which would remain the same under all contingencies. But Christ is absolutely precious; that is to say, nothing can ever match him, much less excel him; and he is precious under all circumstances. There he, yet can arrive a time when we shall be compelled to confess his want of value, of lower our estimate of him. He is infinitely precious. O my soul, dost thou esteem him so? My heart, art thou sure of this, that; unto thee he is precious beyond compare; precious positively, precious comparatively, though heaven itself were compared, precious superlatively, beyond all things that can be dreamed of; or imagined? is he to thee essential preciousness, the very standard of all value? Thus it should be, for the text means no less: "Unto you that believe he is precious."

The thought which I desire to bring out into fullest, relief is this, that Jesus Christ is today continually precious to his people. The moment a soul believes in Jesus, his sins are forgiven. Well, then, the precious blood that washes all sin away, is not that clone with? Oh, no! Unto you that believe, though yea have believed to the saving of your seal. he IS still precious; for your guilt will return upon your conscience, and you will yet sin, being still in the body, but; there' is a fountain still filled with blood, and thus unto you experimentally the cleansing atonement is as precious as when you first relied upon its expiating power. Nay, Jesus is more precious to you now than when first you were washed in his blood and were made white as snow; for you know your own needs more fully, have proved more often the adaptation of his saving grace, and have received a thousand more gifts at his blessed hands. I do fear me that some Christians imagine that after believing, all is done; but my Lord Jesus Christ is no old almanac, used up and of no further service. he is not; like the physic which I took months ago, which then healed me of my disease, so that now I can afford to put it on the shelf and laugh at it; oh, no! he is still my divine medicine. Still I want him, still I have him. If I believe in him, I feel I want him more than ever I did, and he is dearer to me than ever he was. If I needed him aforetime as a poor guilty sinner, I want him just as much as a poor needy saint, hanging, upon his daily bounty, deriving life perpetually from his life, peace from the virtue of his precious blood, and joy from. the outflowings of his love to me. Instead of Christ's losing value to the believer, the pith of the text is this — that you, believer, when you get Christ, and get what Christ bringeth to you, instead of esteeming him as though he were an empty vessel, out of which you had drained the last drop, you prize him

more highly than ever you did before. He is not a gold mine worked out and exhausted, a field reaped of its harvest, or a vineyard where the grape gleaning is done: he has still the dew of his youth, the fullness of his strength, the infinity of his wealth, the perfection of his power.

Now, beloved, just for a minute or two, let us think how Christ is today precious to you.

He is today precious to you because his blood even now this day is the only thing which keeps you from being a condemned sinner, exposed to the wrath of God. There has been enough sin upon your soul, my brother, my sister, this very day, to cast you into hell, if your Surety had not stood between you and God's justice. You have been into no sinful company today; you have been in your Sunday-school class, and I have been in the pulpit; but, ah! my pulpit sins would have damned me today, if it had not been for that precious blood, and thy Sunday-school sins had shut thee up in hell, if that dear Mediator had not stood between thee, and God. So you see it is not the first day in which you believe in which he is precious to you; but right on still, as long as you are a sinner, the Intercessor stands and pleads for you, evermore putting your sin away; being yesterday, today, and for ever, your Savior, your shield, and your defense, and therefore evermore supremely precious.

Remember, too, he is precious, because the only righteousness you have is, still, his perfect righteousness. That; which pleads with God. for you is not what you are, but what he is. You are accepted at this moment, but you are only accepted in the Beloved. You are not justified because you feel in a sweet frame of mind, or because your heart rejoices in, the name of God. Oh, no! your acceptance is all in your great Surety, and if it could be possible that he and the entire system of his grace could be withdrawn, and covenant engagements abrogated, you would be as unacceptable as even lost spirits are, and would be like them for ever driven from the face and favor of God. Is he not, then, as your accepted Substitute, at this hour most precious to you?

Moreover, beloved, Jesus Christ is precious to you at this moment, as much as ever he was, because from henceforth it is his example which you strive to imitate. So far as he is an example to his people, his character has always been most admirable in your esteem, and this day you delight to know that in his life God's law appears drawn cut in bring characters. You aspire to be like him now; you expect to be perfectly like him in the day of

his appearing. Now, because, he sinews you what you shall be, and because in him lies the power to make you what you shall be, is he not therefore daily precious to you? In proportion as you fight with sin, in proportion as you seek for holiness with inward longings and sublime pantings, in that proportion will Jesus Christ, the paragon of all perfection, be precious in your esteem. Beloved, you are to be crucified with him; your flesh, with its corruptions and lusts, must die upon his cross as lie died. Is lie not precious when you believe that it will be by virtue of his death that sin will die in you? You are to rise in him; nay, I trust you have already risen in him, in newness of life; I hope you are panting more and more after the resurrection life, that you may no longer regard the dead things of this world, but live for eternal things, as those whose life is hid with Christ in God. If so, I know you will prize a risen Savior, and your appreciation of him will increase as you drink deeper into the fellowship of the risen life. Forget not, beloved, that, our Redeemer has ascended and in that ascension every saint has; his share. I do not say that you all enjoy your share yet, but in proportion as you do so, you will reckon Christ to be precious; for he hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places; our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Lord Jesus, whose Second Advent is to be the perfection of our spiritual life, the unveiling of the hidden beauties and manifestations of the sons of God. Just in proportion as you enter into your royal heritage, and live in it, and believe in it, in this proportion Jesus Christ will be precious to you.

Beloved, let me tell you a secret. To many of you, there is as much in Christ undiscovered, as you have already enjoyed. Your faith has only yet grasped Christ as saving you from going down to the pit — Christ is precious to you so far; but if your faith could even now comprehend the fact that you are one with Christ, are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones, that you are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, ah, then, how doubly precious would Jesus be! As, surely as your faith grasps more, and becomes more capacious, and appropriating, Christ will grow in preciousness to you. I am persuaded that there is a meaning in these words which the whole of God's saints have not yet been able to discover, a deep mysterious preciousness of Jesus, only to be known by a close and intimate acquaintance with him such as falls to the lot of few. "Unto you that believe," just in proportion as you believe, the larger, the stronger, the deeper, the purer, the sublimer, the more full-grown your faith, the more

unto you Jesus Christ is precious. Ask, then, for more faith, that Jesus may be more precious to you, and God grant it to you, for his name's sake!

Thus much on that point. Now a few words on another. Because Jesus is precious to believers, he efficaciously operates upon them. The preciousness of Christ is, as it were, the leverage of Christ in lifting up his saints to holiness and righteousness.

Let me show you this. The man who trusts Christ values Christ; that which I value I hold fast; hence our valuing Christ helps us to abide steadfast in times of temptation. The world saith to a Christian, "Follow me, and I will enrich thee." "Nay," saith the Christian, "Thou canst not enrich me; I have Christ, and I am rich enough." "follow me," saith the world, "and I will bless thee; I will give thee the delights of the flesh." "Nay," saith the heart, "thou canst not bless me, for these things are accursed and would bring me sorrow and not pleasure; Jesus Christ is my pleasure, and to love him and to do his will is my joy." Do you not see, the greater your value of Christ, the greater your strength against temptation? Although the devil may tempt you with this and that, yet Jesus Christ being more precious than all things, you say, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou canst not tempt me while Christ is dear to my spirit." O may you have a very high 'value of Christ, that thus you may be kept firm in the day of temptation.

Notice further: this valuing of Christ helps the believer to make sacrifices. Sacrifice-making constitutes a large part of any high character. He who never makes a sacrifice in his religion, may shrewdly suspect that it is not worth more than his own practical valuation of it. When a man hath a very important document about him, on which depends his title to his estates, if a thief should try to take it from him, he will suffer the thief to tear away his garments, to rob him of anything he has except his treasure, that he takes care to hold fast as long as he can. Indian messengers when entrusted with jewels, have been known to swallow them to preserve them from robbers, and to allow themselves to be stripped naked of every rag they wore, but they would not lose the jewel with which their prince had entrusted them. So the Christian will say to the world, "Take away my fortune, take away my livelihood; take away my good name if thou wilt, O lying world, but despite all I will retain my Savior, for he is precious!" Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for Christ, and he never will or can give Christ up if Christ be precious to him. See, then, that believing

in Jesus makes him precious, and his being precious helps us to make sacrifices most cheerfully for his dear sake.

Moreover, brethren, this valuing of Christ makes us jealous against sin. What, say we, does Jesus Christ deign to live under my roof? Then, while he lives in my heart, I will give no roosting-place to any foul bird of sin that might begin hooting in his ear. No! ye enemies of Christ, begone, begone, begone! My Beloved shall have the best chamber of my spirit, undefiled by your filthy feet. We are afraid lest we should do anything to grieve the heavenly Lover of our souls; this makes us keep our garments white, and pick our steps through this miry world Hence, a right valuing of Christ promotes directly the highest degree of sanctification. he who loves the Redeemer best purifies himself most, even as his Lord is pure.

Beloved high valuing of Christ helps the Christian in the selection of his associates in life. If I hold my divine Lord to be precious, how can I have fellowship with those who do not esteem him? You will not find a man of refined habits and cultured spirits, happy amongst the lowest and most illiterate. Birds of a feather flock together. Workers and traders unite in companies according to their occupations. Lovers of Christ rejoice in lovers of Christ, and they delight to meet together; for they can talk to each other of things in which they are agreed. I would recommend you to choose the church of which you would be a member, and the pastor whom you would hear, by this one thing; by how much of Christ there is in that church, and how much of the savor of Christ there is in that ministry. Oh! it is ill of a child of God to be enchanted by mere rhetoric. As well might you choose a table to feast at merely on account of the knives and forks, or the polish of its mahogany. You require food for the soul, and there is nothing that will long feed a true heart but Jesus Christ, who is the meat and the drink of his people. Love to Christ soon makes a Christian discontented with mere oratory. He cannot be satisfied even with the best doctrine apart from Jesus. "They have taken away my Lord," saith he, "and I know not where they have laid him." I must hear about Jesus; and if that silver bell does not ring, then all the rest may Chime as they may, but my ear is at unrest until I hear that celestial sound. Thus a lofty estimate, of Christ will be seen, if I had time to track it, to operate through the entire history of a Christian.

Little need is there more fully to particularize, but we must not fail to remark that a sense of the Redeemer's preciousness makes the Christian

useful, for that which is much on the heart will soon creep up, to the tongue, and the testimony of the heart is a notable method for spreading the gospel. If thou lovest Christ much, thou wilt speak about him. Thy restrained speech will almost choke thee, thy soul will be hot within thee whilst thou art silent, till a last, like a fire in thy bones which cannot longer be concealed, it will break out, and thou wilt say to others, "My Beloved is the fairest and noblest of all beloveds; O that you. all knew him and loved him as I do! If you see him, his face is brighter than the sun in its strength; if you hear him, his voice is sweeter than the chorus of heaven; if you draw near to him, his garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia; and if you trust him, you will find him to be faithfulness and truth itself. Broken the words may be, the sentences may not flow with rhythmical harmony, but he that loves Christ must out with it, somehow or other. Thus telling out the things which he has made touching the King with a burning heart, others will hear the good news, and they will ask, "Who is this Precious One?" and they will, by God's good Spirit, be led to seek him and find him too. So the Christian valuing Christ will come to be useful to the souls of men; indeed, as I have said before, it will exercise an operating power on the entire Christian manhood, and render it holiness unto the Lord.

Christ being thus precious, his preciousness becomes the test of our Christianity.

I shalt not prolong this humble talk, but shall, in conclusion, put a question to you. Beloved brother or sister, you know very well that I would be the last person in the world to speak lightly of the value of sound doctrine. I wish we were all acquainted with the Scriptures far more, and that the doctrines of grace were more clear to our understandings, and more imprinted upon our hearts; but there are some people who love a certain set of doctrines so much, that if you diverge a hair's breadth they will denounce you as rotten at the core. They will not associate with any who do not say, "Shibboleth," and sound the "sh" very harshly, too. They will cut off and condemn all God's people who do not precisely agree with them. Now, mark you, it is not written, "Unto you that believe a code of doctrines will be precious." That is true, but it is not, written so in the text. The text is, "Unto you that believe Christ is precious." It is better to count Christ precious than it is to count orthodoxy precious. Oh, it is not loving a creed, but it is loving Jesus that proves you a Christian. You may become such a bigot that it may be only the laws of the land which keep you from burning those who differ from you, and yet you may have none of the

grace of God in your heart. I love Protestantism, but if there is anything in this world that I have a horror of, it is that political Protestantism which does nothing but sneer and snarl at its fellow citizens, but which is as ignorant as a cow about what Protestantism truly is. The great truths of Protestantism — not mere Protestant, ascendancy — and the great secret power of those truths, far more than the mere letter of them, is the thing to be prized. You may get it into your head that you are a member of the one only true church; you may wrap yourself about with any quantity of self-conceit, but that does not at all prove you to be a possessor of grace. It is love to Christ that is the root of the matter. I am very sorry, my dear brother, if you should hold unsound views on some points; but I love you with all my heart if Jesus is precious to you. I cannot give up believers' baptism; it is none of mine, and, therefore, I cannot give up my Master's word. I am sure that it is Scriptural. I cannot give up (he doctrine of election, it seems to me so plainly in the word; but over the head of all doctrines and ordinances, and over everything, my brother, I embrace thee in my heart if thou believest in Jesus, and if he be precious to thee, for that is the vital point. These are the matters of heart work that, mark a Christian — nothing else is so true a test. If you cannot say, "Jesus is precious to me," I do not care to what church you belong, or what creed you are ready to die for, you do not know the truth of God unless the person of Christ, is dear to you.

This may serve as a test for each one here. My brother, my sister, dost thou believe in him who is the Son of God, and yet was born of the Virgin here on earth? Dost thou rely alone on him who on the cross poured Out his heart's blood to redeem sinners? Dost thou depend on him who now standeth with his priestly garments on before the throne of the infinite majesty, pleading for the unjust, that they may live through him? If thou dost, then answer this question: Dost thou love Jesus now? Dost thou love him with thy heart and soul? Wouldst thou serve him? Dost thou serve him? Wilt thou serve him? Wilt; thou subscribe thy hand to be his servant from this day forth? Dost thou declare now, if not with lip, yet honestly with thy soul, "He is precious to me, and I would give up all else sooner than give up him"? Then it is well with thee! Be thou happy and rejoice. Come thou to his table and feast with him at the banquet of love. If not, thou has; not built on the rock. If thou art; not loving Christ, I pray thee examine thyself, and see where thou art, for there is but a step between thee and hell. Repent thee! May God convert, thee, and give thee now to

put thy confidence in Jesus, and now to be saved, that he may be glorified in thee, for hitherto he has had no glory from thee. Unto you that do not believe, Christ is not precious, and you will go your way and despise him. O that you were made wise by the Holy. Ghost, and taught to consider things aright, and he would be precious indeed to you! He is the only way for your escape from the wrath to come! He is the only hope for you of ever entering the gates of heaven. He must be your only shelter when the world will be on a blaze, as soon it shall; when the stars shall, fall like withered leaves from the trees; when all creation shall rock and reel, and his voice shall resound in earth, and heaven, and hell, "Awake, ye dead, and come to judgement!" The only hope of a Savior in that last tremendous day must be found in Jesus. O seek him now while he may be found, call upon him while he is near! Turn not your heel away from him now, lest you turn once for all to perdition. Come to him now; believe in him now; and he shall have the glory. Amen.

# A VISIT TO CHRIST'S HOSPITAL.

**BEING A SHORT SERMON BY C. H. SPURGEON.**

“Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD! in their trouble, and he sayeth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to, the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.” — Psalm 107:17-22.

It is a very profitable thing to visit an hospital. The sight of others' sickness tends to make us grateful for our own health, and it is a great thing to be kept in a thankful frame of mind, for ingratitude is a spiritual disease, injurious to every power of the soul. An hospital inspection will also teach us compassion, and that is of great service. Anything that softens the heart is valuable. Above all things, in these days, we should strive against the petrifying influences which surround us. It is not easy for a man, who has constantly enjoyed good health and prosperity, to sympathize with the poor and the suffering. Even our great High Priest, who is full of compassion, learned it by carrying our sorrows in his own person. To see the sufferings of the afflicted, in many cases, would be enough to move a stone, and if we go to the hospital and come back with a tenderer heart, we shall have found it a sanatorium to ourselves. I purpose, at this time, to take you to an hospital. It shall not be one of those noble institutions so pleasingly plentiful around the Tabernacle; but we will take you to Christ's Hospital, or, as the French would call it, the Hotel de Dieu, and we shall conduct you through the wards for a few minutes, trusting that while you view them, if you are yourself healed, you may feel gratitude that you have been delivered from spiritual sicknesses, and an intense compassion for those who still pine and languish. May we become like our Savior, who wept over Jerusalem with eyes which were no strangers to compassion's floods: may we view the most guilty and impenitent with yearning hearts, and

grieve with mingled hope and anxiety over those who are under the sound of the gospel, and so are more especially patients in the Hospital of God.

We will go at once with the psalmist to the wards of spiritual sickness.

And, firsts, we have set out before us THE NAMES AND CHARACTERS OF THE PATIENTS. You see, in this hospital, written up over the head of every couch the name of the patient and his disease, and you are amazed to find that all the inmates belong to one family, and, singularly enough, are all called by one name, and that name is very far from being a reputable one. It is a title that nobody covets and that many persons would be very indignant to have applied to them — “Fool.” All who are sick in God’s hospital are fools, without exception, for this reason, that all sinners are fools. Often, in scripture, when David means the wicked, he says, “the foolish;” and, in this he makes no mistake, for sin is folly. Sin is foolish, clearly, because it is a setting-up of our weakness in opposition to omnipotence. Every wise man, if he must fight, will choose a combatant against whom he may have a chance of success, but he who wars with the Most High commits as gross a folly as when the moth contends with the flame, or the dry grass of the prairie challenges the fire. There is no hope for thee, O sinful mart, of becoming a victor in the struggle. How unwise thou art to take up the weapons of rebellion! And the folly is aggravated, because the person who is opposed is one so infinitely good that opposition to him is violence to everything that is just, beneficial, and commendable. God is love: shall I resist the infinitely loving? He scatters blessings: wherefore should I be his foe! If his commandments were grievous, if his ways were ways of misery and his paths were paths of wee, I might have some pretense of an excuse for resisting his will. But O my God, so good, so kind, so boundless in grace, ‘tis folly, as well as wickedness, to be thine enemy. Besides this, the laws of God are so supremely beneficial to ourselves, that; we are our own enemies when we rebel. God’s laws are danger signals is sometimes on the ice those who care for human life put up “Danger” here and there, and leave all that is safe for all who choose to traverse it, so God has left us free to enjoy everything that is safe for us, and has only forbidden us that which is to our own hurt. If there be a law which forbids me to put my hand into the fire, it is a pity I should need such a law, but a thousand pities more if I think that law a hardship. The commands of God do but forbid us to injure ourselves. To keep them is to keep ourselves in holy happiness; to break them is to bring evil of all kinds upon ourselves in soul and body. Why should I violate a law, which if I were perfect I should myself have

made, or myself have kept finding it in force. Why need I rebel against that which is never exacting, never oppressive, but always conducive to my own highest welfare, The sinner is a fool, because he is told in God's word. that the path of evil will lead to destruction, and yet he pursues it with the secret hope that in hits ease the damage will not be very great, he has been warned that sin is like a cup frothing with a foam of sweetness, but concealing death and hell in its dregs; yet each sinner, as he takes the cup, fascinated by the first drop, believes, that to him, the poisonous draught will not be fatal. How many have fondly hoped that God would lie unto men, and would not fulfill his threatenings! Yet, be assured, every sin shall have its recompense of reward; God is just and will by no means spare the guilty. Even in this life many are feeling in their bones the consequences of their youthful lusts; they will carry to their graves the scars of their transgressions. In hell, alas, there are millions who for ever prove that sin is an awful and an undying evil, an infinite curse which hath destroyed them for ever and ever. The sinner is; a fool, because, while he doubts the truthfulness of God, as to the punishment of sin, he has the conceit to imagine that transgression will even yield him pleasure. God saith it shall be bitterness: the sinner denies the bitterness, and affirms that it shall be sweetness. O fool to seek pleasure in sin! Go rake the charnel to find an immortal soul; go walk into the secret springs of the sea to find the source of flame. It is not there. Thou canst never find bliss; in rebellion. Hundreds of thousands before thee have gone upon this search and have all been disappointed; he is indeed a fool who must needs rush headlong in this useless chase, and perish as the result. The sinner is a fool — a great fool — to remain as he is in danger of the wrath of God. To abide at ease in imminent peril and scorn the way of escape, to love the world and loathe the Savior, to set the present fleeting life above the eternal future, to choose the sand of the desert and forego the jewels of heaven; all this is folly, in the highest; conceivable degree.

Though sinners are fools, yet there are fools of all sorts. Some are learned fools. Unconverted men, whatever they know, are only educated fools. Between the ignorant man who cannot read a letter and the learned man who is apt in all knowledge there is small difference, if they are both ignorant of Christ; indeed, the scholar's folly is in this case the greater of the two. The learned fool generally proves himself the worst, of fools, for he invents theories which would be ridiculed if they could be understood, and he brings forth speculations which, if they were judged by common

sense, and men were not turned into idiotic worshippers of imaginary authority, would be scouted from the universe with a hiss of derision. There are fools in colleges and fools in cottages.

There are also reckless fools and reckoning fools. Some sin with both hands greedily; "A short life and a merry one" is their motto; while the so-called "prudent" fools live more slowly, but still live not for God. These last, with hungry greed for wealth, will often hoard up gold as if it were true treasure, and as if anything worth the retaining were to be found beneath the moon. Your "prudent," "respectable" sinner will find himself just as much lost as your reckless prodigal. They must all alike seek and find the Savior, or be guilty of gross folly. So, alas! there are old fools as well as young ones. There are those who after an experience of sin burn their fingers at it still. The burnt child dreads the fire, but the burnt sinner lovingly plays with his sin again. Hair ought to be a crown of glory, but too often they are fool's caps. There are young sinners who waste the prime of life when the dew is on their spirit, and neglect to give their strength to God, and so miss the early joy of religion, which is the sweetest, and Rakes all the rest of life the sweeter: these are fools. But what is he who hath one foot hanging over the mouth of hell, and yet continues without; God and without Christ, a trifler with eternity?

I have spoken thus upon the name of those who enter God's hospital; permit me to add that all who go there and are cured agree that this name is correct. Saved. souls are made to feel that they are naturally fools: and, indeed, it is one stage in the cure when men are able to spell their own name, and when they are willing to write it in capital letters and say, "That is mine! If there is no other man in this world who is a fool, I am. I have played the fool before the living God." This confession is true, for what madness it is to play the fool before the Eternal One, with your own soul as the subject of the foolery? When men make sport they generally do it with trifling things. A man who plays the fool and puts on a cap and bells, is wise in comparison with him who sports with his God, his soul, heaven, and eternity. This is folly beyond all folly. Yet the sinner, when he is taken into God's hospital, will be made to feel that he has been such a fool, and that his folly is folly with an emphasis. He will confess that Christ must be made unto him wisdom, for he himself by nature was born a fool, has lived a fool, and will die a fool, unless the infinite mercy of God shall interpose.

Now, for a minute, let us notice THE CAUSE OF THEIR PAINS AND AFFLICTIONS. “Fools because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.” The physician usually tries to find out the root and cause of the dispense he has to deal with. Now, those souls that are brought into grief for sin, those who are smarting through the providential dealings of God, through the strikings of conscience, or the smitings of the Holy Spirit, are here taught that the source of their sorrow is their sin. These sins are mentioned in the text in the plural. “Fools became of their transgression, and because of their iniquities.” How many have our sins been Who shall count them? Let him tell the hairs of his head first. Sins are various, and are therefore called “transgressions and iniquities.” We do not all sin alike, nor does any one man sin alike at all times. We commit sins of word, thought, deed, against God, against men, against our bodies, against our souls, against the gospel against the law, against the week-day duties, against the Sabbath privileges — sins of all sorts, and these all lie at the root of our sorrows. Our sins also are aggravated; not content with transgression, we have added iniquities to it. No one is more greedy than a sinner, but he is greedy after his own destruction. He is never content with revolting: he must rebel yet more and more. As when a stone is rolled downhill its pace is accelerated the further it goes, so with the sinner, he goes from bad to worse.

Perhaps I speak to some who have lately come into God’s hospital. I will suppose a case. You are poor, very poor, but your poverty is the fruit of your profligate habits. Poverty is often directly traceable to drunkenness, laziness, or dishonesty. All poverty does not come from that. Blessed be God there are thousands of the poor who are the excellent of the earth, and a great many of them are serving God right nobly; but I am now speaking of certain cases, and probably you know of such yourselves, where, because of their transgression and iniquities, men are brought to want. There will come to me sometimes a person who was in good circumstances a few years ago, who is now without anything but the clothes he tries to stand upright in, and his wretchedness is entirely owing to his playing the prodigal., he is one of those whom I trust God may yet take into his hospital. At times the disease breaks out in another sort of misery. Some sins bring into the flesh itself pains which are anticipatory of hell; yet, even these persons may be taken into the hospital of God, though they are afflicted, to their shame, through gross transgression. Oh, how many there are in this great City of London of men and women who dare not tell their

condition, but whose story is a terrible one indeed, as God reads it. Oh that he may have pity upon them., and take them into his lazar house, and heal theta yet through his abundant grace!

In more numerous cases the misery brought by sin is mental. Many are brought by sin very low, even to despair. Conscience pricks them; fears of death and hell haunt them. I do remember well when I was in this way myself; when I, poor fool., because of my transgression and my iniquities was sorely bowed in spirit. By day I thought of the punishment of my sin; by night I dreamed of it. I woke in the morning with a burden on my heart — a burden which I could neither carry nor shake off, and sin was at the bottom of my sorrow. My sin, my sin, my sin, this was my constant plague. I was in my youth and in the hey-day of my spirit; I had all earthly comforts, and I had friends to cheer me, but they were all as nothing. I would seek solitary places to search the Scriptures, and to read such books as “Baxter’s Call to the Unconverted” and “Alleyne’s Alarm,” feeling my soul ploughed more and more, as though the law, with its ten great black horses was dragging the plough up and down my soul, breaking, crushing, furrowing my heart, and all for sin. Let me tell you, though we read of the cruelties of the Inquisition, and the sufferings which the martyrs have borne from cruel men, no racks, nor firepans, nor other instruments of torture cart make a man so wretched as his own conscience when he is stretched upon its rack. Here, then, we see both the fools and the cause of their disease.

Now, let us notice THE PROGRESS OF THE DISEASE. It is said that “their soul abhorreth all manner of meat,” like persons who have lost their appetite, and can eat nothing; “and they draw near unto the gates of death,” they are given over and nearly dead.

These words may reach some whose disease of sin has developed itself in fearful sorrow, so that they are now unable to find comfort in any biting. You used to enjoy the theater; you went lately, but you were wretched there. You used to be a wit in society, and set the table on a roar with your jokes; you cannot joke now. They say you are melancholy, but you know what they do not know, for a secret arrow rankles in your bosom. You go to a place of worship, but you find no comfort even there. The manner of meat that is served to God’s saints is not suitable to you.. You cry, “Alas, I am not worthy of it.” Whenever you hear a thundering sermon against the ungodly, you feel, “Ah, that is me!” but, when it comes to “Comfort ye,

comfort ye my people,” you conclude, “Ah, that is not for me.” Even if it be an invitation to the sinner, you say, “But I do not feel myself a sinner. I am not such an one as may come to Christ. Surely I am a castaway.” Your soul abhorreth all manner of meat, even that out of God’s kitchen. Not only are you dissatisfied with the world’s dainties, but the marrow and fatness of Christ himself you cannot relish. Many of us have been in this way before you. The text adds, “They draw nigh unto the gates of death.” The soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and feels that it cannot bear up much longer. I remember using those words of Job once in the bitterness of my spirit, “My soul chooseth strangling rather than life;” for, oh the wretchedness of a sin-burdened soul is intolerable. All do not suffer like strong convictions, but in some it bows the strong man almost to the grave. Perhaps, my friend, you see no hope whatever; you are ready to say, “There cannot be hope for me. I have made a covenant with death and a league with hell; I am past hope. There were, years ago, opportunities for me, and I was near unto the kingdom: but, like the man who put his hand to the plough and looked back, I have proved myself unworthy.” Troubled heart, I am sent with a message for you: “Thus saith the Lord, your covenant with death is broken and your league with hell is disannulled. The prey shall be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive shall be delivered.” You may abhor the very meat that would restore you to strength, but he who understands the human heart knows how to give you better tastes and cure these evil whims; he knows how to bring you up from the gates of death to the gates of heaven. Thus we see how terribly the mischief progresses.

But now the disease takes a turn. Our fourth point IS THE INTERPOSITION OF THE PHYSICIAN. “Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he sayeth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” The Good Physician is the true healer. Observe, when the physician comes in — when “they cry unto the Lord in their trouble.” When they cry, the physician has come. I will not say that he has come because they cry; that would be true, but there is deeper truth still — they cried because he came. For, whenever a soul truly cries unto God, God has already blessed it by enabling it to cry. Thou wouldst never have begun to pray, if the Lord had not taught thee. God is visiting a soul, and healing it; when it has enough faith in God to cast itself, with a cry, upon his mercy. I cannot hope that there is a work of grace in thee yet, till I know thou prayest. Ananias would not have believed

Paul converted, had not it been said, "Behold he prayeth!" Note the kind of prayer here: it was not taken out of a book, and it was not a fine prayer in language, whether extempore or pre-composed: it was a cry. You do not need to show your children how to cry: it is the first thing a new-born child does. It wants no schoolmaster to teach it that art. Our School Boards have a great deal to teach the children of London, but they need never have a department for instruction in crying. A spiritual cry is the gall of the new-born nature expressing conscious need. "How shall I pray?" says one. Pour thy heart out, brother. Turn the vessel upside down, and let it run out to the last dreg, as best it can. "But I cannot pray," says one. Tell the Lord you cannot pray, and ask him to help you to pray, and you have prayed already. "Oh, but I don't feel as I should!" Then confess to the Lord your sinful insensibility, and ask him to make your heart; tender, and you are already in a measure softened. Those who say, "I don't feel as I should," are very often those who feel most. Whether it be so or no, cry. If thou art a sin-sick soul, thou canst do nothing towards thy own healing, but this — thou canst cry. He who hears thy cries will know what they mean. When the surgeon goes to the battle-field after a conflict, he is guided to his compassionate work by the groans of the wounded. When he hears a soldier's cry, he does not inquire, "Was that a Frenchman or a German, and what does he mean?" A cry is good French, and excellent German too; it is part of the universal tongue. The surge, on understands it, and looks for the sick man. And, whatever language, O sinner, thou usest, uncouth or refined, if it be the language of thy heart, God understands thee without an interpreter.

Note well, that as we have seen when the physician interposed, we shall see next what he did. He saved them out, of their distresses, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh, the infinite mercy of God! He reveals to the heart pardon for all sin; and, by his Spirit's power, removes all our weaknesses. I tell thee, soul, though thou be at death's door at this moment, God can even now gloriously deliver thee. It would be a wonder if your poor burdened spirit should within this hour leap for joy, and yet, if the Lord visit thee, thou wilt do so. I fall back upon my own recollection: my escape from despondency was instantaneous. I did but believe Jesus Christ's word, and rest upon his sacrifice, and the night of my heart was over: the darkness had passed, and the true light had shone. In some parts of the world there are not long twilights before, the break of day, but the sun leaps up in a moment: the darkness flies, and the light reigns; so is it

with many of the Lord's redeemed, as in a moment their ashes are exchanged for beauty, and their spirit of heaviness for the garments of praise. Faith is the great transformer. Wilt thou east thyself now, whether thou live or die, upon the precious blood and merits of the Savior Jesus Christ? Wilt` thou come and rest thy soul on. the Son of God? If thou dost so, thou art saved: thy sins Which are many ale now forgiven thee. As of old, the Egyptians were drowned in a moment in the Red Sea — the depths had covered them, there was not, one of them left,; so, the moment thou believest, thou hast lifted a mightier rod than that of Moses, and the sea of the atoning blood, in the fullness of its strength, has gone over the heads of all thine enemies: thy sins are drowned in Jesus' blood. Oh, what joy is this, when, in answer to a cry, God delivers us from our present distresses and our future destructions!

But how is this effected? The psalmist saith, "He sent his word and healed them." "His word." How God ennobles language when he uses it! That word "word" is uplifted in Scripture into the foremost place, and put on a level with the Godhead. "THE WORD." It, indicates a God-like personage, for, in the beginning was the Word; nay, it denotes God himself, tot, the Word was, God. Our hope is in the Word...the incarnate Logos, the eternal Word. In some aspects our salvation comes to us entirely through the sending of that Word to be made flesh, and to dwell among us. He is our saving health, by his stripes we are healed. But here the expression is best understood of the gospel, which is the word of God. Often the reading of the Scriptures proves the means of healing troubled souls; or, else, that same word is made effectual when spoken from a loving heart with a living lip. What might there is in the plain preaching of the gospel! No power in all the world can match it;. They tell us, now-a-days, that the nation will go over to Rome, and the gospel candle will be blown out. I am not a believer in. these alarming prophecies; I neither believe in the Battle of Dorking, nor in the victory of Plus the Ninth. Leave as our Bibles, our pulpits, and our God, and we shall win the victory yet. Oh, if all ministers preached the gospel plainly, without aiming at rhetoric and high flights of oratory, what great triumphs would follow? How sharp would the gospel sword be if men would but pull it out of those fine ornamental, but useless, scabbards! When the Lord enables his servants to put plain gospel truth into language that will strike and stick, be understood and retained, it heals sick souls, that else might have lain fainting long! Still the word of God in the Bible and the word of God preached cannot heal the soul unless God send it in

the most emphatic sense. "He sent his Word." When the eternal Spirit, [Drings home the word with power, what a word it is! Then the miracles of grace wrought; within us are such as to astonish. friends and confound foes. May the Lord, even now, send his word to each sinner, and it will be his salvation. "Hear, and your soul shall live." Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, and faith brings with it all that the soul requires. When we have faith, we are linked with Christ; and so our salvation is ensured.

That brings us to the last point — THE CONSEQUENT CONDUCT OF THOSE WHO WERE HEALED. First, they praised God for his goodness. What rare praise a soul offers when it is brought out of prison! The sweetest music ever heard on earth is found in those new songs which, celebrate our late deliverance from the horrible pit and the miry clay. Did you ever keep a linnet in a cage and then. bethink yourself that it was hard to rob it of its liberty? Did you take it out into the garden and open the cage door? Oh! but if you could have heard it sing when it had fairly escaped the cage where it had been so long, you would have heard the best linnet music in all the wood. When a poor soul breaks forth from the dungeon of despair, set free by God, what songs it pours forth! God loves to hear such music. Note that word of his, "I remember thee, the love of thine espousal, when thou wentest after me into the wilderness." God loves the warm-hearted praises of newly emancipated souls; and he will get some out of you, dear friend, if you are set free at this hour.

Notice that these healed ones praised God especially for his goodness. It was great goodness that such as they were should be saved. So near death's door and yet sawed! They wondered at his mercy and sang of his wonderful works to the children of men." It is wonderful that; such as we were should be redeemed from our iniquities; but, our Redeemer's name is called Wonderful, and he delights in showing forth the riches of his grace.

Observe that, in their praises, they ascribe all to God: they praise "him for his wonderful work." Salvation is God's work, from beginning to end. Their song is moreover comprehensive, and they adore the Lord for his love to others as well as to themselves; they praise him "for his wonderful works to the children of men."

Forget not that they added to this praise sacrifice: "Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving." What shall be the sacrifices of a sinner delivered from going down into the pit? Shall he bring a bullock that hath

horns and hoofs? Nay, let him bring his heart; let him offer himself, his time, his talents, his body, his soul, his substance. Let him exclaim, "Let my Lord take all, seeing he hath saved my soul." Will you not lay yourselves out for him who laid himself out for you? If he has bought you with a price, confess that you are altogether his. Of your substance give to his cause as he prospers you; prove that you are really his by your generosity towards his church and his poor.

In addition to sacrifice, the healed ones began to offer songs, for it was to be a "sacrifice of thanksgiving." May those of you who are pardoned stagger more than is customary now-a-days. May we, each one of us, who have been delivered from going down to the pit, enter into the choir of God's praising ones, vocally singing as often as we can, and in our hearts always chanting his praise.

Once more, the grateful ones were to add to their gifts and psalms a declaration of joy at what God had done for them. "Let them declare his works with rejoicing." Ye who are pardoned, should tell the church of the Lord's mercy to you. Let his people know that God is discovering his hidden ones. Come and tell the minister. Nothing gladdens him so much as to know that souls are brought to Jesus by his means. This is our reward. Ye are our crown of rejoicing, ye saved ones. I can truly say, I never have such joy as when I receive letters from persons, or hear from them personally the good news, "I heard you on such-and-such a night; and found peace;" or, "I read your sermon, and God blessed it to my soul." There is not a true minister of Christ but would willingly lay himself down to die, if he could thereby see multitudes saved from eternal wrath. We live for this. If we miss this, our life is a failure. What is the use of a minister unless he brings souls to God? For this we would yearn over you, and draw near unto God in secret, that he would be pleased in mercy to deliver you. But, surely, if you are converted, you should not conceal the fact. It is an unkind action for any person who has received life from the dead, through any instrumentality, to deny the worker the consolation of hearing that he has been made useful; for the servant of God has many discouragements, and he is himself readily cast, down, and the gratitude of those who are saved is one of the appointed cordials for his heavy heart. There is no refreshment like it. May God grant you grace to declare his love, for our sake, for the church's sake, and, indeed, for the world's sake. Let the sinner know that you have found mercy, perhaps it will induce him to seek also. Many a physician has gained his practice by one patient telling others

of his cure. Tell your neighbors that you have been to the hospital of Jesus, and been restored, though you hated all manner of meat, and drew near to the gates of death; and, may be, a poor soul, just, in the same condition as yourself, will say, "This is a message from God to me." Above all, publish abroad the Lord's goodness, for Jesus' sake. He deserves your honor. Will you receive his blessing, and then like the nine lepers give him no praise? Will you be like the woman in the crowd, who was healed by touching the hem of his garment, and then would fain have slipped away? If so, I pray that the Master may say, "Somebody hath touched me," and may you be compelled to tell us all the truth, and say, "I was sore sick in soul, but I touched thee, O my blessed Lord, and I am saved, and to the praise of the glory of thy grace I will tell it; I will tell it, though devils should hear me; I will tell it, and make the world ring with it, according to my ability, to the praise and glory of thy saving grace."

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

JUNE 1, 1872.

### FAITH

**AN ADDRESS BY C. H. SPURGEON, DELIVERED AT THE CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS AND STUDENTS EDUCATED AT THE PASTORS' COLLEGE, ON TUESDAY, APRIL 16TH, 1872.**

Now that the time has come for me to address you, my beloved brethren, may God himself speak through me to you!

The subject which I have selected for this address is FAITH. As believers in Jesus we are all or us of the pedigree of faith. Two lines, of descent, claim the covenant heritage. There is; the line of nature, human efforts and works, headed by Ishmael, the son of Hagar. We own no kindred there. We know that the highest position to which the child of the flesh can attain will only end in "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac." We, brethren, are children, of the promise, born not after the flesh, nor according to the energy of nature, hut by the power of God. We trace our new birth not to blood, or the will of the flesh, or the will of man, but to God alone. We owe our conversion neither to the reasoning of the logician, nor to the eloquence of the orator, neither to our natural betterness, nor to our personal efforts: we are as Isaac was, the children of God's power according to the promise. Now, to us the covenant belongs, for it has been decided — and the apostle has declared the decision in the name of God — "that to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He faith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ."

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed,  
and heirs according to the promise." — Galatians 3:16, 29.

We are altogether saved by faith. The brightest day which dawned upon us was the day in which we first "looked unto him and were lightened." It was all dark till faith beheld the Sun of Righteousness. The dawn of faith was to

us the morning of life; by faith only we began to live. We have since then walked by faith. Whenever we have been tempted to step aside from the path of faith, we have been like the foolish Galatians, and we have smarted for our folly. I trust we have not “suffered so many things in vain.” — Galatians 3:4. We began in the Spirit, and if we have sought to be made perfect in the flesh we have soon discovered ourselves to be sailing upon the wrong tack, and nearing sunken rocks. “The just; shall live by faith,” is a truth which has worked itself out in our experience, for often and often have we felt that in any other course death stares us in the face; and, therefore,

“we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.”  
— Galatians 5:5.

Now, brethren, as our pedigree is of faith, and our claim to the privileges of the covenant is of faith, and our life in its beginning and continuance is all of faith, so may I boldly say that our ministry is of faith too. We are heralds to the sons of men, not of the law of Sinai but of the love of Calvary. We come to them not with the command, “This do, and thou shalt live,” but with the message, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Ours is the ministry of gracious faith, and is not after man, nor according to the law of a carnal commandment. We preach not man’s merit but Christ crucified.

The object, of our preaching, as well as its doctrine, is faith; for we reckon that we have done nothing for sinners until, by the power of the Holy Ghost, we bring them to faith; and we only reckon that our preaching is useful to saints, as we see them increase in faith. As faith is in our hand the power with which we sow, and as the seed we sow is received by us by faith and steeped in faith, so the harvest for which we look is to see faith springing up in the furrows of men’s hearts to the praise and glory of God.

Interwoven, therefore, with our entire spiritual life, and with all our ministerial work, is the doctrine and grace of faith; and, therefore, we must be very clear upon it — that is a small business, we must be very strong in it, — that is the great matter. On that topic I will speak to you, praying earnestly that we may every one of us be strong in faith, giving glory to God, “being men full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.”

Our work especially requires faith. If we fail in faith we had better not have undertaken it; and, unless we obtain faith commensurate with the service

we shall soon grow weary of it. It is proven by all observation that success in the Lord's service is very generally in proportion to faith. It certainly is not in proportion to ability, nor does it always run parallel with a kind of zeal; but it is invariably according to the measure of faith, for this is a law of the kingdom without exception, "According to thy faith be it done unto thee." It is essential, then, that we should have faith to be useful, and that we should have great faith if we are to be greatly useful. For many other reasons besides usefulness namely, even for our being able to hold our own against the enemies of the truth, and for ability to stand against the temptations which surround our office — it is imperative upon us that we should have abundant confidence in the living God. We, above all men, need the mountain-moving faith, which, in the old time, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, subdued kingdoms, and wrought righteousness.

One of the brethren observed at last; night's meeting that I confirmed you in the habit of saying, firstly, secondly, and thirdly. I must plead guilty to, the charge and follow the same method still, for I judge it to be no fault, but a practice helpful to the speaker in the arrangement and recollection of his thoughts, and profitable to the hearer in the remembrance of the sermon. We may risk being formal when to be formal is to be useful. Though not to be slavishly followed, the custom of announcing divisions in a discourse may be generally maintained, and we will maintain it, at any rate, today.

**I. I mean first to speak concerning faith under the head of this question, WHEREIN, AND UPON WHAT MATTERS HAVE WE, AS MINISTERS, FAITH, OR GREAT NEED OF IT?**

First, we have faith in God. We believe "that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." We do not believe in the powers of nature operating of themselves apart from constant emanations of power from the Great and Mighty One, who is the sustainer as well as the creator of all things. Far be it from us to banish God from his own universe. Neither do we believe in a merely nominal deity as those do who make all things to be God, for we conceive pantheism to be only another form of atheism. We know the Lord as a distinct personal existence, a real God, infinitely more real than the things which are seen and handle, more real even than ourselves, for we are but shadows, he alone is the I AM, abiding the same for ever and ever. We believe in a God of purposes and

plans, who has not left a blind fate to tyrannize over the world, much less an aimless chance to rock it to and fro. We are not fatalists, neither are we doubters of providence and predestination. We are believers in a God who orders all things according to the counsel of his own will. We do not conceive of the Lord as having gone away from the world and left it and the inhabitants thereof to themselves: we believe in him as continually presiding in all the affairs of life. We by faith perceive the hand of the Lord giving to every blade of grass its own drop of dew, and to every young raven its meat. We see the present power of God in the flight of every sparrow, and hear his goodness in the song of every lark. We believe that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and we go forth into it, not as into the domains of Satan where light comes not, nor into a chaos where rule is unknown, nor into a boiling sea where fate's resistless billows shipwreck mortals at their will; but we walk boldly on; having God within us and around us; living and moving and having our being in him, and so by faith we dwell in a temple of providence and grace wherein everything doth speak of his glory. We believe in a present God wherever we may be, and a working and operating God accomplishing his own purposes steadfastly and surely in all matters, places, and times; working out his designs as much in what seemeth evil as in that which is manifestly good; in all things driving on in his eternal chariot towards the goal which infinite wisdom has chosen, never slackening his pace or drawing the rein, but for ever, according to the eternal strength that is in him, speeding forward without pause. We believe in this God as being faithful to everything that he has spoken, a God that can neither lie nor change. The God of Abraham is the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he is our God this day. We do not believe in the ever-shifting views of the divine Being which differing philosophies are adopting; the God of the Hebrews is our God. Jehovah, Jah, the Mighty One, the covenant God, is our God for ever and ever; he shall be our guide even unto death.

Whether we be fools or not thus to believe in God the world shall know one day, and whether it be more reasonable to believe in nature, or in powers that operate of themselves, or Co believe in nothing, than it is to believe in a self-existent Being, we shall leave eternity to decide.

Meanwhile, to us faith in God is not only a necessity of reason, but the fruit of a child-like instinct which tarries not to justify itself by arguments, being born in us with our regenerate nature itself.

Next to this, our faith most earnestly and intensely fixes itself upon the Christ of God. We trust in Jesus; we believe all that inspired history saith of him; not making a myth of him, or his life, but taking it as a matter of fact that God dwelt in very deed among men in human flesh, and that an atonement was really and truly offered by the incarnate God upon the cross of Calvary. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ to us is not alone a Savior of the past. We believe that he has “ascended up on high, leading captivity captive,” and that he “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” I saw in the cathedral at Turin a very remarkable sight, namely, the pretended graveclothes of the Lord Jesus Christ, which are devoutly worshipped by crowds of Romanists. I could not help observing as I gazed upon these relics, that the ensigns of the death of Christ were all of him that the Romish church possessed. They may well show the true cross, for they crucify him afresh; they may well pray in his sepulcher, for he is not there, or in their church: and they may well claim his graveclothes, for they know only a dead Christ,. But, beloved brethren, our Christ is not dead, neither has he fallen asleep, he still walks among the golden candlesticks, and holds the stars in his right hand.

Our faith in Jesus is most real. We believe in those dear wounds as we believe in nothing else; there is no fact so sure to us as that he was slain., and has redeemed us to God by his blood. We believe in the brightness of his glory; for nothing seems to us so necessarily true as that he who was obedient unto death should as his due reward be crowned with glory and honor. For this reason, also, we believe in a real Christ yet to come a second time in like manner as he went. up into heaven; and, though we may not inquire minutely into times and seasons, yet we are looking for and hastening unto the coming of the Son of Man; at which time we expect the manifestation of the sons of God, and the rising of their bodies from the tomb. Christ Jesus is no fiction to us: —

*“While Jews on their own law rely,  
And Greeks of wisdom boast,  
We love the incarnate mystery,  
And there we fix our trust.”*

Beloved, we have an equal confidence in the Holy Spirit. We unfeignedly believe in his deity and personality. We speak of his influences because he has influences, but we do not forget that he is a person from whom those influences stream; we believe in his offices, for he has offices, but we rejoice in the person who fills them and makes them effectual for our good.

Devoutly would each one of us say, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Yet, my brethren, do you believe in the Holy Ghost? "Yes," say you unanimously, spontaneously, and emphatically; "Yes," say I also: but, be not grieved if I ask you yet again if you verily and indeed believe in him; for there is a believing and a believing. There is a believing which I have concerning a man, for which I may have but slender grounds, and upon which I would not risk a single penny of my substance: but it is another form of believing in a man when I feel that I could trust my very life with him, being assured that he would be true to me, and prove both an able and willing helper. Have we such a reliance upon the Holy Ghost? Do we believe that at this moment he could clothe us with power, even as he did the apostles at Pentecost? Do we believe that, under our preaching, by his energy a thousand might be born in a day? If we all so believe we are happy to be, in such an assembly, for the majority of Christians, if under one sermon even a dozen persons were to cry out, "What must we do to be saved?" would exclaim exactly as the unbelieving Jews did, "These men are drunken with new wine." They would condemn the whole transaction as the result of dangerous excitement; they could never imagine it to be of the Lord. For this reason I mournfully conclude that there is not such a belief in the Holy Ghost in the church as there ought to be; and yet, as certainly as we hear the voice which saith, "Power belongeth unto God," as surely as we hear the divine voice of the Son, saying, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me;" so truly does the third person of the blessed Trinity claim our loving confidence, and woe unto us if we vex him by our unbelief. When we have a full faith in the Triune God, then shall we be "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."

Farther than this, dear brethren, you and I believe in the doctrines of the gospel. We have received the certainties of revealed truth. These are things which are verily believed among us. We do not bow down before men's theories of truth, nor do we admit that theology consists in "views" and "opinions." We declare that there are certain verities, essential, abiding, eternal, from which it is ruinous to swerve. I am deeply grieved to hear so many ministers talk as if the faith were a variable quantity, a matter of daily formation, a nose of wax to be constantly reshaped, a cloud driven by the wind. So do not I believe: I have been charged with being a mere echo of the Puritans, but I had rather be the echo of truth, than the voice of falsehood. It may be want of intellect which prevents our departing from the good old way, but even this is better than want of grace, which lies at

the bottom of men's perpetual chopping and changing of their beliefs. Rest assured that there is nothing new in theology except that which is false; and that the facts of theology are today what they were eighteen hundred years ago. But in these days, the self-styled "men of progress" who commenced with preaching the gospel degenerate as they advance, and their divinity, like the snail, melts as it proceeds; I hope it will never be so with any of us. I have likened the career of certain divines to the journey of a Roman wine cask from the vineyard to the city. It starts from the wine-press as the pure juice of the grape, but at the first halting-place the drivers of the cart must needs quench their thirst, and when they' come to a fountain they substitute water for what they have drank. In the next village where are numbers of lovers of wine who beg or buy a little, and the discreet carrier dilutes again. The watering is repeated, till, on its entrance into Rome, the fluid is remarkably different from that which originally started from the vineyard. There is a way of doctoring the gospel, in much the same manner. A little truth is given up, and then a little more, and men fill up the vacuum with opinions, inferences, speculations, and dreams, till their wine is mixed with water, and the water none of the best. Many preachers — and I speak: it with sorrow — have built a tower of theological speculations, upon which they sit like Nero, fiddling the tune of their own philosophy while the world is burning with sin and misery. They are playing with the toys of speculation while men's souls are being lost. Much of human wisdom is a mere coverlet for the absence of vital godliness. I went into railway carriages of the first class in Italy which were lined with very pretty crochet-work, and I thought the voyagers highly honored, since no doubt some delicate fingers had sumptuously furnished the cars for them. The crochet work was simply put on to cover the grease and dirt of the cloth. A great deal that is now preached of very pretty sentimentalism and religiousness is a mere crochet-work covering for detestable heresies long since disproved, which dared not appear again without a disguise for their hideousness. With words of human wisdom and speculations of their own invention men disguise falsehood and deceive many. Be it ours to give to the people what God gives to us. Be ye each of you as Micaiah, who declared: "As the Lord liveth, whatsoever the Lord saith unto me that will I speak." If it be folly to keep to what we find in Scripture, and if it be madness to believe in verbal inspiration, we purpose to remain fools to the end of the chapter, and hope to be among the foolish things which God has chosen.

Brethren, our faith also, resting upon the doctrines of the gospel and upon the God of the gospel, embraces the power of prayer. We believe in the prevalence of supplication. I am afraid this is going out of fashion in the so-called Christian world. The theory of some is that prayer is useful to ourselves, but that it cannot be operative upon God; and much is said about the impossibility of the divine purposes being changed, and the utter unlikelihood of a finite being affecting God by his, cries. We also hold that the purposes of God are not changed, but, what if prayer be a part of his purpose, and what if he ordains that his people should pray when he intends to give them blessings? Prayer is one of the necessary wheels of the machinery of providence. The offering of prayer is as operative in the affairs of the world and the production of events, as the rise of dynasties or the fall of nations. We believe that God in very truth hearkens to the voices of men. For my own part, if any man should say to me now, "God does not hear prayer; such a notion is a piece of superstition," I should reply to him, "Nay, sir, but with you I have no argument at, all. The whole question is a personal one which concerns my own character, — am I an honest man or no? If I am a truth-speaking person, my testimony is worth, receiving; and I solemnly declare that the Lord has heard my prayers scores and hundreds of times, and that these answers have come so often and so singularly that they could, not have been coincidences." it should not argue beyond this point, — "Unless you are prepared to make me a liar, yea are as much bound to believe facts which I have witnessed, as I am to believe anything which you solemnly assert." Brethren, we ought not always to profess our ability to prove scriptural truths to ungodly men, for many of them lie out of the region of their understanding. I should not try to prove to a blind man that the grass is green and the sky blue, because he can have no idea of the proposition which I am proving. Argument in such a case is folly on both sides. To us, at any rate, prayer is no vain thing. We go to our chambers atone? believing that we are transacting high and real business when we pray. We do not bow the knee merely because it is a duty, and a commendable spiritual exercise; but because we believe that into the ear of the eternal God we speak our wants, and that his ear is linked with a heart feeling for us and a hand working on our behalf. To, us true prayer is true power.

One other point, which I believe is essential to a minister's faith, is that we believe in our own commission to preach the gospel. If any brother here is not assured of his call to the ministry, let him wait till he is sure of it. He

who doubts as to whether he is sent of God goes hesitatingly, but he who is certain of his call from above demands, and commands an audience; he does not apologize for his existence, or for his utterances, but he quits himself as a man, and speaks God's truth in the name of the Lord. He has a message to deliver which he must, deliver, for woe is unto him unless he preaches the gospel. In the face of the Ritualists who boast that they alone have the apostolical succession, we declare that ours is the true commission, and that their claim is false. We are not afraid to submit our claims to the test which the Lord himself has appointed, — "By their fruits shall ye know them." We believe that God has anointed us to preach the gospel, and we do preach it, but: who will testify that; these priests even so much as know the gospel? Under our word the Spirit of God regenerates man, but he does not so through these pretenders; for they do not even comprehend what regeneration is, but, confound it with a, ceremonial aspersion. Our gospel satisfies the heart, renews the nature, comforts the soul; but can these pretenders do so with their enchantments? If they be apostles, let them show us their signs. We claim to be the Lord's ministers, and our epistles of commendation are written upon many hearts.

Now, having detailed the great, points of faith, let me say, brethren, we believe, hence, on account of all this, that, notwithstanding the slenderness of our stores, the Great Shepherd of the sheep will grant us an all-sufficiency with which to feed his people. Believing in God All-sufficient, we expect to see our loaves and fishes multiplied; consequently, we do not lay by in store, but deal out at this present all that we have. I saw in Rome a fountain, which represented a man holding a barrel, out of which a copious stream of water was perpetually running. There was never much at once in that marble barrel, and yet it has continued to yield a stream for four or five hundred years. So let us pour forth from our very soul all that the Lord imparts to us. For twenty years and more I have told out all I know, and have run dry every time, and yet my heart still bubbles up with a good matter. I know good brethren in the ministry who are comparable to the great tun of Heidelberg; for capacity, and yet the people do not receive so much gospel truth from them as from preachers of very inferior capacity who have formed the habit of giving out all they have. We believe that the Spirit of God will be in us a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, and we speak upon that theory. We do not expect to have much goods laid up for many years, but as we live by daily bread, so upon continually new supplies do we feed our people. Away with the musty,

worm-breeding stores of old manna, and let us look up day by day for a fresh supply.

Brethren, our faith discerns upon our side unseen agency. While we are at work God is at work. We do not reckon that the forces engaged upon our side are confined to the pulpit; we know that all the week long God is by care, and affliction, and trouble, and sometimes by joy and consolation making the people ready to receive what he has charged us to teach. We look upon our congregations, and perhaps are ready to cry in our unbelief, "Master, what shall we do?" but our eyes are opened, and we see horses of fire, and chariots of fire round about the prophet of the Lord; mysterious agencies are co-operating with the ministry of grace. When the Mont Cenis Tunnel was being made, a party of engineers worked from the Italian side for six years, and expected at the end of that period to see an open roadway through the mountain. They knew that the work would take, at the rate they were going, twelve years at least, and yet they knew it would be completed in six years, because there was another party on the French side working to meet them; and, accordingly, in due time they met to an inch. I cannot understand these miracles of engineering, and do not know how two tunneling parties manage to meet each other in the heart of an Alp; neither do I know how the Lord's work in men's consciences will fit in with mine, but I am quite sure it will, and, therefore, in faith I go on working with all my might.

Faith leads us to believe in difficulties as overruled to promote success. Because we believe in God, and in his Holy Spirit, we believe that difficulties will be greatly sanctified, and that they are only placed before us as stepping-stones to grander results. We believe in defeats, my brethren; we believe in going back with the banner trailed in the mire, persuaded that this may be the surest way to lasting triumph. We believe in waiting, weeping, and agonizing; we believe in a non-success which prepares us for doing greater and higher work, for which we should not have been fitted unless anguish had sharpened our soul. We believe in our infirmities, and even glory in them; we thank God that we are not so eloquent as we could wish to be, and have not all the abilities we might desire, because now we know that "the excellency of the power shall be of God and not of us." Faith enables us so to rejoice in the Lord that our infirmities become platforms for the display of his grace. Brethren, we believe that our enemies shall, in God's hands, subserve our highest interests; they are yoked to the car of God. Perhaps, of all the powers which effect the divine

purposes in the world, none does more than the devil himself. He is but a scullion in the Eternal's kitchen; he unwillingly performs much work to which the Lord would not put his children, work which is just as needful as that which seraphim perform. Believe not that evil is a rival power of equal potency with the good God. No, sin and death are, like the Gibeonites, hewers of wood and drawers of water for the divine purposes; and, though they know it not when the Lord's enemies rave and rage most they fulfill the eternal purposes to the praise of the glory of his wisdom and grace.

Brethren, we believe in the gospel, as God's power to save. We know that for every case of spiritual sickness we have a cure; we need not say to any man, "We have no good news from God for you." We believe that there is a way of getting at all hearts. There is a joint in every sinner's harness, though he be an Ahab, and we may draw the bow hopefully, praying the Lord to direct the arrow through it. if we believe in God nothing can be too hard or too heavy for us. If I believe only in myself I feel that a hardened sinner may refuse to listen to my reasoning, and may not be moved by my affectionate address; but, if I believe in the Holy Ghost, I feel that he can win a hearing and carry conviction to the conscience. We believe...brethren, in the power of truth. We do not expect truth to be loved, by mankind; we do not expect the gospel to become popular amongst the great and the learned, for we remember that word, "not many great men after the flesh, not many mighty are chosen;" but we do not believe that the Gospel has become decrepit through old age,. When the foolish wise men of this age sneer at the old gospel, they render an unconscious homage to its power. We do not believe that our grand castle and defense has tottered and fallen to the ground, because men say it is so. We recollect Rabshakeh, and how he reviled the Lord, and how, nevertheless, it is said, "He shall not come against the city, nor shoot an arrow there, by the way that he came, by the same shall he return." We have seen enough philosophies go back "to the vile dust from whence they sprung," to know that the race is of the order of Jonah's gourd. We, therefore, in confidence wait, and in patience bide our time. We are sure of victory ere long. If our gospel be true it will come to the front yet, and God will work for us; therefore, are we steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. If we do not see souls saved today or tomorrow we will work on. Our is not the work of Sisyphus rolling up hill a stone which will rebound upon us, nor that of the daughters of Danaus who sought to fill a bottomless vessel. Our work may no more appear than

the structures which the coral insects are building below the blue waves of the southern sea; but the reef is rising, far down the foundation of the massive structure is laid, and its walls are climbing to the surface. We are laboring for eternity, and we count not our work by each day's advance as men measure theirs: it is God's work, and must be measured by his standard. Be assured that, when time, and things created, and things that oppose themselves to the Lord's truth shall all be gone, every earnest sermon and every importunate prayer offered, and every form of Christian service honestly rendered shall remain embedded in the mighty structure which God from all eternity has resolved to raise to his own honor.

**II.** Thus I have recapitulated the subjects of our faith. Now, brethren, our second head will be, **WHAT WORKETH OUR, FAITH IN US?**

It works in us, first, a glorious independence of man. We are glad of earnest helpers: but, we can do without them. We are grateful for our good deacons: but we dare not. make flesh our arm. We are very glad if God raises up brethren in or her churches who will fraternize with us: but we do not lean upon them. The man who believes in God, and believes in Christ, and believes in the Holy Ghost, will stay himself in the Lord alone. He does not wish to be solitary, yet can he singly contend for his Master, and when he has most of human helps he sedulously endeavors still to wait only upon God. If you lean upon the helpers when you have them, it may be you will realize the terrible meaning of this word, "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." As the apostle saith, it remains with them that, have wives to be as though they had. not, so may we say that it remaineth to us who have zealous helpers to be as though we had them not, and to let our confidence in God be as simple, and our own selves as free of all carnal confidence, as if we stood, like Athanasius against the world, and had not one to speak us a good word or bear a portion of our burden. God alone suffices to bear up you unpillared firmament. He alone balances the clouds and upbears them in the heavens. He kindles the lamps of night, and gives the sun his flames or fire. God alone is sufficient for us, and in his might we shall achieve the purpose of our being.

This faith gives us courage under all circumstances. When young Nelson came home from a birds-nesting expedition, his aunt chided him for being out so far into the night, and remarked, "I wonder fear did not make you come home." "Fear," said Nelson, "I don't know him." Fit speech for a believer when working for God. "Fear? I do not know it.. What does it

mean?" The Lord is on our side. Whom shall we fear? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" A minister stands trembling in the presence of a learned schoolmaster, who, with twenty school boys, makes an important item in a village congregation — is that a consistent condition of heart for a prophet of the Lord? A preacher is all on a quiver because a person with a white cravat under the gallery looks like a minister, and probably is a London divine who is staying in the neighborhood for his health. Is that trembling preacher a man? I say a man! I will not ask, is he a man of God? If you have something to say of your own, my dear friend, do not try to say it when those learned people are present who can speak so much better; but, if God has something to say through you, he knows which trumpet is most fit for him to use; and what matters it to you who may or may not be listening? Dare you play the coward in the presence of God? No. The conviction that you have a commission from God, and that the Spirit of the Lord is upon you, will make you very bold. Faith in God will cause us to honor our calling so much that we dare not disgrace it; by cowardice.

True faith in God will make us abundant in good works. The eleventh of Hebrews is a chapter dedicated to the glorification of faith; but, if I assert that it records the good works of the saints, can anybody contradict me? Is it not as much a record of works as of faith? Ay, verily, because where there is much faith there shall surely ere long be abundant good works. I have no notion of that faith which does not produce good works, especially in the preacher. I question whether, as channels for damnation Satan has upon earth more apt instruments for breeding infidelity and for causing men to regard the gospel with contempt, than those who profess to believe the gospel and then act as though the belief were a matter of no consequence whatsoever. Those philanthropists who are always telling what ought to be done and who do nothing — what is their faith, and what is their philanthropy? To what shall I liken it? It reminds me of a shipwreck off the Tuscan coast some years ago. The Tuscan coastguard reported to his government that there had been a lamentable shipwreck on the coast, and he said, "Notwithstanding that I lent to the crew on board the ship every assistance possible by means of my speaking-trumpet, I regret to say that a number of bodies were washed upon the shore next morning, dead." Very wonderful, was it not! And yet this is the kind of assistance which many who profess the faith have lent to the people. They have yielded them the assistance of rhetoric, flowers: of speech, and poetical quotations, and yet men have persisted in impenitence. There has been no real care for

souls. The sermon was preached, but the people were not prayed for in secret. The people were not hunted. for as men search for precious things. They were not wept over; they were not in very deed cared about. After all it was the speaking-trumpet's help and nothing else. But our faith makes us abundant in good works. May I say to you, if you are doing all you possibly can for Christ, endeavor to do yet more. I believe a Christian man is generally right when he is doing more than he can; and when he goes still further beyond that point, he will be even more nearly right. There are scarcely any bounds to the possibilities of service. Many a man who now is doing little might, with the same exertion, do twice as: much by wise arrangement and courageous enterprise. For instance, in our country towns, a sermon delivered on the village green would, in all probability, be worth twenty sermons preached in the chapel; and, in London, a sermon delivered to a crowd in a public hall or theater may accomplish ten times as much good as if it had fallen on the accustomed ears of our regular auditors. We need, like the apostles, to launch out into the deep, or our nets will never enclose a great multitude of fishes. If we had but the pluck to come out of our hiding-places and face the foe, we should soon achieve immense success. We need far more faith in the Holy Ghost. He will bless us if we cast ourselves entirely upon him.

Faith in God enables many of you, I know right well, to bear much hardship, and exercise much self — denial, and yet; to persevere in your ministry, My heart rejoices over the many brethren here whom God has made winners of souls; and I may add that I am firmly persuaded concerning many here present that the privations they have undergone, and the zeal they have shown in the service of their Lord, though unrewarded by any outward success, are a sweet savor unto God. True faith makes a man feel that is sweet to be a living sacrifice unto God. Only faith could keep us in the ministry, for ours is not a vocation which brings with it golden pay; it is not a calling which men would follow who desire honor and rank. We have all kinds, of evils to endure, evils as numerous as those which Paul included in his famous catalogue of trials; and, I may add, we have one peril which he does not mention, namely, the perils of church-meetings, which are probably worse than perils of robbers. Underpaid and undervalued, without books and without congenial associates, many a rural preacher of the gospel would die of a broken heart, did not his faith gird him with strength from on high.

Well, brethren, to sum up a great many things in one, faith is to us a great enlargement of our souls. Men who are morbidly anxious to possess a self-consistent creed a creed which will put together and form a square like a Chinese puzzle, — are very apt to narrow their souls. Fancying that all truth can be comprehended in half-a-dozen formulae, they reject as worthless every doctrinal statement which cannot be so comprehended. Those who will only believe what they can reconcile will necessarily disbelieve much of divine revelation. They are, without knowing it, following the lead of the rationalists. Those who receive by faith anything which they find in the Bible will receive two things, twenty things, ay, or twenty thousand things, though they cannot construct a theory which harmonizes them all. That process of theory-making is an expensive folly, the invention of middle terms is a waste of ingenuity; it were far better to believe the truths and leave the Lord to show their consistency.

Those who believe firmly are, moreover, the men who are strong for service. I have you ever seen the famous statue of the boy sitting down and picking a thorn out of his foot? I saw him twenty years ago and I saw him the other day, and he was still extracting the little tormenter. I have known brethren of the same order; they are always picking horns out of their feet, they have a doubt about this, and a scruple about that; but the man who says, “I know whom I have believed, I know what I have experienced” — he is the man Who can run upon the Lord’s errands.

Faith is our refreshment. Our faith in God relieves us of our weariness. Even natural fatigue is sometimes overcome by faith. Certainly faintness of spirit needs no better restorative than reliance upon God. Close to the Coliseum there stands the ruin of an ancient fountain and bath called the Mete Sudans. Here came the gladiators who had escaped with life the struggles of the amphitheater covered with blood, and begrimed with sweat and dust from the arena, they plunged into the bath and felt delicious refreshment. Faith in God is just such a laver to, our hearts.

**3.** My concluding word shall be, WHAT SAITH OUR FAITH TO US THIS MORNING? It claims to be well founded. I put it to you, brethren, in very simple words. Is the living God worth trusting? Does Onnipotence deserve that you should lean upon it? Does Omniscience warrant you in believing it? Does Immutability justify you in depending upon it? Why, if I were to bring here the best man of woman born whose name should be to you the synonyme for virtue, and if I were to advise that you should Trust him with

your lives, I must speak with bated breath, for who shall trust in man? Ay, and if there stood here Gabriel, the angelic messenger of God, and he should tell us that he would zealously defend us, I might hesitate ere I said to you, "O sons of men, rest in cherubic strength, and rely on seraphic zeal." But, when I speak of the Father, the Incarnate Son, the ever-blessed Spirit, who shall venture to hint a limit to our trust in God? What logician shall accuse us of folly in confiding in such a One?

The older I grow (and Mr. Rogers, who is still older, will agree with me I am sure) I feel more and more sure of the things I believe, not merely (as some would insinuate) because I get into the habit of saying them, and therefore think I believe them, but because they tally with my soul's best experience. I read occasionally some of those productions of genius which are associated with the frothy religion of modern thought, but, when my body is sick or I am depressed in spirit, nothing suits my case but the gospel of our fathers, the very truth of God. Now, I believe that the doctrine which a man's innermost experience confirms to him in the day of trial, and in the day when he is nearest to God, is to him, at any rate, the very truth itself and worthy of his credence.

I never feel when I meet with intellectual men, who look down upon me as a mere preacher of platitude, that they have any right to do so. To them I give place by subjection, no, not for an hour. I have rather to check a propensity to look down on them than to subdue any feeling of inferiority. To us the truths of the gospel are absolute certainties for which we do not crave tolerance, but to which we demand submission. If any shall brand us with epithets, such as bigot, vulgar dogmatist, or mere echo of departed Puritanism, (and all these are used,) we will only reply, "You may use what opprobrious titles you will to us, but we know that if we were to express the truth about you, there is no adjective of contempt which you do not deserve; and, therefore, because we know of no language sufficiently strong to set forth our abhorrence of your false doctrine, we will let you pass in silence." My brethren, when you hear that a learned man has made a new discovery which contradicts the Scriptures, do not feel alarmed. Do not imagine that he is really a great man, but believe that he is just a learned idiot, a self-conceited fool. If you find time to read the works of learned sceptics, you will soon see that their statements of fact are not reliable, their deductions are not logical, their inferences are monstrous, their speculations are insane. I remember reading some statements of the great German, Oken, which to me sounded singularly like the babblings of

Bethlehem Hospital. They reminded me of an incident which occurred, when a prize was offered for verses of poetry, which were to be quite free from meaning. The two first among the competitors were nearly equal, but in one there was the faintest glimmering of an idea, while the other had not even a trace of sense, and therefore so gained the prize. I vote for the supremacy of the neologians in that department; in sonorous nonsense they excel. If I am thought, to express myself too strongly, it must be so, for I believe I speak what God himself would endorse; he applies no soft terms to boastful unbelievers. When he takes any notice of them at all he calls them fools, and has done with them. You: shall find that to be the expression which the Lord uses concerning unbelievers constantly in the Old Testament, and in the New too — “Professing themselves to be wise they became fools.” And, brethren, when I hear my heavenly Father say that a man is a fool, I dare not think him wise. Do not let us think otherwise than God.

Though we may be, confounded in argument we cannot be confounded in experience, or driven from that; which we have tasted and handled of the good word of God. Neither are we confounded in our faith. We know that our faith is well founded, and, therefore, we hear it say, “Do not treat me as if I were a dream. Do not tell your message with bated breath. Say it, out! For he who contradicts it is a liar.” If it be of God it must be so. We are not adherents of an infallible church which founds its faith on its own authority, or of an infallible Pope who fancies himself to be the image of truth; if such were our boast the world might well laugh us down: but, having learned God’s truth by divine revelation, we defy the world’s sneer, we do not even say, “By your leave, gentlemen.” No, but with or without your leave, we will speak what God has revealed to us.

Next, our faith asks us this question, — “Have I ever deceived any of you?” I shall pass the inquiry round. God puts it to you. “Have I been a wilderness to Israel?” Has the Lord failed you? Has he turned his back upon you in the day of trouble; and, when you have leaned upon his arm, has it proved insufficient? If God has failed you, and his truth has been a lie to any one of you, let him speak!

But, if you could not, would not must not accuse the Lord of unfaithfulness, but would loathe such a thought because your experience would deny it, then, brethren, go on to believe, and to believe more

steadfastly? Go on to believe, only rest more quietly still on the ever-blessed arm.

And so faith says, in the third place, "Give me a wider range. Trust your God far more." We trove only waded ankle-deep in faith as yet. We thought the water very cold and chili when we timorously ventured in, but having tried it up to the ankles we have found it good and pleasant. Let us advance until we are breast deep, yea, and deeper. Blessed be that man who gets his feet off the bottom, and swims in the stream where he has no hope but his God, and no confidence and no helper but the Invisible One who sustaineth all things. Faith cries, "Trust me, my son, to make you preach better. Have more enterprise. Be more daring. Do not fight your own battle in the church-meeting, leave it to your God; trust all with him. Do not be afraid to go and speak to that foul-mouthed man; I will give you a word in the self-same hour. Trust me, and. go with prudence but with zeal into the darkest haunts of vice. Find out the worst of men and seek their salvation. There is nothing thou canst not do if thou wilt trust in God." Brother, your failure, if you fail, will begin in your faith. The air says to the eagle, "'Trust, me; spread thy broad wings. I will bear thee up to the sun. Only trust me. Take thy foot from off you rock which thou canst feel beneath thee. Get away from it, and be buoyed up by the unseen element!'" My brethren, eaglets of heaven, mount aloft, for God invites you. Mount! You have but to trust him. An unknown glory rests upon him, and the radiance thereof shall come upon you if you know how to trust.

And then faith says (and with that, I shall close), "Feed me! Feed me!" Faith has been everything to you; feed her upon the bread of heaven. On Christ faith feeds. I saw a group of lovely ferns the other day in a grotto from the roof of which continually distilled a cool, clear, crystal ran: these ferns were perpetually fresh and beautiful, because their leaves were continually bathed in the refreshing drops. Although it was at a season when verdure was seam:, these lovely ferns were as verdant as possible. I observed to my friend that I would wish to live in the everlasting drip of grace, perpetually laved, and bathed, and baptized in the overflowing of divine fellowship. This makes a man full of faith. If Moses had faith you do not wonder, for he had been forty days upon the mount. If we have communed with God it shall be a marvel if we doubt, and not that we believe. Feed faith with the truth of God, but especially with him who is the truth.

I pray the Lord to endow this College with Faith. May we be an endowed and established church — established on a rock, and endowed with the blessings of the covenant of grace. Remember, brethren, that you and I are committed to faith now. It is too late to retire. We are in the condition of Bunyan's pilgrim: we must go forward. There are many perils before us, the valley of the shadow of death lies on ahead; arrows will fly very thickly around us as we traverse its shades. 'Tis hard going on, but we cannot retrace our steps, for we have no armor for our backs. Suppose we should take to reasoning, suppose we should give up the fundamentals of our faith, what would remain, to us? For my part, I have nothing beneath the sun to do but, to take the rope of Judas and to end a miserable life, for only my faith makes it. worth my while to live. If faith were gone, I would intreat; permission to expire; to be extinct were better than to live if these things be but a delusion after all. It must be onward with us, for in the case of brethren of this College the most unsafe thing for us is to think of turning back. One or two of our former comrades have gone aside from us; I cannot judge their hearts, but I fear they have also gone aside from God. I will not say more of them than this — they are the last men you would envy if you knew their history. If any men bear upon them, even in this life, the evident mark of God's disapprobation, it will be those who have known the truth and defended it, and yet, for lucre's sake, or ambition's sake, have turned aside from it. If it were fitting, I could write narratives of apostate experiences which would harrow up your feelings, and they would relate to men into whose faces I have looked as I now look: into yours, and who were familiar with me, but with whose names, once well beloved, I am ashamed now to be associated. God have mercy upon them! It is all that I could say if I had to write their epitaphs — “God have mercy upon them!”

Well, you and I are, committed to the onward course, we cannot go back, neither can we turn to the right hand nor to the left. What shall we do, brethren? Shall we lie down and fret? Shall we stand still and be dismayed? No! In the name of the Lord let us set up our banner again, the royal standard of Jesus the crucified. Let us sound the, trumpets joyously, and let us march on, not with the trembling footsteps of those who know that they are beat upon an enterprise of evil, but with the gallant bearing of men whose cause is divine, whose warfare is a crusade. Courage, my brethren, behold the angels of God fly in our front, and lo, the eternal God leads our van. “The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the

mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” Blessed faith! God grant us more of it, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

### A SEQUEL

Since delivering the address above printed I have had to endure a somewhat, severe trial of the faith which I so much recommended to others, and the trial still lasts. The Orphanage has from the first been so graciously sustained of God, that there has always been a considerable balance in hand. During the last three months friends have appeared to forget our orphans, very little has come in, and the nest eggs have vanished one by one. Over and above the endowment there is needed about 10 pounds each day to carry on the institution, and on the 17th of May there certainly was not one day’s supply in hand, if the accounts had there and then been balanced. Debt we have not, and by God’s grace never mean to have, but we were never so near the ground before. Dear reader, this is a position by no means enviable; with 220 boys to feed, clothe, and educate, one looks around and feels it well to be able still to look up. I have always felt that the funds would come to feed the little ones who are cast on the fatherhood of God. I still feel it, and am very far from being depressed or dismayed. But this is a new experience with the Orphanage. Laid aside for a week with most severe neuralgic pain, this was by no means a comforting medicine, but, perhaps it may prove a valuable tonic. I undertook the work, as I believe, at the Lord’s bidding, on the behalf of his church. I did not expect to be always kept above trial, and I had no promise that I should be. I am sure, however, that the Father of the fatherless will not desert his family, nor will he allow my brethren to desert me in the hour of need, One looks the Lord in the face at such times, and faith comes to close quarters with the promise. I am as sure that, he will interpose as I am that seed-time and harvest will not fail, yet prayer has to tarry awhile, and entreaty has to knock again and again, and effort has to bestir herself. I cannot expect the Lord to inform his people of the needs of the Orphanage by miracle, and, therefore, I feel bound to let them know by the magazine. He may let me be straitened and I will bless him, but I do not think his people ought to let the work run quite so short of supplies again. If I and my fallow-trustees do the work in a trustworthy manner, our fellow-servants should not stint us quite so much. “Peradventure it was an oversight,” and as soon as beloved brethren know of the need they will hasten to supply it.

# THE KING'S MOWINGS.

## IN MEMORIAM.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“The king’s mowings.” — Amos 7:1.*

Certain lands belonged to the, king, so far, that he always took the first cut of grass for himself; and left troy aftermath to those who worked upon the land. Now, our great King has his mowings too. His church is the field which he has enclosed and blessed. At set seasons the king takes his mowings. Lately, beyond any other time in my life that I remember, the King has been taking his mowings in and around the church, of which he has made me overseer. One has spent many hours at the bedslides of the dying, end in trying to console the bereaved. Our loss, if I may venture to call it a loss, as a church, at the opening of this year was extremely heavy. The King has been taking his mowings among us, and has cut down here one and there another. When churches commence with a great many young members there naturally would not be so many deaths; but, its we all grow old together, there must be a larger proportion of removals from this world into the land above. I purpose to speak a little upon that subject, and I shall do so in a threefold way: — First; by way of consolation; then, by way of admonition; and, then, by way of anticipation.

**1.** First, by way of CONSOLATION. It, is a sorrowful matter that our beloved brethren, should be taken from us. We were no more but less titan men if we did not sorrow. Jesus wept, and by that act he sanctified our tears. It is not wrong, it is not unmanly, much less is it sinful, for us. to drop the tear of sorrow over the departed; yet let us help to wipe those tears with a handkerchief of sacred consolations.

First, seeing, “All flesh is grass, and all the comeliness thereof as the flower of the grass,” dost thou lament that the King has been mowing? Then let this thought chide thee. The King himself has done it! There is no such abstract thing as death, an unloosed monster devouring the saints at will, “drinking the blood of men, and grinding their bones between his iron

teeth.” This is a poet’s raving. No destroying angel is sent forth to slay the Israel of God. There is a destroying angel, it is true; but he comes not near those who bear the blood-mark: It is not in the power of disease, or accident, to kill the children of God except as instruments in the divine hand. No saint dieth otherwise than by the act of God. It; is ever according to the King’s own will; it is the King’s own doing. Every ripe ear in his field is gathered by his own hand, cut down by his own golden sickle, and by none other. Every full-blown flower of grace is taken away by him, not smitten with blight, or cut down by the tempest, or devoured by some evil beast.

*“When mortal man resigns his breath,  
 ‘Tis God directs the stroke of death;  
 Casual howe’er the stroke appear,  
 He sends the fatal messenger.*

*The keys are in that hand divine;  
 That hand must first the warrant sign,  
 And arm the death, and wing the dart  
 Which doth his message to our heart.”*

The Lord has done it in every case, and, knowing this, we must not even think of complaining. What the King doeth his servants delight in; for he is such a King, that, let him do what seemeth him good we will still, bless him: we are of the mind of him who said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”

Again, those who have been mown down and taken away are with the King. They are the King’s mowings: they are gathered into his stores. They are not in purgatory; they are not in the limbus patrum, much less are they in hell. They are not wandering in dreary pathways amidst the stars to find a lodging place. “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, the glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me from before the foundations of the world:” this prayer has fixed their abode. We shat enter into no questions now about whether heaven is a place, and where it is, or whether it be a state merely: it is enough for us that where Jesus is there his people are — not some of them on lower seats or sitting outside or in lower rooms, but they are all where he is. That will certainly content me, and if there be any degrees in glory you who want the high ones may have them. The lowest degree that I can perceive in Scripture is, “that they may be with me where

I am, that they may behold my glory,” and that lowest degree is as high as my most vivid imagination can carry me. Here is enough to fill our souls even to the balm. And now do you sorrow? Do you not almost blame your tears when you learn that your beloved ones are promoted to such blissful scenes. Why, mother, did you ever wish for your child a higher place than that it should be where Jesus is? Husband, by the love you bore your wife you cannot grudge her the glory into which she has entered. Wife, by the deep devotion of your heart to him who is taken from you, you could not wish to have detained him a moment from the joy in which his soul now triumphs with his Lord. If he were gone to some unknown tuna, if you could stand on life’s brink, and hear the roaring billows of a dread mysterious ocean and say, “My dear one has gone, I know not whither, to be tossed like a waif or stray upon yonder tempestuous sea,” Oh, then you might mix your own tears with the brine of that ocean But you know where they are, you know with whom they are, and you can form some idea by the joy of Christ’s presence here on earth what must be their bliss above.

*“Sounds of sweet melody fall on my ear;  
Harps of the blessed, your voices I hear!  
Rings with the harmony heaven’s high dome.  
Joyfully, joyfully bring the saints home.”*

It is a sweet, reflection, too, that although our dear friends have been cut down like, flowers by the scythe, yet their lot is better than ours; though we are standing and blooming today. Life seems better than death, and the living dog is better than the dead lion; but take into account the everlasting state, and who will dare say that the state of the blessed is worse than ours? Will not all assert that it is infinitely superior? We are suffering still, but they shall smart no more. We are weak and tottering here, but; they have regained the dew of their youth. We know what want means, and wipe the sweat of toil from off our face, but they rest in abundance for ever. The worst of all is that we still sin, and hate to wrestle hard with doubts and fears; Satan still besets us, the world is around us, and corruptions within us. But they are where not a wave of trouble can ever break the serenity of their spirit, beyond the barkings of the hell-dogs, and beyond the arrows of hews quiver; though there be archers who would shoot their darts into heaven itself if they could. The ingathered ones are supremely blest; they are far beyond what we are in joy, and knowledge,

and holiness; therefore, if we love them, how can we mourn that they have gone from the worse to the better, and from the lower to the higher room?

And, moreover, brethren, although some of you sorrow very bitterly, because God has taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke, let me remind you that you might have had a worse sorrow than this concerning them. Ah, the mother that hath to mourn over a grown up son who has become a profligate, has a bitterer pang a thousand times over than she who sees her infant carried to the grave. The father who knows that his sons or daughters have become a dishonor to his name, may well wish that he had long ago seen them laid in the silent tomb; and I have known men in the Church whom I would sooner have buried a thousand times over than have lived to see what I have seen afterwards in them. For years they stood as honorable professors; but they lived to dishonor the Church, to blaspheme their Lord, to go back into perdition, and, prove that the root of the matter was never in them. Oh, ye need not weep for those in heaven; weep not for the dead, neither bewail them; but weep for the spiritually dead; weep for the apostate and backslider; weep for the false professor and the hypocrite, “the wandering stars,” “for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” If ye have tears, go and shed them there; but for those who have fought the fight and won the victory, for those who have stemmed the stream and safely landed on the other side, let us have no tears; nay, put away the sacbut and bring forth the clarion, let the trumpet, ring out jubilantly the note of victory. It is to them the day of jubilee; why to us should it be the hour of sorrow? They put on the crown and wear the palm branch, wherefore should we don these funeral weeds? There is more to rejoice, in infinitely than there is to sorrow for; therefore, let our hearts be glad. The Lord hath said to them, “Well done,” and rewarded them according to his grace, and this is infinitely better than that they should have lived to slip and slide.

“But; this is poor comfort,” you will say, and therefore let me come back to the text, and say the King has taken his mowings. Sorrowful as they may be, it is not the worst sorrow, but whether or no we must not grudge the King. All the friends we have are lent us. The old proverb says, “A loan should go laughing home,” that is, we should never be unwilling to return a loan but cheerfully give it hack. They were lent us — and, dear cues, what a blessing they have, been to us. The lamps of our house, have they been the joy of our day? The Master says, “I want them back again,” and do we clutch at them and say, “No, Master, thou shalt, not have them.” Oh, it

must not be so. Our dear ones were never half as much ours as they were, Christ's. We did not make them, but he did; we never bought them with our blood, but he did; we never sweat a bloody sweat for them, nor had our hands and feet pierced for them, but he did. They were lent us, but they belonged to him. Your prayer was, "Father, let them be with me where I am" but Christ's prayer was, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given, me, be with rue where I am." Your prayer pulled one way and Christ's another. Be not envious that Christ won the suit, for if I ever enter into the Lord's court of chancery, if I find that Christ is on the other side, my Lord, I will not plead. Thou shalt have thy will, for I and. thou and thou and I are one; and if it be thy suit that all I love be with thee, so be it, for I shall be with thee too, ere long, and I would not quarrel with thy wish. The King has let out this church like a pasture to us, and he says, "I must take my mowings sometimes." Well, he has so watered us and given us the smell of a field that the Lord God has blessed, that when he comet and takes his rent, we may not stand at the gate and forbid him, bus say, "Good Master, come and take which thou wilt. Take thy quitrent, for the field is all thine own. Thou hast dearly purchased it, and thou hast tilled, it with much diligence: take what thou wilt, for it is thine."

And, let us add, to increase our comfort, that, the King took his mowings at the right time. Out of those whom he has taken away from us, I think we must all confess that the Lord took them when they should be taken. In one case, a venerable sister, who, if she had lasted longer would have been the prey of weakness and of pain. 'Twas well she fell asleep. In another case, a dear young friend was pining under that fell disease, consumption. Her throat was scarcely able to receive nourishment. I think those who loved her best must have felt relieved when at last she fell asleep. Two brethren rise before my mind's eye — the one struggled through life, and wondered often that he did not sink before, for he was like a ship unfit for sea, which every wave threatens to engulf — it is a wonder that he survived so long as he did. He served his Lord up to the last, and when all was over it was well. Another, whom I saw with an afflicting disease about him that had brought him very low, had led so gracious a life that he did not need to utter any dying testimony. Brethren., beloved, also who were once with us in the College have fallen asleep, having finished their course and kept the faith.

I may add that, not only did the king take his mowings at the right time, but in every case I have now before my mind he took them in the easiest

way. tie took them gently. Some have a hard fight for it at the last, but, in these eases though there were pains and dying strife, yet at the last their souls were kissed away by the dear lips of him who named them by their names and said they were his. They fell asleep, some of them, so sweetly, that those who looked on scarcely knew whether it was the sleep of life or the deeper sleep of eternity. They were gone; they were gone at once to their Lord and their God.. Putting all these things together, reflecting that the King has done it, that those he has taken away he has taken to be with himself, that their present lot is an infinitely better one than anything beneath the moon; considering, too, that we must never grudge the King the heritage which he has so dearly bought, and that he took his mowings at the right time, and took them in. the happiest manner, we will no longer repine, but we will bless the Lord.

**2.** And now, brethren, suffer me for a few minutes to use the subject by way of ADMONITION.

I hardly know whether under this head I haw; grouped together Thoughts that are quite admonitory. The first one to me is very joyous. It is this, that as we belong to the King, our hope is that we shall be mown too. We are sitting on the banks of Jordan, especially some of riper years, waiting for a summons to the court of the Eternal King. It grows a wonder sometimes with aged Christians, why they stay so long. John Newton, methinks, used to marvel at his own age; and Rowland Hill used to say he half imagined they had forgotten him, and hoped they would soon recollect him and send for him. Well, we have not. quite got that length — we who are young — but still we entertain the hope that some fair evening, calm and bright, the angel-reaper will come with the: scythe. Then shall we, having fulfilled, like the hireling, our day, lay down our tools of labor and take our rest. Then shall we put down our sword, and take off our breast-plate, and unloose the shoes of iron and brass, for we shall fight no more, but take the palm and claim the victory before the throne. Never let us look forward to this with dread. It is wondrous that we should do so, and we could not if our faith were stronger. When faith vividly realizes the rest that remaineth for the people of God, we are tempted to long to be up and away. Then why should we wish to linger here? What is there in this old musty worn-out world, worm-eaten and full of holes, with its very gold and silver cankered that can satisfy an immortal spirit? Let us away to the hills of spices and to the mountains of frankincense, where the King in his beauty stands with “helmed cherubim and sworded seraphim,” and all the hosts that serve hint

day and night, to behold his lane, and evermore adore him. Let us anticipate cheerfully the time when the King's mowings shall include us also.

Brethren, the admonition that rises out of all this, is — let us be ready. Should not every Christian man live every day as if he were going to die that day? Should we not always live as if we knew our last hour to be at the door? If a man in his sight state were informed on a sudden, "You will die tonight," he ought not to alter his mode of life one atom; he should be so living that he had nothing more to do but to continue his course. It is remarked of Bengel, the great critic, that "he did not wish to die in spiritual parade, but in the ordinary way; like a person called out to the street door from the midst of business: so much so that he was occupied with the correction of his proof-sheets at his dying season, as at, other times." To me it seems to be the very highest kind of death to die in harness, concluding life without suspending service. Alas, many are unready, and would sadly be put about if the midnight cry were suddenly heard. Oh, let us see that every thing is in order! Both for this world and the next nothing should be left to be hurried over in the last few hours. Christian man, is your will made? Are your business affairs all straight? They ought to be, everything ought to be as near as you can keep it in perfect order, so that you are ready to go at any minute. Mr. George Whitefield used to live so in anticipation of death that he said, "I never go to sleep at night with even a pair of gloves out, of place." Oh, that we could be habitually ready and in order, especially in higher matters, walking before the Lord, as: preparing to meet him!

Then, dear friends, this departure of many friends, while it admonishes us to be going, at the same time teaches us to do twice as much while we are here, seeing that our numbers, are being thinned. A brave soldier in the day of battle, if he hears that a regiment has been exterminated by the enemy's shot and shell, says "Then those of us that survive must fight like tigers. There is no room for us to play at fighting. If they have slain so many, we must be more desperately valiant." And so, to-day, if one is gone here and there, a useful worker from the Sabbath-schools, from the street preaching, then it is time our broken ranks were repaired. O you young men, I pray you, fill up the gap; and you young women who love the Savior, if a Sabbath-school teacher is gone and you are teaching, teach better, or, if you are not teaching, come and fill the place. My dear brethren, I pray for recruits, I stand like a commander in the midst of my little army and see

some of the best smitten down, here one and there one, and what can I do, but, as my Master bids me, lead you on, and say, “Brethren and sisters, step into their places; fill the gaps in the ranks.” Do not let death gain upon us, but even as one goes into the golden city, let another cry “Here I am: I will fill up the place and seek to do the work until the Master shall call me also to my reward.” As for us who are at work we must labor more zealously than ever, we must pray more fervently than ever. When a certain great man suddenly died in the ministry, I remember in my young days an old preacher saying, “I must preach better than ever I did now that Mr. So-and-so is gone.” And you, Christian, whenever a saint is removed say, “I must live the better to make up to the church the loss which it has sustained.”

One other thought, by way of admonition. If the King has been taking his mowings, then the King’s eye is upon his church. He has not forgotten this field, for he has been mowing it. We have been praying lately that he would visit us. He has come, he has come! Not quite as we expected him, but he has come, he has come! Oh yes, and as he has walked these aisles, and looked on this congregation, he has taken one and then another. He has not, taken me, for I was not ready; and he has not taken you, for you are not quite ripe; but he has taken away some that were ripe and ready, and they have gone in with him. Well, then, he has not forgotten us, and this ought to stimulate us in prayer. He will hear us, his eye is upon us; this ought to stimulate us to self-examination. Let us purge out everything that will grieve him. He is evidently watching us. Let us seek to live as in his presence that nothing may vex his Spirit, and cause him to withdraw from us. Beloved, these are the words of admonition.

**3.** And, now, a few more words by way of ANTICIPATION. I hardly know under what head to place them. What anticipations are there that come out of the mowing? Why, these. There is to be an after-growth After the King’s mowings there came another upspringing of fresh grass, which belonged to the King’s tenants. So we expect, now that the King has been mowing, that we shall have a fresh crop of grass. Is there not a promise, “They shall grow as the grass, as willows by the watercourses”? Fresh converts will come, and who will they be? Well, look around, and I will not say with Samuel, as I look at some young man in the gallery, “Surely the Lord hath chosen him;” neither will I look down here and say, “Surely the Lord hath chosen him;” but I will bless God that I know he has chosen some, and that he means to make this fresh grass spring up to fill up the

waste caused by the King's mowings. Do you know who I should like to come if I might have my preference? Well, where the daughter died, how glad I should be if the father came, or the brother came; and where the father died, how would I be rejoiced if the son should come; and where a good woman has been taken away, how glad would I be if her husband filled up the place. It seems to me as if it were natural to wish that those who loved them best should occupy their position, and discharge their work for them. But if that cannot be, I stand here to — night as a recruiting sergeant. My king in his wars has lost his men, and the regiment wants making up. Who will come? I put the colors in my hat tonight, but; I will not stand here and tempt you with lies about the ease of the service, for it is hard service; yet I assure you we have a blessed Leader, a glorious conflict, and a grand reward. Who will come? Who will come to fill up the gaps in the ranks? Who will be baptized for the dead, to stand in their place of Christian service, and take up the torch which they have dropped? I will put the question round, and I hope that many a heart will say, "Would God the Lord would have me. O that he would blot out my sins and receive me!" He delighteth in contrite hearts; he sayeth such as be of a contrite spirit. He will have whom he will have, but the way to be enlisted is plain, "Oh," say you, "what must, I give to be Christ's soldier?" To be the queen's soldier you do not give any thing; you receive a shilling. You take to be a soldier of the queen, and so to be Christ's soldier you must take Christ to be your all in all, holding out your empty hand and receiving of his blood and righteousness, to be your hope and your salvation. Oh that his good Spirit would sweetly incline your wills, that one after another were made willing in the day of his power. May he thus do, and our hearts will greatly rejoice.

As I read the passage in Amos, which we have taken for our text, I noticed something about caterpillars. It is said that after the King's mowings there came the caterpillars to eat up the aftergrowth. Oh, those caterpillars! When the poor eastern husbandman sees the caterpillars, his heart is ready to break for he knows they will eat up every green thing. And I can see the caterpillars here tonight. There is the great green caterpillar that eats up all before him; I wish I could crush him. He is called the caterpillar of procrastination. There are many, many other worms and locusts which eat up much, but this worm of procrastination is the worst, for just as the green blade is beginning to spring up this caterpillar begins to eat. I can hear him gnawing, "Wait, war, wait; tomorrow, tomorrow; a little more

sleep, a little more sleep, a little more sleep.” And so this caterpillar devours our hopes. Lord, destroy the caterpillar, and grant that instead of the fathers may be the children, instead of the King’s mowings may come up the after-grass which shall be a rich reward to the husbandman and bring glory to the owner of the soil.

We have reason to pray that the Lord would send the dew and the rain to bring forth the aftergrowth. “He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass” Now this congregation is like mown grass. God has mown it — a rich mowing has the King taken from us. Now, my brethren, we have the promise; let us plead it before the throne. All the preaching in the world cannot save a soul, nor all the efforts of men; but God’s Spirit can do everything, and, oh, that he would come down like rain upon the mown grass now. Then shall we see the handful of corn upon the top of the mountain multiply till its fruit shall shake like Lebanon, and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth. The Lord send it, the Lord send it now.

If any would be saved, here is the way of salvation: “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” To believe is to trust. What you have to trust in is this — that Jesus is God, that he became man, that he suffered in the sinner’s place, and that whosoever believes in him shall be forgiven because God has punished Christ instead of believers. Christ bore God’s wrath instead of every sinner that ever did or ever shall believe in him, and if thou believest in him thou wast redeemed from among men. His substitution was for thee and it will save thee; but if thou believest not thou hast no part nor lot in this matter. Oh, that thou weft brought to put thy trust in Jesus. This would be the pledge of thy sure salvation to-night and for evermore. God bless you for Christ’s sake. Amen.

# A SERMON AND A REMINISCENCE.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.” — 1 Peter 2:7.*

WHEN one has a cold in the head it is a very effectual hindrance to thought; you may do what you will, and select what subject you may, but somehow or other the mind has lost its elasticity, I frankly confess that for this reason I selected this text for my discourse. I thought that perhaps if the head would not work, the heart might; and, that, if the thoughts came not, yet the emotions might. Emotions may well be stirred in the preacher if not in the hearer by the memories awakened by this passage. For I remember well that I note than twenty-two years ago, the first attempted sermon that I ever made was from this text. I had been asked to walk out to the little village of Teversham, some little distance from the town of Cambridge, in which I lived, to accompany a young man whom I supposed to be the preacher for the evening, and on the way I said to him that I trusted God would bless him in his labors. “Oh dear,” said he, “I never preached in my life. I never thought of doing such a thing; I was asked to walk with you, and I sincerely hope that God will bless you in your preaching.” Nay, said I, “but I never preached, and I don’t know that I could do anything of the sort.” We walked together till we came to the place, my inmost soul being all in a tremble as to what would happen. When we found the congregation assembled, and no one else there to speak of Jesus, though I was only sixteen years of age, as I found that I was expected to preach, I did preach, and this was the text. It’ a raw recruit could speak upon anything, surely this theme would suit him. If one were dying this would be the text, if one were distracted with a thousand cares this would be the text, because its teaching is experimental — its meaning wells up from the inner consciousness, and needs neither a clear brain nor an eloquent tongue. To the believer it is not a thing which somebody else has taught him; it is a matter of fact, which he knows within his own soul, that Christ is precious to him, and he can bear testimony concerning it although not always such bold testimony as he could wish. I intend to let my heart run over like a full cup, just as the thought comes to my heart it shall be poured out. Let

us go then at once to our text, and speak a little, first, about believers; then, about their appreciation of Christ; and then about how they show it.

**1. About BELIEVERS.** "Unto you which believe." Believers are getting to be rather scarce things, now-a-days: the doubters have it: they are the men who claim all the wisdom of the period. There is scarcely a single historical fact but what is doubted now. I fancy the existence of the human race must be a matter of question with some persons. I believe some imagine that not even themselves are actually existent; certain ideas of themselves exist, but not themselves! We know not how far the human mind will go in this direction: but surely there must be a limit to doubting. Wonderful is the capacity of faith, but a hundred times more wonderful is the capacity of unbelief. The most credulous persons in the world are unbelievers. He who refuses to swallow the gnat of scriptural difficulty, usually swallows camels in large quantities of other difficulties of all sorts. The text speaks of believers, and for my part I am. happy to know that a man is reckoned among believers of any sort rather than with doubters.

But the believers mentioned here are not mere believers, they are spiritual believers, Christian believers, they believe in Christ Jesus. It is only to such that Christ is precious. In the word of God there are many expressions with regard to believing in Christ. We read of believing in, him, believing upon him, and believing him. Now, if I understand, aright, believing in him means this: believing that he is what he claims to be; as, for instance, that he is the sent One of God, the Messias, that he is King in Israel, that he is the Son of God, that he is the Word than was God and was in the beginning with God, that he is the Priest making atonement for our sins, that he is the Head of the Church, and so on. That, is to believe in him, to accept him as being what God's Word says he is:, to believe God's testimony concerning his Son. But believing upon him goes further, for when a man believes upon Jesus, or, on Jesus, he trusts him, he rests himself upon him for the pardon of his sin he relies upon the Savior's atoning sacrifice; for eternal life he rests upon the Savior's immortality for his resurrection he looks to the Savior's power for everything he looks to his Redeemer; he leans upon him, he believes on him. And this, mark you, in essential to salvation, for we may believe Christ to be God, and yet perish; we may believe Christ to be the priest putting away sin by his atoning sacrifice, and yet perish. The faith that saves is a trusting faith a reliant faith, a sacred recumbency, confidence, and leaning upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Dear hearer, do you possess it? Has the Holy Spirit given to

you to cast yourself once for all upon him whom God has set forth to be a propitiation for sin? If you have, sure you will through grace proceed to the third form of faith, you will believe him — his person as well as his words. You will believe him. whatever he may say, you will believe him whatever he may do; you will be persuaded that he is himself the essential truth, according to his word — “I am the way, the truth, and the life;” and then you will know what Paul meant when he said, “I know whom I have believed,” — not “in whom,” but “whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him.” if you asked a true believer in Christ’s day “What is your creed?” he would have pointed to his Master; he would! not have repeated certain articles, but he would have said, “I believe that glorious man; my trust is in him; I believe him.” We have seen many books labeled upon their backs, “Body of Divinity,” but of a truth Jesus is the only real “body of divinity.” If you want, theology, he is the true Theologos, the essential word of God. It is a ground thing when a man believes Jesus to be what Jesus is — a Savior from sin; and then believes the Christ to be what Christ is — the anointed of the Lord; and so makes him to be his Alpha and Omega — all his salvation and all his desire.

Divide yourselves upon this question as to how for you are believers, for we cannot assert that Christ is precious to you if you are not believers. We know he will not be your heart’s monarch if you have no faith. He will be the very reverse. But if you be believers in and upon him, he will be precious to you beyond all comparison.

**2.** Let us, then, consider the BELIEVER’S APPRECIATION OF HIS MASTER; and observe, first, that every believer appreciates Christ him-self his very person: “Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.” He. Some think the ordinances, which they call the sacraments, very precious: so they are; but only for his sake. Others reckon the doctrines to be very precious, and always thrust doctrine into the forefront. We will not deny that every doctrine is precious, but it owes its value to the fact that Christ is in it. Dry doctrine is nothing better than a sepulcher for a dead Christ to be buried in; but the doctrine preached in relation to his person becomes a throne on which he is exalted. It is a great pity when any of you Christians forget; that you have a Savior who is alive, and overlook the personality of Christ. Remember that he is a real man, and as a real man on Calvary he died for you, and as a real man he is gone into heaven. He is no ideal personage, but an actual personage; and the very marrow of Christian experience lies

in the realization of the personality of the Savior. "Unto you that believe, he is precious." If you make doctrine the main thing, you are very likely to grow narrow-minded; if you make your own experience the main thing, you will become gloomy and censorious of others; if you make ordinance the main thing, you will be apt; enough to grow merely formal; but you can never make too much of the living Christ Jesus. Remember that all things else are for his sake. Doctrines and ordinances are the planets, but Christ is the Sun; the stars of doctrine revolve around him as their great primal light. Get to love him best of all. Yea, I know you do, if ye are believing in him. You love the doctrines, and would not like to give one of them up, but still the incarnate God is the sum and substance of your confidence; Christ Jesus himself is precious to you.

Now, as this appreciation concerns Christ, it may here be remembered that it is in the case of every believer a personal appreciation. As we appreciate Christ's person, so we each in person appreciate him. We do not pretend to appreciate Christ because others say so; nor do we run with the multitude, but we judge for ourselves. Unto those that believe in him, Christ is precious on his own account, from their own personal knowledge of him. They have not borrowed it. They do not cry, "Yes, he is precious," because their dear mother, who is gone to heaven, used to say so; her memory helps them, but they have a better reason than that. He is precious to them. Beloved, there is; nothing like personal religion. The religion which you inherit, if at the same time it is not yours personally, is not worth one single farthing. You will not be saved by hereditary godliness. If any man should say, "My ancestors believed so and so, and therefore I do," that would be a reason why we should have been Druids, for our ancestors were such. If our religion has come to us as an heirloom like the family pew, and we have merely taken it at, second-hand, it is of poor account. You must value Christ because you have tried him, and know him for yourself; for nothing short of a personal appreciation, and a personal appropriation, of the Lord Jesus, by faith, to your own case, and in your own heart, will ever bring you. to heaven. Everything short of personal godliness falls short of eternal life. Remember that nobody can be born again for you. Ye yourselves must be regenerated. Nobody can renounce "the pomps and vanities of the world" for you. Sponsorship in religion is the most transparent of frauds. Nobody can love Christ for you; your own heart must beat high with affection towards his dear name. It must be a personal religion.

As there must be an appreciation of the person of the Lord Jesus by our own selves, so, let me add, our experience must be the basis of that estimate. Christ is precious to us this day, because we have proved him to be precious. What has he done for us? He has delivered us, first, from all the guilt of our past sins. You have not forgotten the day when —

*“Laden with guilt and full of fears,”*

you crept to the cross foot, and looked up and saw him suffering for you and while you believed in him the burden fell from off your shoulders, and you received a liberty unknown before. Christ is very precious to, the man who has once felt the work of the law on his conscience. I wish that some people who slight him, had been east where some of us once lay, in spiritual wretchedness and deep depression of spirit. Oh, the misery of a tortured conscience! We trembled in anticipation of the flames of hell, while our sins stared us in the face; but in an instant, by virtue of the application of the precious blood, fear was gone, guilt disappeared, and we were reconciled to God by Christ Jesus. Is he not precious if this has been the case?

Beside this, he has emancipated us from the chains of sin. Aforetime passions mastered us; the flesh stood at the helm and steered the vessel which way it would. Sometimes a fierce self-will, at another time the baser passions of the flesh ruled us. We could not overcome ourselves; Satan and the flesh were tyrants over us; but now the vices once so dear have become detestable, the chains of sin are broken, and we, are the Lord's free men; and though sin strives to get the mastery over us and we have much to mourn over, yet that same sword which has slain, some sins is close at the throat of others, and by grace divine we know that we shall slay them all ere long. There is such a change in the character of some in this place, to my knowledge, that Christ, the great, transformer, must be precious to them. Once at the ale-house where sinners congregate; once frequenting nameless haunts of vice; once a swearer, once passionate, once dishonest, once a liar, once everything that is evil; but now washed and sanctified you cannot but prize your Deliverer. Oh, when I meet the re. formed drunkard, and when I gaze into the face of the Magdalene, who now rejoices to wash the Savior's feet with her tears, I know that to such he is precious. A renewed character going with pardoned sin, as it always does, endears the Savior to the soul.

And, O beloved, beside that, he is precious to us because he has changed the whole bent and current of our thoughts. We were selfish once, and cared for nothing else; but since the Lord Jesus Christ has saved us we serve not self but Christ; we do not live now to hoard money, or to get ourselves honor, or even to save our own souls; for that is completed; we now rise above the groveling love of self, and our whole being is devoted to Jesus. He is precious beyond all price, for he has taught us to live for God's glory, and for the welfare of our fellow men.

He is precious to us by experience, because he has helped us in many a dark hour of trial. I shall not tell you tonight how often he has cheered me. If any spirit here is more than ordinarily inclined to despondency, perhaps it is mine; but, ah, the sustaining influences of the presence of Christ. I can rise even to the seventh heaven of ecstasy when I do but fully come back to a simple faith in his precious name. Some of us could not live without Jesus Christ. It has come to this — it is hell here if we do not have Christ with us. I remember slipping the cable of my belief once, and being driven out to sea before a furious wind of doubt. At first I reveled in that speedy sailing across a sea of fierce unbelief; but, ah, when I began to see whither I was going and when I stood at the prow of the vessel and marked bite dreary cloud-land that lay before me, and knew not what rocks might be ahead, I felt a horror of great darkness, and cried for deliverance right loudly, and was glad when the anchor held fast again and my dreadful cruise was over. On Christ my soul has a hold as tight as the drowning man's death-grip, and I cling with all my might to his everlasting love, his personal love to my poor soul, and to the merit of his substitutionary sacrifice on my behalf. Believe me, he is precious to all whose whole mental thought has come to an anchorage in him, whose faculties feel that their utmost reach and stretch cannot go beyond him, for he is all in all. Yes, the text says, "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious."

Perhaps you imagine that I speak only of the past as though Jesus had been precious. I meant that; but he is precious now: "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious." When one of the saintly martyrs had been tormented by persecutors they said to him, "What can Christ do for you now?" and he replied, "He can help me to bear with patience that which you inflict upon me." When the murdered Covenanter's head was carried by the dragoon to the poor bereaved wife, and he asked her what she thought of her husband's face now, she said that he never looked bonnier when he lived than he did now that he had given up his life for Christ.

Verily, we can say today, that Christ never looked bonnier than he does tonight, when we think of him as slain for us. We could gladly sing that hymn —

*“If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now.”*

Some people grow less level? upon close acquaintance, but all lovers of Christ, testify that his beauties bear the closest inspection; those who lie in his bosom longest love him best, and those who have served him seventy years, are the most fluent, and also the most sincere, in singing his praises. O, he is a most precious Savior now! Young man, do you trust Christ tonight? If you do, he is precious to you, and if he is not precious to you, then you have not believed in him. May you be led to do so by the power of his Spirit, and then Christ will be precious to you indeed!

But I must add, although Christ is precious to us now on account of past experience and present, enjoyment, he is precious to us with a dash of expectation. We expect soon to enter the cold shades of death, and it will be precious to have the Savior with us then. The question will sometimes come over every thoughtful mind, — “Shall we, after all, die when we die? Are we like so many mites in a cheese, and shall we soon be crushed out; of being, and cease to be?” Oh, dark and dreary thought! But, then, we remember that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, — if any historical fact is certain, that is. There may be doubts about whether Caesar was slain by Brutus, or whether Alfred was ever king in England, for there are not evidences one half so positive on those points as those which prove the resurrection of the Savior. I know not that anybody died as a witness for Caesar’s death, but many shed their blood joyfully rather than deny that the Christ who was hanged upon the cross actually rose again from the tomb. In that fact lies our hope of resurrection. A man, a real man, who died on a tree, has risen from the dead, and we are one with that glorious man, who was also God, and because he lives, we shall live also! He is precious to us when we think of dying, and that should not be seldom. We shall soon come to it. Those who are strongest and most hale are nearing their last hour, and those who are sickly are nearer still, it may be. Oh, it is sweet to have Christ to live with, for then — let death come when it, may, it will be a joyful thing for us, and once reconciled to our Maker through his Son, what have we to fear?

**3.** Some Christians seldom acknowledge that **THEY ARE SUCH** It is a beggarly business to love Christ in a corner and to be ashamed to own him.

He was never ashamed to confess himself the sinner's friend, yet, there are sinners who profess to be saved by him who are ashamed to be known as his followers. "O," says one, "If I were to say I am a follower of the Crucified, and join with his church and people, I should expect, to be laughed at." And are you afraid of a fool's laughter? Was Christ ashamed to be laughed at for you? O, coward, to be ashamed to be ridiculed for him! "O, but my friends would make a hubbub at, home." And did not his friends, who should have helped him, cast him out and reject him? Yet he bore it for your sake. O, craven spirits that will not take sides with Jesus; take heed when he cometh for those who deny him before men, shall be themselves denied before God and the holy angels. This day the standard floats in the breeze; let all who are on Christ's side rally to it, for the hosts on the other side are many and bold. The foes of Jesus insult; him to his face — some deny his deity and others thrust a human priest into his place.

*Ye that are men now serve him  
Against unnumbered foes;  
Your courage rise with danger,  
And strength to strength oppose."*

If he is precious to you, you will never blush to be called a fool for his sake.

Those who really judge Jesus to be precious rejoice in possessing him. One cannot understand those Christians who say, "Christ is mine," and yet go fretting and worrying through life. Dear brother, if Christ is yours, you have no cause for fretting. "What, none?" saith one. "I am very poor." You are not poor. He who can call Christ his own cannot be poor. "But I am comfortless." How can that be, when the Lord Jesus has given you a comforter? "But I am bereaved." Truly so, but you have not lost your Lord. Come, dear brother, if a man were to go through the streets of London with twenty thousand pounds in his pocket, and, when he reached the bank, found that a thief had stolen his cotton pocket handkerchief, I think the reflection that would rise in his mind would be.. "Thank God I have not lost my money," and the very loss of his handkerchief would only make him the more grateful that he had not lost his treasures. Look on all things you have here as nothing compared with. Jesus, and say, —

*"How can bereaved be  
Since I cannot part; with thee?"*

If you esteem Christ as you should, you will refuse, to give him up at any cost, and under any circumstances you will hold to what you believe. You will have to suffer loss, it may be, in social position or in business. Very well do it gladly, and only wish you could suffer more for his dear sake. One might almost; envy the martyrs, that they could earn that ruby crown which is not now within our reach, Let us at any rate be willing to take such little rebukes and rebuffs as may be given us for Christ's sake. If you love Jesus Christ, my brothers and sisters, you will be willing to make sacrifices for his cause. I wish this spirit were abroad throughout all the church, that Christ was really precious to saints, so that they consecrated themselves and their substance to him. We want personal, consecration. I have heard that word pronounced "purse-and-all consecration," a most excellent pronunciation certainly. He who loves Jesus consecrates to him all that he has, and feels it a delight that he may lay anything at the feet of him who laid down his life for us.

Once mere, he who really has this; high estimate of Jesus will think much of him, and as the thoughts are sure to run over at the month, he will talk much of him. Do we so? If Jesus is precious to you, you will not be able to keep your good news to yourself; you will be whispering it into your child's ear; you will be telling it to your husband; you will be earnestly imparting it to your friend; without the charms of eloquence you will be more than. eloquent; your heart will speak, and your eyes will flash as you talk of his sweet love. Every Christian here is either a missionary or an impostor, Recollect that. You either try to spread abroad the kingdom of Christ, or else you do not love him at all. It cannot be that there is a high appreciation of Jesus. and a totally silent, tongue about him. Of course I do not mean by that, that those who use the pen are silent: they are not. And those who help others to use the tongue, or spread that which others have written, are doing their part well: but that man who says, "I believe in Jesus," but does not think enough of Jesus ever to tell another about him, by mouth, or pen, or tract, is an impostor. You are either doing good, or you are not good yourself. If thou knowest Christ thou art as one that has found honey; thou wilt call others to taste of it; thou. art like the lepers who found the food which the Syrians had east away; thou wilt go to Samaria and tell the hungry crowd that thou hast found. Jesus, and art anxious that they should find him too. Be wise in your generation, and speak of him in fit, ting ways and at fitting times, and so in every place proclaim the fact that Jesus is most precious to your soul.

# “FORWARD.”

**BEING THE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY  
C. H. SPURGEON,**

**AT THE COLLEGE CONFERENCE, ON TUESDAY MORNING,  
APRIL 14, 1874.**

BRETHREN, the substance of my address this morning will be found in the words of God to his servant Moses, “Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.” “Forward” is the watchword of our Conference, let it ring through your ranks. Onward, ye elect of God! victory is before you your very safety lies in that direction. To retreat is to perish. You have most of you read the story of the boy in an American village who climbed the wall of the famous Natural Bridge, and cut his name in the rock above the initials of his fellows, and then became suddenly aware of the impossibility of descending. Voices shouted, “Do not look down, try and reach the top.” His only hope was to go right up, up, up, till he landed on the top. Upward. was terrible, but downward was destruction. Now, we, dear brethren, are all of us in a like condition. By the help of God we have cut our way to positions of usefulness, and to descend is death. To us forward means upward; and therefore forward and upward let us go. While we prayed this morning we committed ourselves beyond all recall. We did that most heartily when we first preached the gospel, and publicly declared, “I am my Lord’s, and he is mine.” We put our hand to the plough: thank God, we have not looked back yet, and we must never do so. The only way open to us is to plough right, on to the end of the furrow, and never think of leaving the field till the Master shall call us home. But this morning you committed yourselves again to the Lord’s work; you did not deliberate, and consult with flesh and blood, but you plunged right in, renouncing all for Jesus, and except ye be reprobates ye have enlisted for life in the service of Jesus. You are the branded servants of Christ, bearing in your bodies his mark. You have now no liberty to serve another, you are the sworn soldiers of the Crucified. Forward is your only way; you are shut up to it. You have no armor for your backs, and whatever dangers lie in front there are ten thousand times as many be, hind. It is onward, or nothing; nay, onward or dishonor; onward, or death

We were compared last night, in the eloquent address of our friend Mr. Gange, to the little army of Sir Garnet Wolseley marching to Coomassie; and the parallel was very beautifully worked out in all respects. Fellow-soldiers! we are few, and we have a desperate fight in the bush before us, therefore it is needful that every man should be made the most of, and nerved to his highest point of strength. It is desirable that you should be the picked men of the church, yea, of the entire universe, for such the age demands, therefore it is as to yourselves that I am most concerned that you should go forward. You must go forward in personal attainments, growing in gifts and in grace, in fitness for the work of God, and conformity to the image of Jesus. The points I shall speak upon begin at the bottom, and ascend.

**1.** First, dear brethren, I think it necessary to say to myself and to you that we must go forward in our mental acquirements. It will never do for us to continually present; ourselves to God at our worst. We are not worth his having at our best; but at any rate let not the offering be maimed and blemished by our idleness. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" is, perhaps, more easy to comply with than to love him with all our mind; yet we must give him our mind as well as our affections, and that mind should be well furnished, that we may not, offer him an empty casket. Our ministry demands mind. I shall not insist upon "the enlightenment of the age," still it is quite certain that there is a great educational advance among all classes, and that there will be much more of it. The time is passed when ungrammatical speech will suffice for a preacher. Even in a country village, where, according to tradition, "nobody knows nothing," the schoolmaster is now abroad, and want of education will hinder usefulness more than it once did, for, when the speaker wishes his audience to remember the gospel, they on the other hand will remember his ungrammatical expressions, and will repeat them as a theme of jest, when we could have wished they had rehearsed the gospel of Jesus Christ one to another in solemn earnest. Dear brethren, we must cultivate ourselves to the highest possible point, and do this first by gathering in knowledge that we may fill the barn, then by acquiring discrimination that we may winnow the heap, and lastly by a firm retentiveness of mind, which lays up the winnowed grain in the storehouse. The three points may not be equally important, but they are necessary to a complete man.

We must, I say, make great efforts to acquire information, especially of a Biblical kind. We must not confine ourselves to one topic of study, or we

shall not exercise our whole mental manhood. God made the world for man, and made man with a mind intended to occupy and use all the world; he is the tenant, and nature is for a while his house; why should he shut himself out of any of its rooms? Why refuse to taste any of the cleansed meats the great Father has put upon the table? Still, our main business is to study the Scriptures. The smith's main business is to shoe horses; let him see that he knows how to do it, for should he be able to belt an angel with a girdle of gold he will fail as a smith if he cannot make and fix a horse-shoe. It is a small matter that you should be able to write the most brilliant poetry, as possibly you could, unless you can preach a good and telling sermon, which will have the effect of comforting saints and convincing sinners. Study the Bible, dear brethren, through and through, with all helps that you can possibly obtain: remember that the appliances now within the reach of ordinary Christians are much more extensive than they were in our father's days, and therefore you must be greater Biblical scholars if you would keep in front of your hearers. Intermeddle with all knowledge, but above all things meditate day and night in the law of the Lord.

Be well instructed in theology, and do not regard the sneers of those who rail at it because they are ignorant of it. Many preachers are not theologians, and hence the mistakes which they make. It cannot do any hurt to the most lively evangelist to be also a sound theologian, and it may often be the means of saving him from gross blunders. Now-a-days we hear men tear a single sentence of Scripture from its connection, and cry "Eureka! Eureka!" as if they had found a new truth; and yet they have not discovered a diamond, but a piece of broken glass. Had they been able to compare spiritual things with spiritual, had they understood the analogy of the faith, and had they been acquainted with the holy learning of the great Bible students of ages past, they would not have been quite so fast, in vaunting their marvelous knowledge. Let us be thoroughly well acquainted with the great doctrines of the Word of God, and let us be mighty in expounding Scripture. I am sure that no preaching will last so long, or build up a church so well, as the expository. To renounce altogether the hortatory discourse for the expository would be running to a preposterous extreme; but I cannot too earnestly assure you that if your ministries are to be lastingly useful you must be expositors. For this you must understand the Word yourselves, and be able so to comment upon it that the people may be built up by the Word. Be masters of your Bibles,, brethren; whatever other works you have not searched, be at home with the

‘writings of the prophets and apostles. “Let the word of God dwell in you richly.” Having given that the precedence, neglect no field of knowledge. The presence of Jesus on the earth has sanctified the realms of nature, and what he has cleansed call not you common. All that your Father has made is yours, and you should learn from it. You may read a naturalist’s journal, or a traveler’s voyage, and find profit in it. Yes, and even. an old herbal, or a manual of alchemy may, like Samson’s dead lion, yield you honey. There are pearls ill oyster shells, and[fruits on thorny boughs. The paths of true science, especially natural history and botany, drop fatness. Geology, so far as it is fact, and not fiction, is full of treasures. History — wonderful are the visions which it makes to pass before you — is eminently instructive; indeed, every portion of God’s dominion in nature teems with precious teachings. Intermeddle with all knowledge, according as you have the time, the opportunity, and the peculiar faculty; and do not hesitate to do so because of any apprehension that you will educate yourselves up to too high a point. When grace abounds, learning will not puff you up, or injure your simplicity in the gospel. Serve God with such education as you have, and thank him for blowing through you if you are a ram’s horn, but if there be a possibility of your becoming a silver trumpet, choose it rather.

I have said that we must learn always to discriminate, and at this particular time this point needs insisting on. Many run after novelties, charmed with every new thing; learn to judge between truth and its counterfeits, and you will not be led astray. Others adhere like limpets to old teachings, and yet these may only be ancient errors: prove all things, and hold fast that which is good. The use of the sieve, and the winnowing fan, is much to be commended. Dear brethren, a man who has asked of the Lord to give him clear eyes by which he shall see the truth and discern its bearings, and who, by reason of the constant exercise of his faculties, has obtained an accurate judgment, is one fit to be a leader of the Lord’s host, but all are not such. It is painful to observe how many embrace anything if it be but earnestly brought before them. They swallow the medicine of every spiritual quack who has enough of brazen assurance to appear to be sincere. Be not children in understanding, test that which claims your faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you the faculty of discerning, so shall you conduct your flocks far from poisonous meadows, and lead them into safe pasturage.

But then, if you have the power to acquire knowledge, and also to discriminate, seek next for ability to retain and hold firmly what you have learned. Alas, in these times certain men glory in being weathercocks, they

hold fast nothing, they have, in fact, nothing worth the holding. They believed yesterday, but not that which they believe today, nor that which they will believe tomorrow; and he would be a greater prophet than Isaiah who should be able to tell what they will believe when next the moon doth fill her horns, for they are constantly changing, and seem to be born under that said moon, and to partake of her changing moods. These men may be as honest as they claim to be, but of what use are they? Like good trees oftentimes transplanted, they may be of a noble nature, but they bring forth nothing; their strength goes out in rooting and rerooting, they have no sap to spare for fruit. Be sure you have the truth, and then be sure you hold it. Be ready for fresh truth, if it be truth, but be very chary how you subscribe to the belief that a better light has been found than that of the sun. Those who hawk new truth about the street, as the boys do a new edition of the evening paper, are usually no better than they should be. The fair maid of truth does not paint her cheeks and tire her head like Jezebel, following every new philosophic fashion; she is content with her own native beauty, and in her aspect she is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. When men change often they generally need to be changed in the most; emphatic sense. Our “modern thought” gentry are doing incalculable mischief to the souls of men, and resemble Nero fiddling upon the top of a tower, with Rome burning at his feet. Souls are being damned, and yet these men are spinning theories. Hell gapes wide, and with her open mouth swallows up myriads, and those who should spread the tidings of salvation are “pursuing fresh lines of thought.” Highly cultured soul-murderers will find their boasted “culture” to be no excuse in the day of judgment. For God’s sake, let us know how men are to be saved and get to the work; to be for ever deliberating as to the proper mode of making bread while a nation dies of famine is detestable trifling. It is time we knew what to teach, or else renounced our office. “For ever learning and never coming to the truth” is the motto of the worst rather than the best of men. I saw in Rome a statue of a boy extracting a thorn from his foot; I went my way, and returned in a year’s time, and there sat the, selfsame boy extracting the intruder still. Is this to be our model? “I shape my creed every week” was the confession of one of these divines to me. Whereunto shall I liken such unsettled ones? Are they not like those birds which frequent the Golden Horn, and are to be seen from Constantinople, of which it is said that they are always on the wing, and never rest? No one ever saw them alight on the water or on the land, they are for ever poised in mid-air. The natives call them “lost souls,” seeking rest and finding none. And, methinks, men who have no personal

rest in the truth, if they are not unsaved themselves, are, at least, very unlikely to save others. He who has no assured truth to tell must not wonder if his hearers set small store by him. We must know the truth, understand it, and hold it with firm grip, or we cannot be of service amongst the sons of men. Brethren, I charge you, seek to know, and, knowing, to discriminate; having discriminated, I charge you “hold fast that which is good.” Keep in full operation the processes of filling the barn, winnowing the grain:, and storing it in granaries, so shall you mentally “Go forward.”

**2.** We need to go forward in oratorical qualifications. I am beginning at the bottom, but even this is important, for it is a pity that even the feet of this image should be of clay. Nothing is trifling which can be of any service to our grand design. Only for want of a nail the horse lost its shoe, and so became unfit for the battle; that shoe was only a trifling rim of iron which smote the ground, and yet the neck clothed with thunder was of no avail when the shoe was gone. A man may be irretrievably ruined for spiritual usefulness, not because he fails either in character or spirit, but because he breaks down mentally or oratorically, and, therefore, I have begun with these points, and again remark that we must improve in utterance. It is not every one of us who can speak as some can do, and even these men cannot speak up to their own ideal. If there be any brother here who thinks he can preach as well as he should, I would advise him to leave off altogether. If he did so he would be acting as wisely as the great painter who broke his palette, and, turning to his wife, said, “My painting days are over, for I have satisfied myself, and therefore I am sure my power is gone.” Whatever other perfection may be reachable, I am certain that he who thinks he has gained perfection in oratory mistakes volubility for eloquence, and verbiage for argument. Whatever you may know, you cannot be truly efficient ministers if you are not “apt to teach.” You know ministers who have mistaken their calling, and evidently have no gifts for it: make sure that none think the same of you. There are brethren in the ministry whose speech is intolerable; either they dun you to death, or else they send you to sleep. No chloral can ever equal their discourse in sleep-giving properties. No human being, unless gifted with infinite patience, could long endure to listen to them, and nature does well to give the victim deliverance through sleep. I heard one say the other day that a certain preacher had no more gifts for the ministry than an oyster, and in my own judgment this was a slander on the oyster, for that worthy bivalve shows

great discretion in his openings, and knows when to close. If some men were sentenced to hear their own sermons it would be a righteous judgment upon them, but they would soon cry out with Cain, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." Let us not fall under the same condemnation.

Brethren, we should cultivate a clear style. When a man does not make me understand what he means, it is because he does not himself know what he means. An average hearer, who is unable to follow the course of thought of the preacher, ought; not to worry himself, but to blame the preacher, whose business it is to make the matter clear. If you look down into a well, if it be empty it will appear to be very deep, but if there be water in it you will see its brightness. I believe that many "deep" preachers are simply so because they are like dry wells with nothing whatever in them, except decaying leaves, a few stones, and perhaps a dead cat or two. If there be living water in your preaching it may be very deep, but the light of the truth will give, clearness to it. At any rate labor to be plain, so that the truths you teach may be easily received by your hearers.

We must cultivate a cogent as well as a clear style; we must be forceful. Some imagine that this consists in speaking loudly, but I can assure them they are, in error. Nonsense does not improve by being bellowed. God does not require us to shout as if we were speaking to three millions when we are only addressing three hundred. Let us be forcible by reason of the excellence of our matter, and the energy of spirit which we throw into the delivery of it. In a word, let our speaking be natural and living. I hope we have forsworn the tricks of professional orators, the strain for effect, the studied climax, the pre-arranged pause, the theatric strut, the mouthing of words, and I know not what besides, which you may see in certain pompous divines who still survive upon the face of the earth. May such become extinct; animals ere long, and may a living, natural, simple way of talking out the gospel be learned by us all; for I am persuaded that such a style is one which God is likely to bless.

Among many other things, we must cultivate persuasiveness. Some of our brethren have great influence over men, and yet others with greater gifts are devoid of it; these last do not appear to get near to the people, they cannot grip them and make them feel. There are preachers who in their sermons seem to take their hearers one by one by the button-hole, and drive the truth right into their souls, while others generalize so much, and

are so cold withal, that one would think they were speaking of dwellers in some remote planet, whose affairs did not much concern them. Learn the art of pleading with men. You will do this well if you often see the Lord. If I remember rightly, the old classic story tells us that, when a soldier was about to kill Darius, his son, who had been dumb from his childhood, suddenly cried out in surprise. Know you not that he is the king?" His silent tongue was unloosed by love to his father, and well may ours find earnest speech when the Lord is seen by us crucified for sin. If there be any speech in us, this will rouse it. The knowledge of the terrors of the Lord should also bestir us to persuade men. We cannot do other than plead with: them to be reconciled to God. Brethren, mark those who woo sinners to Jesus, find out their secret, and never rest till you obtain the. same power. If you find them very simple and homely yet. if you see them really useful, say to yourself, "That will do for me;" but if on the other hand you listen to a preacher who is much admired, and on inquiry find that no souls are savingly converted, say to yourself; "This is not the thing for me, for I am not seeking to be great, but to be really useful."

Let your oratory, therefore, constantly improve in clearness, cogency, naturalness, and persuasiveness. Try, dear brethren, to get such a style of speaking that you suit yourselves to your audiences. Much lies in that. The preacher who should address an educated congregation in the language which he would use in speaking to a company of costermongers would prove himself a fool: and on the other hand he who goes. down amongst miners and colliers, with technical theological terms and drawing-room phrases, acts like an idiot. The confusion of tongues at Babel was more thorough than we imagine. It did not; merely give different languages to great nations, but it made the speech of each class to vary from that of others. A fellow of Billingsgate cannot understand a fellow of Brazenose. Now as the costermonger cannot learn the language of the college, let the college learn the language of the costermonger. "We use the language of the market," said Whitfield, and this was much to his honor; yet when he stood in the drawing-room of the Countess of Huntingdon, and his speech entranced the infidel noblemen whom she brought to hear him, he adopted another style. His language was equally plain in each ease, because it was equally familiar to the audience: he did not use the ipsissima verba, else his language would have lost its plainness in the one case or the other, and would either have been slang to the nobility or Greek to the crowd. In. our modes of speech we should aim at being "all things to all men." He is the

greatest master of oratory who is able to address any class of people in a manner suitable to their condition, and likely to touch their hearts.

Brethren, let none excel us in power of speech: let none surpass us in the mastery of our mother-tongue. Beloved fellow-soldiers, our tongues are the swords which God has given us to use for him, even as it is said of our Lord, "Out of his mouth went a two-edged sword." Let these swords be sharp. Cultivate your powers of speech, and be amongst the foremost, in the land for utterance. I do not exhort you to this because you are remarkably deficient; far from it, for everybody says to me, "We know the college men by their plain, bold speech." This leads me to believe that you have the gift largely in you, and I beseech you to take pains to perfect it.

**3.** Brethren, we must be even more earnest to go forward in moral qualities. Let the points I shall mention here come home to those who shall require them, but I assure you I have no special persons among you in my mind's eye. We desire to rise to the highest style of ministry, and if so, even if we obtain the mental and oratorical qualifications, we shall fail, unless we also possess high moral qualities.

There are evils which we must shake off, as Paul shook the viper from his hand, and there are virtues which we must gain at any cost.

Self-indulgence has slain its thousands. Let us tremble lest we perish by the hands of this Delilah. Let us have every passion and habit under due restraint: if we are not masters of ourselves we are not fit to be leaders in the church.

We must put away all notion of self-importance. God will not bless the man who thinks himself great. To glory even in the work of God the Holy Spirit in yourself, is to tread dangerously near to self-adulation. "Let another praise thee, and not thine own lips," and be very glad when that other has sense enough to hold his tongue.

We must also have our tempers well under restraint. A vigorous temper is not altogether an evil. Men who are as easy as an old shoe are generally of as little worth. I would not say to you, "Dear brethren, have a temper," but I do say, "If you have it, control it carefully." I thank God when I see a minister have temper enough to be indignant at wrong, and to be firm for the right; still, temper is an edged tool, and often cuts the man who handles it. "Gentle, easy to be entreated," preferring to bear evil rather than inflict it, this is to be our spirit. If any brother here naturally boils over too soon,

let him mind that when he does do so, he scalds nobody but the devil, and then let him boil away.

We must conquer — some of us especially — our tendency to levity. A great distinction exists between holy cheerfulness, which is a virtue, and that general levity, which is a vice. There is a levity which has not enough heart to laugh, but trifles with everything; it is flippant, hollow, unreal. A hearty laugh is no more levity than a hearty cry. I speak of that religious veneering which is pretentious, but thin, superficial, insincere about the weightiest matters. Godliness is no jest, nor is it a mere form. Beware of being actors. Never give earnest men the impression that you do not mean what you say, and are mere professionals, To be burning at the lip and freezing at the soul is a mark of reprobation. God deliver us from being superfine and superficial may we never be the butterflies of the garden of God.

At the same time, we should avoid everything like the ferocity of bigotry. There are religious people about, who, I have no doubt, were born of a woman, but appear to have been suckled by a wolf. I have done them no dishonor: were not; Romulus and Remus, the founders of the city of Rome, so fed? Some warlike men of this order have had power to found dynasties of thought; but human kindness and brotherly love consort better with the kingdom of Christ. We are not to be always going about the world searching out heresies, like terrier dogs sniffing for rats, and to be always so confident of one's own infallibility, that; we erect ecclesiastical stakes at which to roast all who differ from us, not, 'tis true, with fagots of wood, but with those coals of juniper, which consist of strong prejudice and cruel, suspicion.

In addition to all this, there are mannerisms, and moods, and ways which I cannot now describe, against which we must, struggle, for little faults may often be the source of failure, and to get rid of them may be the secret of success. Count nothing little which makes you even a little more useful; cleanse out from the temple of your soul the seats of them that sell doves as well as the traffickers in sheep and oxen.

And, dear brethren, we must acquire certain moral faculties and habits, as well as put aside their opposites. He will never do much for God who has not integrity of spirit. If we be guided by policy, if there be any mode of action for us but, that which is straightforward, we shall make shipwreck before long. Resolve, Clear brethren, that you can be poor, that you can be

despised, that you can lose life itself, but thin; you cannot do a crooked, thing. For you, let the only policy be honestly.

May you also possess the grand moral characteristic of courage. By this we do not mean impertinence, impatience, or self-conceit; but real courage to do and say calmly the right thing, and to go straight on at all hazards, though there should be none to give you a good word. I am astonished at the number of Christians who are afraid to speak the truth to their brethren. I thank God I can say this, there is no member of my church, no officer of the church, and no man in the world to whom I am afraid to say before his face what I would say behind his back. Under God. I owe my position in my own church to the absence of all policy, and the habit of saying what I mean. The plan of making things pleasant all round is a perilous as well as a wicked one. If you say one thing to one man, and another to another, they will one day compare notes and find you out, and then you will be despised. The man of two faces will sooner or later be the object of contempt, and justly so. Now, above all things, avoid that. If you have anything that; you feel you ought to say about a man, let the measure of what you say be this — “How much dare I say to his face?” We must not allow ourselves a word more in censure of any man living. If that be your rule, your courage will save you from a thousand difficulties, and win you lasting respect.

Having the integrity and the courage, dear brethren, may you be gifted with an indomitable zeal. Zeal — what is it? How shall I describe it? Possess it, and you will know what it is. Be consumed with love for Christ, and let the flame burn continuously, not flaming up at public meetings and dying out in the routine work of every day. We need indomitable perseverance, dogged zeal, and a combination of sacred obstinacy, self-denial, holy gentleness, and invincible courage.

Excel also in one power, which is both mental and moral, namely, the power of concentrating all your forces upon the work to which you are called. Collect your thoughts, rally all your faculties, mass your energies, focus your capacities. Turn all the springs of your soul into one channel, causing it to flow onward in an undivided stream. Some men lack this quality. They scatter themselves and fail. Mass your battalions, and hurl them upon the enemy. Do not try to be great at this and great at that — to be “everything by turns, and nothing long,” but suffer your entire nature to

be led in captivity by Jesus Christ, and lay everything at his dear feet who bled and died for you.

**4.** Above all these, we need spiritual qualifications, graces which must be wrought in us by the Lord himself. This is the main matter, I am sure. Other things are precious, but this is priceless; we must be rich towards God.

We need to know ourselves. The preacher should be great in the science of the heart, the philosophy of inward experience. There are two schools of experience, and neither is content to learn from the other; let us be content, however, to learn from both. The one school speaks of the child of God as one who knows the deep depravity of his heart, who understands the loathsomeness of his nature, and daily feels that in his flesh there dwelleth no good thing. "That man has not the life of 'God in his soul,'" say they, "who does not know and feel this, and feel it by bitter and painful experience from day to day." It's in vain to talk to them about liberty, and joy in the Holy Ghost; they will not have it. Let us learn from these one-sided brethren. They know much that should be known, and woe to that minister who ignores their set of truths. Martin Luther used to say that temptation is the best teacher for a minister. There is truth on that side of the question. Another school of believers dwell much upon the glorious work of the Spirit of God, and rightly and blessedly so. They believe in the Spirit of God as a cleansing power, sweeping the Augean stable of the soul, and making it into a temple for God. But frequently they talk as if they had ceased to sin, or to be annoyed by temptation, they glory as if the battle were already fought, and the victory won. Let us learn from these brethren. All the truth they can teach us let us know. Let us become familiar with the hill-tops and the glory that shines thereon, the Hermons and the Tabors, where we may be transfigured with our Lord. Do not be afraid of ever growing too holy. Do not be afraid of being too full of the Holy Spirit. I would have you wise on all sides, and able to deal with man both in his conflicts and in his joys, as one familiar with both. Know where Adam left you; know where the Spirit of God has placed you. Do not know either of these so exclusively as to forget the other. I believe that if any men are likely to cry, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" it will always be the ministers, because we need to be tempted in all points, so that we may be able to comfort others. In a railway carriage last week I saw a poor man with his leg placed upon the seat. An official happening to see him in this posture, remarked!

“Those cushions were not made for you to put your dirty boots on.” As soon as the guard was gone the man put up his leg again, and said to me, “He never broke his leg in two places, I am sure, or he would not be so sharp with me.” When I have heard brethren who have lived at ease, enjoying good incomes, condemning others who are much tried, because they could not rejoice in their fashion, I have felt that they knew nothing of the broken bones which others have to carry throughout the whole of their pilgrimage.

Brethren, know man, in Christ and out of Christ; Study him at his best, and study him at his worst; know his anatomy, his secrets, and his passions. You cannot do this by books; you must have personal spiritual, experience; God alone can give you that.

Among’ spiritual acquirements, it is beyond all other things needful to know him. who is the sure remedy for all human diseases. Know Jesus. Sit at his feet. Consider his nature, his work, his sufferings, his glory. Rejoice in his presence: commune with him from day today. To know Christ is to understand the most excellent of sciences. You cannot fail to be wise if you commune with wisdom; you cannot miss of strength if you have fellowship with the mighty Son of God. I saw the other day in a grotto a little fern, which grew where its leaves continually glistened and danced in the spray of a fountain. It was always green, and neither summer’s drought nor winter’s cold affected it. So let us for ever abide under the sweet influence of Jesus’ love. Dwell in God, brethren; not sometimes go to him, but abide in him. They say in Italy that where the sun does not. enter the physician must. Where Jesus does not shine the soul is sick. Bask in his beams and you shall be vigorous in the service of the Lord. Last Sunday night I had a text which mastered me: — “No man knoweth the Son but the Father.” I told the people that poor sinners who had gone to Jesus and trusted him, thought they knew him, but that they knew only a little of him. Saints of sixty years’ experience, who have walked with him every day, think they know him; but they are only beginners yet. The perfect spirits before the throne, who have been for five thousand years perpetually adoring him, perhaps think they know him. but they do not to the full. “No man knoweth the Son but the Father.” He is so glorious, that only the infinite God has full knowledge of him, therefore there will be no limit to our study, or narrowness in our line of thought, if we make our Lord the great object of all our thoughts.

Brethren, as the outcome of this, if we are to be strong men, we must be conformed to our Lord. Oh, to be like him! Blessed be that cross on which we shall suffer, if we suffer for being made like unto the Lord Jesus. If we obtain conformity to Christ, we shall have a wondrous unction upon our ministry, and without that, what is a ministry worth?

In a word, we must labor for holiness of character. What is holiness? Is it not wholeness of character? a balanced condition in which there is neither lack nor redundancy. It is not morality, that is a cold, lifeless statue: holiness is life. You must have holiness; and, dear brethren, if you should fail in mental qualifications (as I hope you will not), and if you should have a slender measure of the oratorical faculty (as I trust you will not), yet, depend upon it, a holy life is, in itself, a wonderful power, and will make up for many deficiencies; it is, in fact, the best sermon the best man. can deliver. Let us resolve that all the purity which can be had we will have, that all the sanctity which can be reached we will obtain, and that all the likeness to Christ that is possible in this world of sin shall certainly be in us through the work of the Spirit of God. The Lord lift us all as a college, right up to a higher platform, and he shall have the glory!

**5.** Still I have not done, dear brethren. I have to say to you, go forward in actual work, for, after all, we shall be known by what we have done. Like the apostles, I hope our memorial will be our acts. There are good brethren in the world who are impractical. The grand doctrine of the second advent makes them stand with open mouths, peering into the skies, so that I am ready to say, "Ye men of Plymouth, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven?" The fact that Jesus Christ is to come is not a reason to star-gazing, but for working in the power of the Holy Ghost. Be not so taken up with speculations as to prefer a Bible reading over a dark passage in the Revelation to teaching in a ragged-school or discoursing to the poor concerning Jesus. We must have done with day dreams, and get to work. I believe in eggs, but we must get chickens out of them. I do not mind. how big your egg is; it may be an ostrich's egg if you like, but if there is nothing in it, pray clear away the shells. If something comes of it, God bless your speculations, and even if you should go a little further than I think it wise to venture, still, if you are more useful, God be praised for it. We want facts — deeds done, souls saved. It is all very well to write essays, but what souls have you saved from going down to hell? Your excellent management of your school interests me, but how many children have been brought into the church by it? We are glad to hear of those special

meetings, but how many have really been born to God in them? Are saints edified? Are sinners converted? To swing to and fro on a five — barred gate is not progress, yet some seem to think so. I see them in perpetual Elysium, humming over to themselves and their friends, “We are very comfortable.” God save us from living in comfort while sinners are sinking into hell. In travelling along the mountain roads in Switzerland you will continually see marks of the boring-rod; and in every minister’s life there should be traces of stern labor. Brethren, do something; do something; do something. While committees waste their time over resolutions, do something. While Societies and Unions are making constitutions, let us win souls. Too often we discuss, and discuss, and discuss, and Satan laughs in his sleeve. It is time we had done planning and sought something to plan. I pray you, be men of action all of you. Get to work and quit yourselves like men. Old Suwarrow’s idea of war is mine: Forward and strike! No theory! Attack! Form column! Charge bayonets! Plunge into the center of the enemy.” Our one aim is to save sinners, and this we are not to talk about but to do in the power of God.

**6.** Lastly, and here I am going to deliver a message which weighs upon me, go forward in the matter of the choice of your sphere of action. I plead this day for those who cannot plead for themselves, namely, the great outlying masses of the heathen world. Our existing pulpits are tolerably well supplied, but we need men who will build on new foundations. Who will do this? Are we, as a company of faithful men, clear in our consciences about the heathen? Millions have never heard the name of Jesus. Hundreds of millions have seen a missionary only once in their lives, and know nothing of our King. Shall we let them perish? Can we go to our beds and sleep while China, India, Japan, and other nations are being damned? Are we clear of their blood? Have they no claim upon us? We ought to put it on this footing not “Can I prove that I ought to go?” but “Can I prove that I ought not to go?” When a man can prove honestly that he ought not to go then he is clear, but not else. What answer do you give, my brethren? I put it to you man by man. I am not raising a question among you which I have not honestly put to myself. I have felt that if some of our leading ministers would go forth it would have a grand effect in stimulating the churches, and. I have honestly asked myself whether I ought to go. After balancing the whole thing I feel bound to keep my place, and I think the judgment of most Christians would be the same; but I hope I would readily and cheerfully and willingly go if I did not so feel. Brethren, put yourselves

through the same process. We must have the heathen converted; God has myriads of his elect among them, we must go and search for them somehow or other. Many difficulties are now removed, all lands are open to us, and distance is annihilated. True, we have not the Pentecostal gift of tongues, but languages are now readily acquired, while the art of printing is a full equivalent for the lost, gift. The dangers incident to missions ought not to keep any true man back, even if they were very great, but they are now reduced to a minimum. There are hundreds of places where the cross of Christ is unknown, to which we can go without risk. Who will go? The men who ought to go are young brethren of good abilities who have not yet taken upon themselves family cares.

Each student entering the college should consider this matter, and surrender himself to the work unless there are conclusive reasons for his not doing so. It is a fact that even for the colonies it is very difficult to find men, for I have had openings in Australia which I have been obliged to decline. It ought not to be so. Surely there is some self-sacrifice among us yet, and some among us are willing to be exiled for Jesus. The Mission languishes for want of men. If the men were forthcoming the liberality of the church would supply their needs, and, in fact, the liberality of the church has made the supply, and yet there are not the men to go. I shall never feel, brethren, that we, as a band of men, have done our duty until we see our comrades fighting for Jesus in every land in the van of the conflict. I believe that if God moves you to go, you will be among the best of missionaries, because you will make the preaching of the gospel the great feature of your work, and that is God's sure way of power. I wish that our churches would imitate that of Pastor Harms, in Germany, where every member was consecrated to God in deed and of a truth. The farmers have the produce of their lands, the working-men their labor; one gave a large house to be used as a missionary college, and Pastor Harms obtained money for a ship which he fitted out, to make voyages to Africa, and then he sent missionaries, and little companies of his people with them, to form Christian communities among the Bushmen. When will our churches be equally self-denying and energetic? Look at the Moravians! how every man and woman becomes a missionary, and how much they do in consequence. Let us catch their spirit. Is it a right spirit? Then it is right for us to have it. It is not enough for us to say, "Those Moravians are very wonderful people!" We ought to be wonderful people too. Christ did not purchase the Moravians and more than he purchased us; they are under no more

obligation to make sacrifices than we are. Why then this backwardness? When we read of heroic men who gave up all for Jesus, we are not merely to admire, but to imitate them. Who will imitate them now? Come to the point. Are there not some among you willing to consecrate yourselves to the Lord? "Forward" is the watchword today! Are there no bold spirits to lead the van? Pray all of you that during this Pentecost the Spirit may say, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work."

Brethren, on wings of love mount upward, and fly forward. Amen.

## THE SWORD THE TROWEL.

DECEMBER, 1874.

# A DOUBLE KNOCK AT THE DOOR OF THE YOUNG. <sup>fla</sup>

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“I have a message from God unto thee.” — Judges 3:20.*

MY message is not sharp and deadly like that of Ehud, who when he had pronounced the words drove at once his dagger into the heart of the tyrant king. That was the sharp message from God to him. Mine is a message not of death but of life. If anything be killed by it, I trust it may be that sin which otherwise would have killed us. Young man, young woman, “I have a message from God unto thee!”

In ordinary correspondence through the post there are four special marks which occasionally distinguish our letters, any one of which is sure to draw attention to them. There are, in like manner, four attractive features about the message I have to deliver. You sometimes receive a letter marked “Important,” or another upon which there is written “Immediate.” You will see to those at the first moment. Perhaps a third comes, “On Her Majesty’s service,” and you will look to that; but I should not wonder if the most pleasing of all in your eyes is that which is tied round with a green string. It is registered, and contains something of value, which you hope may be as precious as you wish. I have four such letters to deliver at this time to my young friends, and I shall ask: their earnest attention to them.

The first-message I have to deliver is

“IMPORTANT!”

I cannot take you by the button hole and hold you fast, but I should like you to think I am doing so, while I try to chain your ears and engage your hearts. Like the old mariner in Coleridge’s rhyme who detained the wedding

guest with his story, so would I try to detain you. Not that I have to tell you any strange legend, or to relate any re-mantic narrative; but with something practical and earnest I would hold you. Here you find yourself with a career just opening up before you, at the age of fifteen or sixteen, or it may be of one-and-twenty, or five-and-twenty. Infancy at least is behind you, and immediately before you there is the sharing of your life. The reflection you have in your mind, if you judge righteously, will be that since God has created you. and endowed you with all the faculties you possess, he has a. first claim upon you. From your own point of view it is reasonable what the Creator should demand and expect that the creatures he has formed, should answer the ends for which he save them being, and fashioned them as men, for if you construct a machine you expect to get the benefit of your own handicraft, and if after making it you spend money in its maintenance yea expect it to be useful to you. God has made us, and not we ourselves, and we are bound to render service to him. The breath in our nostrils and the pulsing in our veins come to us from an immediate act of God, and, therefore, every second of our lives we ought to live to him, else we do. not live honestly. We are raider solemn obligations that our whole life should be spent for him, and to neglect this is to rob God. Young men and women, will you not acknowledge this obligation? As you have any justice in your souls, I charge you. to do so. Will you defraud your God? I pray you be not so unjust. You see I am not trifling, I am pleading for God, my message is IMPORTANT, most IMPORTANT.

It may encourage you to accept this duty cheerfully if you remember that the service due to God which he asks of you is by no means injurious to yourself In fact his law, when condensed into a sentence, is just this, "Do thyself no harm." There is not a sin which can by any possibility be really for our benefit, neither is there a divine command, which can be for our hurt. His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all ]his paths are peace. Though in the pursuit of right we may have to suffer, the trials which are necessitated by doing right are not for a moment comparable to those pangs of conscience and agonies of remorse which are sure to follow upon the heels of doing wrong. Notwithstanding that the road to heaven is rough in places, it is a smoother road take it for all in all than yonder attractive road to hell, which so many choose. You shall find the service of God to be liberty. If ye be men, ye shall be the more manly through being servants of God. If you be happy by nature and constitution, you shall be the happier through being devoted to his service; and if you be somewhat dull and

inclined to gloom by nature, you shall find the sweetest alleviation of your constitutional depression in the grateful love and devoted service of the Most High. I have known the Lord and served him now since I was fifteen years of age through his love and mercy, and if he were a bad master I would tell you. I would not lie even for him. But I must bear him witness that it; is sweet to do his bidding, and had I done it more perfectly I had been happier than I am. But as it is, to have given my heart to him, and to have sought his glory has conferred upon my life its highest joy and its deepest satisfaction. May I ask you to think of this, and to keep on thinking about it; until you have come to this conclusion, that God is God, and. you will serve him.. I think I hear the good resolve to which you have come.. Your heart is yielding to the truth. I hope it is, for the matter is **IMPORTANT! MOST IMPORTANT!**

But I have other important things to remind you of. One is that you have not to choose how you shall begin life; for you have begun it already. Unconverted as I suppose you now to be, just reflect where the beginning of life has already placed you. You have already broken God's commands. I am not going to raise the question as to at what; time a child is capable of knowing right from wrong', and therefore becomes charged with responsibility. You have passed the period of your childhood, and you have gone through, or are nearly through the days of your youth. You have sinned, you know you have, from childhoods earliest days till now. Now before you can talk about; serving God, remember the past has to be condoned or rather to be atoned for. How is that to be done? I pray you attend to me while in a few words I deliver the glad tidings of forgiveness by Jesus Christ. It is not the first time you have heard this story, but it may be the first time you ever heeded it. Oh, believe it as I tell you it again, practically embrace it, and obey it, and it will give you relief from the guilt of your past transgressions. God was pleased out of infinite mercy to his elect to lay their sins upon Jesus Christ, his Son, their substitute and sacrifice; and Jesus Christ took at1 that mass of sin up to the cross, and there and then so suffered for it, that the sin he carried has been put away for ever, and now God can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. You say to me, "Did he carry my sin? That is the point I want to know." Those for whom Jesus was an effectual substitute are in due time known by their faith. He laid down his life for his sheep, and he has said, "My sheep hear my voice." If you believe on him your sin was laid upon him. To believe on him is to trust him. You have therefore to put; this question to yourself,

Am I trusting my whole soul with Jesus Christ, the God-appointed Savior? For, if you are so trusting, then your transgressions were laid on him and are not on you, for they cannot be on two persons at the same time. Your transgressions are alerted for, and have ceased to be, and you are forgiven. It all hinges on this — do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you rest simply, and alone in him? If so, you are reconciled to God. It seems strange that any of us should hesitate when such a gospel as this is propounded to us. If the Lord asked some great thing of us we might hesitate, but when he says simply, “I ask nothing of thee, young man, but that thou trust in the blood and righteousness of my Son, and even that trust I will bestow upon thee by the power of the Holy Spirit,” ‘tis passing strange, ‘tis wonderful, and if we did not know the baseness of the human heart it would be incredible, that men should start back and neglect the great salvation. Do not be yourself so unwise, for of all concerns this is the most IMPORTANT.

Do you know also, my dear young friend — I seem to throw myself back to the time when I was your age, and Z freely speak to you as I would have liked at that time to have been spoken to myself — do you know that in addition to the sin you have committed there is in you a tendency to sin, as you must have perceived, even though you may not have examined yourself thoroughly. You never require a teacher to lead you into the wrong path, but you do require a kindly word to conduct you aright. You know that you never want an incentive to evil, for your heart goes that way as a stone goes down hill, or as a spark ascends. There is a tendency that way. You have seen that; you must have done so. That tendency must be taken from you. The needle of your soul points now in the wrong direction; it must be magnetized in some such way that it shall point to Jesus, the true pole. Now this can be done. You cannot change your own nature; as well might a stone turn itself into a bird, or a deadly upas into the vine which beareth goodly clusters. But there is one who can do it: it is the Holy Ghost. He can change the whole bent and current of the mind, can remove tendencies to evil, and inspire aspirations after perfection. “Oh,” say you, “how I wish he would do this for me!” If you believe in Christ Jesus that work is done, that change of nature has already commenced, for there never was reliance upon Christ yet in an unrenewed heart. Wherever there is simple faith in Jesus Christ, you may rest assured that the first principles of eternal life are already implanted, which will go on to grow, and operate yet more powerfully upon your character. “Oh,”

says one, “that has taken a heavy weight from my mind: I have been looking for some great mystery!” That is all the mystery. Seeing you have believed in Jesus, you are forgiven: being forgiven, you love God for having forgiven you, and it is clear that you are a changed man, or you would not do that. Because the gospel thus reveals to you the intimate connection between the new birth, and faith, it is above all things **IMPORTANT.**

So, then, I have brought you this important message, that the Lord is able to meet your fallen condition, — its sin by pardon, its sinful tendencies by renewal; and if this be done there is before you a useful, happy life, and a glorious immortality. Young woman, if you give your heart to Jesus you are safe for time and eternity. Young man, you have, already thought of insuring your life, may your soul be insured and your character insured; and they will be if you believe in Jesus. He will not suffer you to fall away and perish. “I give,” saith he, “unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands..” The salvation which comes by faith is not temporary, but lasting; yea, everlasting. When the Lord once renews a man, he suffers him not to go back like the dog to his vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire; he turns the dog into a child, the sow into a sheep. Renewed men love purity and holiness, their tastes and desires are altered, and they cannot return to their former ways. Thrice happy is that young heart which entrusts itself to the hand of Christ, for when the evil days come and the keepers of the house do tremble, and the strong men bow themselves, you will have nothing to dread, but will accept the summons to depart with holy calmness and expectant delight. But ah, if there should be no yielding to God, and no faith in Christ, there remains only for you a life of disaster, a death of darkness, and a resurrection to shame, and everlasting contempt. The world’s mirage and pleasure’s will-o’-the-wisp will deceive for a time, but the sorrow that worketh death will be your portion here, and after death the “for ever! — the dreadful for ever! — the dreadful for ever of which we will not now speak, and which I pray you may never know by terrible experience.

So much, then, concerning the letter which is marked “IMPORTANT.”

We shall now pass on to speak of another letter — the same message indeed, but it is marked “IMMEDIATE!”

I stood a very short time ago by a sick bed, and on it there lay a woman advanced in life, who was gasping heavily for breath. I saw that I had little opportunity for speaking to her about her soul, unless I spoke shortly and quickly to her, as I tried to do. I warned her that she would soon die, and begged her to remember that it would be terrible to pass into another world unprepared. Now you are not gasping as she was; I do not observe any sunken cheeks and glazed eyes, that look like speedy death; but, yet we are all dying men and women, and it becomes us to hear the message of God as such, for persons in hale strength, seeming perfectly well, have on a sudden died, as you know. There is no reason known to you why you may not die while yet these words are under your eye. My message, then, is marked "IMMEDIATE." And immediate first, because, young friend, you have already lingered long enough. As the prophet said, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" You that are the children of godly parents, you have been already a long time turning over these matters. You have sojourned long enough in the dangerous realms of indecision. Oh, immediately may God grant you grace to decide; immediately, I say, because your character is forming at this very moment. I remember a remark of Mr. Ruskin, which I cannot quote in his beautiful language, but the substance is this, that if particles of chaff or dust fall upon the Venice glass while it is being fashioned, you may in vain invoke the north wind to come and blow upon it until it shall become clear and transparent, for the spots will never depart. So with the flaws of youth. The chaff which falls upon the character while yet in process of formation will leave its trace in: after years. In the erection of a building, if there should be any mistake in the upper part of the structure it will discover itself by and by, and probably may be repaired; but who has not seen a faulty public structure in which the difficulty of rectifying faults of construction was extreme, because the fault was in the foundation? A crack here, a settlement there, how it spoils the whole! Young man, your early days are the foundation of your life-character. Young woman, these bright days of yours represent the time when your vessel is being freighted for its future voyage; when your barque is far out to sea you will have to suffer for the errors or defects of her lading. Your youth, dear friends, is a very beautiful thing to be presented to God. God asks for sacrifice the firstlings, a bullock or a ram of a year old; this shows us that the Lord would have our prime of life dedicated to his praise. You will not have another youth: soon it will no; be in your power to offer to God your beauty and freshness. You may be able to give him the ripeness of middle age, but not the beauty of youth, unless

you at once attend to the message which is marked "IMMEDIATE." Is there not an exceeding preciousness about youth? They gave out that there was a fountain somewhere in the western main whereof if men would drink it would renew their youth, and straightway a gallant Spaniard, as foolish as gallant, Ponce de Leon, with his flotilla scoured the seas for months to discover the fountain of immortal youth, but never found it. His vain quest only shows how precious a thing man counts it, and God counts it precious too. My young sister, give my Lord and Master the flower of your being while yet it is in the bud. Bring him your first ripe clusters, a basket of summer-fruit sweet unto his taste, for well doth he deserve it. But let it be now, for the bloom will soon be gone, and the dewdrops will have exhaled. Your immediate conversion is the object of our prayers. Your mother never prays for you to be converted in years to come, her prayer is for your immediate salvation; our anxiety always leads us to that desire. Have I the faith to believe that this writing of mine will be made useful to your souls? Well, if I cannot go so far as that, I can say my soul thirsteth, yea even panteth that you may be led to give your hearts to Jesus at this instant. That is our prayer, and if it be your parents' prayer, and your friends' prayer, oh, that the grace of God might hear it, and might hear it at this very moment, while yet the last month of the year is with us.

Dear friend, it is possible that if your heart be not given to Christ; immediately it never will be, for you may not live to have another warning, or to receive another invitation. Remember, yet again, that if you should be converted in after life, it is probable that your conversion will cost you great pain., which it may not now. When the Lord's children come to him early in the morning they generally come to him rejoicing; but if late in the flay they come to him (as they do, for sovereign grace will not. lose its own), they frequently come limping and sorely wounded. Oh it is happy, seeking Christ early in the morning. "They that seek me early shall find me," saith he. It is often hard seeking him amid the shades of evening. Sharp affliction is often necessary to men, they will not come to Christ without it; but oh, if we do come without it how much better it is. A gentleman was riding on a coach one day, and the driver observed to him, "You see that off-leader, sir?" "Yes." "Well, when he gets to that white gate over yonder he will shy terribly." What are you going to do with him?" "Why, just before he gets there, I shall give him something to think about;" and so he did, in the form of several sharp cuts of the whip. Many of us have been like the horse and the mule, which have no understanding,

whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle. May you have grace to yield to the influence of gentler means, and it shall be well with you. May his sweet Spirit incline you to do so immediately.

I say “immediately,” because if you should be converted afterwards, the sins of your youth will always trouble you. Mahomet in his early days was poisoned by a Jewish maid, who thought that she should do a good deed if she put; poison into his meat. His life was preserved, but when he lay dying, and was full of pain, he said to those around him, “I can feel the poison still in my veins.” Many a saved man has felt the sins of his younger days in his bones. I have heard good men say that when a hymn has been sung, a snatch of an old lascivious song has come up before them; and sights which to the unsullied would have suggested nothing but purity, have awakened in them recollections of unclean acts in early youth which have been a cross and a curse to them. May God grant that we may be led in the paths of righteousness from the earliest period, that we may not have to go down to our grave with regrets.

Beloved young friend, wherever you may be, it is not I that invent that word “IMMEDIATE.” It is the gospel’s call. “Today if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.” What God saith ought to have weight with us. “Today,” then I pray you, believe in the Lord Jesus. You cannot possibly yield your heart to Christ too soon. Too soon? Too soon? Ah, it is never too soon to be forgiven when you have committed a fault! It is never too soon to have the kiss from the Father’s lips when you have offended him, and to hear him say, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” It is never too soon to be happy; it is never too soon to be safe; it is never too soon to be a child of God; it is never too soon to gain an inheritance in heaven. It is never too soon to put on the armor of the holy war, never too soon to enlist beneath the banner of Jesus, never too soon to be the Lord’s for time and for eternity.

Thus I have dwelt upon the immediateness of it. May the urgency be felt, and tend to arouse you.

Let us now devote a few minutes to the consideration of a third form of message. A letter marked O. H. M. S. would command prompt attention.

“ON HER MAJESTY’S SERVICE.”

It may be some very unimportant matter, peradventure it is of no consequence whatever, still one is sure to look directly when the envelope bears these royal words on his face.

Now the message I have to you young people is most distinctly” ON HIS MAJESTY”S SERVICE.” We want to enlist you in His Majesty’s army. One occasionally sees in certain places announcements such as this, “Smart young men wanted for the Guards.” Well, I am a recruiting sergeant. My colors are crimson, and I am eager to enlist both young men, and women. I would be glad if I could do a bit of business, and gather up recruits for Christ. Some more aged reader inquires. “Will you not have us old people?” I would be glad enough, but I am not after you just now. The Lord have mercy upon you and save you, but I have just now a message for the young folks. We want them beyond all others to join the ranks of the covenanted warriors of the Lord.

Why? Because they bring fresh energy into the church. This is much to be desired. A young man, all aglow with youthful ardor and spiritual life, coming into a church sets us all aflame. Everybody wakes up when he begins to pray. Any church in which there is a large preponderance of persons who have passed middle age is likely to be very respectable and excellent, and to possess many of the virtues, perhaps all, but it is not very likely to be consumed with zeal. I seldom hear of persons over sixty setting the Thames on fire. At that mature age people have not, as a rule, any strong proclivities for fervent excitement, and they are of opinion that the Thames had better be let atone. The elders seldom exhibit the enterprise of youth, their business is to take the Conservative side of questions. They are valuable to the church, and cannot be spared, but the church wants some of the fire of youth, sanctified by grace, and made into genuine zeal for the kingdom of Christ. We want you, beloved youths, because the older soldiers are going off the field, and others of us will soon have to think of ourselves as in the same category. Nobody in our army ever retires on half-pay; blessed be God they shall have their full joy, even when they can do but little, and they have the pledge of a fall heaven hereafter. Still many have been taken away from us, and our ranks are thinned. Oh for recruits to fill up the vacancies! Good women, earnest matrons who were serving in the schools, and in the classes; good men who were preaching in the streets, and doing good in all ways, are falling asleep. Young men and women, step forward and fill the places of your fathers and mothers! We

cannot have a better stock; none could be more welcome than your fathers' sons and daughters.

Young men are valuable when converted, for by God's grace how much they may do while yet young. Do you know that John Calvin wrote his famous "Institutes" — a most wonderful production for thought if not for accuracy — before he was twenty-seven years of age? Though Martin Luther did a grand work after he was five-and-forty years old, it is something to say of Calvin, the clearer of the two, that he had commenced his work and wrought wonders when he was seven-and-twenty. Many a Christian man has won his hundreds and some even thousands for Christ before attaining that age. There is power in youth, let it. then be consecrated to HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE.

I am eagerly desirous that many of you should be converted, because your influence will tell against the truth and the cause of God if you are not, saved. A young man died in New York some time ago whose last expression was this, "For God's sake gather up all my influence and bury it with me!" That was impossible. He might be penitent for his wrong doing, but his evil influence was gone forth and could never be stayed. He had perverted many. His brilliant talk had led some into scepticism, and his immoralities had plunged others into vice; and this mischief could not be undone. Every man bring bears in his hand a box. Take off the lid (and it must be taken off), and from it. will either stream the seeds of the disease of sin, or a sacred perfume of grace bearing healing for the nations. Our influence will either, under God, be a channel by which his grace works among the sons of men, or else, if let alone, it will become the means by which Satan destroys multitudes.

What shall I say to you with regard to this service of the Lord Jesus Christ? I will write this inquiry — Who is on the Lord's side? Who? Young people, if you have believed, and are on his side, come forward and say so. Take up Christ's yoke early; make a profession of your saith even in your first days, and to life's latest hour you shall never have cause to regret either that Jesus blessed you, or that you lived for him. You shall love him better every day, and the more your days multiply the more will you rejoice in your Lord.

And now the last thing was the letter marked

"REGISTERED."

Is it for you? Registered letters are only for those they are sent to. This letter is directed to the young man who has by grace believed. Here is another addressed to the young woman who has trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. I will show you the contents: "I have loved thee" — -thee Mary — thee John — thee William — "I have loved then with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. I have loved thee and giver: myself for thee." (latch the words: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels." That is; for you, young believer, for yourself, all for yourself. Take it; to yourself. Wear these gems, for the Lord presents them to you. You are his chosen; you are his redeemed. He will be with you for ever, and you shall be with him for ever. "What, all these mine?" says one; "I have only lately believed in him." They are just as much yours as if you had believed in him seventy years ago, for the possessions of the covenant as much belong to the babe in grace of an hour old as to the man who has fulfilled his threescore years and ten in the ways of the Lord. Take that registered letter, rejoice in the sure promises of the God of grace, and may God the Holy Spirit open them up to you, and give you to see that they are all yours, since you are Christ's and Christ is God's.

Farewell, my message is ended as far as I am concerned, what have you to say to it?

IS THERE ANY ANSWER?

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

SEPTEMBER 1875

# WHOSE FAITH FOLLOW.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON

TO THE MEMBERS OF MRS. BARTLETT'S CLASS ON THE  
SABBATH AFTER HER LAMENTED DECEASE. <sup>f2a</sup>

MY dear Friends, — On this occasion I will not try to comfort you, for I fear I might only aggravate your sorrow. I have already attempted the painful duty on two occasions, both at the time of the funeral and also this morning; but your wounds are too new and too deep. May the Holy Spirit exercise his chosen office of Comforter, and then your griefs will be assuaged. I shall rather endeavor this afternoon to make practical use of the life and character of our beloved friend. I am sure if we could hear her wishes from her own mouth she would say, “Weep not for me, but follow me so far as I followed Christ” and she would not forbid my speaking of her if thereby any of you might be benefited, for she lived only for your good. In that respect her desires are unchanged; even in glory she loves you still. Anything about her that would glorify Christ she would not wish me to withhold.

The Apostle Paul addressed the Hebrew believers in the thirteenth chapter of his epistle at the seventh verse, and said, on the behalf of teachers and [asters (and Mrs. Bartlett was both of these), “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow.” Those last words shall serve me for a text, “WHOSE FAITH FOLLOW.”

I could, this afternoon, have held up our departed sister as an example in a great number of points of character, but in selecting her faith I halve chosen that which lay at the root of all the rest. “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” and therefore until we believe in the Lord Jesus

none of those things which, are pleasing to God are to be found in us. Faith is the boring-rod which taps the great “deep which lieth under” and enables the fountain of grace to well up in streams of Christian virtue. With faith we must begin, with faith we must continue, and with this we must close; for, as the first sure token of salvation is faith as a grain of mustard seed, so its perfection is faith with the far-reaching boughs, beneath which the weaker ones find a shelter. “The just shall live by faith.” Hence the apostle in saying “Whose faith follow” means, in fact, that we are to follow them in every grace, only he points his finger expressly at that which is the center and kernel of all.

But; have you faith? Have you all believed in the Lord Jesus Christ? If you have not, why not? and wherefore? We are sometimes attacked by unbelievers, and they seem to think it will be difficult for us to justify our faith: we do not find it so, but, on the other hand, you unbelievers have a task before you which you will never be able to accomplish, namely, to justify your unbelief. Many of you know that the gospel is true, you know that Jesus is the Son of God, you know that his blood taketh away sin, and yet you are not trusting in the cleansing blood, you are not believers in the Son of God, but you remain still without Christ, unpardoned, unrenewed. How can you excuse your unbelief? How will you excuse it at the last great day? You have no faith, and therefore you are “condemned already, because you have not believed,” and remaining as you are you must be lost; for ever. I would to God that this afternoon you might follow Mrs. Bartlett’s faith by resting as she did in the great sacrifice. Come to the Savior just as you are:, with all your sins and weaknesses, and tell him you are lost and undone without him, and that from his feet you will never go until he look upon you and say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” Come without fear, for Jesus has sweetly said, “Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.”

There are some points about our beloved sister’s faith that I would urge you to follow, and the first relates chiefly to you who are young. Oh that you might follow her in the early birth of her faith. She was quite a child when the Holy Spirit wrought saving faith in her. I do not see many here so young as she was when she made a profession of her faith in our blessed Lord. I would urge upon you younger ones to pry in the language of the psalm, “O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that; we may rejoice and be glad all our days.” I have noticed that many of the most eminent saints were called early. Sin, even when repented of and blotted out, leaves a weakness

behind, but when the soul is preserved from falling into the grosser sins through early conversion there is often developed by the Holy Spirit a character of peculiar beauty and a piety of special excellence. Your Samuels, and Josephs, and Josiahs, and Daniels, are “men greatly beloved,” and young women who give their hearts to Jesus when they are young are most likely to grow up into Christians who shall be like Deborah, who was “a mother in Israel.” Those who give to God the morning of their youth shall find him doubly precious in the evening of their days. From seven to seventy makes a grand Christian life, and roughly speaking our beloved friend realized that joy. I am myself a living testimony to the sweetness of giving the dewy morning to Jesus. I was not yet; sixteen years of age when I was baptized into the name of the sacred Three, and I have never regretted that with my mouth I thus early made confession of the Lord Jesus. Oh that I had sooner believed: It is, quite impossible for us to find eternal life too soon. It were well to be so soon converted as to have no bad example to regret, no wasted years to mourn over, no formation of evil habits to lament, no memories of a conscience tampered with to embitter the future. Oh, you who are very young, dear Mrs. Bartlett speaks to you, and from her grave reminds you that those who seek the Lord early shall find him.

I would now say follow her faith in the continuance of it. During all those long years our beloved friend was kept by the grace of God standing on the same rock on which she put her childish foot, looking up to the same Savior whom she, had saluted in her girlish days as Christ her Lord, growing in grace, becoming rooted and grounded and built up in him. She continued walking in the same way — the good old way — abiding steadfast in the fulfill even unto life’s close. We have been so stunned by the blow of her unexpected death that we have, perhaps, forgotten that it was almost time for her to go home. She had reached her threescore years and ten, so that hers was not a life terminated before its time. She has been gathered like a shock of corn fully ripe that cometh in its season. Throughout that life which, according to the rule of nature, may be considered to be a complete one, she was enabled to press forward in the heavenly race with undiminished ardor. True to the last hour to her life-work, she spent the last gasp of her breath in her Lord’s service. She was for years what she used frequently to call herself “a dying woman,” but she labored on to the end. She lived until her work was done; we are sure of that, for had there been more for her to do her Master, and ours, would

have permitted her to remain to do it. Her work was finished; through divine grace and the power of the Holy Spirit it was finished: the last warning to you all she had given, the last invitation to come to Jesus she had presented, the last prayer for you she had offered, and the last tear for you she had shed; and then she went home, and her Lord said to her, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Oh, my sisters, let us follow her faith in this. May we never be backsliders, never lose our first love, never turn aside to crooked ways. If any of you have done so, return I pray you. By the prayers and tears of her you loved so well, return, return! And may the Lord so restore you and establish you in the faith that from this moment until you are summoned home you may never desert your post, nor slumber at it. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." Mrs. Bartlett stood firm to the last; let us gird ourselves also with the same mind. "Be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

Another point in her faith which I earnestly commend to this class, and all here present, was its unalloyed simplicity. Ever since I have known my beloved sister, now with God, I have admired the way in which she has kept to the simplicity of the gospel, both in her own experience and in her teaching. Many have come and gone, but we have always known where to find her. I remember her tremblings when certain novel views were introduced into the class by a good but unwise brother. She came to me and said, "This will never do; those young people know nothing of those points, and do not need to know; they will be puzzled and led away from simply looking to Jesus." I was of her mind, and rejoiced in her common sense, and in her holy resolve to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. In her time she, with me, saw the rise and fall of many wise ones, who had found out something new: — oh, so new, so wonderful, so delightful! I have seen others go after these will-of-the-wisps until they have plunged into the mire, but none of these things moved her. There she stood, knowing in her soul two things, herself a sinner and Christ a Savior. You have heard, I dare say, a good deal of talk about higher life and perfection; you never heard a syllable from her concerning any higher life than the life of faith upon the Son of God, and yet if ever woman possessed the higher life she had it, and because she had it she could not see it in herself, and would never have been so vain as to assert that she exhibited it. The spiritually ugly see beauties in themselves; but the beautiful in heart mourn over their spots and imperfections. She knew that

there is only one true life, namely, life in Christ, and there can be nothing higher than that, for it is the life of God in the soul; and whoever strains after anything higher than that leaps at a shadow, and is in danger of missing the substance. Exalted views of their own spiritual attainments frequently crush men in despair when the bubble collapses. She kept to this — “I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him.” You never heard from her any “divers and strange doctrines.” I know that you have listened to everything that fell from her lips, some of you for many years, and you can bear witness that the end of her conversation was, as Paul puts it here, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and for ever.” If there was anything beyond Christ she did not seek it; if there was anything beside Christ, she did not desire it. Her motto was “Jesus only,” and this made her so safe a guide for young minds, and this made each one of you feel when you got anywhere under her lee like a ship in a quiet harbor. Now, dear young friends, and older friends too, imitate her faith in its simplicity. Be not dazzled with this or that. If any say, “Lo, here!” or “Lo, there!” say to yourself, and say to others too, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

I commend to you the faith of your departed teacher for its intensity. She heartily and thoroughly believed, what she taught. Intense faith is not very common. We are very apt to take things at second-hand, and put them down as orthodox, and consider that we believe them. So to believe that when you are on the borders of the grave you can steadily gaze upon eternity without fear, this is faith. So to believe that, like my dear brother, William Olney, we can realize death and feel nothing but pleasure at the thought, because we shall so soon be with Jesus: riffs is to believe indeed. Often has Mrs. Bartlett in spirit skirted the <:casts of eternity, for she was frequently prostrated with pain, and by that extreme weakness which succeeds it, and at; such times she has never displayed the slightest sign of doubt or dread. Her heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. Her intense faith yielded comfort to herself, but it also affected others. She spoke because she believed, and her confidence gave her power. This is an age of falsehood, and the good must expect to be abused, but I have never heard anybody hint that Mrs. Bartlett did not believe what she taught, or was not in earnest while teaching it: surely Satan himself dared not insinuate that. Her pathetic pleadings have forced the tear from the eyes of strong, minded men, for she felt every syllable that she uttered, and made others feel it.

Through God's Holy Spirit, her unstaggering reliance upon the Savior has led many of you to confide in him. You saw how she believed, you saw the joy which her faith brought to her, the calm rest and power which she obtained, and you were led to Jesus Christ, perhaps unconsciously to ourselves, very much through her example. She was a thorough and complete believer; downright in her convictions and rooted in her principles. She was immersed into the Lord Jesus, she had not, been content with a mere sprinkling of faith; and according to her faith so was it unto her.

Imitate her faith, next, in its activity. What a worker she was. Nobody will ever know until the books are opened at the last how much she did. Her Sabbath-day work was but a small portion of her holy toil: she almost looked upon it, as relaxation: her work continued all the day, and every day of the week. How many times she has come to me with the burden of your souls upon her, to speak of the tempted, the afflicted, and the backsliding! How frequently, also, did she tell me glad tidings concerning souls awakened and troubled ones brought to rest in Jesus. Your despondencies, your temptations, your failings, she carried them all on her heart. I do not believe that any mother in this place knows her children much better than she knew the members of this class; and, what is more, I believe that there are few children who would tell their inward feelings to a mother so frankly as many of you have unbosomed yourselves to her. There was about her a sympathy of heart and an affectionateness of manner, and, an absence of everything like reserve and haughtiness, which drew you towards her and held you fast. Her heart was large and her efforts incessant. If her son, Mr. Edward Bartlett, were to rise and tell you what she did, which I am sure he cannot do, he would have a long story to tell. He himself has been fired by his mother's zeal, and is one of the most industrious workers among us, and may God spare him long to labor on. She was a worker who neither needed the pastor's praise to encourage her, nor his exhortation to enliven her. She needed the bit rather than the spur, for she went beyond her strength, and when ordered to rest she only went away and worked elsewhere. It is well to remember this, for this will make us see how long she lived: if we measure life by work rather than by years she lived as long as the ancients before the flood. My dear sisters, are there not some among you who love the Lord who could be equally active for him? I do not think we shall find her equal in all respects for many, many a day to come, but every working sister must be after her own order, and if you consecrate

yourself as perfectly as she did you may not be useful in her line of action, but you will succeed in some other. God will open a door of usefulness, and help you to enter in. Some of you who have the gifts and the graces qualifying you to lead, should give yourselves up to the Lord, and ask him to anoint you with fresh oil. Our ranks are thinned, close them up. A brave officer has fallen, let each private soldier see to it that; the fight does not falter. Be instant in season and out of season, and so follow her faith's activity.

Again, imitate her in her self-sacrifice, though not exactly in the form it took. Few could rightly make so supreme a sacrifice as Mrs. Bartlett did. When she first came among us she was in a good position, obtaining by her own efforts a considerable income, but when the class multiplied it; called for so much of her time and attention that she determined to give up all, and devote herself entirely to this work. Accordingly she cast herself upon the providence of God, and the kindly support of her two loving sons: but, as in the order of God's providence her sons did not prosper as we would have desired, she had much reason to regret the step which she had taken, and yet so possessed was she with the passion for soul-winning that I do not think such a thought ever crossed her mind. I marked her self-denial, and it was my great privilege to help her in divers ways as best I could, always judging that anything I could do for her was exceedingly well laid out. I rejoiced to know and help a woman who could, for Christ's sake, relinquish everything, just; before she died, as you perhaps know, her son, whom God has greatly prospered in America, came over to this country. She told me herself that he pressed her to return with him, as he could provide for her most comfortably in his adopted country; he also urged his brother to emigrate, for there would be good prospects before him. She told me last Sabbath week that she knew it would be for her temporal advantage, but she added, "How could I leave that dear class?" The mother would gladly have joined her son, but; the lover of souls was stronger than the mother, and she said, "How can I leave the class which God has given me? How could Edward leave his work at the Alms Houses? It is impossible for me to go." I rejoiced in both the mother and the son, and thanked God that I had such helpers. I am sure it was to Mrs. Bartlett a deliberate giving up of earthly comforts for your sakes when she resolved to abide with you. She could not tell then, of course, that she was on the doorstep of heaven at that very moment when making, once again, a supreme sacrifice for her Lord and Master. She could not have made a

more complete surrender, even had she known that the Lord was so near. Yet see how, in her self-renunciation, she after all was led to do the best thing for herself; for now she did not die on her passage across the sea, and she did not die in a strange land, but she fell asleep amid old and happy associations, just as she would have desired to do had it been left to her choice. May we also be willing, if it be for God's glory, to suffer the loss of all things that we may win Christ, and be found in him.

I am sure if all could be told — and I am not authorized to tell it, nor would it be right for me to do so — she would be reckoned among the most illustrious of consecrated women. “Whose faith follow,” my sisters.. “Whose faith follow,” my brethren. Reckon yourselves rich, not in proportion to what you have, but in proportion to what you can sacrifice for Christ. Reckon yourselves to be wealthy, not in proportion to what you can lay by, but in proportion to what you can give to the Master's cause; for he is most honored who can most completely forget himself and live entirely for the Lord. May that blessed Spirit who enabled her to present herself as a living sacrifice enable each one of us to do the same.

Last of all, “Whose faith follow” in the consummation of it; for now her faith has attained its reward. We think a great deal of the dying words of good men and women; but perhaps we go too far in so doing. Some professors ought to bear a good testimony for Christ when they come to die, for they have never done so during their lives. Sometimes God enables his feeble ones to say good things when they are dying, for the sake of their relatives, who might otherwise have been overwhelmed with sorrow. I have no ambition myself to sit up in my bed and gather a company around me, and talk as some dying Christians have done; I would prefer to bear my testimony while I live, as Whitefield did. A friend remarked to him, “I should like to be near you when you die, Mr. Whitefield.” “Why?” said the man of God. The answer was, “Because you will bear such a testimony for Jesus.” “No,” said Whitefield, “I do not suppose I shall; there is no need for it, for I have testified to hundreds of thousands all the while I have been living.” I want you so to live that if your life should be, suddenly cut short your work would be finished. There are so many unfinished lives: as you look at them you lament over them as fragmentary and unsatisfactory. Our dear sister's life has long been such that had she been called home at any hour she would have died in harness and gone from her post to her portion. There was nothing particular for her to do when she reached her last moment. I did not hear of her sending for anybody to ask their forgiveness,

nor that there was anybody whom she had to forgive; nor did she need to send for a minister to cheer her, nor to say to those about her, "Have pity upon me, oh my friends, for the hand of the Lord has touched me." She had but one thought which was at all distressing; it was concerning those she left behind, and very largely about you, and who would watch over you in her absence. Beside that she had nothing to do, and that really was no work of theirs, because no worker is called upon to find his own successor. We must all be satisfied like Moses to work up to the point at which God calls us away, and then leave him to find the Joshua who shall crown the enterprise. Her work was finished. Standing here and looking back upon it; as calmly as I can, I pronounce hers to be a finished life. To God be all the glory.

Your class is now like a vessel without a captain; but meanwhile the Lord will bless you. Follow the faith of the departed by believing in God, and not in flesh and blood: "Whose faith follow" by expecting a great blessing still. Do not be discouraged. Be not afraid: "only believe." I recollect a time when for certain reasons this class became very thin, and its condition was unsatisfactory, but Mrs. Bartlett said to me, "Well, if they all go away, I will begin again and gather another class." and she buckled to the labor with such indomitable zeal that very soon all was flourishing again. Now that this trial has come, we will not dishonor our God by unholy mistrust, but we will begin again by God's good blessing; nay, rather, we will keep on where she has left us, and I am sure that God will certainly find for the class the teaching which you need. We will do our best, all of us resting in the power of God, and the work of her hands shall be established for many years to come.

As for her who is gone, if anything could make heaven more heavenly to her it would be if she could look down and see the class quickened with a divine ardor, passionately longing for the conversion of souls, keeping well together like a well regulated army, and continuing that, blessed warfare which she for so long a time carried on in this place. I charge you by the love of Jesus Christ and by the love you bear her, try to make this class in years to come all that it has been in the past. Regard it; as her living monument. While some are planting flowers over the graves of their dear ones, be you yourselves the flowers, and this class the little garden, which shall keep loving memories from dying out. Never let the class flag in numbers, in earnestness, in prayer, or in service. Pray for it; work for it;

live for it; because if God has magnified himself in it, it ought to be very precious to us.

To her God, and my God, and your God I commend you. He ever liveth and ever worketh. We who minister among you are all passing away, but he is the same, and of his years there is no end. Look up, I beseech you, from the coffin and the grave to your risen Lord, and his abiding Spirit, and hear him say, Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

NOVEMBER, 1875.

### IN COURT.

A SERMON BY MR. C. H. SPURGEON.

(Suggested by his being summoned to attend the police court as a witness.)

*“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.” — Isaiah 43:10.*

It is some time since I have known what it is to be at leisure. One’s time from morning to night is occupied in different departments of the Master’s service, and it has been peculiarly troublesome to rue during the last week to be compelled [to spend many hours in a police court. While sitting on the bench my text has again and again occurred to me. “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.”

A great trial is going on, of which all worlds constitute the jury — a great trial between the powers of evil and the one perfect Lord of good. Slanders have been vented against the name and majesty of heaven, and plots have been invented with the intent to overthrow holiness and truth. The whole fraternity of hell have stirred up their malicious craftiness to defame the God of heaven and earth. We know which way the suit will be decided, for we know where the truth lies; but, lo, these many centuries the matter has been hanging in the balances. Sometimes it has seemed that truth had gained the day, but at other times the powers of evil have come to the front. This trial is still proceeding. Satan brings up his witnesses, ready enough to lie and to establish the teachings of the father of lies; and, on the other hand, the Lord brings up his witnesses to bear testimony for truth and righteousness. There are many in this place of whom the text speaketh.

“Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.” We are summoned in this great trial of the ages to stand forward as witnesses for God.

Very simply, indeed, let us talk of this matter.

At the outset we will take the simple assertion that WE ARE WITNESSES, and inquire what sort of witnesses we ought to be? I count it no small honor for the good Lord to call me as a witness in his case. Hence I, for one, am a willing witness. I need no subpoena to compel me to come forward and bear such witness as I can for the glory of his great name. Such of you as can cheerfully come forward for the Lord should attend to the duty of witnesses well. Let us see what are the main points of that duty.

First, let us be present to witness, in our proper place, at the proper time. I know some Christians who are of a very “retiring” disposition. — I believe that is their favorite word. I fear truth would say they are cowardly, and hence they are silent when their witness should be borne. They are willing enough to bear testimony when thousands are doing the same, and they can shout “Hosanna” when all the streets are ringing with it; but not so many are prepared to witness for Christ when the hoarse cry of “Crucify him! crucify him!” is heard on every side. If we are witnesses for God we are bound to be witnesses to all that we know, but flesh and blood will suggest to us to be out of the way when unpopular truths are in question. Certain brethren find it convenient to insist upon quiet portions of the word of God, and not on truths which might cause them trouble and provoke discussion. That doctrine which is received already they will affirm, because all men agree with them, but the very portion of truth which most needs witnessing is shirked, and even looked down upon with disfavor. Let us be always in the way when there is a witness wanted to be browbeaten and abused because he slates unpalatable truth. Never pick and choose in truth, or in your witness to it; or if you must make a choice, vindicate that truth most which is most despised. If you happen to be where men are blaspheming, witness against that blasphemy, calmly but firmly. If you dwell where error is taught, wait till you have a fair opportunity, and then stand up for Jesus. I do not say that you are to rush about like a knight-errant, fighting with everybody; but when there is a demand for a witness upon any point of truth, be you the man, and witness a good confession for Jesus your Lord.

Next, if we are witnesses for God, we should not only be in our place, but we should be willing to speak up when the time comes. No redeemed man must be in any degree an unwilling witness for his Lord. It is a pity when truth has to be extracted from us with as much difficulty as a decayed tooth. That is the best wine which flows most freely from the grape, and that is the best testimony which a man bears with cheerful spirit because he

values the truth in his own soul, and would have others prize it too. The thought that our Lord Jesus was silent for us should prevent our ever being silent towards him. One word from his mouth in Pilate's hall would have broken the spell which bound him to death, but he would not speak it; and now, if one word from our lip would sign our death-warrant, if it be a word for truth and Christ, let us speak it and joyfully accept the consequences God's true children are never born dumb; therefore speak out like a true man. What thou knowest, tell What God has taught thee, teach. What thou hast learned in the closet, proclaim on the housetop; and what was whispered in thine ear in communion with thy God, blaze it abroad before all men. Speak up, speak up for Jesus.

It is required of the Lord's witnesses that they speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Every witness in the court is sworn to do that, and every child of God is bound by the most solemn obligations to his Lord to do the same. Our God never requires a man to tell a lie for him. The Jesuits have held the theory that the end sanctifies the means; and so those — I was going to say diabolical — beings suppose they are glorifying God when they heap falsehoods pile on pile. One of the chief qualifications for a priest is to be able to tell a lie without the slightest sign of blushing; and I must give some of them credit; for great proficiency in the art. Our Lord would not have us speak falsely for him, or even suppress the truth, to serve his cause. Occasions may sometimes arise when you feel — “Well, I don't know: my friend will be annoyed if I confess that truth. I will not exactly deny my belief in it, but I will depreciate it as a small matter of very slender importance.” Thus you will do evil that good may come. Some say to themselves “I am in a false position, but had I not better remain in it, for it gives me great opportunities for usefulness. It is true I do not believe in the teaching of my church, but may I not still belong to it? Her catechism and ritual do not represent my views, and there are many persons of an opposite way of thinking who are very glad to use the very language which I profess to believe in, and express thereby the most abominable of dogmas: all this is deplorable, but had I not better put up with it and go on as I am?” My dear friend, I do not believe that God ever desires any of his people to occupy a position in which they cannot be strictly truthful; and I do not believe that he will justify them in retaining such a position. Whether I am useful or not is not one half so much my business as whether: I am faithful and true. Equivocation and suppression of truth cannot serve the cause of God. You

are to speak the truth for God. He does not want you in one syllable or word to speak anything but the truth. And you are to bring out all the truth as far as the Lord has taught it to you. Do not conceal anything on the ground of policy. At the same time do not exalt, any one truth out of its fair proportion. If a man's portrait had to be drawn it would be a mistake to paint his nose and nothing else, or to make that organ so large that you could not see his eyes. Never distort truth. Some doctrines fill up the background of a picture, but were never meant to stand in the front; still background, foreground, and every part must be truthful. My Lord will not call liars to witness for him, for they are detestable in his sight.

Remember, also, that we must be personal witnesses. A witness the other day got as far as, "And he says to me, says he" — but he was immediately stopped with the sharp rebuke that it was not evidence, and could not be listened to. In our courts of law we do not allow of second-hand evidence. "No," says the judge, "what did you see yourself, my good man? We want to know that." It is so with regard to your witness for God. You must testify what you have seen and felt for yourselves. It is very easy to read biographies of good men, and then come forward and talk experience; but, it is a very wicked thing to do. Let your experience be your own, and your testimony for God be what you have tasted and handled of his good word. There is a vast difference between second-hand spiritual, gossiping experience and the first — hand personal testing and trying of the promise and the word of God. You cannot tell what power you will have with children if you tell them how the Lord dealt with you when you were a child; and upon the unconverted, if you tell them what you have discovered of the folly of sinful pleasures, and the emptiness of the world. Nothing is more useful to a young convert than to tell him how you found the Savior, and what the Savior has been to you. In dealing with those who are doubting and desponding, your own trials and your own deliverances will be the most helpful subjects. Personal experience must furnish you with personal testimony, and this you must never withhold.

In the matter of witnesses there are great differences between one and another. Both witnesses may speak the truth, but you would far sooner believe one than the other, because of the previous character of the witness. Good lawyers do not count heads, but; they weigh them, and if they have one man of known position and honesty, and he will assert such a thing, they scarcely need to support his evidence; whereas, half-a-dozen witnesses of rather a shady description will scarcely be able to prove a fact.

In witnessing for God the holier your character the better. It does not do to say one thing with your mouth and another thing with your hand. Your witness for Jesus Christ in the school will be spoiled if at home there is no piety, if in business there is a want of honesty. If your character is doubtful, you will rather damage than help the good cause. The devil once wanted to be a witness for Christ; and some of us would have thought it would be a fine stroke of policy to put the devil into the box, and make him speak the truth; but the Lord Jesus Christ would not have it. He said, "Hold thy peace and come out; of him." Truth did not want any assistance from the father of lies. I do not invite the ungodly man to be a witness for Jesus Christ. Unto the wicked God saith, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes?" Still, if you are a child of God, the weight of your evidence will be considerably lessened if your character be not pure. For your Lord's sake, then, I beseech you, watch your lives and walk according to his commands. Oh, never let it be said that Christ was wounded by us — by us for whom he died — by us who have leaned our heads upon his bosom. God grant that front first to last we may be mighty witnesses, because our character is known and read of all men. May the Holy Spirit, who sanctifieth us, help us in this matter.

One thing more. Every witness should be ready to bear cross-examination. Oh, how some Christians dislike this. Even as to joining a church, I frequently hear my brother ministers say that we should make the way into the church as easy as possible, that we should not question the "dear young friends," and a lot of rubbish of that kind. I, on the other hand, believe that if they cannot give a reason for the hope that is in them, it is time they should learn; and if they cannot face their own Christian brethren and relate their experience, it is more their minister's fault than theirs. I am not going to gather together a horde of cowardly members, nor excuse any from declaring what the Lord has done for their souls. There are plenty of churches where young ladies and gentlemen are taken in because they write a very pretty little letter, and some friend hopes they are all right, and so they are received, and thus we are inundated with people who never speak for Christ, and tremble to call their souls their own. We have too much of this kid-gloved, lavender-watered religion, and for my part I would not care to march through the world with such a regiment of feather-bed soldiers. Give me the men who can bear persecution, who are ready to go into the streets and preach Christ at the corners, and are bold to speak a word for Jesus to anybody they shall meet. We need a race of heroes, of

cowards we have plenty. Dear friends, we must bear to be cross-examined, for the world will cross-examine us with harsh words, sneers, insinuations, misrepresentations, and falsehoods. The more outspoken we are the more of running of the gauntlet we shall have to undergo; but we must be prepared for it. If our sires, not without blood, passed to their thrones, and we have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin, shall we speak of Christ with bated breath, or dastardly consent to hold our tongues? "I had as lief not be as live to be in awe of such a thing as I, myself." Is a Christian man to be afraid of man, and conceal his principles for fear he should be ridiculed? God forbid. Leave shame for those who have no religion, or have a religion which is of no value. Let us be true witnesses for Christ in life and death, worthy of the ancestors that went before us, and mindful of the eyes which rest upon us.

We will now change the strain, and dwell upon the fact that WE HAVE EVIDENCE TO GIVE. Let us inquire to what matters of fact we are able to bear witness?

Let us think a little. Supposing us all to be Christians, we cannot all bear witness to precisely the same facts, because there is a growth of experience; but yet there are some facts to which all of us who know the Lord can bear most positive testimony.

First, we can bear witness to many of the attributes of God, as for instance, that he is true. We find him stating in his Word that man is fallen...that his heart is deceitful. Is it so, brethren? What is your witness about yourselves? If you cannot speak of other people, how do you find it in yourselves? Truly I must bear painfully decided witness to the depravity of my heart! When I saw, or thought I saw, the evil of my nature, I was driven to despair by the sight, and though a sight of Jesus Christ has given me peace, yet I never can forget how vile my nature is. It only needs that God should withdraw his grace, and as the floods drowned all the world, so would the deeps of our depravity drown everything gracious within us. We know that God has spoken the truth there, because facts in our own case prove it. The Lord has promised that whoso believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall have eternal life. We have believed in Jesus Christ; have we found that new life has been bestowed upon us? Let us speak out. Are we conscious of possessing a heavenly life? If there is anything true in the world, we are sure that this is so. Grace has changed us. Eyes have we, with which we see the invisible, ears have we with which we hear the eternal. We have

learned to realize the things not seen as yet, our faith is “the, substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.” There is a spirit-life within us. We cannot describe it. We could not make another man who is unconscious of such a life know what it is; but that we have it is a certain fact, and we bear willing witness to it. There are some who ridicule religion altogether, and have ridiculed this fact among the rest; yet they have no right to do so. There are many of us Who are as honest and trustworthy as other people. and almost as sensible. If we were to enter a witness-box our evidence would not, be questioned: even those who ridicule us would believe us there, why do they not believe us now? Why they should think it proven that there is no such thing as a new life, because they have not felt it, I cannot see. Negative evidence is worthless in such a case. If we bear testimony that we have felt it, it is fair that they should accept the testimony, whether they personally know the truth of it or not. At any rate, let us be very, very plain about it, and say, “Yes, our God was true in what He said about our fallen state, and God is true in what he says about the renewal of the soul by the Holy Ghost through faith in Jesus Christ.”

That God is true will also appear in his answering our prayers, his delivering us in time of trial, his fulfilling his promises, and in divers other ways. Whenever any of these occur to us let us stand forth as witnesses and say, “Surely the Lord is true.”

We ought, also, to bear witness, beloved, to the love of God. We have an old proverb that everybody should speak as he finds. Speak of the Lord as you have found him. I am sure that this is more than I shall ever be able to do to my own satisfaction. My blessed God! Was there ever any like unto thee! If the gods of the heathen were gods, yet were they not worthy to be mentioned in the same day with our blessed God. What love he has lavished upon some of us! I doubt not that all of you who know the Lord will echo my words, but I must say that the Lord surprises me every day with his lovingkindness and his tender mercies, He melts me down by the fires of his grace. I cannot understand why he is so good to me. If he had only pardoned his rebellious child, and allowed him to be a scullion in the royal kitchen, I would have kissed his feet with gratitude; but, behold, he has said unto me “Thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son then an heir, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ.” If he had only permitted me to have one glimpse of his love, so as to let my soul know that I was not utterly lost, I would have praised him to all eternity; instead of which, he has made all his goodness pass before me, and proclaimed his glorious

name. As to his tenderness to me in providence, his goodness in chastening, his gentleness in restoring me, am overwhelmed with it. Blessed be his name! You may have what master you like, but he is mine for ever; and you may worship what God you please, but I will have none but the Lord. You may praise up year beauties as you please, but my Beloved is altogether lovely.

Again, brethren, we can testify to our Lord's wisdom, can we not? We younger folk cannot do it so well as our elders; but my veteran friends here who are getting into their sixties and seventies delight when they speak of the wisdom of the Lord. You are living proofs that all the ways of the Lord are wise, for he has overruled all things for your good, and here you are to praise his name. By-and-by, when life's journey is more nearly over, we shall be able to tell to others yet more of that wisdom and prudence wherein the Lord has abounded towards us. For the present let us testify what we know.

Beloved friends, we can also bear witness to the immutability of God. Of course, our span of life is so little at the longest that we cannot bear much witness to the eternal unchangeableness of Jehovah. Still, take our five-and-twenty years of Christian experience; or some of you can take your fifty, has there been any change in your God? We are fickle as the winds that blow; but there certainly has been no change in him. He loved us, and he loves us still; he forgave us, and he forgives us still; he chastened us, and he chasteneth us still; but he sustained us, and he sustains us still.

*Immutable his will;  
Tho' dark may he my frame,  
His loving heart is still  
Eternally the same.  
My soul thro' teeny changes goes,  
His love no variation knows."*

We have proved this by actual trial. Perhaps in the time of trouble we thought that his love was failing us; but in looking back we confess how wrong we were. There was as much love in the Lord's chastenings as in his caresses, we were as much loved when we were hiding under the shadow of his wings as when we were reveling in the light of his countenance. Blessed be his name, he changes not.

Now, brethren, besides the things which have a manifest respect to God, in which we are witnesses to the character of the Most High, there are other

facts to which we testify, and one is this: we can witness to the power of prayer. As I uttered that last word, my eye caught the glance of a sister below me whom I will not indicate. She and I knew how we wrestled together in prayer for a certain sick daughter, and how the Lord heard us, so that I rose from my knees and said to her, "Go your way you will find your daughter recovering when you reach the house." She knows that she found it so, and how, since then, in many other ways, God has heard her prayers. I speak to some with whom prayer is an every-day matter; a commerce with God which they do not carry on at certain seasons, but all the year round; and, if you do that, answers to prayer become so usual that you forget a large proportion of them, and only the more singular abide upon your memory. If a man tells me that God does not hear prayer, I laugh in his face. He might as well tell me that the sun does not shine, or that twice two do not make four. God hears prayer every day, and every hour of the day, and I know it, and man might sooner beat me out of the belief that I exist than out of this knowledge that God listens to my requests. Upon this point I do not stand alone, for there are thousands who will unite in declaring "Verily there is a God that heareth prayer." When I hear brethren say how wonderful it is that God has heard prayer, I think it far more wonderful that they should talk so, for surely it is not surprising that God should keep his word. No, these are the common places of genuine Christianity — a prayer-giving God working in the heart, and a prayer-answering God working both in providence and in grace. Brethren, never be slow to bear your testimony to a prayer-hearing God.

We are also quite clear upon the efficacy of the gospel. Where the gospel is truly preached there will be results; and where the gospel is believed it is the power of God unto salvation. Some here present are witnesses to that. You have taught a class in the school, and you have seen the boys or girls converted to God. There are brethren in connection with this church who have evangelized the lowest parts of London, and they have seen those regions abound in precious fruit unto God. Others have introduced the gospel to the utterly fallen, and they have seen them reclaimed. The manhood which appeared extinct has become bright; the womanhood which seemed to be crushed out has shone like a precious jewel. God's gospel has done wonders. It is not remarkable that a minister gets sceptical if he never sees conversions. The proof of the gospel lies in what it does. If it does not: save men from sinning, if it does not lift up the fallen, if it does not; give light and joy to the despairing, then, surely, it lacks the evidences

of its divine mission; for even Jesus Christ himself gave to his own mission this as the proof — “The deaf hear, the blind see, the lepers are cleansed, the poor have the gospel preached to them.” If these things be not true now, we may doubt whether the gospel which we preach be the gospel of Jesus Christ. But we can bear witness — and, oh, how joyfully we do it! — that the gospel has not lost its power.

Another point, as God’s witness, we can speak to is the sweetness of near communion with himself — a theme upon which I hardly dare to trust my wandering tongue. Oh, brethren, there is nothing like the joy which comes of high fellowship with God. Mr. Aitken told us the other afternoon that he would give us a recipe for being miserable; I think his words were — “Be half-and-half Christians.” He said, “If you are a worldling you will get some sort of pleasure: you will get the painted bubble, though it will soon burst, but you will get that; and if you are a genuine, thorough-going Christian you will get the joy of the Lord; but if you are a sort of neither-this-nor-the-other you will get nothing.” Have you never seen little boys, when they go to bathe in the morning, stand up to their knees shivering? Of course they shiver. The way to get warm is to plunge in head first. Some professors stand in very shallow water, and they shiver and cry —

*“Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought” —*

and so on. Oh, my brother give yourself up wholly to Christ, and the joy of the Lord will be yours as it is ours. These are some of the things we can speak of.

Very briefly, in the third place. When a witness is called for one side he is against the other side: so we also must remember that OUR EVIDENCE CONDEMNNS THE OTHER SIDE.

We are witnesses against sin. Sin comes with a painted face like Jezebel; but we witness that she is a destroyer and must die. The pleasures of sin are but a masquerade of misery. Happy they who never drink of the cup which this siren presents. My God, grant that none of our young friends may try the pleasures of vice, for they are as deadly hemlock. Those who have been converted in later life bear very sorrowful witness that sin is misery, and that the wages of sin is death.

We bear witness also against self. Many say with the proverb, “Self is the man” — self will save — self is righteous; but our witness is that self has

no strength to performs his own resolutions, that self is a ragged beggar When he thinks himself a king — that self is emptiness and vanity, deceit and death. We bear that witness now, and we always shall have to bear it.

We bear our witness against unbelief. Is there any Christian here who has ever gained anything by being unbelieving? Has any child of God ever escaped from trouble by mistrusting the faithfulness of the Lord? No, we have been losers all round by cur unbelief, but never gainers. Unbelief is a sorry cheat. Mr. Bunyan says that Incredulity was taken and condemned to be hanged, but he very rightly says that he broke out of prison, “for he was a nimble-jack.” The only part of “Pilgrim’s Progress” that I felt inclined to find fault with was where Mir. Greatheart cut Giant Despair’s head off, for to my knowledge he is still alive, But Bunyan sets that right by saying in his rhyme —

*“Sin can rebuild his castle, make’t remain,  
And make Despair, the giant, live again.”*

Oh, that wretched unbelief. Brethren, let your witness against it be clear and distinct.

Moreover, we bear testimony against Satan, whom we know to be a deceiver, a liar, and a murderer. Evil is never good, nor dare we give place to it in order to turn it to useful ends. We must resist the evil one, steadfast in the faith, and ever witness that he is the deadly foe of the soul, whatever disguise he may assume.

In closing, let me say that there sure times when our witness is peculiarly valuable. Do you ask — and when is that? I reply, Your witness will be precious when others are sinfully silent, if you live in a place where there are few earnest Christians, and error abounds, be faithful, my brother. Your light is needed where lamps are few. You need not find fault with others, for that will not help the matter. If the place is dark, shine the more, if error prevails hold forth the truth. There is no argument against error equal to truth, advocated, delighted in, and practiced. Testimony becomes more precious as it becomes more scarce. You might have held your tongue, perhaps, had advocates been plentiful; but now that they are so few be doubly earnest, like your divine Lord, to bear witness to the truth.

Witnesses become valuable, again, in times of persecution. Have you been made to suffer for Christ’s sake? Brother, be glad, for “so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.” If you can be patient, if you can bear

ridicule without resentment, if, being reviled, you do not revile again, you have a grand opportunity. The world looks on a man under scoffing and ridicule to observe how he behaves; and if he conducts himself like a Christian it feels this power, and respects his consistency. Give way a little, and you will have to give way more, and be despised; but adherence to principle commands respect. Put your foot down; stand firmly where God would have you stand, and your testimony will gather value from the very ridicule which is poured upon it.

My brethren and sisters, your testimony will be none the less valuable because you are poor. Nothing does the gospel more honor than the godly lives of humble Christians. It honors the gospel when a man both wears a coronet and prays, but how few have done so! The poor man who is happy, contented, thankful, and trustful is one of God's nobility, and the church of God honors him. We rejoice to see such men standing in the witness-box to declare the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Testimony becomes all the weightier as we grow older. People pay more attention to the words of experienced men; it is natural and right that they should do so. As years creep upon us, we ought to be all the more earnest that our testimony for God should be clear, solid, and frequent. An aged Christian who has little or nothing to say for his Master is a sad drawback to young beginners. I very greatly deprecate the example of some who have been long professors, but who still remain babes in Christ, if they be in Christ at all. It is a great pity to see the head white with the sunlight of heaven, and yet so little of heaven in the daily conversation. Rise up, ye grave and reverend sires, and declare the faithfulness of our God.

Very choice, too, are the testimonies of the sick. It is a great trial when those whom we love are continually suffering, we wish we could bear their pains awhile and give them respite: yet no greater blessing can come to a man's house than an afflicted child of God. The tried ones go so deep, they speak so sincerely and so touchingly. There is no nonsense about their religion. Racking pain very soon drives away illusions; and pretences and shams do not stand before the solemn reality of continued sickness.

Witnesses in the furnace of affliction are powerful indeed. We hear no songs in the night till breasts are pierced with the thorn. If there were not some who, like the Arab divers, plunge deep into the depths of sorrow, we should have fewer pearls; but there are such, and their testimonies are

precious. When your turn and mine come to go upstairs awhile, and preach from our beds, God grant that we may deliver gracious sermons.

Lastly, there is something peculiarly valuable about the testimony of the dying saint. The Lord might well say to these, “Ye are my witnesses.” Some of us remember testimonies that we were privileged to gather up from dying men’s lips, and they have been great strengtheners to our faith. I remember a brother who used [to walk out to preach in the villages, a man of very little talent, but with a great heart. I hardly know any word of witness more powerful than the utterances of his last hours, lie was blinded by disease, and when he heard a friend’s voice he addressed him thus —

*“And when ye see my eyestrings break,  
How sweet my minutes roll!  
A mortal paleness on my cheek,  
But glory in my soul.”*

His tones of joy added deep solemnity to his words.

Oh, those sweet testimonies of the dying, how we store them up! Children talk of Jesus in their last hours as wisely as old men. Mothers and fathers leave witnesses behind them precious as gems. But I refrain: you and I will go soon; may grace enable us to expire with a glad witness on our tongues.

Alas, I recollect as I finish that some of you are not witnesses for God, for you know nothing about him. Remember, if you are not witnesses for God, you will be prisoners at his bar; and you must either occupy the witness-box for God, or else take the prisoner’s place, to be tried, cast, and found guilty. Oh, sinners, I wish you would try our God, whose witnesses we are. If we had found him untrue, we would tell you. If we had found that Christ could not save, we would tell you. If we had found that God could not pardon, we would tell you. If religion made us miserable, we would tell you, or you would find it out. If God could not be trusted in providence, and did not hear prayer, we would tell you, for we hope we would not maintain a lie. But we have no such disclosures to make; we bear our willing testimony for God. Remember, it is written, “Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.” Go and test the veracity of that promise, and God bless you, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

MARCH, 1876.

# A SHORT SERMON FOR A WINTER'S EVENING.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.” — John 18:18.*

We note from this incident that it was a cold night in which our Redeemer agonized in the garden of Gethsemane. A cold night, and yet he sweat! A cold night, and yet there fell from him, not the sweat of a man who earns the staff of life, but the sweat of one who was earning life itself. “He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground.” No natural heat of the sun, or of a sultry evening, caused this, but the heat within his soul distilled those sacred, drops, His heart’s throbs were so mighty that it seemed to empty itself, and his life floods rushed with such awful force that the veins, like overfilled rivers, burst their banks, and covered this blessed person with gory drops. On such a wintry night; as this, while you wrap your garments about you, I would ask you to remember the olive garden, unit the lone sufferer, all unsheltered, entering into the dread anguish by which he won our souls from death and hell. The sharp frost may be a useful monitor to us, if it makes us think of him, and remember that dark, that doleful night, when all the powers of evil met, and, even unto blood, he strove with them for our sakes.

Now we will take you away from the garden to the high priest’s hall, where the incident occurred which is recorded in the text, and we will make as good a use as we can of it. I suppose it was a large dark hall in which the soldiers, and the priests, and the rabble were gathered together. There may have been a few lamps lighting up the further end where Christ was with his judge and his accusers, but the greater part of the hall would

have no other light than the glare of the fire which had been kindled! — a charcoal fire, around which the band of men who had seized Christ, and the servants of the high priest, gathered, to keep themselves warm. We are going to make five observations upon that, and upon the fact that Peter was amongst those who warmed their hands.

The first observation is this. This is a typical incident as to the most of men. Jesus Christ was being tried. Some were very busy about it, being full of malice and burning with rage, but a great many more were indifferent, and in the presence of a rejected and maltreated Savior were carelessly warming their hands. It was not a matter that interested them, they did not care whether he escaped or was condemned: it was very cold, and so they warmed their hands. Now, in a land like this, where Jesus Christ is preached, it is a sad circumstance that there are individuals who oppose him and his gospel: there is the infidel, who denies the gospel altogether, there is the superstitious man, who sets up another way of salvation, and there is the persecutor, who rages at Christ and his people. Yet these active enemies are, comparatively few: the great bulk of those who hear the gospel are not open opponents, but like Gallio, care for none of these things. They know that there is a Christ, and they have some idea of his salvation, but it does not interest them or awaken any sympathy in their minds. “What shall we eat and what shall we drink?” — these are the great questions of their catechism: but as to who this glorious sufferer is, and why he died, and what are the blessings which he bought with his precious blood, — none of these things move them, and they forget, neglect, or despise the great salvation trod the Savior too. They are full of the business of warming their hands! The death of Jesus may be important to other people, it may concern ministers, and clergymen, and professors, but it is nothing at all to them — they have other matters to attend to, and their own comfort is their main concern. Around that charcoal brazier the servants of the high priest warmed their hands; and so, in their temporal comforts, or in marinating at the lack of them, the most of men spend their lives. To them it is nothing that Jesus should die: a rise in their wages, a fall in provisions, or a change in the money market is far more important to them.

If you think of it, this is a very terrible thing. Christ comes into the world to save men, and men do not think: it worth their while to turn their gaze upon him. He takes their nature, but his incarnation does not interest them; he dies that men may not perish, and men care not; one whirl for his great

love. One hies away to his farm, and another to his merchandise; one has bought a yoke of oxen, and goes to prove them, and another has married a wife, and therefore he cannot come. They are eager for the bread which perisheth, but they make light of the meat which endureth to life everlasting; they think much of this world, but nothing of the world to come. Jesus is over yonder on his trial, and they are warming their hands. I pray you think this over a few minutes, any of you who have been indifferent to the great realities of redemption, and see what, it is and who it is that you thus treat with discourtesy. It is the Son of God, the Redeemer of men, whom you neglect.

Can you imitate those who raffled the dice-box at the foot of the cross, in utter hardness of heart, though his blood was falling upon them as they cast lots upon his vesture? Can you trifle in the presence of a dying Savior? Can you, did I say? Alas! some have done so for thirty, forty, fifty, and even sixty years, and unless the mighty grace of God prevents, they will continue to trifle still — to sport, and play, and seek their own ease in the presence of the bleeding Son of God, within earshot of his dying groans. See, he dies, and they place his body in the sepulcher, but on the third day, according to the promise, he rises again from the dead. That risen Savior is surrounded by the glory of promises unspeakably precious, for he has risen for the justification of his people and as the first fruits of them that slept — the great pledge that all those who sleep in him shall rise as he has risen. An august mystery — a mystery which brought angels out of heaven, the one to sit at the head and the other at the Coot, where his body had lain; and yet men eat, drink, sleep, and wake as if no risen Jet, ms had been here. In the presence of the risen Christ many only warm their hands, for it is cold. The animal has mastered the mental: the body, which is the baser part of man, and cleaveth to the dust, has subdued the soul, and so the man allows himself to trifle in the presence of Jesus risen from the dead.

Nor is this all, for he that rose from the dead ascended after forty days. A cloud received him out of the sight of his disciples, and he rose into the glory, and now he sitteth at the right hand of the Father, reigning there head over all principalities and powers, King of kings and Lord of lords. Men do not generally trifle in the presence of a king; if they have petitions to present they put on art air of reverence. In the presence of the Royal Intercessor, who pleads for us day and night, one would think there would be some interest excited but no, the multitude warm their hands, and think nothing of him. In his presence they forget his redeeming love, neglect his

great salvation, and remain without God and without Christ. This is terrible! As I see the worldling, merely eating for his personal comfort, while Christ is in the glory, I marvel, first, at the insolence of the sinner, and, secondly, at the infinite patience of the Savior.

The Lord Jesus is to come a second time to judge the earth in righteousness; when he shall appear no man knoweth, but come he will, and before him every one of us must stand. If we be alive and remain, we shall join in that great throng, should we fall asleep before his coming, we shall rise from the dead, at the sound of the trumpet, which proclaims his advent, and shall all be judged of the Most High. The hour of his appearing is not revealed, in order that we may always stand a tiptoe, expecting it to be today, or tomorrow, for he has said, "Behold, I come quickly." Oh, how can you still be money-grubbing, pleasure seeking, enjoying yourselves, living only for this world, living to get a competence, living to be what is called respectable," and to feed yourselves like the beasts of the field? Have you no thoughts for the Judge, and the day of his coming? Shall our immortal spirits spend all their energies on these trifling temporary things in prospect of "that great, tremendous day, when Christ with clouds shall come"? Surely the solemnities of judgment should constrain us to think of something nobler than earth and time.

There was no harm in their warming their hands, neither is there any harm in our attending to the things of this life; indeed they ought to be seen to, and seen to with care; but there is something higher, something nobler and loftier for us to do than to serve ourselves; and As it was horrible that men should be so callous in the presence of the suffering Jesus, so is the widespread indifference of sinners a terrible thing. I would to God that the unthinking portion of those who hear the gospel might be startled out of their groveling care for the things of this life, and be led to say — "What have I to do with this Jesus of Nazareth? Is his blood sprinkled upon me? Has he cleansed me from sin? May I hope for salvation through him?" Oh, consider ye these things, and give an answer to your consciences; and God do so with you, as you shall think of Christ your Lord.

Secondly, we remark that, for a disciple to make his own comfort the chief thing in the presence of his suffering Master is most inconsistent. One does not wonder at the high priest's servants making a fire of coals, for it was cold, and one is not surprised at their standing to warm their hands, for they knew but little, comparatively, of Christ. They had never tasted of his

love, they had never seen his miracles, they had not; been asked to watch with him in the garden of Gethsemane, they had never heard him say “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee”: the marvel is that Peter should stand there among them warming his hands. Why did he do so? Not because he was indifferent to his Master. Let us do him justice; it is plain that he was in a dreadful state of mind that night. He was so attached to His Master that he followed him — followed him up to the door of the hall, and stopped there till John came out and admitted him. He went up to the fire because he thought he must act as others, did, so as to escape suspicion, and as they warmed their hands, he did the same, so as to appear as one of them. It so happened, however, that the light of the fire shone upon his face, and lit up his countenance, so that one said, “Thou art one of his disciples.” Then, to get away from observation, we find Peter passing into another part of the hall, where, I suppose, it was darker. The people were talking, and Peter must needs talk, for it was his weakness to do so, and, moreover, he might have been suspected again had he been silent. Then another remarked, “Thou also art of Galilee, for thy speech bewrayeth thee.” He was discovered again, and so made for the door, but was known there also. He was all in a tremble. He did love his Master, weak as his faith was, and therefore he could not leave him, and yet he was afraid to confess hint. He was worried and troubled, tossed to and fro between a desire to rush forward and do some rash thing for his Lord and a fear of his own life. He went to the fire, because nobody would think that a follower of Jesus could warm his hands while his Master was being despitely entreated.

You see the gist of my observation, that for a disciple of Christ to make his own ease and comfort the main thing is most palpably inconsistent with the Christian character. Ah, dear brethren, our Lord had not where to lay his head; though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor: Call it be consistent for the Christian to make the getting of money the main business of life? Is such a disciple like his Master? The Master gives up everything, shall the disciple labor to aggrandize himself?

Some warm their hands, not at the fire of wealth so much as at the fire of honor. They want approbation, respect, esteem, they will do anything to gain it. Conscience is violated, and principle is forgotten, to gain the approbation of their fellow men. They must be respected and admired whatever happens. Is this as it should be? Are they really disciples of the Nazarene? Is that their Master, despised and rejected spit upon and jeered?

Is he their Lord who made himself of no reputation? If so, how can they court the smiles of men, and sacrifice truth to popularity? What can be more inconsistent! The disciple warming his hands, and the Master enduring the contradiction of sinners against himself! Dear brethren, every time our cheek crimsons with shame because of the taunts of the wicked, and we lower our colors because of the jeers of the godless, we are guilty at heart of the meanness of seeking to fare better than our Lord. Every time we check a testimony because it would involve us in censure, every time we stay from a labor because we covet ease, every time we are impatient at the suffering which the cross involves every time we “make provision for the flesh, to obey the lusts thereof,” every time we seek ease where he toiled, honor where he was put to shame, and luxury where he endured an ignominious death — we are like Peter amongst the ribald throng, warming our hands at the fire while our Lord is buffeted and shamefully entreated. May the Holy Spirit keep us from this.

We now come to our third observation. It is much better to be cold than to warm ourselves where we are exposed to temptation. Peter, if he had known it, was better off outside the door than in the hall. I suppose he had forgotten the Master’s warnings, for if he had thought of them he would have said to himself, “Peter, thou hadst better go home. Did not Jesus, in fact, tell thee to go home, when he said to those who came to seize him, “If ye seek me, let these go their way?” It would seem to have been the path of humble obedience to have gone his way and not to have pressed into the hall. Though no doubt the motives which led both him and John into the high priest’s house were commendable, Peter’s position among the soldiers and hangers on around the fire was extremely full of peril, and offered no corresponding advantages. Did he not know that “evil communications corrupt good manners”? Did he not know that the men who had taken his Lord prisoner were not fit associates for him? Should he not have felt that, though he might have his hands warmed, he would be likely to get his heart blackened by mixing with such company? Brethren, I like to warm my hands, but if I cannot warm them without burning them, I would rather keep them cold. Many things are in a measure desirable, but if you cannot obtain them without exposing yourself to the smut of sin, you had better let them alone. I have known professors far too anxious to mix with what is called. “good society.” Now, for the most part, good society, as the thing goes now-a-days, is very bad society for a Christian. The best society in the world, for me, I know, is to associate with my brethren in

Christ. Title, rank, wealth, are a poor recompense for the lack of true religion. Yet some professors covet the honors of the ungodly world, mid they say, "It is not so much for ourselves; we are advanced in years; but we want to bring the girls out; and our young men you know — our sons — well, they must have some society." Yes, and for the sake of this dangerous luxury our churches are deprived of successors to godly fathers. Instead of seeing the younger members of Christian households drafted into our ranks, we have continually to begin again with new converts from the outer world. Full often professors whom God prospers in this world so train their children that they forsake the spiritual worship of God and turn their backs on principles for which their forefathers dared to bleed and die. I charge you, brethren: remember that if you cannot be admitted into "society" without concealing' your principles, you are far better off without society. Has not our Lord called us to go without the camp? Are we not warned against being conformed to this world? Deny yourselves the warm place around society's charcoal brasier, for its sulphurous vapor will do you more harm than the cold.

Some whom I have known have ventured very far upon very dangerous ground to win the affection of a chosen object. There is no wiser precept in Holy Scripture than that which commands us to marry "only in the Lord." It never ear: conduce to the comfort of any Christian man or woman to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever: you had far better remain in the cold of your bachelor or spinster life than warm your hands at the fire of unhallowed marriage.

Not a few are tempted by the cleverness of certain literature to defile their minds with sceptical and even blasphemous writings. Such and such a Quarterly or Fortnightly is so very clever that you are regarded as a Philistine and an ignoramus if you do not read it. Yet if you do read it you are never the better, but very much the worse, for your pains; why then yield to its more than doubtful influence? Do you pray the better for such reading? Have you more faith in God after perusing such works? No; but doubts which would not else have occurred to you are sown in your mind, difficulties which only exist in ungodly brains are conjured up, and the time which ought to have been spent in devotion, and in growing in grace, and in bringing others to Jesus, you waste in battling for the very life of your faith, which you have needlessly exposed to assault. I do not believe it to be essential to roll in a ditch every day for the sake of proving the efficacy of the clothes brush, neither is it worth while to seek out infidel doubts in

order to try our logical powers upon them. Some tell us that we must keep abreast of the times, but if the times run the wrong way, I see no reason why we should run with them. Rather let us leave the times and dwell in the eternities. If I can be cheered and refreshed by good literature, and be the better and wiser for it, I am thankful; but if I must, in warming my hands, defile them with unbelief, I will sooner let them become blue with cold.

Perhaps, dear friends, our liability to be injured by that which renders us comfortable is one reason why God does not subject some of his best people to the trials of prosperity. Have you not sometimes wished that you were rich? I dare say you have. But perhaps you never will be. You did prosper once, but it came to an end. Once or twice the prize of wealth seemed within your reach, others seized it, and you are still working hard and earning a bare crust. We do not know what you might have been if you had been allowed to succeed. In warming your hands you might have burned them. Many Christians have been impoverished by their wealth, and brought to inward wretchedness by outward prosperity. You have flourished best in the soil in which the Lord has kept you; anywhere else you might have run to seed. Some years since when the first lurch tree was introduced into England the person who had brought home the specimen put it into his hothouse to grow. It did not flourish, and no wonder, for it delights in a colder atmosphere; the gardener therefore pulled up the spindly thing by the roots and threw it upon the dunghill, and there to everybody's surprise it grew wonderfully. It was created to flourish under trying circumstances, and perhaps you are of the same order. Learn you the lesson, and be content to be where you are.

A fourth observation is this — if a Christian acts inconsistently he is pretty sure to be found out. Here was Peter warming his hands, and he thought that nobody would know him; but his face, as we said before, was illuminated by the light of the fire, and one said, “Surely thou art one of his disciples.” The fire did not merely warm, but it threw light on him, and showed him up; and so, when it comes to pass that a Christian gets into association with the ungodly, and figures with them, his sin will find him out. I have noticed in a very wide sphere of observation — that bad men may do wrong for years and not be discovered, and that hypocrites may contrive to carry on their hypocrisy half a lifetime without being unmasked; but a true man, a real child of God, if he shall only do a tenth as much wrong as others, will be certain to be detected. Peter tried to look

uncommonly comfortable and calm while at the fire, but he could not do it; he discovered himself by the twitches of his face, and the very look of him, and when he spoke, as we have already said, the tones of his voice betrayed him. A Philistine helmet will not sit well upon an Israelite, he wears it awkwardly and is known though in disguise. Ah, Christian man, you had better keep to your own company, it is of no use for you to try to travel incognito through this World, for it will detect you. Never go where you will be ashamed to be seen, for you will be seen. A city set on a hill cannot be hid; a lighted candle must be seen. A speckled bird will be noticed where no note is taken of others. Worldlings have lynx eyes with which to spy out erring professors, and they are sure to publish your faults, for they are sweet morsels to them. "Report it! Report it!" say they. In vain will you try to pass yourself off as a stranger to Christ, your speech will betray you, and the finger of scorn will be justly pointed at you for your inconsistency: therefore keep to your own company, and walk not in the way of the wicked.

The fifth point is this — and you all know it to be true — it is a great deal easier to warm your hands than your hearts. A few coals in a brasier suffice to warm Peter's hands: but even the infinite love of Jesus did not just then warm his heart. O sirs, what was the scene at the end of the hall? Was not that enough to set all hearts aglow? It was a bush that burned with fire and was not consumed. It was the Son of God smitten on the mouth and vilely slandered, and yet bearing it all for love of us. O sirs, there was a furnace at the other end of the hall — a furnace of love divine. If Peter had but looked at his Master's face, marred with agony, and seen upon it the mark of his terrible night sweat, surely, had his heart been right, it must have burned within him. One marvels that with such a sight before him — if Peter had been Peter — if he had only been true to that true heart of his, he would have braved the malice of the throng, placed himself side by side with his Lord and said, "Do to me whatever you do to him. If you smite him, smite me. Take me and let me suffer with him." If he might not have done that, one would not have wondered if Peter had sat there and wept till he broke his heart to see his Master treated so. But, alas, the sight of his Lord, accused and betrayed, did not warm Peter's heart. My brethren, we sometimes wish that we had actually seen our Lord, but seeing Christ after the flesh was of small service to Peter. It was when the Holy Spirit used the glance of Jesus as a special means of grace, that Peter's heart was thawed and his eyes dropped with tears of repentance. O Lord and Master,

though a bodily sight of thee would not warm us, if thou shouldst walk up these aisles and shouldst show thy pierced hands in this pulpit, yet if thy blessed Spirit will come upon us tonight, we shall see thee by faith; and the sight will make our hearts burn within us, winter though it be. Come, sacred Spirit, shed abroad the love of Jesus in our souls, and so shall our love be kindled and burn vehemently. Grant it therefore, we pray thee, for thy love's sake. Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

APRIL, 1876.

### A SERMON BEE.

REPORTED BY C. H. SPURGEON.

Sweet indeed is the communion of saints, and when the Spirit of God is pleased to set brotherly love in active exercise, it brings those who enjoy it into the land which borders upon Paradise. Such was our experience the other evening when some thirty or forty ministers, laboring in London, and all brethren of the Pastors' College, met as is their wont once a month, to have fellowship one with another in the things of God. "As iron sharpeneth iron so doth a man's countenance his friend." Every man brought a bag of jewels with him, and the sacred traffic in the commodities of the "far country" ended in a gain to all.

First came the tea, a far from melancholy meal, for at a meeting of old friends and old college comrades, the talk is very free and fraternal. Christian love reigned in all hearts, and happiness smiled from every countenance. Even the downcast one forgot his sorrows, or told them to his fellows to receive words of cheer.

Then the tables were moved back and a great family circle was formed round the fire and there we sat with the patriarchal and truly reverend G. R. in the midst of us, the one head of snow contrasting with the many others crowned with youthful locks. We sang one of the songs of Zion, and asked the divine Spirit. to be present with us, and then the President suggested that we should read the Forty-second chapter of Isaiah and give our comments thereon, sermon fashion. This was done to pour water into the pump that more might flow, and flow it did with living waters. We wish we could remember even half the good things which followed, but, alas, our memory is frail, so that much of the honey which flowed around us, as of old it dropped in the wood of Jonathan, cannot be conveyed to our readers. We will, however, do our best to give them a taste of it.

P.\_\_\_\_ read “Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom ray soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.” He then remarked on verse 1, that we are called to Behold Christ, — a duty mid a privilege never too often exercised. To behold him as servant, and see how humbly, faithfully, and thoroughly he acted that part. To behold where his great strength lay, viz., in God’s upholding, in his election to his office, and in the possession of the Holy Spirit. To behold God’s pleasure in him, and to hope for the like delight in us if we too serve after the same manner. G. R. (not Georgius Rex, but a royal George) suggested for another arrangement, **1.** The titles he bears. **2.** The qualifications he possesses. **3.** The attention he demands, — “Behold,” etc. A grand old homilist is the aforesaid G. R., and many a noteworthy sentence he let fall, which we, alas, have let slip.

M\_\_\_\_. most pertinently quoted a hymn which was new to most, if not all the brethren, and charmed us all.

“O LORD, TRULY I AM THY SERVANT.”

*“O! not to fill the mouth of fame  
My longing soul is stirred;  
O give me a diviner name;  
Call me thy servant, Lord!”*

*“Sweet title that delighteth me,  
Rank earnestly implored;  
O what can reach my dignity?  
I am thy servant, Lord.*

*“No longer would my soul be known  
As self-sustained and free;  
O not mine own, O not mine own;  
Lord, I belong to thee.*

*“In each aspiring burst of prayer,  
Sweet leave my soul would ask  
Thine every burden, Lord, to bear  
And do thine every task.*

*“For ever, Lord, thy servant choose,  
Naught of thy claim abate;  
The glorious name I would not lose,  
Nor change the sweet estate.*

*“In life, In death, on earth, in heaven,  
No other name for me!  
The same sweet style and title given  
Through all eternity.”*

It was remembered that M. had read a paper at the London Baptist Association upon “The source of superhuman power in the Savior’s ministry,” which subject is evidently contained in the verse before us.

We, have looked up this paper in the Baptist Magazine, for October, 1874, and a capital article it is. We quote the last few sentences upon the Lord’s restraint of his own omnipotence, and his willing dependence upon God “How majestic is the repose suggested in the voluntary dependence of our Lord! You look on a cup of water untroubled and still, and you do not say, ‘How I admire that calm!’ ‘but you gaze on the great ocean with. all its proud reserve of power, lying without a ripple beneath the silent sun, and it fills you with thoughts of rest. A child’s toy-boat floats quietly on that same sea, yet that suggests nothing of peace, but the ‘Great Eastern,’ or one of our colossal war ships, with its engines of many hundred horse-power, and its guns, so terrible for thunder and destruction, floats placidly before you — idling gently on the idle sea — and, you say, What a majestic symbol of tranquility! Even so; the measure of power is the measure of repose. And, O brethren, in what a majestic aspect; does this ministry of dependence reveal the peace of Christ! Here, if what we, have tried to say be true, — here for over thirty years is omnipotence holding itself in reserve. Nothing provokes it to assert itself — not even the trials of the ministry. ‘Command that these stones be made bread,’ says the tempter: it replies gently, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone; there is other bread — the bread of doing and following the will and plan of heaven.’ No scribes irritate this omnipotence into action; my Pharisees provoke it. It is challenged on the Cross to come down that all men may believe it. It does not even break the silence, but merely thinks, as it had sometimes said before, ‘How, then, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled? Sweet peace, that knows no wish to be or to do anything apart from the Father’s will.’”

Then followed remarks and questions by many as to the oneness of the Deity, whether in the Father or the Son, and many thoughts were suggested not soon to be forgotten. It is beyond measure amazing that Jesus should lay aside his own power to be upheld by the Father, and anointed by the Spirit; yet such is proven both by plain Scripture and by the facts of his life to have been the case.

As we were getting into deep waters the topic was changed and P.\_\_\_\_ read again verses 2 and 3, Isaiah 42. "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." Remarks were made upon the very remarkable connection of this verse in Matthew 12:20, where it follows upon the council of the Pharisees to destroy Jesus, and his withdrawal from them, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of Esaias the prophet," etc. Therefore, the first sense must be that our Lord would not come into needless conflict with such weak and offensive bruised reeds and stacking flaxes as the Pharisees were he was not so combative as at once to crush out the miserable pretensions of these men. Those who strive and cry in the streets are eager for controversy where they feel sure of an easy victory, but not so Jesus: he turns aside and lets these despicable foes die out of themselves. From this first sense the more common reading derives force, for if he did not stamp out such poor pretensions as these, we may be all the more sure that real life will be preserved and fostered by him.

The unambitious, gentle, peaceful character of our Lord's ministry was suggested as a topic upon verse 2.

Verse 4 was then read, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." It was remarked that until the nations shall be converted, our Redeemer will follow out his great purpose. Topic suggested — The Lord's discouragements, or things which would of themselves cause failure to the gospel; and the constancy of the Lord in his work till his end is accomplished.

C.\_\_\_\_ suggested that we heard a great deal of the final perseverance of the saints;: it would be well to dwell upon the final perseverance of their Savior, and, therefore, gave us an outline as follows: —

1. The Fact of our Lord's perseverance in the work which his Father gave him to do. This implies his true humanity, otherwise we could hardly speak of his persevering. What a glorious spectacle we are here permitted to behold! It was "a new thing in the earth."

2. The Difficulty of it. Arising from his being almost alone in his work, from his not being strong physically, from his being poor, from his "views" being unpopular, from his own family deriding his claims, from having raw recruits as followers, and lastly from his real and sore temptations.

3. The Success of it. He taught the truth he came to teach, he did the work he came to do, he suffered all that was necessary and appointed, he triumphed over sin, death, and hell, by his resurrection and ascension. We see his success in the triumphs of his apostles and the early Church, we see it still today in the spread of the gospel, and that success shall continue until "the whole earth shall be filled with his glory," and he is "satisfied."

4. Its Secret. "He trusted in God." "The Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works," his strong, abiding, and incomparable faith was the secret of his constancy Jesus is the Greatest Believer.

5. Its Practical Lessons are two. Example and stimulus for his followers to "endure unto the end," and encouragement to those "without." "He will not fail" you, nor "be discouraged" about you: he saveth to the uttermost.

It was also proposed to show the Redeemer's perseverance in the case of each believer this would be a very choice subject.

Thus we passed on from verse to verse till we reached the 16th. We can only remember a few of the jewels which were dropped around us by the brethren.

On verse sixth, "I will give thee for a covenant of the people," the Lord was spoken of as the surety, the seal, the substance, the mediator, and the federal head of the covenant, and as the covenant itself. On the words, "I will give thee for a light of the Gentiles," Christ as a light, and a light to ignorant, deluded, sinful, miserable Gentiles, was also suggested to our consideration.

*"Light of those whose dreary dwelling  
Borders on the shades of death."*

None need him more or will prize, him more than those whose darkness is extreme. Y. P. illustrated the promise contained in the words “I will hold, thy hand,” from a father’s holding a child’s hand to guide him, to comfort him, or to strengthen him. “The arms of his hands were made strong by the mighty God of Jacob.” When the boy tries to draw the bow his father puts his hand upon the boy’s hands and imparts his own force to his pull.

Verse 7 is so rich that there was hardly any room or need for exposition.

Verse 8 The Lord’s jealousy of his glory, and. the practical lessons to be derived therefrom.

Verse 9 **1.** The novelties of grace — “new things do I declare.” **2.** Though new to our experience, they are the “old, old story” of the word — “before they spring forth I tell you of them.” **3.** The confirmation to our faith which this fact affords when we see how the Bible end our own experience tally we gather confidence in God.

Verse 10. V.P. remarked upon the text as a suitable vindication of the abundant singing at revivals. P. suggested that a new song is asked for because we are new men, with new knowledge, new mercies, and new hopes. Old songs are not good enough, nor suitable to new circumstances, nor expressive of our own peculiar delights: besides, it would argue indolence to go on for ever in one strain, and honor the Lord with stale music.

It was proposed to take the two verses as exhorting people under all spiritual conditions, as well as in all physical positions to sing unto the Lord: — the far off ones, the restless souls at sea, the lonely ones like islets cut. off from fellowship, the barren ones in the wilderness, the little ones in the villages, the believers to whom Christ is only a refuge, and the assured on the mountain top. This was dwelt upon as a jubilant theme to be handled when the heart is in tune.

Verse 13 contains a fresh and stimulating topic — the Lord in battle. **1.** His power displayed. **2.** His jealousy aroused. **3.** His voice heard. **4.** His victory secured.

Verse 16 produced many remarks. W. suggested divisions — **1.** The unknown way. **2.** The known guide. P. remarked upon four kinds of blind; the physically, mentally, spiritually, and consciously blind, and reminded the brethren that at the end of the London-road, Southwark, they have all

four; on the right is the Blind School, for the physically blind; on the left; Bethlehem Hospital, for the mentally blind; right before you, St. George's Catholic Cathedral for the spiritually blind, and the Christian man is himself the fourth, or consciously blind. The words of our Lord to the Pharisees were quoted, "Now ye say we see, therefore your sin remaineth": and P. added this outline — **1.** Who these consciously blind are? **2.** What does God promise to do for them? Bring, lead, etc. **3.** What comes of his guidance? I will make, etc. **4.** How it all ends? Fulfilled promises — "these things will I do unto them." Everlasting preservation, "and not forsake them." These are mere gleanings of the vintage. Marty voices contributed to the harmony of thought, and no one raised a discordant note, or one aside from the subject.

It was now proposed to begin at the right hand corner of the fire and each one give an outline of a sermon. Our brother B. who is wealthy in all good things, gave us a handful of his golden apples. One was founded on. Proverbs 9:8: "He knoweth not that the dead are there."

There are other houses besides those of "ill-fame," which contain the dead, and there are other temptresses besides the "strange woman." There are,

- 1.** Madam Avarice at the house of Wealth, and in her house are **1.** Dead affections. **2.** Dead generous impulses. **3.** Dead joys. **4.** Dead manhood
- 2.** Madam Gambling at the house of Speculation. In her house are, **1.** Dead honor. **2.** Dead truthfulness.
- 3.** Madam Gaiety, at the house of Pleasure. In her house are, **1.** Dead virtue: young men and women ruined by music-halls. **2.** Dead impressions: impressions of the sanctuary murdered. **3.** Dead hopes of parents.
- 4.** Madam Drink at the house of Intoxication. **1.** Dead promises of future usefulness. **2.** Dead talents and gifts. **3.** Dead home-happiness.
- 5.** Madam Morality at the house of Self-righteousness; a more respectable courtesan, but she slays as many as any. Her house is full of dead souls.

After this admirable sketch, as the next brother was not prepared, B. favored us with another in his stead, upon what God's grace can do in an hour. He has since favored us with this outline on paper, and here it is.

Acts 16:33. "He took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." In the history of the jailor we have the case of one who, in one and the same hour, Was

**1.** A heathen, and a brutal one; for "he thrust them into the inner prison," and "made their feet fast in the stocks": — two aggravations of their sufferings which he had not been ordered to commit.

**2.** At, anxious inquirer. **1.** "He springs in"; see his earnestness. **2.** "He trembled": showing his alarm. **3.** "He fell down": which indicated his humble sense of helplessness. **4.** He was suddenly courteous: he said, "Sirs;" — grace had already produced fruit. **5.** He was thoroughly serious, and his one thought was how to be saved.

**3.** A rejoicing believer. He not only believed, but attained to assurance, for he "rejoiced." (verse 34).

**4.** A Christian worker. **1.** He brought his family to hear the gospel. **2.** He washed the apostles' stripes; manifesting not only his love to the instruments used of God to his salvation; but also his desire to make amends for his former ill-treatment of them.

**5.** A thorough Baptist, and the head of a Baptist family: He was baptized, he and all his, straightway, for he is described as "believing in God with all his house."

These were lively and refreshing, and with many thanks we passed on to E., who is a thoughtful elder brother, He gave us his last sermon. The text was John 8:31-32, "Disciples indeed." He worked out the connection, making "disciples tricked" his central idea. From above that idea he drew forth the two leading characteristics of true discipleship (verse 30); faith, "then said Jesus to those Jews which believed," and perseverance, "if ye continue in my word." From below the text he drew the two leading privileges, "and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (verse 32). Knowledge of the truth and freedom as the result.

B. of D. suggested the Savior's I ams of the gospels as a topic; it is one in which there is plenty of sea room, and might be made into a series of discourses. The Jams of the Revelation he also mentioned, and showed how they could be profitably used.

V. P. gave an outline upon our Lord's visit, to Bethesda, in which he showed **1.** Mystery present everywhere. Sin and sorrow existing in God's world. **2.** Mystery examined by our Lord himself, and thus made more mysterious, since he looked on and did not at once heal all. **3.** Mystery explained by the reasons for the existence of sorrow, and, **4.**, Mystery terminated in heaven.

U. remarked that the visit of the King of kings to Bethesda might be illustrated by the late visit of Her Majesty to the London Hospital. Sweetly did this brother descant upon the joy of the people, upon the mottoes upon the route, especially "Come Again," and upon the enthusiasm of the poor little sick child, who exclaimed, "O if I could only see the Queen, I am sure I should get well!" How the visits of our Lord create gladness, hope, and enthusiasm in all faithful hearts. The contrast as to what the Queen could not do, and Jesus does do, was also hinted at.

C. observed that whenever brethren were pressed for a subject they would find the whole of John 13 a wonderful storehouse of preachable texts, almost every verse being available for a sermon.

Thus did one and another minister to the general edification till the time had expired; and P. closed the meeting with prayer, after reading from "Spiritual Fables, Apologues and Allegories" the three following eminently beautiful pieces: —

## CAMOMILES.

"You smell delightfully fragrant," said the Gravel-walk to a bed of Camomile flowers, under the window.

"We have been trodden on," replied the Camomiles.

"Does that cause it?" asked the Gravel-walk. "Treading on me produces no sweetness."

"Our natures are different," answered the Camomiles. "Gravel-walks become only the harder by being trodden upon; but the effect on our own selves is, that, if pressed and bruised when the dew is upon us, we give forth the sweet smell which you now perceive."

"Very delightful!" replied the Gravel.

Oh! what sweetness has issued from the sufferings of the Lord Jesus!" It pleased the Father to bruise him" (Isaiah 53:10), and from his sorrows spring sympathy for his afflicted, comfort to the humble, and salvation unto sinners. (Hebrews 2:10, 17, 18.)

Our trials have theft good effects only when they cause our spirits to send up ardent desires to heaven, and to shed a holy fragrance around us in the world.

With the dew of grace on our hearts (Hosea 14:5) persecutions and afflictions will bring out our divine character, so that we shall be like bruised camomiles. "Thy dew is as the dew of herbs." (Isaiah 26:19.)

## SOFTENING.

"Unaccountable this!" said the Wax, as from the flame it dropped melting upon the paper beneath.

"Do not grieve," said the Taper. "I am sure it is all right."

"I was never in such agony!" exclaimed the Wax, still dripping.

"It is not without a good design, and will end well," replied the Taper.

The Wax was unable to reply at the moment, owing to a strong pressure; and when it again looked up, it bore a beautiful impression, the counterpart of the seal which had been applied to it.

"Ah! I comprehend now," said the Wax:, no longer in suffering. "I was softened in order to receive this lovely durable impress. Yes, I see now it was all right, because it has given to me the beautiful likeness which I could not otherwise have obtained."

Afflictions in the hand of the Holy Spirit effect the softening of the heart, that it may receive heavenly impressions. Job said, "God maketh my heart soft" (23:16).

As the wax in its naturally hard state cannot take the impress of the signet, and needs to be melted to render it susceptible, so the believer is by sanctified trials prepared to receive and made to bear the Divine likeness. "In whom also after that ye believed (says the apostle) ye were sealed with

that Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). “Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Corinthians 1:22).

## EBB AND FLOW.

“Mother,” said a little Limpet, sticking to the rock, “Mother, what has become of the sea? I am so dry here!”

“Nothing unusual has taken place, dear,” said the old Limpet, affectionately.

“Oh, it was so nice to be in the deep water,” said the little one. “Is the sea all gone?”

“It will come again by-and-by, love,” replied the kind old Limpet, who had had long experience of ebb and flow.

“But I am so thirsty, and almost faint; the sea has been away so long.”

“Only wait awhile in hope, little one; hold fast to the rock, and the tide will soon come back to us.”

And it did come, soon come; rolling up the beach and humming over the sands, making little pools, and forming tiny rivers in the hollows; and then it rolled up against the rocks, and at last it came to the Limpet, bathed it with its reviving waters, and so amply supplied its wants that it went to sleep in peace, forgetting its troubles.

Religious feeling has its ebbings and flowings. But, when former sensible comforts are departed, still to hold fast to the immovable, unchangeable rock, Christ Jesus, is the soul’s support and safety.

Love mourns the absence of spiritual enjoyments. “Hath the Lord forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?”

# THE PALM TREE.

## GATHERINGS BY C. H. SPURGEON.

When staying at Mentone the visitor is sure to observe a sunny promontory which juts into the sea at the extreme east. It is so constantly bright, and catches the sun so long after the shadows have fallen elsewhere, that it is quite impossible to avoid noticing it, and inquiring its name. "That is Bordighera," is sure to be the prompt reply; and if you take a carriage and go to the aforesaid Bordighera you will find it to be like Jericho, the city of palm trees; plenteously endowed no doubt with those noble plants because it basks so continually in the beams of the sun. There are forests of palms around the town, supplying such a spectacle as can be rarely seen out of the West Indies. Other towns along the Riviera possess a few stately date, palms and boast in them, but in Bordighera they abound, and mark: out the spot as altogether peculiar. The grand ceremonials of Palm Sunday and Easter at Rome require many leaves of the palm, and to Bordighera is given the honor of supplying St. Peter's and the Pope's Chapel. We were happy in seeing the palms before their fronds had been stripped off for papal uses; but had we been there after the stripping we should have been somewhat compensated by the story which is told of the way in which Bordighera obtained its peculiar Easter privilege. We had heard the anecdote told concerning a British tar, but that is an invention of our national vanity, the truth being as we now tell it. An immense multitude had assembled in Rome to witness the raising of a huge obelisk. Silence was enjoined upon all, on pain of death, while a host of laborers ragged at the cables of the lifting machinery. There was a suspense, the stone would not settle on its base., all the strength applied to it seemed insufficient, and yet the work was so nearly accomplished that the hitch was all the more deplorable. There was a sailor in the throng who saw it all, and knew the remedy; but the sentence of death held him in prudent silence. All men grazed with excitement while the monolith still resisted all force, and it seemed probable that the strain must be relaxed and the task abandoned. At last, death or no death, our sailor friend could restrain himself no longer, but shouted with all his might, "Wet the ropes!" It was done, and the obelisk was in its place, but the seafaring man had been seized by the papal guards, and was now to answer for his daring breach of infallible rule. He

turned out to be a man of Bordighera, and being pardoned for his offense was also rewarded for his courage and common sense by being allowed to ask any favor he chose. He only asked that his native town might be favored to supply his Holiness with palms; upon what terms we know not, but from the fellow's shrewdness we may be sure that they were not to be disposed of without money and without price. Our inference from the legend is, that he who knows how to do the right thing at the right moment is the man who will bear the palm. Many men have wit, but they have left it at home; they know that, the ropes should be wetted, but they do not happen to think of it at the time.

Of course at Bordighera the palm is grown more for ornament than for use, and a most stately adornment it is to any street, or garden, or plain, where it may be found; but it is in other lands famous beyond measure for its usefulness. Beauty and utility are nowhere more completely united than in the date palm. In Kirby's "Chapters on Trees" we read, "The blessings of the date palm are without limit to the Arab. Its leaves give a refreshing shade in a region where the beams of the sun are almost insupportable. Men, and also camels, feed upon the fruit, and sweet liquor is obtained from the trunk by making an incision. It is called the milk of the palm tree, and by fermentation it becomes wine.

The wood of the tree is used for fuel, and as a material for building the native huts; and ropes, mats, baskets, beds, and all kinds of articles are manufactured from the fibers of the leaves. The Arab cannot imagine how a nation can exist without date trees; and he may well regard it, as the greatest injury that he can inflict upon his enemy to cut; down his date trees.

"There is rather an amusing story told of an Arab woman, who once came to England in the service of an English lady, and remained there as nurse for some few years. At length, however, she went back to her own country, where she was looked upon as a great traveler, and a person that had seen the world. Her friends and relations were never tired of listening to what she had to tell them, and of asking her questions. She gave such a glowing account of England, and the fine houses, and rich people, and grand clothes she had seen, that the Arabs became quite envious, and began to despise their own desert land, with its few villages scattered here and there. Indeed, the effect of the conversation was to make them very low spirited, and to wish they had been born in England. But happily this

state of things did not last. The woman chanced to say as a kind of after-thought, that one thing was certainly a drawback in the happy country she had been describing. In vain she had looked for the well-known date trees, and she had been told that not one single tree grew in England. It was a country without dates. ‘Ah, well!’ said her neighbors, much relieved, and their faces brightening up, ‘that alters the case. We have no wish now to live in England!’”

The Israelites were very fond of calling their daughters Tamar, or palm tree, the, stately beauty of the tree appearing to be peculiarly symbolical of a queenly woman. What a sight must Tadmor or Tamar in the Desert have been! The Greeks rightly turned the Hebrew name into Palmyra; it was a palm city in the center of the wilderness where the caravans halted on their journey between the luxurious East and the needy West. Scarcely would the two thousand five hundred columns of pure white marble, all gleaming in the brilliance of an eastern sun, have rivaled the glory of the palms which lifted their pillar-like trunks into the air two hundred feet, and then threw out their graceful fronds, light as the feather of the ostrich, yet strong to resist the storms from heaven. Alas, the watercourses which feed the gardens of that magnificent city are broken up, “the tanks which supplied the caravans of the merchants have been destroyed by war or by earthquakes, and, since the discovery of the passage by sea from Europe to India, the march of the caravans in that direction has ceased, there is no one to repair the stations of the desert, to dress the gardens, or to renew the palms.” In vain do we mention the names of Solomon, and Zenobia, Adrian and Aurelian, the palm-treed city of the wilderness is dead, and the Bedouin prowls around her tomb. Have we not seen flourishing churches also pass away in the same manner? Neglect, forgetfulness of the sacred irrigation of prayer, failure of spiritual life, and other causes, have caused the glory to depart, and made the city to become a heap, and the garden a desolation. May such evil never happen in our day, but may we see the Lord’s hand stretched out still to prosper his people.

We did not commence writing with the intention of saying all that can be said upon the palm tree, for many have been over this ground before us, and have brought out a vast variety of useful lessons; ours is but; a leisure paper of odds and ends, perhaps not quite so well known to our readers as other matters about the palm may be. We trove seen them growing in the Bordighera nurseries, and have borne upon our shoulder weighty branches pulled from growing specimens; we have, also seen the male, or barren tree

planted where it could fertilize its fruit-bearing neighbors; we have marked the little ferns growing upon the decayed ends of the fronds, and watched the happy lizards sporting in the crevices, and we seem now to be at home with palms, atleast as much so as a man can be who has never been in Egypt or Persia. Probably there are as many instructive uses in the palm tree as there are actual uses in its material, but we are too idle to work them out just now, and so we open a book written at Calcutta by the Revelation J. Long, and transfer a page to our magazine to let our readers see what an Indian missionary makes out of this oriental tree. He, says, "The righteous are like the palm."

1. "The palm tree grows in the desert. Earth is a desert to the Christian; true believers are refreshed in it even as a palm in the Arabian desert, so Lot amid Sodom's wickedness, and Enoch who walked with 'God amongst the antediluvians.
2. "The palm tree grows from the sand, but the sand is not its food; water below feeds its tap roots, though the heavens above be brass. Some Christians grow, not as the lily, Hosea 14:5, by green pastures, or as the willow by the water-courses, Isaiah 44:4, but as the palm of the desert. So Joseph among the cat worshippers of Egypt, Daniel in voluptuous Babylon: faith's penetrating root, reaching the fountains of living waters.
3. "The palm tree is beautiful, with its tall and verdant canopy, and the silvery flashes of its Waving plumes; so the Christian virtues are not like the creeper or bramble, tending downwards, their palm branches shoot upwards, and seek the things above, where Christ dwells, Colossians 3:1; some trees are crooked and gnarled, but the Christian is a tall palm as a son of the light, Matthew 3:12; Philippians 2:15. The Jews were called a crooked generation, Deuteronomy 32:5, and Satan a crooked serpent, Isaiah 27, but the Christian is upright like the palm. Its beautiful unfading leaves made it, an emblem of victory, it was twisted into verdant booths at; the feast of tabernacles, and the multitude, when escorting Christ to his coronation in Jerusalem, spread leaves on the way, Matthew 21:8. So victors in heaven are represented as having palms in their hands, Revelation 7:9. No dust, adheres to the leaf as it does to the battree; the Christian is in the world, not of it, the dust of earth's desert adheres not to his palm leaf. The leaf of the palm is the same — it does not, fall in. winter, and even in the summer k has no holiday clothing, it is an evergreen.

4. “The palm tree is very useful. The Hindus reckon it has 360 uses. Its shadow shelters, its fruit refreshes the weary traveler, and it points out to the pilgrim the place where water may be found. Such was Barnabas, a son of consolation, Acts 4:36, stroh Lydia, Dorcas, others, who on the king’s highway showed the way to heaven, as Philip did. to the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts 9:34.

5. “The palm tree produces fruit even in old age. The best dates are produced when the tree is from thirty to one hundred years old; three hundred pounds of dates are annually yielded; so the Christian grows happier and more useful as he grows older: knowing his own faults more, he is more mellow to others; he is like the setting sun, beautiful, mild, and enlarged; or like Elim, where the wearied Jews found twelve wells and seventy palm trees.”

This is very good, and has somewhat of freshness in it. It reminds us of what Dr. Thomson says in “The Land and the Book,” upon the text, “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God.” He says, “The palm grows slowly but steadily, from century to century,” uninfluenced by the alterations of the seasons which affect other trees. It does not rejoice overmuch in winter’s copious rain, nor does it droop under the drought and the burning sun of summer. Neither heavy weights which men place upon its head, nor the importunate urgency of the wind can sway it aside from perfect uprightness. There it stands, looking calmly down upon the world below, and patiently yielding its large clusters of golden fruit from generation to generation. They bring forth fruit in old age. The allusion to being planted in the house of the Lord is probably drawn from the custom of planting beautiful and long-lived trees in the courts of temples and palaces, and in all ‘high places’ used for worship. This is still common; nearly every palace and mosque and convent in the country has such trees in the courts, and, being well protected there, they flourish exceedingly. Solomon covered all the walls of the ‘Holy of Holies’ round about with palm trees. They were thus planted, as it were, within the very house of the Lord; and their presence was not only ornamental, but appropriate and highly suggestive. The very best emblem, not. only of patience in well-doing, but of the rewards of the righteous — a fat and flourishing old age — a peaceful end — a glorious immortality. The Jews used palm branches as emblems of victory in their seasons of rejoicing, and Christians do the same on Palm Sunday, in commemoration of our Savior’s triumphant entry

into Jerusalem. They are often woven into an arch, and placed over the head of the bier which carries man to his 'long home,' and speak sweetly of victory and eternal life."

We were thinking of the way of climbing a palm tree, and noted how easy it would be to step from the notch of one departed frond to another, but we could not see our way clear to read the lesson of the physical fact till, turning to good Moody Stuart's "Song of Songs," we found him thus sweetly expatiating upon the eighth verse of the seventh chapter: —

"I said, I will go up to the palm tree, I will take hold of the boughs thereof." This is for the purpose of gathering the fruit, or rather it is the grasping of the fruit itself, for the laden, boughs of the palm are little else than vast fruit-stalks. No tree presents a more beautiful picture of abundance; the single, branchless, untapered stem, the magnificent crown of branching leaves at the summit of the stem, and beneath the leaves the boughs or fruit-stalks, each of them clustered round with innumerable dates, and sometimes hanging downward not far from the outstretched hand. The fruit of the palm is so abundant that in some of the oases of the great African desert, it is said to form the principal food of those sons of Ethiopia, 'who will soon stretch out their hands to God,' and pluck living fruit from a nobler palm. In these last days we sometimes look back with desire on the patriarchal infancy of the church ere the palm tree had attained its present height, and when our fathers in the faith gathered the ripe fruit from the low summit of its still slender stem.

*"Sweet were the days when thou didst lodge with Lot,  
Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,  
Advise with Abraham, when thy power could not  
Encounter Moses' strong complaint and moan;  
Thy words were then, Let me alone.  
One might have sought and found thee presently,  
At some fair oak, or bush, or cave, or well."*

Herbert.

But if the tree has grown taller, its fruit is more abundant, in words of life multiplied tenfold to us and to our children; its thickened stem is more easily grasped, and is notched round year by year with helpful footsteps by the very gathering of the laden boughs. Each successive produce of the tree both prepares for a greater, and leaves like the palm a permanent step in

the ladder by which we may reach the ample fruit, all the past a handmaid to the future.”

Our musings and gatherings must now end. We must go from the palm trees of a sunny clime to the oaks and elms of Old England, which also have their teaching, and one of these days we may perhaps put it into words for our readers.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

DECEMBER, 1877.

# “DO NOT SIN AGAINST THE CHILD.”

AN ADDRESS AT A PRAYER MEETING FOR SABBATH SCHOOLS. BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“And Reuben answered them, saying, Spoke I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required.” — Genesis 42:22.*

YOU know how Joseph’s brethren, through envy, sold him into Egypt; and how ultimately they were themselves compelled to go down into Egypt to buy corn. When they were treated roughly by the governor of that country, whom they did not know to be their brother, their consciences smote them, and they said one to another, “We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought, us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.” While their consciences were thus accusing them, the voice of their elder brother chimed in, saying, “Said I not unto you, Do not sin against the child?” From which I gather that, if we commit sin after being warned, the voice of conscience will be all the more condemning, for it will be supported by the memory of disregarded admonitions, which will revive again, and with solemn voices say to us, “Said we not unto you, Do not sin against the child?” We who know what is due to children will be far more guilty than others if we sin against their souls. Wiser views as to the needs and hopes of the little ones are now abroad in the world than those which ruled the public mind fifty years ago, and we shall be doubly criminal if now we bring evil upon the little ones.

The advice of Reuben may well be given to all grown up persons: “Do not sin against the child.” Thus would I speak to every parent, to every’ elder brother or sister, to every schoolmaster, to every employer, to every man

and woman, whether they have families or not, “Do not sin against the child:” neither against your own child, nor against anybody’s child, nor against the poor waif of the street whom they call “nobody’s child.” If you sin against adults, “do not sin against the child.” If a man must be profane, let him have too much reverence for a child to pollute its little car with blasphemy. If a man must drink, let him have too much respect for childhood to entice his boy to sip at the intoxicating cup. If there be ought of lewdness or coarseness on Coot, screen the young child from the sight and hearing of it. O ye parents, do not follow trades which will ruin your children, do not select houses where they will be east into evil society, do not bring depraved persons within your doors to defile them. For a man to lead others like himself into temptation is bad enough, but to sow the vile seed of vice in hearts that are as yet untainted by any gross, actual sin, is a hideous piece of wickedness. Do not commit spiritual infanticide. For’ God’s sake, in the name of common humanity, I pray you, if you have any sort of feeling left, do not play the Herod by morally murdering the innocents. I have heard that when, in the cruel sack of a city, a soldier was about to kill a child, his hand was stayed by the little one’s crying out, “O sir, please don’t kill me; I am so little.” The feebleness and littleness of childhood should appeal to the worst of men, and restrain them from sinning against the child.

According to the story of Joseph, there are three ways of sinning against the child. The first was contained in the proposition of the envious brothers, “Let us slay him, and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” “:Shed no blood,” said Reuben, who had reasons of his own for wishing to save Joseph’s life. There is such a thing as morally and spiritually slaying boys and girls, and here even the Reubens unite with us; even those who are not so good as they should be, will join in the earnest protest, “Do not sin against the child” — do not train him in dishonesty, lying, drunkenness, and vice. No one among us would wish to do so, ‘but it is continually done by bad example. Many sons are ruined by their fathers. Those who gave them birth give them their death. They brought them into the world of sin, and they seem intent; to bring them into the world of punishment, and will succeed in the fearful attempt unless the grace, of God shall interfere. Many are doing tall they can, by their own conduct at home and abroad, to educate their offspring into pests of society and plagues to their country. When I see the number of juvenile criminals I cannot help asking, “Who slew all these?” and it is sad to have

for an answer, "These are mostly the victims of their parents' sin." The fiercest beasts of prey will not destroy their own young, but sin makes men unnatural, so that they destroy their offspring's souls without thought. To teach a child a lascivious song is unutterably wicked; to introduce him to the wine cup is evil. To take children to places of amusement where everything is polluting — where the quick-witted boy soon spies out vice and learns to be precocious in it; where the girl, while sitting to see: the play, has kindled within her passions which need no fuel — to do this is to act the tempter's part. Would you poison young hearts, and do them lifelong mischief? I wish that the guardians of public morals would put down all open impurity; but if that cannot be, at least let the young be shielded. He who instructs a youth in the vices of the world is a despicable wretch, a panderer for the devil, for whom contempt is a feeling too lenient. No, even though thou be of all men most hardened, there can be no need to worry the lambs, and offer the babes before the shrine of Moloch.

The same evil may be committed by indoctrinating children with evil teachings. They learn so soon, that it is a sad thing to teach them error, It is a dreadful thing when the infidel father sneers at the cross of Christ in the presence of his boy; when he utters horrible things against our blessed Lord in the hearing of tender youth. It is sad to the last degree that those who have been singing holy hymns in the Sabbath-school should go home to hear God blasphemed and to see holy things spit upon and despised. To the very worst unbelievers we might well say — Do not thus ruin your child's immortal soul; if you are resolved to perish yourself, do not drag your child downward too.

But there is a second way of sinning against the child, of which Reuben's own proposition may serve as an illustration. Though not with a bad motive, Reuben said, "Cast him into this pit in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him." The idea of many is to leave the child as a child, sad then look him up in after days, and seek to deliver him from destruction. Do not kill him, but leave him alone till riper years. Do not kill him, that would be wicked murder; but leave him in the wilderness till a more convenient season, when, like Reuben, you hope to come to his rescue. Upon this point I shall touch many more than upon the first. Many professing Christians ignore the multitudes of children around them, and act as if there were no such living beings. They may go to Sunday-school or not, they do not know, and do not care. At any rate, these good people cannot trouble

themselves with teaching children. I would earnestly say, “Do not; sin against the child by such neglect.” “No,” says Reuben, “we will look after him when he, is a man. tie is in the pit, now, but we are in hopes of getting him out afterwards.” That is the common notion — that the children are to grow up unconverted, and that they are to be saved in after life. They are to be left; in the pit now and to be drawn out by-and-by. This pernicious notion is sinning against the child. No word of Holy Scripture gives countenance to such a policy of delay and neglect. Neither nature nor grace pleads for it. It was the complaint of Jeremiah, “Even the sea monsters draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.” Let not such a charge lie against any one of us. Our design and object should be that our children, while they are yet children, should be brought to Christ; and I ask those dear brothers and sisters here present who love the Lord not. to doubt about the conversion of their little ones, but to seek it at once with all their hearts. Why should our Josephs remain in the pit of nature’s corruption? Let us pray the Lord at once to take them up out of the horrible pit, and save them with a great salvation.

There is yet a third way of sinning against the child, which plan was actually tried upon Joseph: they sold him — sold him to the Ishmaelites. The merchantmen came by, and they offered so many pieces of silver, and his brothers readily handed him over for a reward. I am afraid that some are half inclined to do the same now. It is imagined that now we have school-boards we shall not want Sabbath-schools so much, but may give over the young to the Secularists. Because the children are to be taught the multiplication table they will not need to be taught the fear of The Lord! Strange reasoning this! Can geography teach them the way to heaven, or arithmetic remove their countless sins? The more of secular knowledge our juveniles acquire the more will they need to be taught in The fear of the Lord. To leave our youthful population in the hands of secular teachers will be to sell them to the Ishmaelites. Nor is it less perilous to leave them to the seductive arts of Ritualists and Papists. We who love the gospel must not let the children slip through our hands into the power of those who would enslave their mind, by superstitious dogmas. We sin against the child if we hand it over to teachers of error.

The same selling of the young Josephs can be effected by looking only to their worldly interests and forgetting their souls. A great many parents sell their children by putting them out as apprentices to men of no Character,

or by placing theta in situations where ungodliness is the paramount influence. Frequently the father does not ask where the boy can go on the Sabbath-day, and the mother does not inquire whether her girl can hear the gospel when she gets out; but good wages are looked after, and not much else. They count themselves very staunch if they draw a line at Roman Catholics, but worldliness and even profligacy are not reckoned as barriers in many cases. How many there are of those who call themselves Christians who sell their daughters in marriage to rich men! The men have no religion whatever, but "it is a splendid match," because they move in high society. Young men and women are put into the matrimonial market and disposed of to the highest bidder: God is not thought of in the matter. Thus the rich depart from the Lord, and curse their children quite as much as Lite poor. I am sure you would not literally sell your offspring for slaves, and yet to sell their souls is by no means less abominable. "Do not sin against the child." Do not sell him to the Ishmaelites. "Ah," say you, "the money is always handy." Will you take the price of blood? Shall the blood of your children's souls be on your skirts? I pray you, pause a while ere you do this.

Sometimes a child may be sinned against, because he is disliked. The excuse for undue harshness mid severity is, "He is such a strange child!" You have heard of the cygnet that was hatched in a duck's nest. Neither duck, nor drake, nor ducklings could make anything out of the ugly bird, and yet, in truth, it was superior to all the rest. Joseph was the swan in Jacob's nest, and his brothers and even his father did not understand him. His father rebuked him and said, "Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" the was not understood by his own kin. I should fancy he was a most uncomfortable boy to live with, for when his elder brothers transgressed he felt bound to bring unto his father their evil report. I doubt not that they called him "a little sneak," though, indeed, he was a gracious child. His dreams also were very odd, and considerably provoking, for he was always the hero of them. His brother called him "this dreamer," and evidently thought him to be a mere fool He was his father's boy, and this made him even more obnoxious to the other sons. Yet that very child who was so despised by his brothers was the Joseph among them. History repeats itself, and the difference in your child, which now causes him to be pecked at, may perhaps arise, from a superiority which as yet, has not found its sphere; at any rate, "do not sin against the child" because he is singular, for he may rise to special distinction. Do not, of course, show him partiality and make him a cost of

many colors; because, if you do, his brothers will have some excuse for their envy; but, on the other hand, do not suffer him to be snubbed, and do not allow his spirit to be crushed.

I have known some who, when they have met with a little Joseph, have sinned against him by foolish flattery. The boy has said something rather good, and then they have set him upon the table so that everybody might see him, and admire what he had to say, while he was coaxed into repeating his sage observations. Thus the child was made self-conceited, forward, and pert. Children who are much exhibited are usually spoiled in the operation. I think: I hear the proud parents say, "Now do see — do see what a wonderful boy my Harry is!" Yes, I do see; I do see what a wonderful stupid his mother is. I do see how unwise his father is to expose his boy to such peril. Do not sin against the child by fostering his pride, which, as it is an ill weed, will grow apace of itself.

In many cases the sin is of quite the opposite character. Contemptuous sneers have chilled many a good desire, and ridicule has nipped in the bud many a sincere purpose. Beware of checking youthful enthusiasm for good things. God forbid that you or I should quench one tiny spark of grace in a lad's heart, or destroy a single bud of promise. We believe in the piety of children; let us never speak, or act, or look as if we despised it.

"Do not sin against the child," whoever you may be. Whether you are teacher or parent, take care that if there is any trace of the little Joseph in your child, even though it be but in his dreams, you do not sin against him by attempting to repress the noble flame which God may be kindling in his soul. I cannot just now mention the many, many ways in which we may be offending against one of the Lord's little ones; but I would have you recollect that if the Lord's love should light upon your boy, and he should grow up to be a distinguished servant, of the Lord, your conscience will prick you, and a voice will say in yore: soul," Said I not unto you, Do not sin against the child?" And if, on the other hand, your child should not become a Joseph, but an Absalom, it will be a horrible thing to be compelled to mingle with your lamentations the, overwhelming consciousness that you led your child into the sin by which he became the dishonor of your family. If I see my child perish, and know that he becomes a reprobate through my ill teaching and example, I shall have to wring my hands with dread remorse and cry, "I slew my child! I slew my child! and

when I did it I knew better, but I disregarded the voice which said to me ‘Do not sin against the child.’”

Now, dear Sunday-school teachers, I will mention one or two matters which concern you. Do not sin against the child by coming to your class with a chilly heart. Why should you make your children cold towards divine things? Do not sin against them by coming too late, for that will make them think that punctuality is not a virtue, and that the Sunday-school is of no very great importance. Do not sin against the child by coming irregularly, and absenting yourself on the smallest pretense, for that is distinctly saying to the child, “You can neglect to serve God when you please, for you see I do.” “Do not sin against the child” by merely going through class routine, without really teaching and instructing. That is the shadow of Sunday-school teaching, and not the substance, and it is in some respects worse than nothing. “Do not; sin against the child” by merely telling him a number of stories; without, setting forth the Savior; for that will be giving him a stone instead of bread. “Do not sin against the child” by aiming at anything short of his conversion to God through Jesus Christ the Savior.

And then, you parents, “do not sin against the child” by being so very soon angry. I have frequently heard grown up people repeat that verse. “Children, obey your parents in all things.” It is a very proper text... a very proper text, and boys and girls should carefully attend to it. I like to hear fathers and mothers preach from it; but there is that other one, you know: there is that other one.” Likewise, ye fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” Do not pick up every little thing against a good child, and throw it in his or her teeth, and say, “Ah, if you were a Christian child, you would not do this and you would not do that.” I am not so sure. You who are heads of families do a great many wrong things yourselves, and yet I hope you are Christians; and if your Father in heaven were sometimes to be: as severe with you as you are with the sincere little ones when you are out of temper, I am afraid it would go very hard with you. Be gentle, and kind, and tender, and loving.

At the same time, do not sin against any child by over-indulgence. Spoiled children are like spoiled fruit, the less we see of them the better. In some families the roadster of the house is the youngest boy, though he is not yet big enough to wear knickerbockers. He manages his mother, and his mother, of course, manages his father, and so, in that way, he rules the

whole house. This is unwise, unnatural, and highly perilous to the pampered child. Keep boys and girls in proper subjection, for they cannot be happy themselves, nor can you be so, unless, they are in their places. Do not water your young plants either with vinegar or with syrup. Neither use too much nor too little of rebuke. Seek wisdom of the Lord, and keep the middle of the way.

In a word, “do not sin against the child,” but train it in the way it should: go, and bring it to Jesus that he may bless it. Cease not to pray for the child till his young heart is given to the Lord. May the Holy Spirit; make you wise to deal with these young immortals. Like plastic clay, they are on the wheel. O that he would teach us to mould and fashion their characters. Above all, may he put his own hand. to the work, and. it will be done indeed.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

MAY, 1878.

# A VOICE FROM THE SEA.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“Yea, it shall be at an instant suddenly.” — Isaiah 29:5.*

*“The Lord sent out a great wind into the sea.” — Jonah 1:4.*

About four o'clock in the afternoon of Lord's-day, March 24th, the inhabitants of London were startled by a sudden hurricane which all at once brought with it darkening clouds of dust, and for a short season raged furiously. Sitting in our study in quiet meditation we were aroused and alarmed by the noise of doors and windows, and the terrible howling of the blast as it swept upon its headlong course. Unhappy were travelers across heath and moor who were overtaken by such an overwhelming gust, for it gave no warning, and allowed no time to seek a shelter. It was soon over, but it was followed by cold and dreary weather, and it would seem to have been a token that winter meant to make another struggle to assume his ancient throne. His Parthian arrow was driven forward with intense force and left its mark in ruin and death.

Just at the moment when landsmen were terrified by the threatening storm, her Majesty's training ship "Eurydice," which had returned from a cruise to the West Indies, was rounding Dunnose headland, off the Isle of Wight, with all plain sails, and also her studding sails set. Those on board were all naturally anxious to reach their homes, and having only to round the coast and to anchor off Spithead, they were making the best of the wind. The noble frigate was plainly seen from the lovely village of Shauklin; but one who was watching the fine vessel suddenly missed it and wondered why. She was hastening along with all sails set except her royals, and her ports open, when in a moment the fierce wind pounced upon her. It was in vain that the captain ordered sail to be shortened; the ship lurched till her keel was visible, and in less time than it takes us to write it the ship capsized,

and more than three hundred brave seamen perished. Well might her Majesty's telegram speak of "the terrible calamity of the 'Eurydice.'" What mourning and lamentation had that one cruel blast scattered over the hind! How swift is the swoop of death! How stealthy its step! How terrible its leap! In the midst of life we are on the verge of the sepulcher. This lesson is preached to us by those three hundred men who lie enshrouded in the all-devouring sea, with a gallant ship as their mausoleum.

*"Toll for the brave!  
The brave that are no more!  
All sunk beneath the wave,  
Fast by their native shore!"*

Great is the peril of the ocean, but there are also dangers on the hind, and at, any moment we also may be summoned to appear before our God. Since this cannot be questioned, let; each prudent man foresee the evil and prepare himself for it.

Another lesson which lies upon the surface of this sad event is this — never feel perfectly safe till you are in port. Many awakened souls are almost within the haven of peace, and are at this time rounding the headland, of thoughtfulness, with the sails of earnest inquiry all displayed to the breeze. Their condition is very hopeful but it is not satisfactory to those who are anxious about their eternal welfare, nor should it be satisfactory to themselves. They are steering for the harbor, they enjoy favoring winds, they have all sails set, but still they have not quite believed in Jesus, nor surrendered themselves to his grace. We who watch them can see that their ports are open, and we dread lest they should be overtaken by a sudden temptation and should suddenly be overturned at the very moment when our hopes are at their best. Is the reader in such case? Then let us beseech him not to be content till he has found Christ and so by faith has anchored in the harbor of "eternal salvation." Do not be happy, dear friend, till you are moored to the Rock of Ages, under the lee; of the everlasting hills of divine mercy, through the stoning blood. It seems very wonderful that a ship which had been to sea so many times and had just completed a long winter's cruise in safety should at last go down just off the coast in a place where danger seemed out of the question. It is doubly sad that so many men should be within sight of a shore upon which they must never set their foot. To perish in mid ocean seems not so hard a lot as to die with the white cliffs of Albion so near: to die with the gospel ringing in our ears is still more sad. Never reckon the ship safe till it floats in the haven: never

reckon a soul safe till it is actually “in Christ.” The “almost persuaded” are often the last to be fully persuaded. Aroused, impressed, and moved to good resolutions, to tears, and even to prayers, yet men postpone decision, and by the force of Satan’s arts are lost, — lost when we all hoped to see them saved. O that seekers were wise enough to be distressed until they are thoroughly renewed. Any position short of regeneration is perilous in the extreme. The manslayer would have been cut down by the avenger had he lingered outside the walls of the refuge-city; it would have been all in vain for him to have touched its stones or sheltered near its towers: he must be within the gates or die. Seekers after salvation, you are not safe till you actually close in with Jesus, place all your confidence in him and become for ever his. Shall it be so now, or will you abide in death? Rest not an hour. Trifle not for another moment; for death may seize you, or a spiritual lethargy may come over your soul from which you may never again be aroused. Give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till your anchor has entered into that within the veil and you are saved in Christ Jesus.

A further lesson should be gleaned from the scant wreckage which as yet has floated up from the sunken vessel. Let us all take warning, and remember that we cannot tell when fierce temptation may assail us.

*“Be watchful, be vigilant, danger may be  
At an hour when all seemeth securest to thee.”*

As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh, our want of foresight keeps us in constant jeopardy, and should therefore induce unceasing watchfulness. The gale may burst upon us either from the north or from the south, and if we make ready for an easterly breeze we may be assailed from the westward instead. He who has sailed upon the sea never trusts it; he who has been at the mercy of the wind never depends upon it.

Beloved believer, you have had a long stretch of fair sailing; let a brother whisper in yore, ear, “keep a good look-out.” Those who are familiar with spiritual navigation know that there is never more likelihood of storm than when the barometer stands at “set fair.”

*“Whene’er becalm’d I lie,  
 And storms forbear to toss;  
 Be thou, dear Lord, still nigh,  
 Lest I should suffer loss:  
 Far more the treacherous calm I dread  
 Than tempests bursting o’er my head.”*

The danger of a foreseen tempest is comparatively little, for your ship with close-reefed sails, and bare poles, is ready for whatever comes; but the perils of the calm lie in the temptation to security, and the liability that sudden temptation may find us unprepared. “What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch”: for if the good captain of the ship had known at what hour the storm would come he would have lowered all his sails, and have weathered the gale. He did all that a brave man could do, but all was little enough, for the huge ship was tossed over and sucked down, and but two remained to tell the tale. Be ye always ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the danger will be upon you.

One other warning let us collect from the wreck while yet it lies beneath the wave. Always be most afraid of sudden temptation when all sails are filled with a fair wind. Personal experience teaches some of us that our gladdest times attract perils to us. The temper of the placid may readily be ruffled when they have newly come from solitary communion with God: the rude shock of the, world’s rough speech tells most upon a mind which has been bathed in heaven. Even the love of Jesus may lead us in the heat of our spirit to wish that we could invoke fire from heaven on his foes. Great, power in prayer, unless we guard ourselves well, may be followed by a fit of depression, even as Elijah fled from Jezebel very soon after his wrestlings upon Carmel. High and rapt enjoyment may be followed by fierce temptation, for the enemy watches for loaded vessels when he allows the empty bark to escape. Even our Lord found but a short interval between the testimony from heaven at his baptism and the temptation from hell which beset him in the wilderness. Our full sails tempt the prince of the power of the air to rage with more than his usual malignity. It is right that, all sail should be set when the wind is favorable. Why should we not avail ourselves of everything which may speed us on our way? Still, let us, never forget to watch unto prayer, or our happiness may be our danger. Brother, mark well your steps in coming down from the mount of communion, for at the foot of it you may meet mocking Pharisees, dispirited disciples, and

perhaps one possessed of an evil spirit of the kind which goeth not out save with prayer and fasting.

Let the self-exalting professor specially beware; but remember, dear brother, that you may soon become such a character. When your sails are big with the wind, and you are flying over the waves, clap your hands if you please and hope soon to have perfected your voyage, but take care to have all hands ready for an emergency. Perhaps one of the best things that could happen to you would be that when you are sailing along so bravely, confident and at ease, your topsails of pride should be carried away; you would be all the better for losing such lofty gear. Plenty of ballast must be stowed away or our royals may be our ruin. Better have our glory rent to ribbons by the gusts than for the ship itself to be blown over. Mark this.

Are you prospering in business? Keep your eye on the weather, and do not flatter yourself that you will never be moved. Is all going well with your family? Be grateful, but rejoice with trembling. Is every desire gratified? Thank God, but do not fold your arms, or suffer the watch to go below. Are you progressing wonderfully in the spiritual life? Doubtless Satan has told you that you are somebody now, strong in which, exceedingly earnest, wonderfully busy, and altogether an crumple to others! Do you not see that the storm-fiend is near you, and do you not know what a wind he can raise? Remember how he slew Job's children by a wind which smote all the four corners of the house, He saves up those four-cornered hurricanes for men in high estate as Job was; therefore beware. Brother,, take in those sails, for the weather is very gusty just now and cannot be relied on for five minutes. As you would, dread shipwreck cultivate a holy jealousy, maintain, godly fear, and evermore look to him that keepeth Israel. He never slumbers nor sleeps, for he knows that his children always need his watchful eye.

## “CALLING OUT THE RESERVES.”

*“Reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war.”  
Job 38:23.*

On the evening of April 1st, the Lord Chancellor read a message from the Queen, stating that

“Her Majesty has thought it right to communicate to the House of Lords that her Majesty is about to cause her Reserve Force and her Militia Reserve Force, or such part thereof as her Majesty shall think necessary to be forthwith called out for permanent service.”

Might not some such message from the King, who is in the midst of Zion, be just now very seasonable, if the Holy Spirit should convey it to all the churches? There should be no reserves in the hosts of the Lord; but alas, through the lukewarm condition of many, these reserves form a numerous part of our membership, and need a great many calls from their officers before they will obey. Perhaps if they felt that the King himself ordered that they should be “forthwith called out for permanent service,” the love of Christ would constrain them, and we should see them marching forth to war. “I pray thee have me excused” has been upon their lips for a long time, or else they have said, “I go, sir,” but; they have not gone. The word of Moses to the children of Gad and Reuben is exceedingly needed by many at this time, “Shall your brethren go to war, and ye sit still?” The reserved forces are so terribly numerous as compared with the active army of our great King that our holy war is sadly hindered and the Canaanites are not subdued. Among these inactive professors there are many who are commonly known as “very reserved people.” These must no longer sit at ease, but, must summon up courage enough to come up to the help of the Lord against, the mighty, lest the curse of Meroz fall upon them. Others are idle, and allow their armor and their weapons to rust. Many are busy here and there about inferior things, but forget their allegiance to their Lord. Very much time, talent, and opportunity is held in reserve for various reasons, and ought at once to be brought forth and consecrated actively to the Lord. What meanest thou, O sleeper? What aileth thee, O sluggard? There is much to be done, why doest thou not thy part? Every man has a

place appointed him in the battle, what excuse can 'be accepted for those who are at ease in Zion, and stir not a hand for their Master and his cause. Nor is it, in men alone that a sinful reserve is made, but great treasures of gold and silver belonging to Christians are laid by to canker while the Lord hath need of them. Men talk of loving Jesus so as to give him all, and in their hymns they say that if they might make some reserve, and duty did not call, their zeal would lead them to a total sacrifice, and yet the financial reserve of the church of God is probably a hundred times as great as that which is expended in the Lord's service. Your own judgments will confirm this statement. The funds actually in the hands of professed believers are immense, for many Christians are enormously rich, and yet we hear daily appeals for money, till one might conclude that all professors of the Christian faith were poor as Lazarus, and that nowadays no holy women were able to minister to the Lord of their substance, and such persons as Joseph of Arimathea were no longer disciples of Jesus.

There is a great deal of reserve time, and reserve talent, and reserve energy and fire, and we would in the name of Jesus call it all out. Why, some men when engaged in the service of God seem to be only the tenth part of men compared with their zeal in their business pursuits. It would take nine of some church members to make one real praying man, and twice that number of some preachers to make a downright earnest minister of the gospel. Is this judgment too severe? Are not some men mere apologies for workers, even when they do pretend to be up and at it? Verily it is so. Oh, if they would but be aroused; if all their manhood, all their heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, were truly engaged, how differently they would act; and if they sought strength from on high, what grand results would follow! I long to see the Holy Spirit filling us all with ardor, and causing every man and woman among us to yield himself or herself fully unto the Lord.

When the reserves are called out matters look very serious, and we expect to see war. Every lover of peace shuddered as he read the Queen's message, for he felt that at last war was really threatened. God grant it may not be so. But with regard to the church of Christ, when the reserves are called out., the world believes that it really means war for Christ. At present the world despises many a church for its inactivity, but when all Christians come forth it will know that we are in earnest. While the regular workers are marching to and fro like a standing army, going through its regular drill, very little is done beyond mere defense, but when the reserves

are called out, it means defiance, and the gauntlet is thrown to the foe. Our Lord would have us fight the good fight of faithful, and go forth in his name conquering and to conquer, but the elect host is hampered and hindered by the suffers and camp-followers who hang about us and work us serious ill. If all this mixed multitude could be drilled into warriors, what a band would the Son of David lead to the war! Once get the reserved members of this church praying, working, teaching, giving, and the enemy would soon know that there is s, God in Israel. These is too much playing at religion nowadays,, and too little of intense, unanimous, enthusiastic hard work. A part of the church is all alive, but a far larger portion is as a body of death, by which the life of the church is held in bondage. Once find the whole body tingling with life from head to foot, from heart to finger, and then you shall have power over the adversary and prevalence with God. When all the people shout for joy and long for the battle, the Philistines will be afraid, and cry out;, saying, “God has come into the camp.” O that my eyes could once perceive the signal! Zion travailing is the sign by which those who know the times will be able to prophecy concerning Zion triumphant. O for the universal agony, the inward throes of deep compassion and consuming zeal; for when these are felt by the whole body, the joyous hour is come.

The Queen’s message reminds me of a great and comforting truth. God himself, blessed be his name, has forces in reserve which he will call forth in due time. Remember the Lord’s own language in the book of Job: “Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against; the day of battle and war?” He represents himself in the language of his servant Joel,. as calling out innumerable locusts as a part of his host: “The Lord shall utter his voice before his army; for his camp is very great.” The hiding of his power we cannot estimate, but we know that nothing is impossible to him. Whatever the church may have seen and experienced of divine power there is yet more in reserve, and when the fit moment shall come all restraint shall be withdrawn, and the eternal forces shall be let loose to rout every foeman, and secure an easy victory. For the moment our great Captain puts his hand into his bosom and allows the enemy to exult, but he is not defeated, nor is he in the least disquieted. “He shall not fail, nor be discouraged.” His time is not yet, but when the time comes he will be found to have his reward with him and his work before him. Let us never be daunted by the apparent failures of the cause of God and truth, for these

are but the trial of patience, the test of valor, and the means to a grander victory. Pharaoh defies Jehovah while he sees only two Hebrews and a rod, but he will be of another mind when the Lord's reserves shall set; themselves in battle array and discharge plague upon plague against him. Even the doubling of the tale of bricks, and the wanton cruelty of the tyrant, all wrought towards the divine end, and were no real hindrances to the grand design; nay they were reserved forces by which the Lord made his people willing to leave Goshen and the fleshpots.

Today, also, the immediate present is dark, and there is room for sad forebodings; but if we look a little further, and by faith behold the brilliant future which will arise out of the gloom, we shall be of good cheer. Lily eye rests at this moment somewhat sorrowfully upon the battle field of religious opinion; truly, there is much to rivet my gaze. It is a perilous moment. The prince of darkness is bringing up his reserves. The soldiers of the devil's old guard, on whom he places his chief reliance, are now rushing like a whirlwind upon our ranks. They threaten to carry everything before them, deceiving the very elect, if it be possible. Never were foes more cunning and daring. They spare nothing however sacred, but assail the Lord himself: his book they criticize, his gospel they mutilate, his wrath they deny, his truth they abhor. Of confused noise and vapor of smoke there is more than enough; but it will blow over in due time, and when it is all gone we shall see that the Lord reigneth, and his enemies are broken in pieces.

Let us watch for the coming of recruits divinely prepared. Let us be eager to see the reserves as they come from the unlikeliest quarters. There may be sitting even now by some cottage fireside, all unknown, the man who shall make the world ring again with the gospel, preaching it with apostolic power. The orthodox advocate, born to cope with subtle minds and unravel all their sophistries, may even now be receiving his training in yonder parish school; yea, and even in the infidel camp, like Moses in the palace of Pharaoh, there may dwell the youth who shall act the iconoclast towards every form of scepticism. Jabin and Sisera may reign, but there shall come a Deborah from mount Ephraim, and a Barak from Kedeshnaphtali. Let the Midianites tremble, for Gideon who threshes wheat in the wine-press will yet beat them small. The Ammonites shall be smitten by Jephtha, and the Philistines by Samson; for every enemy there shall be a champion, and the Lord's people shall do great exploits. I for one believe in Omnipotence. All other power is weakness, in God alone is

there strength. Men are vanity, and their thoughts shall perish; but God is everlasting and everliving, and the truth which hangs upon his arm, like a golden shield, shall endure to all eternity. Hither come we, then, and bow heft, re the face of the Eternal, who reserveth wrath for his enemies and mercy for them that seek hire; and as we lie at his feet we look up right hopefully, and watch for the moment when all his reserves of grace, and love, and glory shall be revealed to the adoring eyes of his chosen people world without end. C.H. S.

## FLOODS IN THE STREETS.

*“Rivers of waters in the streets.” — Proverbs 5:16.*

*“Let judgment run down, as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.” —  
Amos 5:24.*

On Thursday morning, April 11th, when we reached the Tabernacle, at eleven in the morning, we found the rooms of the basement covered with water, so that they could not be occupied. Our conference was unable to meet for dinner in the schoolroom, and was obliged to adjourn to another building. The papers, among many accounts of the flooded districts, thus speak of our near neighbors in the somewhat aristocratic region of Brixton:

“The easterly gate which had been blowing since Sunday morning subsided on Wednesday night, and was followed by such a downpour of rain as seldom occurs in this latitude except in connection with summer thunderstorms. It was very heavy all through the night, and continued yesterday without much abatement through the early hours of the forenoon, until more rain had fallen in a few hours than the average rainfall for a month. At Brixton there was a serious flood, caused by the inability of the Effra river, which is nothing better than a covered sewer, to carry off all the water. It burst forth at all openings, and even forced itself upward in jets which are compared to the spoutings of a whale. The water rising with much rapidity, the inhabitants, who in most cases were sitting down to or preparing for breakfast, had barely time to escape from their breakfast rooms, when the water was upon them. Snatching up what came first to hand, they made the best of their way upstairs, and finding all efforts to save their property futile, gave up the attempt in despair. In Brixton-road, not alone the carriage way, but the footpaths were submerged, and in some places the flow of water was so great that the roadway and pavement were broken up by the rushing waters seeking to find an outlet, and in some instances the pavements were actually washed away. The main road itself was like a quickly-flowing river, and many of the side roads were also flooded. The water was in most places upwards of a foot in depth, and in many nearly two feet. Locomotion was exceedingly difficult, vehicles of all descriptions having to be drawn through the flood, with the horses nearly up to their knees in water, while with the tram-cars the water reached up to the step, and an extra horse was necessary to draw the car.”

When the Lord is pleased to open the windows of heaven and refresh the thirsty earth with plentiful showers, man in his boasted wisdom has so arranged the cities where he dwells that there is no room for the divine bounty, and a benison becomes a danger. His careful preparations in blotting out rippling brooks and water courses begirt with willows, and burying in the earth beneath arches of brick the once silvery streams, are all sources of peril to him; peril, too, from that which should have been his greatest; blessing. The rain is good, but we have not room enough to receive it; we have space for our own filthiness if the heavenly rains will let us alone, but for "showers of blessings" our arrangements have left no receptacle, and they must drown us out, and stop our traffic, to gain even a temporary lodging-place. Time was when the Effra river would have carried the water down to the Thames without any greater inconvenience than a flooded meadow, or a garden swamped for an hour or two. Some living; persons remember the Effra as a pretty brook with a charming walk by its side and overhanging trees. We have seen some pretty bits of scenery which an artist copied from this rural streamlet of days gone by. There were little rustic bridges here and there, and many a nook where lovers of quiet could sit down and meditate; but now there is no sign of the brook until you pass into Dulwich; almost, throughout its entire length our modern civilization has transformed it, into a covered drain. Confined within a dark arch of brick, the stream forgets its sunny days, and like a prisoner urged along the corridor of an underground dungeon pursues its dreary way. Alas, that man should have made human life to be so much after the same manner. Of green fields and fresh breezes how little do the multitudes of our toilers ever see or feel: of cheerfulness and content how little do many of our merchants and traders understand; and of sacred joy and consecrated delight the bulk of men know nothing whatever. Life comes to us, but; too often we will not allow it to flow freely in holy content and joy, where the trees are flourishing and the birds singing among the branches, but we compel it to grovel underground in anxiety and unbelief.

Yet heavenly life cannot always be made to abide among the dead, just as the Effra when fed by showers from heaven would no longer brook its prison. It burst forth wherever a vent existed and forced ways of escape for itself where there were none before. Every now and then this happens in spiritual affairs and men behold the phenomenon with wonder and even with alarm. It was so in the age of Whitefield and Wesley, when the

Lord [opened the windows of heaven upon our land. What an outbreak there was! What a commotion and upheaval! The old pavements of conventionality were torn away, and the floods burst up through them. Attempts were made to stop the stream, persecution was tried against the Methodists, they were denounced from the pulpit, threatened by mobs, and ridiculed as modern enthusiasts and madmen, and regarded as the offscouring of all things; but all this availed nothing, omnipotence was at work and malice could not hinder. The sacred flood would not be denied a channel, but found free course and God was glorified. Of course it stirred the mud and raised the foulness of the community to most offensive, rage, but it cleansed as it rushed forward, and swept away the accumulated vices of dreary years. May the like happen again in our times, indeed we are not altogether strangers to such burstings forth of the living waters even now.

It were well if in individuals there were such floodings of the soul with the grace of God, that the divine life would break forth everywhere, in the parlor, the workshop, the counting-house, the market, and the streets. We are far too ready to confine it to the channel of Sunday services and religious meetings, it deserves a broader floodway and must have it if we are to see gladder times. It must burst out upon men who do not care for it, and invade chambers where it will be regarded as an intrusion; it must be seen by wayfaring men streaming down the places of traffic and concourse, hindering the progress of sinful trades, and surrounding all, whether they will or no. We want another universal deluge, not of destruction, but of salvation, so that the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

Would to God that religion were more vital and forceful among us, so as to create a powerful public opinion in behalf of truth, justice, and holiness. It will be a blessed day when all the streets of our land shall be flooded with grace. Amos in the text which we have quoted bids us aim at this, in the name of the Lord. The formalities of religion are of little worth compared with this, for the Lord says, "I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies." "Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for it will not hear the melody of thy viols, But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." He would have us exhibit a life which should purify the age, and sweep before it every obstacle; a life to be seen even in the streets, where men care least to have

it.. It is much to be desired that the Christian church may yet have more power and influence all over the world for righteousness and peace. Something of it is felt; even now., but, not enough. The Church of Christ in England has more power today than it ever had before. Our country would have been plunged, in war months ago (May, 1878), if it had not been for Christian men who have been the backbone of the opposition to the war party. Peace would not have been kept unbroken, so long as it has been had it not been earnestly promoted by the prayers and labors of those who worship the Prince of Peace. In other matters, also, of social reform, and moral progress, the influence of true religion is felt, and it will yet be far more mighty. May the day come when the Spirit of righteousness shall have complete control over those who govern and direct our affairs, then shall judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. All will not go pleasantly even then, for many will be greatly vexed by such prevalence of right principles: their craft will be in danger, they will be greatly inconvenienced in their sins, they will be up to their knees in an element which they do not relish, and they will rave against it; but for all that it will be a blessing if God sends us such showers of grace as to become an irresistible flood. Come, mighty stream; send it, we beseech thee, O Lord: and let us live to see Ezekiel's vision fulfilled. "Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh."

**C. H. SPURGEON.**

# AN INTERRUPTION IMPROBED.

**A FEW WORDS SPOKEN BY MR. SPURGEON,**

**AT A PRAYER-MEETING, WHEN A FRIEND HAD BEEN  
CARRIED OUT IN A FIT.**

POSSESS your souls in quietness, beloved friends. When we are engaged in prayer, or in any other form of worship, interruptions may occur, especially in large assemblies. We cannot expect all nature to be hushed because we are bowing the knee. Permit not your minds to be easily distracted, or you will often have your devotion destroyed. Rather let us learn a lesson from a painful incident. I seemed to hear a voice in theft pitiful cry of our friend, and it bade me have pity upon the many whose life is one long agony. Let that doleful moan awaken sympathy for thousands in the hospital and out of it who are grievously tormented. We are in good health, and are sitting in the midst of a happy company of our fellow Christians; let us be grateful that we have not been struck down to be carried out; amid the distress of anxious friends. Sympathy and gratitude are two choice emotions, and if both of these are aroused by the interruption we shall have gained more by it, than we can possibly have lost.

Sympathy or fellow-feeling may well be excited by the sight or hearing of pain in our fellow-creatures. We may indulge it freely, for it is not only due to the sufferer, but exceedingly beneficial to the humane heart which feels it. Those who are never out of health themselves, and keep aloof from the poor and the sick, are apt to undergo a hardening process of the most injurious kind. It is a sad thing for the blind man who has to read the raised type when the tips of his fingers harden, for then he cannot read the thoughts of men which stand out upon the page; but it is far worse to lose sensibility of soul, for then you cannot peruse the book of human nature, but, must remain untaught in the sacred literature of the heart. You have heard of "the iron duke," but an iron Christian would be a very terrible person: a heart of flesh is the gift of divine grace, and one of its sure results is the power to be very pitiful, tender, and full of compassion. You would feel all the greater sympathy with some afflicted ones if you knew how good they are, and how patient under their sufferings. I am delighted with the diligent way in which some of our tried sisters come out to religious

services. When many in good health stay away from the meetings upon the most frivolous excuses, there are certain dear sick ones who are never absent. There is one among us who has martyr fits in a week, but how she loves to be here! I beg her to sit near the door, for her fits may come upon her at any moment, but she is an example to us all in the constancy of her attendance. Have sympathy with all the sick, but especially with those who might be spoken of in the words applied to Lazarus, “Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

I mentioned gratitude also, and I hope it will not be forgotten. Let the cry of pain remind us that we owe our Lord a song of thanksgiving for screening us from the greater ills of life, — consumption sapping the constitution, asthma making it misery to breathe, epilepsy tearing us to pieces, or palsy causing every limb to lose its power. Blessed be God for our limbs and senses, and for health which sweetens all. We shall never become too grateful; let us abound in thanksgiving.

This interruption speaks to us with a still deeper and more solemn tone. Our friend is not dead, but might readily enough have been so. That cry says to me — “Prepare to meet thy God.” We are liable to death at any moment and ought always to be ready for it: I mean not only ready because we are washed in the blood of the Lamb, but because we have set our house in order and are prepared to depart. I feel it right when I lay my head upon my pillow to ask myself, “If I never wake on earth, is it well with my soul?” and then to reply,

*“Sprinkled afresh with pardoning blood,  
I lay me down to rest,  
As in the embraces of my God,  
Or of my Savior’s breast.”*

Could we now, dear friends, at this moment resign our breath, and without further preparation crater upon the eternal world? Breathing out the prayer, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,” could we now ascend from earth, made meet for the inheritance above? It should be so. Everything about us should be in such order that if our Lord should come while we are in the field we should not wish to go into the house, but could depart at once. I agree with the great scholar Bengel that death should not become a spiritual parade, but should be regarded as the natural close of our ordinary life; the final note of the psalm of which each day has been a stanza. We ought so to live that to die would be no more remarkable than

for a man in the middle of business to hear a knock at the street door, and quietly to step away from his engagements. There should be no hurrying for a clergyman to administer sacraments, or for a lawyer to write a hasty will, or for an estranged relative to make peace; but all should be arranged and ordered as if we kept our accounts closely balanced, expecting an immediate audit. This would make noble living, and do more for God's glory than the most. triumphant death scene. A friend remarked to George Whitefield that should he survive him he would wish. to witness his death-bed, and hear his noble testimony for Christ. The good man replied, "I do not think it at, all likely that I shall bear any remarkable witness in death, for I have borne so many testimonies to my Lord and Master during my life." This is far better than looking forward to the chill evening' or actual sunset of life as the time of bearing witness. Let us set about that holy work immediately, lest swift death arrest us on the spot and seal our lips in silence. Be faithful every day that you may be faithful to the end. Let not your life be like a tangled mass of yarn, but keep it ever in due order on the distaff, so that whenever the fatal knife shall cut the thread it may end just where an enlightened judgment would have wished. Practice the excellent habit of Mr. Whitefield to whom I before referred, for he could not bear to go to bed and leave even a pair of gloves out of place. He felt that his Master might come at any moment, and he wished to be ready even to the minutes; details.

Now that disturbing incident is over, and we shall settle down again, all the more ready to unite in prayer and praise.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

SEPTEMBER 1878.

### FISHING. <sup>f3a</sup>

#### AN ADDRESS AT TABERNACLE PRAYER-MEETING BY C. H. SPURGEON ON HIS RETURN FROM SCOTLAND.

FEAR I have gathered but few illustrations during my holiday in the north, though I am almost always upon the look out for them. I have spent nearly all my time on board my friend Mr. Duncan's yacht, cruising by day in sunny seas, and usually anchoring at night in lonely bays, far off from the busy haunts of men, where you hear neither rumble of traffic nor hum of city life, but are startled by the scream of sea-birds, the cry of the seal, and the splash of leaping fish. The profound quiet of those solitary regions is a bath of rest for a wearied brain: lone mountain, and sparkling wave, and circling gull, and flitting sea-swallow, all seem to call the mind away from care and toil to rest and play. I am grateful to the last degree for the brief furlough which is permitted me, and for the intense enjoyment and repose which I find in the works of God. No exhibitions, or picture galleries, or artificial recreations, or medical preparations can afford a tithe of the restoring influence which pure nature exercises.

I have been resting, but not idling; relieving the mind, but not smothering it. Very frequently I have seen others fishing, and as I have looked on with interest and excitement, I have been sorry to have been able to take so small a share in it. Perhaps, however, I have gained as much from lines and nets as those who personally used them: they took the fish, but I preserved the silver truths which the creatures brought their months. These pieces of money I have taken, like Peter, not for myself only, but "for me and thee," and so let us share them.. We have a good company of spiritual fishermen in our midst to-night, for here are the young members of "the College of Fishermen," who are making and mending their' nets; here, too, are eager members of a church in which, when the minister says, "I go a-fishing," all the members say" We will go with thee." Here are the fishers of the

Sabbath-schools and of the Bible-classes, fishers of the Tract Society and of the Evangelists' Associations; all these have heard our Lord say, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Not for the hurling of our fellows but for their good we seek to "take up all of them with the angle, to catch them in our net, and gather them in our drag"; and therefore we are willing to learn from others who are fishers too.

Fishermen speak of what they call gathering bait, and they say, such a fish is a "gathering bait," and another is a "killing bait." We need both. The gathering bait brings the fishes together, and thus becomes very useful. You cannot catch the fish if they are not there, and it is therefore wise to throw in your ground-bait pretty freely to attract the finny multitude. I wish some of my fellow fishermen were a little more liberal with gathering bait, for one would like to see the creeks and bays of their pews and galleries swarming with life. Some of them appear rather to frighten the fish away than to attract them around their hooks, they are so dull, so monotonous, so long, and so sour. All spiritual fishermen should learn the art of attraction; Jesus drew men to himself, and we must draw men in like manner. Not only in the pulpit but in the Sunday-school class you need gathering bait, to draw the little ones together, and maintain and increase their numbers. In every other sphere of Christian service the same is true. If faith cometh by hearing, we should first endeavor to gain interested listeners, for how shall they believe if they will not hear. Common sense teaches us that the people must be drawn together first, and must be induced to attend to what we have to put before them; and therefore we must lay ourselves out to this end, because it is essential to our highest aim. A pleasant manner, an interesting style, and even a touch of wit, may be useful. I have sometimes been blamed for making use of pleasantries, but I have done so partly because I could not help it, and chiefly because I have perceived that the interest is sustained and the attention excited by a dash of the familiar and the striking. A sufficient quantity of that which will draw men to listen to our message we not only may use but must use, unless we mean to be content with empty nets and useless hooks. A good temper is a fine gathering bait in a Sabbath-school. There are, some of our brethren and sisters whose very faces are enough to gather the children round them. If I were a little girl I could not help being drawn to some of the sisters who teach in our schools; and if I were a boy the kindly manners of many of our brethren would bind me to them at once: kindly teachers need not bribe children with gifts, their looks and words are irresistible

bonds. Cheerfulness and good humor should be conspicuous in all our attempts to catch men for Jesus; we cannot drive them to the Savior, but they may be drawn. There is a way of giving a tract in the street which will ensure its kindly treatment, and another way which will prejudice the receiver against it: you can shove it into a person's hand so roughly that it is almost an insult, or you can hold it out so deftly that the passer-by accepts; it with pleasure. Do not thrust it, upon him as if it, were a writ, but invite him to accept it as if it, were a ten-pound note. Our fish need delicate handling. The painter, when asked how he mixed his colors, replied, "With brains, sir," and we must fish for the souls of men let like fashion. If you are to win souls you must not be fools. Men will no more succeed in the Lord's business than they will in their own unless they have their wits about them. If Christ's work be done in a slovenly or churlish manner it will answer no man's purpose, but prove labor in vain. We cannot make the fish bite, but we can do our best to draw them near the killing bait of the word of God, and when once they are there we will watch and pray till they are fairly taken.

The fisherman, however, thinks far less of his gathering bait than he does of his catching bait, in which he hides his hook. Very numerous are his inventions for winning his prey, and it is by practice that he learns how to adapt his bait to his fish. Scores of things serve as bait, and when he is not actually at work the wise fisherman takes care to seize anything which comes in his way which may be useful when the time comes to cast his lines. We usually carried mussels, whelks, and some of the courser sorts of fish, which could be used when they were wanted. When the anchor was down the hooks were baited and let down for the benefit of the inhabitants of the deep, and great would have been the disappointment if they had merely swarmed around the delicious morsel, but had refused to partake thereof. A good fisherman actually catches fish. He is not always alike successful, but, as a rule, he has something to show for his trouble. I do not call that man a fisherman whose basket seldom holds a fish; he is sure to tell you of the many bites he had, and of that very big fish which he almost captured; but that is neither here nor there. There are some whose knowledge of terms and phrases, and whose extensive preparations lead you to fear that they will exterminate the fishy race, but as their basket returns empty, they can hardly be so proficient as they seem. The parable hardly needs expounding: great talkers and theorizers are common enough, and there are not a few whose cultured boastfulness is only exceeded by

their life-long failure. We cannot take these for our example, nor fall at their feet with reverence for their pretensions. We must have sinners saved. Nothing else will content us: the fisherman must take fish or lose his toil, and we must bring souls to Jesus, or we shall break our hearts with disappointment.

Walking to the head of the boat one evening, I saw a line over the side, and must needs hold it. You can feel by your finger whether you have a bite or no, but I was in considerable doubt whether anything was at the other end or not. I thought they were biting, but I was not certain, so I pulled up the long line, and found that the baits were all gone; the fish had sucked them all off, and that was what they were doing when I was in doubt. If you have nothing but a sort of gathering bait, and the fish merely come and suck, but do not take the hook, you will catch no fish; you need killing bait. This often happens in the Sunday-school: a pleasing speaker tells a story, and the children are all listening, he has gathered them; now comes the spiritual lesson, but hardly any of them take notice of it, they have sucked the bait from the hook, and are up and away. A minister in preaching delivers a telling illustration, all the ears in the place are open, but when he comes to the application of it the people have become listless; they like the bait very well, but not the hook; they like the adornment of the tale, but not the point of the moral. This is poor work. The plan is, if you possibly can manage it, so to get the bait on the hook that they cannot suck it off, but must take the hook and all. Do take care, dear friends, when you teach children or grown-up people, that you do not arrange the anecdotes in such a way that they can sort them out, as boys pick the plums from their cakes, or else you will amuse but no benefit.

When your tackle is in good trim, it is very pleasant to feel the fish biting, but it is quite the reverse to watch by the hour, and to have no sign.. Then patience has her perfect work. It is very encouraging to feel that a large creature of some sort is tugging away at the other end of your line. Up with him at once! It is better still to have two hooks and to pull up two fish at a time, as one of our friends did. To do this twice every minute, or as fast as ever you can throw the line is best of all. 'What an excitement! Nobody grows tired, and the day is hardly long enough. Up with them! In with the lines! What, another bite? Quick, quick.! We seem to be all among a shoal. The basket, is soon filled this is good fishing. Our great Lord sometimes guides his ministers to the right kind of bait, and to the right spot for the fish, and they take so many that they have hardly time to attend

to each ease, lint in joyful haste receive the converts by the score, and fill the boat. It; is grand fishing when the fish flock around you, but it does not happen all the day long, nor yet all the days of the week, nor yet all the weeks of the year, else ‘would there be a great rush for the fishers’ trade. When amateurs are at sea and the fish do not bite, they have nothing to do but to give over and amuse themselves in some other way, but it must not be so with us, to whom fishing for souls is a life-work and a vocation; we must persevere, whether we have present success or not. At times we have to spend many a weary hour with our line, and never feel a bite; but we must not, therefore, go to sleep, for it would be a pity for the angler to lose a fish by negligence. Draw the line in every now and then, look to the hooks, try a new bait, or go to the other side of the vessel, and cast your tackle into another place. Do, not be disappointed because you do not always fish as you did once; have patience and your hour will come.

Our captain one evening when we were in a very lovely bay came up to me and said, “Look at this: I only just threw the line over the side, and this fine cod has taken the bait in a minute.” A cod is noted for the thorough manner in which it swallows the bait. Being of a hungry nature it is not in a picking humor, but feeds heartily. I remarked at the time that the cod was like earnest hearers who are hungering for divine grace, and so greedily snatch at time sacred word. Hungering and thirsting, their souls faint within them, and when the promise of the gospel is placed before them they seize it directly: tell them of Jesus and full deliverance through his precious blood, they do not make two bites of the gracious message — they dash at it, and they are not content till they have it, and it holds them fast. O for more of such hearers.

All fish are not of this kind, for some of them are cautious to the last degree. The author of “The Sea Fisherman” introduces us to an. old salt, who says. of the Conger eel, “He don’t bite home, sir, — that is to say, he does not take the hook if he can help it.

In the instance referred to it had stolen the bait six times, and vet was not captured. Alas, we have an abundance of hearers of this kind, who are interested, but not impressed, or impressed but not converted “they don’t bite home,” and we fear they never will.

This fishing with a line is a suggestive subject, but I must leave it to say a word. about fishing with the net, a mode of fishing to which our Savior makes more numerous allusions than to angling with a hock.

When we came home on the Monday, after visiting Rothesay, we cast anchor in the Holy Loch. Mr. Duncan said to me, "Look at the fish. Just look at them out there, they are leaping up on all sides; and there are the men, let us go and see what they are getting." We were soon in a boat pulling towards them, while all around us were the fish leaping in the air and splashing back into the water. We reached the fishers, who were just getting out the net. I suppose you all know how this is done. A certain number of men remained near the shore with one end of the net, while others in a boat encompassed a great circle of water, letting out the net as they went along. Thus they enclosed a large space, and the salmon within that area were fairly imprisoned. When all was ready the fishers began to pull at both ends, so as to make the circle smaller and smaller. We followed the decreasing ring, and kept just outside the edge of the net. The fish, which had still been leaping all around us, now began to do so in greater earnest, for those within the range of the net seemed to know that they were in an undesirable position, and strove to leap out of it. Some escaped, but many more failed in the attempt. The men kept pulling in, and then it became very exciting, for it was evident that the net was full of life. Here is a very good picture of what we should do as a church. I am to go out on the Sabbath with the net, the grand old gospel net, and it is my business, to let it out and encompass the thousands who fill the Tabernacle; then on Monday night at the prayer-meeting we must all join in pulling in the big net, and looking after the fish. So we bring to land all that, have been caught. Many who were surrounded by the net during the sermon will jump out before we secure them, but still it is a comfort that it is not every fish that knows how to get out of the gospel net. Some of them will be in a rage, and bite at the nets, but they will only be the more surely held prisoners. To me it was a very pleasant sight to see within the net a mass of living, twisting, and struggling salmon-trout, most of them fine fish. There were thirty-seven large fish taken at one haul. O that we may often succeed in taking men in larger numbers still. Let us drag in the net to-night. Let us pray the Lord to bless the services of last Lord's-day, and recompense the fisher's toil.

We must never be satisfied till we lift sinners out of their native element. That destroys fish, but it saves souls. We long to be the means of lifting sinners out of the water of sin to lay them in the boat at the feet of Jesus. To this end we must enclose them as in a net; we must shut them up under the law, and surround them with the gospel, so that there is no getting out,

but they must be captives unto Christ. We must net them with entreaties, encircle them with invitations, and entangle them with prayers. We cannot let them get away to perish in their sin, we must land them at the Savior's feet. This is our design, but we need help from above to accomplish it: we require our Lord's direction to know where to cast the net, and the Spirit's helping of our infirmity that we may know how to do it. May the Lord teach us to profit, and may we return from our fishing, bringing our fish with us. Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

MARCH, 1879.

# INCIDENTS OF TRABEL CLUSTERING ROUND A TEXT.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

When we were in Turin we were delighted to see in one of the most public streets a Vaudois temple, which we entered, and found full of earnest worshippers. It was Charming to think of the change of times, as marked by the difference between the fierce persecution which stained Piedmont blood-red and a noble house of prayer, in part erected by a royal grant, in which the Waldensian church was able to worship, none making her afraid. Upon the front of the edifice we read the text, from Jeremiah 6:16,

“Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the, ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

This Scripture struck us as most wisely chosen, and as a noble testimony against the novelties of the Church of Rome, some of which, indeed, are such new inventions that the assemblies which decreed them have but lately separated, and the aged priest who was their mouthpiece is hardly cold in his grave. The passage impressed us so forcibly that we hid it in our heart, and lying there it budded and put forth five blossoms, which our readers may, perhaps, develop into flowers and fruits.

We saw upon it, first, A CALL TO CONSIDERATION, — “Stand ye in the ways, and see and ask.” Like those to whom the prophet spoke, men are by nature wanderers, and if they go heedlessly onward they will lose themselves more and more in the many “ways” which lead the soul to destruction; therefore is it man’s wisdom to pause awhile, and not rush onward heedlessly. A pause is suggested, — “Stand ye.” Come to a halt,

stay your steps, do, not be too sure that you are right; another step may be dangerous, therefore “Stand ye.” In the commencement of life young people should take thought, and meditate upon the design of their being, and the way by Which they should answer it; in middle life men should carefully consider their ways, and mark whither they tend; and in going down the hill the aged should be specially aroused to make sure of a right ending to their pilgrimage. We are most of us in too great a hurry, and we blunder on as if we were infallible, and could not possibly be making a life-long error. As we were the other day brought to a dead stand while travelling in an express train by the exhibiting of a red flag, so. do we now hang out the signal, and cry with all our might to all who are thoughtless “STAND YE.”

Crossing the Channel, on a foggy afternoon, the man on the lookout sting out? loud and clear, a warning voice, and the captain caused the vessel to be stopped in a moment. Right ahead was the North Foreland, we had gone a point out of our course, and we must pause and bear away from the danger. Looming through the haze which a thoughtful eye may pierce, there may at this moment be a huge rock of sin; let a voice like thunder cry “Stop her,” and if need be, “Back her,” for it is better far to shift our course a hundred times than dash upon destruction.

Then, in the text, an examination is advised — “Stand ye in the ways, and see.” Look about you, within you, beneath you, above you. Look at; your road, and your companions, and the prospect beyond. Compare these with the chart of Scripture by the help of an enlightened conscience. Climbing up the olive terraces, and steep mountain sides at Mentone, we find it needful to look at every footstep lest our feeble feet should cause us to fall.; and when we ascend a hill which is new to us we have to take our bearings pretty frequently lest we should miss our course and find ourselves altogether cut of our latitude. No man can go to heaven blindly. ‘the eye of faith which looks to Christ will be needed all the way, and he who closes it will soon be tripped up by one stumbling-block or another. It is foolish to hope that a priest can see for us, or that we may follow the multitude with closed eyes. He that hath eyes to see let him see. We shall not be excused if we go astray through want of thought when the Bible is in our hands, and the way of life is plainly mapped out therein.

Nor is this all, for by a third word inquiry is recommended, — “ask for the old paths.” Select those who may reasonably be expected to know, and

question them with earnestness. Most of us have some Christian friends, let us ask them the way, they will be glad to tell us; indeed, they are anxious to be our guides. Best of all, we can ask of the Lord of the way himself, and by his Holy Spirit he will direct us into the one and only path which has been trodden from time immemorial by all his saints. Ask in prayer, ask by hearkening to the Word, ask by looking to Jesus who says, "I am the way."

In driving about the great world of London we are frequently brought to a stand by the alteration of the streets, and the sudden springing, up of new neighborhoods. We had a coachman once who had an invincible repugnance to asking his way, although we over and over again laid before him the maxim "Better ask a dozen times than once miss your road." Ask he would not, and so we should have lost time in endless mazes had we not pulled him up very often, and sought direction from one and another who knew the region well. The mass of people nowadays are of our coachman's mind, and will not ask. We have to force our directions upon them. O that they would become inquirers, and follow us with anxious questions; we should never weary of showing them, the old paths.

Our Waldenstart inscription has a second meaning, for it contains A COMMENDATION OF ANTIQUITY, — "ask for the old paths." In this case the older the better. Many think the mediaeval paths old, but, indeed, they are of yesterday and are new inventions. May we not trust "the fathers," says one? And our answer is — better far to go back to the apostles, and to their Master. Certain churches boast of their venerable age, but no way of religion is so ancient as that which is found in the Scriptures themselves. Councils, synods, assemblies, bulls, decretals, are all modern; the old paths are to be found marked down in the old Book, and they bear the footprints of old saints. The way of repentance is as old as John the Baptist, yea, as old as David; the way of faith is as old as Abraham; the way of communion with God is as old as Enoch; the way of approaching God by the lamb slain is as old as Abel; yea, the true Lamb was slain from before the foundations of the world. Romanism and Anglicanism, and half the isms, are the moss which has grown upon the ancient stones: the interpolations of yesterday upon the writing of the ages. There is an interesting ride from Mentone which brings you to a cathedral adorned, after the manner of papal taste, with gaudy colors and childish decorations. There you will see all the apparatus for modern Romish worship; but you need not stay there. Ask for the crypt, — the old church. Descend a winding stair, and you shall see in the center of the building a baptistery. What, are we in a Baptist

chapel? Listen to the guide, who is the sacristan, and he will tell you in Italian, so like to Latin that you can understand him, that this is an ancient font used in those days when baptism was by immersion. Why not by immersion now? The difference in that ordinance is only an index of the wholesale alterations which priests have made from time to time. Man's church covers over the church of God, and when you have seen the oldest of the national churches, you must then inquire for the old original church. New doctrines as well as new ordinances are taught, and new modes of life are brought into fashion. It is with religion as with wine, "the old is better."

"Ask for the old paths." The infallible Word of God is older than the supposed infallible pope, the priesthood of the saints is older than the priestcraft of the clergy, the epistles are older than the thirty-nine articles, and the true church of God is older than any one of the sects. Lovers of antiquity, take care that your antiquity is antiquity. Let the old be old enough. With our own eyes we have seen "real antiques" in process of being made, and have observed the finishing touches as they gave the fine dark tinge to furniture of the middle ages fresh from the cabinet-maker's. 'Twas from a canal at Venice that we first saw veritable antiquities in their maker's workshop. Many a religious antique have we seen since then which was not one whir more worthy of acceptance. Remember that the twelfth century, the sixth century, or the second century are nothing to us; we go back not to this or that Anno Domini, but to the Dominus, to the Lord himself and his apostles, and we will! receive nothing but what we find in the Old and New Testaments. We wish that all professors would do the same, and thus "ask for the old paths."

Our text next gives us A DESCRIPTION OF THE WAY. It is called "the good way." It is not the easy way: the idle and the foolish ask for that, but it is not worth seeking for, since it leads to poverty and perdition. Neither is it the popular way, for few there be that find it. But it; is the good way, made by a good God in infinite goodness to his creatures, paved by our good Lord Jesus with pains and labors immeasurable, and revealed by the good Spirit to those whose eternal good he seeks. It is the way of holiness, of peace, of safety, and it leads to heaven. Is it not good. It has been traversed by the best of men since time began, and the unclean do not pass over it. It is good at its commencement, for at its entrance men are born again; it is good at its continuation, for they are righteous who hold on their way; and it is good in its termination, for it leads to perfection, to bliss, to God himself.

When we are asked “Where is the good way?” we need not hesitate in our reply, for our Lord Jesus says, “I am the way.” Faith in him as the Son of God, the Substitute, the Savior, the all in all, is the way of life for the soul. Many are the ways which are not good. In the dusty weather, as we crossed a road, a boy ran in front of us with his broom, pretending to sweep the path, but in reality raising a cloud of dust around us; and this reminds us of the men with new brooms of modern thought, who offer their services nowadays to clear the way for us, though all that they do is to create a blinding dust of doubt and questioning. We prefer God’s old, good way to their new and false way. We were told of a fresh road the other day, and we went to try it. and found it foul at its entrance, miry in its progress, and abrupt in its termination, landing us nowhere; the old. road is very steep, and tires our knees, but next time we go in that direction we shall follow it, for we know it, and know that, though rough and rugged, it leads somewhere. The doctrines of grace and Puritanic practice are not attractive to the flesh, but they are safe, they have been long tried, and their end is peace. Others may say, “We will not walk therein,” but as for us, we have already found rest for our souls in the good road, and shall not leave it for another.

Another blossom of the text is found in AN EXHORTATION TO PRACTICE — “walk therein.” First see where is the good old way, and then walk in it. Walking in the way is the end aimed at; the standing, seeing, and questioning are only the means. That question, “Where is the good way?” has come from many a false lip. Pilate asked, “What is truth?” But what cared he? Thousands ask the same question; the learned discuss it, the frivolous amuse themselves with it. Vainly do they ask, and in vain are they answered, unless they enter upon the holy pilgrimage.

Some spend their time in finding fault with wisdom’s travelers. “See how he limps!” say they of one. “What a clownish gait!” say they of another. Yet were it better for themselves if they would walk as cripples in the good way than to run in the broad road.

Others intend pursuing the road., but first they must have solved for them a metaphysical difficulty, a petty scruple, or a theological puzzle. A lady of whom we heard in our travels had worried several ministers who sought her good by always telling them that she could not believe till they could explain to her how God could be without a beginning, “For,” said she, “if he never began, then he has not begun, and there can be no God at all.”

Very dexterous are certain persons in blocking up their own road, and yet, perhaps, there is no great dexterity in it, for the proverb says, "A fool may put questions which a wise man cannot answer." In the Vatican at Rome we saw the renowned statue of the boy who has a thorn in his foot, and is busy extracting it. He was doing this when we first saw him, and three years after he was attempting the same operation. We have good reason for believing that he is even now in the same posture, and will be found in like attitude fifty years hence. He is carved in marble, and therefore is excused for making no procuress; but what shall be said of living, thoughtful individuals who year after year are trifling with imaginary difficulties, and never set foot on the road to heaven? "Walk therein" is the advice of common sense as well as the command of God.

Yet many who appear to be in the road make no progress; they sit, but do not walk. One cold winter's evening we were on the railroad between Alexandria and Genoa when the train was in a very peculiar condition: the wheels revolved, but the carriages made no advance on the journey, the rails were slippery, the wheels did not bite, and our engine was spending its strength for naught. Until the iron way had been sprinkled with sand we just held our place, and nothing more. We have known several persons in like case: they revolved in the routine of religious duty, but they had no grip, no hold upon the heavenward way, and did not advance an inch, with all their expenditure of effort, Walk therein, — go on, proceed, advance, lest ye glide backward. Grew in grace, and in the knowledge of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Let us not talk of repentance, but repent; neither let us be satisfied with knowing what faith is, but at once believe in the Lord Jesus. A religion of head-knowledge and theories will prove of no avail either in this life or in that which is to come. There are large maps upon the walls of many French railway stations, yet no man ever reached Paris or Marseilles by gazing at the map; he must take his place with other travelers, or the train will hasten on without him. The Chronicle is one of the finest roads in the world, but no traveler ever passed from Marseilles to Genoa by a mere study of its course; there must be actual journeying or the highway is useless. Not the hearer of the word, but the doer thereof, is saved.

The concluding words of the text contain A SENTENCE OF PROMISE. "Ye shall find rest for your souls." In the good old way you shall find rest if you have never enjoyed it before; travelling you shall rest, as certain birds are

said to rest upon the 'wing'. Joy shall be upon your head, peace shall prepare the place of your feet. It is wisdom's dominion, and concerning her we read, "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." Rest for the conscience comes to those who enter God's way of salvation; rest of heart arises out of their love to him who is the way; rest of brain from their acceptance of his teaching; rest of desire from their satisfaction with his person, — in a word. the soul rests in all its powers and faculties. Nor does it alone rest in the present; the future is guaranteed beyond all fear. Trouble will come, we are born to it, and our life is sure to accord with our birth; nor need we wish to be screened from affliction, for there will come with it surpassing consolations. The dungeon of the Mamartine, where a probable tradition declares that Paul was for awhile confined, is entered through a round hole in the floor of another dungeon above. The uppermost apartment is dark enough, but the lower one is darkness itself, so that the apostle's imprisonment was of the severest kind. We noticed, however, a strange fact: — in the hard floor there is a beautiful fountain of clear crystal water, which doubtless was as fresh in Paul's day as it is now. Of course the Papists believe the fountain to be miraculous: we who are not so credulous of traditions rather see in it a symbol of instruction: — there never was a dungeon for God's servants which was without its well of consolation. Sorrow never comes to a saint without its solace, nor care without its cure. "Ye shall find rest unto your souls" is the language not only of the prophet, but of the Lord of prophets, and we may be doubly sure of its fulfillment.

"Alas," cries one, "I am in daily bondage through fear of death." Let not this fear hold you captive any longer, for it is without cause, seeing you have your Lord's word for it, that you shall find rest unto your soul. When we returned from Italy some years ago the Mont Cenis Tunnel was newly opened, and we reckoned that it must be a dreary passage. Six miles underground! We thought it must be very dark, and therefore we had better be provided with a candle. It would be damp and close, and therefore we reckoned upon closing every window, for fear we should find it hard to breathe the impure air. So we speculated; but when we traversed that wonderful passage the carriages were exceedingly well lighted, and much of the tunnel also, and we sat with open windows, finding it as easy to breathe as on the mountain's side. It was a joy rather than a peril to pass through the dreaded tunnel. So shall the voyager along the good old way find that death is not what he dreams: Jesus will light the darksome way,

and the soul shall need no candle of earth; fresh breezes from glory shall drive away the death-damps, and the music of angels shall make the heart forgetful of all pains. How can the good old way lead into danger? What can it conduct us to but the eternal rest?

Reader, you have heard the wise advice which bids you consider, and the commendation which directs you to prefer the older paths, you have also been reminded that the way is good, and you have been urged to follow it and encouraged by a promise: what is your answer? Do not, we beseech you, say, like Israel of old, "We will not walk therein" but rather cry, "Teach me thy way, O Lord."

# UNDER HIS SHADOW.

## A BRIEF SACRAMENTAL DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT MENTONE TO ABOUT A SCORE BRETHREN.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” —Psalm 91:1.*

MUST confess of my short discourse, as the man did of the axe which fell into the stream, that it is borrowed. The outline of it is taken from one who will never complain of me, for to the great loss of the church, he has left these lower choirs to sing above. Miss Havergal, last and loveliest of our modern poets, when her tones were most mellow, and her language most sublime, has been caught up to swell the music of heaven. Her last poems are published with the title, “Under his Shadow,” and the preface gives the reason for the name. She said, “I should like the title to be ‘Under his shadow.’ I seem to see four pictures suggested by that: under the shadow of a rock in a weary plain; under the shadow of a tree; closer still, under the shadow of his wing; nearest and closest, in the shadow of his hand. Surely that hand must be the pierced hand, that may oftentimes press us sorely, and yet evermore encircling, upholding, and shadowing.”

“Under his shadow,” is our afternoon subject, and we will in a few words enlarge on the scriptural plan which Miss Havergal has bequeathed to us. Our text is, “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” The shadow of God is not the occasional resort, but the constant abiding-place, of the saint. Here we find not only our consolation, but our habitation. We ought never to be out of the shadow of God. It is to dwellers, not to visitors, that the Lord promises his protection. “He that dwelleth in the secret, place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty”: and that shadow shall preserve him from nightly terror and ghostly ill, from the arrows of war and of pestilence, from death and from destruction. Guarded by omnipotence, the

chosen of the Lord are always safe; for as they dwell in the holy place, hard by the mercy seat, where the blood was sprinkled of old, the pillar of fire by night, and the pillar of cloud by day, which ever hangs over the sanctuary, covers them also. Is it not written, "In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me"? What; better security can we desire? As the people of God we are always under the protection of the Most High. Wherever we go, whatever we suffer, whatever may be our difficulties, temptations, trials, or perplexities, we are always "under the shadow of the Almighty." Over all who maintain their fellowship with God the most tender guardian care is extended. Their heavenly Father himself interposes between them and their adversaries. The experience of the saints, albeit they are all under the shadow, yet differs as to the form in which that protection has been enjoyed by them, hence the value of the four figures which will now engage our attention.

1. We will begin with the first picture which Miss Havergal mentions — namely, THE ROCK sheltering the weary traveler.

*"The shadow of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32:2).*

Now, I take it that this is where we begin to know our Lord's shadow. He was at the first to us a refuge in time of trouble. Weary was the way, and: great was the heat; our lips were parched, and our souls were fainting; we sought for shelter and we found none; for we were in the wilderness of sin and condemnation, and who could bring us deliverance, or even hope? Then we cried unto the Lord in our trouble, and he led us to the Rock of Ages, which of old was cleft for us. We saw our interposing Mediator coming between us and the fierce heat of justice, and we hailed the blessed screen. The Lord Jesus was unto us a covering for sin, and so a covert from wrath. The sense of divine displeasure, which had beaten upon our conscience, was removed by the removal of the sin itself, which we saw to be behind on Jesus, who in our place and stead! endured its penalty.

The shadow of a rock is remarkably cooling, and so was the Lord Jesus eminently comforting to us. The shadow of a rock is more dense, more complete, and more cool than any other shade; and so the peace which Jesus gives passeth all understanding, there is none like it. No chance beam darts through the rock shade, nor can the heat penetrate as it will do in a measure through the foliage of a forest: Jesus is a complete shelter, and blessed are they who are "under his shadow." Let them take care that they

abide there, and never venture forth to answer for themselves, or to brave the accusations of Satan.

As with sin, so with sorrow of every sort: the Lord is the rock of our refuge. No sun shall smite us, nor any heat, because we are never out of Christ. The saints know where to fly, and they use their privilege.

*“When troubles, like a burning sun,  
Beat heavy on their head,  
To Christ their mighty Rock they run,  
And find a pleasing shade.”*

There is, however, something of awe about this great shadow. A rock is often so high as to be terrible, and we tremble in presence of its greatness. The idea of littleness hiding behind massive greatness is well set forth; but there is no tender thought of fellowship, or tenderness: even so, at the first, we view the Lord Jesus as our shelter from the consuming heat of well-deserved punishment, and we know little more. It is most pleasant to remember that this is only one panel of the fourfold picture. Inexpressibly dear to my soul is the deep cool rock-shade of my blessed Lord, as I stand in him a sinner saved; yet is there more.

2. Our second picture, that of THE TREE is to be found in the Song of Solomon 2:3, —

*“As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved  
among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight,  
and his fruit was sweet to my taste.”*

Here we have not so much refuge from trouble as special rest in times of joy. The spouse is happily wandering through a wood, glancing at many trees, and rejoicing in the music of the birds. One tree specially charms her the citron with its golden fruit wins her admiration, and she sits under its shadow with great delight; such was her beloved to her, the best among the good, the fairest of the fair, the joy of her joy, the light of her delight. Such is Jesus to the believing soul.

The sweet influences of Christ are intended to give us a happy rest, and we ought to avail ourselves of them: “I sat down under his shadow” This was Mary’s better part, which Martha, well-nigh missed by being cumbered. That is the good old way wherein we are to walk, the way in which we find rest unto our souls. Papists and papistical persons, whose religion is all

ceremonies, or all working, or all groaning, or all feeling, have never come to an end; we may say of their religion as of the law, that it made nothing perfect; but under the gospel there is something finished, and that something is the sum and substance of our salvation, and therefore there is rest for us, and we ought to sing, "I sat down."

Dear friends, is Christ to each one of us a place of sitting down? I do not mean a rest of idleness and self-content — God deliver us from that; but there is rest in a conscious grasp of Christ, a rest of contentment with him, as our all in all God give us to know more of this. This shadow is also meant to yield perpetual solace, for the spouse did not merely come under it; but there she sat down as one that meant to stay. Continuance of repose and joy is purchased for us by our Lord's perfected world. Under the shadow she found food; she had no need to leave it to find a single needful thing, for the tree which shaded also yielded fruit; nor did she need even to rise from her rest, but sitting still she feasted on the delicious fruit. You who know the Lord Jesus know also what this meaneth.

The spouse never wished to go beyond her Lord. She knew no higher life than that of sitting under the Well-beloved's shadow. She passed the cedar, and oak, and every other goodly tree, but the apple-tree held her, and there she sat down. "Marty there be that say, who will show us any good? But as for us, O Lord, our heart is fixed, our heart is fixed, resting on thee. We will go no further, for thou art our dwelling-place, we feel at home with thee, and sit down beneath thy shadow." Some Christians cultivate reverence at the expense of childlike love; they kneel down, but they dare not sit down. Our divine Friend and Lover wills not that it should be so; he would not have us stand on ceremony with him, but come boldly unto him.

*"Let us be simple with him, then,  
Not backward, stiff, or cold,  
As the our Bethlehem could be  
What Sinai was of old."*

Let us use his sacred name as a common word, as a household word, and run to him as to a dear familiar friend. Under his shadow we are to feel that we are at home, and that he will make himself at home to us by becoming food unto our souls, and giving spiritual refreshment to us while we rest. The spouse does not here say that she reached up to the tree to gather its fruit, but she sat down on the ground in intense delight, and the fruit came to her where she sat. It is wonderful how Christ will come down to souls

that sit beneath his shadow; if we can but be at home with Christ he will sweetly commune with us. Has he not said, "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart"?

In this second form of the sacred shadow, the sense of awe gives place to that of restful delight in Christ. Have you ever figured in such a scene as the sitter beneath the grateful shade of the fruitful tree? Have you not only possessed security, but experienced delight in Christ? Have you sung,

*"I sat down under his shadow,  
Sat down with great delight;  
His fruit was sweet unto ray taste,  
And pleasant to my sight"?*

This is as necessary an experience as it is joyful: necessary for many uses. The joy of the Lord is our strength, and it is when we delight ourselves in the Lord that we have assurance: of power in prayer. Here faith developes, and hope grows bright, while love sheds abroad all the fragrance of her sweet spices. Oh! get you to the apple-tree, and find out who is fairest among the fair. Make the light of heaven the delight of your heart, and then be filled with heart's-ease, and revel in complete content.

3. The third view of the one subject is, — THE SHADOW OF HIS WINGS — a precious word. I think the best specimen of it, for it occurs several times, is in that blessed psalm, the sixty-third, and the seventh verse:

*"Because thou hast been my help,  
therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."*

Does not this set forth our Lord as our trust in hours of depression?

In the psalm now open before us, David was banished from the means of grace to a dry and thirsty land, where no water was. What is much worse, he was in a measure away from all conscious enjoyment of God. He says, "Early will I seek thee. My soul thirsteth for thee." He sings rather of memories than of present communion with God. We also. have come into this condition, and have been unable to find any present comfort. "Thou hast been ray help," has been the highest note we could strike, and we have been glad to reach to that. At such times, the light of God's face has been withdrawn, but our faith has taught us to rejoice under the shadow of his wings. Light there was none; we were altogether in the shade, but it was a warm shade. We felt that God who had been near must be near us still, and

therefore we were quieted. Our God cannot change, and therefore as he was our help he must still be our help, our help even though he casts a shadow over us, for it must be the shadow of his own eternal wings. The metaphor is of course derived from the nestling of little birds under the shadow of their mother's wings, and the picture is singularly touching and comforting. The little bird is not yet able to take care of itself, so it cowers down under the mother; and is there happy and safe. Disturb a hen for a moment and you will see all the little creatures huddling together, and by their chirps making a kind of song. Then they push their heads into her feathers, and seem happy beyond measure in their warm abode. When we are very sick and sore depressed, when we are worried with the care of pining children, and the troubles of a needy household, and the temptations of Satan, how comforting it is to run to our God — like the little chicks to the hen — and hide, away near his heart, beneath his wings. Oh, tried ones, press closely to the loving heart of your Lord, hide yourselves entirely beneath his wings. Here awe has disappeared, and rest itself is enhanced by the idea of loving trust. The little birds are safe in their mother's love, and we, too, are beyond measure secure and happy in the loving favor of the Lord.

**4.** The last form of the shadow is that of THE HAND, and this it seems to me points to power and position in service. Turn to Isaiah 49:2 —

“And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me”

This undoubtedly refers to the Savior, for the passage proceeds: — “And said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my ‘work with my God. And now, saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and ray God shall be my strength. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest, be my salvation unto the end of the earth.” Our Lord Jesus Christ was hidden away in the hand of Jehovah, to be used by him as a polished shaft for the overthrow of his enemies, and the victory of his people. Yet, inasmuch as it is Christ, it is

also all Christ's servants, since as he is so are we also in this world; and to make quite sure of it, we have got the same expression in the sixteenth verse of the fifty-first chapter, where, speaking of his people, he says, "I have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand." Is not this an excellent minister's text? Every one of you who will speak a word for Jesus shall have a share in it. This is where those who are workers for Christ; should long to be — "in the shadow of his hand," to achieve his eternal purpose. What are any of God's servants without their Lord but weapons out of the warrior's hand, having no power to do anything? We ought to be as the arrows of the Lord which he shoots at his enemies, and so great is his hand of power, and so little are we as his instruments that he hides us away in the hollow of his hand, unseen until he darts us forth.. As workers, we are to be hidden away in the hand of God, or to quote the other figure, "in his quiver hath he hid me" we are to be unseen till he uses us. It is impossible for us not; to be known somewhat if the Lord uses us, but we may not aim at being noticed, but, on the contrary, if we be as ranch used as the very chief of the apostles, we must truthfully add, "though I be nothing." Our desire should be that Christ should be glorified, and that self should be concealed. Alas! there is a way of always showing self in what we do, and we are all too ready to fall into it. You can visit the poor in such a way that they will feel that his lordship or her ladyship has, condescended to cult upon poor Betsy; but there is another way of doing the same thing so that the tried child of God shall know that a brother beloved or a dear sister in Christ has shown a fellow-feeling for her, and has talked to her heart. There is a way of preaching, in which a great divine has evidently displayed his vast learning and talent; and there is another way of preaching, in which a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, depending upon his Lord, has spoken in his Master's name, and left a rich unction behind. Within the hand of God is the place of acceptance, and safety; and for service it is the place of power, as well as of concealment. God only works with those who are in his hand, and the more we lie hidden there, the more surely will he use us ere long. May the Lord do unto us according to His word, "I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of my hand." In this case we shall feel all the former emotions combined: awe that the Lord should condescend to take us into his hand, rest and delight that he should deign to use us, trust that out; of weakness we shall now be made strong, and to this will be added an absolute assurance that the end of our being must be answered, for that which is urged onward by the Almighty hand cannot miss its mark.

These are mere surface thoughts. The subject deserves a series of discourses. Your best course, my beloved friends, will be to enlarge upon these hints by a long personal experience of abiding under the shadow. May God the Holy Ghost lead you into it, and keep you there, for Jesus' sake.

# SERMON TO MINISTERS AND OTHER TRIED BELIEVERS

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” — 1 Peter 5:7.*

THIS season of depression in trade has brought great care to many a house and heart, especially to village pastors and their flocks.

Their troubles have been heavy, and I am afraid their cares have not been light. Few have escaped the pinch of these hard times: the most prosperous have to watch the ebbing tide, and ask — How long shall these things be? The subject will be seasonable to us all.

A very good preface to any sermon is the connection; let us look at the passage before us. The verse preceding it is, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” If we are truly humble we shall cast our care upon God, and by that process our joy will be exalted. We are slow to submit to the hand of God, and oftentimes our care is fretful rebellion against our heavenly Father’s will. We determine to carve for ourselves, and so we cut our fingers. I saw upon a cart only yesterday the name of a tradesman who calls himself “Universal Provider”: do we not aspire to some such office? There is a Universal Provider, and if we are humble under his hand we shall leave our matters in his hands. Oh for more humility, for then shall we have more tranquillity. Pride begets anxiety; true humility gives birth to patience.

The verse which follows our text is this — “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Cast your care upon God, because you need all your powers of thought to battle with the great enemy. He hopes to devour you by care. Cast all your care upon God, for if you are worried you cannot be sober or watchful. Satan rides on the back of carnal care, and so obtains entrance into the soul. If he can distract our minds from the peace of faith by temporal cares he will get an advantage over us.

The preface allowed of expansion, but I have compressed it with stern economy of time. I must condense with equal rigor all through my discourse. We will first expound the text, and then enforce it.

1. First, let us EXPOUND the text — “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” It is noteworthy that in the Greek the two words for “care” are different: hence the Revised Version reads, “Casting all your anxiety upon him; because he careth for you.” The care which you are to cast upon God, is wearing you out, and you are to cast it upon God because, in quite another sense, “he careth for you.” The word used in reference to God is applied to caring for the poor, and in another place to the watchfulness of a shepherd. Our anxiety and God’s care are two very different things, His care, though tender and comprehensive, causes no anxiety to him, for his great mind is more than equal to the task; but our care ferments within us and threatens the destruction of our narrow souls. You are to cast your care, which is folly, upon the Lord, for he exercises a care which is wisdom. Care to us is exhausting, but God is all-sufficient. Care to us is sinful, but God’s care of us is holy. Care distracts us from service, but the divine mind does not forget one thing while remembering another.

If our care is to be cast upon God we are hereby led to make a distinction; for there is a care which we could not dare to cast upon God, it would be blasphemy to attempt it. Anxiety to grow rich; can we impart that to God? Anxiety to be famous, to live in luxury, to avenge an injury, to magnify myself; can I ask the Most High to bear such an anxiety for me? If any of you are vexed with such care, I charge you to fling it off, for it is like the poisoned tunic of Hercules, and unless you can tear it away it will burn into your very soul. All cares of covetousness, anger, pride, ambition, and willfulness must be cast to the winds, it would, be criminal to dream of casting them upon God. Do not pray about them, except that God will redeem you from them. Let your desires be kept; within a narrow circle, and your anxieties will be lessened at a stroke.

“Casting,” says the apostle. He does not say “laying all your care upon him,” but he uses a much more energetic word. You have to cast the load upon the Lord; the act will require effort. It is no child’s play to cast all our care upon our Lord when there are six little children, shoes worn out, cupboard empty, purse bare, and the deacons talking of reducing the scanty salary. Here is a work worthy of faith. You will have to lift with all your

soul before the burden can be shifted, and the anxiety cast upon the Lord: that effort, however, will not be half so exhausting as the effort of carrying your load yourself. Oh, the burden of watching and waiting for help which never comes; depending on the help of man, who is altogether vanity. Oh, the weariness of carrying a heart-breaking anxiety, and yet standing up to preach. We have all seen statues of Atlas bearing the world on his shoulders but we can hardly conceive of his preaching in that attitude. It would be better to make one tremendous effort and have done with it. rather than groan under a perpetual weight. If the fox is eating into our bowels, let us pluck it from our bosom and kill it at once.

Note the next words: "Upon him." You may tell your griefs to others to gain their sympathy, for we are bidden to bear one another's burdens; you may ask friends to help you, and so exercise your humility; but let your requests to man be ever in subordination to your waiting upon God. Some hart obtained their full share of human help by much begging from their fellow Christians; but it is a nobler thing to make known your requests unto God; and somehow those who beg only of God are wondrously sustained where others fail, What a pleasant story is that; in which we recount the lovingkindnesses of the Lord, and tell how "this poor man cried; and the Lord heard him." Quiet, patient believers have come under my notice who have carried their cross in silence, waiting upon the Lord alone. How they endured their trial I cannot tell, save that "they endured as seeing him who is invisible"; but their necessity became known,, it leaked out they knew not how, and they were helped, and. helped better than they would have been if their appeal had been to man. I am condemning no appeal to our fellow believers; many are willing to help, and they cannot do so if the need is unknown; but do not place anyone in the office and throne of the great God, who alone is the Caretaker and Burden-bearer of his people. I am afraid that sometimes in our care not to alienate this great maul who does so much for the cause, or that excellent lady who takes half-a-dozen sittings in the chapel, we may grieve the Lord and lose our true Helper. Cease, then, from man; cast all your care upon God, and upon him only.

Certain courses of action are the very reverse of casting all your care upon God, and one is indifference. Whatever virtue there may be in stoicism, it is unknown to the true child of God. "I don't care" may be an excellent thing for an atheist, but it, is not suitable for a Christian: it may sound well, and the man who utters the defiant word may think himself some great one, but it is an evil word for all that. I am afraid some brethren's "don't care" is

very sinful.; for they get into debt, and don't care; they break their promises and engagements, and don't care. Brethren, such men ought to care. Every man is bound to care about his life-duties, and the claims of his family. He that careth not for his own household is worse than a heathen man. Casting care upon God is the very reverse of recklessness and inconsiderateness.

It is not casting care upon God when a man does that which is wrong in order to dear himself; yet this is too often tried. Under pressure some men do very unjustifiable things. We ought to be slow to condemn, since we ourselves also may yet be tempted in the same way and may err in like manner; still, faith ought to be able to win every battle. He who compromises truth to avoid pecuniary loss is hewing out a broken cistern for himself. He who borrows when he knows he cannot pay, he who enters into wild speculations to increase his income, he who does ought that is ungodly in order to turn a penny is not casting his care upon God. An act of disobedience is a rejection of God's help, that we may help ourselves. He who does the right thing at all hazards practically casts his care upon the Lord. Acts are with us, but their consequences are with God: our care should be to please God, and all other care we may safely leave to hits.

How, then, are we to cast all our care upon God? Two things need to be done. It is a heavy load that is to be cast upon God, and it requires the hand of prayer and the hand of faith to make the transfer. Prayer tells God what the care is, and asks God to help, while faith believes that God can and will do it. Prayer spreads the letter of trouble and grief before the Lord, and opens all its budget, and then faith cries, "I believe that God cares, and cares for me, I believe that he will bring me out of my distress, and make it promote his own glory."

When you have thus lifted, your care into its true position and cast it upon God, take heed that you do not pick it up again, Many a time have I gone to God and have relieved my care by believing prayer, but I am ashamed to confess that after a little time I have found myself burdened again with those very anxieties which I thought I had given up. Is it, wise to put our feet into fetters which have once been broken off? My brethren, there is a more excellent way, a way which I have tried and proved. I have at times been perplexed with difficulties; I have tried my best with them and I have utterly failed, and then I have gone with the perplexity to the throne of God, and placed the whole case in the Lord's hands, solemnly resolving

never to trouble myself about the aforesaid matters any more, whatever might happen. I was quite incapable of further action in, the matter, and so I washed my hands of the whole concern, and left it with God. Some of these cares I have never seen again, they melted like hoar frost in the morning sun, and in their place I have found a blessing lying on the ground. Other troubles have remained in fact but not in effect, for I have consented to the yoke, and it has never galled my shoulder again. Brethren, let the dead bury their dead, and let us follow Jesus. Henceforth let us leave worldlings to fret and fume over the cares of this life; as for us, let our conversation be in heaven, and let us carefully abstain from carefulness, being anxious only to end anxiety by a childlike confidence in God.

**2.** Accept this little contribution towards an exposition, and let us now proceed to ENFORCE the text. I will give you certain reasons, and then the reason why you should cast all your care upon God,

First, the ever blessed One commands you to do it. We need no other reason. The precept is akin to the gospel command, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." It is a blessed privilege, and it is also a command. He who bids us cease from idolatry, also bids us cease from care. The law of Sabbath-keeping is not more divine than that of resting in the Lord. He whom we call Master and Lord bids us take no anxious thought; his bidding has all the authority of law. Say to yourself, my anxious brother, "I may roll my burden upon the Lord, for he bids me do so." If you do not trust in God you will be distinctly sinful; you are as, much commanded to trust as to love.

Next, cast all your cares on God, because you will have mallets enough to think of even then. There are sacred cares which the Lord will lay upon you, because you have cast your care upon him. When he has broken your painful yoke you will have his easy yoke to bear. There is the care to love and serve him better; the care to understand his word; the care to preach it to his people; the care to experience his fellowship; the care so to walk that you shall not vex the Holy Spirit. Such hallowed cares will always be with you, and will increase as you grow in grace.. In a dense we may cast even these upon God, looking for his Holy Spirit to help us, for it is he that worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure; yet not without our care and zeal doth he operate upon us, and this is one reason why you are not to allow lower ends and designs to inundate your mind. Your spirit has another vineyard to keep, another capital to put out to interest, another

master to please, and it cannot afford to yield its thought to meaner pursuits. Ministers are shepherds, and must care for the sheep. “The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep;” but you have the care of churches laid upon you daily, and it is peculiarly needful that you be not occupied with carnal care.

And, next, you must east your care upon God, because you have God’s business to do. It is a dangerous thing for a merchant to employ a mart who has a business of ibis own, because sooner or later the master’s business will suffer, or else the man’s own concern will die out. “No man that warreth,” saith Paul, “entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” There is sure to be a clashing of interests when a brother goes into business, unless he does it as Paul did, that he may not be chargeable to the church; for then he attains to double honor. Paul carried his needle and thread with him wherever he went, for everybody had a tent in those days, and he was ready for work at any moment either upon small family tents, or tents to cover a great assembly. When he had finished preaching, he could turn to tent-mending, and so earn his own living, and preach the gospel freely. Paul did not make his preaching a stalking-horse to his trade, but he made his handicraft a pack-horse to his ministry, so that he could say, “These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.” That is a very different thing from a minister deserting his charge to make a larger income by some other calling. The less we have to do with other business the better, for all our care is needed by the church. Queen Elizabeth bade a notable merchant in the city of London go to the Continent on royal business. “Please your majesty,” said he, “who will attend to my business while I am away?” The queen replied, “If you will go abroad, and see to my business, I will see to your business.” I will be bound to say it would not suffer if such a queen took it in hand. Just so the Lord says to us, “You attend to my work, and I will take care of you and your wife and children.” The Lord pledges himself to do it; bread shall be given us, our water shall be sure. The testimony of many among you will bear me out in this! I come of a line of preachers, and though some of them have had to endure straitened circumstances, yet none of them were forsaken, nor have their seed been seen begging bread. The Lord has cared for us, and we have lacked nothing.

You ought to do it not only for this reason, but; because it is suck a great privilege to be able to cast your care upon God. If I am plunged in a

lawsuit, and some eminent law officer would offer to undertake it all, out of love to me, how glad I should be! I should worry no longer. I should say to all who troubled me on the matter, "You must go to my solicitor; I know nothing about the matter." Do this to your cunning enemy, the devil, who is always glad to see you anxious and fretful. Let us say to him, "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee." What a the that is for the old viper to break his teeth upon! Chosen! chosen! And if chosen shall we not be Cared for?

Let me add, that you ministers ought to cast all your care upon God, because it will be such a good example for your hearers. Our people learn much from our conduct, and if they see us fretting, they will be certain to do the same. You preach faith, do you not? How sad it will be for you to be convicted of unbelief! Our own words may condemn us if we are anxious. Once when I was unduly depressed, my good wife said to me, "I have a book here which I should like to read to you." It did me good to hear her read, but I felt myself rebuked by every word. I half suspected what was coming when she said, "That is your own, recollect." She had been giving the doctor some of his own medicine. What a many things you have said, my brethren, that will condemn you if you do not trust God! Is it, after all, mere talk? Did you mean what you said, and is it true? Or have you merely been repeating official dogmas in which you have no personal

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

SEPTEMBER, 1883.

“WE SHALL GET HOME; WE  
SHALL GET HOME.”

A PRAYER-MEETING TALK,

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

CONVERSING just now with an elder of the church, I remarked that he must be somewhere about seventy-five, and he replied, “I am eighty-two.” “That,” I replied, “is a good old age.” “Yes,” said he, “it is”; and then he cheerfully nodded his head, and added, “We shall get home; WE SHALL GET HOME!” And so we shall, brothers; so we shall, sisters. In chorus we will take up our brother’s word, and say, “We shall get home.”

“We shall get home.” There is music in that simple sentence; a soft melody, as of the evening bell. Early in life its sound may be more stirring and trumpet-like, nerving our youth to energy, and making us cry “Excelsior”; but as our years increase, and the sun descends, its note is sweet and soothing, and we love to listen to it in our quiet moods, for each word has a silvery tone — “We shall get home; WE SHALL GET HOME.” This is our great comfort: however long the way, we shall get home. We may live to be eighty-two, or even ninety-nine; but we shall get home in due time. We may not doubt that blessed truth, for the Lord has taught us to sing in the song of Moses, his servant, “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance.” The way may be rough, but it is the king’s highway, and no brigands can drag us off from it: we shall by this road get home to the Father’s own house above. Some of us are not nearing threescore years as yet, and perhaps we have many long leagues to traverse, but we shall get home — glory be to God!

*“His love has fixed the happy day  
When the last tears will wet our eyes,  
And God shall wipe those dews away,  
And fill us with divine surprise,  
To be at home, and see his face,  
And feel his infinite embrace.”*

One reason why I feel sure that we shall get home is this, that we are found in the road which leads there. This is a great wonder; in fact, a greater wonder than our getting home will be. When we were far astray, with our backs to the Father’s house, fond of riotous living, the Lord in his infinite mercy visited us, made us long to return to him, and set our feet upon the way of life. This is a miracle of grace, and I am never tired of thinking of it; and because of all that it includes I feel quite at ease about getting home. “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” The love which plucked us out of the fire will assuredly keep us from falling back into it. God does not begin a work without intending to finish it.

Besides, my brethren, we have already come far on the road, and therefore we shall get home. Considering our many temptations and trials, and the evil of our nature, we are bound to praise the Lord with our whole hearts because we have been preserved unto this day. Our life in the future can hardly be more full of miracle than the past has been; why should we suppose that the Lord will stay his hand? Nothing but omnipotent grace could have brought us thus far, and that grace is quite sufficient to preserve us through all the rest of the way. We shall get home; for “the Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us.” Even in the hour of death fear shall not overshadow us. You know how quaintly John Mason puts it —

*“I have a God that changeth not:  
Why should I be perplexed?  
My God, that owns me in this world,  
Will own me in the next.*

*“Go fearless then, my soul, with God  
Into another room:  
Thou who hast walked with him here,  
Go, see thy God at home.”*

I am persuaded we shall get home because oftentimes we receive messages from the Father himself, and these love-words assure us that he remembers

us; and if he remembers us he will not let us perish. Moreover, we receive substantial help from him, and comforts by the way both by day and by night. If he meant to cast us off at last he would not so often have cheered our spirits by his gracious visits and love-tokens on the road. As the land-birds which light upon the rigging of his vessel assure the voyager that he is nearing the shore, which as yet he sees not, so heavenly blessings without number flying to our succor tell us that the glory-land is nigh. We shall soon cast anchor in the Fair Havens.

We shall get home, for others have done so who were once at our side travelling the same path. We asked them, as they departed from us, how they hoped to reach their journey's end, and they told us that all their hope rested upon sovereign grace: what less or what more do we rest in? That grace which has secured to them a safe journey, will secure the like to us; why should it not? It is true that we do not deserve it, nor did they; it was to them a matter of grace, as it certainly will be to us. But that grace is true and constant. All who sail with Jesus shall be saved from the yawning deep. Yes, even though it should be on boards and broken pieces of the ship, we shall get safe to land!

We shall get home; for oh, if we do not, what a lament there will be in heaven! Think of that. If the children do not come home, what mourning for the lost ones will be heard in the mansions above. Neither God nor good men could see the divine family broken and yet be happy. Every angel in heaven would feel a disappointment if one child of God was absent at the reading of the muster-roll. Did they not once rejoice over each one of us as a sinner :repenting? Their sympathetic mirth was premature in our cases if we perish by the way. But angels are not doomed to find their hopes frustrated, neither will the great Father find that he himself was glad too soon. Heaven would be a desolate place if at its banquets some David's seat was empty! We cannot endure to imagine some member of the sacred family missing, lost forever, cast into hell! It must not be, for in that land of absolute perfectness there is

*“No missing heir, no harp that lies unstrung,  
No vacant place those hallowed halls among.”*

We shall get home, for the great Father himself will never rest until we do; and he that bought us with his precious blood will never be satisfied till all his redeemed shall stand around him girt in their snow-white robes. If we had been on pilgrimage with our families, and we had reached home

ourselves, and then missed a dear child, what a stir there would be! I appeal to every father's heart: would you sleep with a child lost? Would you not tramp back every step of the road to seek your dear stray lamb? You would cry everywhere, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth!" Well can I imagine our good Shepherd using the same words concerning any one of us if we did not get home, and asking everywhere, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" He would not rest until he had found his chosen, his heart's delight. Did he rest the first time till he brought us home on his shoulders rejoicing? Would he rest a second time till he had folded us in glory? No, he can never have full joy in his heart until all his ransomed are in the place where the many mansions be. "We shall get home."

Brothers, we shall get home, I am sure we shall; and what a joy it will be! Think of the bliss of seeing our Father, our home, our Savior, and all those who are dear to us for Jesus' sake. A venerable sister who saw me very busy the other day remarked that we shall have plenty of time to talk to each other in eternity. I do not quite see how there can be time where time shall be no more; but no doubt there will be space and opportunity for the fullest communion with each other, and for much fellowship of united delight in the adorable person of our blessed Lord. I anticipate much felicity from fellowship with perfect saints above, since I have had so much pleasure in the society of imperfect saints below. Many have gone home from us of late, and we are all getting older; but let us not regret the fact, since the home above is being filled, and a perfect society is being formed which will last forever.

I remember a remark of my dear friend John Edwards before he left us for the fatherland above. I said to him one day, "Our brother So-and-so is gone home," and he replied, "Where else should he go?" Just so. When evening draws nigh, home is the fit place for each one of us, and we instinctively turn to it. We think badly of people who do not care to go home when their work is done. Some workmen make long hours, and stay late at work, but nobody envies them on that account: most persons think the sooner they are home the better. Do not you think so? Do you not long for the home-going? It is best to have no impatience about it, but to fill up the whole day with holy service, and then consider going home as the crown of it all. Even this poor world can be made very home-like if we have the true child-like spirit. "Where is your home?" said one to a little girl. The reply was — "My home is where mother is." Even so our home is

where Jesus is; and if he wills us to tarry out of heaven for awhile, we will feel at home in the desert in his sweet company.

Here, however, comes in a word of caution; it will be wise to ask ourselves — Where is our home? Somebody said, “It is well to go home if we have a good home to go to.” That point is worthy of deep thought. Every creature goes to its own place: the fox to its hole, the bird to its nest, the lion to its den, and man to his home. The righteous will rise to the light that is sown for them; but as for the ungodly, where will they go? Where must they go? You may judge of their place by their pleasures. What are their pleasures? Vanity, sin, self. There are none of these things in heaven, and therefore those who love them cannot enter there. If they have found their pleasure in the ways of Satan, there shall they find their endless portion.

We may judge men by their company. Like will to like. What sort of company do you prefer? The man who sings the drunkard’s song, the man who pours forth loose talk, is he your companion and friend? Then you shall be gathered to him, and to such as he, in the assembly of the dead. I remember a good woman saying to me on her dying bed, “I am sure the Lord will not cause me to dwell for ever with the ungodly and the profane, for I have never loved such society. I think he will let me go to my own company.” Yes, that he will. Those who are your companions here will be your companions hereafter.

You may also foretell your future abode from your present character, for your eternal destiny will be the ripe fruit of your character in time. If you are numbered amongst the ungodly when the Lord comes to judgment you must have your portion far off from God. The false, the foul, the prayerless, cannot find a home among the true, the pure, the holy. Oh, you who are unrenewed, I pray you think over those words of the psalmist — “If I make my bed in hell.” What a bed! But as you make it you will have to lie upon it. If you find rest in sin you will make your bed in hell. O my beloved, do not one of you run the risk of such a doom. We have loved each other here; let us not be divided. Let us go together along the way of holiness. Together let us follow Jesus, and then we shall all get home to the same Father’s house. My joy, my crown, my second heaven shall be to meet you all there in that sweet, sweet home, where danger shall be ended, where sorrow shall be banished, and sin excluded. Our Father will receive us, our elder Brother will joy in us, and the Spirit of God will be glad over us. The dear ones whom we wept as lost will meet us, and all the rest of

the company redeemed by blood will welcome us. Do not our souls joyfully anticipate that grandest of all family gatherings? Is it not a jubilee to our hearts to think of the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven?

**WE SHALL GET HOME;**

**WE SHALL GET HOME.**

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

JUNE, 1886.

# WHAT WE WOULD BE. <sup>f1</sup>

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON AT THE  
TWENTY-SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE PASTORS'  
COLLEGE ASSOCIATION.**

THIS assembly begins to be venerable. For years we were a band of young men; but now our own sons are with us, comrades of our ministry, and we feel that we are no longer striplings. We have not yet reached the sere and yellow leaf, nor have we come to our dotage, or our anecdotage; but we are tending towards maturity, and are impressed with the conviction that if ever we are to do anything for our Lord Jesus we must do it at once. To us remains no time for loitering, or even for leisure. To me, at least, eternity seems so near that I cannot frame an excuse for delay. Now or never sounds sternly in my ears.

## RETROSPECT.

Coming together, as we do now, after more than twenty years of brotherly Conferences, and some of us after more than thirty years of ministry, what recollections surround us! In the crystal glass of memory we see the past living and moving. Far be it from me, though racked with pain, to cloud that glass with the hot breath of my own anxiety; but yet I must say it — never do I look back upon my own past without regret. I am among the most favored of my Lord's servants, and I sink into the dust while I joyfully confess it. I have no complaints to make against my God, yet I have nothing else but complaints to make against myself. It seems to me that, wherein by divine grace I have succeeded, I might have succeeded on a far larger scale had I been a better man. Want of faith on my part may have hampered and hindered my Lord. If I have fed the saints of God, I might have fulfilled that sacred pastorate far more to my Lord's praise had

I only been more fit to be used by his Spirit. How can I take a vainglorious complacency in the little which has been accomplished, when before my eyes I see an immeasurable mass of possibilities which I have missed?

This will be a healthy feeling for the younger brethren, who are flushed with their first victories. Let them rise to a higher scale of expectancy, lest they readily become self-satisfied, and thus destroy all hope of a great life. Believe me, young brother, as our years sober us we become more and more aware of our imperfections, and feel less and less inclined to admire our own performances. To me a retrospect means a hearty psalm of praise, and a deep sigh of regret. Unto the Lord be glory forever: but unto me belong shame and confusion of face.

But what is the use of regret unless we can rise by it to a better future? Sighs which do not raise us higher are an ill use of vital breath. Chasten yourselves, but be not discouraged. Gather up the arrows which aforesaid fell wide of the mark, not to break them in passionate despair, but to send them to the target with director aim, and a more concentrated force. Weave victories out of defeats. Learn success from failure, wisdom from blundering. Through grace, if we have done well, we will do better. We will more fully acquaint ourselves with God, that, being more in harmony with him, our life may be pitched to a diviner key. Mayhap, cure for these ill days may lie near to our own mending. When our own torches have less of smoke, and more of heavenly flame, the night may not seem quite so drear.

## PROSPECT.

With regard to the prospect before us, I may be supposed to be a prophet of evil; but I am not. I mourn the terrible defections from the truth which are now too numerous to be thought of in detail; nevertheless, I am not disquieted, much less dispirited. That cloud will blow over, as many another has done. I think the outlook is better than it was. I do not think the devil is any better: I never expected he would be; but he is older. Brethren, whether that is for the better or for the worse, I do not know; but, assuredly, the arch-enemy is not quite such a novelty among us as he was. We are not quite so much afraid of that particular form of devilry which is raging now, because we begin to perceive its shape. The unknown appeared to be terrible; but familiarity has removed alarm. At the first this

“modern thought” looked very like a lion; the roaring thereof was terrible, though to some ears there was always a suspicion of braying about it. On closer inspection the huge king of beasts looked more like a fox, and now we should honor it if we likened it to a wild cat. We were to have been devoured of lions, but the monsters are not to be seen. Scientific religion is empty talk without science or religion in it. The mountain has brought forth its mouse, or, at any rate, the grand event is near. Very soon “advanced thought” will only be mentioned by servant girls and young Independent ministers. It has gradually declined till it may now be carried off with the slops. There is nothing in the whole bag of tricks.

At this hour I see the tide turning — not that I care much for that, for the rock on which I build is unaffected by ebb or flood of human philosophy. Still, it is interesting to remark that the current is not setting in quite the same direction as heretofore. Young men who have tried modern doubt have seen their congregations dwindle away beneath its withering power, and they are, therefore, not quite so enamored of it as they were. It is time they should make a change; for Christian people have observed that these advanced men have not been remarkable for abundant grace, and they have even been led to think that their loose views on doctrine were all of a piece with looseness as to religion in general. Want of soundness in the faith is usually occasioned by want of conversion. Had certain men felt the power of the gospel in their own souls they would not so readily have forsaken it to run after fables.

Lovers of the eternal truth, you have nothing to fear! God is with those who are with him. He reveals himself to those who believe his revelation. Our march is not to and fro, but onward unto victory. “The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.” Other enemies will arise, even as Amalekites, Hivites, Jebusites, Perizzites, and all the rest of them, rose up against Israel; but in the name of the Lord we shall pass on to possess the promised heritage.

## PROPOSAL.

Meanwhile, it is for us quietly to labor on. Our day-dreams are over: we shall neither convert the world to righteousness, nor the church to orthodoxy. We refuse to bear responsibilities which do not belong to us, for our real responsibilities are more than enough. Certain wise brethren

are hot to reform their denomination. They ride out gallantly. Success be to the champions! They are generally wiser when they ride home again. I confess great admiration for my Quixotic brethren, but I wish they had more to show for their valor. I fear that both church and world are beyond us; we must be content with smaller spheres. Even our own denomination must go its own way. We are only responsible so far as our power goes, and it will be wise to use that power for some object well within reach. For the rest, let us not worry and weary about things beyond our line. What if we cannot destroy all the thorns and thistles which curse the earth; we can, perhaps, cleanse our own little plot. If we cannot transform the desert into a pasture, we may at least make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before; and that will be something.

Brethren, let us look well to our own steadfastness in the faith, our own holy walking with God. Some say that such advice is selfish; but I believe that, in truth, it is not selfishness, but a sane and practical love of others which leads us to be mindful of our own spiritual state. Desiring to do its level best, and to use its own self in the highest degree to God's glory, the true heart seeks to be in all things right with God. He who has learned to swim has fostered a proper selfishness, for he has thereby acquired the power of helping the drowning. With the view of blessing others, let us covet earnestly the best blessings for ourselves.

## PERSONAL AMBITION.

I want to make the most of myself. I may not even yet know the way to be most useful, but I would like to know very soon. At least, I can honestly go the length of saying that, if I felt that I could be more useful outside of the pulpit than within it, I would hurry out of it at once. If there were a street corner where, I was divinely assured that, by my blacking of shoes, God could be more glorified than he is by my bearing witness before the great congregation, I would welcome the information, and practically obey it. Some men never can do much for God in the way which they would prefer, for they were never cut out for the work. Owls will never rival falcons by daylight; but then falcons would be lost in the enterprise of hunting barns at night for rats and mice, and such small deer. Each creature is not only good, but "very good" in its own place, fulfilling its own office: out of that place it may become a nuisance. Friend, be true to your own

destiny! One man would make a splendid preacher of downright hard-hitting Saxon; why must he ruin himself by cultivating an ornate style? Another attempting to be extremely simple would throw himself away, for he is florid by nature; why should he not follow his bent? Apollos has the gift of eloquence; why must he copy blunt Cephas? Every man in his own order. It seems to me nowadays that every man prefers his own disorder. Let each man find out what God wants him to do, and then let him do it, or die in the attempt. In what way can I bring my Lord most glory, and be of most service to his church while I am here? Solve that question, and pass into the practical.

## MORE GRACE.

One thing is past all question; we shall bring our Lord most glory if we get from him much grace. If I have much faith, so that I can take God at his word; much love, so that the zeal of his house eats me up; much hope, so that I am assured of fruit from my labor; much patience, so that I can endure hardness for Jesus' sake; then I shall greatly honor my Lord and King. Oh, to have much consecration, my whole nature being absorbed in his service; then, even though my talents may be slender, I shall make my life to burn and glow with the glory of the Lord! This way of grace is open to us all. To be saintly is within each Christian's reach, and this is the surest method of honoring God. Though the preacher may not collect more than a hundred in a village chapel to hear him speak, he may be such a man of God that his little church will be choice seed-corn, each individual worthy to be weighed against gold. The preacher may not get credit for his work in the statistics which reckon scores and hundreds, but in that other book, which no secretary could keep, where things are weighed rather than numbered, the worker's register will greatly honor his Master.

## NEED OF GREAT CARE.

Brethren, my desire is to do everything for the Lord in first-rate style. We are all of us eager to do much for the Lord, but there is a more excellent way. With ringing trowel we strike away and build a wall, and girdle a city in six months: the aforesaid wall will be down in six days afterwards. It would be better to do more by doing less. Thoroughness is infinitely

preferable to superficial area. It is well to work for God microscopically: each tiny bit of our work should bear the closest inspection. The work of the church had need be done in perfect fashion; for her flaws are sure to show themselves in exaggerated form before long. The sins of to-day are the sorrows of ages. Look at those straths in the Highlands which remain to this day Roman Catholic. Had they at the time of the Reformation been carefully visited by a Protestant ministry, they could not have remained for centuries in bondage to old Rome. How slight a deviation from the right line may involve ages of dreary labor! Our Puritan forefathers raised their walls, and laid their stones in fair colors, building well the city of God. Then that greatest of heroes, Oliver Cromwell, looked upon them, and lent his aid. He handled the sword of steel as few have ever done, but his carnal weapon agreed not with the temple of the Lord. The Lord seemed to say to him, even as he said unto David, "Thou hast been a man of blood, and therefore thou shalt not build the house of the Lord." Therefore Puritanism had to come down, and all its exceeding stateliness of holiness, because its sons saw not that the kingdom of the Lord is not of Church and State, nor of the law of nations, but purely of the Spirit of the Lord. We, upon whom the ends of the world are come, must be careful that we do not send the armies of the Lord wandering for another forty years in the wilderness, when Canaan else had been so near. The Lord help us to be workmen that need not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of God. May we live in the eye of ages, past and future; above all, live as seeing him who is invisible!

## AROUSAL.

Need I affectionately call upon you, my brethren, to stir up the gifts which are in you? Cultivate your natural and gracious qualifications for the ministry. The pastor knows far more than when he left college; has he learned all he ought to have learned in that interval? No doubt many of our brethren

*"Grow wiser than their teachers are,  
And better know the Lord."*

I am not so sure about those who are the most eager to assert this of themselves. Real progress may be usually reckoned by the gauge of

humility. He knows most who is most aware that he knows little. We have all great need of much hard study if our ministry is to be good for anything. We have heard of the French peasants who sent to the Pope for a curé “who had finished his education.” They complained that their pastor was always studying, and they wanted a man who knew all that was necessary, and consequently needed no time for books and thoughts. What fools they must be in that part of France! We need exactly the kind of preacher whom they despised. He who has ceased to learn has ceased to teach. He who no longer sows in the study will no more reap in the pulpit.

My earnest desire is that all of us be really

## SOUL-WINNERS.

I hope it will never get to be your notion that only a certain class of preachers can be soul-winners. Every preacher should labor to save his hearers. The truest reward of our life-work is to bring dead souls to life. I long to see souls brought to Jesus every time I preach. I should break my heart if I did not see it to be so. Men are passing into eternity so rapidly that we must have them saved at once. We indulge no secret hope which can make it easy to lose present opportunities. From all our congregations a bitter cry should go up unto God, unless conversions are continually seen. If our preaching never saves a soul, and is not likely to do so, should we not better glorify God as peasants, or as tradesmen? What honor can the Lord receive from useless ministers? The Holy Ghost is not with us, we are not used of God for his gracious purposes unless souls are quickened into heavenly life. Brethren, can we bear to be useless? Can we be barren, and yet content?

Remember that if we would win souls we must act accordingly, and lay ourselves out to that end. Men do not catch fish without intending it, nor save sinners unless they aim at it.

The prayer of a certain minister before his sermon was, that God would bless souls by his discourse. After hearing that discourse, I wondered at the prayer. How could the man ask for that which he seemed never afterwards to have thought of? His discourse unprayed his prayer. He might as well have poured water on a fire, and have prayed God to make the fire burn thereby. Unless the Lord had caused the people to misunderstand what the

preacher said, they could not have been converted by his utterances. God works by means — by means adapted to his ends; and this being so, how can he bless some sermons? How, in the name of reason, can souls be converted by sermons that lull people to sleep; by sermons containing mere frivolities; by sermons which say plainly, “See how cleverly I put it”; by sermons which insinuate doubt, and cast suspicion upon every revealed truth? To ask for the divine blessing on that which even good men cannot commend, is poor work. That which does not come from our inmost soul, and is not to us a message from the Lord’s own Spirit, is not likely to touch other men’s souls, and be the voice of the Lord to them.

Brethren, I long that we may all be

## TEACHERS.

The church is never overdone with those “whose lips feed many.” It should be our ambition to be “good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” We all know certain able ministers who are expositors of the Word, and instructors of believers. You always bring something away when you hear them. They trade in precious things: their merchandise is of the gold of Ophir. Certain passages of Scripture are quoted and set in a new light; and certain specialities of Christian experience are described and explained. We come away from such preaching feeling that we have been to a good school. Brethren, I desire that we may each one exercise such an edifying ministry! Oh, that we may have the experience, the illumination, the industry needful for so high a calling! Oh, for more richly-instructive sermons! Brethren, look at many modern sermons! What fire and fury! What flash and dash! What is it all about? To what purpose is this display? We often meet with sermons which are like kaleidoscopes, marvelously pretty, but what is there in them? See, there are several bits of colored glass, and one or two slips of mirror, and other trifles, and these are put into a tube! How they sparkle! What marvelous combinations! What fascinating transformations! But what are you looking at? You have not seen anymore after twenty displays than you saw at first; for indeed there is no more. Some preachers excel in quotations of poetry; and others excel in apposition and alliteration, or in the quaintness of the division of their texts. Many are great in domestic sorrows, and death-bed spectacles, and semi-dramatic picturings. Very telling, very sensational; and, under

gracious direction, useful in its own measure; but when souls are to be saved, and saved souls are to be fed, more solid matters must take a prominent place. We must feed the flock of God. We must deal with eternal verities, and grapple with heart and conscience. We must, in fact, live to educate a race of saints, in whom the Lord Jesus shall be reflected as in a thousand mirrors.

(To be continued.)

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

JULY, 1886.

## WHAT WE WOULD BE.

**AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON AT THE  
TWENTY-SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE PASTORS'  
COLLEGE ASSOCIATION.**

(Continued.)

FATHERS.

THE Apostle Paul truly says, "Ye have not many fathers." He calls the general run of teachers pedagogues, and says that we have myriads of such; but "fathers" are not many. No man has more than one natural father, and in the strictest sense we have each one spiritual father, and no more. How singularly true are the apostle's words at this present hour: still have we a lack of spiritual fathers. I would suggest to this Conference of brethren who have been for years in the ministry, that we have come to that point of age and experience in which each of us should set before him the image of a father as that to which he should approach more and more. We are already fathers in the sense of having around us converts who are our children in the Lord. We have already heard the penitential cries, and the believing prayers, of those born to God through our preaching. Many of us, beloved brethren, without boasting, can rejoice that the Lord has not left us without witness. Ours has been an imperfect and feeble ministry; but the Lord has given life to many by our words.

The parental relation is one which requires much of us.

## A FATHER SHOULD BE A STABLE AND ESTABLISHED MAN.

Something of solid worth and substantial judgment is looked for in a father. Many a preacher we could not call “father”: it would seem too ridiculous. The trifler, the brother of many ways of thinking, and the man who is of an angry spirit, are out of the list when we read over the roll of fathers. Something of weight, kindness, dignity, steadiness, and venerableness goes to make up our idea of the father. Great truths are very dear to him, for he has had experience of their power for many years. When some of the boys tell him that he is behind the times, he smiles at their superior wisdom. Now and then he tries to show them that he is right, though it is hard to make them see it. The boys think the fathers fools; the fathers do not think that of them — there is no need. True fathers are patient: they do not expect to find old heads on young shoulders. They have the knack of waiting till tomorrow, for time brings with it many instructions, and while it may demonstrate the true it may also explode the false. Father is not blown about by every wind of doctrine, neither does he run after every new thing which is cried up by the skeptical or by the fanatical. A father knows what he does know, stands by what he has verified, and is rooted and grounded in the faith.

But, with all his maturity and firmness, the spiritual father is full of tenderness, and manifests an intense love for the souls of men. His doctrinal divinity does not dry up his humanity. He was born on purpose to care for other people, and his heart cannot rest until it is full of such care. Along our coast in certain places there are no harbors; but in other spots there are bays into which vessels run at once in the time of storm. Some men present an open natural harborage for people in distress: you love them instinctively, and trust them unreservedly, and they on their part welcome your confidences, and lay themselves out for your benefit. They were fashioned by nature with warm human sympathies, and these have been sanctified by grace, so that it is their vocation to instruct, to comfort, to succor, and in all ways to help spirits of a feebler order. These are the kingly men who become nursing fathers of the church. Paul says of Timothy, “I have no man like-minded who will naturally care for your state.” He himself had this natural care, but he could not just then put his hand upon another of like mind to himself, except Timothy. This natural

care may be illustrated by the feeling of birds towards their offspring. See how diligently they work for them, and how boldly they defend them! A hen with chicks beneath her wings is bravery itself. She becomes a very griffin for her little ones. She would fight the Emperor of Russia, ay, and all the great powers of Europe. The man of God who feels the force of holy fatherhood would do anything and everything, possible and impossible, for the sake of his spiritual children: he gladly spends and is spent for them. Though the more he loves the less he may be loved, yet by the force of inward prompting he is impelled to self-denying labor.

## THE FATHER'S POWER.

Does any brother exclaim, "I should like to fill a father's place in my church, for then I could rule it"? This is a sorry motive, and one which will disappoint you. The father of a family usually finds that his preeminence is one of superior self-denial rather than of self-assertion. The best of fathers do really rule, but they never raise the question of "Who is master?" In a well-ordered house "baby is king." Have you not seen how everything is set aside for him? The warmest welcome is for that little stranger, and the movements of the household are guided by his needs. If you were as great an autocrat as the King of the Cannibal Islands it would make no difference — baby must be attended to. What means this? Why, that the poorest, weakest, and most easily offended person in the whole church must rule you if you are a true father! You will study the most wayward, and yield your personal pleasure for the good of the most faulty. Somebody asked, "Why should we deny ourselves alcoholic drink because weak-minded persons are overcome by it? That would be to make the weakest persons the virtual rulers of our conduct, which would be absurd." Just so. But the absurdity appertains to the family of love. Our domestic affairs must seem absurd to unsympathetic strangers. Who likes to tell them to the uninitiated? It would be casting pearls before swine. I would say — all hail to the absurdities of holy love: long may they reign! Baby is king: the weakest rule our hearts. The pace of the whole flock is slackened, lest we overdrive the lambs. Our ruling is carried out by seeing that none tread down the weak, and by setting the example of the greatest self-forgetfulness. He is not fit to be a father who does not see that this is the imperative law of love, and is, indeed, the secret of power. We lay ourselves down for all men to go over if thus they may come to Jesus.

Our place is to be the servants of all. The father earns the daily bread, brings it home, and divides it. We blend father and mother in one, and lay ourselves out to fulfil all needful offices for those committed to our charge. If you desire to be a father in the church that you may have his special honor, you see the way to it: it comes of self-denial, patience, forbearance, love, zeal, and diligence. Whosoever would be chief among you, let him be the servant of all.

## A FATHER MUST POSSESS WISDOM.

But in this matter many are deceived, for they aspire to it from a wrong motive, and so become foolish. If you had wisdom, my brother, what would you do? Would you so use it as to make others feel your superiority. If so, you have little wisdom as yet. A minister's wisdom lies in endeavoring to be wise for others, not cunning for himself. Some use their wisdom in a very unwise way, and curse the church which they should bless. And so you would go about the church, and put everybody right, being so wise yourself! Herein is often great folly. A man I have heard of said, "I am not at all afraid of thieves breaking into my house. If I heard a burglar, I should touch this button, and in a moment an electric current would explode dynamite in the cellar, and that would blow up the burglar and the whole establishment." You laugh; but we have met with ministers who have acted in much the same manner. I am sorry to know a brother who has performed this feat in five or six churches. The moment he thinks that a member, especially a deacon, has gone wrong, he blows the whole thing to pieces, and calls it faithfulness. This is not acting the father. If we have wisdom, we shall maintain peace, and shall attempt reforms with gentleness. Fathers do not kill their children because they are unphilosophical, or unsound in theology, or somewhat disobedient in conduct.

If we would be fathers, we must aim at

## A HIGH DEGREE OF HOLINESS.

The query is often proposed — Is it possible for believers to be perfectly holy here on earth? That question sounds strangely from some lips. I saw a

man the other day who had no shoes on his feet, and was only half covered by his rags. Suppose he had asked me whether I thought it was possible that he could become a millionaire, I should have answered that he had better first go and earn sixpence for his night's lodging, and then save up enough to buy a decent suit of clothes. Thus, those who are eager to dispute about perfection had better see that their lives are first of all decently consistent with the profession they have made. Brethren, we can be much more holy than we are. Let us attain first to that holiness about which there is no controversy. At the time of the Council of Trent there was a controversy between the Church of Rome and the Protestants as to whether it was possible for the laws of God to be kept. The question was awkwardly put, and when Luther endeavored to show that it was impossible, he seems to me to have advocated one truth at the cost of another. At any rate we dare not set limits to the power of divine grace, so as to say that a believer can reach a certain degree of grace, but can go no further. If a perfect life be possible, let us endeavor to obtain it. If a faith that never staggers can be ours, let us seek it. If we can walk with God as Enoch did throughout a long life, let us not rest short of it. We dare not straiten the Lord in this matter; if we be straitened at all it is in ourselves. Let us aspire to saintliness of spirit and character. I am persuaded that the greatest power we can get over our fellow-men is the power which comes of consecration and holiness. More eyes than we wot of are fixed upon our daily life at home, and in the church, and in the world. We claim to be the Lord's ministers, and we must not wonder that we are watched at every turn; ay, watched, when we think that no observer is near. Our lives should be such as men may safely copy.

You know the weighty responsibility of a father towards his children; such is ours. I do not think that any of us would dare to say, "Follow me in all things." And yet the tendency is to follow the pastor. In this tendency lies influence for the holy, and a dreadful power for mischief for the careless. Many beginners take readily to an earthly model: they find it more natural to copy a godly man whom they have seen than to imitate the Lord Jesus whom they have not seen. I do not commend them in this; but so it is, and we must be tender towards this weakness so that it become not the occasion of evil. Children first obey their parents, and so learn the law of the Lord, and no doubt many of the weaker sort learn the way of holiness from their spiritual guides. A painter, who afterwards becomes a great original, is in his earliest days a disciple of a certain school of art: it is so in

religion. The babe in grace is taught to walk by an older brother, and afterwards takes his own path. I believe that many weak ones in our churches are seriously injured, if not entirely broken down, by following the example of their ministers in matters wherein they come short of the Lord's mind. How grievous it would be if any believers were dwarfed through our conduct! May we not fear that there are some in our churches today who are not what they might have been had we properly guided them? No doubt some have been coddled into weakness, and others have been allowed to grow more in one direction than in others. Do you say, "We cannot help this. It is no business of ours"? I tell you it is our business. Strangers may talk in a careless way, but fathers are conscious of great responsibility as to their children. If a family is not well ordered, a wise father begins to mend his own ways. If our people do wrong, we fret and blame ourselves. If we were better, our church-members would be better. It is little use to scold them: our wiser way is to humble ourselves before God, and find out the reason why we do not produce better results.

I don't think I can say much more, I am so greatly overcome by pain. I was going to say that as an earthly father stands in the place of God to his children, so do we in a certain measure. We do not aim at it nor wish for it, but we are placed by many weak and ignorant persons in a position from which we would gladly escape if we could, for we abhor everything which wears the semblance of priestcraft. Alas! there are simple souls who forget to look to the Lord's mind in the Scriptures, but they look to us as their teachers and guides. I grant you there may be an evil superstition in it, but there it is, and it must not be trifled with. In many instances, however, through their grateful respect the members of our congregation gather lessons from what we do as well as from what we say, and this should make us very careful lest we lead them astray. Be holy that others may be holy.

## WE HAD NEED BE KIND AND COURTEOUS,

for even such a small thing as shaking hands, or giving a nod, may have an influence. One who is now a member of our church told me that he had often stood to shake hands with me at the back gate, as I left the building, long before he had come inside to hear me preach. The mere fact of a kindly notice which I gave him on going out had made him think of me,

and inclined him to hear. He assured me that this simple matter was the first link between him and religion. He was drunken, and wretched, and ungodly, but he had by a happy accident become the friend of a minister of Christ, and this bond, though slight as a spider's thread, was the beginning of better things. Never be stiff and proud. Be pitiful; be courteous. Children expect kindness from a father; let them not be disappointed. It is ours to be all things to all men, if by any means we may save some. Even to those who are without, we must show a tender consideration.

## EVEN TO THOSE WHO REJECT OUR GOSPEL

we must display unbounded tenderness. It should fill us with deep sorrow that men refuse the Savior, and follow the way of destruction. If they will persist in ruining themselves, we must weep for them in secret places. Having lovingly preached the gospel to them, if they will not repent we must break our hearts because we cannot break their hearts. If Absalom has perished, we must go with David to the chamber over the gate, and bitterly lament him, crying, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee! O Absalom, my son, my son!" Do you ever mourn over your hearers as one that weepeth for the slain of his people? Can you bear that they should pass away to judgment unforgiven? Can you endure the thought of their destruction? I do not know how a preacher can be much blessed of God who does not feel an agony when he fears that some of his hearers will pass into the next world impenitent and unbelieving?

On the other hand, survey the picture of a father who sees his child returning from the error of his way. In the New Testament, you see the portrait divinely drawn. When the prodigal was a great way off, his father saw him. Oh, to have quick eyes to spy out the awakened! The father ran to meet him. Oh, to be eager to help the hopeful! He fell upon his neck and kissed him. Oh, for a heart overflowing with love, to joy and rejoice over seeking ones! As that father was, such should we be: ever loving and ever on the outlook. Our eyes, and ears, and feet should ever be given to penitents. Our tears and open arms should be ready for them. The father in Christ is the man to remember the best robe, and the ring, and the sandals: he remembers those provisions of grace because he is full of love to the returning one. Love is a practical theologian, and takes care to deal

practically with all the blessings of the covenant, and all the mysteries of revealed truth. It does not hide away the robe and ring in a treasury of theology, but brings them forth, and puts them on.

Oh, my brethren, as you are the sons of God, be also fathers in God. Let this be the burning passion of your souls,

## GROW TO BE LEADERS AND CHAMPIONS.

God give you the honor of maturity, the glory of strength! But courageously expect that he will then lay on you the burden which such strength is fitted to bear. We need you to quit yourselves like men. In these evil days, when the shock of battle comes, it will have to be sustained by the fathers, or not at all. Our young and immature brethren are invaluable as light troops, leading the way, and advancing into the enemy's territory; but the solid squares, which stand firm against the fury of the charge, must mainly be composed of the Old Guard. You of experience in the things of God; you experts who have fought the battles of the Lord over and over again; you must stand fast, and having done all, you must still stand. I call upon you fathers to hold the fort till Jesus comes. You must be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. If you fail, where are we to look? It will be as when a standard-bearer fainteth.

But lest you should feel pleased with the fact that you desire this high honor, and fancy that the mere aspiration will fulfill itself, let me remind you how the Savior lived. He never settled down in desires and resolves, but girded himself for constant service. He said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." Soul-winning must be meat and drink to us. To do the Lord's work must be as necessary as food to us. His Father's work is that in which we also are engaged, and we cannot do better than imitate our Lord. Tell me, then, how Jesus set about it. Did he set about it by arranging to build a huge tabernacle, or by organizing a monster conference, or by publishing a great book, or by sounding a trumpet before him in any other form? Did he aim at something great, and altogether out of the common line of service? Did he bid high for popularity, and wear himself out by an exhausting sensationalism? No; he called disciples one by one, and instructed each one with patient care. To take a typical instance of his method, watch him as he paused in the heat of the day. He sat upon a well, and talked with a woman, — a woman who

was none of the best. This looked like slow work, and very common-place action. Yet we know that it was right and wise.

To that single auditor he did not deliver a list of clever maxims, like those of Confucius, or profound philosophies, like those of Socrates; but he talked simply, plainly, and earnestly with her about her own life, her personal needs, and the living water of grace by which those needs could be supplied. He won her heart, and through her many more, but he did it in a way which many would think little of. He was beyond the petty ambitious of our vain-glorious hearts. He cared not for a large congregation; he did not even ask for a pulpit. He desired to be the spiritual father of that one daughter, and for that purpose he must needs go through Samaria, and must, in his utmost weariness, tell her of the water of life. Brethren, let us lay aside vanity. Let us grow more simple, natural, and father-like as we mature; and let us be more and more completely absorbed in our life-work.

As the Lord will help us, let us lay our all upon the altar, and only breathe for him. Certain of you will go abroad, some of you may find a grave on the banks of the Congo: we cannot all do this, but, brethren, we must all live unto the Lord, and lay down our lives for the brethren. The Thames and the Clyde must have their consecrated ones as well as the Congo and the Ganges. London and Bristol must witness to as true a heroism as Canton and Calcutta. Because we belong to Christ, the zeal of the Lord's house must eat us up.

I wish I could have spoken to you with all my strength, but it may be that my weakness may be used of God to greater purpose. My thoughts are few by reason of pain, which disorders my head, but they are all on fire, for my heart remains true to my Lord, to his gospel, and to you. May he use every man of us to the utmost of our capacity for being used, and glorify himself by our health and our sickness, our life and our death! Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

JANUARY, 1887.

### ALL OF GRACE.

**NOTES OF A SERMON DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS GOING ABROAD.**

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” — Ephesians 2:8.*

OF the things which I have spoken unto you these many years this is the sum. Within the circle of these words my theology is contained, so far as it refers to the salvation of men. I rejoice also to remember that those of my family who were ministers of Christ before me preached this doctrine, and none other. My father, who is still able to bear his personal testimony for his Lord, knows no other doctrine, neither did his father before him.

I am led to remember this by the fact that a somewhat singular circumstance, recorded in my memory, connects this text with myself and my grandfather. It is now long years ago. I was announced to preach in a certain country town in the Eastern Counties. It does not often happen to me to be behind time, for I feel that punctuality is one of those little virtues which may prevent great sins. But we have no control over railway delays, and break-downs; and so it happened that I reached the appointed place considerably behind the time. Like sensible people, they had begun their worship, and had proceeded as far as the sermon. As I neared the chapel, I perceived that someone was in the pulpit preaching, and who should the preacher be but my dear and venerable grandfather? He saw me as I came in at the front door and made my way up the aisle, and at once he said, “Here comes my grandson! He may preach the gospel better than I can, but he cannot preach a better gospel; can you, Charles?” As I made my way through the throng, I answered, “You can preach better than I can. Pray go on.” But he would not agree to that. I must take the sermon, and so I did, going on with the subject there and then, just where he left off. “There,” said he, “I was preaching on ‘For by grace are ye saved.’ I have been

setting forth the source and fountain-head of salvation; and I am now showing them the channel of it, through faith.' Now you take it up, and go on." I am so much at home with these glorious truths that I could not feel any difficulty in taking from my grandfather the thread of his discourse, and joining my thread to it, so as to continue without a break. Our agreement in the things of God made it easy for us to be joint-preachers of the same discourse. I went on with "through faith," and then I proceeded to the next point, "and that not of yourselves." Upon this I was explaining the weakness and inability of human nature, and the certainty that salvation could not be of ourselves, when I had my coat-tail pulled, and my well-beloved grandsire took his turn again. When I spoke of our depraved human nature, the good old man said, "I know most about that, dear friends"; and so he took up the parable, and for the next five minutes set forth a solemn and humbling description of our lost estate, the depravity of our nature, and the spiritual death under which we were found. When he had said his say in a very gracious manner, his grandson was allowed to go on again, to the dear old man's great delight; for now and then he would say, in a gentle tone, "Good! Good!" Once he said, "Tell them that again, Charles," and of course I did tell them that again. It was a happy exercise to me to take my share in bearing witness to truths of such vital importance, which are so deeply impressed upon my heart. While announcing this text I seem to hear that dear voice, which has been so long lost to earth, saying to me, "TELL THEM THAT AGAIN." I am not contradicting the testimony of forefathers who are now with God. If my grandfather could return to earth, he would find me where he left me, steadfast in the faith, and true to that form of doctrine which was once delivered to the saints.

I preach the doctrines of grace because I believe them to be true; because I see them in the Scriptures; because my experience endears them to me; and because I see the holy result of them in believers. I confess they are none the less dear to me because the advanced school despises them: I should never think it a recommendation of a doctrine that it was new. Those truths which have enlightened so many ages appear to me to be ordained to remain throughout eternity. The doctrine which I preach to you is that of the Puritans: it is the doctrine of Calvin, the doctrine of Augustine, the doctrine of Paul, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. The Author and Finisher of our faith himself taught most blessed truth which well agreed with our text. The doctrine of grace is the substance of the testimony of Jesus.

I shall handle the text briefly, by way of making a few statements. The first statement is clearly contained in the text: —

## THERE IS PRESENT SALVATION.

The apostle says, “Ye are saved.” Not “ye shall be,” or “ye may be;” but “ye are saved.” He says not, “ye are partly saved,” or “in the way to being saved,” or “hopeful of salvation;” but, “By grace are ye saved.” Let us be as clear on this point as he was, and let us never rest till we know that we are saved. At this moment we are either saved or unsaved. That is clear. To which class do we belong? I hope that, by the witness of the Holy Ghost, we may be so assured of our safety as to sing, “The Lord is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.”

Upon this I will not linger, but pass on to note the next point.

## A PRESENT SALVATION MUST BE THROUGH GRACE.

If we can say of any man, or of any set of people, “Ye are saved,” we shall have to preface it with the words, “By grace.” There is no other present salvation except that which begins and ends with grace. As far as I know, I do not think that anyone in the wide world pretends to preach or to possess a present salvation, except those who believe salvation to be all of grace. No one in the Church of Rome claims to be now saved — completely and eternally saved. Such a profession would be heretical. Some few Catholics may hope to enter heaven when they die, but the most of them have the miserable prospect of purgatory before their eyes. We see constant requests for prayers for departed souls, and this would not be if those souls were saved, and glorified with their Savior. Masses for the repose of the soul indicate the incompleteness of the salvation which Rome has to offer. Well may it be so, since Papal salvation is by works, and even if salvation by good works were possible, no man can ever be sure that he has performed enough of them to secure his salvation.

Among those who dwell around us we find many who are altogether strangers to the doctrine of grace, and these never dream of present

salvation. Possibly they trust that they may be saved when they die: they half hope that, after years of watchful holiness, they may, perhaps, be saved at last; but, to be saved now, and to know that they are saved, is quite beyond them, and they think it presumption.

There can be no present salvation unless it be upon this footing — “By grace are ye saved.” It is a very singular thing that no one has risen up to preach a present salvation by works. I suppose it would be too absurd. The works being unfinished, the salvation would be incomplete; or, the salvation being complete, the main motive of the legalist would be gone.

Salvation must be by grace. If man be lost by sin, how can he be saved except through the grace of God? If he has sinned, he is condemned; and how can he, of himself, reverse that condemnation? Suppose that he should keep the law all the rest of his life, he will then only have done what he was always bound to have done, and he will still be an unprofitable servant. What is to become of the past? How can old sins be blotted out? How can the old ruin be retrieved? According to Scripture, and according to common-sense, salvation can only be through the free favor of God.

Salvation in the present tense must be by the free favor of God. Persons may contend for salvation by works, but you will not hear anyone support his own argument by saying, “I am myself saved by what I have done.” That would be a superfluity of naughtiness to which few men would go. Pride could hardly compass itself about with such extravagant boasting. No, if we are now saved, it must be by the free favor of God. No one professes to be an example of the opposite view.

Salvation to be complete must be by free favor. The saints, when they come to die, never conclude their lives by hoping in their good works. Those who have lived the most holy and useful lives invariably look to free grace in their final moments. I never stood by the bedside of a godly man who reposed any confidence whatever in his own prayers, or repentance, or religiousness. I have heard eminently holy men quoting in death the words “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” In fact, the nearer men come to heaven, and the more prepared they are for it, the more simple is their trust in the merit of the Lord Jesus, and the more intensely do they abhor all trust in themselves. If this be the case in our last moments, when the conflict is almost over, much more ought we to feel it to be so while we are in the thick of the fight. If a man be completely saved in this present time of warfare, how can it be except by grace? While he has

to mourn over sin that dwelleth in him, while he has to confess innumerable shortcomings and transgressions, while sin is mixed with all he does, how can he believe that he is completely saved except it be by the free favor of God?

Paul speaks of this salvation as belonging to the Ephesians — “By grace are ye saved.” The Ephesians had been given to curious arts and works of divination. They had thus made a covenant with the powers of darkness. Now, if such as these were saved, it must be by grace alone. So is it with us also: our original condition and character render it certain that, if saved at all, we must owe it to the free favor of God. I know it is so in my own case; and I believe the same rule holds good in the rest of believers.

This is clear enough, and so I advance to the next observation:

## PRESENT SALVATION BY GRACE MUST BE THROUGH FAITH.

A present salvation must be through grace, and salvation by grace must be through faith. You cannot get ahold of salvation by grace by any other means than by faith. This live coal from off the altar needs the golden tongs of faith with which to carry it. I suppose that it might have been possible, if God had so willed it, that salvation might have been through works, and yet by grace; for if Adam had perfectly obeyed the law of God, still he would only have done what he was bound to do; and so, if God should have rewarded him, the reward itself must have been according to grace, since the Creator owes nothing to the creature. This would have been a very difficult system to work, while the object of it was perfect; but in our case it would not work at all. Salvation in our case means deliverance from guilt and ruin, and this could not have been laid hold of by a measure of good works, since we are not in a condition to perform any. Suppose I had to preach that you as sinners must do certain works, and then you would be saved; and suppose that you could perform them; such a salvation would not then have been seen to be altogether of grace; it would have soon appeared to be of debt. Apprehended in such a fashion, it would have come to you in some measure as the reward of work done, and its whole aspect would have been changed. Salvation by grace can only be gripped by the hand of faith: the attempt to lay hold upon it by the doing of certain

acts of law would cause the grace to evaporate. “Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace.” “If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”

Some try to lay hold upon salvation by grace through the use of ceremonies; but it will not do. You are christened, confirmed, and caused to receive “the holy sacrament” from priestly hands: does this bring you salvation? I ask you, “Have you salvation?” You dare not say “yes.” If you did claim salvation of a sort, yet I am sure it would not be in your minds salvation by grace; for those who are most addicted to the performance of outward rites are usually the last persons to enjoy any assurance of being saved by grace: they do not even look for such a thing. The more they multiply their rites and ceremonies, the more they quit the notion of grace, and the more they lose the true idea of salvation..

Again, you cannot lay hold upon salvation by grace through your feelings. The hand of faith is constructed for the grasping of a present salvation by grace, but feeling is not adapted for that end. If you go about to say, “I must feel that I am saved. I must feel so much sorrow and so much joy, or else I will not admit that I am saved,” you will find that this method will not answer. As well might you hope to see with your ear, or taste with your eye, or hear with your nose, as to believe by feeling: it is the wrong organ. After you have believed, you can enjoy salvation by feeling its heavenly influences; but to dream of getting a grasp of it by your own feelings is as foolish as to attempt to bear away the sun-light in the palm of your hand, or the breath of heaven between the lashes of your eyes. There is an essential absurdity in the whole affair.

Moreover, the evidence yielded by feeling is singularly fickle. When your feelings are peaceful and delightful, they are soon broken in upon, and become restless and melancholy. The most fickle of elements, the most feeble of creatures, the most contemptible of circumstances, may sink or raise our spirits: experienced men come to think less and less of their present emotions as they reflect upon the little reliance which can be safely placed upon them. Faith receives the statement of God concerning his way of gracious pardon, and thus it brings salvation to the man believing; but feeling, warming under passionate appeals, yielding itself deliriously to a hope which it dares not examine, whirling round and round :in a sort of dervish dance of excitement which has become necessary for its own

sustaining, is all on a stir, like the troubled sea which cannot rest. From its boilings and ragings, feeling is apt to drop to lukewarmness, despondency, despair, and all the kindred evils. Feelings are a set of cloudy, windy phenomena which cannot be trusted in reference to the eternal verities of God.

We now go a step further.

## SALVATION BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH, IS NOT OF OURSELVES.

The salvation, and the faith, and the whole gracious work together, are not of ourselves.

First, they are not of our former deservings: they are not the reward of former good endeavors. No unregenerate person has lived so well that God is bound to give him further grace, and to bestow on him eternal life; else it were no longer of grace, but of debt. Salvation is given to us, not earned by us. Our first life is always a wandering away from God, and our new life of return to God is always a work of undeserved mercy, wrought upon those who greatly need, but never deserve it.

It is not of ourselves, in the further sense, that it is not out of our original excellence. Salvation comes from above; it is never evolved from within. Can eternal life be evolved from the bare ribs of death? Some dare to tell us that faith in Christ, and the new birth, are only the development of good things that lay hidden in us by nature; but in this, like their father, they speak of their own. Sirs, if an heir of wrath is left to be developed, he will become more and more fit for the place prepared for the devil and his angels! You may take the unregenerate man, and educate him to the highest; but he remains, and must forever remain, dead in sin, unless a higher power shall come in to save him from himself. Grace brings into the heart an entirely foreign element. It does not improve and perpetuate; it kills and makes alive. There is no continuity between the state of nature and the state of grace: the one is darkness, the other is light; the one is death, and the other is life. Grace, when it comes unto us, is like a firebrand dropped into the sea, where it would certainly be quenched were it not of such a miraculous quality that it baffles the water-floods, and sets up its reign of fire and light even in the depths.

Salvation by grace, through faith, is not of ourselves in the sense of being the result of our own power. We are bound to view salvation as being as surely a divine act as creation, or providence, or resurrection. At every point of the process of salvation, this word is appropriate — “not of yourselves.” From the first desire after it to the full reception of it by faith, it is evermore of the Lord alone, and not of ourselves. The man believes, but that belief is only one result among many of the implantation of divine life within the man’s soul by God himself.

Even the very will thus to be saved by grace is not of ourselves, but is the gift of God. There lies the stress of the question. A man ought to believe in Jesus: it is his duty to receive him whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sins. But man will not believe in Jesus, he prefers anything to faith in his Redeemer. Unless the Spirit of God convinces the judgment, and constrains the will, man has no heart to believe in Jesus unto eternal life. I ask any saved man to look back upon his own conversion, and explain how it came about. You turned to Christ, and believed on his name: these were your own acts and deeds. But what caused you thus to turn? What sacred force was that which turned you from sin to righteousness? Do you attribute this singular renewal to the existence of a something better in you than has been yet discovered in your unconverted neighbor? No, you confess that you might have been what he now is if it had not been that there was a potent something which touched the spring of your will, enlightened your understanding, and guided you to the foot of the cross. Gratefully we confess the fact; it must be so. Salvation by grace, through faith, is not of ourselves; and none of us will dream of taking any honor to ourselves from our conversion, or from any gracious effect which has flowed from the first divine cause.

Last of all,

**“BY GRACE ARE YE SAVED THROUGH FAITH;  
AND THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES:  
IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD.”**

Salvation may be called, Theodora, or God’s gift: and each saved soul may be surnamed Dorothea, which is another form of the same expression. Multiply your phrases, and expand your expositions; but salvation truly

traced to its well-head is all contained in the gift unspeakable, the free, unmeasured benison of love.

Salvation is the gift of God, in opposition to a wage. When a man pays another his wage, he does what is right; and no one dreams of belauding him for it. But we praise God for salvation because it is not the payment of debt, but the gift of grace. No man enters eternal life on earth, or in heaven, as his due: it is the gift of God. We say, "Nothing is freer than a gift." Salvation is so purely, so absolutely a gift of God, that nothing can be more free. God gives it because he chooses to give it, according to that grand text which has made many a man bite his lip in wrath, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." You are all guilty, and condemned; and the Great King pardons whom he wills from among you. This is his royal prerogative. He saves in infinite sovereignty of grace. At the same time the Lord himself declares that. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This wide statement in no degree conflicts with the statement that none receive this salvation except as a gift. You must stand obliged to God's mercy for it, or else die without it. To pretend a right to it will be to insult God, whose heart is set upon the exercise of his free bounty. He will not barter and bargain with you. So much grace for so many tears, so much mercy for so much repentance, so much love for so many works! The idea is contemptible. Salvation is not in the market except on these express terms — "Without money and without price." Freely may you be saved if you will cast out of your soul the last thought of making God your debtor.

Salvation is the gift of God: that is to say, completely so, in opposition to the notion of growth. Salvation is not a natural production from within: it is brought from a foreign zone, and planted within the heart by heavenly hands. Salvation is in its entirety a gift from God. If thou wilt have it, there it is, complete. Wilt thou have it as a perfect gift? "No, I will produce it in my own workshop." Thou canst not forge a work so rare and costly, upon which even Jesus spent his life's blood. Here is a garment without seam, woven from the top throughout. It will cover thee and make thee glorious. Wilt thou have it? "No, I will sit at the loom, and I will weave a raiment of my own!" Proud fool that thou art! Thou spinnest cobwebs. Thou weavest a dream. Oh, that thou wouldst freely take what Christ upon the cross declared to be finished.

It is the gift of God: that is, it is eternally secure, in opposition to the gifts of men, which soon pass away. “Not as the world giveth, give I unto you,” says our Lord Jesus. If my Lord Jesus gives you salvation at this moment, you have it, and you have it forever. He will never take it back again; and if he does not take it from you, who can? If he saves you now through faith, you are saved — so saved that you shall never perish, neither shall any pluck you out of his hand.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

MARCH, 1887.

# IN AN OLIVE GARDEN AT MENTONE. <sup>r2</sup>

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

IF there is one prayer in which we should all unite for ourselves, and for all our brethren in Christ, it would be a prayer for our increased usefulness. We desire each one to bring forth fruit unto God's glory: we care not to be conspicuous as the poplar, or majestic as the cedar, but we would be useful as the olive. These olive-groves, in which we, some of us, spend so many hours, ought to teach us a lesson concerning the bringing forth of precious results from all our planting and watering in the Lord's vineyard. I have a thousand thoughts about them which come and go too swiftly for me to put them down. I love the olive better than any other tree, and yet I cannot describe it, for it is ever changing. It is everyday different, every hour different, every ten minutes different, in color and tone. See how it varies from the bright silver grey of one day, to the dark green, and almost blackness of another! True picture of our experience in its glitter and its gloom, but evermore a constant sermon upon fruitfulness! I have known many begin with an aversion to the olive, and yet before long they have confessed it to be the most mysterious and fascinating of trees.

There is this to be learned without much thought: the olive brings forth its useful oil, mother of light, from an almost sterile soil. Some of the ground in which the olives grow might produce other crops; but in many other instances, if the olives were not there, it would produce nothing at all. Most excellent olive-oil is produced from a rocky soil in Greece, which is simply a bare burning limestone: indeed, it seems to verify the Scriptural expression of, "Oil out of the flinty rock." Brave is this achievement of the olive; and it is performed all around us. This ought to show to us that we can be good workers for the Lord, and successful fruit-bearers for his

glory, without having the pick of places. We may take our position as God has placed us in it, and honor the name by which we are called. Usefulness is as possible in obscurity as in publicity, and we can glorify God as truly in sickness as in health, in poverty as in wealth. Our temptation will be to think we could do exceedingly well in somebody else's sphere, but that we may be pardoned if we do not shine in our own. This is to lay a false and flattering unction to our souls: if we do no good where we are, neither should we have been useful anywhere else. A barren tree blames the soil, but the real fault is in itself. The best fruit is often produced in the worst situation. Solomon saw the hyssop on the wall, and the cedar in Lebanon; but I have seen far greater wonders, for I have seen the cedar on the wall, and the hyssop growing in Lebanon: that is to say, I have seen the noblest character where the position was unfavorable, and the poorest graces where all things tended to produce a grand result. What a shame, that the man of ten talents should sometimes bring in less interest for his Lord than the poor servant who never had but one! And yet it is often so. On a far-spreading tree, in a fat soil, I have looked in vain for fruit, while on the rocks I have seen the olive-branches breaking down with their excessive wealth of berries. It is not our surroundings, and circumstances, but the inner life, and the power that is within, that will determine the quantity of fruit that we bear.

Another lesson that we may learn from the olives is not to expect fruit-bearing trees to be exactly like one another. I think if a reward of ten thousand pounds were to be offered to anyone who could produce two olive-trees exactly alike, no one would be found to claim it. They could produce two alike when they had sawn off all the branches that bore fruit, and left only dead stumps; but as long as they are fruitfully alive, each one differs from the other. One twists and twirls in all sorts of shapes, and another is quite straight and comely: one seems to concentrate its branches, and fashion them into a single cup, while another is a forest tree, whose beauty lies in its untrimmed liberty of growth. Mark how, in its adornment with lichens, or in a certain smoothness and oiliness of life, each olive-tree varies from its neighbor. There is no pattern for an olive-tree. That tree which bears the most olives might serve as a capital model for the rest; but even in that case its particular form might turn out to be the most uncomely, so far as mere appearance is concerned. There is no model, and it would be idle to attempt to make one. The Dutch gardener of the olden time was very particular about trimming his hedges close, and clipping his

yews so that he had a verdant peacock in one corner, and a huge green cheese in another, and these designs he repeated forever and a day. This is unnatural and stiff. Little children say first, "How beautiful!" and then, "How funny!" The Lord God has not so made the forest trees, nor even those which bear fruit, for man. He loves naturalness and variety; and let us in this thing agree with him, and never try to found a school of workers, or fashion a set of people all of one mould. There is a special beauty in the olive-groves as the result of this diversity, and we ought to be grateful to the great Husbandman for so arranging his trees.

I find among many excellent people a feeling of surprise that godly people are not all alike. They say, "We cannot understand how So-and-so can be a Christian, and have such strange ways." Some express their surprise that God should make use of persons and modes of procedure which are so outré and extravagant in their esteem. Our tendency is to accept ourselves as patterns, and censure all divergences from our excellent selves. You cannot understand why yonder olive is so peculiar. Shall I tell you? A wandering wind came this way one morning and so fiercely twisted that young tree when it was supple, that it bears the trace thereof, and will bear it for hundreds of years. And this with its hollow trunk was assailed by a little worm when it was itself little, and the nibblings of that enemy have left lines and scars which will never be erased. Numerous agencies have been at work here, carving to good purpose. The hand of beauty smoothed yonder bough, while the tooth of time gnawed this bark. The great Gardener, who still walks the olive-groves, made one grow in this way, and another in that. We had better leave them alone. Among us who are called Nonconformists it is perfectly unreasonable and inconsistent to expect conformity. In some matters I believe in the dissidence of dissent, and delight to see those natural diversities which are the mark of life, and the beauty of health. Everybody living unto God should live according to the life that the Lord has placed within him, and not according to somebody else's life. Let the sober glorify God by his seriousness, and the cheerful by his gladness. Let the reasoning mind use its logic to holy purpose, but let it not snuff out all that is emotional, nor even that which is humorous and playful in others. One complained of a certain brother that he had too much wit; but it was justly remarked of the censor that no one would ever bring that charge against him.

I think you will see in the olive-tree one other lesson, namely, that this fruitful tree seems to bear the mark of suffering. I have called it a ligneous

agony: a death-throe in wood. Some of them are twisted and gnarled in such anguish that one would think they had heard the groans of Gethsemane. Well does the olive embody the great agony. The pangs that rent the Savior's heart in the garden have often been brought before me when resting among these trees. If you will observe them, not so much the younger ones as those of venerable age, you will compare them to serpents, in their strange twistings and coilings. Some of them are split to the very heart, and broken from the root upward as with an axe. One wonders how they live; but, indeed, they are full of life. I am told that even the old roots which are brought to us in our baskets for the fire would grow if they were buried in the ground. If that be so, it would be very hard work to extirpate an olive-tree. It has so much life in it, that if it is buried in the soil, it will send out shoots. Even when it is on the fire, it burns with a clear flame, far more bright than that of any other wood, for it is full of the oil of life; and even in perishing it does its best to enlighten those who cast it on the fire. I suspect that if we care to do great things for God, we shall have to become gnarled and twisted by suffering. I suppose that a few good people may possibly escape from trial and suffering, but I do not know them. Those whose lives are very easy are usually of small account in the matter of usefulness. Many who are doing very little would be all the better for the fertilizing processes of pain and anguish. Even a week or two of gout might cure them of fancies, and put them upon real work. Sympathy with others is not learned without personal suffering. The power to comfort grows out of our own afflictions. Depend upon it, those useful workers whom you so much envy, have their private griefs, which minister to their usefulness, or keep them humble under their success. Those whom the Lord honors in public he chastens in private. These sicknesses and sorrows of ours have a fertilizing effect, or at least they ought to have. Every cold wind, as well as every sunbeam, helps to put oil into the olives, and grace into believers. Skillful mariners sail by all winds, and we ought to make progress through all circumstances.

So, then, brethren, we will, like the olives, try to be fruitful under difficulties, we will leave others to develop their graces and to do good in their own way, and we will ourselves look out for personal affliction, counting it not strange concerning the fiery trial as though it were a new thing upon the face of the earth.

We will come to these olives another day, and hear what they have to say to us. They will not leave their fatness even to be promoted over the trees,

and therefore we shall find them here when the climbing brambles of the hour have passed away.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

JUNE, 1888.

### PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS. <sup>f3</sup>

AT THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PASTORS' COLLEGE  
EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION, APRIL 17, 1888.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

IT is not possible for us to converse together during such a time of intense excitement without alluding, or at least seeming to allude, to matters which are just now the subjects of severe controversy. It will be thought that things spoken by me this day are aimed at individuals who may not be in my mind at all. I am awkwardly circumstanced, and I might, therefore, speak with great reserve; but such is not my habit: as a rule, I blurt out my thoughts, for I have nothing to conceal. I have no intent to wound anyone, but I cannot help it if I do. I do not say this by way of apology, for I am now past all need of apology, and I have become a chartered libertine in the speaking of my mind, since I have found it utterly impossible to please, let me say or do what I will. One becomes somewhat indifferent when dealing with those whom every word offends. I notice that when I have measured my words, and weighed my sentences most carefully, I have then offended most; while some of my stronger utterances have passed unnoticed. Therefore, I am comparatively careless as to how my expressions may be received, and only anxious that they may be in themselves just and true. Certainly my criticisms have cost me more pain than they have inflicted. At the first I said that he who ventured on the task which was laid upon me would get no honor from it: the prophecy is true, and I am content to have it so.

I have now nothing to gain, and I have nothing to fear. I can never endure worse misrepresentation than has already befallen me. It is not my intention to say anything upon the burning question which distinctly refers to the Union; and if I go beyond that intent it will be the current of the hour

which bears me away, and no resolve of my own. I make these remarks by way of introduction, that your minds may be led out of the clamor of the fight into the hush of quiet thought.

I would also add a word of caution to heated minds. Can we not draw a distinction between men and their opinions? An old Scotch wife once quarreled with her minister. I think the difference arose out of some business transaction; perhaps the poor preacher was slow in his payments, or she had not been up to the mark in the goods supplied to him; but, anyhow, she felt bitterly towards him. Yet she came constantly to hear him preach, and when he asked her how she could abuse him as she did, and yet always attend his ministry, she answered, "Man, my quarrel is with you, not with the gospel." Our case is exactly opposite to hers. Our quarrel is not with the men, but with that other gospel, which is not another, with which they trouble us. Away with personalities, but let us earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It may not be easy to keep clear the distinction between the men and their opinions; but at any rate let us labor to do so. Let us grind the falsehood to powder, but desire from our inmost souls the good of those deluded by it. I have heard of a stone being broken to atoms on the breast of a man, yet he who wielded the hammer hurt not the man in the least degree. We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness. We fight neither with small nor great, save only with the deadly error which seeks to be king in Israel.

I desire so to speak to you, that you may be girded for the battle against all sin and false doctrine, and be prepared to follow your divine Lord in all his sacred warfare. May you go back to your several spheres of service feeling that you have wasted no time in coming up to this Conference, but that you have been inspirited and stimulated by communion with each other and your Lord. God help me so to speak as to give a healthy tone to our fellowship!

I want to speak to the times. We are exhorted to be "abreast of the age": I will look into its breast, and see whether it has there a sound mind, or an evil heart of unbelief. My subject is

## THE EVILS OF THE PRESENT TIME.

Nobody can question that there are evils which are constant throughout the ages; and, on the other hand, there are certain intermittent fevers which rage only at intervals. There are evils of all seasons: evils of winter, evils of summer, evils of autumn, evils of this spring-tide. Certain evils abound at this particular period, with which we were not so familiar twenty years ago. We meet now with error, and with sin, in forms which they did not commonly assume in the early years of our ministry. Truth is one and the same in all eras, but falsehood changes its shape, and comes and goes like the fashions of dress. To evil things also there is a season, and a time for every doctrine which is not from heaven.

I suppose you have met, in your pastoral work, with the great evil of questioning fundamental truth. Brethren have always differed on minor points, and it has not been unusual for us to meet each other, and discuss matters of doctrine upon the basis of Holy Scripture. All were agreed that whatever Scripture said should be decisive, and we only wished to ascertain what the Lord had revealed. But another form of discussion has now arisen: men question the Scriptures themselves. A deacon of one of our churches said the other day upon a certain doctrine, "Even if the Bible said so, I would not believe it." This is a new thing in our Israel. To some the teaching of Scripture is not of final authority: their inner consciousness, their culture, or some other unknown quantity is their fixed point, if fixed point they have anywhere. The fount of inspiration is not now within the Book, and with the Holy Spirit, but within the man's own intelligence. We have no longer, "Thus saith the Lord," but "Thus saith modern thought." We used to debate upon particular and general redemption, but now men question whether there is any redemption at all worthy of the name. We used to converse upon which aspect of the atonement should be made most prominent, but in the vicarious sacrifice we all believed. Alas! we have fallen upon days in which substitution is denied, and the doctrine of the patting-away of sin by the blood of our Lord Jesus is spoken of in opprobrious terms. We described justification by faith under various figures in days gone by; but now men are among us who set it quite aside. The other day a certain preacher informed us that even if a sinner should truly repent and believe on his dying bed, he would yet have to suffer for awhile in the next world. Thus salvation by faith is made to give place to a sort of purgatory. This is not to differ about the faith, but altogether to renounce

it. It is not in our denomination alone or chiefly that these evils exist, but they are everywhere. I know not what our brethren mean when they deny the general prevalence of unbelief. Are they willfully deaf and blind? Do they live on the dark side of the moon? You must have noticed in the newspapers apologies for Mohammedanism and Buddhism, in which these religions are praised to the disparagement of Christianity: this is a sign of the times. Scribes are taking up their pens to write upon themes which would not have been touched by the secular papers years ago; and they are only touched now because there is an unbelief abroad which creates a market for anti-Christian literature. Those against whom we fight today are striking at the life of our religion. They are not cutting off its horns, but tearing out its heart.

When I note the clamor for “progress in theology,” and mark the changing nature of modern opinion, I am reminded of the story of a prudent churchwarden who trembled for the spire of the parish church. A vane was to be placed on high, and when he saw it upon the ground it struck him as being far too large to be safely fixed upon the spire. I suppose it was the image of Peter’s cock, and when the good man looked upon it, he did not weep, but he trembled. “Surely,” he said, “when the north wind blows it will tear down the vane and the steeple too.” He who had to fix the vane endeavored to cheer him by the fact that when the wind was blowing, the cock would turn round, so that the full force of the gale would not come upon it. That was a comfortable consideration, and it brought a grand idea into the churchwarden’s mind. Those four letters, N. E. S. W., were of considerable size, and would offer a serious opposition to the wind: could not these also be made to revolve? Certainly this might mitigate the danger: but of what use would the vane be? Even so, they are trying in certain quarters to make the cardinal points of truth go round with the wind. To this we object. Let the weather-cocks spin round as much as they please, but we must have fixed points of faith. Unless we have infallibility somewhere, faith is impossible. The true faith teaches us facts which cannot be questioned. Where is faith to build if there be no rock, and nothing left us but shifting sand? As for us, we find infallibility in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and our one desire is to have them opened up to our minds by the Holy Spirit. Those who choose to do so may invent a changing gospel; but we believe in “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

We are tried at this time by the way in which many attack the truth by misrepresenting it, and wickedly distorting it. They designedly harp upon some one doctrine as though it were all we believed; or, at least, the chief point of our teaching. They know that we hold much more of truth, and that we do not make this one point prominent; but this they willingly forget, that they may make up a case against us. It is easy to paint all a man's features, and yet to caricature him by putting one feature out of proportion to the rest: this is what our opponents do. To give an instance: the doctrine of eternal punishment has been scarcely raised by me in this controversy; but the "modern thought" advocates continue to hold it up on all occasions, all the while turning the wrong side of it outwards. The terror of "the wrath to come" is brought to the front, as if this was our main teaching, and as if its dread forewarning was peculiar to the orthodox doctrine. Can they assure us that there is nothing terrible connected with their own beliefs as to the future of the wicked? If one who holds either of the new views will state his belief clearly, it will be fairly open to much the same criticism as that by which we are castigated. We, at least, do not teach that sinners who die penitent and believing will need to undergo long purgatorial pains before they enter Paradise. Our hope is larger than that hideous dogma. Do any of these gentlemen teach that sin does not entail terrible consequences? If they dare not say as much, why do they turn their spurious humanity in our direction, and grow indignant at us? They will claim at other times that upon the point of future judgment the difference is a matter of degree; but it is not ingenuous on their part to forget this fact when they are laboring to make us the objects of the world's obloquy. This, however, does not matter much to us, for we do not flinch from truth because it is terrible; but it shows the style of men who oppose us.

It is the same with other doctrines which we hold: they are constantly being misrepresented, or, at least, misinterpreted. If our opponents would state the case fairly we should not mind it, but this would not serve their purpose. One said the other day, "I hate that text which says, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.'" "Why?" said a friend; "what is the difficulty to your mind?" The reply was, "I cannot see why God should hate Esau." "Nay," said our friend, "I am not at all surprised that God hated Esau, but I am greatly amazed that God loved Jacob." That is indeed a marvel of grace; the other is one of the common-places of justice. Truth thus has its coat turned inside out, and then is dragged up and down the street in scorn. They make a straw man, and carry him about as a guy,

hoping afterwards to burn him. Fine sport for children, but great folly in men.

While we do preach “the terror of the Lord,” I may say of myself, and of you also, that “we persuade men” in all tenderness. We do not worry them to Christ; but with much gentleness and love we endeavor to draw them with love, and urge them on with tearful anxiety. We are under trembling apprehensions of the wrath to come, and therefore we are in downright earnest. We have no pleasure in their death. Do our enemies dare to think that we have? We grieve to think of their dying in their sins. It is ungenerous to represent us as cruel because we dare to be honest in our interpretation of the threatenings of Scripture.

Yet misunderstanding and misrepresentation form an evil which we have to deal with constantly. I have no doubt that you find it in your churches, weakening your testimony, shaking the unstable, and causing unbelief in many minds. Our gospel is adapted to meet this difficulty. Let us not distrust it; but at the same time, let us not shut our eyes to the fact that this form of evil is rife among us, and must be met in the name of the God of truth.

Another great evil is the want of decision for the truth among truly good men, those who are our brethren in the faith of our Lord Jesus, but who do not seem to have made up their minds as to separation from error. Good, easy men! they are all for peace! Sitting on the fence seems to be a popular position among professors just now. After next Monday’s Union Meeting several brethren may have made up their minds; but until then, they will sit uneasily upon the fence. I have, with commendable forethought, endeavored to drive a number of tenter-hooks and other useful nails into the top of that fence, to assist them in retaining their hold, but I fear they are not deeply grateful to me. Theirs is a position which I never was able to occupy myself, and therefore I have no very profound sympathy with them. One or two learned divines are trying their utmost to get down on both sides of the fence; but it is a perilous experiment. Some are trying to get down on the winning side, and others would prefer to keep their judicious position world without end. Neutrals, in the end, have the respect of neither party, and assuredly they are the difficulty in every controversy. In the churches there will always be trouble so long as men are afraid to denounce sin and error. A negro preacher in a certain village said that among his flock he carefully abstained from preaching against the sin of

stealing chickens, because it seemed so much to damp brotherly fellowship. Many a preacher touches the matter of strong drink very tenderly because certain of his supporters are in "the trade." Is there not a great deal of this suppression of unpalatable truth? Are not many unfaithful as to the sins around them? "They are all things to all men," but it is not that they may save some. I have heard it whispered that it is that they may save a sum to the exchequer of the church. Are not important persons too much consulted? Is not position more valued than piety? Is there enough of downright faithfulness to truth and to Christ at all hazards? Brethren, we want grace to say, "I can be poor; I can be ridiculed; I can be abused; but I cannot be false to my Lord."

I make no personal reference, but I see the spirit of compromise concerning holiness and sin, truth and error, far too prevalent. The spirit of compromise comes not of the Spirit of God, but of the spirit of the world. It is always wisest and best to exhibit clear decision upon fundamental points: we must draw the line distinctly, and then stand to it firmly. Do not alter your course because of winds and currents. Don't try to make things pleasant all round. Do not be like the fellow in one of the American towns, who saw a traveler leaning against a lamp-post, weary and worn with his journey. The traveler inquired of him how far it was to such a place, and was told that it was ten miles. The weary traveler sighed and said, "I shall never hold out. I shall faint on the road." "Ah!" said his sympathizing informant, "I did not know you were quite so far gone, I will knock off three, and make it seven for you." Of course, this operation in words did not alter the fact, nor really reduce the ten to seven. Yet this is the method of some weakly amiable souls; they tone down truth, forgetting that their tone does not affect the fact. This obligation is too severe, and therefore, it is suggested that it may be somewhat relaxed. This doctrine is too stern, make it wear a milder aspect. This manner of pleasing everybody at all cost is the style of the period. If sin and human depravity, and so forth, are strongly spoken of in the old theology, run off to the new, and soften matters. If the punishment of the impenitent too much alarms men, treat it lightly, and spirit it away; who wants to win converts by fear? Yes, yes; "make it seven." But what avail your soft words? The distance is all the same for your lying; and when the deceived one finds it to be so, he will pour no blessings upon your heads. May the Lord save us from the doom of deceivers of souls! May we be watchmen who will be clear of the blood

of men! Be decided yourselves, and then, like men who stand firm themselves, you will be able to help others whose feet are slipping.

Another great evil of the times is the insatiable craving for amusements. That men should have rest from labor, and that they should enjoy such amusements as refresh both body and mind, nobody wishes to deny. Within suitable bounds, recreation is necessary and profitable; but it never was the business of the Christian church to supply the world with amusements. Did Christ found his church that it might offer to the public tableaux vivants, and living wax-works? A dissenting congregation, to my own knowledge, commenced a series of special services with a social meeting, and the evening was spent in various silly dissipations; and among other things the assembled friends played at "Musical Chairs"! I do not know whether you understand what that childish game means. Think of ministers of the gospel and officers of a church playing at "Musical Chairs"! There is a bill extant which states that next week there is to be a "Punch and Judy" show in the same place of worship (so-called)! This is to go on side by side with the preaching of thy bleeding sacrifice, O Christ of God! No, brethren, let me correct myself: the preaching of Christ usually ceases when these frivolities come in. These things are so opposed in spirit, that one or the other will have to be dropped; and we know which it will be. What is to be next done in our chapels? To what length of tomfoolery will ministers of the gospel yet go? Amusements beneath the contempt of idiots have been tolerated in our school-rooms. It has not come to that yet with us, personally; but, brethren, we ourselves have to battle hard against it, for the people are all agog for these vanities, and there are so many societies and institutions more or less remotely connected with our churches that it is difficult for us to keep them all from wandering. Brethren, we are not here to play away our time, but to win souls for Jesus and eternal bliss. By the solemnities of death, and judgment, and eternity, I beseech you, keep yourselves clear of the follies, the inanities of the day. Remark with interest how "the wisdom of this world" and the follies of it seem to be boon companions, and turn from them both with equal loathing.

Another of our difficulties lies in the lack of intense piety in many of the Churches. Numbers of our brethren and sisters today are living, in a high degree, to the glory of God. I thank God that there is now as much of holy activity and hearty consecration as in any former period in the history of the Christian Church. Among us are men and women whose names will go down to posterity as examples of devotion. God has not left himself

without witness. But do you not notice how superficial is the religion of the mass of professors? How many servants might live in so-called Christian families without perceiving any difference between these houses and those of worldlings? Is not family prayer neglected in many instances? Have we not members who are never seen at a prayer-meeting? When inquiry is made, do you not find that the richer sort could not attend because the dinner-hour is at the same time as the gathering for prayer? No doubt they will be most careful to worship the god they favor most. In other cases you find that busy men who could not come out to pray were quite able to attend a concert. Public dinners and sing-songs are more important ceremonials with many than the offering of prayer to God. Do we not meet with church-officers who say openly that they do not care for such old-fashioned things as prayer-meetings? This is a wretched sign of declension, and it is frequently to be seen. Our churches may well cause heartache to their pastors; but, for the most part, in such cases the pastors themselves have so much backslidden that they care nothing about it.

In reference to ministers, many church members are indifferent as to the personal piety of the preacher; what they want is talent or cleverness. What the man preaches does not matter now; he must draw a crowd, or please the élite, and that is enough. Cleverness is the main thing. One would think they were looking for a conjuror rather than a pastor. Whether he preaches truth or error, the man is held in admiration so long as he can talk glibly and keep up a reputation as a speaker. If we had truer piety in members and deacons, pretenders would soon take their wares to other markets. Alas! I fear there has been great laxity in the admission of members, and the quality of our churches has become defiled and debased by "the mixed multitude," among whom all manner of evil finds a congenial dwelling-place. Unhappy leader, who has an Achan in his own camp! Better that Demas should forsake us, than that he should abide with us and import the world into the church. How many ministers are weak for warfare with sin because they are not supported by a godly people, and their hands are not held up by praying brethren!

Not to make my jeremiad too long, a sad evil is the stolidity of the people outside with regard to the gospel. Compared with what it used to be, it is hard to win attention to the Word of God. I used to think that we had only to preach the gospel, and the people would throng to hear it. I fear I must correct my belief under this head. If the gospel does not attract men, nothing will; I mean, nothing which can do them good. Personally, I have

no reason to doubt the attractiveness of the old, old gospel; but I am assured that some of my brethren who faithfully preach the gospel of Christ do not find the people flocking about them. We all feel that a hardening process is going on among the masses. In this vast city we have street after street where the people are living utterly regardless of the worship of God. Those who attend church or chapel are marked men; and if you were to inquire for them, they would be pointed out to you as remarkable individuals. A curious circumstance came under my own notice: it seems that men may come to hear a preacher on a week-evening with less suspicion than on the Sunday. One who had attended a week-night service was asked to come on Sunday, but he replied, "Oh, no; I have not gone so far as that yet!" Attendance at a place of worship on the Sunday has in London become, to many people, a profession of religion. Merely to hear Spurgeon on a Thursday is a different matter. It is a fact that thousands of persons live close to our notable sanctuaries, and never dream of entering them. Even curiosity seems dulled.

Why is this? Whence this distaste for the ordinary services of the sanctuary? I believe that the answer in some measure lies in a direction little suspected. There has been a growing pandering to sensationalism, and, as this wretched appetite increases in fury the more it is gratified, it is at last found to be impossible to meet its demands. Those who have introduced all sorts of attractions into their services have themselves to blame if people forsake their more sober teachings, and demand more and more of the noisy and the singular. Like dram-drinking, the thirst for excitement grows. At first the fiery spirit may be watered down, but the next draught of it must be stronger, and soon it is required to be overproof. The customary gin-drinker wants something stronger than the pure spirit, deadly though that draught may be. One said, as she tossed off her glass, "Do you call that gin? Why, I know a place where for threepence I can get a drink that will burn your very soul out!" Yes, gin leads on to vitriol, and the sensational leads to the outrageous, if not to the blasphemous. I would condemn no one, but I confess I feel deeply grieved at some of the inventions of modern mission work.

Apart from this intoxicating sensationalism, there is a sort of heaviness in the air. Do you not feel it? We are getting into the condition into which Germany fell not long ago. To this day, when talking with a German who is about joining our church, I usually find that he has lived in a country town. The devout German villager still attends public worship, but in the large

towns a practical atheism is supreme. Why is this? The ministers have done it. They preached the people out of their faith in the Scriptures: they taught them to be doubters. The most mischievous minister of Satan that I know of is the minister of the gospel, who not only doubts the truth in his own soul, but propagates doubt in the minds of others by his criticisms, innuendoes, and triflings with words. Some ministers believe nothing except that nothing can be believed. Such a man's conscience is withered. In some modern ministers the faculty wherewith to believe is extinct: they have played with words till they cannot be true if they try. Against this I have protested with my whole soul. People say, "Why did you not speak against these things twenty-five years ago?" I answer, "These evils were scarcely apparent then." Things are not now as in our early ministry. There has been a sudden growth of the toadstools of error. I never heard of Universalism then, nor of post-mortem salvation, nor of probation in the next state. Until very lately I have not heard of ministers holding up the blood of Jesus to scorn. I will not, however, repeat the sad facts which have of late come to my knowledge, and pierced my heart. The times are out of joint. The world may well be careless, for the church in many places is full of unbelief. I trust the present hurricane of evil may soon pass over; but anyone who has his wits about him will sorrowfully admit that the good ship of the church is now tossed about with contrary winds, and needs that her Lord should come and say to the winds and the waves, "Peace, be still." So far I have borne before you the burden of the Lord.

(To be continued.)

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

JULY, 1888.

# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

AT THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PASTORS' COLLEGE  
EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION, APRIL 17, 1888.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

(Continued.)

IN these evil times, we have still

### ONE ABIDING OBJECT.

Whatever the season may be, the farmer has still his land to till. In summer and in winter his work may vary, but his object is the same. It is the same with the servants of our Lord Jesus. Whatever others may do, we have lifted our hand unto the Lord, and we cannot go back. We are still guided by that one purpose which brought us first into the sacred ministry: we dare not look back from the plough nor turn aside from the furrow.

How do you at this time look at your life's mission? What is that mission? What are you at? I think I hear you answer, Our chief end is to glorify God. We do not regard it as our first business to convert sinners nor to edify saints, but to glorify God. If we have preached God's truth, and on any one occasion no souls have been saved thereby, we are still "unto God a sweet savour of Christ," as well in those that perish as in those that are saved. The preaching of Jesus Christ is the burning of sweet odors before the throne of God, and to the Lord it is evermore an acceptable oblation. The sacrifice of Jesus is that which makes the world bearable to a holy God, and the preaching of that sacrifice is a savor of rest unto him.

This is a kind of lactometer by which we can test the quality of any doctrine — “Does it glorify God?” If it does not glorify God it is not genuine gospel, and it will not benefit us or our hearers.

It is ours to keep to our one object, come what may. The fisherman goes forth with his nets upon a calm, bright, summer’s day. “Now, boatman, take thy guitar. Sit upon the bench, and delight us with sweet music.” He answers, “I am not a musician, but a fisherman.” A storm-cloud darkens the sky, and the rain and sleet drive down. “Now, boatman, quit the deck. Make all trim above and shelter thyself below.” He smiles, and answers, “I am no yachtsman out on a pleasure-trip, but I am here to fish, and fish I will.” Over go the nets!

Our sacred fishing may be better carried on in a storm than in a calm. When the waters sleep the fish seem to sleep also, or they are hidden in silent deeps far out of our reach. A dead calm is our enemy, a storm may prove our helper. Controversy may arouse thought, and through thought may come the divine change. In any case we must win souls. Whatever comes of it, we are bound to catch men for Jesus. Repentance and faith must be insisted on; the new birth, with its loathing of sin and trust in Jesus, must be ever set before our people. For this end were we born, and for this purpose were we sent into the world, that we might bear witness to grand soul-saving truths, that by the knowledge of these things God may be glorified among men.

Besides this, we have an intense desire to build up the church, and it strikes me that for this object it is of perpetual necessity that we continue to preach always the same gospel. Is there to be no progress? Yes, within the lines of revealed truth; but there must be no departures from fixed principles. A boy at school commences with his first book in arithmetic; in due time he needs another; but suppose that the second book put into his hand contradicted the first, where would the scholar find himself? Suppose you assure him that the multiplication table is worn out, and that men now know better than to say that twice two are four! What progress could he make? A consistent ministry, carried out through many years’ preaching of the same truth, must, with God’s blessing, produce a result upon a congregation. A noble building is possible when the walls rise course upon course upon a fixed foundation; but what result can those produce who change their teaching? This “ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth,” what does it? What can it do? True progress is

out of the question when everything is moving, road as well as carriage. There is a story told of a man who married his fourth wife, who had brought him money. The like had been the case with each of her predecessors. A friend said to him, "You seem to make a good thing of your wives, whether they live or die." "Alas!" answered the much-married man, "what with the expense of marrying them and the expense of burying them, there is not much profit about them after all." I should think it is much the same with the new creeds with which men fall in love one after the other. What with the trouble of learning the new doctrine, and the trouble of very soon burying it to make room for another, there is not much profit. Weaving comes to nothing if it be constantly pulled out again. If we would build up the church, we must be careful as to our foundation at the first; and upon that foundation we must keep on building to the end. As far as I am concerned, the things which I taught at the first are those wherein I abide until this day. If I had chosen a new object, I might have selected new means for promoting it; but those truths which were for the glory of God thirty years ago, still produce the same result. We work to the same end, and trust in the same power, wherefore we change not our teaching.

Brethren, let me take you further, and speak upon

## OUR URGENT NECESSITIES.

If we are to pursue our holy calling with success, we need to be better men. Brethren, I do not depreciate you: far from it. But, personally, I feel that as the times grow sterner I must cry to God for more grace, that I may be more able to cope with them. You can always cut a hard thing with something still harder. The granite Alps can be tunneled by the diamond. Oh, for grace to be equal to the worst case which can arise! Whatever we already possess of capability or fitness is the Lord's gift, and he is able to grant us far more. He that gave us life can give it to us "more abundantly." The capacities of a man, when God takes him in hand, are not to be estimated by the man, but by God himself. It was prettily put at the meeting last night by one of the brethren, when speaking of the cloud "like a man's hand"; he said that it was the Lord's work, but a man's hand was in it. The blessing comes from the Lord alone, but its sign is often the little cloud, like a man's hand. Oh, to have our hands ready for the Lord's work;

neither folded in indolence nor hanging down in despair, but lifted up in holy pleading and full consecration. Brethren, let it be a main business with us to be ourselves more holy, more gracious, and therefore better fitted for our work. It doth not yet appear what we can be. Oh, for high aspirations!

Let us not judge ourselves by others, and say with deadening self-complacency, "We are getting on well as compared with our brethren. There are not many additions to our churches, but we are as successful as others." O brothers, if some are still further behind in the course, that does not increase our hope of winning the race. While I was ill, a friend endeavored to comfort me by remarking that many suffered far more than I did. He looked unutterable things when I replied, "None but a fiend could derive comfort from the greater agonies of others." Shall we, if we have little of God's blessing, be thankful that others have still less! Did you tell me that John Johnston's potatoes are smaller than mine? I am not going to have my potatoes judged by John Johnston's; my standard as a gardener is not the worst specimen, but the best. Let us measure ourselves by our Master, and not by our fellow-servants: then pride will be impossible, but hopefulness will be natural. We are capable of much greater things; let us attempt them. It is time for us to live, for we grow old.

This done, let us get clearer views of what we believe. A drunken John Brown — I say "John Brown," for "his soul is for ever marching on" — gets to his own house at four o'clock in the morning, and says to the servant at the door, "Where does John Brown live?" "O sir, don't talk like that," says the servant, "you know that you are John Brown yourself." "Well," says he, "I know that; but I want to know where John Brown lives." There is an inebriation of "modern thought" which maunders much in that manner. John Brown of the New School does not know where John Brown lives. Where he lived yesterday he knows, but where he lives today it would be hard to tell. Many are spiritual gypsies. They camp behind any hedge, but they abide nowhere; their theology consists of a few sticks and bits of canvas. It is easily upset, but then it is as easily set up. Well may they sing —

*"We've no abiding city here"!*

They prefer the chase after truth to truth itself; it is clear that such a chase has not much of reality in it; for the man is pleased that his prey should perpetually escape him. In olden times the prophet was a seer; but nowadays a prophet is one who is too cultured to see anything. A man who

protests that he has too much light to be sure that he sees anything is the favorite of certain intellectual hearers. David said, "I believed, therefore have I spoken"; but he was peculiar: our "thoughtful men" now speak because they doubt, and not because they believe.

The next thing necessary for the present time is that we should have more faith. We need to believe more intensely in God, so as to trust him more practically and more unquestioningly. The things which we believe must become more real to us. I fear we often use words without feeling their true meaning. This is terrible. It is a sort of willful murder to expel the soul from pious phrases, and still use them. Let us be honest about the things of God: let us mean all that we say, and say only what we mean. It is a shocking thing for a man to talk all manner of evangelical, gracious, and sanctifying things, and yet to mean nothing by them. I fear our pulpits are not free from such wordmongers. Let us not hold forth shadows before the people. Let them, at any rate, be no shadows to us, but downright facts. You have heard of the old Scotch lady who was making her will. She was leaving £500 to this person, and £1,000 to another, till at length the lawyer remarked, "Have you as much money as this?" "May be not," said the old soul, "but it will show them my liberal intentions." It is to be feared that many preach evangelical doctrine, not because they believe it, but that they may please the evangelical. This will never do. Let us never lie open to such a suspicion. Let the doctrines we declare be dear to us as life, and as real as our own flesh and blood. We believe all Scripture to be true. When the Bible says that a man is lost, we believe that the loss is real and tremendous. Heaven and hell are realities with us, even though to others they may be dreams. To us Christ is a real Christ; and the Holy Ghost within a man brings real life from the dead. If we do not preach realities, I pray God we may be driven out of the ministry, in which we are only treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

We need also more love to souls. We shall never save more till we love more. There is a good story told by our brother Archibald Brown; I will not attempt to tell it in his presence; but it was something like this: — A man was accidentally buried by a fall of earth, and many were greatly energetic to dig the poor fellow out. One fellow stood by, scarcely as much concerned about the matter as many others, until a woman rushed out of the crowd, and laid hold on him, and said in his ear, "It's your brother Bill that's in there!" Those few words wrought a marvelous change in the man; his coat was off in an instant, and he was down in the sewer working like a

Trojan. If we would save our hearers from the wrath to come, we must realize that they are our brothers. We must have sympathy with them, and anxiety about them: in a word, passion and compassion. May God grant these to us!

There must be also a more thorough spirit of self-sacrifice. I must speak tenderly here, because I am among brethren whose life is one of perpetual sacrifice in a pecuniary sense. With scarcely enough to keep body and soul together, they work on without complaint year after year. If they could gain a hundred times their present income in any other calling, they would not quit the pulpit and the pastorate. The work of Christ is more to them than their necessary food. Thank God, this Conference is well supplied with men who count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord. But, my brethren, sacrifice is needed everyday, that we may keep up the abundance of our service. Here also we have many who excel. They are not loiterers, but laborers. He who has an easy time of it in his ministry here, will have a hard time of it in the account to be rendered by-and-by. I fear the idea of the ministry with some men is as much on the down-grade as their doctrine. Their gentlemanly indifference reminds me of the British workman, who observed, "I have such a good master that I do not know how to do too much for him, but I'll take precious good care I don't." Into that spirit may we never enter! Let us live intensely for our Lord!

But beyond surrendering ease, we must be prepared to give up everything else: our name, our repute, our friendships, our connections, must all go without reserve, if Christ's cause needs them. Sooner than deny the truth, we must forego every meed of honor, every particle of deserved esteem, every rag of repute. You have heard almost too often the classic story of Curtius leaping into the gulf in the Forum at Rome. There is a chasm in the Forum at this hour. Who will devote himself for his people and his God? Curtius does not stipulate that he shall be wholly engulfed except the pennon upon his lance, which shall remain above ground as his memorial. No, he takes the leap, and finds immortal renown in being completely swallowed up. In the battle for the truth let your personal comfort and reputation go to the winds. Let not the sacrifice be thought worthy of two thoughts. The weakness of many men is that they think so long that they do nothing. The blood of the martyrs is scarce among us. It will destroy our ministries if we begin thinking of the cost of honesty. Shall we have

before our eyes the fear of a large subscriber, and become afraid of offending him by our fidelity? We have already offended God.

Brethren, let us fear no loss, because we have nothing to lose, seeing all is Christ's already.

*“Here, take an inventory of all I have,  
To the last penny, 'tis the king's.”*

My Lord, for thee I will rejoice to be the off-scouring of all things, that I may be found faithful to thee and to thy truth, even to the end.

In this part of my address I wish to speak

## A WORD OF ADVICE

suitable for such a time as this. I would recommend you to go over the fundamental truths with your hearers very carefully. The bulk of the people do not know the first principles of the gospel. We assume too much when we take it for granted that our hearers, all of them, understand the gospel. Some of the old-fashioned dame-school teachers had a curious way of treating their scholars. They asked Mary to read a passage from a book, but Mary had not yet mastered her letters, and therefore she could not read as she was bidden to do. She was called a naughty child, and put into a corner and told to study her book. She could do nothing at it, for she did not know the letters! If we have not taught our people their letters, how can we expect them to understand the truths that we preach? Let us go over the foundation truths again and again. The simplest doctrines would be great novelties in some pulpits I could mention. A king once asked a courtier what made a certain French preacher so famous. “Your majesty,” said the nobleman, “he preaches the gospel, and that is the scarcest thing in France.” How true of many English pulpits today! Go over the elementary truths with your people. Make them know the first principles of the faith. It will not weary your hearers, it will bless them, and many of them will be delighted. Repeat the fundamentals, too; often, if you can. In the days of old-fashioned farming, they dropped three beans into the hole. And why? One was for the worm, another for the crow, and number three perchance would grow. Let us be liberal with the seed, for the evil powers are liberal with worms, and crows, and thorns. Let others go forth to shine; you are sowers, and must “go forth to sow.” Repeat yourselves if necessary: Paul

said, "To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe."

In the next place, labor distinctly for the immediate salvation of your hearers. Take aim. At Waterloo they say that, for every man that was killed, his full weight in lead had to be fired. We must improve upon this, and use arms of precision. We must get at the people each time we address them. It is wise to make definite characters the point of attack. We must look to the application of each sermon. I have known a true doctor, in a very critical case, act the part of nurse as well as surgeon, and personally see his liniments and poultices applied to his patient. This personal care gives surgery its best chance. We have great need to be very specific in applying truth to our hearers. If a doctor should prescribe a bitter medicine for children, to be taken every three hours, and then should leave it to the youngsters to take it themselves, I fear the doses taken would be small and few. Even so is it with unpalatable truth; we must not only set it forth in general, but we must measure it out in doses to each individual. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit this must be our daily work. We want our hearers saved, and saved at once, and towards this design we must drive with all our power.

Let us inculcate with all our might the practice of holiness. Holiness is the visible side of salvation. I thought it no ill sign when the preaching of holiness was pushed to an extreme. I trembled at the fanaticism, but I thanked God for the earnestness out of which it grew. Let us seek the utmost degree of holiness. The doctrines of grace should be accompanied by ethics of the purest kind. We have been clear upon the fact that good works are not the cause of salvation; let us be equally clear upon the truth that they are the necessary fruit of it. What is the use of our churches if they are not holy? What is the use of ourselves if we are not holy? Holiness is practical orthodoxy, and it should walk hand in hand with doctrinal orthodoxy. We must not only have a high-toned morality, but a consecrated morality, quickened by the Spirit of God — and that is holiness.

To this end, I would exhort you to be careful about the admission of members into the church. Doubtless there are some in our ranks who ought not to be there. This is to their own hurt, to the dishonor of the Lord Jesus, and to the injury of the church itself. Unconverted members lower the whole tone of the church. How low that tone has now become, let spiritual

men judge for themselves. If the members were converted, they would make short work of many of the ministers; but the people are like their priests. Many are the letters of sympathy which my protests upon this matter have drawn forth. It is clear that lax doctrine and lax living are pretty frequently associated. A weeping Hannah writes me of her husband, who has been for years a lay-preacher, who now spends his evenings far into night at the billiard-table, for which he acquired a taste when he went in for New Theology and religious entertainments. Many have gone from the prayer-meeting to the amateur theatricals of the Mutual Improvement Society, and thence to the play-house itself. This seems to be natural, if not inevitable. Oh that we had a purer membership to work with! Do what we may, Judas will come in; but let us not invite him: let us not make it easy for a betrayer of Christ to be comfortable with us. To mix up the world with the church is a crime; it brings with it an awful curse, and acts upon godliness as a blast and a mildew. Let the door of the church be opened to all sincere souls, but closed against all whose hearts are in the world. It is not even for the worldling's good that he should hold the form of godliness while he is a stranger to its power. As you love your Lord, and value men's souls, guard well the entrance of the church.

As to yourselves, I would recommend entire separation from those who would be likely to injure your spiritual life. I would no more associate with one who denied the faith than with a drunkard or a thief. I would guard my spirituals as jealously as my morals. A loyal man is not at home in the company of traitors. There are associations with the ungodly into which we must needs go, unless we get out of the world altogether; but there are others which are optional, and here we should dare to be scrupulous. A godly minister once said of a certain preacher, "I would not permit such a man to enter my pulpit. I am as jealous of my pulpit as of my bed." I do not think he was too rigid. We should guard ourselves against compromising the truth of God by association with those who do not hold it, especially at such a time as this.

Next, we must bind ourselves more closely together, and seek to render help to each other, and to all who are of the same mind in the Lord. Denominational divisions sink in the presence of the truth of God. To my mind, the grand distinction to be now observed is found in evangelical doctrine, of which our Lord's substitutionary sacrifice is the center and the soul. Where we see faithful brethren struggling, we ought to lay ourselves out to help them, for they are sure to be the objects of inveterate

opposition. Lovers of the old faith should stand shoulder to shoulder, to remove the injustice of the past, and frustrate the opposition of the future. The struggle before us is severe; let us, at any rate, economize our strength by union.

Lastly, let me leave with you

## WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

The times are bad, but they have been bad before. You have to fight with Apollyon, but many have met this arch-enemy before your day. Gird up the loins of your mind, and stand fast, for the Lord is greater than the times. The days are evil, but evil days are followed by good days. History repeats itself, and this is one of the points in which history is very persistent. Let me read you a cheering passage from Witherspoon: — “Nothing is impossible to the power of God. I add, that the most remarkable times of the revival of religion, in this part of the United Kingdom, immediately succeeded times of the greatest apostasy, when ‘truth’ seemed to be ‘fallen in the street, and equity could not enter.’ This was the case immediately before the year 1638. Corruption in doctrine, looseness in practice, and slavish submission in politics, had overspread the church of Scotland; and yet, in a little time, she appeared in greater purity, and in greater dignity, than ever she had done before, or, perhaps, than ever she has done since that period. Let no Christian, therefore, give way to desponding thoughts. We plead the cause that shall at last prevail. Religion shall rise from its ruins; and its oppressed state at present should not only excite us to pray, but encourage us to hope for its speedy revival.”

Make the most of .prayer. I have received much encouragement of late from many quarters by the assurance that our conflict for the gospel is continually mentioned in their prayers. The praying heart of God’s people is with us. Prayer is the master weapon. We should be greatly wise if we used it more, and did so with a more specific purpose. In New England a certain church had elected a young man named Mr. Stoddard to be its pastor. After awhile the people found out that their new preacher was not a real Christian. What did they do? Did they find fault, and quarrel? No, they were wiser folks. One Sabbath night, when his day’s work was over, the young minister saw the people flocking to the meeting-house. He was surprised at their coming in such numbers to a service at which he was not

himself to preside. "Why are they meeting?" he said. "Sir," said one, "they are coming together to pray that their minister may be converted." Young Stoddard went within doors, sought his chamber, prayed for himself, and found eternal life. Before the hour of prayer was over he was converted, and went down to the meeting to tell them so. Was not this a glorious work of grace? Might we not win more victories if we more constantly used this weapon of all-prayer?

All hell is vanquished when the believer bows his knee in importunate supplication. Beloved brethren, let us pray. We cannot all argue, but we can all pray; we cannot all be leaders, but we can all be pleaders; we cannot all be mighty in rhetoric, but we can all be prevalent in prayer. I would sooner see you eloquent with God than with men. Prayer links us with the Eternal, the Omnipotent, the Infinite, and hence it is our chief resort. Resolve to serve the Lord, and to be faithful to his cause, for then you may boldly appeal to him for succor. Be sure that you are with God, and then you may be sure that God is with you.

### **IN A THUNDER-STORM.**

IT is a delight to hear the crash of thunder among the hills, and to rejoice in the glorious roll of the drums of the God of armies when the forces of heaven are on the march. It is glorious to hear the voice of the tempest from afar; but it is quite another matter to be in your own house when it seems to be the target of the dread artillery of heaven. There is no music in the sharp crack of electric rifles sounding in your very ear, nor in the apparent fall of masonry from your own tower, nor in the trembling of beams, and walls, and floor. You are driven from the windows by feeling yourself charged with the subtle fluid; and as you move further into the house you are suddenly forced back by what seems a furnace or a sun descending through the light in the roof. Then a tempest is a tempest indeed; and as your dog with lowered tail crouches at your feet, and looks up in fear, you need all your manhood, to enable you yourself to look up to your own greater Lord, and rely upon his guardian care. I write under the immediate experience of such a visitation — a visitation which I shall not soon forget.

Just so when holy wrath breaks forth within the soul, and the conscience feels the terror of divine justice. There is then an end of all debate about the punishment of sin upon the heathen, or in the ages to come. The

terrible result of evil has come home to you: in blazing fire Jehovah rebukes iniquity, and in thundering threatening he declares that he will by no means spare the guilty. How sweet it is at such a moment to bow at the cross, and shelter beneath the stoning sacrifice! In such an hour of conscious condemnation what can those men do who scorn the great propitiation? At any rate, for me in the time of physical agony, when the chill shadow of death freezes the current of my life, and the future, with all its solemnity, flames forth before me, it is my solace, my joy, my delight, to cast myself on Jesus, and to be as nothing in the presence of the all-in-all of his transcendent merit. It would be eternally for the health of some men's souls if they could but for a little while know the terror of seeing God in arms against iniquity. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; and for lack of that fear which they affect to treat as a mean thing, they remain forever mean, never having faced the truth of judgment, and, consequently, never having known the truth of salvation.

C. H. S.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

AUGUST, 1888.

# “I PRAY YOU TO FASTEN YOUR GRIPS.”

A PRAYER-MEETING TALK, BY C. H. SPURGEON.

THIS sentence I met with in one of those marvelous letters which Samuel Rutherford left as a priceless legacy to the church of God in all ages. Truly he hath dust of gold. I thought it would make a capital text for a prayer-meeting address, and so I jotted it down. It gripped me, and so I gripped it, in the hope that it might grip you, and lead you “to fasten your grips.” But do not imagine that I have taken a text from Rutherford because I could not find one in the Bible, for there are many passages of Scripture which teach the same lesson. As for instance, that exhortation, “Lay hold on eternal life,” or that other, “Hold fast that thou hast,” or that other, “Hold fast the form of sound words.” The things of God are not to be trifled with, “lest at any time we let them slip”: they are to be grasped, as Jacob seized the angel, with “I will not let thee go.” Faith is first the eye of the soul wherewith it sees the invisible things of God, and then it becomes the hand of the soul, with which it gets a grip of the substance of “the things not seen as yet.” A man has two hands, and I would urge you to take a double hold upon those things which Satan will try to steal from you. Take hold of them as the limpet takes hold upon the rock, or as the magnet takes hold of steel. Give a life grip — a death grip: “I pray you to fasten your grips.”

And first, do this with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ. Cling to his cross as the sole hope of your soul. You, who already hold him by faith, I would stir up to hold fast the beginning of your confidence even to the end. Hold to him more intelligently and more decidedly than ever. Let everything else go, but keep your hand upon him as Joab held to the horns of the altar. Should Jesus ask you, “Will ye also go away?” answer at once, “Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.” As he holds you

by his grace, so hold him by the grace which he has wrought in you. You must not ever have to think, as that Swedish sailor did, of whom Mr. Faithful told us that he said, “he once had Christ, and had lost him.” “I pray you to fasten your grips” so firmly that no such awful thought shall ever darken your minds. “I held him,” said the spouse in the Canticles, “and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother’s house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.” You cannot bring Jesus to others if you do not hold him fast yourselves. Never dream of letting him go who is your hope, your joy, your all. He is yours to have and to hold when death shall part you from all beside.

If any of you have never taken hold upon Christ Jesus, “I pray you to fasten your grips” on him tonight. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may teach you, lead you, and enable you to do so at this moment! Christ is no shadow, you can lay hold of him, there is something to lay hold upon. Grasp him now as a drowning man would seize a life-buoy, as a man dying of hunger would clutch at a bit of bread. Jesus will not try to get away from you: he did not withdraw his garment from the woman who touched it for healing: he never denied himself to a seeking soul. Hold him, then, with a daring grasp. Make bold with our good Lord, for he loves a daring faith, Hath he not said, “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out”? Grasp him, for he puts himself in your way at this good hour. Men are eager enough to snatch at the shadows of this poor fleeting world; why are you so slow to “fasten your grips” upon him who is grace and truth. What life, what salvation, what everlasting joy shall come streaming out of him into you, if you are now moved to lay hold on him and take him as your own! Think it no robbery. He is God’s unspeakable gift, freely bestowed on needy sinners.

In the next place, “I pray you to fasten your grips” on the doctrines of the gospel. You do believe them, dear friends, or you would not rally around the preacher. If there are any of you who do not believe them, and yet are members of this church, you can scarcely remain so with a clear conscience, for our Confession of Faith is most explicit on those points. When any cease to hold the grand doctrines of a free-grace gospel, they generally clear out within a very short time, for they are weary of the constant preaching of them. My ministry is a flail which parts the chaff from the wheat, and a fan which drives the chaff away. It is so, and I desire it to be so: I aim at separating the chaff from the wheat. If I hear that somebody has been offended because of the truth which I have preached, I

remember that many were offended at that infinitely greater preacher who, on one occasion, found that many went back, and walked no more with him, for he had uttered a hard saying — “who could hear it?” Doth this offend you? You will be more offended yet, as we further and further dive into the truth of sovereign, distinguishing grace.

But you, dear friends, have taken hold of the doctrines of grace, and “I pray you to fasten your grips.” These are times when everything will be snatched away from you unless you hold it fast. Some years ago, I was highly flattered by a neighbor of rather advanced views, who said that the region of South London was difficult to work in, because the people were infected with a kind of teaching which it was impossible to destroy; for when people once got hold of it, they obstinately refused to let it go. I am rejoiced that this is the case. The doctrines of a gracious gospel are so Scriptural, so comforting, so self-evidencing, so satisfying, that men will not readily quit them when once they know their virtue. Free grace and dying love are such old wine that no man desireth new. Gospel truths saturate a believer right through, and remain in the grain of the cloth like the old reds of soldiers’ coats. The gospel is like some perfumes, which never leave the boxes in which they have once lain. The love of free grace dwells in the core of our heart. It has not only reached our bone, but it has impregnated the marrow; you cannot get it out of us, even if you kill us. I judge how it is with you by what I know of myself: I could be ground into atoms so small that you could not see them without a powerful microscope; but every atom would sparkle with belief in the atoning sacrifice, and the eternal love which gave it. “I pray you to fasten your grips” upon the revealed truths of God’s Word, so that you shall never flinch from avowing and defending them, whatever ridicule your adherence to them may cost you. I told an American friend yesterday that I could claim no credit for preaching a free-grace gospel, because I did not know any other, and would not know any other. “I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” I will be an agnostic to all but my Lord and his infallible Word. Once, when I had been preaching in Wales, an old lady told me that she had been very pleased with what I had said, but I was inferior to Christmas Evans, because he had only one eye, while I had two. I hope I have only one eye, however, in the higher sense. When a man gets a single eye for God’s glory, and preaches nothing else but the doctrine of the Word, he will take good aim, and hit a glorious mark. I pray that I may myself “fasten my grips” more and more

upon the one and only gospel, and that all of you may do the same, without a single exception. We will not let go a particle of that perfect system of revealed truth of which Christ is the center, and grace is the circumference.

Thirdly, dear friends, for your own comfort, "I pray you to fasten your grips" on the promises of God. In days to come the younger ones may see the wisdom of this advice. I will tell you what will help you to fasten your grips — a sharp touch of rheumatism, if grace goes with it. I do not want you to have the rheumatism, or any other trial; but if you do, I trust you will have grace given to lay hold upon precious promises suitable to your condition. Sanctified afflictions will help you to fasten your grips. If you have a very dear one long lying ill; or if your property is melting away; or if your jubilant spirits are sinking in depression, you will want the promises, and you will feel the necessity of fastening your grips. A grip of a promise of God is better than a grasp of a bag of gold. A grip of such a promise as this, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," will enable you to understand the exhortation which Paul saddles upon it, "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." If you are afraid of trouble, if you are doubting and fearing, "I pray you to fasten your grips" on the everlasting covenant. You have an anchor within the veil which will never give way; but mind that your cable is firmly held on board your vessel, for it is to this end of it that your care must be given, and therefore "I pray you to fasten your grips."

"I pray you to fasten your grips," also, on the service which God has given you to do. You who conduct Bible-classes and missions, you who teach in the Sunday-school, you who visit the kitchens of the lodging-houses, you who go round with those brown-covered sermons, and leave them from door to door, you who labor for your gracious Lord in any way — did you say that you thought of giving up your work? What are you at? "I pray you to fasten your grips." I heard the other day of a place of worship from which the congregation has gradually migrated, till very, very few remain. On looking over it I said to one of our deacons, "This place might do for me to preach in when I have to give up the Tabernacle, because of my general weakness and failure of health." He gave me no verbal answer, but he laughed, as if he could not contain himself, and that was all he said. I did not ask him to explain what he meant by laughing at my remarks. The laughter said more than words. I see you are laughing too. Well, you are going to give up your class, are you? Shall I laugh? I would if it would be

interpreted by you as I interpreted my deacon's laugh. It does seem ridiculous for anyone who has a work to do for Christ to talk of giving it up, unless there is a sheer inability to go on. I could rather weep than laugh, for it is even more sad than absurd. Here you are highly honored by having the opportunity of doing good, and winning souls, and you talk of giving up? "I pray you to fasten your grips." Of course, when you cannot do the work because of age and infirmity, it will be your wisdom to stand out of the way, and let somebody else do it better; but as long as you can do it, "I pray you to fasten your grips." Some old men of my acquaintance carried on Sunday-school work till they died, and some aged ministers have been useful to the very last. One good point in the chapter from the Acts, which we read yesterday morning, was the fine fidelity of the Roman soldiers. The Sadducees and the high priest — little can be said in their praise; but the soldiers stood at the door of the prison in the morning, though an angel had set the apostles free. They stood as sentries where they were bidden to stand; and you, who are good soldiers of Jesus Christ, must stand where your Lord and Master has placed you — sentries fixed like statues till recalled. I have heard that on one occasion Sir Henry Havelock was going over London Bridge with his son, and that he said, "Stop here, Harry, until I come back." He forgot all about his boy, finished his business in the city, and went home. His wife said to him, "Where is Harry?" "Bless me," he replied, "he is on London Bridge; I told him to stop there until I returned, and I am sure he will do so." He hastened to the spot, and there was young Harry. "What, Harry, are you still here?" "Yes, father; you told me to stop here until you came back, and I have done so." A soldier's son could do no otherwise, and you are sons of the great Captain of our salvation, even the Lord of hosts. Keep your places, whatever happens; and work on, whatever occurs. Having done all, still stand; and you have not done all yet. Blessed shall that servant be whom his Lord at his coming shall find watching and working. To desert your posts will be too shameful. Are you weary? Rest in your Lord. Are you discouraged? Let patience have her perfect work. No, no, my beloved, we will not one of us think of retiring. "I pray you to fasten your grips."

Now here is a harder bit. "I pray you to fasten your grips" upon the cross: I mean the cross which you are to bear after Jesus. You see, you are bound to carry it, for all believers in the Crucified must be cross-bearers. The cross of Christ has saved you, and now there is a cross of your own which the Lord has prepared for your shoulders, which you are to carry because

you are saved. On affliction, loss, reproach for Christ's sake, "I pray you to fasten your grips." This cross you must take up. You are not to wait to have it forced upon unwilling shoulders. Your Lord's command is, "Take up thy cross, and follow me." Stoop down to it, grasp it, and bear it. Let your hand embrace it for Christ's sake. Do not shun that which is the badge of true saints, and at once their burden and their blessing. Is it reproach? Count it greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. Is it loss for the sake of holiness? Espouse it, as your joyful bride. Is it any form of persecution? Rejoice and be exceeding glad that you are counted worthy to suffer for your Lord's sake. Is it any other form of sorrow which attaches to the life of the godly? Do not rebel against it, but "take it up," and bear cheerfully the sacred load. Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions. Even if your cross grows heavier as you carry it, welcome it, and follow on in the footsteps of the Well-beloved, as one of an elect train, chosen in the furnace of affliction. Someday you will come to see the excellent uses of your crosses, and then you will praise God for them. By faith and patience you may even fall in love with the cross, till you would not even wish to part with it. Submission is the near road to comfort, and cheerful acquiescence finds the cross on the back to be like wings to the shoulders. We glory in tribulations also. "I pray you to fasten your grips" upon your cross, and hold it fast as a treasure rather than an infliction. What I say unto you I say also to myself. I owe more than I can ever tell you to pain, and weakness, and other forms of my Lord's dear cross. It is not an iron cross, as I once thought it, it is only a wooden one; and he himself always bears the heavier end. I could almost sing, "sweet affliction"; surely its bitterness is soon over.

"I pray you to fasten your grips" in a practical manner upon one another. Brethren, let us love one another, for love is of God. We are heartily joined together in one spirit: let us remain so. Let our love increase exceedingly, as we are pressed together by surrounding opposition. Let all those who are one in the common faith get together, and cheer each other. Now, I will not venture upon shaking hands at this moment with Mr. Faithfull, the brother who labors in Marseilles, because example is very contagious, and he has told us that the sailors give him awful grips when they stroke hands. A very little while ago I could not even hold a pen, and I dare not run the risk of a sailor's grip with this most excellent friend; but spiritually, if not corporeally, let us all give each other one of those sailor grips with our hearts, if not with our hands. Brethren, you are very, very dear to me, and

you return that love. Be of like mind among yourselves. Are you out at elbows with one another? Are there even two women who cannot agree? Remember how our apostle said, "I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." They were only two private members, but Paul could not let them fall out. Put an end to discord at once. "I pray you to fasten your grips." Be not cold and distant towards your fellow-members, but let love reign supreme everywhere.

*“‘Tis a shameful sight,  
When children of one family  
Fall out, and chide, and fight.”*

Get to know each other better. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Bear and forbear, feeling that you are not yourselves perfect. Let us live in hearty love, first to our adorable Lord, and then with all our fellow-servants, and so we shall become strong in the Lord, and the Lord will command his blessing to fall like the dew of Hermon where he sees brotherly love abounding. I speak not thus because you fail in this respect, but I speak the more freely because I trust you excel in it. Oh, that all churches were abodes of love! What do we see in many places? No contending earnestly for the faith, but much contending as to who shall be the greatest. I heard the other day of a church which has come to nothing, and one told me that the reason was that "everybody wanted to be boss." You know what the word means: I think it is of American origin, and includes a good deal. Diotrephes is a dreadful mischief-maker. Let us not imitate him, but let us be ready to wash the saints' feet.

"I pray you to fasten your grips" on all God's chosen in every place; on all God's church throughout the whole world; let us pray for all the Lord's people. Let us grip our brethren in America, who have sent so many gracious representatives among us. Our brother, E. J. Parker, who has been evangelizing there, may remind us of them. Let us do the same with the churches on the Continent, for whom our brother Faithfull has spoken. God bless France, and save her. Our evangelist Mr. Harmer has just touched the coast of Africa, and his presence makes us think of the Congo and the Cape. With both hands, and with all our hearts, we salute all the people of God throughout the world, rejoicing that we are one body in Christ Jesus. In this holy love "I pray you to fasten your grips." Amen.

# A LITTLE SERMON FROM THE PAINTER'S BRAZIER.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

I SAW a painter doing up the posts of a gate which led into a gentleman's grounds. The paint was very foul, and so the workman had a brazier, filled with glowing coals, which he held close to the paint, to burn it off. His aim was to paint the posts, and he began his work by scorching them with hot coals. He was no simpleton, but knew his business well; and he knew that before he could put on fresh paint he must first burn off the old paint, or else the work would be badly done.

Seeing that painter at work, I said to myself — “that man is doing what the Lord has often done to me”; and what he may be doing to some of you who are now suffering greatly in the process. You have been seeking the Lord, and you had hoped that you would be converted, and enter into peace at once; instead of which, the sermons you have heard have made you feel worse and worse. You are more troubled now than when you began in earnest to seek salvation. It is all right; the old paint is being burned off. Your self-righteousness and self-sufficiency are being destroyed, and you are keenly feeling the fire of the Lord's wrath against sin burning into your very soul. If the old self had been left, the color of grace could never have soaked into your mind: the old stuff would have kept it out; you would have taken a mere film of grace, and soon the old rubbish of nature would have appeared through the new color of grace. The more completely the old paint is burned off, the better will the new work stand; and it is for this reason that the Holy Spirit is to you a spirit of judgment, and a spirit of burning, before he works for your renewal. See this, and understand the wisdom and lovingkindness of the Lord.

A similar process goes on with godly people, as well as with the unconverted. Your beauty gets old with the wear and tear of life: you lose your freshness, you get into a moldy and defiled condition; for this is a damp and smoky atmosphere in which you stand, even the best of you. Then the Lord comes to you, to restore your soul, and give you the renewing of the Holy Ghost. In order to do this he removes the old

comeliness, and turns your beauty into corruption. There is nothing like the burning process for really, effectually preparing the way for a fair and abiding renewal. No mill has yet been invented for grinding old people young again; but if ever it should be invented, the old man will have to be crushed very small, and broken into the finest powder. I am afraid that most of us would steal away rather than endure the grinding. But yet the crushing is the only sure way to the restoring: we must die daily that we may fully enter into life. By the gate of death multitudes of saints find their way into heaven, and by a deeper death to sin and self we rise more fully into an experimental enjoyment of newness of life. Some of us owe a great deal to the brazier of glowing coals, for this is a chief instrument in the process by which we renew our freshness. Our youth is renewed like the eagle's, and the eagle renews its youth by molting: it loses its glorious feathers, and seems worn and haggard, and then newer, fresher, and brighter plumage covers it. The ways of the Lord are only strange to inexperience: faith sees how perfectly natural they are.

Learn, also, another lesson from the brazier. I said to a friend, as we looked at the painter burning off the old paint, "That is what the devil tries to do with me; he endeavors to burn the doctrines of grace and the old evangelic faith out of me." Ah, friends! the hot brazier of ridicule and unkindness has been laid very close to my soul! But the attempt is not successful, for those truths, in my case, are not paint, and so they cannot be burned off. The gospel is in the very grain of my soul. Even the devil himself cannot burn off that which is part and parcel of myself, my life, my all. When the doctrines of the Word are taught us by God the Holy Ghost, and made to tincture and season our inmost life-blood, no burning process can take them from us, or cause us to give them up. That which is in the grain of the wood becomes more apparent the more deeply the plane cuts its way. My belief in the gospel of the grace of God, and specially in the doctrine of our Lord's substitution, is no veneer; but is in me and of me. I live upon this truth, and by God's help I could die sooner than renounce it. The true child of God does not hold truth so much as truth holds him; it cannot be taken away from him, for he cannot be taken away from it. All the power of fire or water, time or eternity, life or death, can never separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, nor take away from us the blessed truth which he has engraved upon our hearts. This, then, is our little sermon from the painter's brazier.

# A HAPPY SCENE IN A STORM.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

I WENT to the Stockwell Orphanage, on Tuesday, September 23, to walk round with an artist, and select bits for his pencil, to be inserted in a Christmas book for the Institution. We had not gone many yards before it began to rain. Umbrellas were forthcoming, and we tried to continue our perambulation of the whole square of the boys' and girls' houses; but the rain persisted in descending, and speedily increased into a downpour. Nothing short of being amphibious would have enabled us to face the torrent. There was nothing for it but to turn into the play-hall, where the boys gave tremendous cheers at our advent; cheers almost as deafening as the thunder which responded to them. Go out we could not, for the shower was swollen into a deluge, so I resolved to turn the season to account. I had to disappoint the little girls; but their turn will come another day.

A chair was forthcoming, and there I sat, the center of a dense throng of juvenile humanity, which could scarcely be kept off from a nearness which showed the warmth of their reception of their friend. Our artist, who, standing in the throng, made a hurried sketch, could not be afforded space enough to put in the hundreds of boys. It was certainly a melting moment as to heat, and fresh air was not abundant; but anything was better than the storm outside.

Flash after flash made everybody feel sober, and prompted me to talk with the boys about that freedom from fear which comes through faith in the Lord Jesus. The story was told of a very young believer, who was in his uncle's house one night during a tremendous tempest. The older folk were all afraid; but he had really trusted himself with the Lord Jesus, and he did not dare to fear. The baby was upstairs, and nobody was brave enough to fetch it down because of a big window on the stairs. This lad went up to the bedroom, and fetched the baby to its mother, and then read a psalm, and prayed with his relatives, who were trembling with fear. There was real danger, for a stack was set on fire a short distance away: but the youth was as calm as on a summer's day of sunshine, not because he was naturally brave, but because he truly trusted in the Lord.

While I was thus speaking, the darkness increased, and the storm overhead seemed brooding over us with black wings. It was growing dark before its hour. Most appropriately, one of the boys suggested a verse, which all sang sweetly and reverently —

*“Abide with me! fast falls the eventide;  
The darkness thickens; Lord, with me abide!  
When other helpers fail, and comforts flee,  
Help of the helpless, O abide with me!”*

This ended, there followed a word about the ground of the believer’s trust: he was forgiven, and therefore dreaded no condemnation; he was in his heavenly Father’s hand, and therefore feared no evil. If we were quarrelling with God, and had all our sins resting upon our guilty heads, we might be afraid to die; yes, and even afraid to live; but when reconciled by the death of his Son, we said farewell to fear. With God against us we are in a state of war; but with God for us we dwell in perfect peace. Here came flashes of lightning and peals of thunder which might well make us start; but no one was afraid. It is true we all felt awed, but we were restful, and somehow there was a quiet but general cry for “perfect peace.” On inquiring what this meant, I was answered by all the boys singing right joyfully —

*“Like a river glorious is God’s perfect peace,  
Over all victorious in its bright increase,  
Perfect, yet it floweth fuller every day;  
Perfect, yet it groweth deeper all the way.  
Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest,  
Finding, as he promised, perfect peace and rest.”*

This sung, we covered our faces reverently, and the boys were very silent, while I lifted up my voice in prayer. Then we opened our eyes again, and it was very dark, as if night had come before its time. While the flames of fire leaped in through the windows and skylights, the noise of the rain upon the roof and the tremendous thunder scarcely permitted me to say much upon Jesus as being our peace, through his bearing our sins in his own body on the tree. Yet, as well as I could I set forth the cross of Christ as the place of peace-making, peace-speaking, and peace-finding, both for boys and men; and then we all sang, to the accompaniment of the storm-music —

*“How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer’s ear!  
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.”*

Never did the power of that name to drive away fear appear more sweetly. To me the words came with a soothing, cheering power, which filled me with intense delight, and so we very joyfully and peacefully sang the third verse —

*“Dear name! the rock on which I build,  
My shield and hiding-place;  
My never-failing treasury, fill’d  
With boundless stores of grace.”*

Just as we came to “my shield and hiding-place,” there was a peculiarly blue flash, with a sort of rifle-crack, as if something very close to us had been struck. The boys looked at one another, but went on with subdued tones, singing of the “boundless stores of grace.” Teachers and others were mixed with the little army of boys, but we were all welded together in common emotion. I then reminded them that to such a Protector we must give our heart’s love. It was a duty to love one so good as the Lord Jesus, but even more a delight to do so, since he gave himself for us, and, by bearing our punishment, delivered us from all harm. As if by instinct, someone led off —

*My Jesus, I love thee, I know thou art mine,  
For thee all the follies of sin I resign;  
My gracious Redeemer, my Savior art thou,  
If ever I loved thee, my Jesus, ‘tis now.”*

Here was a good opening to press home the question, Is this true of each one of you? The great desire of all who conduct the Orphanage is to lead you to take Jesus for your gracious Redeemer, that so you may love him. Oh, that you loved him now! It may be that, if you leave us unsaved, the Lord will yet bring you in; but it would be far better that you should go out from us ready for the battle of life, and covered with a holy armor, so that you might not be wounded by the arrows of sin. Then I picked out Mr. May, who is employed at the Orphanage, and bade him tell the boys about himself. May was a boy with us at the Orphanage — a restless spirit, and so he went to sea, and, after many hardships and adventures, he was converted to God at Malta, and then came back to us, and we found him a

post at his old school. As the lads knew the most of his story, May did not say very much; and what he did say was rather overborne by the rain on the roof, which sounded like ten thousand drums. The thunder added its trumpet voice, and only allowed us pauses of silence. I went on with the talk till there came a burst of thunder loud and long. I stopped, and bade the children listen to the voice of the Lord. We all hearkened to it with awe and wonder. Then I reminded them of Psalm 29: "The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The Lord sitteth upon tike flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever." I told them how often I had sung to myself Dr. Watts's verses —

*"The God that rules on high,  
And thunders when he please,  
That rides upon the stormy sky,  
And manages the seas:*

*"This awful God is ours,  
Our Father and our love;  
He shall send down his heavenly powers  
To carry us above.*

*"There shall we see his face,  
And never, never sin;  
There from the rivers of his grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in."*

As they did not know the old-fashioned tune "Falcon Street," to which I had been wont to sing the words, we kept quiet till, suddenly, there came another roll of drums in the march of the God of armies; and then, as an act of worship, we adoringly sang together, with full force, the words of the doxology —

*"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise him all creatures here below,  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."*

This was a grand climax. The heavens themselves seemed to think so, for there were no more thunder-claps of such tremendous force. I need not write more. The storm abated. I hurried off to see inquirers at the Tabernacle, but not till one and another had said to me, "The boys will

never forget this. It will abide with them throughout eternity.” So be it, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

FEBRUARY, 1892.

# BREAKING THE LONG SILENCE.

**TWO BRIEF ADDRESSES, BY C. H. SPURGEON, ON THE LAST EVENING OF 1891, AND THE FIRST MORNING OF 1892.**

DEAR FRIENDS, — I am not able to say much to you at present. I should have gladly invited you to prayer every morning if I had been able to meet you; but I had not sufficient strength. I cannot refrain from saying a little to you, on this the last evening of the year, by way of Retrospect, and perhaps on New Year's morning I may add a word by way of Prospect.

We have come so far on the journey of life; and, standing at the boundary of another year, we look back. Let each one gaze upon his own trodden pathway. You will not need me to attempt fine words or phrases: each one, with his own eyes, will now survey his own road.

Among the striking things to be noted are the dangers we have escaped. After Bunyan's pilgrim had safely traversed the Valley of the Shadow of Death, the morning light dawned upon him, and sitting down, he looked back upon the terrible road which he had passed. It had once seemed an awful thing to him that he had marched through that valley by night; but when he looked back, and saw the horrors he had escaped, he must have felt glad that darkness had concealed much of its peril when he was actually in the midst of it. Much the same has it been with us: thank God, now that we clearly see the perils, we have passed them in safety.

During the year which closes this night, certain of us have been very near to the jaws of death, and some of us may also have skirted the abyss of despair; and yet we live and hope. Our path has been full of trials and temptations, and yet we have not been permitted to fall. Our heart has been torn with inward conflicts, and yet faith has proved victorious. No one of us knows how near he has been to some great sin, or some false step. A single act might have changed the whole aspect of life to us; but from that

act we have been preserved. Others have stumbled, and sadly fallen; and we are of like passions with them: blessed be the hand which has held us up! The Greek liturgy speaks of the Savior's "unknown sufferings." Doubtless they were the greatest of all his woes. We may with equal accuracy speak of our "unknown dangers", for probably they have been the greatest of our perils. The Lord saw what we could not see, and kept us where we could not have kept ourselves.

I would remind you that to have evils averted is a choice favor. A Puritan father met his son by arrangement. They had each traveled several miles to reach the appointed spot, and when they came together, the son thankfully observed, "Father, I have experienced a most remarkable providence on the road; for my horse stumbled three times, and even threw me, and yet I am unhurt." His father answered, "It is well; but I also have enjoyed a remarkable providence on the road, for my horse came all the way without stumbling once." Truly, to be kept from danger is as great a privilege as to be kept in danger; but we forget this. Let us thank God for preserved lives, continued comforts, and unspotted characters; for these wares are marked "Fragile", and that they are not broken is a marvel of grace. Since last we met, how many have died! Plagues and deaths have been flying around us, like shots in the heat of an action; and only he who, of old, covered David's head in the day of battle, could have kept us from death. Our spiritual life still survives, and only he who holds the stars in their courses could have maintained us in our integrity. It ought to bring tears of gratitude to our eyes while, to quote the language of the Song of Solomon, we "look from the top of Hermon; from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards."

For my own part, I dare not omit from my retrospect the sins of the past year, of which I would unfeignedly repent. He who does not know himself to be sinful does not know himself at all. He who does not feel his own unworthiness must surely have grown callous or conceited. Sins of omission are those which trouble me most. I look back, and remember what I might have done, and have not done; what opportunities of usefulness I have not seized; what sins I have allowed to pass unrebuked; what struggling beginners in grace I have failed to help. I cannot but grieve that what I have done was not done better, or attended with a humbler dependence upon God. I now perceive, in my holy things, faults in their beginning, faults in their carrying on, and faults in their ending. Delay to commence, slackness in the act, and pride after it, defile our best service.

What an endless list our faults and failings would make! Oh, friends, when we examine one year of life carefully, looking into the thoughts and motives and secret imaginings of the soul, how humbled we ought to be! As I rode through the streets of Menton this day, I felt bowed down with a sense of sin; and on a sudden it flashed into my mind, "Yes, and therefore, I have my part and lot in the work of the Lord Jesus, for he said expressly, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.'" "Note that the words "to repentance" are most properly omitted from the Revised Version (Mark 2:17).

Why did Jesus die? He died for our sins: he would not have needed to die for men if men had not sinned. Where there is no sin, there is no share in the sin-offering. If we have no sin, we have no connection with that Savior who came to save his people from their sins. For whom does Jesus plead? He makes intercession for the transgressors: if I am not a transgressor, I have no assurance that he pleads for me. The whole mediatorial system is for sinful men; and as I am conscious of guilt, so am I assured, by faith, that I am within the circle of divine grace. My faith places her hand upon the head of him who was our Substitute and Scapegoat, and I see all my sins and all the sins of all believers forever put away by him who stood in the sinner's place. Let your tears fall because of sin; but, at the same time, let the eye of faith steadily behold the Son of man lifted up, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, that those who are bitten by the old serpent may look unto him and live. Our sinnership is that emptiness into which the Lord pours his mercy. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." On that blessed fact I rest my soul. Though I have preached Christ crucified for more than forty years, and have led many to my Master's feet, I have at this moment no ray of hope but that which comes front what my Lord Jesus has done for guilty men.

***"Behold him there! the bleeding Lamb!  
My perfect, spotless Righteousness,  
The great unchangeable, 'I AM,'  
The King of glory and of grace."***

A flood of light breaks over the scene if we look back upon our mercies! Now for your arithmetic! Now begin to make your calculations! Think of major mercies and minor mercies; fleeting mercies and eternal mercies; mercies by day, and mercies by night; mercies averting evil, and mercies securing good; mercies at home, and mercies abroad; mercies of bed and

board, of city and field, of society and seclusion. Mercy affects every faculty of the mind, and every portion of the body. There are mercies for conscience, and fear, and hope; mercies for the understanding and the heart; and, at the same time, there are mercies of eye, and ear, and head, and hand. The whole landscape of life is golden with the light of mercy. In the love of God we have lived, and moved, and had our being. We see mercies new every morning, mercies old as the eternal hills; streams of mercy; oceans of mercy; mercy all, and all mercy.

God has been specially good to me. I think I hear each heart whisper, "That is just what I was going to say." Dear friends, I will not monopolize the expression: it is most true from me; I doubt not that it is also true of each one of you. Can we conceive how God could have been more gracious than he has been? If you are familiar with the Lord of love, so that you dwell in him, and his Spirit dwells in you, you will join me in abundantly uttering the memory of his great goodness. How wonderful is his lovingkindness! How free! How tender! How faithful! How lasting! How everlasting! No, I cannot even attempt an outline of the Lord's goodness to us during the year which is now waning: we must each one review the record for himself. "How much owest thou unto my Lord?" is an inquiry which must be personally answered by each one as an individual.

One thing more before I close. What are the lessons which our gracious God has intended us to learn by all that has happened during the year? Each one of us has had his own order of discipline and line of learning; but all have not had the same. It is written, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," but all the children are not reading from the same page, at the same moment.

Have we not learned to expect more of God, and less of men? To make fewer resolutions, but to carry out those which were wisely and devoutly formed? Have we not seen more of the instability of earthly joys? Have we not learned more fully the need of using time present, and ability possessed? Are we not now aware that we are neither so good, so wise, so strong, nor so constant as we thought we were? Have we been taught to go down that Jesus may rise, after the manner of John the Baptist, who cried, "He must increase, but I must decrease"? These are truths worth learning. I have neither time nor strength to suggest more of those lessons which experience teaches us when our hearts are made ready for the divine

schooling. We ought to have learned much in 365 days. I hope we have. Permit me only to hint at a truth which has come home to me.

During the past year I have been made to see that there is more love and unity among God's people than is generally believed. I speak not egotistically, but gratefully. I had no idea that Christian people, of every church, would spontaneously and importunately plead for the prolonging of my life. I feel myself a debtor to all God's people on this earth. Each section of the church seemed to vie with all the rest in sending words of comfort to my wife, and in presenting intercession to God on my behalf. If anyone had prophesied, twenty years ago, that a dissenting minister, and a very outspoken one, too, would be prayed for in many parish churches, and in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, it would not have been believed; but it was so. There is more love in the hearts of Christian people than they know of themselves. We mistake our divergencies of judgment for differences of heart; but they are far from being the same thing. In these days of infidel criticism, believers of all sorts will be driven into sincere unity. For my part, I believe that all spiritual persons are already one. When our Lord prayed that his church might be one, his prayer was answered, and his true people are even now, in spirit and in truth, one in him. Their different modes of external worship are as the furrows of a field; the field is none the less one because of the marks of the plough. Between rationalism and faith there is an abyss immeasurable; but where there is faith in the Everlasting Father, faith in the Great Sacrifice, and faith in the Indwelling Spirit, there is a living, loving, lasting union.

I have learned, also, that when the one church pleads with hearty entreaties, she must and will be heard. No case is hopeless when many pray. The deadliest diseases relax their hold before the power of unanimous intercession. As long as I live, I am a visible embodiment of the fact that, to the prayer of faith, presented by the Church of God, nothing is impossible. It is worthwhile to have been sore sick to have learned this truth, and to have proved it in one's own person.

In this little circle, probably one and another may say, "These are not exactly the lessons that we have learned this year." Perhaps not. But if you have learned more of Jesus, and of his love, which passes knowledge, it suffices. Be thankful if you have learned even a little of Jesus. Do not judge yourself by the attainments of others who are older or more experienced; but rejoice in the Lord. Bless God for starlight, and he will give you

moonlight; praise him for moonlight, and he will give you sunlight; thank him for sunlight, and you shall yet come to that land where they need not the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light forever and ever. May this year close with blessing! Amen.

In the morning the friends came together again, and Mr. Spurgeon sat as before, and spoke with them; this time more briefly.

Passing at this hour over the threshold of the New Year, we look forward, and what do we see? Could we procure a telescope which would enable us to see to the end of the year, should we be wise to use it? I think not. We know nothing of the events which lie before us: of life or death to ourselves or to our friends, or of changes of position, or of sickness or health. What a mercy that these things are hidden from us! If we foresaw our best blessings, they would lose their freshness and sweetness while we impatiently waited for them. Anticipation would sour into weariness, and familiarity would breed contempt. If we could foresee our troubles, we should worry ourselves about them long before they came, and in that fretfulness we should miss the joy of our present blessings. Great mercy has hung up a veil between us and the future; and there let it hang.

Still, all is not concealed. Some things we clearly see. I say, "we"; but I mean those whose eyes have been opened, for it is not everyone who can see in the truest sense. A lady said to Mr. Turner, "I have often looked upon that prospect, but I have never seen what you have put into your picture." The great artist simply replied, "Don't you wish you could see it?" Looking into the future with the eye of faith, believers can see much that is hidden from those who have no faith. Let me tell you, in a few words, what I see as I look into the new year.

I see a pathway made from this first of January, 1892, to the first of January, 1893. I see a highway cast up by the foreknowledge and predestination of God. Nothing of the future is left to chance; nay, not the falling of a sparrow, nor the losing of a hair is left to haphazard; but all the events of life are arranged and appointed. Not only is every turn in the road marked in the divine map, but every stone on the road, and every drop of morning dew or evening mist that falls upon the grass which grows at the roadside. We are not to cross a trackless desert; the Lord has ordained our path in his infallible wisdom and infinite love. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way."

I see, next, a Guide provided, as our companion along the way. To him we gladly say, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel." He is waiting to go with us through every portion, of the road. "The Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee." We are not left to pass through life as though it were a lone wilderness, a place of dragons and owls; for Jesus says, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Though we should lose father, and mother, and the dearest friends, there is One who wears our nature, who will never quit our side. One like unto the Son of man is still treading the life-ways of believing hearts, and each true believer cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon the Beloved. We feel the presence of the Lord Jesus even now, in this room, where two or three are gathered in his name; and I trust we shall feel it through all the months of the year, whether it be the time of the singing of birds, or the season of ripe fruits, or the dark months when the clods are frozen into iron. In this Riviera, we ought the more readily to realize our Lord's presence, because the country is so like "thy land, O Immanuel!" Here is the land of oil olive, and of figs, and of the clusters of Eshcol. By such a blue sea he walked, and up such rocky hills he climbed. But whether here, or elsewhere, let us look for HIM to abide with us, to make this year truly to be "a year of our Lord."

Beside the way and the Guide, I perceive very clearly, by the eye of faith, strength for the journey provided. Throughout the whole distance of the year, we shall find halting-places, where we may rest and take refreshment, and then go on our way singing, "He restoreth my soul." We shall have strength enough, but none to spare; and that strength will come when it is needed, and not before. When saints imagine that they have strength to spare, they turn sinners, and are apt to have their locks shorn by the Philistines. The Lord of the way will find the pilgrims with sufficient spending-money for the road; but he may not think it wise to burden them with superfluous funds.

God all-sufficient will not fail those who trust him. When we come to the place for shouldering the burden, we shall reach the place for receiving the strength. If it pleases the Lord to multiply our troubles from one to ten, he will increase our strength in the same proportion. To each believer the Lord still says, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." You do not yet feel that you have grace to die with: what of that? You are not yet dying. While

you have yet to deal with the business and duty of life, look to God for the grace which these require; and when life is ebbing out, and your only thought is about landing on the eternal shore, then look to God your Savior for dying grace in dying moments. We may expect an inrush of divine strength when human strength is failing, and a daily impartation of energy as daily need requires. Our lamps shall be trimmed as long as they shall need to burn. Let not our present weakness tempt us to limit the Holy One of Israel. There is a hospice on every pass over the Alps of life, and a bridge across every river of trial which crosses our way to the Celestial City. Holy angels are as numerous to guard us as fallen ones to tempt us. We shall never have a need for which our gracious Father has furnished no supply.

I see, most plainly, a power overruling all things which occur in the way we tread. I see an alembic in which all things are transformed. "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose." I see a wonder-working hand which turns for us the swords of disease into the plowshares of correction, and the spears of trial into the pruning-hooks of discipline. By this divine skill, bitters are made sweet, and poisons turned to medicines. "Nothing shall by any means harm you," is a promise too strong for feeble faith; but full assurance finds it true. Since God is for us, who can be against us? What a joy to see Jehovah himself as our banner, and God himself with us as our Captain! Forward then into the New Year, "for there shall no evil befall you."

One thing more, and this is brightness itself: this year we trust we shall see God glorified by us and in us. If we realize our chief end, we reach our highest enjoyment. It is the delight of the renewed heart to think that God can get glory out of such poor creatures as we are. "God is light." We cannot add to his brightness; but we may act as reflectors, which, though they have no light of their own, yet, when the sun shines upon them, reflect his beams, and send them where, without such reflection, they might not have come. When the Lord shines upon us, we will cast that light upon dark places, and make those who sit in the shadow of death to rejoice in Jesus our Lord. We hope that God has been in some measure glorified in some of us during the past year, but we trust he will be glorified by us far more in the year which now begins. We will be content to glorify God either actively or passively. We would have it so happen that, when our life's history is written, whoever reads it will not think of us as "self-made men", but as the handiwork of God, in whom his grace is magnified. Not in

us may men see the clay, but the Potter's hand. They said of one, "He is a fine preacher"; but of another they said, "We never notice how he preaches, but we feel that God is great." We wish our whole life to be a sacrifice; an altar of incense continually smoking with sweet perfume unto the Most High. Oh, to be borne through the year on the wings of praise to God; to mount from year to year, and raise at each ascent a loftier and yet lowlier song unto the God of our life! The vista of a praiseful life will never close, but continue throughout eternity. From psalm to psalm, from hallelujah to hallelujah, we will ascend the hill of the Lord; until we come into the Holiest of all, where, with veiled faces, we will bow before the Divine Majesty in the bliss of endless adoration. Throughout this year may the Lord be with you! Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

MARCH, 1894.

### MR. SPURGEON AT A FUNERAL. <sup>f4</sup>

BELOVED friends, and especially you who are mourners on this occasion, it is not difficult for me to sympathize very deeply with you, because I conceive that, in the departure of this dear brother, I am as great a loser as anyone alive. You lose much of domestic comfort; but I lose a true yoke-fellow. And let me say of my dear friends at the Tabernacle, associated with me in church work, that our communion is not one of a common kind. Our brethren are at the house of prayer most days of the week; and, in the case of some of them, the service of God there occupies much of their time as their own business receives; and, in the case of others of them, even more. Their very heart and soul are there; and if there are any men who are not united by ties of blood to each other, who, nevertheless, are most closely, most intimately, and most affectionately knit together, I am sure that I may say this of myself and of all my dear brethren there. Though we have not lost a father, we feel that we have lost a brother; and even his own dear wife, — whom may God most graciously sustain! — can scarcely feel more the loss than some of us will do who have been with her dear husband from day to day for so many years.

When I heard of this second loss, <sup>f5</sup> I thought that I should never be able to come to this funeral, for I felt so utterly cast down; but I am not so now. I have looked round to the other side of this grief a little, and I think that what I say this afternoon will help some others, who are mourning today, to look round there, too, that they may be able to bear their loss, not only with resignation, but with a cheerful acquiescence in the will of God.

I thought to myself, “I know what I have been thinking concerning the deaths of these good men; but I must not think in lines parallel to those of an unbeliever.” What does an unconverted man, who does not believe in Christ, think about death? If you were in the catacombs at Rome, you

could tell when you were in the Christian part, and when you were in the heathen portion, because, wherever there is a heathen buried, you seem in imagination to hear howls of lamentation, and the inscriptions on the monuments are all full of grief that never can be assuaged, and of complaints against God. But when you come where Christian men are buried, you perceive at once the change of tone; it is, at least, always peaceful, and sometimes it is triumphant. It never can be right for a Christian to weep as though he were without hope, or as though he rebelled against a tyrant instead of yielding to a Father.

Death has done us serious injury, doubtless. It is no small thing that the golden bowl should be broken, that the silver cord should be loosed, that the pitcher should be broken at the fountain, and the wheel be broken at the cistern, that the windows should be darkened, that the grinders should cease, and that the dust should return to the earth as it was. It is no small matter that a man should become a corpse, and that his corpse should become food for worms; yet this is but the beginning of the end. This is but the digging out of the foundation for a costly and glorious superstructure; this is but putting away the worn-out vesture, in order that there may be brought forth the spotless robes of glory; this is but the refining-pot, into which this body is put, and it shall come out of the crucible like gold seven times purified. No, no; we must have no doubts, no fears, no gloom, no darkness about a Christian's grave. Let us rather rejoice and be glad. Young's Night Thoughts, with all their instructiveness and solemnity, are not written as brightly as they should be; they often make things appear dark that God would have us regard as light.

Well, next, I asked myself, if I may not think of these departed friends as an unconverted man would, how may I think of them? Shall I do it as a half-believer does? The Church of God today swarms with half-believers, with people who believe the creed as a creed, but not as a matter of fact. "I believe in the resurrection of the dead," say they; but do they believe it? Do they really accept that great truth? Have they made it a tangible reality to their own hearts? It is one thing to say, "I believe," but quite another thing to believe. When you are a half-believer, death alarms you. You have the dread of something after death, —

*"The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn  
No traveller returns."*

But it is all very hazy and misty to you. If you are a half-believer, the departure of your friend grievously distresses you. You believe that he is with God; still, it is a phantom-like belief, that yields you no comfort. The reality to you is the grief, not the resurrection; the death stares you in the face, but the eternal life is behind your back. Now, it ill becomes a minister of the gospel to be numbered among these half-believers, these practical unbelievers; and I say more, it ill becomes you, dear brethren, who have, many of you, from your youth up, fed upon the finest of the wheat, and been sustained with the incorruptible Word of God, to have the same views of death as these half-believers have.

I thought within myself, also, how ought I to look at these things as a true believer, and a full-grown man of God? So, I said to myself, "I will see what my great favorite, John Bunyan, used to say about these things, and how he looked, at them." When you get home, if you will turn to the second part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and read about Christianana crossing the river, you will have a great treat, and you will find such refreshment as I cannot give to you. How do you think Bunyan says that the pilgrims who dwelt in the Land of Beulah regarded death? He says that "all the noise of them that walked in the streets, was, More pilgrims are come to town! More pilgrims are come to town!" That was their great joy, that other pilgrims were coming where they were, on the borderland of Heaven. And then Bunyan goes on, "And another would answer, saying, So many went over the water, and were let in at the golden gates to-day." Yes, they spoke about death in that fashion. It was not at all a subject for sorrow; but in all the groves of Beulah Land they talked about the pilgrims who had crossed the water, and were let in at the golden gates. We are all weeping; but, according to this teaching, the saints who have reached Beulah Land ought to be rejoicing as they hear of the pilgrims crossing the river. You know what Bunyan says about the water of that river: "They thought that it tasted a little bitterish to the palate, but it proved sweeter when it was down." So, with high glee, and great delight, they talked about the pilgrims going across the water, and being let in at the golden gates; and if you and I get to have full faith, we shall think even with great joy of dear ones who have gone in to see the King in His beauty; and instead of saying, "They are dead," we shall say, "They have gone beyond the reach of death now." Instead of saying, "We have lost them," we shall say that they have just preceded us a little while, but we are on the road, and we

shall get home, too, and blessed shall be the day when we shall rejoin them in glory.

But how did those think of death who had to go across the water themselves? Bunyan says that, when Mr. Stand-fast was in the river, he said, "The waters, indeed, are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold, yet the thought of what I am going to, and of the conduct (convoy) that waits for me on the other side, doth lie as a glowing coal at my heart." He also said, "This river has been a terror to many; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frightened me. Now, methinks, I stand easy, my foot is fixed on that on which the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood, while Israel went over this Jordan." A little while before Christiana crossed over the water, a letter came to her from the celestial city, saying, "Hail, good woman! I bring thee tidings that the Master calleth for thee, and expecteth that thou shouldest stand in His presence, in clothes of immortality, within these ten days." When the heavenly postman had read this letter to her, "he gave her therewith a sure token that he was a true messenger, and was come to bid her make haste to be gone. The token was, an arrow with a point sharpened with love, let easily into her heart, which by degrees wrought so effectually with her, that at the time appointed she must be gone."

Well, so it was with our brother Higgs; he had his "arrow, with a point sharpened with love," a year or more before, and there it lay until the time appointed for him to be gone. And our dear brother Mills had his loving token sent him some months ago, just to give him notice that the Master expected him soon; and of late he had great quietude from the cares of business, and he ripened, and mellowed in spirit very sweetly. The Lord was evidently getting His servant ready to cross over the stream. Christiana did not look upon her departure with any regret; she took loving adieux of her children and all her friends and fellow-pilgrims. Neither did our dear brother Mills look forward to death with any kind of apprehension. When I sat and talked with him, about his past life, and about the world to come, our conversation was that of two men who were glad to have known each other, and would rejoice when either of the two entered into rest, and would be happy to meet each other again on the other side of the river.

As soon as Christiana received her token, she did what most Christian people do, she sent for her minister, whose name was Mr. Great-heart, for he had helped her and her family on pilgrimage till they had come to the

river; and what, think you, did Mr. Great-heart say, when she told him that an arrow had entered into her heart? Did he sit down and cry with her? No, “he told her he was heartily glad of the news, and could have been glad had the post come for him.” And, though I am not Mr. Great-heart, I can truly say the same. You and I should not dread this message, but may even long for it, envying those who precede us into the presence of the Well-beloved, and get the first chance of leaning their heads upon that bosom whence they shall never wish to lift them again, for therein they find joy and bliss forever.

Remember how, when the pilgrims crossed over the water, poor Mr. Ready-to-halt left his crutches behind him. Are you not glad of that, dear friend, you who have been ready-to-halt for years? There was dear old Mr. Feeble-mind, who said to Valiant-for-truth, “As for my feeble mind, that I will leave behind me, for that I have no need of it in the place whither I go. Nor is it worth bestowing upon the poorest pilgrim; wherefore, when I am gone, I desire that you, Mr. Valiant, would bury it in a dunghill.” And then there was poor Mr. Despondency, with his daughter Much-afraid, who crossed the stream together. “The last words of Mr. Despondency were, ‘Farewell night, welcome day.’ “As for Miss Much-afraid, she went through the river singing, but nobody could make out quite what the words were, she seemed to be beyond the power of expressing her delight.

Oh, it is wonderful how these pilgrims do when they come to die! They may tremble while they live; but they do not tremble when they die. The weakest of them become the strongest then. I have helped many pilgrims on the way, and among them some Mr. Feeble-minds and Mr. Fearings, and a very great worry have they been to me while on the road; but, at the last, either the river has been empty, and they have gone over dry-shod, or else, when they have come to the very depths of it, they have played the man so well, that I have been astounded, I never imagined they could have been so brave. They have stumbled at a straw before; but in death they have climbed mountains. They have been the most weak, timid, sparrow-like people that you could meet with; and now they take to themselves eagle’s wings wherewith to fly away. Brothers and sisters, if you are in Christ, do not be afraid to die, for dying grace shall be given to you for your dying moments.

Come, then, dear brother-ministers, as we see that our people are soon going to die, we must not begin to dispirit them, but we must keep up our

own courage, for we have to help other pilgrims on the road a little longer, and we have to fight Giant Grim for a few more of the women and children, and we must be faithful in this our duty till our work is done. Let us not be cast down at our friend's departure; but let all of us who love the Lord say, "We could have wished the post had come to us."

Now, once more. As I turned this subject over, I thought, What does our dear friend think about it now? I wish that he could give us his opinion. Ah! my brother, thou art not in that coffin, else would I ask thee; it is only thy poor clay that is left. What does he think of it? Oh! what a glorious thing it must be to get out of the body, — I mean, a body that has grown to be sixty years of age, and that has been stricken with paralysis, and that has been upon the verge of death for many a month, — what a joy it must be to be quite clear of it! We do not know what it is to be undressed of this body; but there must be a wonderful freshness to the unclothed spirit! And what must it be to be free from all doubts and fears, and all tendencies to sin of every sort, and to be absolutely perfect? And then, what must it be, in the midst of ten thousand times ten thousand kindred spirits, all joying and rejoicing in one common, glorious God, and in the Christ whose life shall be the light that shineth over all? I warrant you that five minutes in heaven is better than Methusaleh's life on earth, even if spent in the highest happiness that life here below can afford. Oh, how our brother Mills would chide us if he could look back, and see us weeping! How he would reprove us, and tell us that the best thing that could have happened to him had happened, and ask us wherefore we deplored it.

Last of all, it has cheered me most to imagine what the people up in heaven would think about this subject. As we are going to be up there, too, we may as well begin to learn their fashions and their ways. What do you think they say in heaven about our dear ones who fall asleep in Jesus? Why, the angels shall come to meet them! Lazarus died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and that is what happens to all the saints. Bunyan says, "Now the day drew on, that Christiana must be gone. So the road was full of people to see her take her journey. But, behold, all the banks beyond the river were full of horses and chariots," for the angels of God came to meet her as she "entered in at the gate with all the ceremonies of joy that her husband Christian had done before her." Yes, the angels will come to meet the saints. They did come to meet our brother Higgs, and they had not long been back with him before they had to come and meet this other brother, to escort him up to the eternal seats. The angels do not

come to mourn. I warrant you that there was not a hatband among them, and that there was not one of them who wept. They stretched out their glittering hands, and said, "Welcome, brother; welcome, brother! You have long been a pilgrim; now you shall rest forever. Welcome to your eternal home!"

And what do you think the other saints up there thought of our brethren's death? Why, doubtless, they welcomed them with gladsome acclamations; and all through the golden streets they ran, and cried, "More pilgrims are come to town! More pilgrims are come to town! More redeemed ones have come home!" And the Lord Jesus Christ smiled, and said, "Father, I thank Thee because those whom Thou hast given Me are with Me where I am." He welcomed them. And God the Father, too, was glad to greet them in glory. Are you not all glad when your children come home? Lives there a man among you who does not rejoice to see his boys and girls come back to him even for the brief holidays? We like to hear their sweet voices, though they do trouble us sometimes; but then they are our own children, our own offspring, and somehow, to our ears, there is no voice so sweet as theirs; and to God there is no music like the voices of His children. He is glad to get them home to Himself, to go no more out forever. And the Blessed Spirit, too, let us not forget Him, — He delights to see the holy souls He formed anew, those with whom He strove, with whom He wrought so many years. As a workman rejoices over his perfected workmanship, so does the Spirit of God rejoice over those whom He has made to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Wherefore, I counsel you, go to the grave with songs of gladness. Stand there, and if you drop a tear, let the smile of your gratitude to God light it up, and turn it to a gem; and then go home, each one of you, and wait until your own change comes. As for myself, as I have often reminded you at the close of our joyous Sabbath services in the great congregation at the Tabernacle, so would I say again here, —

*"All that remains for me  
Is but to love and sing,  
And wait until the angels come  
To bear me to their King."*

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

APRIL, 1894.

### MR. SPURGEON AT A WEDDING.

AMONG the reminiscences of the late beloved President, sent to us, two years ago, by brethren trained in the Pastors' College, was one which we thought it well to retain until we could give a report of the special service to which the writer alluded. The right time for its publication appears now to have arrived; and the present article will appropriately follow the touching address printed in last month's Magazine under the title, MR. SPURGEON AT A FUNERAL. There, we saw our late dear Editor sympathizing with the sorrowing; here, we think of him as increasing the joy of those who had reached the happiest hour of their lives. Pastor E. A. Hobby, of Macclesfield, is the minister referred to, and his note concerning the memorable event is as follows: —

“How well do I remember my last interview with our beloved President! It was on a bright spring morning, in the month of May, 1890, when he came down from ‘Westwood’ to Thornton Heath, to conduct our marriage service in Beulah Baptist Chapel. Having arrived a few minutes before time, we waited for him in the vestry. Presently the door opened, and he entered, with a bright, happy smile upon his face. After a pleasant greeting, in a few kind words he presented my wife with *Morning by Morning*, in which he had written ‘To Mrs. Hobby, on her wedding-day, May 6th, 1890, with best wishes and prayers of C. H. Spurgeon,’ and *Evening by Evening*, containing the inscription, ‘The Lord bless thee and keep thee!’ He also gave me a morocco-bound Revised New Testament, inscribed, ‘With the Christian love of C. H. Spurgeon.’

“After expressing our hearty thanks, we adjourned to the chapel, where the ceremony took place. After the legal part of the service was completed, and he had addressed us in some wise, cheery words, he turned to those who had witnessed the ceremony, and made a very touching appeal to the

unconverted. What an appeal that was! How our hearts throbbed, and our eyes filled with tears, as the great preacher, in simple, searching, pathetic language pleaded for some soul to yield to Christ as a fitting seal to that happy covenant of love! After the address came the closing prayer, — such a prayer as he alone could offer; it was full of yearning for souls, gratitude for the Lord's goodness, and holy unction.

“It is needless to say that we thanked our beloved President very heartily for his great kindness; but he persisted in saying that the obligation was on his side, thanking us for coming such a great distance to be married by him, and then adding, ‘Would you like an hour at “Westwood”?’ Of course we should; and time-tables were soon consulted, and later trains arranged for. So to ‘Westwood’ we went. He did not begrudge us the time, which he could ill afford to spare; but himself conducted us through the greenhouses and grounds. How those plants seemed to speak, as he described them to us! He appeared to be introducing us to friends as well as to flowers; a little tale about one, a sweet promise associated with another, and in a marvelous way he unveiled the works of God in nature. We had all the poetry of Pantheism set to the meter of the personality of God. From the greenhouses we went to the fernery, where we were shown the famous ‘mother-fern’, mentioned in *The Sword and the Trowel* for December, 1891.

“Last, but not least, we visited the President's special ‘sanctum’, ‘the den.’ This seemed to us a peculiarly-consecrated room; for there, the man of God held secret communion with his Maker; there, the famous Jerusalem blade was sharpened for the fray; there, the mighty warrior buckled on the breastplate of righteousness, and was shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Fain would we linger in this heavenly atmosphere; but time forbids. We must say, ‘Farewell,’ and feel thankful for the unexpected pleasure of spending an extra hour with the one we love so well. As we pass out, through the casement by which we entered, I turn for a parting glance, and breathe an almost inaudible ‘Good-bye.’ The indefatigable toiler was already at work; but his quick ear caught my words, and he responded, ‘Good-bye, dear brother, and God bless you!’ Thus ended my last interview with our beloved President.”

Having had the privilege of accompanying Mr. Spurgeon on this occasion, we are thankful that we preserved a record of the whole proceedings. Addressing the audience in the chapel, he said: —

We do not look upon the ceremony of marriage as, in itself, a religious service; it is the entrance into a legal contract, binding upon the parties thus united, altogether apart from their position as believers or unbelievers. It is our conviction, however, that everything that its right should be “sanctified by the word of God and prayer”; and therefore it is seemly that there should be a gathering together of Christian friends to witness the plighting of the troth on the part of those who are to be married, and to commend them specially to the Lord in prayer. Marriage is nearly the most important event in our lives; it has almost everything to do with our future career. So many interests are bound up in it, in the days to come it may bring us so much happiness or it may cause us so much sorrow, that we cannot plead too earnestly for the Lord’s guidance and blessing upon everything connected with it.

Marriage is the only thing that has come down to us out of Paradise, and that has something of the Paradisaical state still clinging to it. Marriage has been used by our Lord Jesus Christ as the emblem of His love to His Church, and of His union with her; and that fact puts high honor upon it. Jesus wrought His first miracle at a wedding; and it was a very significant miracle, turning water into wine, as if to show that life, after marriage, becomes more full, more rich, more exhilarating, than it was before. And the golden Book of Revelation closes with a wedding, “the marriage of the Lamb.” Just as many a story of fiction winds up, “they were married, and lived happily ever afterwards,” so God’s great story of fact, “the old, old story, of Jesus and His love,” winds up with a wedding. Oh, may every one of us be called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and live forever with Him in glory!

It is our earnest prayer that our brother, whom the Lord has made useful in the ministry, may become doubly useful from this time; having a wife, he ought to be able to do twice as much work for the Master. As each of these dear friends has been individually blessed in the work of the Lord, we pray that, unitedly, they may have a still larger blessing, and may be the means of bringing many souls to the Savior. I am sure we who sustain the work of the ministry know how much grace we need if we are rightly to discharge all our responsibilities; and if the apostle Paul needed to say, “Brethren, pray for us,” we also entreat our brethren’s prayers. I will therefore now ask Mr. Harrald and Mr. Harmer to lead us in supplication, especially remembering our dear friends who are about to become man and wife.

After prayer, and the repetition by the bride and bridegroom of the necessary legal formulas, Mr. Spurgeon said: —

We have given up a great many rites and ceremonies, because we thought they tended towards superstition; but we have retained the ring. It is an index and symbol of true wedded love, for it is a perfect circle, there is no end to it; it is made of pure gold, or it should be pure if it is to be an emblem of real love; and I always hope it will fit well the finger on which it is to be worn.

Will you, my dear brother, in giving the ring to your bride, say to her, “I give thee this ring, to be worn through life, as a token of my affection and faithfulness”? Will you, my dear sister, in receiving the ring, say to your husband, “I accept it, and will wear it as such”?

This having been done, and Mr. and Mrs. Hobby having been duly pronounced man and wife, Mr. Spurgeon proceeded to say: — Now, dear friends, I will read just a few verses of Scripture with regard to the duties of husbands and wives. I believe these young people are well acquainted with those duties; but I will read the apostle’s words just to refresh the memories of some of the older folk present, who may have begun to forget what Paul wrote upon this subject.

I would, however, first ask the prayers of the friends here for our dear brother and sister, and especially for our sister. If I was a young woman, and was thinking of being married, I would not marry a minister, because the position of minister’s wife is a very difficult one for anyone to fill. Churches do not give a married minister two salaries, one for the husband and the other for the wife; but, in many cases, they look for the services of the wife, whether they pay for them or not. The minister’s wife is expected also to know everything about the church, and in another sense she is to know nothing of it; and she is equally blamed by some people whether she knows everything or nothing. Her duties consist in being always at home to attend to her husband and her family, and being always out, visiting other people, and doing all sorts of things for the whole church! Well, of course, that is impossible; she cannot be at everybody’s beck and call, and she cannot expect to please everybody. Her husband cannot do that, and I think he is a great fool if he tries to do it; and I am certain that, as the husband cannot please everybody, neither can the wife. There will be sure to be somebody or other who will be displeased, especially if that somebody had herself half hoped to be the minister’s wife. Difficulties arise

continually in the best regulated churches; and, as I said before, the position of the minister's wife is always a very trying one. Still, I think that, if I was a Christian young woman, I would marry a Christian minister if I could, because there is an opportunity of doing so much good in helping him in his service for Christ. It is a great help to the cause of God to keep the minister himself in good order for his work. It is his wife's duty to see that he is not uncomfortable at home; for, if everything there is happy, and free from care, he can give all his thoughts to his preparation for the pulpit; and the godly woman who thus helps her husband to preach better, is herself a preacher though she never speaks in public, and she becomes to the highest degree useful to the church of Christ committed to her husband's charge.

Now let us turn to the Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter five, verse twenty-five: —

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

This is what Paul says, and he writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and, beside that, I suppose Paul himself had a wife once. You cannot love your wife too much, Brother Hobby. I have never yet heard of a man who loved his wife too ardently; I have heard of wives who have been said to be too attentive to their husbands, but I have not met with any such.

True love seeks the holiness of its object; that is false fire that would lead another into sin. True love always feels that the highest benediction it can bestow is to promote holiness in its object; hence Christ Himself, when He gave Himself for the Church, intended to sanctify, and cleanse, and perfect it. The Lord give us great grace, not only to seek sanctification for ourselves, but also to make us the means of promoting holiness in others!

“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.”

What a wonderful truth, that we should be joined to Christ by a living, lasting union! You remember how Christ said, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” Someone said, “Ah! but they may slip through His fingers.” “No,” replied another; “they cannot, for they are His fingers, as the apostle says, ‘For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones.’” “This is one of the clearest proofs of the security of all believers; for if Christ were to lose the least member of His body, He would not be perfect.

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. .This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.”

Christ left His Father, He left the courts of glory, and came here below, and was joined unto His Church, so that He became one with her.

*“‘Yea,’ saith the Lord, ‘with her I’ll go  
Through all the depths of care and woe;  
And on the cross will even dare  
The bitter pangs of death to bear;”*

and all because He was one with His Church.

“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

That little sentence at the end is often not noticed: “let the wife see that she reverence her husband,” which implies, “let the husband see that there is something in him worthy of his wife’s reverence.”

Now let us turn back to verse twenty-two: —

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife.”

My dear friend, do not you begin to feel proud because Paul says that “the husband is the head of the wife.” Solomon says that “A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband;” and the crown is the top of the head. Still, the governing faculty should rest with the head; and the family will never be ordered aright unless we each keep our right place. I sometimes say to a newly-married wife, “Do not you try to be the head of your husband; let

him be the head, you be the neck, and then you can turn him whichever way you like.”

“Even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the savior of the body.”

So that the husband’s headship consists in doing the will of Christ. The Lord Jesus is the Head, and He is the Savior.

“Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”

That is the teaching of God’s Word; take care that it is carried out in your lives. Now let us sing: —

*“Father of the human race,  
Sanction with Thy heavenly grace  
What on earth hath now been done,  
That these twain be truly one.*

*“One in sickness and in health,  
One in poverty and wealth,  
And, as year rolls after year,  
Each to other still more dear.*

*“One in purpose, one in heart,  
Till the mortal stroke shall part;  
One in cheerful piety,  
One for ever, Lord, with Thee.”*

Dear friends, you have noticed that I have spoken in a very bright and cheery fashion this morning; if we had gathered here for a Christian’s funeral, instead of a wedding, there would have been a more solemn air about us; still, I trust there would have been even then no lack of cheerfulness and happiness. A Christian’s joy does not depend upon circumstances. It used to be said that philosophers could be happy without music; and we can say of Christians that they can be happy under all circumstances. I think we do well to be very joyful at the wedding of Christians, for a well-ordered, godly household is a standing proof of the power of Christianity. I know several friends who, when they speak of their wives and children, say, “If true religion brought me nothing else but my happy home, I should feel sure that it came from God.” When I see homes where there is no contentment, no peace, no happiness, how I wish that the

grace of God were introduced there, to turn out the enmity, strife, bad temper, bitterness, drink, and so on! Depend upon it, true religion is good for this life as well as for that which is to come; and, while we want it when we come to die, we want it just as much when we are beginning life, and especially when we are entering the married state.

Do all of you possess this true religion? We are only a little company; but are we all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ? Have we all passed from death to life? If not, let us think about this matter, and consider our ways, and turn unto the Lord. If we seek Him, He will be found of us. Where He gives the desire for grace, He will Himself satisfy that desire. He is waiting at the door, and He will soon come into every heart that is opened to receive Him. God grant that the wedding-day of our dear friends may be the spiritual birthday, the time of conversion, to some who are with us this morning!

(Then came the closing prayer, which was just what Mr. Hobby states in the letter at the commencement of the present article. As Mr. Spurgeon always objected to the publication of his prayers, we have not printed it; but we give the benediction with which he concluded the service.)

The Lord bless you, and keep you, and cause His face to shine upon you! The Lord bless you, both in body and in soul, in basket and in store, in the pulpit and in the home, with friends or without them, in the sunshine of prosperity or in the darkness of grief! The Lord be with you, and with us also, until the day break, and the shadows flee away! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be your portion forever! Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

AUGUST, 1894.

### A LIFE-BELT FOR DAILY USE.

**A PRAYER-MEETING ADDRESS AT THE METROPOLITAN  
TABERNACLE, BY C. H. SPURGEON.**

SOMEBODY wrote in the newspaper, immediately after one of our great passenger steamers had gone down, that it was a very advisable thing that everybody who went on board a ship should wear a life-belt. He suggested that we should have the apparatus affixed to us so that, just as we felt the ship sinking, all we should have to do would be to float away from the vessel until we were picked up. It did seem to me to be about the last thing that mortal man would ever attempt to do; but the proposal was a very natural one, and in a spiritual sense, and for the highest purposes, it may suggest an equipment which would be exceedingly wise.

If we always went about with life-belts around us, we should look very awkward, and they would be often in our way in following the ordinary business of life if we walked or rode on dry land prepared for swimming or floating; but suppose there could be a life-belt invented, which would :make our ordinary garments more comfortable, which would be of use to us while on the land as well as in the water, which would give ease to us while we were sitting in the pew, and which would positively put strength into us while walking as well as help us to float instead of sinking, which would be useful to the housewife in the kitchen, to the merchant at his desk, to the plowman in the field, and to the workman in the shop, — suppose there were such a life-belt as that, everyone of us would want to have it on, and would never want to put it off.

Now it so happens that, if we would be prepared to die, that preparation will not in the least degree interfere with the duties of this life; but our best preparation for the life that now is will be that which prepares us for the life that is to come. If we were to be immortal on earth, and never see death, the very best thing that we could do in order to live a happy, useful,

successful life would be, first of all, to be reconciled to God, and to receive from Him a new heart, and a right spirit, by which we should be enabled to live in a way which would be acceptable with Him. Now, dear friends, you know how needful it is to be prepared to die; but ought it not to commend that solemn consideration to your soul that the very thing which fits us to die is that without which we are not fit to live? “Are you prepared to die?” is thought to be a very solemn inquiry, and so it is; but, “Are you prepared to live?” is quite as solemn a question, if a man would weigh it by the light of eternity. If my believing in Jesus unto eternal salvation would make me miserable in this life, it would be worthwhile believing and being miserable through this little mortal span in order to inherit eternal life, would it not? When we once pass into the eternal state, how the ages of time will dwindle into nothing! But, beloved, believing in Jesus will not make you miserable, it is the path of happiness and bliss. To believe in Christ is to be unloaded of a terrible burden, and to have your heart filled with a sweet serenity. So there is a double advantage in believing; the result would be worth the having if it brought us a lifetime of misery, but it will not have that effect, for it will bring us present as well as perpetual joy. As we often sing, —

*“ ’Tis religion that can give  
Sweetest pleasures while we live;  
’Tis religion must supply  
Solid comfort when we die.*

*“After death its joys will be  
Lasting as eternity:  
Be the living God my Friend,  
Then my bliss shall never end.”*

Suppose that, from this time forth, if you became a Christian, you had to be always poor, always sick, always baffled, always afflicted, it would be worth all that, it would be worthwhile suffering anything of which a human being is capable, to be eternally saved, and to have the joy of dwelling at the right hand of God forever; but if you believe in Jesus Christ, it will not necessarily deprive you of anything that is really worth having, indeed, there are many who have proved that, although the great gain of godliness is in the world to come, yet even here it has brought them untold blessedness. I remember the story of an old man and his wife, who were once called upon for a subscription to the Bible Society, or some other good work. The old lady said they had lost so much by their religion that

they had no money to spare. The old gentleman said, "Yes, we have lost a great deal. I used to have a suit of clothes all ragged and greasy and filthy, and I never could get another suit because I was a drunkard, and you know, Mary, that by my religion I lost my old ragged clothes. I used to be out till late at night, and then came home drunk, and very often through fighting I brought with me a pair of black eyes; I lost all that by my religion. I also had a nose that began to show the effect of drinking; and I lost that fine rosy tint, you know, Mary. That is only a small part of what we have lost by religion; and I think we can well afford to give a good subscription." Lost by religion! Why, where would some of you have been but for the grace of God? Where does a course of drunkenness and vice lead men? Where does even morality lead many? They have the chilly moonlight of self-satisfaction; but in the hour of trouble they have not the warm sunshine of the Lord's love and grace to cheer them. Yes, although our brightest joys are yet to be revealed, God has been pleased to attach many temporal blessings to the yielding up of ourselves by faith in His dear Son. Who, then, would not be a Christian?

"There are drawbacks," says one. "If we are Christians, we shall get ridiculed and laughed at." I think I have had a tolerable share of that sort of thing; but it has not hurt me, I have not had a bone in my body broken through it, and I have not been robbed of an hour's sleep by it. Dr. Watts said —

*"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,"*

and I think we have come to that pass, and can say the same with regard to ridicule for Christ's sake; that is a very small matter.

"Oh! but it is at home that we are so cruelly persecuted," says somebody. Yes, I know that is a very severe trial, and yet it produces most blessed results. If your persecution were to cease, it might be the worst thing that could happen to you. I knew right well a young man, in a good station in life, a believer, apparently a very earnest believer, and the most indefatigable worker I ever met. He was constantly opposed at home on account of his religion, yet he never yielded an inch, but kept on earnestly working for Christ. The opposition is all gone, and he has a house of his own; but I do not see any earnestness in him now, it disappeared as soon as the persecution ceased. Some of us are very much like those gas bags that we have when we are exhibiting dissolving views; we put heavy weights on them to press out the gas so that we may have a more brilliant light. I do

believe that most of our troubles at home and abroad are just like the weights on the oxygen bags. I am not disposed to wish that every young Christian should have a smooth path, for I notice that the bravest believers are often those who have had the severest struggles to maintain their integrity. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." If you have too much fine weather, you will be like some gardeners' plants that grow too fast; they never get much heart, they had too much sun at the first, they would have been all the better for a little early nipping. You know that celery is not really good till it has had a sharp frost on it, and there are some Christians who seem all the better for a little persecution or trial; it seems to pinch them back, and at the same time it sends a sweetness into the very heart of their religion. If you ask me, "Do you like to hear of our being opposed?" I answer, — "No, I do not; but I would not take this burden off you if I could, for it is best that you should have at least a little of it to bear."

To be truly saved, to be a Christian, to be on Christ's side, to know that you have an everlasting Savior, is worth a great many fools' laughs, is it not? You can bear to let all the asses bray at once, and yet not be troubled if you know that you have Christ, and eternal life in Him. My dear young friends, I do pray that you may be led to weigh and estimate these things, and that you may be drawn by the Divine Spirit to say, "Jesus shall be mine, I will trust myself to Him whatever the consequences may be." You will never come to Christ unless you feel your need of Him, unless you are convinced that you are really sinners, and confess it in penitence before God; but if the Lord has made you realize your true condition, come and welcome to the Savior who died for the guilty; stand not back through shame or fear, the great gates of divine mercy are set wide open that all sinners who believe in Jesus may come through them, and enter the kingdom of heaven, "for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Then, dear friends, having trusted Christ for yourselves, remember that all whom you meet with need to hear about the Savior who has delivered you. I have known some good earnest Christian people who have hardly known when to stop talking about religion, and some of them have at times spoken very indiscreetly. Well, well, I had rather hear of a hundred such indiscretions than that you should be indifferent to the welfare of the souls around you. Never you mind about being called "imprudent" now and then;

there is nobody worth a button with the shank off who has not been imprudent sometimes, there is no one who has ever done anything for Christ who has not been lacking in discretion in the judgments of other people. They have been so prudent that they never spoke to anybody about Christ, they have been so prudent that they never lived as Christians should live, they have been so prudent with their saving faith that they have saved all their money, and not given any to the cause of Christ; they have been so prudent that, when they came to die, they had seriously to raise the question whether they were Christians at all, and they have been so prudent that, when they were dead, their friends did not know what to say of them, but they hoped that the Lord would see some sign of grace in them, although nobody had ever seen it while they were alive. For my own part, I do not wish to be the chip in the porridge; and I hope you will be something that has a flavor in it, and show it by speaking to others of what you yourselves have experienced. There are some things that have flavor in them, but it is never known until they are boiled or bruised; and there are some Christians whose excellence is not revealed till they are persecuted. Therefore do not shrink from the fiery trial that may await you, but look up to your Lord for grace sufficient in the trying hour, and go joyfully forward singing, —

*“If on my face for Thy dear name,  
Shame and reproaches be,  
All hail reproach, and welcome shame,  
If Thou remember me.”*

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

AUGUST, 1895.

# “STEAL AWAY TO JESUS.”

AN ADDRESS AT A TABERNACLE PRAYER MEETING,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON.

*“Return! O wanderer, to thy home,  
Thy Father calls for thee;  
No longer now an exile roam,  
In guilt and misery.*

*“Steal away, steal away,  
steal away to Jesus;  
Steal away, steal away home;  
for Jesus waits to save you.*

*“Return! O wanderer, to thy home,  
‘Tis Jesus calls for thee;  
The Spirit and the Bride say, Come;  
Oh, now for refuge flee!*

*“Return! O wanderer, to thy home,  
‘Tis madness to delay;  
There are no pardons in the tomb,  
And brief is mercy’s day.”*

MAY those sweet words of invitation be very graciously blessed! I was smiling, while you were singing that refrain, “Steal away to Jesus,” at the recollection of something that happened a long time since. Our dear brother Stott, of Abbey Road Chapel, was, years ago, almost as eccentric as I am said to be, though the peculiarity after all is not in us, but in other people who are not so concentric as we are. After an evangelistic service we were holding a prayer-meeting, or a meeting for inquirers. Among the rest of the anxious ones, there was a young man in whom we were both interested. I was kneeling on one side of him, and Mr. Stott knelt down on the other side of him, and prayed a prayer which made me laugh, — I

could not help it. He said, "Lord, here is a poor sinner, who has been a servant of the devil, and he has run away from his master, and never given him any notice."

I was amused by the expression at the time, but there is a great truth in it, and I want just for a few moments to call your attention to that truth, for it may be of lasting service to any of you who long to escape from the slavery of sin and Satan. First, let me remark that, if you give the devil notice, you will never get away from him. If that prodigal son had gone to the citizen in the far country, and said to him, "I am engaged to you for another week to feed the swine, but I give you notice that, at the end of the week, I shall quit your service," he would never have gone back to his father. The only way of escape for him was to steal away home; so he not only said, "I will arise and go to my father," but at once "he arose, and came to his father." Imitate his example. Do not give the devil any notice. This is the very meaning of the refrain, with which we have been familiar ever since we first heard it so pathetically sung by the Jubilee Singers, —

*"Steal away to Jesus"*

That simple sentence may be a very delightful voice to someone here who has been living a life of sin. Do not go back into the midst of your old companions; but steal away to Jesus; steal away home. Perhaps your life has been a very evil one, altogether contrary to the law of God; yet here you are tonight, in the house of prayer, and among a company of praying people. Now, I beseech you, do not say what you will do tomorrow, or in a month's time, or when you have set some matters right but steal away to Jesus at once, just as the poor slave in the Southern States did when he found a chance of gaining his freedom. I warrant you that he did not go to his master, and say, "I's goin' to run away from you to-morrow, massa." Oh, dear no! But on some moonshiny night, when his master least expected it, Sambo was away in the woods, and was being guided by the blessed pole-star to the land of liberty. I say to you again, imitate his example, steal away, steal away to Jesus, if you are held in bondage by sin and Satan; I cannot give you any better advice than that. Procrastination is not only the thief of time, but the murderer of many souls. Remember those verses we sometimes sing: —

*“Today, a pardoning God  
Will hear the suppliant pray;  
Today, a Savior’s cleansing blood  
Will wash thy guilt away.*

*“But grace, so dearly bought  
If yet thou wilt despise,  
Thy fearful doom with vengeance fraught,  
Will fill thee with surprise.”*

Then again, as to the idea of giving the devil notice, you cannot give it. Some try to give this notice by attempting to escape from the power of some one sin, when all the while they are in captivity to other sins as securely as ever. There is many a man who has meant to break off wrongdoing by degrees, and to loose himself from his fetters one by one; but he has not been able to do it; it can only be done all at once, straight away, there and then. Sin is like Joseph’s mistress; you must not parley with it, you must leave your garment and run away, your only safety is in immediate flight. We say to you, as Mentor did to Télémaque, “Fly, Télémaque, fly! Your only hope of conquering is by flight.” Oh! get away at once, poor sinner, Steal away, steal away to Jesus. Let us sing that second verse and the chorus again very softly, —

*“Return! O wanderer, to thy home,  
‘Tis Jesus calls for thee;  
The Spirit and the Bride say, Come;  
Oh, now for refuge flee!*

*“Steal away, steal away,  
eal away to Jesus,  
Steal away, steal away home;  
for Jesus waits to save you.”*

Just this word in closing. You know that, in the old slave days, when one negro wanted to run away from his master, there was often someone who told him the way. There were some good people who worked what they called “The Underground Railway”, by which they passed the slaves on from one place to another till they reached the land of liberty; so, tonight, there are many friends all about this Tabernacle who would be only too glad to speak to any of you who want to steal away to Jesus; and especially if you will come to the platform when the meeting is over, you will find some of my brethren who will be delighted to tell you how to get out of the

great dismal swamp of sin. They know the road; some of them have hardly brushed the mud off their own garments yet, and they will be most pleased of all if they can guide you into freedom. The all-important thing is to get to Jesus. He is the great Liberator, and “if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

If any of you have found your way to Jesus, let me just say to you that it is all very well to steal away from the old master, but do not steal up to the new one. Come right up to Him, and say, “Thine I am, Lord Jesus, and I am not ashamed to own Thee as my Lord and Master.” Come out boldly on the Lord’s side, be baptized according to His command, and His example, too, and unite with His people in fellowship and holy service. If you are truly the Lord’s, you will never want to steal away from Him, and He will never give you up to your old master again, for so hath He declared, —

*“The soul that on Jesus hath lean’d for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake.”*

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

FEBRUARY, 1896.

# AN EXTEMPORE SERMON BY C.H. SPURGEON,

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JANUARY 31ST, 1869,  
JUST TWENTY-THREE YEARS BEFORE HIS OWN HOME-  
GOING.

*“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God  
by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” —  
Hebrews 7:25.*

COME two hours or more ago, I was endeavoring to put my thoughts together, and, by prayer and meditation, to bring myself into a right condition for addressing you this evening, when a servant came hastily for me, and asked me to go round to the house of our deacon, Mr. Cook, who was then, she told me, according to his belief, just departing this life. I hurried to his chamber. He said he wanted to look me in the face once more before he departed; and, though I do not think that he is so near his end as he supposes, yet it was a most thankful and pleasant thing to some of us to hear from him just such words as dying men do say when they are departing, — just as solemn, just as memorable, just as triumphant as some saints utter when they are departing this life. I do not feel, therefore, at all like preaching to you tonight after the order of a set discourse. Indeed, I feel that I must take a fresh text, altogether different from the one I had selected; and just talk to you simply and plainly about the gospel of Jesus Christ, and about such truths as I hope I shall always have at my tongue's end, because they are enshrined in my heart. May God grant that the turning from one subject to another, and giving you this extempore sermon may, of His own good will and pleasure, be greatly blessed to some present! My text will be taken, as I have already announced to you, from the Epistle to the Hebrews, the seventh chapter, and twenty-fifth verse: —

“Wherefore He is able, also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

This is a grand verse, and full of meaning. Notice the connection. Paul has been speaking about priests whose work was never finished, about priests who died, about priests who could not continue in their office, those priests of Aaron’s race who were only the types and pictures of the one real and true Priest, even Jesus Christ Himself, whose sacrifice is perfect, and who continues in His priesthood, because He ever lives, and sits accepted at the right hand of the Father. From this theme, the apostle proceeds to write the words of our text; and we will consider the words just as they stand, for they are all of them full of encouragement and blessed instruction.

1. There is, first, the mention of CHRIST’S ABILITY: “He is able,” Christ is able. These three words sound to me like a psalm, they are like a trumpet-blast, they inspirit the soul: “He is able.” Here are you and I, to-night, by narrate, “dead in trespasses and sins,” like the dry bones of the valley of vision. Who is to quicken us? There is no ability in ourselves. Human nature is shorn of all its strength. All our old natural depravity has taken away from us spiritual life itself, much more spiritual power. But “He is able.” There is one Living One who comes into the valley of the dead, and saith, “Ye dry bones, live.” There is One greater than the prophet Ezekiel, the true Prophet of God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, who could say, “He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” There is in man no ability to save himself; but all ability to save man is treasured up in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a time, beloved, when a man who knows anything of the divine life is made conscious, most painfully conscious, of his own want of strength and of his lack of communion with God. His heart will fly abroad after vanity; even when he wants to pray, he cannot stir up his desires; or if the desires be there, they appear to be so superficial that they do not spring from the inmost soul. All that the man can do is to groan, and he is half afraid there is no proof of real life even in that mournful exercise. He says, with Cowper, —

*“I hear, but seem to hear in vain,  
Insensible as steel;  
If aught is felt, ‘tis only pain  
To find I cannot feel.”*

This happens to really converted men. Their sense of inability prostrates them, makes them lie at the feet of the King, and say, —

*“But oh! for this no strength have I,  
My strength is at Thy feet to lie.”*

Oh! what, hope arises in the soul if such a word as this is whispered in the ear! Thou art unable, but “He is able.” All that is necessary for thy salvation, He is able to perform. He has already finished His great substitutionary work, all else that remains to be done is within the power of Him who cannot flag or fail, even the almighty, untiring invincible Jesus, who will certainly accomplish the task He has undertaken.

“He is able.” These words might be whispered tonight into the trembling ear of one whose conscience is disturbed with guilt, and whose heart is conscious of its powerlessness to escape. You tell me that you cannot repent as you would; you tell me that you cannot save yourself, and you cry out in your hopelessness, “O wretched man that I am!” Beloved fellow-sinners, it is the best condition you can be in, to be thoroughly emptied of yourself, to be brought to know what the voice of God said twice in the psalmist’s ear, “that power belongeth unto God,” and not to you. You are not able, but Christ is able. To go one inch towards Heaven, is not in your power; but Christ is able to take you the whole distance. To bring one single farthing’s worth of good works by way of merit, is not possible to you; but Christ is able to bring a Heaven’s worth of merit with Him. “He is able; He is able!” and we may add the other word that we often sing, “He is willing,” and therefore you need doubt no more. How I would like to go to those dread dungeons where poor souls are shut up in darkness, and bound in fetters of iron, because they feel their own inability; how I would like to look through the grating, and just say, “My brother, Christ is able to set the captive free; each fetter He can break, each rivet He can loose.” How I would like to go down to the dreary pit where there is no water, where souls are just expiring for lack of it, feeling that they cannot lift a hand towards their own salvation, and even there to cry, “He is able; with Him, the Lord, there dwells unbounded might; with Him, our God and Savior, there is unbounded grace. He is able. Look away from thine own weakness to His strength, and doubt no more His power and willingness to save.”

2. The next word in the text strikes a note of an equally cheering and inspiring kind; for it tells of SALVATION. “He is able to save.” I am thankful

that the text does not say, “He is able to forgive,” or “He is able to sanctify,” or “He is able to preserve.” For that word “save” comprehends all this, and more: “He is able to save.” To save a man, according to the popular belief, is to rescue him from the flames of hell. This is the meaning of salvation to the vulgar mind, and this is all that many seek after; but that is not the salvation revealed in the Bible. To save a man, in the Scriptural sense, is to save him from his sin, from the guilt of his sin, from his career in the midst of sin, from the power which the sin has over him, from all the ill effects which that sin has produced upon his moral constitution; in a word, to bring him back from being a bond slave to Satan and to his own lusts, and to set him before the throne of God, a servant of the Most High, an adopted child of the King of kings. This is salvation.

Beloved in the Lord, this text may yield comfort to all sorts of distressed consciences. There are some of you, perhaps, burdened with the guilt of your past offences. “He is able to save.” This signifies that Jesus can pardon you. To trust Him to pardon you, will be a great thing for you, but a comparatively light thing for Him. He has paid your enormous debt; to hand you the receipt is but a work of pleasure to Him. Another of you may be burdened because you cannot cease from evil; some horrible old habit clings to you, and holds you fast as in an iron cage. You would fain escape, but you cannot. But, whatever that habit may be, Jesus is able to save you; and however long it may have been your besetting sin, Christ is able to make you thoroughly rid of it, so that you shall not even desire to turn to it again. Perhaps, my dear hearer, you are depressed in spirit, heavy of heart, wanting to rejoice, but you cannot. Well, but Jesus is able to save you from your melancholy, to save you from unbelief, to save you from everything which would dishonor God and grieve yourself. I care not what your grief or burden may be, dear friend, for my text covers it. It binds you to the living Christ, standing yonder before the eternal throne, and it tells you that, because He is there in all the glory of His accomplished priesthood, He is able at this moment to save you. Bow your head now, whatever your grief may be, and tell it out to Him. He can and He will remove it. Whatever request you have, if it be connected with salvation, and if you can fairly consider it to be a part of your complete deliverance from sin, and of your perfection in Heaven, you have but to ask for it, and you shall have it.

Notice the “wherefore” with which the text begins. It means, — Because Jesus is a Priest always living, therefore He has ability; and because he has

completed His sacrifice, He has, therefore, ability to save. Oh, that we did all trust Christ! We are such unbelieving beings; we talk about faith, but when it comes to the test, where is our faith? The most of us have but a fair-weather faith, that can scarcely stand when the storm comes on. What would some of you do, who make a profession of being Christians, if you were on your dying beds tonight? How would you face the inevitable change? Would you go down the banks of Jordan with a song in your mouth? You could do so if you had a full reliance upon Him who is able to save, and to deliver in the hour of death. But if your faith be fictitious, it will stand you in but little stead when you come to the last moment of your life, and have to face the dread reality of death. The dear friend whom I talked with, this afternoon, said that he was constantly troubled with the thought, — What if his religion should be all surface work? What if it should be all superficial, and not a thing of the inmost heart? He who knows him best knows how little ground there is for such a fear as that; but there is ground in us all to fear lest we should have a surface faith in Christ, and not a real belief. O brethren, He can save us! When thy guilt lies heavy upon thee, can thy faith trust then? Ah, then, it is true faith! When thy graces are bright, and thy virtues shining, to trust in Christ is not so difficult; but oh! when thy guilt prevails, when thy sin accuses thee to thy face, and thou standest self-condemned, then to turn to the bleeding Lamb, and to say, “He is able even now to save,” that is, beloved, to exercise real faith. God grant that we may all possess this faith in very deed! “He is able to save.”

**3.** The next words of the text are equally pleasant, for they show THE EXTENT OF CHRIST’S POWER: “He is able to save to the uttermost.” The Greek is, “to the end, to perfection.” As far as a thing can go, Christ can go as far as that. Suppose we read it, “To the outermost.” Those who are furthest away from God, the offcast, the outcast, the refuse, the scum, “He is able to save to the uttermost.” The uttermost — those who are at the very ends of the earth, or those who have gone to the extreme length of the tether of human guilt. Our Master is a blessed Savior at a pinch, not merely is He able to do the easy part of the work, but to do that which is most difficult; ay, and that which seemeth impossible, as though it were not to be done at all, He is able to do. Do you see a saint so sorely tempted that his feet have almost gone? Christ is able to save him from that sin, though his heart all but consents to it. Do you see a child of God afflicted with poverty, bed-ridden through weakness, his faith almost extinct, like an

expiring taper? Christ is able to come in just then, at the uttermost, and keep his flickering life still flaming upwards, and to make his joy in God shine forth again. Do you see a sinner plunging into the worst of evils, covering himself with the miry clay of every vice? Yet he repents, and turns his tearful eye to the cross; then, no matter what his sin has been, Christ is able to put it all away, He is able at once to cleanse him. Some of you who are here may have gone to such lengths of sin that for you to tell the details would be to pollute your fellow-men; but you cannot have sinned beyond the uttermost, and therefore you have not gone beyond the reach of Christ's arm. You may be at hell's gate, but he can reach you there. The devil may be about to claim you as his own, but Christ can snatch you from between the very jaws of the roaring lion of the pit. Glory be to His name, while life lasts, no sinner shall sin beyond the possibility of the blessed Redeemer rescuing him!

But I think our text belongs specially to the sorrowful, for Christ is able to save them to the uttermost. If you are the very weakest of the uttermost, He is able to strengthen you to the uttermost. If you suffer to the uttermost, He can give you patience to the uttermost. If you should be tried as with fire, and pass many times through the burning fiery furnace; if your trial should be so extreme that no other living man or woman ever suffered as you do; if you should seem to be the butt for the arrows of affliction, the target for the red-hot shot of sorrow, yet still, to the uttermost, to the extreme, to the last moment of that extremity, Christ is able to save; and the ability brings with it the certainty that He will use it for all who trust Him.

Oh! but this, again, is a sweet thing to believe, and to go down to death's gate with, that He is able, when I am not able. He is able to save me when I only deserve to be damned. He is able to save me in extremis. He is just as able to save us then as when we are in our most prosperous state. Away, ye monks and priests, away with your holy oils, which you pretend are so precious! Away with your consecrated wafers, the preparations of knaves to dupe superstitious fools! Christ is able to save unto the uttermost. He shall give me the only extreme unction my soul shall ask. Christ is enough for me in life, and enough for me in death; and single-handed, without any man to comfort me, or any word to stay me, except the Man Christ Jesus and the Word which God hath spoken, I will go down to my dying bed, and close my eyes in peace, singing my song of victory as I pass through death's dark valley.

Many of us do not really believe this gracious truth, though we fancy that we do. We think that Christ can save us to the uttermost; but long before we get to the uttermost, our faith begins to give way, and we are full of doubts and fears. Have I not heard brethren say in prayer in this place, "O Lord, we will never doubt Thee again"? Yet I are afraid they have done so, after all. We think we believe, but do we really believe? Do we believe in Christ the Savior to the uttermost? Suppose that, tonight, before you go to bed, God should let you see yourself as you really are, you would find then that you want a Savior to the uttermost. Brother, you do not know how black you are; you have no idea what a foul heart you have, and what a horrible nature yours is. If God were to let you see yourself a little more clearly than you do now, I should not wonder if you were to say, "I am afraid, after all, I shall never be saved." But, my dear brother, if you were to see yourself as black as seven devils, nay, as black as all hell condensed, if you truly believe my text, you would not fear, for you would say, "I have only now come to the uttermost, and Christ's power is guaranteed to go at least as far as this." Our great High Priest still lives, He lives to make intercession for the transgressors; and therefore to the uttermost He is still able to save.

**4.** The next word of the text gives forth A MINGLED NOTE. It is not all sweetness, we have here minor music with an undertone of sadness: "He is able to save there to the uttermost that come unto God by Him." Christ does not pretend to be the Savior of such as remain at a distance from God; there is a certain sort of sinners that He saves: "them that come unto God by Him." Let us take this text as a test, and try ourselves by it. Dear hearer, have you yet come to God? If not, do you desire to come to God? You cannot come to Him by any process of locomotion, with hands and feet, for He is here already. God is all around you; in that pew where you are; He is there already; there is no physical coming to Him, the "coming" here intended is mental, spiritual. Does your mind desire to agree to what God loves, to do what God would have you do, to be at peace with God, to get God's pardon, to have God's favor? If so, that desire is a sort of coming. Coming to God, however, generally shows itself in prayer. The man who pleads with God, who asks of God, who talks with God, — he is the man who comes to God. I do not mean the man who comes into a pulpit, and either repeats a form of prayer or utters extemporaneous effusions of his own; that may be done without any real praying. God pardon us if it ever is so! But I mean those who, with their hearts, in their

secret chamber, or in the street, or anywhere, say, “O God, forgive me, accept me, bless me, for the sake of Thy dear Son whom I trust! I thank Thee for Thy mercies, help me to honor Thee.” That is coming to God.

But you notice that the text says, “He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him.” If there are some who pretend to come to God, without coming through or by Christ, that is not acceptable coming, and for them there is no promise of salvation. There is so great a distance between a man and God, that it is not possible for a man to come to God until Jesus Christ comes to man, and Himself becomes a man; but now that He has become man, I, a man, can talk with God through Christ who is both God and man.

To come unto God by Christ, is to trust in what Jesus Christ suffered for us, to rest in what He is still pleading before the throne of God above. Our prayers must therefore be offered for Christ’s sake; and we must only expect to receive a blessing because Christ deserves it, not because we deserve it; we make mention of His name to give our prayers force and merit in the sight of God.

Now, beloved, each one of you in this house of prayer, how stands it with your soul? Have you come to God through Christ? Are you continually coming? Say, is this the tenor of your life, — drawing nigh unto God through Jesus Christ? Do you live as in His majestic presence? Do you hope in God, and rely upon His faithful love in time of trial? Do you, through Christ Jesus, talk with God as a man talks with his friend? What sort of: coming is yours? Is it real coming, or only sham coming? There are some who only draw nigh to God with their lips, and all the while their heart is far from Him; I pray you, let it not be so with any of you.

Now, by this proof shall you know the ability of Christ to save you; when you draw near to God, you shall find Christ can save you to the very uttermost, “Oh!” saith one, “but that shuts me out, for I never pray.” Then, friend, begin to pray now. “Ah!” says another, “that, condemns me, for I have lived without thinking of God” My friend, turn unto God this very moment; may His Holy Spirit turn thee! “May I come?” asks one; “and may I hope that Christ will save me?” Why not? What saith the text? Does it say that Christ is able to save to the uttermost the good, the affluent, the virtuous that come to God? No, sirs, but them that come; any people in all the world that come. They that come in their sin, and poverty, and shame; yea, they that desire to come, and endeavor to come to God through the

merit of Jesus Christ, they need not entertain a single doubt but that Christ is able to save them to the uttermost, be that uttermost what it may. Oh! here is good news; such good news that, if it could be preached to the demons in hell, they would hold a jubilee and shout “Hallelujah!” at such a gospel. I put it in very plain words, and perhaps it may not interest some of you; but ah! sirs, if you do not lay hold of this Christ who is able to save you, the day will come when you will curse the hour in which you were born, and you will wish that you had never heard the gospel, because your hearing it led to your rejection of it, and your rejection of it increased your guilt and condemnation. If you are lost, it is not because Christ cannot save you; it is because you go not to God through Him, because you desire not the knowledge of His ways, but persist in sin, or wrap yourself up in the rags of self-righteousness.

**5.** Our time is passing, so we must come to the next words of our text: “seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.” Here, again, is MUSIC UNMINGLED. Christ ever liveth. One has observed of this text that it doth not merely say, “He ever existed,” but, “He ever liveth,” implying that all that Christ was on earth in loveliness, activity, and power, He is now. The Christ in Heaven is not like Lot’s wife, turned into a pillar of salt, standing there to be gazed upon; the Christ of glory is not like the impassive Jove of the old poets, sitting still upon a stately throne, unconcerned in the things of this life; but He lives, and lives observing, He takes an interest in everything that is done here below. If the Lord Jesus Christ stood here on this platform, and were about to offer prayer, I would fain hope that many a trembler would lift up his finger hoping that it might catch the Master’s eye, and he would raise his voice, and say, “Blessed Lord, plead for me.” Who amongst us would not send up our little notes to this effect? How this table would be loaded with scraps of paper containing our petitions! How we should all feel, — now is the time of grace; let us but get a share in His prayers, and all will go well with us! Well but, though we see Him not, He is yonder before the throne of God in our nature, and He is truly here in our midst, and. He will at once make intercession for all that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them. Do you all, dear friends, desire to come to God through the one Mediator? I know you saved ones desire it. We who believe in Jesus have a portion in His perpetual intercession; but, oh! you wayward ones, do any of you wish it? Methinks, that young man, over yonder, says in his heart, “Jesus, plead for me!” That aged one, surely he

who is so near his end, must want Jesus to plead for him. Jesus lives on purpose to plead for sinners; He died to redeem them, but He lives to plead for them. This is His business in Heaven. Your poor prayers could never get to Heaven without Christ's pleading. So blotted are your petitions, so badly worded and mis-spelt, that they are not fit for the King's eye; but Jesus will re-write them for you, and, instead of putting at the end of them your signature, which is the name of a rebel, and which would secure their rejection, He will put His own name, and the prayer will be granted to you, for God denies nothing to His dear Son. Will it not be wisdom, then, to put your case into Christ's hand? Well and happy has it been with me since I learned to leave the whole work of my salvation to Christ. Martin Luther used to say, "I will have nothing to do in effecting my own salvation. Christ is a Savior, let Him do His own business; I will put it into His hands, and He shall do it all." I like the utterance of another, who was wont to say, "When the devil tempts me, I do not try to answer him, but I tell him that I have an Advocate who will speak for me; and if I have an Advocate, I need not answer for myself. I will let Christ speak on my behalf, and put the devil to silence." Depend upon it, the more we rest upon what Christ can do by virtue of His having died, and risen again, the more thoroughly we come to the true foundation whereon our hopes shall be undisturbed. "Ah!" said my dear friend, this afternoon, "all the good things that have happened in my life are just nothing to me as I lie here." Someone said something about his having been kept by grace so many years. "Ah!" he answered, "yes, it has been nothing but grace; and now it is none but Christ;" and then he repeated, in the voice of one just about to depart, with his hands outstretched, —

***"On Christ, the solid rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand."***

And, depend upon it, dear friends, you will find it so yourselves; and it will be best to make it so now, and to act accordingly. There is the fountain of life, Christ Jesus. Sometimes a little flower grows on it, and we are very pleased with that little flower, yet it is a withering thing; and when it dies, we are half like Jonah, weeping for his gourd; but the fountain is more beautiful than the flowers. So, Christ Himself is more precious than the choicest flowers that grow out of His grace, and the grace that comes by His Spirit; and it is a blessed thing, when everything else withers, and is swept right away, that we may say, "None but Christ, none but Christ, is the solid foundation of our souls."

I do not know why I have been driven to this text tonight, nor why I have been led to talk over these simplicities of our holy faith. I might have desired to cheer the people of God, and to have spoken to them of some of the deeper truths of the gospel, after having been dealing with tender consciences this morning;<sup>16</sup> but if I must needs use this hammer to strike again and again the same nail, oh! my Master, do Thou drive the nail home, and grant that some poor sinner may tonight lay hold on eternal life! Lead him away from everything else to the cross, and may he look on Thee as the Jews looked on the brazen serpent, and be Thou alone the source of salvation from sin and the wrath to come! Look to Jesus, poor sinner, for

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*“There is life for a look at the Crucified One;  
There is life at this moment for thee;  
Then look, sinner, — look unto Him, and be saved, —  
Unto Him who was nail’d to the tree.*

*“Then doubt not thy welcome, since God has declared,  
There remaineth no more to be done;  
That once in the end of the world He appear’d;  
And completed the work He begun.”*

Is there no one here who will trust Jesus tonight? Shall no angel bear a message to the skies, that one has come to God by Christ? Shall Christ see none of the travail of His soul out of this congregation? Forbid it, Lord, forbid it, that the truth declared tonight shall die. Yea, by this text and by Thy promise we dare to put the challenge to Thee, “My Word shall not return unto Me void.” We believe Thy promise, Lord. The living seed drops somewhere; where does it fall? Where is the soil that accepts it, and nurtures it? Where is the heart that receives Jesus? Did you say, “I will,” you great sinner? Then be it so, and God be glorified! Did you say, “I will,” you outwardly moral young man? Oh, let God be praised for that! Did you say, “I will,” youth and beauty, or you, sir, in the strength and fullness of your manhood? Be it so; it matters little to whom the message comes, so long as it comes to you, and you receive it personally in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord grant you this, and His shall be the praise forever and ever! Amen.

ROBERT G. LEE, DISTINGUISHED SOUTHERN BAPTIST  
**SPEAKING OF SPURGEON**

**By Dr. Robert G. Lee**

No matter what words one may speak with eloquence of tongue or write with skill of pen, a woeful sense of inadequacy would oppress orator and writer in making an effort to express the worth and wonder of Charles Haddon Spurgeon's sermons. Veritable beds of Gospel pearls are all the sermons of this remarkable preacher so greatly used of God.

Browning sings:

All the breath and the bloom of the year in the bag of one bee;

All the wonder and wealth of the mine in the heart of one gem;

In the core of one pearl all the shade and the shine of the sea;

Breath and bloom, shade and shine — wonder, wealth, and — how far above them —

Truth that's brighter than gem,

Trust that's purer than pearl, —

Brightest truth, purest trust in the universe — all were for me

In the kiss of one girl!

But how much more than that and how far beyond all that is the wealth of the spiritual riches of God's truth and grace as proclaimed by this remarkable man who played a conspicuous part in the Renaissance by creating a popular atmosphere for evangelism, who preached at an ordinary service to nine thousand people, who thrust the evangelical pulpit into the glare of public attention. With flaming intensity, he made almost miraculous impact upon each individual unit in the surging crowds that flocked every Sunday with wistful hearts to hear him.

Spurgeon lived in days when there were giants. As Boreham says, the leaders of all departments of British life and thought recognized that the

spirit of Spurgeon represented the life-force of the ages. He magnetized and sometimes electrified them. They went to hear him. They sought his counsel.

I am glad you are going to publish METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE PULPIT. A sense of inadequacy is upon me as I speak of Charles Haddon Spurgeon and his sermons. No eloquence of tongue nor skill of pen can fully describe the man and his message. His biography and sermons have influenced my life in many ways.

In his preaching this giant of God flowed as a river and never did trickle as a rill. By lip and life he shone as a chandelier — never as a flickering candle. The man and his message made a Scriptural orchestra of many instruments. He was a great organ whose full breath was thunder beneath God's fingers pressed.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

SEPTEMBER, 1896.

## MINISTERIAL JOYS.

AN ADDRESS TO THE STUDENTS OF THE PASTORS' COLLEGE, ON ONE OF THEIR VISITS TO "WESTWOOD."

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

DEAR BRETHREN, — When we meet for a social gathering like the present, I do not usually think it well to occupy much of your time with any address specially prepared. I thought, however, that I might, quite informally, say just a few words to you upon the subject of —

### MINISTERIAL JOYS.

On another occasion, I may have to remind you of the sorrows and trials that most ministers have to endure, and I should not need to draw upon my imagination in order to find abundant illustrations of such a sad and somber theme; but for today, at least, let us look at the bright side of the picture, and think of the pleasures that are our portion. Whether we have already entered upon the great life-work of the Christian ministry, or whether we are undergoing a course of preparation for the service to which we believe the Lord has called us, we have many joys and delights of which men of the world know nothing.

First, our very studies are a source of pleasure to us. To sit down earnestly and reverently to study the Word of God that we may learn what is the mind of the Spirit, — to come to the fountain of theology undefiled, and by prayer and meditation to drink of its pure waters, is one of the highest joys that mortals can ever know in this imperfect state. I do not think any other place on earth has had more pleasure in it than this room <sup>f7</sup> has had while I have been searching the Scriptures to find out what the Lord has therein

revealed. This used to be the billiard-room of the house in the former owner's time, and I suppose that he and his companions derived much enjoyment from their play; but I am quite sure that, since the light from these burners has been shed on the Word of God and those who have been seeking to know its meaning, far more pleasure has been experienced here. I trust, brethren, that you will often have a personal realization of this joy in the study of the Word.

Next, what a source of pure pleasure is prayer! I know that I have often found it to be so in the public service of the sanctuary; many a time, when in prayer for the great congregation at the Tabernacle, I have been so lifted up that, whether in the body or out of the body, I could not tell, and I have just lost myself in a rapture of adoring ecstasy before the throne of God. But there has been equal joy in fellowship with two or three kindred spirits with Jesus in the midst, or in communion alone with God at the mercy-seat. To pray over the Word, brings us great joy as we continue to make fresh discoveries of the heights, and depths, and lengths, and breadths of the love of Christ, and as we find out new meanings in texts that have long been familiar to us. I think, brethren, that even the preparation for the Christian ministry should be one of the best means of grace that a man can have, and that prayer especially should be to him a constant joy and delight.

Then, when we actually get at the work, what a joy there is in preaching the gospel! It is not always a pleasure, for sometimes the chariot wheels are taken off, and our thoughts and words drag heavily. But when we are borne along by the Holy Spirit, there is not an eagle whose flight is as swift as ours. When I am on my platform at the Tabernacle, I feel sometimes as if, in the might of God, I could speak as with lightning and thunder, such power is there in the Word of the Lord; and as for the joy of preaching, I have often felt that I did not wish to change places even with Gabriel himself. I have known what it is, while proclaiming the truth of God, to see eternal things, to look into the many mansions of the blessed, to walk amidst cherubim and seraphim, to bow, and wonder, and adore, and to lead the people also up to those glorious heights of bliss. Yes, it is indeed a joyous work to preach the gospel, when the Spirit of God is present with us.

Besides, brethren, what a joy it is to us when souls are converted through our instrumentality! Especially do we rejoice over the salvation of very black sinners; their joy in being saved is truly great, but we feel almost as

much delight as we rejoice over them. Nay, more than that, we think of all the bliss that will yet be theirs, — joy on joy, glory on glory, “from glory unto glory,” — and we seem to have a share in it all as we shake hands with those whom we have been permitted to lead to the Savior. Last Lord’s-day morning, after the service, there was brought to me a card bearing the name of a minister of the gospel, and when the good man came into the vestry he said to me, “Twenty-four years ago, Mr. Spurgeon, you brought me into gospel liberty by such-and-such a sermon.” That kind of message gives me more joy than I can describe, and I praise the Lord that this is not a solitary instance of blessing, but only one out of a multitude of cases which afford me the highest delight that is possible here below.

I think I ought also to mention the great joy of associating with godly people in Christian service, and especially with those whom we have ourselves brought to the Savior. I can say without hesitation that I have great joy in my dear brethren, the deacons and elders and members of the church. Some people find fault with deacons and elders, and even with ministers, and very likely there is good reason for the complaints that are made; but I am inclined to think that there is something in the grumblers themselves which accounts for their fault-finding. At all events, I comfort myself with the reflection that, as a rule, God’s people are about as good as I am; and if they are not what they ought to be, I must do my best to make them better. I should like to give to you, my young brethren, a piece of practical advice that may come in useful one of these days, — Don’t throw away every stick that is a little crooked, but try to find out where you can employ it to a good purpose. Some of those very people who at first were opposed to you may become your most faithful friends and followers. If they do say nasty things about you, be sure to have a good supply of cotton wool to put in your ears, so that you may not hear what would grieve you; or if you must hear it, never let them know that you heard it, for the day may come when they will regret their hasty and unkind words, and be your most hearty helpers.

Still, brethren, you are not going into the ministry with the idea of pleasing men, but that you may glorify God. One of my greatest delights is to come home, and to feel, “I have not been able to preach as I should have liked to have done; but, O my Lord, it has been Thy truth that I have proclaimed.” There is a passage in the fortieth Psalm that I often repeat with great thankfulness to the Lord who enables me truthfully to say it: “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained

my lips, O Lord, Thou knowest. I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation: I have not concealed Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth from the great congregation.”

It is frequently my experience, — and a very curious experience it is, — when reading a book, all of a sudden to come upon a piece about myself; quite recently I met with this observation: — “There are two men who are true prophets of God in this age; they are, Canon Liddon and Mr. Spurgeon. When they preach, they both of them say, ‘This is what is in God’s Word.’ So many other preachers say, ‘This is the result of my study, and of my thinking, and of my reasoning;’ but these two prophets, when they go to the Scriptures, seek to know what is the mind of God, and what HE has to say to the people to whom He has sent them to proclaim His truth.” I am not responsible for what the writer of this book says; but I can honestly declare that, when I have done preaching at any time, I have, to the best of my knowledge and belief, unfolded the truth in my text, and I have made known what I have believed to be the inspired revelation of God.

If I have repeated the message that I have received from my Master, those who do not like it must settle the quarrel with Him, not with me. A person comes to my door, and I send a message to him by my servant; if the man finds fault with what I have told her to say to him, she very naturally replies, “That is no business of mine; I have only repeated to you what my master told me to say, you must blame him if you do not agree with what he says.” That is just my case; I do not profess to be an original thinker, but I do try to tell out what my Master has spoken into my own ear and heart, and those who do not approve of it must find fault with my Master. If I have made a mistake as to my Lord’s truth, I am so far responsible; but if, to the best of my knowledge and belief, I have made known what He has revealed to me, I am clear of all the consequences of my action. I am simply a reporter who must take down, verbatim et literatim, what my Lord says; I am only like a telephone through which He speaks. The glass in those windows is perfectly clear; if you do not like the view that you can see through the windows, the glass cannot help that. You and I, brethren, are to be like clear glass, through which men and women and children can see God and His everlasting truth. If we are thus clear, and are kept well cleaned, one of the joys that we shall know will be the joy of possessing an easy conscience, so that we shall be able to say with Paul, “I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the

counsel of God.” We shall also have the joy of a quiet walk with God, because we have thought and said and done all that we believed would be most pleasing in His sight.

Finally, dear brethren, what a joy it will be, by-and-by, to meet one another in Heaven! I expect I shall know the apostle Paul as soon as I see him. Blessed Paul, how fully did he understand the gospel, and how grandly did he teach it and preach it! And John, too, “that disciple whom Jesus loved,” I am sure I shall recognize him; and Peter, who will never go out again to weep bitterly. I mean to look out for John Calvin, and John Knox, and John Bunyan; what a treat it will be to see “the immortal dreamer” in the Celestial City that he delighted to describe! I have promised to meet dear old Father Rogers up there, and to say to him, “Now, friend Rogers, you were wrong about that infant sprinkling, after all, were you not?” I expect to meet my dear friend, Dr. Armitage, \* there, and you, too, beloved brethren. The highest joy of Heaven will be communion with God Himself, and next to that will be the delight of fellowship with the spirits of just men made perfect, and the innumerable company of angels who have never sinned. The Lord grant that all of us may not only be ourselves saved, but may also take a numerous company with us, and each one be able to say, “Behold I and the children which God hath given me”! May we be like the sheep described in the Canticle, “whereof every one beareth twins, and there is not one barren among them”! Amen.

#### METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE PULPIT

“I WOULD SAY, WITHOUT ANY HESITATION AT ALL, THAT THESE 56 VOLUMES FORM THE GREATEST COLLECTION OF SERMONS OF ONE MINISTER OF THE WORD OF GOD THAT WE HAVE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.” — Dr. Wilbur M. Smith, Moody Monthly.

#### AN EVALUATION —

**By Dr. Wilbur M. Smith**

In the ministry of Charles H. Spurgeon, there were two basic factors which placed him, not only statistically, but in the matter of influence for the Gospel, above all others who were preaching in Great Britain during the nineteenth century or who have preached there in our own less religious twentieth century:

First of all, Mr. Spurgeon during his more than thirty-five years at New Park Street and the Metropolitan Tabernacle (1855-1892) preached Sunday after Sunday, year after year, to more people than any other minister in the British Isles.

Secondly, Mr. Spurgeon's printed sermons issued each week, and then appearing in annual volumes for over forty years, some of which extended to more than 700 pages, have had the greatest circulation of any printed sermons since the beginning of that century. Dr. John Brown was exactly right when in his Lyman Beecher Lectures at Yale, in 1899 (Puritan Preaching in England), he referred to Mr. Spurgeon's ministry as "a success certainly unparalleled in England since the days of Whitefield and Wesley."

When Charles H. Spurgeon came to London, in 1855, to begin his amazing metropolitan ministry, he could have had no premonition whatsoever that in the years that were before him, he would be having as fellow-laborers the greatest galaxy of preachers that Britain has ever known for a given period of forty years. H. P. Liddon (1829-1890) would be delivering his profound sermons to great audiences at St. Paul's Cathedral; Joseph Parker (1830-1902) would be expounding the Scriptures at City Temple; F. W. Farrar (1831-1903), with not such a biblical emphasis, would often be heard at Westminster Abbey; and Hugh Price Hughes (1847-1902), of whose ministry at West London Mission it is said "took London by storm." F. B. Meyer began his influential work at Regents Park Chapel in 1888. By leaving London one could go to Manchester and hear Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910); to Birmingham and hear R. W. Dale (1829-1895), or on to Edinburgh and hear Alexander Whyte (1836-1921). (It is interesting to note that seven of these remarkably gifted preachers were born within a period of eight years, 1829-1836).

All of those men drew great crowds (though not all of them held large audiences to the end), but none as great as Mr. Spurgeon. Furthermore, all of those we have mentioned published extensively, some with phenomenal circulation, such as the sermons by H. P. Liddon and the devotional

writings of F. B. Meyer; but none ever attained the circulation of the Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

Though I have read the sermons of these men for years, and with great profit, if I were given the choice of a set of sermons of only one of these men, I would certainly choose those of Charles H. Spurgeon.

# A SERMON ON CLAPHAM COMMON. <sup>f8</sup>

DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY AFTERNOON, JULY 10TH, 1859,

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

*“Be ye therefore ready also.” — Luke 12:40.*

HAPPILY for us, it is not often that men are struck dead by lightning. Remember all the multitudes of men existing upon the face of the earth, then calculate the number of thunder-storms, and you will see that, after all, many of the fears which disturb our minds in time of tempest and of storm are far more groundless than we are apt to imagine. It is but here and there, and now and then, that the scathing blast smites the earth, and a fellow-creature is launched into eternity. When, however, such a solemn event occurs, we ought to hear in it the voice of God, and listen to what He says to us. I thought, as I passed this tree a short time since, what a sermon it might preach if it could speak! How the rustle of its leaves might forewarn us of the stealthy footsteps of death; and, as it towers toward Heaven, how it might be regarded as a finger directing us to look upward to the skies, and seek the Lord of grace and mercy!

The sermon of the tree this afternoon is simply this, — “Be ye therefore ready also.” I wish I had strength enough to speak it out, and that my voice might be heard by you all, while I endeavor to draw from this tree a solemn lesson, and to impress it upon your minds.

To die! To die! This is the sure end of earthly life. However long our life may be, it must terminate in death! We are not to live here always. The day, however calm and bright, must die into the evening. The flower, however sweet, hath its root in the grave, and it must die. The very earth must one day pass away; the sun himself will grow dim with age, and Nature's wreck is sure. All things must shake, and the heavens shall be

rolled together as a scroll, and pass away. We must all die; there is no escape from the skeleton king; his hand must bind us in the silent grave. We may struggle as we will, but the stream of time is carrying us onwards, and we must be swept away; strong swimmers though we be, we cannot contend against the flood, but onward we must go, each day bearing us upon its bosom to the boundless sea of eternity.

### 1. Since, then, death is certain to each of us, WHAT IS IT TO DIE?

First, to die, is to stand in the presence of the King of kings. Is no preparation required ere we appear before the Majesty of Heaven? Why, if men are about to have an audience with Her Majesty the Queen, they think much about it, and prepare carefully for it; and do we think that we may rush unprepared into the presence of the King of kings? Do we imagine that the God, whose majesty is boundless, will permit us to come before His face without preparation? Or, if we do so, can we think that He will not drive us from His presence, and appoint us our portion with the lost in hell?

To die, is not only to appear before the King, but to stand before the Judge of all. There is a judgment to come at the last day; but, nevertheless, there is a judgment passed upon every individual the moment when he appears in eternity. The scales of justice are standing even today; and, when I die, I must be weighed at once. My hearers, shall you and I be found of the right weight .at last, or shall the verdict be, “MENE, MENE, TEKEL: Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting”?

To die, is to stamp our lot to all eternity. We may change here; many have been changed by grace in this life; but there are no changes in the world to come.

*“Fixed is their everlasting state;  
Would they repent, ‘tis now too late.”*

Life is the writing; death is the signature and the sealing. Then shall each of us be compelled to feel, “What I have written, I have written.” The voice of the angel over the tomb is, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

Now if we look at death in this light, as our appearing before the KING, our standing before the JUDGE, and the settling of our eternal existence, what

arguments we might draw from these facts that we should be “ready also.” Many a man says, “Oh! when I come to die, I shall say, ‘Lord, have mercy upon me!’ and so I will get ready to go to Heaven.” Dressing for Heaven, my friends, is not done quite so rapidly as that. Besides, how do you know that even five minutes will be given to you for repentance? I have heard of a man who often made it his boast that he would so prepare for Heaven; but, alas! coming home one night, drunk, his horse leaped the parapet of a bridge, and he was heard cursing as he descended to his doom. Such may be your lot; sudden death may smite you, and there will be no time for you to prepare to meet your God. Remember that, once dead, preparing time is over. The breath has sped from the body, there lies the corpse, it will never know life again in this world; its eyes can never shed tears of repentance, neither can its heart beat with sorrow. Its needs are all done. Put it into the grave, and bury it; in this world, its memory and love are lost; alike unknowing and unknown, it shall not be numbered with the living. And as for the undying soul, its work is done, too. “Yea, saith the Spirit,” concerning the righteous, “that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.” “Yea,” saith Satan himself, concerning the wicked, “their works are over, too; but their punishment shall overtake them, and the rod of conscience, and the terrible wrath of the just God, shall crush them to the lowest hell.”

**2.** If death be what I have said, it is needful that we should be prepared for it; but **WHAT IS THE PREPARATION WE ARE TO MAKE?**

My hearers, there are two things necessary before a man can face his God without fear. The first is, that his sins should be pardoned. When an unpardoned sinner shall come into the presence of God, he shall not stand in the judgment, for the burning wrath of God shall consume him like stubble. “Depart,” says God, “depart, ye cursed; ye have lived in sin against Me; go and reap the harvest ye have sown; inherit the reward of your own works.” Sin unpardoned clothes a man with rags; and shall a man stand in rags before the King of Heaven? Sin unpardoned defiles a man with filth and loathsomeness; and shall filth and loathsomeness appear before perfection, or blackness stand in the presence of light and purity? Sin unpardoned makes man an enemy of God, and God an enemy of man. O sinners, I hope you do not think that you can face God while your unforgiven sins, like putrefying sores, are covering your souls!

“Well,” cries one, “but I will get rid of my sins very easily; I never intend to commit anymore, and then no doubt God will blot out all I have committed for the sake of my repentance.” Nay, nay; that is not the way in which a just God deals with men. Go to your creditors, and say to them, “I owe you fifty pounds; but, if you will blot out my debt, I will never get into your debt any more.” Do you imagine they would listen to you for a moment? Assuredly not; nor would you have the impudence to try it. You expect to have to pay your debts, and you will have to do so; and what you owe to Divine Justice, as a debt of punishment, must be paid, either by you, or else by Jesus Christ. Do not think that God will burn the bonds; imagine not that he will rend in pieces this record of your iniquity. No; the books will be opened, and every transgression will receive its just recompense of reward. Oh, think not that sin is so easily buried! It still lives, it never dies; there is nothing that can kill it except the precious blood of Christ, who died upon the cross at Calvary. He who would not fear death must have his sins forgiven; but how is this to be effected? He who would be forgiven must go away straight to Jesus Christ, who is the only Savior from sin. There is no other way of salvation, no other hope, no other refuge; therefore, fall upon your knees before Him, and confess your sin to Him. Pretend not that your sin is little, acknowledge that it is great; go just as you are, admit all your faults and all your iniquities, and then lift your tearful eyes to Heaven, and cry, “Lord have mercy upon me, for Jesus’ sake!” Plead the blood of Christ; no man ever perished while trusting to the blood of Christ; no sinner ever remains unforgiven if he is but able to plead the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

“Well,” cries one, “I will try to get better, and then ask to have my sins forgiven.” Ah, hopeless task! The best way in which you can beg is in rags. When I first lived in London, a man called on me in rags, asking charity. I gave him a pair of old shoes and a coat; and, after he had put them on, I thought, “That poor fellow, I dare say, will lose a good deal this day if he tries to beg in those clothes.” However, I watched him, and soon discovered that he was wiser than I thought he was, for he took off the shoes, and put them in a bag behind him; and he put on his almost soleless shoes, and his ragged garments, because they were the best livery he could wear. There is no livery like rags for a beggar, and no livery like a sense of need for a sinner. If you would be saved, go to Christ just as you are; do not be dressing or smartening yourselves up. Away! away to the cross of

Jesus Christ; all you may do to recommend yourselves will be only making bad worse; go to Jesus, for —

*“None but Jesus  
Can do helpless sinners good.”*

There was once a monk in his cell who, upon reading his Bible, found out the way of salvation; he discovered that there was no way to Heaven but by Jesus; and when the superintendent of the monastery came in to visit him in his dying moments, the poor monk bade him go away, crying out, “Thy wounds, O Jesus! thy wounds, O Jesus! these are my hope; these are my refuge.” Sinners, lay hold of Jesus Christ. Ye doves, ye who are timid, and fear the tempest of God, go and hide yourselves in the cleft of the Rock of Ages; so shall ye be sheltered in the day of the fierce anger of the Lord.

Now, as I have said, the first thing necessary for salvation is pardon of sin, and that is to be had through faith in Christ Jesus. But, secondly, even if a man’s past sins are pardoned, he would not be prepared to die if his nature were not renewed. If you could blot out all your sins in a moment, and if it could be possible for you to go to Heaven just as you are, you could not be happy there; because Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. An unconverted man in Heaven would be like a fish out of water; he would be wholly out of his element. Holy George Whitefield used to say that, if an ungodly man could go to Heaven as he is, he would be so miserable there that he would ask to be allowed to run to hell for shelter! Ye who find our places of worship as dreary as prisons, and Sundays to be dull days, how could you endure everlasting worship? How could you bear to have eternal Sabbaths, and continual songs of praise morning, noon, and night? Why, you would say, “Let me out, Gabriel, let me out; this is not the place for me; let me be gone. I am not happy here.” Listen to the words of Jesus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Ye must be born again.”

“Well,” cries one, “I will change my nature.” My dear friend, you cannot do it; you may alter your habits, but you cannot alter your nature; there is only One who can make that great change, and that One is the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ by His blood blots out sin, and the Holy Spirit by His grace renews the heart. You may reform, but that will not take you to Heaven. It is not being reformed, it is being re-born, it is being made a new creature in Christ Jesus, that saves the soul. There is a passage in the Bible which says,

“The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” The sow went back to her wallowing in the mire because she was a sow; if she had been changed into a sheep, she never would have done so. So God, by His power, must change you from lions into lambs, from ravens into doves; or else, where He is, you can never come. But will the Spirit of God do this? Oh, yes! If you cast yourself simply on Jesu’s blood and righteousness, your nature is changed already, and the work of sanctification will go on from day to day, and from week to week, until you will be made perfect, and you will stand before the bar of God without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; you will be holy as Adam was when he came from the hand of his Maker.

This is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; He presents to every sinner, who believes in Him, the pardon of sin, and a renewed nature. Do you ask, “How are these to be obtained?” I answer, — All who seek these mercies shall find them. Alas, many men will not seek them; they are so hardened in heart that they reject the gospel of Christ. But, my friends, if the Spirit of God inclines your hearts to seek Christ, rest assured that He will never cast you away. At any rate, if ye be not saved, blame not God; the gates of Heaven stand open night and day, and over the gates there is written, —

*“Come and welcome,  
Come and welcome, sinner, come,”*

There is nothing in God’s Word that can keep you from salvation if you are now earnestly longing for it. Open your ears to the cry of love and grace,  
—

*“Come to Jesus,  
Come to Jesus, sinner, come.”*

Whosoever believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ, hath the pardon of his sins, past, present, and to come; his nature is changed, and, die when he may, he shall see God’s face with joy, and shall stand accepted in the Beloved, and prepared to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb forever and ever.

**3.** And now, my dear hearers, I must apologize for not being able to speak as I could wish; but, nevertheless, with all the earnestness that I have in my soul, I would ENDEAVOR TO PERSUADE YOU TO “BE READY,” because none of us can say when our last hour may come, or where is the spot on which we shall die. Our poor friend, who came here, a fortnight ago, to shelter himself from the deluging rain, little thought that this was the spot

where he would meet with his death. None of us know where we shall die; there may be some other tree, on some other common, where you or I may experience the terrors of the lightning flash; or there may be a room and a lowly bed in which we shall breathe our last. The house is doubtless built in which we shall die; the tree is growing which shall make our coffins, and our graves are gaping for us.

I was preaching in Essex, a few months ago, and the sermon was scarcely finished, when a Christian woman, who was hearing it, dropped dead in her pew. It was but a little while ago in Kent, that, during a sermon, a poor man, who had bent forward, and listened with all his ears, fell forward on his face, and then and there appeared before his God. Sudden deaths are not such common things as perpetually to keep us in alarm; yet they are common enough, I hope, to make both young and old arise and hear the voice of the Lord, "Prepare, prepare to meet your God." O my hearers, it will be but a short time with the very longest-lived among us! I see here and there a hoary head; is that white hair yonder a crown of glory, or is it a fool's cap? It is either the one or the other. There are young persons here, too; if they look forward to the longest time that we may live, yet how brief is the period! Time — how short! Eternity — how long!

Well, then, since we must die, I do beseech you to think of death. Why should all your time be spent in thinking of the things of this world, when there is another world beyond the present? Why, why, is this short life to have all your thoughts, and the life to come to have none of them? I have heard of a monarch who, having a fool in his court, gave him a walking-stick, with an injunction never to part with it until he should meet with a bigger fool than himself. He kept it for many a day until, at last, the monarch lay dying. The fool, who was a wise man after all, came and said to him, "Master, where are you going?" "Well," said he, "I am going to die." Said the fool, "How long are you going to be there?" "Oh!" said the monarch, "for ever and ever." "And," said the fool, "have you made any preparation for the journey? Have you any house to live in when you get there? Have you nothing ready?" "No," said the monarch, "I never thought of those things." "Then," said the fool, "take this stick that you gave me; I play the fool in this world, but you have fooled away the next; you have neglected the world to come, and are a fool in very deed." Is not that, after all, the English name of what those men are who are so careless of the world to come? Are they not fools in very deed and truth? Be not ye such fools.

Ye rich men, will your riches serve you when you shall die? If you had a golden coffin, would that shield you from the worm? Ye poor men, will your hard daily drudgery serve you when you have worn out your limbs, and laid yourselves down to breathe your last? Ye learned men, will your wisdom serve you when you stand before your God? Ye fair and lovely ones, will your fine appearance serve you when you must undress to die? Though you paint an inch thick, to the complexion of the worm-eaten skull you all must come at last. How will your jewels and your vain-glorious apparel serve you then? I beseech you, be prepared for the world to come.

I do entreat you to begin to think, and I will give you one argument why everyone should be prepared; it is this, that we may rest assured God will not let us go into Heaven in a crowd. When we reap the cornfields, there are always little weeds which get twisted with the wheat, and they are carried into the barn with the good grain; but when the Son of man shall send forth His reapers in the time of harvest, not one ill weed will be carried into His garner. All the good wheat will be there, not one grain will be lost; but not a solitary weed or tare will be carried into the garner of Heaven. God Himself will search and try us; every soul must go through the fiery ordeal of God's examination. We shall not rush into His presence in one indiscriminate host; all God's sheep at last must "pass again under the hands of Him that telleth them." Could we foolishly attempt to steal in unawares, a voice would be heard, crying, "What doest thou here? Get thee gone; thou wast not one of Mine on earth; thou shalt not be one of Mine in eternity."

My voice and mind fail; I know not how it is, but when I most long to speak impressively, my voice fails, and thought dies away. Let me, however, remind you that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came down from Heaven, was born in human flesh, became man, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and at last died upon the cross at Calvary, a death too shameful to be described, — a death most awful for its pain, and shame, and scorn, and agony. It is by the merit of His death that you are to be saved. Like as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so do I lift up Christ Jesus the Savior. Everyone who will come and look to Jesus Christ, the bleeding Savior, shall be saved. Not one eye was turned to the brazen serpent without relief; and not one sinner shall look to Jesus Christ and be disappointed. He died that we might not die; He suffered, bled, agonized, and died that we might never perish. In vain your prayers, in vain your ceremonies, in vain your confirmation, in vain your sacrament, in vain

your going to church or to chapel, except you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing but the blood of Christ can make atonement for sin; nothing but the robe of Christ's righteousness can enwrap the sinner's naked soul, and make him to stand accepted at the last great day.

I will put the plan of salvation as simply as I possibly can, and then you shall go. There was once a poor man, a huckster, who used to go round to country villages selling his little goods. He was said to be "half-cracked," and very likely he was, for he was constantly in the habit of getting drunk, and that is enough not only to half-crack anybody, but quite to break him. At any rate, he was not a very sensible man, as a man is not likely to be who drives his senses out of him with drink. However, this poor creature, in going round on his journeys, heard some old women singing this simple little ditty, —

***"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."***

Jack recollected that. "Ah!" said he, "that just suits me." So he began to hum it himself as he went round on his huckstering expeditions; and, by God's grace, that little ditty burnt its way into poor Jack's heart. After some time, he became a converted man, gave up his swearing and drinking, and began to attend the house of God regularly. At last, he determined to join the church; so he went to the minister, and he asked Jack, "Well, friend, what can you say for yourself?" "Not much," said Jack, "only this,

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***" 'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all.' "***

"But," said the minister, "can you not tell me more than that?" "No," said Jack, "I can't, for that is all I know." That was his whole confession of faith. "Well, friend," said the minister, "I cannot refuse you church-fellowship; but you will have to come to the church-meeting, and the church-members will have to see you, and to judge of your fitness." Jack accordingly went to the church-meeting, and there sat some good old-fashioned deacons; some of whom began to see whether they could not find fault with him. Jack stood up, and being requested to state his experience, he simply said, —

***"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."***

So one old deacon said, "Is that all you have to say?" "Yes," says Jack, "that is all." The minister said to the members, "You may ask my friend here some questions, if you like to do so." One asked, "Have you not many doubts and fears?" "None," says Jack, "I never can doubt but that 'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,' for I know I am; and I cannot doubt that 'Jesus Christ is my all in all,' for He says He is, and how can I doubt Him?" "Well," said another of the members, "but sometimes I lose my graces, and my evidences, and then I get very sad." "Oh, but," answered Jack, "I never lose anything; for you see, 'I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all,' and you know no one can rob me if I am nothing at all, and then you know, 'Jesus Christ is my all in all,' and who can rob Him? He is in Heaven. I never get richer or poorer, for I am always nothing; but I always have everything." Then another member began to question him thus, "But, my dear friend, do you not sometimes doubt whether you are a child of God?" "Well," said Jack, "I don't quite understand you; but I can tell you I never doubt that —

***"I'm a poor sinner, and nothing at all;  
But Jesus Christ is my all in all."***

"Yes, yes," said the member, "but sometimes I make great advances on the road to Heaven, and then I feel a great deal better; but I often go back again, and that causes me trouble. "Ah!" said Jack, "but, you see, I never go forward; for I am always 'a poor sinner, and nothing at all;' and I cannot go back, for 'Jesus Christ is my all in all;' and, blessed be God, He will not go back, and so I am always safe." Ever after that in the villages they used to call him, "Happy Jack," for he was always happy; and the reason was, that no one could drive him from that simple stand-point. Just so is it with me; there is nothing in me, but I trust in Jesus; I deserve punishment, I am lost in myself; but I just look to Him who came into the world to save sinners, and I know He will not let me perish.

Sometimes, when I try to explain the plan of salvation, I tell what happened to me once at New Park Street Chapel. There came to me an Irishman, when I was in the vestry, and Pat began by making a low bow, and saying, "Now, your Riverence, I have come to ax you a question." "Oh!" said I, "Pat, I am not a Riverence; it is not a title I care for; but what is your question, and how is it you have not been to your priest about it?" Said he, "I have been to him; but I don't like his answer." "Well, what is your question?" Said he, "God is just; and if God be just, he must punish my sins. I deserve to be punished. If He is a just God, He ought to punish

me; yet you say that God is merciful, and will forgive sins. I cannot see how that is right; He has no right to do that. He ought to be just, and punish those who deserve it. Tell me how God can be just, and yet be merciful." I replied, "That is through the blood of Christ." "Yes," said he, "that is what my priest said, you are very much alike there; but he said a good deal besides, that I did not understand, and that short answer does not satisfy me. I want to know how it is that the blood of Jesus Christ enables God to be just, and yet to be merciful." Then I saw what he wanted to know, and explained the plan of salvation thus, — "Pat, suppose you had been killing a man, and the judge had said, 'That Irishman must be hanged.' "He said quickly," "And I should have richly deserved to be hanged." "But, Pat, suppose I was very fond of you, can you see any way by which I could have saved you from being hanged?" "No, sir, I cannot." "Then, suppose I went to the Queen, and said, 'Please your Majesty, I am very fond of that Irishman; I think the judge was quite right in saying that he must be hanged; but let me be hanged instead, and you will then carry out the law.' Now, the Queen could not agree to my proposal; but suppose she could, — and God can, for He has power greater than all kings and queens, — and suppose the Queen should have me hanged instead of you, do you think the policeman would take you up afterwards?" He at once said, "No, I should think not; they would not meddle with me; but if they did, I should say, 'What are you doing? Did not that gentleman condescend to be hung for me? Let me alone; shure, you don't want to hang two people for the same thing, do ye?" "I replied to the Irishman, "Ah, my friend, you have hit it; that is the way whereby we are saved! God must punish sin. Christ said 'My Father, punish Me instead of the sinner;' and His Father did. God laid on His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, the whole burden of our sins, and all their punishment and chastisement; and now that Christ is punished instead of us, God would not be just if He were to punish any sinner who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. If thou believest in Jesus Christ, the well-beloved and only-begotten Son of God, thou art saved, and thou mayest go thy way rejoicing. Die when thou wilt, there is no hell, but Heaven for thee; and thou shalt see the face of thy God with joy and gladness, and praise Him for ever and ever." I believe my Irish friend found peace that day.

I do 'beseech you, dear friends, by the love of God, think of these things, and be prepared to meet your Maker, by the pardoning of your sins and the renewing of your nature. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you may

then take your stand, not only under this tree in a lightning storm, but in the tempest of the last great day, when the earth shall shake, and the heavens tremble and pass away. You will have no cause for fear, for he that believeth in Christ is saved, and shall never come into condemnation. Come what may, the wings of God are over him; saved he is, and saved he must be forever and ever. May the Lord now add His blessing; may He grant, moreover, that a more solemn impression than I can hope to make may be made upon you, as once again you gaze upon this spot! There is, in St. Paul's Cathedral, a little chisel mark in the floor, which you may never have noticed, but which sometime may be shown to you. That is the memorial of the death of some man who, being employed on the dome, fell down, and was dashed to pieces. What a solemn spot is that; and what a solemn spot is this! My dear hearers, ere you go away, breathe a prayer for pardon; and, as often as you pass this awful spot, think of your past lives, and of the world to come. It is said that we often walk over our own graves without knowing it; and that we often come to other men's graves and death places without being aware of it; but there, in that tree, stands the monument of the awfully sudden death of a fellow-creature, and let it be so recorded.

May God bless the widow; may He bless the orphans; and may He bless you! But, my dear friends, ere we go away this afternoon, will not each one of you pray for himself that his sins may be pardoned? Will you all separate, having come together in vain? I do beseech and pray you to lift up your hearts to God, and cry, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" Look this very instant to Christ Jesus, who died upon the cross. We cannot hope ever to meet again until the last tremendous day; oh, may we all meet then at the right hand of God!

(The above is a good specimen of the Sermons the beloved preacher was wont to preach when, on special occasions, he was brought face to face with a promiscuous crowd, forty years ago. As I have transcribed this discourse, I seem to have been carried back to those early days, when the dear Pastor's whole soul seemed to have been poured out in an intense desire for the salvation of men. He then preached with an impassioned energy, that manifested itself even more than in his regular ministrations, as he realized that he had but that one opportunity to plead with the vast congregations that they would look to Jesus, and be saved. — T. W. M.)

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

MARCH, 1898.

## REVIVAL WORK.

**A SERMON, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE PIECE HALL, HALIFAX, ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, APRIL 7TH, 1858.**

**FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.**

Preparatory Note. — On Wednesday, April 7th, 1858, MR. SPURGEON preached two Sermons in a large building erected for the purpose within the Piece Hall, Halifax. It was really wintry weather in the month of April that year, and there had been a very heavy fall of snow. This, together with a high wind, caused an accident which, had it happened in an earlier part of the day, might have resulted in a loss of life even more terrible than that at the panic at the Surrey Music Hall. At the close of the evening service, as the people in the gallery were dispersing, a number of boards and planks gave way with a loud noise, and a large number of persons were thrown heavily upon one another. Frightful screams were heard from the women, and a report was soon circulated that the gallery had given way. The high wind and the heavy fall of snow appear to have been the cause of the accident, and not any defect in the temporary building erected for the occasion. By the good providence of God, no lives were sacrificed, but a man and a woman were carried to the hospital with broken legs, while a number of thieves took advantage of the panic, and secured some spoil. The following is the Sermon preached in the evening of that day. — T. W. M.

“O LORD, revive Thy work.” — Habakkuk 3:2.

OUR hearts have, during the last few weeks, been full of joy and gratitude at the good news which has come across the sea from the land of the West. We hear that one of the most extraordinary religious awakenings has taken place in the United States. As many as fifty thousand persons are reported

to have been added to the churches there in one month. There never has been known, since about a hundred years ago, in the days of Jonathan Edwards, such a thorough shaking throughout the length and breadth of the land, in religious matters. Now, what is there standing in the way of Great Britain, that we should not see the same? Why may not every Christian in England pray for the same? Why should he not work for the same, and why should not we have it at last? There is one curse in America that we have not, — we call no men slaves; but, if even there, the great work of God’s Spirit has been carried on, we have at least one more probability why we should have the like. Only let us strive in prayer, let us labor diligently, and the day shall yet come when we shall see a great revival, when the name of our God shall be glorified, and His Church shall be greatly increased. It is on that subject I shall address you tonight, from the well-known words in the prayer of Habakkuk: “O Lord, revive Thy work.”

It is very clear that there are three truths taught in our text. First, salvation is God’s work. Secondly, God’s work of grace sometimes needs reviving. Thirdly, no one can revive God’s work but God Himself.

### **1. THE GREAT SALVATION WHICH GOD HAS SENT INTO THE WORLD IS ENTIRELY HIS OWN WORK.**

Whether it be in the mass or in the individual, there is no true religion except it cometh from above. A thousand mistakes have been made about this matter; and there is but one way of proving this truth, which is so explicit as to deny every error. Some say that religion is, in part at least, the work of priests. Certain men, gifted with peculiar powers, conferred on them by the bishop’s ordination, are set apart to the office of the regular ministry; and when they read certain prayers, or when they preach, it is supposed that there is in them a special measure of power by which the Church and the world are blessed. Ah, my brethren, God does make use of His ministers to establish His own work; but no so-called “priest” or minister ever yet had power to intermeddle with God’s work. We may be the instruments, just as Milton’s pen was the instrument for writing - Paradise Lost; but the pen might as well claim the authorship of that wondrous poem as any of us claim the slightest iota of glory in the work of salvation. God, from first to last, must have, and shall have, all the glory; — neither priest, nor minister, nor evangelist; and there will be a curse and

a blight on that man's labor who does not always stand behind his Master, and declare that without Him he can do nothing.

There is another phase of error which also is opposed to this truth. I believe that many of my brethren, of whom I am now about to speak, do not see the legitimate tendency of certain doctrines they inculcate; but there are some preachers who teach doctrines, which, when distilled, come to this, that man is to help God in the work of salvation. I care not who the man may be who says that, he is in error. Man, when he is moved by the Holy Spirit, and empowered by Him, may help as an instrument in his own salvation after he has been quickened; but the first work of conversion is altogether irrespective of man, as to its agency. God the Holy Ghost quickens the sinner who is "dead in trespasses and sins." He asks of the sinner neither will nor power; but, finding him without anything, He gives him everything. "Salvation is of the Lord" alone. Jonah learnt that truth in the belly of the fish, and if some preachers I know were sent to a place like that, they might learn it too. A little more soul-trouble, a little more deep experience, would make them come out with this grand old truth, that is sometimes called Calvinism, but which, after all, is only Christianity in its bold, naked form: "Salvation is of the Lord."

We call that man an infidel who says that the world was not created by God; but he is worse than an infidel who takes away the glory of salvation from God. If I wished to choose one out of two sins, the sin of denying God's glory in creation, or in salvation, I would prefer to deny, against my senses, that God created the world, rather than deny that God saves souls. If I must commit a sin, let me commit the lesser one; for it surely is the greatest guilt to try to steal the brightest jewel in the crown of God, and that is the jewel of the glory of man's salvation. No, my hearers, you may cavil at this doctrine if you will; but there it stands, and you must confess its truth, or else, denying it, you will be forced to find it true in this life, or in the next. Salvation is God's work, from the very first holy desire that is breathed into the sinner, till the last dying wish with which he enters into Heaven. God shows the sinner his need; he neither could nor would know his need unless God showed it to him. It is the Holy Spirit who gives the sinner an insight into the all-sufficiency of Christ; he would never understand that unless he were taught of the Spirit. It is, then, the Spirit who touches the will, influences the conscience, guides the sinner out of himself unto Christ Jesus, who saves him; and after that, it is still all of God. He who was the Alpha must be the Omega. He must work all our

works in us, or we shall never see God's face with acceptance. Of this I am persuaded, if I should even get my feet on the golden threshold of Paradise, and my finger on its pearly latch, unless I had all-sufficient grace to take the last step, I should die and perish on the very portal of Heaven. Cannot every Christian say, —

*“Grace led my roving feet  
To tread the Heavenly road;  
And new supplies each hour I meet  
While pressing on to God.*

*“Grace taught my soul to pray,  
And made my eyes o'erflow;  
'Twas grace that kept me to this day,  
And will not let me go”?*

But without grace from God, there is no salvation; for “salvation is of the Lord” alone. This doctrine, I hope, we are all ready to receive.

## 2. THE WORK OF SALVATION OFTEN NEEDS REVIVING.

If you know anything of the work of God's grace in your own heart, you will frequently have to pray, “O Lord, revive Thy work.” Today you are full of faith, tomorrow you may be full of doubts. One day you can sing like an angel, the next day your throat is dry, and not a note rises from your soul. One day you stand on Pisgah's summit, and another day the dens of the leopards are your dreary habitation. You are at times full of zeal, and then nothing is too hard for you; you feel that you could give your body to be burned, if it were necessary, to magnify His name. But, alas! perhaps there comes a long season of backsliding, and your soul grows cold and dead; joy flies away, lukewarmness comes and cools your ardor, all your happiness departs, and your fervor becomes quenched in a frost of cold insensibility. You often need to be revived; nay, more than that, you know that the text may be read, as it is in the Hebrew, “O Lord, preserve Thy work;” for there are times when, not only does the work want reviving, but it seems as if it were almost gone out, and it must be rekindled and preserved. Blessed be God, if any of you need reviving, you have the promise that you shall have it, if you seek it with diligence. “A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench.” He carefully takes the flax, and blows it with His own sweet breath; and when one spark appears, He gently bloweth it until there is another, and at last

the flame becomes bright, and strong, and mighty. So may it be with each of us in our own hearts, in the hidden man, of the soul!

I am sure that it is so, too, with the Church at large. We need to pray earnestly, "O Lord, revive Thy work." There comes, every now and then, a mighty stir in our churches. God sends a George Whitefield, or a John Wesley, and a great wave seems to arise upon the surface of the Church, and it rolls over the sands of man's indifference. Gradually it falls back, and perhaps there follow fifty more years of sloth, and dull routine, and red-tapeism. Again God appears in a marvelous manner, and once more He shows His power and might; but then once again the revival dies out, and the light of Israel seems once more to be quenched, and the glory to have departed. It strikes me that, at this period, we are somewhere between the two great waves. I pray the Lord God that we may very soon, by His infinite mercy, see another great wave of blessing arise mightier than any that have ever gone before. Look at our churches; you will see almost everywhere — I would not speak too harshly, — you will see well-nigh everywhere a coldness which cannot be too much lamented. There is a little awakening just now; some of our ministers are finding out that they have tongues, and they are beginning to speak to "the common people," speaking, too, in good old-fashioned Saxon. They have begun to find out, also, that if they would be the means of saving souls, they must preach as if they meant it; they must not leave their hearts in their studies, bringing their old dry manuscripts with them, and stand droning in a square box for an hour. There is a little awakening, but there is still need of far more of the arousing spirit than they have yet received. I am sure, if you look around you, if any thoughtful man considers the signs of the times, he will admit that the doctrine of the text is a doctrine of fact, and that the Church often needs reviving, and that she always needs preserving.

### **3. NO ONE CAN REVIVE GOD'S WORK BUT GOD HIMSELF.**

I shall presently come to an earnest exhortation; but just a word first on this doctrine that is included in my text: "O Lord, revive Thy work." I have not the slightest atom of faith in any professional revivalism; I have never seen any real good come of it. This I have seen, — while the revivalist has been holding special services, the people have been stirred and warmed, and many have professed to be converted; but, alas! in far too many cases, a blast and a blight have been left on those churches for years afterwards, and an injury has been done them from which they seemed never to

recover. A got-up revival is a sort of spiritual intoxication, producing a kind of arousing of men and women, yet really leaving them flatter and duller than they were before.

But though this kind of revivalism does no good, I know that there are true and genuine revivals, and in each of these there is this prominent mark, that they are most visibly and eminently of God. In the great revival in New England, you remember it was at first produced under a sermon preached by President Edwards. There was an ordination, I think, and he attended it; but the expected minister did not arrive, and President Edwards was asked to preach. He had one sermon in his pocket, for he always wrote his sermons, and read them; and he was by no means a mighty speaker, in the common acceptation of the term. So he took out his manuscript, held it up close to his eye, and stood still, almost without motion, except now and then the lifting of his hand; thus he read his sermon through from beginning to end. The Lord seemed to move among that assembly of people. A mysterious influence entered into all hearts. Men returned to their homes, and they told of the great things they had heard and experienced within. Ministers went home, and they began to preach differently from what they had done before. Church-members went home, and they began to pray more earnestly; and, on a sudden, from the spark that seemed to be kindled by the accident of President Edwards being called upon to preach, there came, as it were, one mighty sheet of fire, which spread throughout the land, as the consuming element sweeps over the prairie. So, in the present revival, the same fact must be noticed. There are no great revivalists in America now, who are making any wonderful stir. God just sent them somewhere else, and said, "Now, gentlemen, I am about to revive My own work." He began it Himself, and He is carrying it on. He has aroused New York, and all New England with a mighty blessing, the end of which no one can tell. The Lord Himself has done it; and however we may talk about revivals, the Lord must do the work Himself, and Himself alone. We must pray, "O Lord, revive Thy work." We must pray the revival down; it is ours to use all right means, methods, and instrumentalities, but it must be also ours to recollect that all the strength, and all the might, and all the success, must come from on high, even from God the Holy Spirit.

Are there any of you here who were converted by a man? If you were, you have grave cause to suspect your conversion. If one man can convert you, another may unconvert you. That which man can do, man can undo. Have any of you had your churches revived by a man? Then probably they may

fall back again; but if the revival be a genuine work of God, — a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, then not death, nor hell, can ever destroy God's own work; stand it must, and prevail it shall. "O Lord, revive Thy work." "Wilt thou not revive us again, that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?"

Thus I have set before you the three truths in my text; and now, with all my might, I desire to speak to you on the subject of a revival, and to endeavor to stir up your minds, by way of remembrance, that you may be led to seek after a genuine revival of religion from the Lord. I beseech you, men, brethren, and fathers, strive with God, both by day and by night, for a revival of religion in our midst. My first argument is this: you may well be urged to pray earnestly when you CONSIDER SOME OF THE EFFECTS OF A TRUE REVIVAL.

When revivals come into a church, they make a great stir, and effect many changes. There is the minister. He used to preach at an average rate of three miles an hour; he certainly never went beyond that. He was diligent, too, all the week through, in trying to pick out long words of many syllables, and thrusting them into his discourses, because, good man, as there are stones in fruit, he thought there ought to be hard words in sermons! It was very seldom that he ever stirred himself in his pulpit; had he taken but a pinch of snuff, the people would have noticed it. It would have been a new thing with him, for he was so regular a stager that he had gone in the same old cart-rut for full twenty years. But there came a revival, he did not at first know what to make of it; but, somehow or other, he brushed himself up, brought his energy into play, and, it is currently declared, the next Sunday he actually told an anecdote! He finds a tear unwittingly come into his eye; and, he does not exactly know how it is, but the people actually seem to catch up his words. Another Sunday, and the man grows more earnest still; and the good old woman in the gallery, who had never been disturbed in her sleep before, asked, "What has come over our minister?" It was said by some that he was "growing quite young again"; but the fact was, the dear man was growing quite good again, and God was pouring of His good Spirit into his heart. He put all his old sermons under the bottom of the bed, and set to work to find a few good, homely thoughts, that he might earnestly speak to the people. His congregation were so struck that they could not make it out at all; he was once so dull and drowsy, and now so changed! But Monday night comes, and with it the prayer-meeting. Never were seen so many present before.

The vestry was half full; how wonderful! And the Monday after, better still, quite full! Ah, but the best of it was yet to come, they had to turn into the chapel at length, for lack of room in the vestry! And, what was almost regarded as a miracle, the good old senior deacon, who used to begin with “the unthinking horse rushing into the battle,” and go on with “the oil poured from vessel to vessel,” to the full extent of twenty minutes, actually forgot the horse, broke the vessels, and prayed half-a-dozen times over, “O Lord, save souls, for Jesus Christ’s sake!” And more than that, all the praying brethren, when they prayed, pleaded earnestly that God would bless their pastor, and prosper him in his work! Well, next, the blessing reached the Sunday-school; the teachers began to look up all the children; the addresses were more solemn than they ever were before; and the children became more thoughtful, nay, more, some of the dear boys and girls were converted to God. And then followed the good effects of the revival all around. The members of the church began to attend more regularly, and they not only came to the services both morning and evening on the Sunday, but they actually came in time! Thus the empty seats in the chapel soon became filled, for the members brought strangers with them to the house of God. And, better still, the church got full, too. The minister called an inquirers’ meeting, and, oh! such a number came; and the good man was ready to say, “Who hath begotten me these?” But the most gratifying thing of all was, that those whom the Lord added to the church stood firm; they did not run away from her services. It was God’s revival, and God’s revivals are not spurious. “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved,” and these whom He added were steadfast in after days, and many of them, in the future, became ministers of the gospel, and some of them were sent into foreign lands, to preach among the heathen the glad tidings of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Oh, how I should like to see such revivals as these in your good Yorkshire chapels! Some of our churches down London way, in Essex chapels especially, have never done anything, I do believe, for the last fifty years, that their great, great grandfathers did not do. If you went into a village, and proposed to preach in the open-air, you would be met by sundry objections. “It is not Calvinistic, for the Wesleyans do that.” Well, well, if others do a good thing, why should we not follow their example, and do as they do? If a special prayer-meeting is proposed, the portly deacon asks, “What is the use of it?” Another old stager says, “The people are fully occupied, the market, too, comes on a Wednesday, and it would prove such a great interference with business.” Then a third chimes in, “No, we had rather not,

there are too many meetings already.” They are very good men, but not quite up to the times, or else they would have seen that, now and then, extraordinary means must be used to produce extraordinary effects.

Some of our respectable churches would be frightened out of all manner of propriety, if God the Holy Spirit should once begin a work of this nature in their midst. There are good old deacons and church-members everywhere to be found who, if more than one candidate a month presented himself for church-fellowship, would exclaim, “Sure, they can’t be good ‘uns;” and they would forthwith begin to try to pump the poor souls dry, by plying them with deep theological questions about “a law work” and “a deep experience” and difficult doctrines; and if the candidates made any little blunder, they would at once say, “Ah! you are not up to the mark, and ought not to be received; you had better wait a few months until you gain more knowledge of the deep things of God.” The effects of a true revival among all our churches would be positively astounding; it would do ministers good, members good, deacons good, and, above all, it would do sinners good, by bringing them to Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christian men and women, I beseech you, pray that God would pour out His Spirit upon us. The devil is wide-awake, hell is active, infidelity is rampant, Popery is making mighty strides, every system of error is on the alert. Up, up, ye guardsmen of the truth! Up, up, ye mothers in Israel! Up, up, for God and for His cause! Cry unto God that, as the enemy is becoming mighty, He would prove Himself almighty. Remember how your time is flying; it is but little you can do for Christ, should you even be spared to live to eighty years of age. What are eighty years? How little to spend for Him who gave His life for us! Oh! when we think how little we can do, it should stir us up to do all we can, and to ask that God, if He will not lengthen out our years, may double their effect, by making us doubly laborious, and doubly useful. Remember, too, that while time is flying, men are dying, souls are being lost, sinners are being hurried away to the bottomless gulf. Does not this thought move your hearts? Would you not seek to save sinful men and women, if you could hear the shrieks and groans of those who have perished in their sins, and are now past hope? And some of these, whom you might seek to save, are your own sons and daughters, your own flesh and blood. You have every cause for a revival, for there are among you wives who have drunken husbands, and there are husbands here who have drunken wives; there are parents here who have ungodly children, sons and daughters who make their hearts to ache. If you

will not plead for the conversion of other sinners, at least pray for a revival that your own offspring may be saved by grace. If this argument touches you not, what other can I use? He that careth not for his own household "hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Oh, how sweet it is to parents when they see their children brought to Christ! I met with a remarkable instance of a happy woman, not many months ago. A widowed mother had two sons, who had nearly come to man's estate. They had been excellent children in their boyhood, but they began to be headstrong, as too many young people are prone to be, and they would not brook maternal control; they would spend their Sunday as they pleased, and sometimes in places where they should not have been seen. Their mother determined that she would never give up praying for them, and one night she thought she would stop at home from the house of God, shut herself up in the house, and pray for her sons' conversion. The very night she had thus set apart for prayer on their behalf, the elder son said to her, "I am going to hear the minister that preaches down Southwark way; I am told he is an odd man, and I want to hear him preach." The mother herself did not think much of that minister, but she was so glad that her boy was going anywhere within the sound of the Word, that she said, "Go, my son." He added, "My brother is going with me." Their mother stayed at home, and earnestly prayed for her sons. Those two young men came to the house of God, and that odd minister was blessed to the conversion of both of them. When the mother opened the door, on their return home, the first one fell upon her neck, weeping as if his heart would break. "Mother," he said, "I have found the Savior; I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ." She looked at him a minute, and then said, "I knew it, my son; to-night I have had power in prayer, and I know that I have prevailed. I knew it would be so." "But," said the younger brother, "oh, mother! I too, have been cut to the heart, and I also have given my heart to Jesus." Happy was that mother, and I was happy, too, when she came to me, and said, "You have been the means of the conversion of my two sons; I have never thought of baptism before, I see it now to be the Lord's own ordinance, I will be baptized with my children." It was my joy to lead the whole three down into the water, and to baptize them into "the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Why should it not be so in your case? If God should send a revival of religion in the midst of your church, you may hope that your children will be included in the blessing.

Now, if other arguments have failed, let me give you one more why you should seek a revival. There, on the cross, hangs your Savior bleeding to death. He looks upon you. Methinks I hear Him say to you tonight, "Love sinners; I love you; do you not love Me? Do you not love sinners for My sake?" think I see Him with His blessed hands nailed to the cruel cross, and as He hangs there, He looks on you, my brother, over yonder, and He says to you, "Sinner, I am bearing all this for thee; what wilt thou do for Me?" What wilt thou do for Jesus Christ, who died to save thee? Brothers, sisters, what will you do? Ask your hearts the question, and answer it as you mean to carry it out, "What can I, what shall I, do for Christ Jesus my Lord?" One of you says, "I will give my money for Christ." Amen! Another says, "I will use my pen for Christ." Amen! Another cries, "I will give my all to Christ; all I am, and all I have, shall be henceforth and for ever Thine, my Savior." Amen and Amen! Practice your resolves; go and live in the world, but no longer as of the world, "for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." God grant that so great a revival may spring up in our land! "O Lord, revive Thy work."

Now I shall conclude by trying to show you HOW YOU CAN, AS CHRISTIANS, EACH OF YOU, IN THE HANDS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, PROMOTE A REVIVAL. It is hard to tell, dear friends, what is the best thing that a man can do towards the salvation of souls when his heart is right; for, sometimes, the very strangest act becomes the most useful. I will tell you a strange but true story. That holy man, George Whitefield, was once staying at Rhode Island, at the house of a captain who was a rich and worthy man. The family were very much attached to the preacher, and they did everything to make him comfortable. Whitefield was accustomed always to speak to the persons where he stopped, and to warn them to "flee from the wrath to come." But this captain was a man so worthy that he did not like to introduce the subject; the devil said to him, "George, don't say anything to the captain, he will get right by-and-by, he will be sure to come round; see what a nice sort of a man he is; it would not look respectful of you, either, to be intruding your religion upon him; and, besides, he hears you preach, and that is sufficient." So George let day go after day, and did not say anything to the captain, his wife, or his family. At length, the last night came, and George Whitefield went to bed with an aching heart, for conscience said to him, "Whitfield, you have not done all you could for the salvation of this family, and therefore you are guilty."

The flesh said, "No, no, Whitefield, you do a great deal now; God will excuse you letting that alone." Again the Holy Spirit said, "Not so, not so, Whitefield, you must say something." Well, poor fellow, what to do he could not tell, for he felt he could not summon courage to speak to the captain on the last day. He said, "If I had done it before, I could have done it well, but not now." At last, this thought struck him; he had a diamond ring on his finger; I never knew the use of those things till I heard this story! He went to the window-pane, and wrote these words, "One thing thou lackest." Whitefield went his way; this was all that he did, and his heart still ached, for he felt sure he had not done all he ought to have done. He was no sooner gone from the house than the captain, who loved and venerated him, went upstairs, and said, "I will look at the bed where this holy man slept." The writing on the window-pane at once caught his eye; he stood and looked, and looked, and wept, and wept again. He then went to the head of the stairs, and said, "Wife, come up here." She came, and he, pointing to the window-pane, said, "There, you and I thought we had made this good man comfortable, and we fancied that he had forgotten our souls; but, you see, he was troubled about us; he did not like to speak to us, yet he could not go away without leaving a message, for his heart was sad about us." "Oh!" she said, "I wondered he did not seem in earnest about us, but I see it now;" and she began to weep with her husband. He said to her, "Let us call the children up," so they called them up, and said to them, "Look there! Read that!" They read it, and there and then the Spirit of God convinced them of sin, and led them to Christ. I know the person who now has in her possession the pane of glass bearing this very writing cut with the diamond, and it is kept by the family as a relic of the most sacred kind. Who can tell how little a thing may do good? Only get your heart right, have an anxious desire to do good, and you cannot tell how you may be the means of promoting a revival, and so bring about the conversion of your friends.

But if you want a large blessing, let me say, first of all, "Meet for prayer." What a grand thing a good prayer-meeting is! I like the "Amen!" of our Methodist friends, when they do not shout it out too loudly, and when they put it in the right place. To hear it sometimes makes a man respond, "Amen! Amen!" he cannot help it. I was once at a Primitive Methodist meeting where a good brother stuck fast in prayer, so they said to him, "Plead the blood, plead the blood, brother!" It frightened me at first, till I remembered where I was. The poor man did plead the blood of Jesus, and

we had a blessed prayer-meeting indeed. What we want is, more life and earnestness in all our prayer-meetings; briefer, more fervent, burning, believing praying. If we all prayed as we would plead for our own lives, if we all said no more words than were wanted, and left off when we had done praying, then we should have good prayer-meetings. Some of our brethren evidently have an idea that they must keep up to the orthodox twenty minutes, and there they stand, telling God everything in the world, but not praying even one little petition. One night, I told one of our friends who had asked the Lord to forgive him for his shortcomings, that he should have prayed to be forgiven for his longcomings. He kept on such a great while that he prayed us into a good spirit, and then prayed us right out again. Our prayer-meetings must not be shams; all the deacons must be present, whosoever else may be absent. If they do not lead in attendance at all public services on Lord's-days and on week-nights, how can we expect the members to be present? The prayers must be real prayers, five minutes a-piece, ten at the outside; and those who do pray, must be earnest; one cold prayer damps and spoils a whole prayer-meeting.

Then, again, if revivals are to become more numerous, we must become more consistent. We have rich men, members of our churches, grinding the faces of the poor; and while this is the case, God will assuredly withhold His blessing. Some men, when they resolve to become rich, seem as if they constructed a great cauldron, into which they are ever ready to pitch their poor clerks and work-people, with their wives and children, crying, "Never mind them; do not trouble about their comfort;" and thus they go on, until curses follow them as they walk the streets. They seem to say, "Boil them all up, and then let us go and take the sacrament." Detestable hypocrisy! And, you, tradespeople, too, when the poor come to deal with you, be sure that you adulterate all the things they buy; if you must sell cheap, do it; that's the way some get on in this world. People say they must live; I wonder if they have forgotten that they must DIE! We cannot expect to have God's blessing until tradesmen, masters and workmen, employers and servants, feel that One is their Master, even Christ, and that all they are brethren. Some men, who are members in our churches, are as bad as their masters; they are mere timeservers. Some people think it is very hard for a master to oppress his servant, but it is equally wrong for the servant to cheat his master. There are some men who pray most delightfully, but I would not give them sixpence a day for their work; they don't mind eating other people's bread, but never know what it is to earn their own. The

commandment in the Bible is, "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." Some people make a fine fuss about the injunction, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," but they are not so careful about the other half of the same commandment; they do not read it through: "Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work." Those who do not labor the "six days" break the fourth commandment as much as they who do not "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." Work during the six-days, then rest on the Sabbath-day. God will not hold the man guiltless who observes only one half of His commandment. A partial obedience is positive disobedience.

You see, I am treating you all alike; there is a piece for everyone, and if the cap fits anybody, let him wear it to his heart's content, and "bring forth fruits worthy of repentance." I was preaching in the shoe country, some time ago, when the shoes were going down sixpence per sole, and the men clapped me; so I said a few more things, and they clapped again; then, when I tried to talk straight to the men, the masters began to clap. I have tonight said something for all of you, for it seems that all need the word of admonition. Oh, if we could all love one another! Down in the cotton districts, in the wool country, and in the iron districts, we do not love one another as we ought. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." In London, the old idea about loving one another, the master loving his man, and the mistress her servant girl, is deemed Utopian and ridiculous, and the question is asked, "Who can do it?" I wish, though, we could get the old idea back again, and love one another. Why, men would work ten times more cheerfully, if they could only feel that their masters loved them, and took an interest in them, and masters would be better served. When this comes to pass, then we shall see a great revival of religion. But the present clashing of interests, the knocking one against another, prevents the growth of religion. The poor man says, "I shall not go to chapel; look at the deacon, he is such a hard man." Then there is the church where most of the members are poor, and the master says, "I shall not join them, they are only my men." So both of them are kept from the place where God would bless them, because they have not learned the great truth that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Until that truth is fully recognized, men will not know how to have love one to the other. We must try to set this matter to rights, and then God will bless us, He will bless us, and that right early.

Let us go to our pulpits, my brethren in the ministry, praying for a revival. Deacons, go to your offices, asking for a revival. Church-members, betake yourselves to your prayer-meetings, and plead for a revival. And, oh, you who are unconverted, remember, it is for your sakes we want a revival! Hear me, ye who are unsaved, while I preach the gospel to you for a minute. You are lost, you are ruined, you are utterly undone. Christ Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, to save sinners, to save you. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house. Cast yourself entirely upon Jesus; say, "Sink or swim, I take Jesus to be my only trust. I give up everything else, and take Christ to be my all, and in all." If you are able to say that from the heart, believing wholly and entirely on our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, you may rejoice that you are safe now, and you shall be safe when the earth shall reel and totter, when the pillars of heaven shall stagger, when the stars shall fall, and when all created things shall pass away. Believe! BELIEVE! BELIEVE! Look, LOOK, LOOK, AND LIVE! The Lord is ready to save you. He Himself invites you, yea, commands you to look and be saved: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." I have often told the story of how that text was blessed to my soul's conversion; it is a Baptist text, and a Primitive Methodist text, and an Independent text, ay, and a Church of England man's text, too. We may not agree in all things; but, poor sinner, we are agreed in telling you to look to Jesus Christ for salvation.

*"Venture on Him, venture wholly,  
Let no other trust intrude;  
None but Jesus, none but Jesus,  
Can do helpless sinners good."*

Oh, that there may be some here tonight who will now look unto Jesus! Spirit of the living God, hear our prayers! Save sinners; grant a revival to the whole Church of Jesus Christ, for His Name's Sake! Amen and Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

NOVEMBER, 1898.

# COMFORT IN TROUBLE.

A SERMON, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE PIERCE HALL, HALIFAX, ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 7TH, 1858.<sup>f9</sup>

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

*“My soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.” —  
Psalm 88:3.*

RELYING upon the promised help of the Holy Spirit, I shall endeavor to address myself, this afternoon, principally to those who are sad at heart, and sorrowful in spirit, and who therefore have need of comfort.

You know, when Bunyan’s pilgrims reached the Delectable Mountains, the Shepherds “had them to the palace door, and then said unto them, Come in, Mr. Feeble-mind; come in, Mr. Ready-to-halt; come in, Mr. Despondency, and Mrs. Much-afraid, his daughter. These, Mr. Great-heart, said the Shepherds to the guide, we call in by name, for that they are most subject to draw back; but as for you, and the rest that are strong, we leave you to your wonted liberty.” I would act, this afternoon, in the same way as those Shepherds acted, and while I know that those who are “strong in faith, giving glory to God.” will be able to take for themselves comfort from God’s most Holy Word, I would turn specially to those whose faith wavers, and whose troubles are increased, and I would say to such, “Come in, beloved; rejoice in the promises; feed upon the rich dainties of God’s Word; and make yourselves joyful in your God.” In addressing myself to these timid, fearful, troubled ones, I would speak from the text I have selected, and which I think will be expressive of their peculiar condition. They are saying, perhaps, in the words of the psalmist, “My soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.” It may be that they

have made use of these very words; but if not, they are sufficiently applicable to allow me to ground upon them some messages of comfort.

Now, thou heir of mourning, thou child of woe, permit me, first of all, to describe the state in which thou art now found; then, in the second place, let me try to find out how it is thou hast come into so sad a condition; and, in the third place, let me endeavor to help thee out of thy sorrowful state, that thou mayest no more hang thy head like a bulrush, but that thou mayest find joy and consolation in thy Lord.

### **1. First, I will DESCRIBE THE CONDITION OF THOSE WHO ARE MOURNING AND SORROWING.**

I commence with this remark. Dear friend, your condition is not peculiar, it is a very common one. You are doubting, distressed, desponding; you imagine that no one else ever felt as you are feeling now. The self-conceit of misery is leading you to believe that you are one of the peers in the realm of woe; or, perhaps you have even climbed the throne, and, putting the crown upon your own head, you have declared yourself to be monarch of the kingdom of misery. Possibly, you are saying, with Jeremiah, "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger." While I strike at your pride, at the same time let me endeavor to afford you some consolation. Yours are not singular sorrows; others are enduring similar ones. The valley which you are now treading has been trodden by many feet before you entered it; your woes and agonies are no strange things; they have happened unto your fellows long before your time; and if to no one else, they certainly happened to your Savior: for He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Perhaps nothing has a greater power to comfort the mourner than for him to remember that others are, or have been, in the same condition as himself. Ye are not alone, O ye mourners! However bad your case may be, others are suffering or have suffered as ye now are. Indeed, so common is the case I am about to describe — the condition of one under despondency of spirit, — that I may safely remark that there is never a Christian who, some time or other, has not been more or less in that state. It may be that you have looked up to one of your good deacons, you have heard him pray very sweetly, and you have said to yourself, "Ah! if I could only pray like that man, I should never more have a doubt." Or you may have listened to

your minister when he has been preaching boldly concerning the good things of the Kingdom, and you have thought, "Ah! if I only had the full assurance of our minister, I should never again have a fear or a despondency." It was because you knew very little about this matter that you thought and spake thus. He who can comfort you must first have needed comfort himself, and received it, even as did the apostle Paul. Remember how he wrote: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Some there are who do comfort others; as Eliphaz said that Job had done: "Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees;" but when trouble comes to themselves, they faint; it touches them, and they are troubled as was Job. Believe me when I say that, oftentimes, some of God's wisest and strongest servants are blown about like the dust of the street by fierce gusts of wind; yea, sometimes, it is as much as the man of great faith can do to hold his own, and to believe that he has any part or lot in the Kingdom of God.

I fear I shall give you very poor comfort when I make the next remark. Not only is despondency very common, but it is a frequent occurrence in the experience of the same person. If you get away from your doubts and fears today, do not flatter yourself that, therefore, you are out of the wood; do not begin to shout too soon, and to say that henceforth you have done with despondencies. Uphill and downhill is the road to Heaven. Sometimes we get to Pisgah's top, and view the goodly landscape, and then we think we have faith enough to leap to Heaven at one spring; but, anon, we go down into the depths of the valley, and the thunderclouds brood over our heads, and sometimes empty themselves in tempests over our poor, quivering frames, and then we seem not to have faith enough to do more than lie down to die. I know the young Christian always fancies that, after he has got over his first great trouble, he will never have another; after he has picked his way pretty well through the Slough of Despond, he thinks there will not be any more such places betwixt there and the Celestial City. If John Bunyan had put fifty Sloughs of Despond between the Wicket Gate and the River of Death, he would not have put too many, for there are quite as many as that, at least for the most of Zion's pilgrims. You must expect, many a time, as you pass through life, to be cast down, and to be forced to cry aloud, with David, "I sink in deep mire, where there is no

standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul." "The righteous scarcely are saved;" their own experience is the best exposition of the difficulties of the way over which they travel to Heaven.

Will you, however, please recollect that there is nothing surprising in the fact that a man is often desponding when he is going to Heaven. A man cannot attain to any eminence even in this world without sometimes being brought to his wits end, and being made to feel that he is utterly helpless. Ask the wealthy merchant, — he who has at last accumulated a princely fortune, — ask him whether he had any seasons of despondency while he was trying to grow rich. He will tell you, "Yes, dozens, ay, hundreds of times." Often, his fortune had trembled in the balance, and, frequently, it had seemed to be with him a case of "making or breaking," — great success or ignominious bankruptcy. Ask the politician whether he found it easy work to win fame. He will answer, "No; far, very far from being easy;" often, his election had been, as it were, as uncertain as the result of throwing dice; whether he would be prosperous, and ride through the world on the wings of applause, or whether he would be disgraced, and covered with infamy, he had often found it impossible to tell. He tried to go the right way to work to secure success; but how it would turn out, he did not know. Ask the engineer whether he ever discovered any great thing without seasons of despondency. He will tell you how he sat up night after night, until his brain became racked and weary. Again and again he had said to himself, "Ah! I have got it;" but he had to add, "I have not;" for he had discovered some small flaw, and so his hopes were all disappointed. He tried once more; that time, he invested all his earnings and savings in making the model of his machine. He knew it would prove to be the right thing; but he could get no one to take it of him, and no one to help him to turn it to practical account. Thus, the very man who afterwards becomes the greatest in a certain line of engineering, is often fain to lament his failures, and is almost tempted to despair of ultimate success.

Seeing that these temporal things are so difficult of attainment, is there to be no trouble or anxiety in climbing "the hill of God"? Must we fight to win an earthly crown, and are we to gain the Heavenly crown without a battle? Shall we, who are called to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ —

*"Be carried to the skies  
On flowery beds of ease"?*

Certainly not. Doubt and despondency, trouble and dismay must overtake us. Before success there must come disappointments; and “we must, through much tribulation, enter into the Kingdom of God.” So, you see, dear friends, there is no wonder if a Christian is sometimes cast down; it is no marvel if, in so great a conflict, and with such a little strength of our own, we should sometimes fear lest victory should never be ours, lest we should be utterly defeated.

Now I will try to find out exactly what your case is. I trust I may be able, by the Holy Spirit’s gracious guidance, to describe it. It was only a few weeks ago that a city missionary, going through the West End of London, discovered a fact which has supplied me with a memorable anecdote. I know it to be true, and I believe that God the Holy Spirit directed me at the time to say that which was so pertinent to the case of one of my hearers. The missionary called, one day, at a cobbler’s shop, and found the man sitting reading one of my Sermons; so, wishing to have a talk with him, the missionary said, “Do you know Mr. Spurgeon?” “Yes,” he replied, “I do, and I have good reason to know him, for he has been the means of bringing me to know the Lord Jesus Christ; but” (he added) “it was in a very strange way he went about it; you will hardly believe me when I tell you. One Sunday morning, I thought to myself, ‘I will go and hear that queer fellow, Spurgeon; people tell me that he says some very odd things.’ So, off I went to the Surrey Gardens, and sat right in front of him. In his Sermon, he said, ‘There is a man here who is a shoemaker; he keeps his shop open on Sundays, and last Sunday he sold a pair of shoes for ninepence, and he made fourpence profit out of it.’ Well, that was just what I had done; I did keep my shop open on Sundays, and on that particular day I had sold a pair of children’s shoes for ninepence, and fourpence was just the profit. So I thought, he must either be a very clever man, or else God had spoken to him about me; and I went home very much frightened. After a time, I went again to hear him; and before long I was sure that God was speaking to me through Mr. Spurgeon. I went home convinced of sin, and soon, by the gracious working of the Holy Spirit, I became a new man in Christ Jesus. But, sir, I shall never cease to wonder, as long as I live, how it was that God should have wrought in such a strange way to bring me to Himself.”

Now, my friend, if your case should be as accurately described, this afternoon, as that man’s condition was depicted at the Music Hall, will you

be so good as to take comfort from the fact, and believe that God has spoken to you through me.

What is your trouble, my poor anxious friend? "I am afraid I am not one of God's elect; that is my trouble. I have been a long time praying and hoping; and I cannot help fearing what will become of me." Well, first of all, let me tell you that yours is a very common fear. A young man, who had that fear when he was first seeking the Savior, went to a minister, who said to him, "Young man, you have nothing whatever to do with the doctrine of election." The young man thought, "That is not a satisfactory answer. If I go and consult a dentist, and he tells me I have nothing to do with the toothache, and that I should not think about such things, I should say, 'Yes, but your talking like that will not make my tooth leave off aching, for it needs either to be stopped or to be extracted.'" "So is it with this doctrine of election; it troubles many anxious souls, and it is no use for us to say to them, 'You have nothing to do with election.'" It is our business to remove the trouble; and it is not a very difficult thing to do that. Will you, who are perplexed about this doctrine of election, just answer me this one question, "Do you, with all your heart, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?" If, with your whole heart, you can answer, "I do believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," you are saved, and you are as truly elect as are the glorified spirits before the throne: "for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Another anxious one says, "I am afraid I have not come to Christ the right way." Now that is a trouble which you never need have. Did you really come to Jesus Christ at all? Because, if so, you came the right way; there is no such thing as coming to Christ the wrong way. He Himself has said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." The Father never draws anyone to Christ in the wrong way; He makes no mistake, so, if you have been made willing to come to Christ, it was the result of the Divine drawing, and you may depend upon it that you have come to Christ the right way.

"But," you say, "I am troubled because my experience differs from that of others of whom I have read." Yes, I know, you take in a twopenny magazine, do you not? It has in it, every month, a biography of some very good man or woman, who is extolled to the skies without any very great reason. You read these biographies, and you say, "I don't know how it is, I am sure; but I do not feel as that good man or that gracious woman felt,

and therefore I fear I cannot be a Christian.” Believe me, you have no cause for fear on that score. You probably have, on the walls of your house, or on your parlor carpet, a lot of roses and lilies, or other flowers, whatever may happen to be the present fashion; there are the same green leaves, and the same hues for the flowers, all exactly like each other. But go into your garden and see if you can find fifty flowers there all alike, or even two exactly like each other. You could not pick out a couple marked in precisely a similar manner. The reason is just this: those that are alike are artificial, while the real, living, growing flowers always differ.

So is it in the Church of Christ. Our God is a lover of variety; although the experience of the Lord’s children will always agree in the main, just as the bones of any one man will correspond to the bones of other men; yet they never do agree in the minutiae, just as all of our faces are differently formed. We are all diverse and distinct in the filling up of the human frame; and so we are in our religious experiences. If I could believe that my experience is, in every jot and tittle, like — ay, like even that of the apostle Paul, I should conclude myself to be a hypocrite; for, if I were just like another man, contending as I do that God never did make two of the same sort, I should view myself as a counterfeit imitation of a genuine Christian. In the details of the inner life, there are and always must be great diversities. Therefore, do not let that trouble you, for there is no cause for fear there, even though your experience may be peculiar, and unlike all others.

Here is a different trouble. Someone exclaims, “I am afraid that I cannot repent enough.” This is a very common fear, and a very rational fear, too; for, at the very outset, let me say, concerning it, that you are quite right in your suspicion; you have not repented enough; no one in the world ever did repent enough. If we were to keep on repenting throughout all eternity, we should never sufficiently repent for the great sins we have committed against so kind and so holy a God.

*“Could my tears for ever flow,” —*

could all the clouds, and rains, and floods dwell in my eyes, that I might weep them out in tears, I could never weep enough on account of the guilt of sin.

“Nay, nay,” says the man, “that is not what I meant; I meant that I could not repent enough to prove that I was a child of God.” Now, mark,

repentance is not to be measured by its quantity, but by its quality. It is like faith; when we begin to be Christians, our faith is very little, but it grows and increases; yet he who has but little faith is quite as sure of Heaven as he who has the greatest faith.

*“The strong, the feeble, and the weak  
Are safe in Jesus now.”*

And they are alike safe, if they are trusting in Him, nor shall any one of them perish. God will not suffer even the least of His people to be lost, and to be eternally cast away from His presence. The question you have to answer is this, Do you repent at all? Is your repentance sincere and genuine? For if, with all your heart, you do abhor sin, and seek to avoid it, you need not fear as to the reality of your repentance; but, as a little grace ensures the death of all your sins, so this little repentance shall go on increasing, and widening, and deepening, from a tiny brook to a broad river, till at last, in one great sea of repentance, it shall include all your sins, and the Savior’s blood, like a far greater ocean, shall cover them and bury them forever and ever.

It is very likely that I have not yet pictured the peculiar case of some person sitting far away at the back of the hall, and who is much exercised in his mind. “O sir!” says he, “my trouble is, I am afraid I am a hypocrite.” I have met with dozens of persons who say this of themselves; but just think what they mean. If a man comes to you on business, and says, “Now I want you to watch me very narrowly in all your transactions with me, for I am afraid I am dishonest,” I fancy that you would exclaim, “Well, this is the first time I ever heard a rogue warn me against himself.” And it is the same with this class of persons to whom I am referring; real hypocrites rarely talk thus: If they are hypocrites, then they are hypocrites indeed. No, my friend, if you are afraid of hypocrisy in yourself, it looks to me like a sign that at least you are true at heart, and have a tender conscience. Strive against hypocrisy, my brother; but be not so foolish as to think yourself a hypocrite when you are really sincere in your desire to be right in the sight of God.

Another says, “I am afraid I shall not hold on in the good way.” Some brethren in the ministry will encourage this fear, and will tell you that some do fall away from grace, and perish. That is a kind of religion in which I do not and cannot believe. I could not base my hope and rest my soul upon

anything that was short of everlasting. Everlasting righteousness must be mine, or else I cannot feel secure and happy. If I cannot feel sure that —

*“My name, from the palms of His hands  
Eternity will not erase;  
Impress’d on His heart it remains  
In marks of indelible grace:  
Yes, I to the end shall endure,  
As sure as the earnest is given;  
More happy, but not more secure,  
The glorified spirits in Heaven;” —*

I can neither rest nor work; but I know that it is so. Therefore, O child of God, this is a fear which need not distract you for a moment; you have no cause to fear lest, after all, you should become a castaway; you have no cause for fear lest you should make shipwreck of faith, because many mere professors do so. Mere professors do perish, and are cast away at last; but if you are truly trusting Christ, then all is well, and all will be well forever and ever. God must change His nature, and forfeit His promises, and His eternal covenant must be made void, before He will suffer you to perish. “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.” It is no uncertain gospel that you are bidden to believe; it is one which will bear your weight; you may rest upon it with the utmost confidence.

*“Once in Christ, in Christ for ever;  
Nothing from His love can sever.”  
O my distrustful heart,  
How small thy faith appears!*

*But greater, Lord, Thou art  
Than all my doubts and fears:  
Did Jesus once upon me shine?  
Then Jesus is for ever mine.*

*“Unchangeable His will,  
Whatever be my frame;  
His loving heart is still  
Eternally the same:*

*My soul through many changes goes,  
His love no variation knows.”*

Now I am going to try to select still another case, and to speak a word that may be pertinent thereto. I remember, in my early boyhood, being at my grandfather's house, and seeing there a venerable lady, who was dressed in black; and her mourning attire was just the emblem of her inner consciousness. She always looked sad, and I never heard her speak one joyful word all the time I knew her. It was whispered to me that she believed she had committed the unpardonable sin; and I well recollect with what amazement I looked at her. I felt almost inclined to pay reverence to such a person; and being, on one occasion, left in the room with her, she called me up to her, and said, — and it quite frightened me, — “Ah! you may be happy, but I never can. I have committed that sin that is unto death; and do what I may, I know I am a lost soul, and there is no hope for me!” It was only the week before last I met a man who said he committed “the unpardonable sin” twelve times every hour! I said to him, “Well, you are a great sinner, and no mistake; do you think the apostle Paul ever sinned like that?” He replied, “No, I do not think he did.” “Well,” I answered, “but Paul says, ‘This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.’ Now, if Paul calls himself the chief of sinners, how do you make it out that you are worse than he was? If you commit the unpardonable sin, you must be a greater sinner than the apostle Paul, and yet he calls himself the chief of sinners.”

Let me speak a few words to any persons who may be present, and who think they are in this condition. If you know what the unpardonable sin is, you know a great deal more than all the divines who have ever lived. After all these ages of controversy about the matter, I believe it is the wisest course for us all to give up the attempt to find out what the unpardonable sin is. If you, therefore, know what it is, you must be marvelously clever; and more learned than all the assemblies of divines, or than the greatest men who have ever studied their Bibles. I do not believe you are so wise as that, and therefore I do not think you know what this sin is; and, further, I do not believe that you have committed the unpardonable sin. With regard to the sin that “hath never forgiveness,” I hold this view. We are not told in Scripture what that sin is, and for a very obvious reason; our very want of knowledge may be a check upon us with regard to all sin, lest we should commit this “sin unto death.” Riding along in the country, I sometimes see boards put up in gentlemen's grounds, bearing this warning, “Trespassers beware! Man-traps set on these premises!” Why is it not put upon the

boards the exact spot where these man-traps are set? Why does it not say, "There is a trap so many feet from the apple tree, or so many yards from the pear tree"? Why, because the very fact that people do not know where the trap is laid, is often the means of preventing them from going there at all. Now, all sin is a trespass against God; you have no right to sin; and God has put up that great warning notice, "There is a sin unto death;" and He tells you, if you commit that sin, you cannot be saved; but what that sin is, He does not tell you; for, to point out that particular sin, would frustrate the very purpose He had in view in giving the warning.

But, mark you, while we cannot tell what that sin is, we can tell you what it is not. I cannot say to any man, "You have committed the sin unto death;" but I can say at least to some men, "You have not committed the sin for which there is no forgiveness." Do you today feel yourself to be a sinner? Do you weep because guilt lies, like a heavy burden, on your heart? Are you willing to be saved? Have you begun to pray? Are you prepared to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart? Then, believe me, you have no more committed that unpardonable sin than have the angels in Heaven. For that sin is "a sin unto death," and you are not dead. You have some signs and tokens of spiritual life; you feel, you wish, you strive, you desire; these feelings prove you have a measure of life, and therefore you have not committed the sin which is unto death; for the immediate consequence of that sin is hardness of heart, the letting of a man alone, so that he has a seared conscience, and goes to his grave careless and indifferent, without God, without Christ, without hope, and, at the same time, without fear and without terror.

I hope that these words which I have spoken may be the means of comforting some of you who are sinking "in deep mire, where there is no standing," and who are saying with "Heman the Ezrahite," "My soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave."

I have taken so long over the first part of my subject that I must be very brief with the rest.

(To be concluded next month.)

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

DECEMBER, 1898.

# COMFORT IN TROUBLE.

A SERMON, DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE PIERCE HALL, HALIFAX, ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 7TH, 1858.

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

*“My soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.” —  
Psalm 88:3.*

(Concluded.)

2. IN the second place, I am to TRY TO FIND OUT HOW IT IS THAT YOU HAVE COME INTO SO SORROWFUL A CONDITION.

Perhaps you are like the man who had a wry neck, you were born so, and therefore cannot help it. Perchance, the day when you were born was a cloudy day, and you have always had a cloudy heart and melancholy disposition. If it be with you constitutional, I know of scarcely anything that can totally deliver you from it, though many things may alleviate your woe.

“Ah!” cries one, “I first of all fell into a miserable state of mind during a serious illness. Before I had the fever, I used to be as happy as the days were long.

*“What peaceful hours I then enjoyed!  
How sweet their memory still!  
But now I find an aching void  
The world can never fill.”*

Well, my brother, seeing that your sorrow has arisen through sickness, the wisest advice I can give you is, go to the physician. There are many of our spiritual ailments, and doubts, and fears, that spring far more from a sickly

body than from anything amiss with the heart. Depend upon it, a good tonic, something that will set your body to rights, will tend also to restore your spiritual joy. If you have once lived near to your God, you may have hope that you shall do so again. Many poor members of our churches cannot afford to buy enough nourishing food to keep their bodies in a healthy state, and therefore they get down in spirit. It is hunger that gives the devil the advantage over them; often, they doubt whether they are the children of God, for no other reason than because their flesh is weak, and their bodies are sick. Strong faith may exist under sore sufferings; but there are some forms of suffering which do to a great extent affect our spiritual condition. Abernethy was a wise doctor; and once, when he went to see a poor man who was in a low state, he looked round the room, he saw neither table nor chairs, for they had all gone to the pawnbrokers; so, when he returned home, the worthy doctor put a couple of sovereigns into a pill-box, and sent them with the written prescription: — “These to be taken as often as required.” It was surprising how soon the poor man got well under that treatment; it was a kind of golden remedy for his disease. My friends, do you find out some poor people, and serve them in just the same way; and many sad souls, now full of doubts and fears, if you would only give a little more to sustain their bodies, would learn to “rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

But I am far from believing that, in many cases, this is all the truth. Very much of our despondency arises from sin. Look at the case of David; he had been a very happy man, but, on a sudden, he fell into dark despondency; and, from that day, he went limping and halting to his grave. There is no mystery about his case: his great sin was the parent of his great sorrow. If David had kept out of the way of that particular sin, he would also have been kept from that special sorrow; if he had been always holy, he might have been always happy. Alas for him; alas for that evil day when he rebelled against his God; it was the first day of his darkness, and the last day of his joy, until he opened his eyes again in another world, and saw his sin and iniquity forever put away. Probably, my friend, your sadness is caused by your sin. Search and look; find out what it is that you have done which has made God angry with you, and then remember, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to Cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

**3.** I have thus tried to picture your case, and I have hinted at the way by which you came into so sad a plight; let me now just say a word or two which may be THE MEANS OF HELPING YOU TO GET DELIVERANCE OUT OF YOUR TROUBLES.

To some of you who are very sad at heart, I will say but two words, Be active. One of the best ways to make a man cheerful is to make him busy.

*“Satan finds some mischief still  
For idle hands to do;”*

and he always finds some misery for idle hearts to feel. Perhaps you think you would like to come to your minister, and to say to him, “O my dear sir, I wish you would preach some comforting sermons! Do take for your text next Sunday, ‘Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people, saith your God.’ Do comfort me; for I am so sad.” If you do talk like that to him, and your minister is a wise man, he will reply, “Yes, my dear friend, I will comfort you as far as I can and ought; but do you not think that you had better take a class in the Sunday-school? I will give you something to do for Christ; that will be the best way of cheering your spirit.” In the winter time, the boys crowd round the fire to warm their hands, and comfort their bodies; but in comes the sensible father, and he says, “Now, boys, out with you into the garden, and get to work!” and the result is, they presently return with rosy cheeks and hands as warm as possible, while they are bright and happy, whereas before they were sullen and miserable.

It is just the same with our lazy church-members, who constantly grumble at their ministers. They say that the minister’s fire reeds poking, and it wants some coal on, it does not burn well; and they think that they can set everything to rights! The fault, however, is not their minister’s, but their own; they themselves are lazy, and they expect the minister to make up the heat that they lose by their own idleness. Lazy church-members are always grumbling; they want shorter sermons; they are seldom, if ever, seen at the prayer-meetings; usually they do not come out more than once on the Lord’s-day. Find them something to do, my brethren; they will then be more cheerful and contented, or let them find some useful service for themselves; that is an exceedingly good way to keep off despondency.

To those who are active, and who are also anxious and troubled, let me say, Look your trouble in the face. A minister once called upon a young woman, who had been ill for months; she was in a very low way, and she

said to the minister, "Sir, I have not a grain of faith; I have not in my heart one spark of love to Jesus." He said to her, "Say that again." She said it again, "I have not in my heart one spark of love to Jesus." He took out his pencil, went to the window, and wrote her words down on a sheet of paper, which he brought to her, and said, "Now, sign your name at the bottom of that paper." "What does it say, sir?" she asked. "Listen: hear these words which I have just written down as you spoke them: 'I have not in my heart one spark of love to Jesus.' Now, sign your name to that statement." She quickly replied, "Oh, no; I could not do that!" And this simple plan was made the means of bringing her out of her despondency; when she looked her trouble straight in the face, then it vanished altogether.

Suppose that Satan says to anyone of you, dear friends, "You are no saint; you are a sinner;" just reply to him, "It may be true I am not a saint; you tell me that I am no child of God, that may be the case; but there is one thing I do know, I am a sinner, and Jesus Christ died to save sinners; and, if I never believed that before, I will believe it now for the first time. If I am not in the right road, I will go back, and come in at the Wicket Gate. Thou sayest I am no saint; but thou canst not deny that I am a sinner; so, if I have been wrong up to the present time, I will go back to the cross, and I will now repose nay unfeigned trust in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior."

**4.** Now, in conclusion, permit me to GIVE A LITTLE ADVICE TO THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE HAPPY IN THE FAITH, AND REJOICING IN CHRIST; to those who have kept out of this despondency of which I have been speaking. The old proverb says, "Prevention is better than cure;" and so it is. We had a servant once who always used to be singing. Whether she was outside the door, whitening the steps; or in the house washing the linen, cooking the dinner, or clearing away the tea things, she would be constantly singing or humming some hymn tune. So I said to her, one day, "Betsy, what makes you sing so?" "Well, sir," she answered, "I think it keeps bad thoughts away; and, if I didn't sing, sometimes I should get so low-spirited, I shouldn't know what to do with myself." There was a good deal of philosophy in Betsy's method. You know that boys, if they have to go through a churchyard at night, always begin whistling to keep up their spirits. Singing does people good, especially "singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Such music cheers the heart, and often tends to drive dull care away. If we, were

to sing twice as much, we should only have half as little time to groan in. If we had twice as many psalms as we now have, we should only have half as many sighs; the more holy songs, the less growlings and murmurings. I should like some of you mourners to live for awhile on hymn-books; they are fine things for you to feed upon until you become consolidated masses of sacred psalmody, breathing hymns of praise wherever you go. That quaint preacher, Rowland Hill, was often found humming a tune, and more than once, when he became very old, he was overheard singing softly to himself, —

*“And when I shall die,  
‘Receive me,’ I’ll cry;  
For Jesus has loved me,  
I cannot tell why;  
But this I do find,  
We two are so joined,  
He’ll not be in glory,  
And leave me behind!”*

What a sweet hymn that was for the dear old saint to sing! Those of us who have many such verses as this in our memory, have a powerful weapon wherewith to keep Satan out of our hearts.

Christmas Evans, the mighty Welsh preacher, was a master of parable and allegory. Here is one of his parables which I will give you in my own way, and in my own words; I cannot give it as Christmas Evans used to do.

Once upon a time, said the good man, the devil flew up from the pit, seeking whom he might devour; and he said within himself, “I will have souls to-day, I will deceive, delude, and destroy all I can. I will reap a harvest from among mankind.” So he silently ascended through the air till he came to a little valley sleeping betwixt two hills; and there, in the bosom of the vale, in a garden by the side of a little stream, was a small cottage, adorned with trelliswork and jessamine; and in the porch there sat a fair young girl knitting. “Ah!” said the devil, “I’ll have her; I’ll tempt her away to the great town; there she shall be deceived, there she shall be ruined;” and then he rejoiced to think, “I shall have her for myself at last.” So he was about to step up to tempt her, when she began to sing, and the words she sang were these, —

*“Jesus, I love Thy charming name,  
 ‘Tis music to mine ear;  
 Fain would I sound it out so loud  
 That earth and Heaven should hear.”*

“Ah!” said the devil, “it is no use tempting that girl to sin; I had better be off somewhere else.”

He spread his dragon wings, and flew across to a plain, where there were fields ploughed ready for the wheat; the horses were resting, for it was dinner-time, and there was a boy in attendance on the horses. Said the devil, “Ah! I will have that boy; I will tempt him to steal his master’s goods. He will then be sent to prison, and will get with a lot of rascals, who will teach him to do worse things than he ever knew before; he will go on from bad to worse, until at length he becomes a murderer, and is hanged. Oh, that will make up for my failure with the girl this morning!” Just then the boy began to sing, —

*“The Lord my Shepherd is,  
 I shall be well supplied;  
 Since He is mine and I am His,  
 What can I want beside?”*

“Oh!” exclaimed the devil, “this boy does not want anything beside, then it is no use my tempting him to steal. He is quite content with what he has; what a bad day’s work I am :making!”

Then the devil bethought himself, and said, “Ah! there is old Williams;” (this was a good old preacher who lay on his dying bed;) “I will try what success I can have with him. If I can but tempt him to deny his God, what a victory it will be! All the country round about will ring with news of my triumph.” So away the devil sped on his wicked errand as fast as his diabolical wings could carry him, for he wanted to make up for the loss of the day. He soon arrived at the village. The lights were extinguished in the cottages, for the people had gone to bed, except in one upper room, where there was the faint gleam of a rushlight to be seen in the top window. The devil knew that room, so he cried, “Ah! the old man is not dead yet, or else the light would be out. I will go in and catch him now while heart and flesh are failing, and induce him to deny his God; perhaps I may cause him even to curse God while he is dying, and then how great will be my triumph!” So upstairs he went; and when he got into the room, he found the dear old saint still alive, though reduced well-nigh to a skeleton; his wife and

children were standing round his bed, taking their last farewell of him. But ere the devil could thrust a doubt or insinuation into the old Christian's heart, the dying man's eyes glistened, and as he put out his hand, all gaunt and bony, he said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." "Ah!" exclaimed the devil, "I am foiled again. He meant that last word. for me, 'in the presence of mine enemies.'" "And then the devil slunk away back to his pit; for he never had had so ill a day in all his life before.

Believe me, my hearers, it is good to have the mind preoccupied with holy thoughts. That heart is sure to be well kept from every evil thing which is full of good things. Live near to God; feed upon His Word; consult His truth; seek to imitate the character of Jesus Christ, and put your trust alone in Him; then you may face a frowning world, and bid defiance even to death and hell.

Now I will close, if you will allow me to utter just one more sentence or two of appeal. "Yes," says some sprightly young man, a gay "fast" lad, "it is just as I always thought; these religious people are the most miserable folk in the world. I knew they were so; I am now more than ever convinced that they are so; for, see how the preacher has to comfort them!" Very well, sir, very well; that is your opinion. You are very much mistaken, though, for all that; and we can prove that you are so most incontestably. Do you know the old woman who wears a red cloak, and who is shivering all the winter in a garret, over a fire made of two sticks? She is so poor that robbers could not steal anything from her; she has scarcely enough to keep body and soul together; and the poor creature, too, is sorely perplexed with doubts and fears and troubles. She loves her God, but she is one of the desponding sort of Christians, and she very seldom experiences much joy. "Come here, Missus, come here! You see that young man there; he says we are all a miserable lot; now, he is a respectable young man, with a good fortune, a flourishing business, in vigorous health, and cheerful in spirit; but without any hope in Christ; — will you change places with him? Think what a lot of money he has; you do not get more than a few shillings a week, and now and then a little from some kind friend or other; will you change places with him?" "No," without hesitation she answers; "no; it is little I have in this world, and but slight comfort I get even out of my religion; but I can say," (and the old woman says it with scalding tears running down her cheeks,) "young man, —

*“Though you may trust in all your stores,  
And tell how bright they shine,  
Your heaps of glittering dust are yours,  
And my Redeemer’s mine.’*

*“Thank God that —*

*“While my faith can keep her hold,  
I envy not the sinner’s gold.”*

Oh, that you all shared the old woman’s faith! Seek the Savior whom now I preach unto you, and trust Him for salvation. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” We dare not alter our Lord’s message; we must deliver it as He gave it. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” The Lord add His blessing, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL

JANUARY, 1899.

# EARNESTNESS!

AN ADDRESS TO THE MISSIONARIES OF THE LONDON CITY  
MISSION, AT THE DEVOTIONAL MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1ST, 1861,

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

MY brethren :in the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, partakers with us in the fellowship of His sufferings, you will suffer the word of exhortation from me this morning, I am sure; and may God the Holy Spirit make it quick and powerful to all our souls, that throughout the coming year we may serve our Master with both our hands, and with all our heart, having the whole of our manhood anointed by the Holy Ghost, and laid as a whole burnt-offering upon the altar of our God!

I think it right to say, before coming to the topic of this morning, that I am sure the Church of God loves you, and has deep sympathy with you. I think I speak the feelings of all who know your office and its trials when I say, in the name of the Church of the Living God, we thank you, and wish you Godspeed. Little can we tell what London would have been without you. If a great moral change has passed over it, — and I am sure there has, — it is owing doubtless to the Christian ministry, but equally as much to your untiring labors from house to house. I scarcely dare to draw a picture of what London would have been without the London City Mission. I am quite certain that, had it not been for this instrumentality, our ministry would have been utterly powerless, at least in the darker parts of those thickly-populated lanes and alleys where the voice of the minister cannot be heard. We thank you, brethren, for the wisdom which you have displayed; there must have been a great deal of holy prudence and lowliness of spirit

in you, or else, composed as you are of all sections of Christians, it would have been impossible for you to have been held together. It must be a very responsible thing indeed to be an officer of this Institution. I have none of the qualifications for such a work as that; I feel it so incumbent upon me to testify to everything that I believe, that, although I can work heartily with all in Christ who differ from me, yet I think I should find it rather difficult to work side by side with those who would frequently have to contradict my opinions. You must be endowed, I think, with a large measure of Christian charity, and the officers must have received that wisdom from above for which our excellent brother just now entreated the Lord in prayer. May this wisdom, this love, and the zeal you have manifested, continue and be increased! God send you, in a sevenfold degree, the unction of the Holy One! May you know all things, may you do all things, and may you be all things to all men, that by any means you may win some! Perhaps it is but little of encouragement that the city missionary gets in his labor. It is not good for us often to have much encouragement; our Master knows that we generally grow best when we are most pruned, He understands that the knife is one of the best instruments for making His vines fruitful. But I think, nevertheless, we ought to speak some words of holy encouragement to you who have been good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and who have not labored in vain.

Now I come to the topic of this morning. I have not taken a text, nor have I chosen any didactic subject. I knew to whom I should address myself, and have therefore selected a theme that is practical rather than doctrinal. My subject is to be, — EARNESTNESS; and I shall speak, first, of its absolute necessity in your office; next, of the parts of your office in which it must be most apparent; then, of certain things which would damp it; and, lastly, of some things which should tend to stimulate it.

**1. First of all, I refer to THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF EARNESTNESS IN YOUR OFFICE.**

Dissenting as I do from many of the opinions of that great man of God, Mr. Richard Baxter, I cannot but consider him to be the model minister of Jesus Christ. As a preacher, he had such earnestness that he has been styled the English Demosthenes. Better still, he knew so well “the terror of the Lord,” that scarcely could Paul himself have persuaded men with greater earnestness than did Richard Baxter. He knew what it was to have his knees knocking together while he preached to sinners of “the wrath to

come.” Seldom did he go from his pulpit satisfied with his performances, but he went to his knees to weep and bewail himself because he had not been more earnest with the souls of men. I do not marvel, however, at his earnestness in the pulpit; but what has made me consider him to be the very prince of preachers is the fact that he was equally in earnest in the pastorate. Every house in Kidderminster was visited by Richard Baxter. There was not a child in the parish whom he had not catechized; there was not a backslider whom he had not warned; there was not a reprobate whom he had not addressed with solemn awe. The whole of the inhabitants of the town knew that Baxter considered himself to be the father of the flock; he was not only the preacher in the pulpit, but he was the pastor in the parish.

I scarcely know by what stress of circumstances the minister’s work in London has become divided. I say honestly, from my inmost soul, I do not conceive myself to be guilty of any dereliction of duty because I can take only one part of Baxter’s work; it is utterly impossible that I should take the other part. If I can preach twice in the day here, and there, and everywhere, as an evangelist; and if I can say that I exhaust myself, and can do no more, I think I cannot plead guilty, if another part of the office is left to others. Throughout London, the pastorate, especially among the Dissenting churches, has, to a large extent, to be left to you, the city missionaries. You do not take Baxter’s place in the pulpit, but you do take his place in the houses. I hold him up to you as the very mirror and pattern of a missionary; going from house to house instructing, in the streets exhorting, under each roof teaching, and personally laboring for the souls of men. But mark, if you were to ask for Baxter’s plans of visitation, you might, when you read them over, think them extremely ordinary, and having but little force in them. The power of Baxter lay not in his method, but in his earnestness. There was such a fire burning within him that it all but consumed his bones. He was so passionate for the conversion of men, that he was seldom in good health; and, like a sword too sharp for its scabbard, his soul cut its way out of his body, and he died full of disease and pain. He would have done no good, he would have been of no service to the Church of Christ, simply as Richard Baxter, if it had not been for Richard Baxter’s earnestness. His divinity might have been worthless, his preaching might have been a delusion, his visitation an imposture, if it had not been that his soul was in his work, and the whole man was wherever Baxter was. To you city missionaries, I say, in your office earnestness is

above all things necessary. In the ministry, earnestness is of the first importance; and yet to our shame let it be said, many of the duties of the ministry may be discharged without earnestness. There are men who can hold together a congregation by the force of oratory; there are some who can enchain the ear, and fascinate the heart, by polished periods and glowing sentences, while they themselves know that they do but play the actor's part, and speak to others what they have never felt themselves. Certainly, a minister without earnestness is the most pitiable of objects; yet he may have a measure of success. But to you, brethren, this is impossible. You have no field for oratory, you have no opportunity for the exhibition of your powers of eloquence; yours is downright hard work; there is nothing of beauty or fascination in it; and without earnestness, what instrument is left to you? If you cast away zeal from your service, of what use are you? Had you not better lay down the name of the office than hold the title if you do not live up to it?

If, on the other hand, you, as city missionaries, had simply to be the dispensers of the public alms, earnestness might not be so necessary. If you carried loaves in a basket in one hand, and a well-filled purse in the other hand, the people would welcome you, whether you were earnest or not. It would signify but very little what fire of love there was in your heart; they would be content with the loaves and the silver, and your mission might be right well fulfilled. But, since you are entirely divorced from opportunities of doing good by these means, how can you hope that the people will receive blessing through you, if your hearts be cold towards them, and indifferent to your holy ministry? In other offices, something may be done while the heart is cold; nothing, I grant you, that is acceptable to God, but yet something which looks like success; but, in your case, there can be nothing at all accomplished unless your whole soul be saturated through and through with the sacred oil, and then be set a-blazing as though you were one mass of light and fire.

Let me ask you now, what can you do when you go out into the street, and rap at the first door, and enter it? What excuse have you for entering into an Englishman's house, unless you go there in real earnest? As a mere matter of office, you have no right to enter his house; your office of city missionary does not entitle you to enter that man's house; your only warrant is, that you feel you have a call from God to tell the inhabitants of that house to escape from the wrath to come; but if you have not earnestness, there is a clear proof that you have not God's warrant for

entering; you are an intruder into the house, you certainly will not be required there a second time. If you are not in earnest, what will the person say? "That man has undertaken to call and see me, but I will undertake that he shall not do so." If, however, you are in earnest, you may reasonably hope that the person may say, "However little I may value that man's visits, yet he will call to see me, and he will be unhappy if I do not let him; so I had better listen to him, and let him come again." I say that your office is an intrusion upon the privacy of an Englishman if you do not carry earnestness into it; and if you have not this to excuse you, your office will very soon become contemptible in the eyes of those whom you visit.

You, my dear friends, as city missionaries, need earnestness, moreover, because it is not possible for you to render your account to the Church unless you really serve it with all your might. There always lies upon you and me what some of the ungodly consider an odium; they look upon us as being paid servants of the Church. So we are, and we think it no dishonor. The Church does not always give us what our services are worth; and especially in your case is this true. Doubtless, the Church would do so if she found that the means were ready to her hands, and she ought to do so if it were within her power. But, inasmuch as we are paid servants of the Church, unless we are in earnest, we take money to which we have no right. For me to receive my salary, is robbing the Church unless I serve it with my whole soul; and it is the same with you. If you do not put your whole heart into your work, you have taken money for services which you have not rendered. The Church does not support you and me that we may be images to look at, but that we may be servants to labor. We are not maintained that we may go through mere routine, but that we may give our body, soul, and strength to our Master's service, being the better enabled to do so if we are kept from the cares of this life. How, then, I ask, can you render your account to the Church unless you are in earnest?

But, above all, what account can you and I render to our God at the last, if we go about our work listlessly and carelessly? How shall we stand at the judgment-bar? How shall we bear to hear it said, "I sent you to perishing sinners, and you sought not to save them. I sent you in the Name of Him that bled, yet you did not weep over the lost. I bade you testify in My Name, and as an ambassador for Christ, to persuade men, but you did not persuade them; you missed opportunities of doing good; you passed by seasons when the heart was impressible, and you might have driven home the truth; and there they are in hell, weeping, and wailing, and gnashing

their teeth, thousands out of your district, the sinners that were in the streets, and lanes, and houses where you were called to visit"? What can you and I say in that day? What will the unfaithful minister dare to say? Will not his knees begin to shake through the tremors of an unutterable fear? Will not a double hell, a hell multiplied in proportion to the number of souls who, by his instrumentality, were damned, seize upon his soul? Oh! better would it have been for us that we had never been born than that we should profess to be ministers and missionaries for Christ, and yet not throw our hearts into the work. I implore and beseech each one of you, — and in so doing I lift up my heart to God, that what I ask you to do I may be enabled to do myself, — "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Whatsoever God gives you to do, do it as a man would if he knew he should die as soon as it was done, and should have immediately to give an account to God as to how he had done his work. Live each day as though that day were the end of living here, and be prepared to die when each visit is over; labor as though the putting off of your coat at night should be the signal for the putting on of your shroud; so shall you live to purpose, and God, even our God shall bless you; "and that right early."

**2.** Now permit me to turn to the second part of my subject, upon which I have somewhat trenched already. **THERE ARE PARTS OF YOUR OFFICE WHICH MUST CLAIM EARNESTNESS AT YOUR HANDS.**

I have already alluded to one of these, that of house-to-house visitation. Let me repeat that your visitation from house to house is an unwarrantable intrusion unless you have a mission from God to enter the houses of the people. The warrant of Heaven allows you to go anywhere; as the sheriff, with her Majesty's warrant, may enter any house, so may we with the warrant of the King of kings. But you have not that warrant, and you will not have the impudence to think that you have it, unless you are in earnest for the winning of souls to Christ. I suppose that every missionary here would give the same reply to a question I am about to put, — What is the object of your life? I do not imagine that anyone here would give any other answer than this, "The object of my life is to win souls" I do not think, my brother, you would be satisfied to say, "My object is to get people to attend the house of God." I think you would not be content to say, "My object is to get children to the Sunday-school." All that would be true; these are incidental objects, and very important; but you would say, "No;

my direct and special end in living is to seek the immediate conversion of the souls under my charge." You have not reached the true dignity of your position unless you can say that.

There are many Sunday-school teachers who say that they are teaching in the school that they may prepare the children's minds for the ministry of the Word; but I believe the object of all true Sunday-school teaching is the immediate conversion of the children, as children. So is it to be with you, brethren; you are not to say, "We are to try to lift these people up to another stage." No; your object is, in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit, — and may God, in His gracious sovereignty, send down that rich anointing upon you, — your object is that these souls may now, through your instrumentality, be converted to God.

I say solemnly, though to some it may seem a hard saying, that, unless souls are converted through you as the instrument, you have lived in vain; unless you personally are, in the hand of God, the means of bringing souls to Christ, you have not answered the end of your being, much less of your office. I can understand a city missionary, who has had but very few spiritual children, laboring for a time in vain; but I cannot understand either minister or missionary being happy while he is not blessed. I can comprehend my preaching, and yet God's withholding the dew of blessing from it; but I could not call myself anything less than a monster if I could preach and be content and happy unless souls were being saved under my ministry. May God seal our mouths in eternal silence sooner than let us preach and be content and happy while souls are being damned! I should look upon it as being a proof of apostasy and reprobation if, as a minister, my heart did not yearn over souls, and "travail in birth" till Christ be formed in them.

Now, since I believe this is your object, I ask, — What can you do without earnestness? You may do without Latin and Greek, you may do without learning, you may do without ten thousand things; but you cannot win souls without earnestness. God has blessed many a zealous fool to the salvation of souls; but it would be strange if He blessed a cold-hearted man. The Lord uses very poor instruments to do His work; I have known sinners converted to God, instrumentally, by members of my congregation who could not speak a single sentence grammatically, and who misquoted Scripture at such a rate that I should be frightened to listen to them; but I have seldom seen genuine conversions under any man, however great his

ability, or his apparent industry, unless he was full of life and fire. We do want light; but, more than all, we want fire; we want to be like John the Baptist, who was a burning as well as a shining light. You must burn your way through this world if you mean to be a soul-winner; if ever you are to do good service for Jesus Christ, it must be by carrying sword and fire before you; “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,” and the fiery energy of His Divine influences. Without these two things, you may bear the name, but you will never rightly fulfil the office of a missionary or a minister of Christ Jesus.

But, my dear friends, there is another point in which earnestness is especially needed by you, and that is, in your own private prayers. The Mission cannot prescribe how many hours you should spend in prayer; but, let me ask, — How many hours a day do you pray? I may not suggest how long you should, but I think we may each ask ourselves, “How long during the past year did I spend upon my knees?” It would be a very instructive task for us all if we were to keep a memorandum book, and put down how long each day we were at prayer; we should be startled to see what a little time we spend on our knees. The Lord doth not reprove us this day for lack of preachings, and teachings, and visitings; but He reproveth us because we have bought Him “no sweet cane with money,” neither have we filled Him with the fat of our sacrifices in private. I do feel every day that the power of a minister or a missionary must be won upon his knees. I know of a truth that, when I have been at all slack in my supplications, though I may have prepared my sermon as carefully as possible, I have always been powerless in the delivery of it. I can bear my testimony, as a constant preacher of the gospel of Christ, that it is prayer that makes us strong; and it must be so with you, my brother. If you go to your work without prayer, I pity you; but if you can come back from your work without prayer, I not only pity, but I must upbraid you. Shall I see sin in its naked deformity and not pray to God to cleanse it? Shall I be called everyday to walk in the midst of the thick darkness of this city, and not cry to the Sun of righteousness to arise upon it? Can I stand by the bedside of the dying, and offer a prayer there, and not return home to pray for that dying man? If I can, oh! search me, good Lord, and try me, for it may be that, after all, I am only a hypocrite, and that Thy grace is not in me. You who see some of the worst forms of evil, you who come into continual contact with it, — I cannot imagine you ever being of any service if that contact with evil does not drive you to your knees. If you lose earnestness

in prayer, if you cease to be much in your closet, you had better resign your office; I am sure you had. Every day you hold it, you add sin to sin; and every hour you continue in it, you do but aggravate your iniquity, and grieve the Holy Spirit. Take heed, lest He should leave you to go to your work alone, and then what will you do?

Again, my dear friends, you particularly need earnestness, I am sure, in your cottage meetings. The Mission has a fiction that you are not allowed to preach; but you all do preach. You do not, perhaps, take a text, but you do expound the Scriptures; and it is a distinction without a perceivable difference, as far as I can observe. But your teaching or preaching differs from that of the ministry in this respect; we can command the crowded audience, and it is but honest to say that there is a kind of excitement given to the speaker when the place is well filled, and especially when the building is capacious. I have heard some foolish persons say they believed they could very easily preach if they had three thousand people to listen to them. I only wish they would try it; they might find that, while there are some advantages in great numbers, there are, on the other hand, some disadvantages. I would not, however, overestimate these; but, when you have a cottage meeting, and there are only four, five, six, or a dozen persons present, and perhaps three of them babies, crying, I cannot conceive of your getting on unless you are in downright earnest. Imagine that you have twenty in your audience, and out of those twenty the major part persons who are utterly unconcerned, — men who have been induced by their wives to come in and listen to you, and who sit all the while as if they wished they could be at the public-house. You speak, you pray, you read the Scriptures, you tell an anecdote, you look round, and wish that man in the corner would become interested, but he will not. You rack your brains to think of something else that you can say. That is excellent practice and most holy practice for you; but, my dear brethren, if you are not all alive, if you have not the determination to discharge your conscience, you will go home the most miserable of men. You lack the enthusiasm of the great assembly; you lack the afflatus of publicity; and if you are not filled with the Holy Spirit, and with fire from on high, you must be wretched in your office, and, I am certain, you must be unsuccessful in it. If you are really in earnest, those men who have not listened to the Word before are likely to prove the best hearers in the world. They are like men whose eyes are just opened; and when they see the stars, how great is their surprise! They are not, as a rule, gospel-hardened sinners that you

have to listen to you; they are not men who have had the gospel drummed into their ears till they have become deafened by its influence. As they see you earnest, they do not criticize your style, and pull your words to pieces; but, seeing that you mean what you say, they give you a hearing. If you are truly in earnest, God will bless you; He must bless you. He never did make a man in earnest to win souls without intending that souls should be won by being really brought by him to Christ.

I must again say that, in all these things in which you, as missionaries are engaged, I can see no hope whatever of blessing for you unless you are terribly in earnest; unless as if life and death, eternity and judgment, were before your eyes, and you were ready to live or to die if you might but win immortal souls. You can write up your journal, and make it look very respectable, and yet do no real good. You may pay your visits, just as a galvanized corpse might be made to go round to the doors; but, in such a case as that, it would be, the more visits, the more sins. You may be commended by the officers of the Society; using all their discernment, they may not be able to detect the lack that the Lord sees. But, oh! my brethren, they cannot cause you to be accepted of your God, and that should be our chief concern. It is little for us to be approved of men; it is little for us to be thought industrious or earnest; the great matter is really to be so, and to have the witness in our conscience that, in all sincerity, as in the sight of God, we have served the Lord Jesus Christ, and endeavored to bring His lost sheep to His fold.

(To be concluded next month.)

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

FEBRUARY, 1899.

# EARNESTNESS!

AN ADDRESS TO THE MISSIONARIES OF THE LONDON CITY MISSION, AT THE DEVOTIONAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY MORNING, JANUARY 1ST, 1861.

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

(Concluded)

**3.** NOW I purpose to spend a few minutes in marking THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE HINDRANCES AND DRAWBACKS TO YOUR EARNESTNESS.

One of the first of these is habit. "Habit?" say you, "can holy and religious habits ever become antagonistic to zeal?" Yes; my experience teaches me so. I frequently catch myself, when reading the Scriptures for my own private devotion, looking at the verses to see what sort of texts they will make; and I must confess that, when in private prayer, pleading my own case before God, I feel a very strong influence which would carry me off at a tangent to pray as a minister rather than as a man. One of the sternest difficulties of my Christian experience is to keep my own vineyard watered while I am busy watering the vineyards of others. Do you remember how you felt when you first went out as a young missionary? Was there not something specially solemn about your first round of visits? I should not wonder but that you rose very early that morning to have more time than usual for prayer. Perhaps you did not succeed to your own satisfaction, the first time; do you recollect that hallowed uneasiness which you felt, that sacred anxiety within, because you could not succeed as you wished to do? Brothers, do you feel that now? If not, why do you not? There is certainly as good ground for it as ever there was. The fact is, that good habit has helped to strangle the other good things, and you will have continually to

struggle against this influence, or else you will become like the blind horse going round and round in the mill; and may God deliver you from that! I would go to the next sermon that I shall preach with as holy a trembling, with as entire a dependence upon the help of the Holy Spirit, as I did when, as a lad of sixteen, I steal up to address an assembly. But it is difficult always to feel like that; one begins to think, "I have preached so many times, I shall not break down now." Perhaps such thoughts may not really cross your mind, or, if they do, they fly over so swiftly that you do not perceive them, yet they leave their impression. Unless we look very carefully to ourselves, we may come to perform every religious duty as an automaton might, or like a machine that is wound up, or like the toys which our children have, which only need a certain quantity of sand at the top, and they run on until they run down. Now, above all things, we must struggle and strive against this spirit. I hate ministerialism, yet I often find it creeping upon me. One gets inside a pulpit, and begins to feel that he is not as other men are; but I like, if I can, to preach as a sinner to sinners; as one saved by grace to tell the love which Christ had towards me, the chief of sinners, and "less than the least of all saints." I do not doubt that, as soon as you get out your little book to take with you, you feel like a missionary, and not simply like a sinner saved by grace. But, I pray you, do not feel like a missionary; feel like a sinner who has been washed in the precious blood of Jesus. You will never do good if you go to your work *ex officio*, you must go to it *ex animo*; not because of your office, but because of your soul being in it, because your heart yearns toward sinners, because you must have them saved. Strive not against any habits that are good; but against that evil tendency which, somehow or other, Satan, who is exceedingly crafty, manages to cast over our very best habits.

Some of you have, perhaps, to contend with another great damper to your zeal, namely, being yoked with cold-hearted persons in your labor. I can conceive that it must be a very heavy drawback to a city missionary to have for his District Superintendent a person who does not go forward with him heartily in the work of Jesus Christ. Let us not suppose that there are many such, but there may be some. If, when you think there is an opening for a Ragged-school, or when you feel that some other agency might be undertaken with the greatest possible hope of success, cold water be at once thrown upon your proposal, you cannot help feeling in your heart an exceeding heaviness, and you go to your knees before God, wishing that you could meet with someone who would run as swiftly as you want to

run, and help you as you desire to be helped. I am afraid that I am myself sometimes guilty in this respect. I have great pleasure in having associated with me one or two excellent missionaries. If I do not always give them so cordial a shake of the hand, or quite so sweet a smile, as they might wish, they know that it is only through forgetfulness, and not from any want of sympathy with them in their work. If I had an assembly of ministers here who were the Superintendents, I would say to them. "Always give the missionary a kind word; and if you cannot go with him in all his plans, yet, at any rate, go with him as far as ever you can."

You have, too, in your district, no doubt, to come into contact with queer Christian people who do not appreciate you and your work. They think that your office is an innovation; or, if they have not that foolish notion, they look upon you as an intruder into their preserves. Now, my dear brethren, you are not children, you are not mere boys, to be checked and hindered by any folk of that sort. You do not expect to serve Christ earnestly, without meeting with rebuffs, do you? If you do, you will be bitterly mistaken. Let me assure you that, in the Church of Christ, any man who is more earnest than his fellows will at the first meet with greater opposition from professing Christians than from worldlings. Let him, however, but persevere; let him hear that holy trial and ordeal which God has ordained in order that he may be qualified to take his place among the heroes of the Christian Church; and then true Christians will be his best friends. So will you find it, my brethren; if there are any Christians who chide you, and seek to hold you back, if you do but persevere, these very men will be your chief helpers. You have but to overcome their timidity, or their caution, or their prudence; you cannot do this by despising them, or by ridiculing them; but only by stern, sacred perseverance. You shall thus lead even the most timid of the Lord's soldiers to feel that, where some can march to victory, they must dare to follow, that the blessing of God may be enjoyed by them as it is by you. We wish for you the heartiest cooperation of all ministers of Christ; and I pray that all of us who are called to be District Superintendents may have your most earnest prayers, that we may be your helpers and not your hinderers in the work.

No doubt there is one other thing which more than any that I have mentioned will tend to quench your zeal, and that is, an apparent want of success. You have set your mind, perhaps, on the conversion of such-and-such a person; his case is specially laid on your heart. You do all that is within your power, yet the man appears to become more hardened than he

was before. There is a lane or alley into which you desire to throw a little gospel light; but it seems as if the people are determined that you shall not come into their houses, for they shut the door in your face. You invent a great many plans to get in; you put a tract under the door, or through the window; yet you cannot gain admittance. I have heard of one brother who went from door to door, and shouted a gospel text through the key-hole; that was not at all a bad thing to do. Perhaps you have done it, yet all your efforts appear to be in vain; like waves that dash upon a rock, they are broken into spray, and so return to you. Let me again remind you that I am not speaking merely to men, but to Christian men; and shall you and I ever be discouraged, and give up our work, because we see no immediate success? We will be troubled if we do not see it, but we will not be discouraged. My brethren, how long did Jesus Christ woo us before He won our hearts? How many times, in the ministry of the Word, did He knock at the door of our heart before it was opened? And when it was opened for Him to come in, what was it but His own almighty grace that forced an entrance into that heart which was close shut up, like Jericho, against Him? If then, we have tried the patience of the King of kings, if we have grieved the Holy Spirit, it is a very simple matter that our patience should be tried, and that we should be grieved. Let us also remember that, the longer we are seeking to win a soul, the more precious it will be to us when at last we obtain it. The more we shall have to tug and toil to get this diamond out of the mine, the more brilliantly shall it shine in our crown when Christ the Judge shall come and honor His people with Himself. Therefore let not any of these things put us back; but, rather, whenever we meet with peculiar difficulty, let us hear the voice of God saying to us, "Here is a case, Christian labourer, for redoubled zeal. Here is a high mountain, and there is need. that thou shouldst be the more persevering in climbing it." Is there a river in thy way? Then thou must with lusty arms stem the forceful current. The more difficulties we meet with, the more need is there that we should put the whole of our manhood into the work. Instead of obstacles being arguments against earnestness, they should be the very sternest pleas for earnestness. I have now preached the gospel for seven years in London; and I was compelled to say, the other Sunday, that I was something like Jacob, who served seven years for Rachel, but obtained Leah instead. I meant, that there were some of my congregation who I had hoped would be saved, I had always looked upon them as being seals to my ministry by-and-by; but, after seven years of earnest entreaty, they are still unsaved, though the Lord has given me many others in the

place of them. It may be so with you, my brethren; just where you thought your instrumentality would not fail, it will be least successful; and, probably, the man whom you gave up as hopeless, will be the very person who shall fulfil the desire of your heart, and cause you to believe yet more fully in the power of the gospel, seeing that it was able to save such an one as he was. Be not discouraged, then, by an apparent want of success, but still maintain your earnestness and zeal at white heat.

**4.** I fear lest I should weary you, and therefore I will close by giving you **SOME ENCOURAGEMENTS TO YOUR ZEAL.** There are many reasons why our zeal and earnestness should become more intense than ever they were. I need scarcely mention them, except to recapitulate what you already know, and thus to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.

Brethren, we must be earnest, because we are ourselves so greatly in debt to the rich, free, and sovereign grace of God. Let us recollect, this morning, that first hour when our sins were forgiven; it is still fresh and vivid upon at least some of our memories, I hope it is upon all. We remember when the burden fell from off our backs, when we saw the wounds of Christ, and knew ourselves to be His. Oh, that blessed morning! — that blessed morning! What earnest preachers we should have made if we could have been put into a pulpit there and then! What house-to-house visitors we should have been if we could have been sent at that very moment to go and tell to all the families around what Christ had done for us! Yet then, brethren, we were only in debt to Christ for one item; but now the list is so long that we cannot measure it, and do we love Him less now than we did then? When He had forgiven all our iniquities, we loved Him; and now that He has been pleased also to heal all our diseases, to redeem our life from destruction, and to crown us with lovingkindness and tender mercies, and to satisfy our mouth with good things, so that our youth is renewed like the eagle's, shall we love Him less? God forbid! Yet I question, brethren, whether any of us do go to our work now as we should have done on the day of our conversion. Come, now, recall the place where you once were; think of the horrible pit and the miry clay whence you have been brought up. Think also of where you now are; put your foot firmly down upon the Rock of ages, and rejoice that you are safe in Christ. Look at your covering now; you are arrayed in His righteousness. Look at your sustentation now; you are fed with the Bread from Heaven, and are made to drink, spiritually, of the blood of Christ. Think of year end, and of all that has been provided for you in the

mansions of the blessed, in the land of the hereafter. And will not these things make you feel that you are immeasurably in debt to Christ, that you are debtors to Him over head and ears? Oh, what do we not owe Thee, Thou precious Christ of God? If we could give our bodies to be burned, if this flesh could be torn piecemeal from our bones, and be eaten of dogs, it would be but a small sacrifice to offer to Thee. Could we even give up Heaven for Thee; could we be kept out of glory for ages to preach, and teach, and suffer for Thee, we might well be content, and think it two Heavens to lose Heaven for awhile if we might but the better show our love for Thee. If there be a man among you who is not in debt to Christ, this plea can have no power with him. If you are not washed in the blood of Christ, if you are hoping to be saved by your own merits, or your own strength, you have no call to be in earnest, there is no need that you should give your hearty service to Jesus Christ; but I feel persuaded that there is not such a man amongst you; therefore, spend and be spent each one of you in your whole-hearted service for your Redeemer; and the Lord Jehovah will accept your sacrifice through Jesus Christ, the great High Priest!

As a further reason for earnestness, let me say, brethren, except we are in earnest, our souls can never be in sympathy with the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ. I see Him now, standing on the brow of the hill, and looking down upon the doomed city of Jerusalem. He sees the gilded roof of the Temple, and the thickly-peopled streets; He foresees the total destruction of that city, “beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth;” in vision, He beholds her streets crimsoned with gore, and her Temple already in flames; and what does He say? Does He stand there, callous and dry-eyed, feeling that all this is predestinated, and must come to pass? No; Christ knew the awful destiny of Jerusalem, and therefore He wept over it. From His eyes the scalding torrents ran adown His cheeks, they cut furrows for themselves; but His very soul burst out in the passionate lament, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” Now, if your heart does not feel like that, it is not in harmony with the heart of Jesus Christ. There must be the same weepings, the same longings, the same yearnings, or else we have not had fellowship with Christ in the great end and aim of His incarnation, — the salvation of the souls of men. Tell me

not of your communings in your closets, tell me not of your raptures and your ecstasies, when your soul has been like the chariots of Amminadib; these things are blessed if they are coupled with the other; but unless you have fellowship with Christ in labor, fellowship with Him in perseverance, fellowship with Him in suffering, I care not for your ecstasies or your reveries, they are hollow and deceitful things. If you have dwelt with Christ, and worked with Christ, then I do not marvel that, sometimes, you feast with Christ when He feedeth among the lilies, and that, in choice moments, you can say, "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." Oh, let the crucified One stand before each one of us this morning! I think I see Him, as He looks at me, and says, "I gave My blood to save sinners; wilt thou not give thy life, too?" And if I feel faint and weary, methinks He puts His hand upon me, and He says, "Son of man, I have set thee to speak unto this multitude, for I have much people in this city; be strong, and fear not; by My wounds, I charge thee, be thou faithful unto death." By the wounds of Jesus, I charge you, brethren, by His agony and bloody sweat, by His cross and passion, by His precious death and burial, by His glorious resurrection and ascension, in His Name I charge you, be ye faithful unto death, and ye shall inherit the crown of life.

What other reasons do I need to give? I must draw to a close, but ere I do so, I must give just this one. "Fellow-labourers for Christ, we ought to be earnest when we think of our noble comrades. It is often useful to us to read some good biography. When I read the Journal of Wesley, or the Life of George Whitefield, I always find there is an influence attending the reading, only second to reading the Scriptures themselves; they are not so Divine, but yet they are, to a less degree, very invigorating to my spirit. Think of some who were once in your own ranks, whom God has greatly blessed and rendered highly honorable. The City Mission does not lack its heroes. I take it that, when the Church above sings of the noble army of martyrs, and the goodly fellowship of the apostles, there must be put into her song a note of praise for that glorious company of city missionaries who have ascended to God, and who now adore Him before the throne. I do think that you, with your toils, sometimes with your poverty, — but ye are rich, — with your various rebuffs and persevering labors for souls, with your midnight watchings, with your frequent trials, are worthy to stand in the very front rank of the army of Christ. You think not so of yourselves; you are willing to be the servants of servants, that you may thus be honored and blessed by your Master. I charge you, by the names of those

saints of God who have suffered in the holy cause of Jesus Christ, by all the men and women who, in devotedness, have given up their whole substance and their time to Christ, be ye worthy of this glorious cause. Runners in the Heavenly race, open your eyes, and look at the glorious assembly that surrounds you; see ye not the great cloud of witnesses? If ever ye were men, “play the man” before such spectators. When such spirits look on, will you not lay aside every weight, and run with endurance the race that is set before you, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith? If, at the old Olympic and Isthmian games, men thought they must strain every nerve and muscle because Greece looked on, what shall we say to you, when the world looks on, and the Church looks on, and hell looks on, and Heaven looks on? By all these, the spectators of your warfare, fight bravely, and win the crown, through the grace of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

That crown is the last argument for zeal and earnestness. I could not help weeping while we sang, just now, that hymn about our glorious appearance before God. There may be some missionaries here today to whom a message which I gave last night to my own congregation may be applicable: — “They did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.” It may probably be said, concerning some of you, “This year ye shalt eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan.” There are some among us here this morning who, in all probability, will not be here this day twelvemonths; I think we might contend which of us it should be to go first. It were a sweet boon, a blessed benison of Heaven, to be allowed to take the reward so soon. It will be so with some of us. Do not trouble yourselves so much about that sickness in your family; you will not have to see that sickness many months, for you will be where the inhabitants are no more sick. Be not desponding, because you have not seen all the fruit of your labors that you could wish; your Master may say to you, this year, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

*“The way may be rough,  
but it cannot be long;  
So smooth it with hope,  
with song.”*

Some of you, too, my brethren, are fathers in Christ; you are veterans in this army. Well you, perhaps, may hope that the conflict shall be the sooner ended. God cheer you at the last, yea, and cheer you now, by that splendid prospect of eternal bliss which lies before the servant of Christ! Is it true,

can it be possible, that I shall be near and like my God? Shall this head ever wear a crown? Shall I ever be fellow with the angels, and co-worshipper with cherubim and seraphim? .Jesus, Master, shall I see Thee face to face, and lie emparadised in Thy bosom? Then God forbid that I should ever think of these light afflictions, which are but for a moment! Save me, Lord, from ever degrading my spirit by being bowed by these temporary trials, these momentary difficulties, when an eternal Heaven, and a bliss unspeakable are my reward. Come, brethren, it is but a narrow stream which rolls before you; then ford it, for Canaan lies beyond. Think not that you have many difficulties; when you set them side by side with what you are to win, they are not worth calling difficulties. What are the battle and the fighting when we think of the splendor of the victory? For, when we shall ride with Christ, triumphant, through the streets of Heaven, we shall forget the scars of battle, and the garments rolled in blood; and I think then, instead of wishing that we had had fewer trials and fewer difficulties, we shall, if it were lawful, even wish that we had lived a more arduous life of toil, that we had suffered more, that we might be the more glorified with Christ. We are really glorified with Him when we are called to stand side by side and foot to foot with Him, and to have fellowship with Him in His labors and His sufferings.

The blessing of the Lord God, the God of Israel, rest on you, my brethren! The Lord anoint you this day with fresh oil! You remind me of the gathering of the apostles on the day of Pentecost. Come, Thou mighty rushing Wind, and fill this house! Ye cloven tongues of fire, descend and rest upon us! With that tongue of fire, and that Divine breath of life in us, may you and I, and each of us, go out this day and all our days to labor for Christ, plucking sinners out of the midst of the fire, and so honoring the Name of Him whose love is our joy, whose presence is our comfort, and whose breast shall be our Heaven! God bless you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

JULY, 1899.

# THE SAVING NAME OF JESUS.

A SERMON PREACHED IN A TENT, AT ROSS,  
HEREFORDSHIRE, ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1857,

BY C. H. SPURGEON.

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

*“And She Shall Bring Forth A Son, And Thou Shalt Call His Name JESUS:  
for He shall save His people from their sins,” — Matthew 1:21.*

WE never knew how sweet it was to have a friend until we saw our Lord Jesus Christ locked to us in the bonds of friendship. When a person is dear, everything connected with him becomes dear for his sake. Even Christ’s “garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.” His robe becomes a robe of dignity because He has worn it; the place He has stepped upon becomes dear because He has set His foot upon it; the lightest word He has used becomes precious for His sake. Sweet words become glorious, and common words become sweet, because He has uttered them. The words Husband, Brother, Friend, all become fuller of meaning when applied to Him. Jesus! it is the Name which moves the harps of Heaven to melody.

*“Jesus, the Lord, their harps employs, —  
Jesus, my love, they sing!  
Jesus, the life of all our joys,  
Sounds sweet from every string.”*

If there is one of our Lord’s titles that is more precious than another, it is this Name, — Jesus. It is woven into the very warp and woof of our sweetest psalmody. Many of our hymns begin with it, and scarcely any, that are good for anything, end without it. We are ready to say, with good George Herbert, “It is the music with which the bells of Heaven ring; a song in a word, an ocean for comprehension, an oratorio in two syllables, a

gathering up of the hallelujahs of eternity in five letters.” If we had only that word, Jesus, and were to preach nothing else for a sermon, it would be enough to make a child of God spring upon his feet, and leap for joy.

“He shall save His people.” Ask the Sabbath-school child the meaning of salvation, and he will probably answer, “An escape from hell”; and it is just possible that the child’s parent would give the same reply. Certainly, this answer is not untrue, but it is not the correct or legitimate meaning of the term salvation. Deliverance from hell is only one of the effects of salvation; it reaches from the gates of hell up to the pearly gates of Paradise, and stretches from where time finds us up to the very throne of God. Salvation means more than merely an escape from perdition and an arrival in glory.

### 1. First, SALVATION IS DELIVERANCE FROM OUR DEATH IN SIN.

Jesus finds His people “dead in trespasses and sins;” He, by His Spirit, quickens them into life because they are His people. In these days, many strange doctrines are taught; some people say, “If you begin the work, then God will carry it on.” That is true; and yet, good as many of the people are who say so, it is not easy to utter anything which is more misleading. If men could and did begin, God would probably help them; but, then, they never do begin. You have heard of the story which the Romanists tell about St. Denis and his head. After his head was cut off, they say that he walked a thousand miles, carrying it in his hand. A wit, who heard this story, replied, “I have no doubt about the thousand miles, after he had taken the first step; that is where the difficulty lay;” and, in like manner, the difficulty in the case of the sinner’s salvation lies in the first step.

If a man can really take the first step by himself, what need has he of God to help him? If any man here could raise the dead out of their graves, I can easily understand how, afterwards, he could keep them alive by feeding them. It would be a perilous thing for a man were God to say to him, “You must quicken yourself.” God wants nothing of any man when He first begins with him. He finds the sinner abhorring Him, but He does not expect nature will produce grapes from thorns. God finds the sinner destitute of life, and He gives him life; He finds the sinner destitute of everything that is good, and He Himself supplies all the sinner needs, by His own grace casting out all his sin. We may preach on forever; but, unless God the Holy Spirit shall begin the work, it will be of no more use than if we preached to stocks and stones.

Some people do not like this truth as a doctrine, but they agree with it in practice. They say, "Such preaching will do harm;" but my business is to preach the truth, and not to trouble myself about any supposed harm that may follow from it. If God has taught us this doctrine in His Word, surely we must preach it. We may be quite sure that God cares more about consequences than we do, and we need not fear to proclaim anything that He has revealed. Did any of you ever meet with a true Christian, who said he began the work himself? Do not all believers join in saying, "God first began the work in us; Christ, by His Spirit, taught our feet to tread the Heavenly road"? Although some ministers may mystify this truth in their preaching, yet they all agree with it in their prayers. Although they may confuse their hearers with their "ifs", their "maybe's", their "buts", and their "peradventures", yet in their hearts they all believe it. They know on whose head to place the crown. Salvation is all of the Lord from first to last. He begins the work, and it would never be finished unless He also put the top-stone upon the edifice.

2. After the Lord has delivered men from their death in sin, then comes the second Divine act implied in the text, SALVATION FROM EVERY PHASE OF SIN IN THE CONSCIENCE, AND OF EVIL IN THE HEART.

Dead men do not feel anything. Stab that corpse through and through, there is no feeling in it. Drag out that dead body; pile heavy weights upon it; cast a mountain upon its shoulders; there is no weariness, no grief, no pain, simply because it is dead. How sensitive, on the contrary, is a living body! Like that also is the difference in the soul before and after conversion, before and after spiritual quickening. Some of us can remember when Moses tied us up to the halberds, and flogged us with the great ten-thonged whip of the law; we recollect how our own conscience rubbed brine into our wounds; how, when we lay down on our bed in our prison-house, we found it to be a mass of spikes, and when we went about our business in the day, we thought we saw everywhere the avenging angel of Jehovah. Our constant cry then was, "My sin, my sin!" "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

But when the Lord Jesus came to our rescue, the load of sin rolled off our back, our wounds smarted no more, and we began to dance and clap our hands in merriment of spirit. Others of you can also remember when Jesus, as the Sun of righteousness, first shone into your poor dark spirit. I have always thought that first day when I believed was not a day of time at all; it

seemed like a little bit of eternity sent as a foretaste. You know that good old John Bunyan said, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, that when Christian saw the cross, his burden rolled off his back, and he gave three great leaps for gladness. So it was with us; we thought we could have leaped into Heaven there and then. This was the realization of the meaning of the blessed Name, Jesus. There is no way of ever being saved from the anger of God against sin, but through the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ the one and only Savior and Redeemer of the guilty. We must ever bid the sinner look to Christ Jesus, and to Him alone.

There was a young man, in Edinburgh, who was intended for a missionary. He said, "I will begin to work for the Lord in our own town; why need I go away to be a missionary?" He had not gone far, one morning, when he met one of the old Musselburgh fish-wives, carrying her load. "Well, friend," said the young man, "here you are, with your burden on your back; did you ever feel your spiritual burden?" She replied, "Do you mean the burden that John Bunyan wrote about? I got rid of that many a year ago, but I did not go John Bunyan's way to work." The young man thought the woman had deceived herself, but she continued, "That man, Evangelist, was not a preacher of the gospel in its fullest sense; he said to Christian, 'Do you see that gate?' He should have said, 'Do you see that CROSS? Keep JESUS CHRIST in your eye till you come to Him.' I made a short cut, and went straight away to Christ on the cross." "But, my good woman," he asked, "did you never go through the Slough of Despond?" "Oh! yes, sir; fifty times and more, but it is a great deal easier to go through it with your burden off than on." John Bunyan was right, and yet he was, in a sense, wrong; the way most people go is round by hedge and ditch, as he described; but the gospel road leads straight away to the cross. Look to Jesus, with all your sins, with all your doubts, with all your fears; naked and guilty, just as you are, look to Jesus. Everything besides Jesus is a fallacy, a deception, and a lie.

### **3. What next does Jesus do for His people? HE SAVES THEM FROM THE POWER OF SIN IN THEIR LIVES.**

The grace that does not make a man better, is not worth talking about. If people, after their conversion, live as they used to live before, their conversion is of the wrong sort. I daresay there are some such people in this part of the country. "God's dear people," they call themselves; they are very "dear" — dear at any price. "God's peculiar people." They are

very, very “peculiar.” They tell us, “There are not many such as we are!” It is a great mercy that there are not many such, or it would be bad for the morality of the country. They are ready to go as high as ever you like in doctrine, but not an inch in holy living. I have no fellowship with that sort of people. Tell me that a man can lie, and drink, and swear, and yet talk about his conversion; I tell you his conversion is not worth a button. I would say to all such, “Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” We shall not put off sin entirely till we are in our winding-sheet; but unless men show the fruits of conversion in their lives, they need converting again. Let it never be said that grace leads to licentiousness. It does not. Jesus saves His people, not in their sins, but “from their sins.”

Remember that I do not find fault with this doctrine because some people abuse it, as I do not throw away all hemp because some men hang themselves with a hempen rope. No; we must have holiness where men profess conversion. We will not believe that a man is converted, unless he is converted from his sins. I feel sometimes as though I could hurl thunderbolts at the base caitiffs who say that they live in sin, “that grace may abound.” Their condemnation will be just. They understand much of the Scriptures, they can split any hair of doctrine; but, alas! their practice does not agree with their preaching. They boast of their humility while they are as proud as Lucifer. That kind of spirit will not do, beloved. God’s children will not be perfect in this world, but they will strive after perfection; they will desire to slay every sin, for the Lord Jesus Christ saves “His people from their sins,” and so makes them whole every whit.

#### **4. The next thing is, JESUS SAVES HIS PEOPLE FROM ANY POSSIBILITY OF THEIR FINALLY RETURNING TO THE CONDEMNATION OF THEIR SINS.**

Some people say that a man may be in Christ today, but out of Christ tomorrow. I have no faith in any such doctrine. Let those who have, try to get comfort out of it when in distress; they may pick at that bone long enough before they will get any meat off it. I was walking one day with a person who was an Arminian. All at once he said, “Do you see that man over the hedge? He has been regenerated three times to my knowledge.” I replied, “He may have been regenerated in your way; but I will be bound that he needs to be truly regenerated, and I pray that God the Holy Ghost may regenerate him, and then the work will be effectual.” Children of God today, and children of the devil tomorrow! What a precious doctrine to

believe! I have been pardoned, but God will condemn me after all! Such a doctrine is beneath the dignity of God, and I may add, beneath the dignity of man, too. The gospel I have to preach is a gospel of everlasting certainties.

*“Once in Christ, in Christ for ever,  
Nothing from His love can sever.”*

But some of you believe that God’s children may fall away, and perish. Now I have a puzzle for you, and you may take until this day month to answer it. The Bible says, in many places, that, if apostasy be total, it is final. “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.” (Hebrews 6:4 — 6.) I hold that this doctrine, as written in Scripture, is as clear as daylight. “Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it?” If grace in the heart could die out, if the Divine life could be wholly extinguished, the backslider would be as much lost as if he were already shut up in the pit. You let your saints tumble away, and then put them into the covenant again by restoring them to church-fellowship. Make these passages square with your practice of restoring those who fall away if you can. If grace were to die out, there would be no hope for the person; but the mercy of it is that the grace of God never does die out. “The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.” The cloths on your table were washed yesterday, but there is a stain left which you cannot get out; so, in like manner, Jesus does not take the stain of sin wholly out of His people until they die. Though Rahab was saved, she was called a “harlot” centuries after her death; Simon, too, never lost the name of “the leper.” Never until we die shall we be “without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing”; but then we shall “be holy and without blemish.” Then, Christian, will thy doubts be wholly gone, thy propensities to sin will all disappear; then there will be war with Amalek no more, and the last Canaanite shall be driven out of the land. It were a blessed thing to rise in newness of life, and be with Jesus forever. It were well worth dying, if that be the only road to glory everlasting.

*“With thy glorious garments on,  
Holy as the Holy One.”*

It is truth that we sing when we say, “holy as the Holy One.” Then we shall know to the full the truth of our text, JESUS “shall save His people from their sins.” I am aware that I have not expounded this text as I should have liked to have done; but I trust I have made it plain to all my hearers that salvation is deliverance from the dominion, the power, the blemish, and the penalty of sin.

(To be concluded next month.)

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

AUGUST, 1899.

# THE SAVING NAME OF JESUS.

A SERMON PREACHED IN A TENT, AT ROSS,  
HEREFORDSHIRE, ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1857,  
BY C. H. SPURGEON.

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

*“And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.” — Matthew 1:21.*

(Concluded.)

5. WE have now to declare WHO THEY ARE WHOM JESUS SAVES. Christ Jesus will not save any people but His own. And who are “His people”? Christ’s people are those who are His by Divine election; they were chosen in Him from before the foundation of the world. God gave them to Him in the eternal covenant; they are His by sacred union, His by blood purchase, His by omnipotent capture, He made them His by His own strong arm of power; and they are His also by perpetual preservation. They were chosen of Him ere time began, and they have chosen Him in return. All of them will He present to His Father with the words, “Here am I, and those whom Thou hast given Me.” “Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none.”

But who are the people of God? Rowland Hill was once asked to preach a sermon only to the elect. He replied, “So I will, if you will mark them all on the back.” But that is the difficulty, and we can only judge them by their fruits. Some people’s souls are so small that even a nutshell is too capacious for them to dwell in. In a place that I know very well, a man said to me, “Religion is in a very low way here; there are not more than a dozen people of God in the town.” “Well, friend,” I said, “let us sit down and count them.” So he began, “Well, there is myself, and — “ I knew so much about him that I stopped him at once, and said, “You need not go any

further; if that is the best beginning you can make, the rest cannot be worth much." Yet there are people in that town who know far more than that boaster did of the blessedness of prayer and vital religion. That man was like another I have heard of, who was told that he would get on better without the character he had acquired than with it. He had no occasion to fear the consequences if he should lose it, and he had better run away, and leave it, and get a fresh one. Yet that man thought himself better than his neighbors. We ought to hate all such narrowness as that; and get rid of the idea that nobody is to go to Heaven unless he cuts his coat after our pattern, and unless he comes to our chapel. The worst of it is, that the nearer such people approach one another in sentiment, the less they like each other. In a little village I know well, there are two Baptist Chapels, the congregations of which treat one another as if they were cats and dogs; but all the difference between them that other people can see is, that the name of the one place of worship is "Salem," and the name of the other is "Bethel." This state of things ought to be altered as quickly as possible. If I could get my way, I would have old Mrs. Bigotry hung up by the neck; and when she was dead and buried, I would not put any stone to mark her grave. Her body is so bitter that no worms would ever eat it; and I expect that, if she could come to life again, a thousand years hence, she would rise as strong and vigorous as ever. We must get rid of the old dame forever by burning her in the fiercest fires of love.

Still asking the same question, "Who are the people of God?" let me put to each one of you the personal inquiry, "Have you been delivered from sin?" If so, my text warrants me in declaring that you are one of the Lord's people. "Oh!" says one, "you need not ask me whether I am one of His people, for see, I am a minister!" Bah! that is not saying much; for, like a scaffold pole, employed in the erection of a building, you may one day be taken down, and used as fuel for the fire. Did it ever strike you what became of Noah's carpenters? They were all drowned, though they helped to build the ark in which others were saved. Judas, also, who saw Christ's miracles, and heard His words, after all his privileges hanged himself, and so went to his own place. Perhaps another says, "I am a deacon of the church;" and yet another, "I have been a member of the church for fifty years." My dear friends, many an old tree has stood for fifty years, yet it has been rotten inside the whole time, though none have suspected it. The gospel comes to men and women like an officer with a search-warrant, who is looking for stolen or contraband goods. If you say to him, "There is

no occasion to look in that copper, or under that bed," the officer will very properly reply, "That is the very place I mean to search most carefully." It is often just where a man thinks and says that the devil is not to be found that he is most truly present.

How stands the matter with each one of you, my hearers? Are you wise, and confident, and full of fleshly assurance? Let us test and try you a little. How about that yard-measure that was an inch or two short? How about that pound weight that was light? How about that steel-yard? How about that bushel measure that was a little short? Do you sell by it? You are too wise to buy with it. If those are your tricks, it is clear that you are not one of "His people." Do you say, "I only do what everybody else does"? Then you belong to everybody, to the world; you belong to "the goats"; you are not Christ's sheep; clearly you have not been converted; if you continue thus sowing to the flesh you "shall of the flesh reap corruption." You are willing to be as great a rogue as others if nobody detects your roguery; then, do not say you are converted, for when Jesus saves a man, He saves him from his sins.

Perhaps you are a master, and have many men toiling for you; and you grind them almost to powder. See, there is the cauldron, throw them in, boil them well; they are only poor people; stir the fire, and turn them round, and get all you can out of them, for they are only the poor! When you have done this, you go and take what you call "the sacrament." You say that you are a Christian, yet you have no pity on the poor, and you oppress the widow and the fatherless! How many professedly Christian people do such things everyday; and if their minister dared to rebuke them for it, they would soon let him see that they could get him turned away from his post! But, brethren, whatever the consequences may be, we must speak the truth, and declare that such actions are not consistent with a profession of religion. Possibly, I am addressing someone who is a servant. While the master is close by, the work goes on very fast; but when he is away, you can spend an hour looking over the hedge, and talking to a neighbor; and on Monday morning you wish that Saturday night would soon come. You rob your master when you can, yet you always take what people call "the sacrament." This will not do. Rowland Hill once said, that a man's religion was worth nothing unless his dog and cat were the better for it, unless it made him a better man in every relation of life. When a man is really converted, it makes him a better servant to his earthly employer. The change of heart produces an entire change of life, and enables him to

serve God with honor even in that which relates to temporal matters. Be you sure of this, God and Satan will never sit down at the same loom to throw the shuttle by turns; God must have the whole piece to Himself, or He will have none at all. There is no proof of thy salvation unless thou art saved from thy sins.

Perhaps someone here may say, "I know that I am not saved from sin. I am guilty, and must stand here and confess my transgression." That confession of thine leads me to hope that thou hast been delivered from thy death in sin. There was a time when thou didst not weep on account of thine iniquity; nay, thou didst not even know that thou wert a sinner. Do I hear thee say, "My soul is sorely troubled because I cannot find salvation. Oh, what would I not do if God would but look upon me in mercy"? If that is what thou sayest, thou art not "dead in trespasses and sins;" thou couldst not talk so if thou wert dead. Weeping on account of thy transgression is one of the first signs of thy spiritual renewal I may tell thee that Jesus loves thee; Jesus has shed His blood for thee; Jesus Christ will have thee as His own, beyond all doubt, forever and ever. Jesus loves thee, not because thou art guilty, but because thou confessest that thou art guilty; this is part of the evidence that He loves thee, and the more thou dost confess thine iniquity, the more will I believe that thou dost truly belong to Christ.

Reason came along, one day, and seeing a man naked and sick, said, "He can never enter Heaven; for there is no such thing as nakedness or sickness there." But Faith said, "Thank God that the man is naked and sick; for Christ Jesus came into the world to clothe the naked, and to heal the sick." Reason argues white from white, but Faith argues white from black. You remember the notable method of argument that Martin Luther adopted, when Satan came to him. The devil said, "Martin Luther, you are a great sinner; and, therefore, you will surely be damned." But Luther answered, "I will cut off thine head with thine own sword. It is quite true that I am a great sinner, but Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Are you, my friends, real bonâ fide sinners in your own apprehension? If so, I have a glorious gospel to preach to you. I have heard of a man, who kept in his house a stout piece of rope for the special benefit of sham beggars. If you are only pretended sinners, there is the ten-thonged lash of the law to drive you to conviction; but if you are real sinners, I have a real gospel to preach to you Jesus Christ died for sinners. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" and those for whom He has died cannot perish, God will not first

punish Christ, and afterwards punish the sinner for whom He died. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." You know that this is the gospel declaration. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Believe, then, that Jesus died for you a sinner. Are you a sinner? Do you really know that you are a sinner? Then, do you dare to tell me that you cannot believe that Christ Jesus died to save sinners? When my God says a thing, I demand that you should believe what He says. God is the God of truth, He can never lie. Now, you admit that you are a sinner; that is a settled point with you. Is there a tear of penitence in your eye? Is there a consciousness of true repentance in your heart? You say, "Ay, that there is, with a vengeance! I stand in the very foremost ranks of sinners." Then, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and, as soon as with the heart you believe, you shall rejoice. If you refuse to believe in Him, you may well keep on groaning and sorrowing. God will bring you to trust in Christ Jesus, sooner or later, if you are one of "His people." May He be pleased to make you believe in Christ Jesus now!

Often, it is our blunders that are instrumental in saving souls, more than what we mean to say. Good old Matthew Wilks, when reproved for his oddities in preaching, said, "Stop a minute while I run upstairs." Producing a list of names, he said, "Now, all these precious souls profess to have been converted to God through my oddities; so, please God, I will keep to my oddities, for they pay well." I would not mind what I said, could I, even by my blunders, be the means of leading a soul to Heaven. The Lord often guides His servants to do singular things in order that sinners may be saved. When George Whitefield was at Providence, in Rhode Island, he was staying with a family the members of which were not truly religious. The devil said to Whitefield, "This man and his wife and sons have been very kind to you; you must be very gentle with them. Do not say anything to them about their need of salvation." God, in His mercy, thought very differently; and, the night before Whitefield left the house, the Lord would not let him sleep. The Divine message seemed to be, "Now, George Whitefield, these people have been very kind to you; it is your duty to inform them of their true condition in the sight of God." So, early in the morning, before leaving the bedroom, Mr. Whitefield took off the diamond ring from his finger, and scratched on a pane of glass in the window the sentence, "ONE THING THOU LACKEST." The people of the house had an intense reverence for Mr. Whitefield, and immediately he was gone, the

master of the house went into the room where his guest had slept, and at once saw the writing on the glass. A tear welled up in his eye, when the meaning of that sentence flashed upon his mind. He burst forth with the exclamation, "He never said a word to us about our souls, but this proves that he loves us!" He called, "Wife, come up here!" She came, and the children came up with her. They together joined him in saying, "We did all we could to make him happy, but we did not succeed, for he was anxious about our state before God." Father and mother, sons and daughters, fell weeping together; they knelt down, the whole six of them, and confessed their sins to God, and sought pardon through the blood of Jesus; and, ever afterwards, the members of that family were exemplary followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. My friend, Dr. Armitage, of New York, has in his congregation one of the daughters, and she has the pane of glass as a treasured possession.

I have often before told the story of my own conversion, and it has been published many times; but it cannot be told too often, so, as it may possibly be of use to some persons now present, I will relate it again. While I was quite a youth, I was the subject of many religious impressions, and these were of so painful a character that I might truly have been called a miserable wretch. At last, I determined to attend a place of worship three times on the Sabbath, and to go to every chapel in the town where I lived, to see if I could find the Savior in any one of them. It was not without prayer that I formed this resolution; and, day after day, I cried to God to save me. I must confess that I never heard the gospel preached in any of the places where I went. I say this without any disparagement to the ministry of my native town, for the ministers there were good men and true; but one preached the experience of a child of God, and I had nothing to do with that; another told of the future blessings of the regenerated, and these did not apply to me. On one Sunday, the text would be, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked;" and on another Sunday, "The wages of sin is death." I only became worse and worse after hearing discourses which drove me well-nigh to despair; and then came another text for good people, but not a word for me. At last, I found out a little Primitive Methodist Chapel, up a narrow street. I had heard that the singing there was so loud that it split people's heads. Well, I went, and I found that they sang quite as loudly as I liked to hear. Presently, a tall thin man ascended the pulpit, and took for his text, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." Now, that was what I wanted to hear. I knew it was

intended for me; and, indeed, the preacher fixed his eye upon me, and, pointing at me with his finger, said, “Young man, you are in great distress of mind.” I was, sure enough. “Then,” said he, in a voice of thunder, which I shall never forget, (my voice seems nothing to his,) “LOOK — LOOK TO JESUS NOW, AND BE SAVED! Are you not now lightened of your burden?” I felt as though I could have sprung into the air; for I had looked, and my burden of sin had left me, and now I can say, —

*“E’er since by faith I saw the stream  
Thy flowing wounds supply,  
Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die.”*

I think the essence of the gospel ought to be put into every sermon; I would say to my brethren in the ministry, — Have a shot at the sinners anyway, at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of every discourse. The random shots, like the sharpshooters in the army, often tell the most. Some preachers are so cold, both in their manner and their delivery, that they seem as if they did not themselves believe what they are saying; but how can we be cold when we think of Christ? There is the Lord Jesus, hanging on the cross; and from His pierced side is pouring out a stream of blood. That blood is shed for thee, poor sinner. Look to Jesus; it is all He bids thee do. He does not say thou art to see Him; thou art but to look. When thou seest a man in the distance, the view may be misty, or thy sight may be dim, so that thou dost not see him clearly; but, here, if thou lookest to Jesus, thou art at once saved. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” May God give thee grace to look unto Jesus, and be saved! Amen.

NOTE. — In *The Sword and the Trowel* for 1895, pages 477 — 483, there are the notes of a Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon, on the text, Matthew 1:21, preached at Belfast in 1858. Comparing the two discourses, it will be seen how the beloved preacher, while following the same general outline, yet varied the filling up as he preached in different places. These two Sermons from the same text are fair specimens of the manner in which he told out “the old, old story of Jesus and His love,” forty years ago, as he went from town to town, and village to village, proclaiming “the glorious gospel of the blessed God.” Let it be borne in mind that these discourses were addressed to large assemblies of people who were hearing the preacher for the first time. A Sermon from the same text, preached at the Tabernacle, in 1878, will be found in Volume 24 of *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*,

No. 1,434. It will be interesting for readers of the Magazine to compare these three discourses. — T. W. MEDHURST.

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

NOVEMBER, 1899.

# A VISIT TO CALVARY.

A SERMON DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON, AT THE HANOVER SQUARE ROOMS, ON MARCH 14, 1856, ON BEHALF OF THE EXETER BUILDINGS' RAGGED SCHOOL.

FORWARDED BY T. W. MEDHURST, CARDIFF.

*“And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!” — John 19:5.*

IT had been insinuated against Pilate that he was in league with Jesus Christ to set up a new monarchy in opposition to that of Caesar. In order to refute that accusation, Pilate orders Jesus to be scourged. The soldiers put upon His head a crown of thorns; they spit upon Him; they pluck His hair; they buffet Him; and when all these cruelties and insults have been heaped upon His person, Pilate brings forth Jesus Christ from the Praetorium. Standing there, he addresses the people assembled in the street, tersely exclaiming, “Ecce homo!” “Behold the man!” “This is the man with whom you charge me of conspiring against Caesar. Is this how I would treat my accomplice? Would I in this way show my kindness and devotion to one whom I intended to set up as Caesar’s rival? Do you fancy that here you see marks of honor? Is that old purple coat the imperial robe which you say I wish to throw over His shoulders? Are these my kindnesses to my friend?” It must have been a very telling answer to their accusations; and they must have seen that a repetition of the charge would be a barefaced falsehood.

I think, also, that Pilate had another purpose to serve in bringing Jesus forward in this array of misery. I believe that he sincerely desired to deliver our Savior from crucifixion, and he thought that, bloodthirsty as the people were, their vengeance would be satisfied at the sight of their victim in this extremity of suffering and sorrow, and that they would say, “Let Him go.” “Surely,” he thought, “this will satisfy them; thought they had demons’

hearts, this might content them; though, like fiends, they thirsted to show their cruelty, surely this would be enough." But, it was not so; like the tiger which has tasted blood, they were insatiable; and the very sight of His emaciated form, stained all over with the streaming gore, did but excite them the more loudly to cry, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

I believe that one of Pilate's purposes was answered; the people no longer suspected him of being an accomplice with our Savior. But the other purpose, blessed be God, was not accomplished; for if it had been, we should have been unredeemed at this hour, and the sacrifice of Calvary would not have been offered for our redemption. Now I am going to leave Pilate, and I shall endeavor, by the help of God, to stand in his place, and with an entirely different motive, to say to each one of you, —

### **“BEHOLD THE MAN!”**

May the Holy Spirit be with us, and, by His gracious power, reveal our Lord Jesus Christ visibly set forth crucified among you, so that, by the eye of faith, every one of you, whether you have seen Him before or not, may now be enabled to look unto Him who was crucified for our sins, who bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows! A view of Christ on Calvary is always beneficial to a Christian. We never hear a sermon concerning Christ crucified of which we disapprove, however inelegant its diction, if it be sound in doctrine. We never complain of our minister that he preaches too much concerning Jesus Christ. No; there can be no tautology where His Name is mentioned; though a sermon should be little beyond the mere repetition of His Name, we would rejoice to hear it, and say, —

*“Jesus, I love Thy charming Name,  
‘Tis music to mine ear.”*

The French king said that “he would rather hear the repetitions of Bourdaloue than the novelties of any other preacher.” So we can say of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we had rather hear the repetitions of Jesus than any novelty from any preacher whatsoever. Oh, how dissatisfied are our souls when we listen to a sermon that is destitute of Christ! There are some preachers who can manage to deliver a discourse and to leave Christ's Name out of it altogether. Surely, the true believer, who is present on such an occasion, will say, with Mary Magdalene, “They have taken away the

Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him.” Take away Christ from the sermon, and you have taken away its essence. The marrow of theology is Christ; the very bone and sinew of the gospel is preaching Christ. A Christless sermon is the merriment of hell; it is also a fearful waste of time, and it dyes with the blood of souls the skirts of the man who dares to preach it. But too much of Christ we cannot have. Give us Christ always, Christ ever. The monotony of Christ is sweet variety, and even the unity of Christ hath in it all the elements of harmony. Christ on His cross and on His throne, in the manger and in the tomb, — Christ everywhere is sweet to us. We love His Name, we adore His Person, we delight to hear of His Works and His Words. Come, then, to Calvary awhile with me, that I may say to you, as Pilate said to the Jews outside his judgment hall, “Behold the Man!”

I would take you there with this object; first, to instruct your intellect; secondly, to excite your emotions; and, thirdly, to amend your practice. For we hold that religion consists of three things; sound doctrine, affecting the intellect; true experience, dealing with the emotions; and a holy life, fashioning the outward visible practice of everyday. Our Lord Jesus Christ will benefit us in all these respects; and if, by faith, we are enabled to see Him now, we shall go away edified in doctrine, blessed in experience, and sanctified in practice.

**1. First, I beseech you to “behold the Man,” TO INSTRUCT YOUR INTELLECT.**

The first lesson I would indicate to you, — for I shall not so much teach it as leave the Holy Spirit to teach it, — is concerning the evil nature of sin. See that Man crucified, His hands extended upon the cruel tree. Mark the droppings of His precious blood. Do you see the thorny crown upon His head? Do you note the signs of suffering upon His whole frame? Do you observe His eyes sunk in their sockets? Do you behold the agony depicted on His countenance? Do you perceive the acute, unutterable anguish which He suffers? If thou dost see Him aright, thou wilt see in Him the evil of sin. In no other place wilt thou ever know how desperately vile is man’s iniquity. This is the spot where guilt committed its direst crime. Sin is exceeding sinful when it is a homicide; but it is most sinful of all when it becomes a DEICIDE, and kills God. The vilest deed sin ever did was when it nailed the Savior to His cross, and there let Him hang, the murdered Victim of our sin. Would you really see sin? I might show you a thousand

pictures of it. I might let you behold fair Eden blasted and withered, with all its fruits smitten, the moisture of its trees completely dried up, its fair walks covered with the leaves of decay. I might show you a heavenly pair banished, driven out to till the ground whence they were taken, with the swords of the cherubim flashing behind them; and when you saw that sight, you would execrate sin as a thing which drew the plowshare over Paradise. I might make you hate sin, too, if I showed you, yonder, a drowned world, deluged by a flood. See where men, women, and children are sinking in the mighty waters, where the fountains above and the deeps below are clasping hands. Did you hear the shriek of the last strong swimmer, in his agony, ere he also was overcome by the boundless, shoreless sea? Behold the earth, waste and void, save where yon ark floats alone above the deluge! Do you inquire the cause of all this desolation? What loosed the bands of the great deep? What brought this awful destruction? SIN did it. What was that which devoured Sodom and Gomorrah, and rained fire and brimstone out of heaven upon them? What was that which swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and took them down alive into the pit? What hath peopled death's dominions? Whence those skeletons and bones? Whence yon hearse and funeral? And what has built the gloomy chambers of Hades? What has made Gehennah hot with unquenchable fire? And what is that which hath given hell its everlasting torments, and furnished it with inhabitants beyond number, who live in eternal tortures and unutterable woe? SIN, thou didst all this; therefore do we execrate thee. Thou didst drown a world; thou didst dig the grave; thou didst pile the faggots of hell. We hate thee, SIN; but yet, methinks, we might forgive thee if thou hadst not put Jesus Christ to death!

Christian, wilt thou not, henceforth, hate sin from this very fact, that the blood of thy Savior is on it? Thou art tempted to do an act which thou knowest is wrong; it looks fair, and beautiful, and goodly, but examine it closely; it seems lovely and excellent, and thy heart goeth after it. Stop! Turn it round; do you see the blood mark upon it? That sin is stained with thy Savior's blood. Wilt thou touch it now? Surely, nothing which has in the least contributed to His death can be loved by us. Will we not, henceforth, abjure, abhor, detest, and avoid everything that is sinful? What! do you call yourselves Christians, and yet live in sin? Do you nurse in your bosom the murderer of your Savior? Do you hang upon your walls the dagger wherewith your best Friend was stabbed, and embroider on your clothes the image of His murderers? Will you still harbor sin, and love it,

when sin slew your Lord? Nay, surely, your heart cries, "I'll take vengeance against my sins, and slay the murderers, too."

Another lesson I would give your understanding is this, — "Behold the Man," for then you will see the inflexibility of Divine justice. Do we not all know that God's justice is inflexibly severe? If any man sin, the Law saith, "Cursed is that man." The Law alters not in its thunder. "Cursed! Cursed! Cursed!" is the sentence that continually sounds from Sinai. Have we not read that God "will by no means spare the guilty"? And do we not know it to be a fact? Yet, beloved, there are some who preach an atonement which looks very much like the abrogation of Divine justice. We have heard and read of divines whose theory of the atonement is something like this; although God hath solemnly declared Himself to be angry at sin, and hath vowed to punish every sinner, yet Jesus Christ, in some way or other, — we know not how, — did something or other which allows God now to pass by our sins without punishing them at all. We have no faith in such an atonement as that; we believe that God is so just, that every sinner must be punished, and that every crime must inevitably receive its due penalty. We believe that all the punishment which God's people ought to have endured was laid upon the head of Christ; we look to His cross, and we there see God's justice satisfied only because all our guilt was laid upon His shoulders, and the punishment for 'that guilt was actually borne by Christ Jesus our Lord. God did not absolutely pass over sin; He punished it on Christ Jesus, His people's Substitute; and, henceforth, sin ceases to be punishable upon the persons of those for whom Christ died.

O ye who do not know how inflexible Divine justice is, stand at the foot of yon cross, and hear our Savior's dying groans, see His looks of agony, mark His lineaments of woe; and then shall ye know how severe is the justice of God. No man ever thought Brutus so severely just as when he put his own sons to death. "Surely," the people said, "he will spare them." But, no; the inflexible senator said, "They have broken the laws of my country, and they shall die." And so, in a higher and more sublime sense, we might never have known how just God was, if He had not put His own Son to death for our sin. Bring forth the sinner, Justice! "Nay," saith Justice, "the sinner may go free; for here is the sinner's Substitute." Then bring Him forth, O Justice! "Art Thou the Substitute for the guilty? "I am, My Father." "Well, My Son, I love Thee, I have loved Thee from all eternity; but since Thou art become the Substitute for sinners, I must punish on Thee every sin which they commit." See! the lash is uplifted; will

it not fall gently on HIS shoulders? He is the Son. See there! the sword is unsheathed. O sword, sleep in thy scabbard; He is the Son! He is the Son! Ay, but Son though He be, He is the sinner's Representative, and He must die. See how the cruel lash falls on Him as they scourge Him at Pilate's pillar; mark how He bleeds at every pore, while in the garden, under His Father's wrath against His people's sin, He sweats great drops of blood! Mark how the sword unsparingly smites Him till He cries, "It is finished." O brethren, God is just; but we never know that truth half so well till, in Gethsemane's gloom, and in the midst of Golgotha's horrors, we have tarried for awhile! What thinkest thou, O unpardoned man or woman? If God punished His Son for sins not His own, surely He will punish thee for thy sins if thou continuest an unbeliever. If Jesus Christ, who only had imputed guilt laid to His charge, must suffer like this, how wilt thou escape from suffering for thine own sin? If He, the perfect, the pure, the spotless One, must suffer so fearful an amount of agony, how shalt thou escape if thou dost "neglect so great salvation"? How hopest thou to be delivered if, on the beloved Son's head, such vengeance fell? Where, O where, wilt thou find a covering for thyself? Know thou this, that God, who is infinitely just, having exacted, at the hands of Jesus Christ, the penalty for all His people, will surely expect the penalty at thine hands if thou diest impenitent, and if thou approachest His bar unwashed in the blood of the Savior.

Next, I think we may also learn here, the omnipotence of love. O Love, thou art the conqueror of all hearts! O Love, thou art the sum of Godhead, thou art the explanation of Divinity! What is this great world of ours, but "Love" writ large? The stars, if we could read them rightly, would spell to us "Love." If we could interpret the language of the floods, we should hear them thundering "Love." And could we gather together all flowers, and distil their essence, and get the concentrated sweetness of them all, we should find that its fragrance was "Love." Everything in this world telleth of Love. But would you know the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of God which passeth knowledge, come hither to the cross of Calvary, and "behold the Man." We never know our love to our country till we are called to make some sacrifice for it. You remember that, in Russia, there was a law which exempted the only son of a widow from going to war; but it is said that, so closely were they driven for recruits, that the law was for a time rescinded, and the widow's only son was taken. Suppose such a thing happened here, and there should be a widow whose

only son was demanded of her. See her come forward, saying, "Ay, take him; my country is dearer to me even than he is." She puts him forward, and says, "Go forth, my son, to die if it be necessary; I give thee up right willingly." You see the red eyes of the widow; she hath wiped them dry, but she hath wept in secret; and if we steal behind the door when her son is gone, and see her pouring out whole floods of sorrow, we can tell how great must have been her love for her country which made her give up him, — her all. Beloved, we never should have known Christ's love in all its depths and heights if He had not died; nor could we have told the depth of the Father's affection for us if He had not given His Son to die in our stead. As for the common mercies we enjoy, they all sing of "Love," just as the sea-shell, when we put it to our ears, whispers of the deep sea whence it came; but, ah! if ye desire to hear the ocean itself, if ye would hear the roarings of the floods, ye must not look at everyday mercies, but at the mercies of that night, that mid-day night, when Jesus Christ was crucified. He who would know LOVE, let him repair to Calvary, and see the Man of Sorrows die.

*"See from His head, His hands, His feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?"*

2. Now, beloved, let us "behold the Man" TO EXCITE OUR EMOTIONS.

We will again go, in imagination, to Calvary, and if God's Spirit shall help us, it will be more than mere imagination; and we will endeavor there to hold fellowship with Christ, first, that our emotions of sorrow may be excited. We do not love a sorrowful religion, but we do not think anything of that religion which hath no sorrow in it. That which is entirely made up of sorrow, came not from God; for God loves happiness, He rejoices to see His creatures happy, and His religion has that tendency; but, still, he who never knew spiritual sorrow hath not known spiritual joy. If we have never shed the tear of penitence, we must not expect to sing the song of acceptance. Go ye to Calvary, if ye would learn to weep. There are times when we would give much to be able to shed a tear, for our icy hearts are so cold that all the heat of mercy cannot thaw them, and our souls are so hard that it seems impossible that they should ever be melted. Ye Christians, who have long walked in Christ's ways, have ye not sometimes cried, "Oh, that we could weep as once we did, when we were young and tender in the fear of God! Then we could pour out our heart in tears, but

now these rocky hearts will not weep; though there be things which we hear concerning Jesus that might make our souls run over at our eyes in perpetual torrents, yet we cannot weep a single tear just now." Well, beloved, would you be made to weep? Come with me to Calvary. See there your Savior with the thorns upon His brow; can you not afford a tear for Him? See the wounds in His side; can you not drop a tear of grief there, especially when I remind you that He is your best Friend? Surely I might say, "If you have tears, prepare to shed them now." Ye ought to shed them while ye see His hands nailed to the accursed wood, His feet fastened there, too, and His side gushing like a fountain of blood. Ah! well may we sing, —

*“Alas! and did my Savior bleed?  
And did my Sovereign die?  
Would He devote that sacred head  
For such a worm as I?”*

*“Was it for crimes that I had done  
He groan’d upon the tree?  
Amazing pity! grace unknown!  
And love beyond degree.*

*“Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut his glories in,  
When God, the mighty Maker, died  
For man, the creature’s sin.”*

Did He die? Ay, that He did. Then I may indeed weep; and I may say, with holy Herbert, —

*“O who will give me tears? Come all ye springs,  
Dwell in my head and eyes: come clouds, and rain:  
My grief hath need of all the wat’ry things  
That nature hath produc’d. Let ev’ry vein  
Suck up a river to supply mine eyes,  
My weary weeping eyes, too dry for me  
Unless they get new conduits, new supplies,  
To bear them out, and with my state agree.”*

If, by any accident, I had killed my best earthly friend, I should go mourning all my days; but since, by my own accursed sin, I have slain my Savior, oh! let me carry to my grave my grief, — not hopeless misery, but sincere sorrow that I slew my Savior. Can I ever hear that word Calvary

without remembering the sad tragedy connected with it? Shall I ever see the cross without shedding tears on account of its once heavy burden? Shall I ever hear the music of the Name of Jesus without mingling with it the plaintive notes of my own grief, crying yet again, —

*“Thy body slain, sweet Jesus, Thine,  
And bathed in its own blood,  
While all exposed to wrath Divine,  
The injured Sufferer stood”?*  
*Here let me weep myself away; —*  
*“But drops of grief can ne'er repay  
The debt of love I owe;  
Here, Lord, I give myself away;  
'Tis all that I can do.”*

(To be concluded next month.)

## THE SWORD AND THE TROWEL.

DECEMBER, 1901.

# “UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER.”

A PRAYER-MEETING ADDRESS BY C. H. SPURGEON.

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” — 2 Corinthians 6:14, 15.

DEAR FRIENDS, — I have here a request for prayer on behalf of one, whose name would be recognized by you, if I mentioned it, as that of a sister who was a member with us at New Park Street Chapel, but who has been away from us for a long time, for, alas! she married an unconverted man, and suffered the usual consequences that almost always follow in such cases. When I saw her, a few days ago, she said to me, “You do not seem to recollect me, Mr. Spurgeon.” I replied, “No, I do not.” That was something very extraordinary, for I have a remarkable power of remembering faces that I have once seen. So she said, “My name is So-and-so; do you not recollect me now? Oh, yes!” I answered, “I do, but what an altered woman you seem to be! Excuse me making the remark, but you seem to have changed much more than I should have thought could have been possible even in so many years.”

She had just come out of the infirmary, and told me that she must go back again, for she was very, very ill. She wanted me to send somebody to see her while she was in the infirmary, and that I promised to do. “But,” I asked, “how did you get into such a state as you are now in?” “Oh, sir!” she exclaimed, “I married an ungodly man; and, as the natural result, I had a world of trouble.”

This evil is far more common than many people believe. I was talking, this afternoon, with an excellent Christian woman, who is coming to join our church. She also had been passing through very deep waters, and she said to me, "I consider that God has been most merciful to me, for I turned aside from Him, and from His people, by marrying a very ungodly man." Now, happily, the Lord has brought her back. I was talking to Mr. Archibald Brown, the other day, and he told me that he was visiting, lately, in one of the worst slums in the East of London, and there he saw a poor woman who had scarcely any clothes upon her, and her little children round about her were crying for bread. Mr. Brown said to her, "From your appearance, I should judge that you were not always in such depths of poverty as this." The poor woman put her hand inside her dress, and drew out a communion card of this church, and said, "I used to be a member there, and I always keep that card in memory of what I once enjoyed." "But," inquired Mr. Brown, "how did you get here?" "Oh!" she sorrowfully answered, "I married an ungodly man, and that is the top and bottom of all my misery."

Having these cases coming immediately under my own eye, or brought before me in the way I have described, and all of them having turned out badly, I thought it was my duty to remind all Christian men and Christian women of the warning given by the apostle Paul to the Corinthians, —

## “BE YE NOT UNEQUALLY YOKED TOGETHER WITH UNBELIEVERS.”

I recollect a young woman coming to ask my advice about marrying an unconverted man. I soon saw that she had made up her mind — as they mostly do in such cases, — what she was going to do. What is the use of asking advice when you have made up your mind as to your own course of action? However, she said that, such was her influence over the young man in question, that she felt certain of bringing him to the Savior. She has not done so, but he has been the means of our losing her from church-fellowship, and I do not know where she is now. I remember that I said to her, "Well, if you believe what you say to be true, I will tell you what to do; go home, and try this little experiment. When the young man comes to see you, climb on the top of the kitchen table, and try to pull him up, and tell him to see if he can pull you down. If you succeed in pulling him on to

the top of the table in spite of all his exertions to drag you down, I think you may safely marry him.” Why, the result always is, and always must be, that the one who is down pulls the other down; at least, I have always found it so, and I have had the painful knowledge of many such cases.

Do not you run such a risk, my young friend, or you will bitterly repent of it. Even when young women marry young men who are members of the church, it is not always that they make a happy match, for there are men who even become members of a Christian church for the very purpose of winning the heart and hand of another of the members. It is a most grievous thing, and a shameful sin; and I am sorry to have to say that it has been done sometimes even here. Take care, young friends, and older ones, too, that you keep your eyes open; and if the man, who desires to be your lover, is not a lover of the Lord, do not give your heart to him; and, my brother, if that young woman, to whom you are being attracted, does not love the Lord, let her find somebody else who will be more suited to her present condition than you are. I am sure that this warning ought to be laid to heart by all of you who are true Christians. If you are a hypocrite, you can get on very well with an unconverted partner in life; but if you are a genuine child of God, and you sin in this way, depend upon it that you will get a whipping from your Heavenly Father. The best thing that can come of such unequal yoking together will be grievous to your own soul, and dishonoring to your Lord and Savior. Remember how the apostle warns us against all wrong association with the ungodly: “For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>Ft1a</sup> Our “Bit for the Boys” has brought us several letters from girls, asking to be remembered. We will attend to that as soon as we can. Meanwhile, the present article is tot the young in general, and, we hope our older subscribers will kindly read it to there junior friends.

<sup>Ft2a</sup> Many, if not all of our readers, must have heard of this female adult class, in which the attendance was from five to eight hundred, and from which several hundreds have been called into the church by Mrs. Bartlett’s instrumentality.

<sup>Ft3a</sup> This is the report of an address which would never have seen the light if an abstract of it had not been inserted in so many of the newspapers. It was never intended for the public eye, but was spoken in homely confidence to the beloved circle of praying people, whom we esteem as our best friends and nearest kindred. A brief abstract, though executed by the most friendly hand, can never be satisfactory, and therefore we feel bound to give our own version — a revision of our friend Mr. Harrald’s shorthand notes.

<sup>ft1</sup> This address was delivered in great pain. It is not what we desired it to be. Our anguish made it hard to think, and almost impossible to think connectedly. Almost all that had been prepared was forgotten, and no new springs of thought could make channels for themselves while the mind was smothered up in physical suffering. We have corrected a good deal; but even now we only dare to trouble our readers with one-half of the address at a time. They may regard it as a literary curiosity — the talk of a man who could with difficulty keep himself from tears through acute suffering, and yet was resolved to take his part in a meeting which he had anticipated with solemn interest for months before. We might not have printed it at all had it not been urged upon us that *The Sword and the Trowel* is, to a large extent, autobiographical, and friends wish to have a permanent record of our various transactions. We may add that the revising of the address was accomplished under much the same conditions as the delivery of it. — C. H. S.

<sup>ft2</sup> Our frontispiece, is from a photograph. Mark the lichens upon the bark, and the varied forms of the olive-trees.

<sup>ft3</sup> Although this was delivered before the resolution of the Baptist Union, nothing has occurred to require any softening, but much to emphasize it. The evils spoken of were at first denied, but surely none can now question that they exist, abound, and triumph.

<sup>ft4</sup> This touching Address was delivered by Pastor C. H. SPURGEON, at Rye Lane Baptist Chapel, Peckham, on Tuesday afternoon, January 16th, 1883, on the occasion of the funeral of Mr. W. MILLS, one of the deacons at the Metropolitan Tabernacle. It is inserted to show how the beloved Pastor sympathized with those who sorrowed. Next month we hope to print a companion Address, Mr. SPURGEON at a Wedding, which will show how he rejoiced with those who were full of happiness.

<sup>ft5</sup> Mr. Mills was “called home” only nine days after Mr. W. Higgs, who was also one of the deacons at the Tabernacle, and a very dear personal friend of the beloved Pastor. See Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 1,700, “A Monument for the Dead, and a Voice to the Living.”

<sup>ft6</sup> See Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, No. 853, “A Sermon for the Most Miserable Of Men.”

<sup>ft7</sup> The “Westwood” gatherings usually took place in the open-air; but on this occasion, — we think because of heavy rain, — the meeting was held in the study. Many of our readers remember the appearance of the “room” mentioned by the beloved speaker, yet it seems almost necessary again to insert the view, which explains Mr. Spurgeon’s allusion to the method of lighting the study. — ED.

<sup>ft8</sup> On Lord’s-day, June 26th, 1859, a violent storm passed over the Southern suburbs of London. On Clapham Common, a tree was struck by lightning, and a man, who had sought shelter beneath it from the rain, was killed. MR. SPURGEON, remembering the charge given by Paul to Timothy, “Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season;” determined to preach beneath the fatal tree on the afternoon of July 10th, and to make a collection on behalf of the widow of the man who had been killed. About ten thousand persons assembled, and Mr. Spurgeon preached from a waggon which had been brought to serve as a pulpit. The collection for the poor woman amounted to £27 10s. 4d. — T. W. M.

<sup>ft9</sup> In our March number, Mr. Medhurst kindly reported the discourse delivered by MR. SPURGEON at Halifax in the evening of April 7th, 1858; and, in doing so, he mentioned the providential escape of the congregation

from what might have been an awful calamity. The incident is fully recorded in Vol. 2. of C. H. Spurgeon's Autobiography, in the chapter on "The Great Catastrophe at the Surrey Gardens Music Hall." In the afternoon Sermon, here published, it will be seen that MR. SPURGEON related the remarkable story of the conversion, at the Music Hall, of a shoemaker, who had been in the habit of keeping his shop open on Sundays. The extraordinary circumstances which led to the man's decision for Christ are also narrated in the Autobiography, Vol. 2., chapter 51. —

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