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Hebrews 8:10 The Wondrous Covenant

NO. 3326

A SERMON PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31ST, 1912,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.” — Hebrews 8:10.

THE doctrine of the divine covenant lies at the root of all true theology. It has been said that he who well understands the distinction between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace is a master of divinity. I am persuaded that most of the mistakes which men make concerning the doctrines of Scripture are based upon fundamental errors with regard to the covenants of law and of grace. May God grant us now the power to instruct, and you the grace to receive instruction on this vital subject.

The human race in the order of history, so far as this world is concerned, first stood in subjection to God under the covenant of

works. Adam was the representative man. A certain law was given him. If he kept it, he and all his posterity would be blessed as the result of obedience. If he broke it, he would incur the curse himself, and entail it on all represented by him. That covenant our first father broke. He fell; he failed to fulfil his obligations; in his fall he involved us all, for we were all in his loins, and he represented us before God. Our ruin, then, was complete before we were born; we were ruined by him who stood as our first representative. To be saved by the works of the law is impossible, for under that covenant we are already lost. If saved at all it must be all quite a different plan, not on the plan of doing and being rewarded for it, for that has been tried, and the representative man upon whom it was tried has failed for us all. We have all failed in his failure; it is hopeless, therefore, to expect to win divine favour by anything that we can do, or merit divine blessing by way of reward.

But divine mercy has interposed, and provided a plan of salvation from the fall. That plan is another covenant, a covenant made with Christ Jesus the Son of God, who is fitly called by the apostle, "the Second Adam," because he stood again as the representative of man. Now, the second covenant, so far as Christ was concerned, was a covenant of works quite as much as the other. It was an this wise. Christ shall come into the world and perfectly obey the divine law. He shall also, inasmuch as the first Adam has broken the law, suffer the penalty of sin. If he shall do both of these, then all whom he represents shall be blessed in his blessedness, and saved because of his merit. You see, then, that until our Lord came into this world it was a covenant of works towards him. He had certain works to perform, upon condition of which certain blessings should be given to us. Our Lord has kept that covenant. His part in it has been fulfilled to the last letter. There is no commandment which he has not honoured; there is no penalty of the broken law which he has not endured. He became a servant and obedient, yea, obedient to death, even the death of the cross. He has thus done what the first Adam could not accomplish, and he has retrieved what the first Adam forfeited by his transgression. He has established the covenant, and now it ceases to be a covenant of works, for the works are all done.

"Jesus did them, did them all, Long, long ago."

And now what remaineth of the covenant? God on his part has solemnly pledged himself to give undeserved favour to as many as were represented in Christ Jesus. For as many as the Saviour died for, there is stored up a boundless mass of blessing which shall be given to them, not through their works, but as the sovereign gift of the grace of God, according to his covenant promise by which they shall be saved.

Behold, my brethren, the hope of the sons of man. The hope of their saving themselves is crushed, for they are already lost. The hope of their being saved by work is a fallacious one, for they cannot keep the law; they have already broken it, but there is a way of salvation opened on this wise. Whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, receives and partakes of the bliss which Christ has bought. All the blessings which belong to the covenant of grace through the work of Christ shall belong to every soul that believeth in Jesus. Whosoever worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, unto him shall the blessing of the new covenant of grace be undoubtedly given.

I hope that this explanation is plain enough. If Adam had kept the law we should have been blessed by his keeping it. He broke it, and we have been cursed through him. Now the second Adam, Christ Jesus, has kept the law, we are, therefore, if believers, represented in Christ and blessed with the results of the obedience of Jesus Christ to his Father's will. He said of old, "Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God! thy law is my delight." He has done that will, and the blessings of grace are now freely given to the sons of men.

I shall ask your attention then, first, to the privileges of the covenant of grace; and, secondly, to the parties concerned in it. This will be quite enough, I am sure, for consideration this evening during the brief period allotted to our sermon.

I. As to The Privileges Of The Covenant Of Grace.

The first privilege is, that to as many as are interested in it there shall be given an illumination of their minds. "I will put my law in their minds." By nature we are dark towards God's will. Conscience keeps up in us a sort of broken recollection of what God's will was. It is a monument of God's will, but it is often hardly legible. A man does not care to read it, he is averse to what he reads there. "Their foolish heart was dark," is the expression of Scripture with regard to the mind of man. But the Holy Spirit is promised to those interested in the covenant. He shall come upon their minds and shed light instead of darkness, illuminating them as to what the will of God is. The ungodly man has some degree of light, but it is merely intellectual. It is a light that he does not love. He loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. But where the Holy Spirit comes, he floods the soul with a divine lustre, in which the soul delights and desires to participate to the fullest degree. Brethren, the renewed man, the man under the covenant of grace, does not need constantly to resort to his Bible to learn what he ought to do, nor to go to some fellow-Christian to ask instruction. He has not got the law of God now written on a table of stone, or upon parchment, or upon paper; he has got the law written upon his own mind. There is now a divine, infallible Spirit dwelling within him which tell him the right and the wrong, and by this he speedily discerns between the good and the evil. He no longer puts darkness for light, and light for darkness, bitter for

sweet, and sweet for bitter. His mind is enlightened as to the true holiness and the true purity which God requires.

Just mark the men to whom this light comes. By nature some of them are deeply depraved. All of them are depraved, but by practice some of them become yet further dark. Is it not marvellous that a poor heathen who scarcely seemed to recognize the distinction between right and wrong, before the Spirit of God entered his mind, has afterwards, without needing to be taught all the precepts individually, received at once the quick light of a tender conscience, which has led him to know the right and love it, and to see the evil and eschew it. If you want to civilize the world it must be by preaching the gospel. If you want to have men well instructed as to the right and the wrong, it must be by this divine instruction which only God himself can impart. "I will do it," and oh! how blessedly he doeth it, when he takes the man that loved evil and called it good, and so sheds a divine beam into his soul, that henceforth he cannot be perverse, cannot be obstinate, but submits himself to the divine will. That is one of the first blessings of the covenant — the illumination of the understanding.

The next blessing is, "And I will write my law in their hearts." This is more than knowing the law — infinitely more. "I will write the law, not merely on their understandings, where it may guide them, but in their hearts where it shall lead them." Brethren, the Holy Spirit makes men love the will of God, makes them delight in all in which God delights, and abhor that which Lord abhorreth. It is well said in the text that God will do this, for certainly it is not what a man can do for himself. The Ethiopian might sooner change his skin or the leopard his spots. It is not what the minister can do, for though he may preach to the ear, he cannot write God's law on the affections. I have marvelled at the expression used in the text, "I will write my law in their hearts." To write on a heart must be difficult work, but to write in a heart, in the very centre of the heart, who can do this but God? A man cuts his name upon a tree in the bark, and there it stands, and the letters grow with the tree; but to cut his name in the heart of the tree — how shall he accomplish this? And yet God doth divinely engrave his will and his law in the very heart and nature of man!

I know what the notion is about Christian people, that they do not conform to this and that custom because they are afraid; they would like to revel in the vanities of the world, but they do not care to encounter the penalties. Ah! ye sons of men, ye comprehend not the mysterious work of the Spirit! He doeth nothing of this sort. He maketh not the child of God to be a serf, a slave, in fear of bondage, but he so changes the nature of men that they do not love what they once loved; they turn away with loathing from the things they once delighted in, and can no more indulge in the sins which were once sweet to them than an angel could plunge himself down and wallow in the mire with the engine. Oh! this is a gracious work, and this is a blessed covenant in which it is promised that we shall be taught the right, to know and love the right, and to do the right with a willing mind.

Am I addressing some to-night who have been saying, "I wish I could be saved." What do you mean by that? Do you mean you wish you might escape from hell? Ah! well, I would to God you had another wish namely, "Oh, that I could escape from sin! Oh, that I could be made pure, that my passions could be bridled! Oh, that my longings and my likings could be changed!" "If that is your wish see what a gospel I have to preach to you. I have not to come and tell you — do this, and do not do that. Moses tells you that, and the preacher of the law speaks to you after that fashion, but I, the preacher of the gospel, unveiling the covenant of grace to-night, tell you that Jesus Christ has done such a work for sinners that God now for Christ's sake comes to them, makes them see the right, and by a divine work upon them in them makes them love holiness and follow after righteousness. I protest, I count this one of the greatest blessings of which ever tongue could speak. I would sooner be holy than happy if the two things could be divorced. Were it possible for a man always to sorrow and yet to be pure, I would choose the sorrow if I might win the purity; for, beloved, to be free from the power of sin, to be made to love holiness though I have spoken after the manner of men to you, is true happiness. A man that is holy is in order with the creation; he is in harmony with God. It is impossible for that man long to suffer. He may for awhile endure for his lasting good, but as sure as God is happy the holy must be happy. This world is not so constituted that in the long run holiness shall go with sorrow, for in eternity God shall show that to be pure is to be blessed, to be obedient to the divine will is to be eternally glorified. In preaching to you, then, these two blessings of the covenant I have virtually preached to you the open kingdom of heaven, open to all such whom God's grace shall look upon with an eye of mercy.

The next blessing of the covenant is — "I will be to them a God." If any ask me what this means, I must reply, Give me a month to consider over it. And when I had considered the text for a month, I should ask another month; and when I had waited a year, I should ask another year; and when I had waited till I grew grey, I would still ask the postponement of any attempt to fully open it up until eternity. "I will be to them a God." Now, mark you, where the Spirit of God has come to teach you the divine will, and make you love the divine will, God becomes to you — what! a father? Ay, a loving, tender Father. A shepherd? Ay, a watchful Guardian of his flock. A friend? Ay, a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. A rock? A refuge? A fortress? A high tower? A castle of defence? A home? A heaven? Ay, all that, but when he said "I will be their God," he said more than all these put together, for "I will be to them a God," comprehendeth all gracious titles, all blessed promises, and all divine privileges. It comprehendeth — ay, now I halt, for this is infinite, and the infinite comprehendeth all blessings. "I will be to them a God." Do you want provision? The cattle on a thousand hills are his; it is nothing to him to give; it will not impoverish him; he will give to you like a God. Do you want comfort? He is the God of all consolation; he will comfort you like a Lord. Do you want guidance? There is infinite wisdom waiting at your beck. Do you want support? There is eternal power, the same which guards the everlasting hills waiting to be your stay. Do you want grace? He delighteth in mercy, and all that mercy is yours. Every attribute of God belongs to his people in covenant with him. All that God is or

can be — and what is there not in that? — all that you can conceive and more; all the angels have and more; all that heaven is and more; all that is in Christ, even the boundless fulness of Godhead — all this belongs to you, if you are in covenant with God through Jesus Christ. How rich, how blessed, how august, how noble are those in covenant with God, confederate with heaven! Infinity belongs to you. Lift up your head, O child of God, and rejoice in a promise that I cannot expound, and you cannot explore. There I must leave it; it is a deep which we strive in vain to fathom.

Notice the next blessing, “And they shall be to me a people.” All flesh belongs to God in a certain sense. All men are his by rights of creation, and he hath an infinite sovereignty over them. But he looks down upon the sons of men, and he selects some, and he says, “These shall be my people, not the rest; these shall be my peculiar people.” When the King of Navarre was fighting for his throne, the writer who hymns the battle, says —

“He looked upon the foemen, and his glance was stern and high;

He looked upon his people, and the tear was in his eye.”

And when he saw some of the French in arms against him —

“Then out spoke gentle Henry,

No Frenchman is my foe

Down, down, with every foreigner, but let your brethren go.”

The king looked for his people even if they were in rebellion against him, and he had a different thought towards them from what he had towards others. “Let them go,” he seemed to say, “they are my people.” So, mark you, in the great battles and strifes of this world, when Lord lets loose the dread artillery of heaven his glance is stern upon his enemies, but the tear is in his eye towards his people. He is always tender towards them. “Spare my people,” saith he, and the angels interpose lest these chosen ones should dash their feet against a stone.

People have their treasures, their pearls, their jewels, their rubies, their diamonds, and these are their peculiar stones. Now, all in the covenant of grace are the peculiar stones of God. He values them above all things else besides. In fact, he keeps the world spinning for them. The world is but a scaffold for the Church. He will send creation packing when once it has done with his saints; yea, sun, and moon, and stars shall pass away like worn-out rags when once he has gathered together his own elect, and enfolded them for ever within the safety of the walls of heaven. For them time moves; for them the world exists. He measures the nation according to their number, and he makes the very stars of heaven to fight against their enemies, and to defend them against their foes. “They shall be to me a people.” The favour which is contained in such love it is not for tongue to express. Perhaps on some of those quiet resting-places prepared for the saints in heaven, it shall be a part of our eternal enjoyment to contemplate the heights and depths of these golden lines.

II. And now, brethren, I wish I had time to go over the other parts contained in the eleventh and twelfth verses of the chapter, but I have not, for I have a practical business to do, and it is to enquire —

For Whom Hath God Made This Covenant? I said he made it with Christ, but he made it with Christ as the representative of his people. The question to-night for you, and for me, and for each one is, “Am I interested in Christ? Did Christ Jesus stand for me?” Now, if I were to say that Christ was the representative of the whole world you would not find any substantial advantage in that, because the great proportion of mankind being lost, whatever interest they may have in Christ, it is certainly of no beneficial value to them as to their eternal salvation. The question I ask is — have I such a special interest in Christ that this covenant holds good towards me; so that I shall have, or so that I now have, the enlightened mind, and the sanctified affections, and the possession of God to be my God? Be not deceived, my brethren; I cannot, and you cannot, turn over the leaves of the book of destiny. It is impossible for us to force our way into the cabinet chamber of the Eternal, I hope you are not deluded by superstitious ideas that you have had a revelation made to you, or that there has been some special sound or dream which makes any one of you think you are a Christian.

Yet on sounder premises I will try to help you a little. Have you obtained already any of these covenant blessings? Have you got the enlightened mind? Do you find now that your spirit tells you which is the right and which is the wrong? Better still, have you got a love for that which is good? Have you got a hatred for that which is evil? If so, as you have got one covenant blessing all the rest go with it. Now, men and women, have you passed through a great change. Have you come to hate that which you once loved? If you have, the covenant lies before you like Canaan before the ravished eyes of Moses on top of the mountain. Look now, for it is yours. It flows with milk and honey, and it belongs to you, and you shall inherit it. But if there has been no such change wrought in you, I cannot hold you out any congratulation, but I thank God I can do what may serve your turn. I can hold you out divine

direction, and the direction for the obtaining an interest in this covenant, and for clearing up your interest in it, is simple. It is contained in few words. Mark well those three words — “Believe and live,” for whosoever believeth in Christ Jesus hath everlasting life, which is the blessing of the covenant. The argument is obvious. Having the blessing of the covenant you must needs be in the covenant, and being in the covenant Christ evidently must have representatively stood sponsor for you. But saith one, “What is it to believe in Christ?” Another word is a synonym to it. It is — trust Christ. “How do I know whether he died for me in particular?” Trust him whether thou knowest that or not. Jesus Christ is lifted up upon the cross of Calvary as the atonement for sin; and the proclamation is given out, “Look, look; look and live,” and whosoever will cast away his self-righteousness, cast away everything upon which he now dependeth, and will come and trust in the finished work or our exalted Saviour, has in that very faith the token that he is one of those who were in Christ when he went up to the cross and wrought out eternal redemption for his elect. I do not believe that Christ died on the tree to render men salvable, but to save them; not that some men might be saved “if,” but really to redeem them, and he did there and then give himself a ransom; he there paid their debts, there cast their sins into the Red Sea, and there made a clean sweep of everything that could be laid to the charge of God’s elect. Thou art one of his elect if thou believest. Christ died for thee if thou believest in him, and thy sins are forgiven, thee. “Well but,” saith one, “how about that change of nature?” It always comes with faith. It is the next akin to faith. Wherever there is genuine faith in Christ, faith works love. A sense of mercy breeds affection; affection to Christ breeds hatred to sin; hatred to sin purges the soul; the soul being purged the life is changed.

You must not begin with mending yourselves externally; you must begin with the new internal life, and it is thus to be had — the gift of God through simply believing in Jesus. A negro who had been for some time attending at a place of worship had imbibed the idea, and a very natural one too, that he was saved because he had been baptized. He had been to one of those places where they teach little children to say after this fashion, “In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.” “Now,” said he, very simply and very plainly, for so the catechism teaches, and a gross delusion it is, “I am saved because I have been baptized; that has made me a child of God.” Now the good man who sought to instruct him better, would find no metaphor to suite his intellect better than taking him into the kitchen and showing him a black ink-bottle. “Now,” said he, “I will wash it,” and he washed the outside of the black ink-bottle, and invited the man to drink out of it because it was clean. “No,” said the man, “it is all black; it is all black; it is not clean because you have washed the outside.” “Ah!” said he, “and so it is with you; all that these drops of water could do for you, all that baptism could do for you, is to wash the outside, but that does not make you clean, for the filth is all within.” Now, the work of the covenant of grace is not to wash the outside, not to clean the flesh, not to pass you through rites and ceremonies, and episcopal hands, but to wash the inside; to purge the heart, to cleanse the vitals, to renew the soul, and this is the only salvation that will ever bring a man to enter heaven. You may go tonight and renounce all your outward vices — I hope you will; you may go and practice all church ceremonies, and if they are scriptural I wish you may; but they will do nothing for you, nothing whatever as to your entering heaven, if you miss one thing else, that is, getting the covenant blessing of the renewed nature which can only be got as a gift of God through; Jesus Christ, and as the result of a simple faith in him who did die upon the tree.

I press the work of self-examination upon you all, I press it earnestly upon you church members. It is of no avail that you have been baptized; it is of no avail that you take the sacrament. Avail? Indeed it shall bring a greater responsibility and a curse upon you unless your hearts have been by the Holy Spirit made anew according to the covenant of promise. If you have not a new heart, oh! go to your chambers, fall upon your knees, and cry to God for it. May the Holy Spirit constrain you so to do, and while you are pleading remember the new heart comes from the bleeding heart, the changed nature comes from the suffering nature. You must look to Jesus, and looking to Jesus, know that —

“There is life in a look at the crucified one,

There is life at this moment for thee.”

These blessings I have spoken of seem to me to be a great consolation and inspiration. They are a great consolation to believers. You are in the covenant, my dear brother, but you tell me you are very poor. But God has said, “I will be your God.” Why, you are very rich. A man may not have a penny in the world, but if he has a diamond he is rich. So if a man has neither penny nor diamond, if he has his God he is rich. Ah, but your coat is threadbare, and you do not see where means are to come from to renew your apparel. “Consider the lilies how they grow; they toil not neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” You have the same God that the lilies have, and shall he so clothe the grass of the field which to-day is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, and shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? I said also it would be an inspiration, and I think it is. It is an inspiration for us all to work for Christ, because we are sure to have some results. I would, indeed I would, that the nations were converted to Christ. I would that all this London belonged to my Lord and Master, and that every street were inhabited by those who loved his name; but when I see sin abounding and the gospel often put to the rout, I fall back upon this: “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure; the Lord knoweth them that are his.” He shall have his own. The infernal powers shall not rot Christ, he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied. Calvary does not mean defeat.

Gethsemane a defeat? Impossible! The Mighty Man who went up to the cross to bleed and die for us, being also the Son of God, did not there achieve a defeat but a victory. He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure in the Lord shall prosper in his hands. If some will not be saved others shall. If, being bidden, some count themselves not worthy to come to the feast others should be brought in, even the blind, and the halt and the lame, and the supper shall be furnished with guests. If they come not from England they shall come from the east, and from the west, from the north and from the south. If it should come to pass that Israel be not gathered, lo! the heathen shall be gathered unto Christ. Ethiopia shall stretch out her arms, Sinim shall yield herself to the Redeemer; the desert-ranger shall bow the knee, and the far-off stranger enquire for Christ. Oh, no, beloved, the purposes of God are not frustrate; the eternal will of God is not defeated. Christ has died a glorious death, and he shall have a full reward for all his pain. "Therefore, be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

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Hebrews 9:22 With or Without Blood Shedding

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"Without shedding of blood is no remission." — Hebrews 9:22.

Week after week, standing before this congregation to preach the things concerning the kingdom of Christ, I sometimes say to myself, "I wonder how much longer I shall have to point out to some of these people the way of salvation before they will walk in it; — I wonder how many times I shall have to preach to them the doctrine of justification by faith in the crucified Christ of Calvary, and how often I shall have to urge them to immediate decision for Christ, the renunciation of their self-confidence, and the forsaking of their sins." It seems to me that, after I have done this, the right thing for me to do is to keep on asking you, "Have you given due attention to thee truths? Do you know them in your soul?" For, "if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;" but the very opposite of happy are ye if ye leave them undone.

I am going to try to enlist the attention of any earnest, thoughtful persons who are here, any of those who are still unconverted, but who have begun to consider their ways, and to turn unto the Lord. To you, dear friends, I mean to preach nothing but the simple gospel of Jesus Christ, and not to preach it as though I were addressing the settlers in Australia or the pundits of Hindustan, but to preach it distinctly to you, and to urge you to accept it here and now. If you have not accepted it by the time the sermon is done, it shall be through no fault of mine; but the blame must lie at your own door, that you have been directed to the way of salvation, but have not walked in it; or that, having heard the gospel, and taken some interest in it, you have wilfully rejected it.

The subject of my discourse is to be the remission, the putting away and getting rid of sin, and that concerns every one of us, from the youngest child to the oldest man or woman, for we are all sinners. It is very common for people to say, "Oh, yes! we are all sinners." But I do not use that expression as they do; I mean that you have done wrong, and that I have done wrong, and that we have all of us done wrong. We have done the things which we ought not to have done, and we have left undone the things which we ought to have done, and there is no health in us." We have chosen the wrong instead of the right, we have chosen to please ourselves rather than to please God; we have even lived as if there were no God; if there had really been no, God, our conduct, might not have been materially affected. We have all sinned in some way or other, —

"Each wandering in a different way,

But all the downward road."

And, dear friends, we all of us need to be cleansed from this sin. There is not one among us who can afford to live in sin, or who can afford to die in sin. We may find a temporary pleasure in it, but it must end in eternal loss to us unless there comes a time when God's grace saves us from it; we cannot be truly happy while we are out of gear with God. And since we are immortal beings, and our soul will not die, but will live on for ever, there will come a time in which the sin, which is unforgiven, will be a sore plague to us, so it is vitally important that we should enquire whether, being sinners, we have been forgiven or not.

I hope I shall be able to reach the conscience of each person here while I try to, talk to, you about two contrasts. First we have, in our text, sin unremitted, and sin remitted, and then, secondly, we have without blood-shedding, and with blood-shedding.

I. So, first, we will consider these two things which are so opposite to each other, Sin Unremitted, And Sin Remitted.

The apostle says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." I do not like the sound of those words, "no remission." They seem to me like a funeral knell, — "no remission." That might have been the sound in the ear of every sinner from the time of Adam until now, — "no remission." It, would have made this world a dreadful prison-house if everywhere, when we, sat down to bethink ourselves of sin, there stared us in the face the words "no remission." This is, indeed, one of the inscriptions across the vault of hell, — "no remission," "no remission." I say that I cannot bear the sound of those words, yet must they be sounded aloud, for there are still some persons to whom they apply; I trust that the sounding of those words in their ears may be the means of their awakening.

What does it mean when we say that a man has sinned, and that there is no remission for him? It means, first, that he is the object of the daily anger of God. God has a benevolent regard for him as one of his creatures, and is not willing that he should perish. God would infinitely prefer that the sinner should turn unto him, and live; but, viewing him as an impenitent sinner, we read that "God is angry with the wicked every day." I have learned not to take much notice of other people's opinions, yet I do not like to make anybody angry if I can help it. If I have ever done so, — and sometimes it has happened unintentionally, — I have had no pleasure in reflecting that someone was angry with me; and if it was somebody who would not be angry without a cause, it has been a very painful thing to live under a consciousness of his displeasure. I want you, whose sins are unforgiven, to, reflect that God is angry with you every day. When he looks upon you, he cannot regard you as a father regards a dear child who has done everything he can to please him, but he must look upon you as a rebel, as one who has revolted against him, and defied him to his face. When he looks upon your sin, his anger must flame forth. A man, who is not angry with sin, must be himself a guilty man; and, in proportion to the holiness of God must be his abhorrence of evil.

Reflect, then, upon what a sad condition you are in. If God should never smite you in his righteous wrath, — if he should continue to give you the mercies of this life every day just as he has done, I think, dear friend, that it ought to trouble you all the more that you are still provoking him by your continued sin. If you really are of the noble spirit that I hope you are, you will not be so ungenerous as merely to regret your faults because of the suffering it will bring to yourself, but you will lament it because it offends so loving, so good, so tender, so gracious a being as the God of the whole earth. Were he vindictive, — had he no bowels of compassion, — if he had made no proclamation of mercy and no terms of grace, — I could understand how you could brazen your forehead, and defy his; but how can you live in enmity against the God who has been so gracious to you? Let the thought of the mercy of God make your unremitted sin such a burden upon your conscience that you will not rest until you have repented of it, and been forgiven.

Remember, dear friends, that, in addition to being the object of the daily anger of God, you are in constant peril of suffering that anger to the full. A single step may cause you to fall, and that fall may lead to the grave. Who among us can tell all the perils of this mortal life? I remember reading a work in which there were collected together numerous instances of the simple means by which men have died, such as the swallowing of a fruit stone, or the sticking of a small bone in the throat, the breathing of some invisible noxious gas, or the failure of some almost imperceptible organ in the body to perform its usual functions. How suddenly death often comes! A friend said to me, this morning, "Do you know that So-and-so is dead?" He was a dear fellow-servant of Christ, an eminent preacher of the gospel. I had no idea, when I saw him a little while ago in robust health, that he and I should never speak to each other again in this world. You also must often have heard of the death of friends, and some day people will tell the survivors that you too are gone. With unremitted sin upon you, you know where you will go, do you not I need not tell you where, they are driven whose sin has never been forgiven, and whose sin never will be forgiven, as they have passed out of this world unwashed in the precious blood of Jesus.

May I very earnestly put to all of you who are still unsaved this question, — "How will you be able to die with unremitted sin upon you?" "There are some of us who believe that there is a spot on this earth where our mortal remains are to lie, and it is possible that the tree, of which the planks will form our coffin, has already been cut down. We expect to die unless the Lord shall soon come, and that will amount to much the same thing; and, expecting to die, we would like to be ready to die, and to have our house in order. I like to meet a sensible, man, who insures his life so as not to leave his wife and family in poverty, or who, when he has means at his disposal, lays by for a rainy day, that, should he be out of work, he will not need to go and beg. Now, if such provision as this is commendable, — and who, will say that it is not? — is it not much more commendable with regard to eternal things. Are we to be careful about lesser matters, and yet to make no preparation for that last moment in which we must pass out of this world to undergo the solemn testing in the scales of unerring justice? If unremitted sin be upon you, — and it is to, be fearful that it is upon very many of you, — I pray you to consider what you will do in that dread hour when the immortal tenant of your house of clay makes her fatal leap without a wing to buoy her up, and sinks into despair, and into yet deeper despair in the bottomless abyss. God grant that none of our spirits may ever know what it is to be found disembodied with sin unforgiven, and afterwards to hear the trumpet of the great day of judgment ring out, and to go back into our risen bodies with sin unforgiven, and shall to be cast, body and soul, into, the lake that burneth for ever and ever.

This is, surely, enough for me to say upon that sorrowful theme, so let us now think upon the brighter theme of remission. Our text seems to me to be musical with hope: "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Then, it is clearly implied that, with shedding of blood, there is remission. In the gospel, we always have glad news to tell. Unconverted sinner, with thy unremitted sin, we have glad news to tell thee, and it is this. Thy sin may be remitted. There is no sin, of which you can repent, which may not be forgiven you. There lives not a mortal man who, if he repenteth of his sin, shall not find mercy. There is a sin which is unto death, but those who commit it never ask for mercy, or desire it. They are dead even while they live, their conscience is seared as with a hot iron, and they rush to hell willingly; but never has a man, sincerely anxious for salvation, committed that sin. Let no penitent man despair, for there is remission for every sin of which any man truly repenteth, and for which he exerciseth faith in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The remission of sin, which God gives to his people, is complete; that is to say, it wipes out all his sins, whatever they may have been. Now look, believer, there is the list of your sins, it is a huge roll; if I were to unroll it, how long would it be? Would it not belt the globe, and reach from the earth to the sun and back again? Can you see all the sin that is recorded there? Yet, the moment that the blood of Jesus is applied to that roll, the whole record is blotted out, and there shall never be any more sin inscribed there, for Jesus Christ, never yet divided a man's sins, forgiving some, and leaving others unforgiven. He deals with sin in the mass, and takes it all up, and flings it, into the sea, or buries it in his own sepulcher, and never shall it have a resurrection, for, saith the Lord, "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found." In the Epistle from which our text is taken, the Lord says, "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." King Hezekiah said is the Lord, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back;" and King David wrote, "As far as the east is from the west," — and that is an infinite distance, — "so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." So you see that God completely sweeps away our sins when he remits them.

Further, the man, who gets remission of sin, gets a clearance from all danger of any penalty resulting from sin, so that he can sing,

"If sin be pardoned, I'm secure,

Death hath no sting beside;

The law gave in its damning power,

But Christ, my Ransom, died."

In dying, Christ bought my pardon, so that I have no cause to fear the punishment of my sin. What a blessing it is that the sin is gone, and the penalty is gone too! When a man's sin is remitted, he comes to the position which would have been his if he had never sinned. We fell, federally, in Adam, and we fell, actually, by our own sin; but Christ has put us back where Adam was in his state of innocence; nay, he has done more than that for us, for man was but man before he fell, but now man is linked to the Eternal in the person of the God-man, Christ Jesus, so we are nearer to God than Adam was before he fell. I said, sinner, that God was angry with you; but if your sin is remitted, his anger is gone. What does a forgiven sinner say to God? "Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Jeremiah wrote, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." It is sin that separates us from God; when that is put away, there is no longer any separation, but we are one in bleed amity, and sacred relationship, and holy concord, and near and dear communion.

Do all of you, dear friends, know what this remission of sin is? There are some of us who could boast of this; — not that we could boast of anything that we are, but we could boast and glory in the great goodness of the Lord to us, the very chief of sinners. There are many here, who could join with me in this declaration, "We were guilty and hell-deserving; but, having believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we know that our sins, which were many, are all forgiven. We are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and are accepted in the Beloved," and we know it; and there is, therefore, now no condemnation to us who are in Christ Jesus, and we are not afraid of any, for, 'being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' The peace we have, through believing in Jesus, is so full, so rich, so deep, that it cannot be broken. Death itself will only deepen it. We are not afraid now to die; why should we be? With the robe of his righteousness upon us, we shall stand boldly even in the great day of judgment; and with the name of Jesus named upon us, he will welcome us, and say to us, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

I wish, with all my heart and soul, that every one of you had received the remission of your sin. I bless God that there are many, in this place, who are humbly resting on the great atoning sacrifice. My brothers and sisters in Christ, do not question the remission of your sins; for, to question that is to question the Word of God itself. God himself there declares that every believer in Christ is justified and saved. But many of you, who have heard the gospel, have not believed it. "This is the condemnation, that light is come

into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." This is your greatest sin, that ye have not believed on Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would convince you of the sin of unbelief, and enable you to repent of it, and to lay hold on Jesus Christ by a act of childlike faith, that you might live through him!

II. This brings me to the second point of my discourse, which divides itself into two parts, — Without Blood-Shedding, And With Blood-Shedding.

"Without shedding of blood," says the apostle, — wherever that is the case, there is no remission. It is not possible that any sin should ever be forgiven to any man without shedding of blood. This has been known from the very first. As soon as man had sinned, God taught him that he needed a sacrifice. Adam and Eve, after they had sinned, tried to clothe themselves with fig leaves; but, that was not a sufficient covering. God must kill some animals, shedding their blood, and in their skins our first parents must be clothed. When Cain and Abel had grown up, the only sacrifice that, God could accept was the slain lamb. To Cain and his sacrifice of the fruits of the earth, God had no respect. Job is, perhaps, the earliest of the patriarchs, but he offered sacrifice for his children lest they should have offended God while they were feasting. He did not think nor did any of those ancient men who feared God think, of finding acceptance with him, and remission of sin, without shedding of blood. This belief has been almost universally held; there is scarcely to be found a tribe of men who have not believed in this. Wherever explorers go, they find that, wherever there is any conception of God, there is a sacrifice in some form or other. Many people have thought it necessary to make very great sacrifices, and some have imagined that they could only expiate their guilt by offering up their own children, so deeply-seated is the thought in our humanity that there must be a sacrifice for sin. I scarcely know of any religion, except Socinianism, without a sacrifice. Humanity craves for it, and cannot do without it. If anyone should proclaim a religion without a sacrifice, you would soon see how quickly this building would be emptied, or any other place of worship. There are always more spiders than people where, the atonement is left out. Men must have a sacrifice; in their inmost hearts, they knew their absolute need of it when they seek to approach the Lord.

The old Mosaic law revealed this need of a sacrifice for sin; the most prominent thing about it, that which must have stuck everybody, was the blood. I do not know whether you have ever realized that the tabernacle, which was praised for its beauty, must have looked like a veritable shambles, and the gorgeous temple itself must have needed abundant arrangements for its cleansing because of the continual sacrifices offered there, and because so much of the service consisted in the shedding and sprinkling of blood. The most prominent idea that a worshipper would get would be that there was something for which an atonement was needed, and that this involved time presentation of life before God; and that is just the thought that God would have us still retain in our minds, for, "without shedding of blood is no remission."

Do not quarrel with this truth, dear friends, for you cannot alter it. It is not for me to stand here to justify the ways of God to men, or to propound any theories of atonement. I have no theory; I simply say what the apostle says, "Without shedding of blood is no remission;" and there is no remission otherwise. You may stand and weep for sin till you become a very Niobe, or be transformed into a dripping well, and waste away in one continual shower of penitential lamentation; but no sin will ever be washed away so. To repent of sin is a part of your natural duty; and attention to one part of duty cannot atone for the neglect of another part.

"Oh, but!" you say, "in addition to this weeping and lamentation, I mean to amend." Well, suppose you do so; if, from this time forth, you never sin again, — if a wrong thought, or word, or act should never stain your character again, you will have done no more than it was your duty to do, and the fulfillment of your duty so far will be no atonement for the faults of the past; all your tears and all your efforts' cannot put away the guilt of the past, for "without shedding of blood is no remission," and repentance and good works are, not blood-shedding.

Suppose you add to these things what you call religiousness. Very well; do so. Attend the house of prayer, join in the petitions of the saints as far as you can, sing with them; but, all time while, mind what you are doing, for you may be adding to your sin, instead of decreasing it, by relying upon such things as those. I repeat the declaration that you have only done what you ought to have done, and that cannot make amends for your previous misdeeds and neglects, so that there too you rest upon a broken reed.

Are you so foolish as to hope that sin can be put away by some legerdemain that may be practiced by so-called "priests"? A plague upon them! They swarm on the face of this earth, — these men who say that, they are endued with some strange power by which they can remit human guilt, by the muttering of certain words, and by passing you through certain performances which are generally attended with the transference of some part of your substance to the pockets of the so-called "priests." O sirs, be not deceived by them! Open your eyes, and see for yourselves what there can be in one of your fellow-men just because there have been laid upon his head the hands of a man wearing lawn sleeves, that he should have the power to put away your sins. If this folly is to be believed, do not let us hear any more about "the enlightened nineteenth century." It would be a disgrace to the people of any century to believe in such a transparent lie as that. Go you to the living God for pardon, for he alone can give it. Make your confessions at his feet; they will be valid only there. And when you have confessed your sin to God, do not in any degree rely on

sacramental efficacy, or on priestly power; but trust wholly to the blood-shedding. There is your hope; but, without shedding of blood, priest or no priest, sacrament or no sacrament, you will be lost, as surely as you are a human being and a sinner.

My last point is to be, with the blood-shedding, there is remission; that is a much more delightful topic. If God had not provided the sacrifice for sin, my text would have sounded the death-knell of all our hopes. "Without shedding of blood — no remission," would have been like the flaming sword of the cherubim keeping us back from the tree of life. "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering," was the sweet assurance of Abraham to Isaac; but to us there is a still sweeter assurance, God has provided the Lamb for a burnt offering. Listen to this, ye who would have remission. God himself came into this world; he who was offended by man's sin condescended to become the sacrifice to put away that sin; and coming here, he took upon himself a human body, spotless and without taint of original sin; and here he lived as man, perfect man, yet just as truly very God of very God. When he had reached the appointed time, he offered himself upon the altar as the one sacrifice for human sin; and, by the shedding of his blood, there is remission for sin. Think of this great truth. Here was an innocent Sufferer, the value of whose life was worth more than an innumerable number of ours. It did more for the honor of God's law for Christ to die than if we had all died; for all created beings will see how just God is when he will not let his own Son escape even when guilt is only imputed to him.

Jesus Christ has died; the Son of God has offered himself as a sacrifice for sin; so, now, whosoever believeth on him shall have immediate remission of sin. It hardly matters how I tell you this great truth so long as I make it clear to you; if I spoke it ungrammatically, if I uttered it so that you had to lean forward, and strain your ears to catch the message, it would not matter, so long as you were able to understand it. You are bound to lay hold of this truth, for it is your life. If you do not grasp it, whose fault will it be? If I stood in the midst of a company of criminals condemned to die, and told them that a free pardon could be obtained in a certain way, there would not be one of them who would criticize my voice or my manner; because, if they really wanted pardon, they would all be taken up with the thought of getting it. It does not matter to me what criticism you may happen to make upon me. I shall sleep just as well, I daresay, for all that, and live as long; but I beseech you not to let any remarks or thoughts about me, or the place, or anything else, drive any one of you from this conviction — that you must either be saved or lost, that you must have your sins forgiven, or else you will be ruined for ever, that the only way of getting them forgiven is through the shedding of blood, and that the only way of availing yourselves of the efficacy of the blood-shedding of Christ is by simple confidence in him. Does anybody misunderstand that expression? Then I put it thus, — give yourself up deliberately into the hands of Christ to save you from the consequences of your sin. As one who is falling drops, because he must; but drops cheerfully, because another stands with outstretched arms to catch him, so drop into the Savior's arms. We are all prone to sin; but, if we give ourselves up to Christ, he will change our natures, and make us love holiness. He will renew our hearts, so that we shall seek after that which is good, and pure, and lovely, and excellent in the sight of God. Salvation from the propensity to sin, as well as from the guilt of sin, will be given at once to everyone who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"But I do not feel right," says one.

Feeling right is not the all-important matter.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then shalt be saved."

"I will go home and pray," says another. That is not what I urge you to do first of all. First believe, and then pray; to put prayer in the place of faith, is to suggest is God that he should change the plan of salvation, which is, as I just reminded another friend, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "What am I to, do, then? Am I to believe that Jesus Christ died for me in particular?" I did not say that; you are to trust Jesus Christ whether you have any particular interest in him or not. You will find out your particular interest in Christ in due time. Just now, look at Christ upon the cross. That is a spectacle that is well worthy of your careful observation. There he hangs, he who made all worlds; with hands and feet fastened to the accursed tree, he hangs there to die the death of a slave, — the death that the Romans would scarcely inflict upon slaves unless they had committed some extraordinary crimes. He, whom the angels worship, hangs there to die, "the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." Can you not trust your soul with him? Will you not believe that God, for Christ's sake, can forgive you? Will you not now rush into his arms, and there confess your sin, yet look up, and say, "I know that thou canst forgive, for Christ has died, and I do rest my soul on his atoning sacrifice?"

I remember — though it was many years ago — when first I really understood that I was simply to look to Jesus Christ and that, doing so, I should be saved. I felt, in my heart, that I wished I had known it long before, for I had been for years seeking rest, and finding none, and I only needed just to be told that there was nothing for me to do but simply to look to Christ. Oh, how I did leap at that message! It was the best sermon I ever heard, yet it was, in itself, a very poor one; but it had in it that which was the means of saving my soul. I trusted Christ then with my soul, and I have nothing else to rest on now. I have preached some thousands of times since that day, and God has given me many souls, but I have not found out any improvement as to the way of salvation. I trusted wholly in Christ then, and well I might, for I had nothing else to trust to, and I trust in nothing but Jesus Christ now, and well I may, for I have nothing else to trust to. If there is a poor sinner here, who sees the lifeboat of faith come close up to him, and he is afraid

to step in, if it is any comfort to you, sinner, let me tell you that, if you step into that lifeboat, and are lost, I must be lost too, for I do not know of any other way of escape. If there is anyone, who trusts in Jesus Christ, and is damned, I must be damned with him, I am perfectly willing to go with him to prison and to death. If my Lord Jesus Christ is not able to save a sinner just as he is, then he is not able to save me: and if the blood of Jesus Christ cannot wash out sin, then mine will never be washed out, for I have nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ to trust to, and I say to him, —

**“Other refuge have I none:
Hangs my helpless soul on thee.”**

O sinner, you can hang where I can hang, and where all God's people are hanging. “Ah!” you say, “you do not know what a great sinner I am.” No, and you do not know what a great Savior he is. “Ah, but I have such a hard heart!” But his heart was broken, and he can break yours. “Ay, but it will be a wonderful thing if he ever saves me.” Ah! there you are right, and so it is when he saves anybody, and he delights to work wonders of grace. I wonder which will be the biggest wonder in heaven, — you or I, or someone else here or elsewhere. Well, we shall see when we get there; but mind that you do get there. God bless you, for his dear Son's sake! Amen.

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Hebrews 10:9 The First and the Second

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“He takes away the first, that he may establish the second.” — Hebrews 10:9

The way of God with men is to go from good to better, and from better to best. In the creation, “the evening and the morning were the first, day?” “and the evening and the morning were the second day;” and so on to the sixth day. God often gives us darkness before he gives us light, and he gives us some measure of light in the rising sun before he gives us the full glory of noontide. And this, I suppose, is not because God needs any such rule for himself. He can give the best first if so he chooses; but I imagine that this arrangement is needful because of our infirmity. It would never do for weak eyes to have the full light of the sun pouring down upon theta. Often, when men are faint, and nearly dying of hunger, they would be killed outright if strong meat were at once set before them; they must be gently fed as they are able to bear it. So God, knowing the feebleness of his creatures, and especially the feebleness of his sinful creatures, is pleased to bestow his mercies with great wisdom and prudence. Little by little, first a very little, it; may be, and then rather more, and then still more, and then much more, and then most of all, until he does exceedingly abound in mercy towards us according to the riches of his grace.

It often happens that the lesser blessing is a sort of preparatory school before the greater favor. The law of Moses acted as an education for men to prepare them to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. The types and shadows of the twilight of the tabernacle and temple services helped men, by-and-by, to appreciate the substance when the True Light began to shine among the sons of men. We have need to be continually educated and trained for that which lies before us. Even heaven itself we are not fit to enter until we have learnt something of the heavenly things here below. There is a first in order that there be a second; and the first has to be taken away, when it has fulfilled its design, in order that then we may enter upon the second. Some lower good precedes the higher; and when the lower good has educated us for the higher, then it is removed, and the greater blessing fills its place, even as it says in our text, “He takes away the first, that he may establish the second.” I am going to sever these two sentences from their connection, just for the time being, because they seem to me to contain a valuable general principle, which may be used for comfort and instruction in many ways.

I. I shall ask you to notice, first, the grand instance of this rule given in the chapter from which our text is taken, the instance which was the occasion of the utterance of the rule.

“He taketh away the first;” that is, the sacrifices and offerings of the ceremonial law; — “He taketh away the first;” that is, the blood of bulls and of goats; — “that he may establish the second;” which second is Christ himself, the one effectual propitiation for sin, the

great burnt-offering which the Lord accepts, and by which he is reconciled to all who trust in it.

The taking away of “the first” involved the removal of instructive and consoling ordinances. Let us never forget that “the first” was given for the wisest possible purposes, and was itself exceedingly useful. God forbid that we should ever find fault with the first dispensation, for it was the means of great comfort, and of much instruction, to the people of God who lived under it. Though it was, in itself, little better than a piece of glass, yet the Old Testament believers saw much through it. Those of them who had clear vision saw through it the same Christ whom we, by faith, see at this day; so that window was to them a very precious thing because of the future glory which they were able to see through it. I can understand how David enjoyed the ceremonies of the holy place in his day; and how, when he was obliged to be absent, he longed once more to stand within the tabernacles of God, and envied the very sparrows and swallows that could fly or build their nests around the courts Of the Lord’s house. I can realize how earnestly he desired again to stand and see the priests presenting the holy offerings before the shrine of the Most High; and I can easily comprehend that. to tell him that all these observances were to be put away, would give him some cause for disquietude. But when he understood that they were to be removed in order that a second, and a better dispensation: should be established in their place, then his disquietude would altogether cease.

Brethren, we ought this day to be far more happy than ever the Jews were when God had accepted their richest sacrifices; for what, after all, were holocausts of bullocks, what were thousands upon thousands of lambs compared with the only-begotten Son of God who has sacrificed himself on our behalf? Of what avail were all the rivers of blood that were shed, and the seas of oil that were poured out? What comfort could, they bring to Jewish believers compared with that which we derive from the flowing wounds of the Christ of Calvary, and from the fact that he who suffered on the cross, that he who was dead and buried, has risen again, and gone back into the glory, and is there pleading, on our behalf, the merit of his one finished, perfect sacrifice? Yes, beloved, let “the first” go; we need not drop a single tear over its departure, seeing that “the second,” which is established in its place, is so infinitely superior to it.

Many Jewish believers tried, as long as ever they could, to keep some relic of the old dispensation. For many a year, they sought at least to teach that converts to Christianity must be circumcised; but they gradually learned that, with the coming of Christ, — rather, through his death, the old dispensation was all taken away. Every fragment of it is gone; and, if we are wise, we shall say, “Let it go; why should we seek to preserve it? Why should we keep that which is dead now that the ever-living One has come, and dwells among us? So, let ‘the first’ go, and let ‘the second’ be established.”

I want, dear friends, to urge all of you to come to this decision very emphatically. I beseech you never to try to bring back “the first.” I do not suppose you will ever literally imitate the Jews, and offer the sacrifices enjoined under the ceremonial law; but there is, in certain quarters, an attempt to bring back portions of it, — ill-formed, broken bones of that which has long since been dead. For instance, when men insist upon it that such an unscriptural ceremony as infant sprinkling is necessary to salvation, and that another man-made rite must be performed, or else grace will not come to us, if we yield to their pretensions for a single moment, we shall be putting ourselves under the bondage of a ceremonial law, which has not even the authority which the law given by Moses had. The two ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper, which Christ has left us, are blessed means of instruction and comfort to living men and living women, but they are not saving ordinances; and he who tries to make them so, in any measure whatever, is to that extent, seeking to bring back “the first” dispensation, which God has for ever abolished. He is also endeavoring to disestablish “the second” dispensation; as far as he can, he is overthrowing it. But Christ will not share with rites and ceremonies the glory of our salvation. We are either saved by grace through faith, or else by the works and ceremonies of the law; there can be no mingling of the two, for they are diametrically opposed to each other. There must be a clean taking away of “the first” that there may be an establishing of “the second.”

Then I want you, next, to take care that you do regard “the second” as being really established; that is to say, that there has been offered one great Sacrifice for sin, and that Christ’s sacrifice has put away sin, and has put it away once for all. This is the establishment of the real, perfect, everlasting atonement. Now, Christian people, you do believe this as a matter of doctrine; but have you truly appropriated all the blessedness of it? Do you know that your sins are forgiven you for his names sake; that an atonement has been presented for you, by which you are so effectually purged from guilt that you will never need to bring any other purgation, or to look for any other atonement? Do you really regard yourself as one who will never have to offer smother sacrifice for sin because your conscience is completely purged already, and you are clean every whit? I know that some professors do not like Kent’s verse, but I like it, for I quite agree with him when he says, —

“Here’s pardon full for sin that’s past,

It matters not how

Black its cast;

And, O my soul, with wonder view,

For sins to come, here's pardon, too!"

The Christ who died on Calvary's cross, will not have to die again for my new sins, or to offer a fresh atonement for any transgressions that I may yet commit. No; but, once for all, gathering up the whole mass of his people's sins into one colossal burden, he took it upon his shoulders, and flung the whole of it into the sepulcher wherein Once he slept, and there it is buried, never to be raised again to bear witness against the redeemed any more for ever. Do regard Christ's sacrifice, then, as firmly established, and, having been once offered, never to be repeated, that one offering having completed the redemption of all the blood-bought throng, and so finishing the great work that nothing needs to be added to it.

II. Now, secondly, I want to give you some historical instances in which the same rule has been carried out. I must speak very briefly upon each point, so try to catch the words as they fly.

First, God took away the earthly paradise, but he has given us Christ and heaven. God gave to man, originally, perfect happiness. In the garden of Eden, there were all manner of delights; and under the covenant made with our first father, all of these would have been ours if he had persevered in obedience. But Adam sinned, and so the covenant of works was broken. He fell, and we fell in him; and, therefore, paradise was taken away from him, and from us also. There is no hope of our ever going through the gate of that garden. Even if it had remained perfect, and we could find it, we should see there the cherubim with a flaming sword turning every way to keep us out of the garden. Why hast thou taken away this paradise, Lord? The apostle here gives us the answer to our question, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second;" for, now, as many as believe in Jesus are brought into another and a better Paradise. They are saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and there is prepared for them a place of joy and delight compared with which the bliss of Eden shall not even be mentioned, neither shall that earthly paradise be brought to mind, or be spoken of any more.

Next, the first man has failed; but behold the second Man, the Lord from heaven; and see again the moaning of our text: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." There was a man in that first paradise; he was the first man, Adam; and you and I were representatively in him; for he was the federal head of the human race. But he fell, and he was taken away. Do we regret this, and mourn over it as though it were an irreparable calamity? By no means; for the Lord hath taken away the first man, Adam, that he may establish the second Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning these two, the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second Man is the Lord from heaven." The first man has ruined us; but we have the second Man now, who heads up his people, having become their federal Representative; and in him they are saved beyond all fear of falling.

"He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second," is illustrated again in the case of Adam and Noah. Adam was not only the federal head of the human race, but he was also its first father and founder; but, although God took away our first father, he gave the race a second father, even Noah, from whom we have all sprung as much as from the loins of Adam. Now, Adam's safety depended upon the perfection of a creature, the obedience of a human being; but Noah's safety lay in a figurative death, burial, and resurrection, went into the ark, and died to that old world in which he had lived so long. Inside that ark, as in a coffin, he was buried beneath the descending floods; and he was floated into a new world, to be the father of a race that should live through his death, burial, and resurrection; as the apostle Peter says, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us;" — not that baptism saves us, but it is another figure of how we are saved by death, burial, and resurrection, as Peter goes on to say, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God." "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Father Adam was taken away, but Father Noah was given to be the new head of the race, and to him the Lord said, "This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth." That second covenant, which God made with Noah, is infinitely more secure than the first covenant which was broken by Adam.

Brethren, there is another great historical instance of the rule mentioned in our text in the case of the covenants made with the literal and the spiritual Israel. There was a first covenant to which the Israelites gave their consent soon after they came out of Egypt. That was a covenant of works, and when Moses rehearsed in the ears of the people the terms of that covenant, "All the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." Yet they soon forgot their solemn promise. You remember how the commandments were "written with the finger of God" upon "two tables of testimony, tables of stone;" but when the people turned aside to worship the golden calf which Aaron had made, we read concerning Moses, "it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." In God's great longsuffering, the commandments were given a second time, though Moses, and not God, wrote on the second tables of stone, and they were put away for safety into the golden ark, above which was placed the mercy seat of pure gold. This was another symbolical illustration of our text: "He taketh away the first, that he may

establish the second." The law in the hand of Moses is broken that we may have the law in the heart of Christ hidden away under the sacred covering of divine mercy in the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. The first covenant of "This do, and thou shalt live," is taken away, that God may establish the second, which is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The first covenant, because it waxed old, has passed away; and now God has established a second covenant, the covenant of grace: "They shall be my people, and I will be their God: and I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them: and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.'

Thus I might keep on showing you how, all the way along in history, there has been a first, and then there has been a second, as there was in the case of the temple at Jerusalem. Solomon built the first temple, but God permitted that to be taken away that he might establish that second temple into which Christ came, and so made the glory of the latter house to be greater than that of the former one. All history seems to me to say, "This is God's usual method of procedure, to give the dim twilight first, and then to follow it with the full glory of the noontide brightness." We must, therefore, expect that it will be so in our time.

III. But, now, leaving history in general, I come to your own individual history, so as to give you some instances in your own experience of the working of this rule: "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

First, this is true of our own righteousness and Christ's. I shall speak of myself because, then, I shall be speaking of many of you also. I once thought that I had a very fine righteousness of my own; and, in looking back upon it, I am not at all sure whether it was not about as respectable as the righteousness which the most of my friends have possessed. Like the young man who came to our Lord, I could have said, concerning the ten commandments, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" But I well recollect the time when God's Holy Spirit began to pull my righteousness away from me. Oh, how fiercely I fought to keep it! There was a terrible tugging between my pride and my conscience, for even my conscience joined with the Spirit of God, and the Word of God, in telling me, that, though outwardly righteous, yet I was inwardly wicked. Still, for a long while, I could not understand and believe that I, the child of godly parents, who had never fallen asleep from the days of infancy without the repetition of the prayer my mother taught me, and who had never left my bedroom in the morning without having presented the petitions which I had learnt as a child, — I could not bring myself to think that I, who was so regular in attendance at the house of God, who read my Bible, who tried to understand theological books, and so on, — could not admit that I had a righteousness which was only like filthy rags, fit for nothing but to be burned. I tell you, dear friends, I did not like that ugly truth, and I fought very hard against it; but I bless God that he took away "the first" righteousness that he might establish "the second." That second — "the righteousness which is of God by faith," — the righteousness which is imputed to everyone who believeth in Jesus, — is so much superior to "the first" that I can truly say with the apostle Paul, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Is there anybody here who is having his righteousness tugged at as mine was? Is that beautiful but flimsy house of your own righteousness beginning to tumble about your ears? Did a big brick-bat come down just now? Was there a slate or two blown off the roof, or did the chimney-pots begin to fall? Thank God for it! Thank God for it! If you have a very fine robe of righteousness, all of your own weaving, I am not desirous that you should be unclothed, and left naked to your shame, but I am anxious that you should be clothed with that spotless robe which was woven in heaven; and I know that you will never wear that wondrous garment until your own dirty rags are pulled off you. Christ never comes and puts his glorious robes over our poor, beggarly, leprous rags. No; they must come off before he will clothe us, so he takes away "the first" that he may give us "the second." O poor sinner, be wise enough to cry to him, "Pull off my rags, Lord, if thou wilt condescend to touch them. I do not want to keep one of them a moment longer." As for you who are so good, and respectable, and righteous in your own esteem, I tell you plainly that those fine robes, of which you are so proud, are only rotten rags whatever you may think of them. Off with them! They must come off if you are to be saved; so ask God to take them off now, and to clothe you in that wondrous raiment which Christ has prepared for all who trust him.

There is another first thing which God has taken away from us, and that is, our false peace. There are many of you who used to be perfectly happy although you were unsaved; you were full of peace, and were not disturbed in mind at all. Why should you be? You used to say to yourselves, "Well, if it goes ill with me, I am sure it will be worse for my neighbors. If I am not all right, there are very few people who are." Yes, you said to yourself, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace. If, sometimes, your minister preached a sermon that came rather too closely home to you, and troubled your conscience, you said to yourself, "Now, that is the kind of preaching that I do not like. I do not think I shall go to hear that man any more; for, in my opinion, people ought not to be made so uncomfortable as I have been made." There are some people who would never have been saved if the Holy Spirit had not broken down their refuges of lies.

There is another “first” that people do not like to lose; that is, their fancied strength. You thought, dear friend, that you could repent and believe in Christ whenever you pleased, and you said to yourself, “There is no hurry for me to decide to be a Christian. I can keep on attending the means of grace; and one of these days, when it is convenient, I will break my own heart, renew my own will, create myself a new creature in Christ Jesus.” That was your meaning; though, possibly, you did not express it quite so plainly. Ah! I recollect well when first I began to discover my own inability in spiritual things; it was a horrible discovery. I wanted to do good, but I found that evil was present with me. I longed to repent, but my heart was as hard as a stone. I earnestly desired to pray, but I could not pray a believing prayer; I could as easily have leaped over the moon as have prayed such a prayer by my own unaided efforts. I really wished to believe in Christ; and though now it seems as plain and simple a thing as anything can be; yet, at that time, I could no more believe in Christ than I could make a new world. Oh, the horror of having one’s strength all taken away! But what a blessed thing it is to lose all our first strength, to be reduced to utter weakness, and to be quite incapable of any spiritual action, so that Christ says to us, “Without me ye can do nothing;” and all this in order that he may establish the second and better strength, and enable us each one to say, “In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.”

The Lord Jesus Christ becomes a strength and a power to us when we have lost our own; but we shall never get his strength while we have our own, for he will never yoke his omnipotence with our poor pretense of power. That cannot be: “He taketh away the first.” He brings you to a swooning state, he brings you to a fainting fit, he brings you to death’s door, he brings you to the very grave of your own personal confidence and strength; and then he comes in, and gives you life in himself, and clothes you with power from on high: “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

Further On in the Christian life, it often happens that the same rule holds good, that the Lord takes away many first things to establish the second. After people are converted, it frequently happens that they have a great deal too much confidence in their minister, or in some Christian friend. At first, it is very helpful to their infant footsteps to have a little go-cart, to which they can hold lest they should tumble down; but, after a while, when God means to teach them something for themselves, and to make them exercise their own judgments, perhaps he takes away that minister, or he takes away from them the pleasure that they once had in hearing him. Sometimes, I have known men so much depended upon that God has left those good men to themselves for a while, that their hearers might see what poor souls they were, and so might never depend upon them again as they had done in the past. Why does the Lord take away that comfortable repose that his poor babes enjoy on the breasts of their teachers? Why, in order that they may find a better and sweeter repose on his own breast; that they may get away from all confidence in men, and come to full confidence in the Lord their God and Savior. It is often a very hard lesson for some to learn; but it must be learned. As the apostle Paul says, “Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” There are some who seem to know Christ only by the teaching of other people; but it is far better to know him by personal contact with him, by coming close to him for yourself; and that blessing is often not realized except at a great expense of things once highly prized. In that sense also our text is true: “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

So, too, there is an early joy that young Christians have. Oh, how full of delight they are! Some of them have a great deal more of flame than they have of real fire. Just as, when a fire is first kindled, and the shavings, and the sticks are burning, there is not half the fire that there will be when the coals themselves are all aglow; — there is not half the fire but there is more blaze and more crackle; so is it with many young people, they have no end of a blaze! Oh, they are so happy! They cannot tell how happy they are! But, after a while, that exuberance of joy goes, and the quiet delight in the Lord which comes afterwards, instead of it, is much more solid and deep. They can give good reasons for their joy; and though they are not so full of exhilaration as they were, their delight is really firmer, and stronger, and deeper than before: “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

I have known many of God’s dear people to be very frightened by some of their first experiences. They thought they were going to be lost because their early joy had departed from them; yet there was no need for cherishing such fears. You know that children lose their first teeth; it is good that they should do so, because there is a better set coming. And, often, it is very much like that with the Christian. He has a wisdom tooth to cut that he did not cut in the first stages of his spiritual life; and the first milk teeth that he has will have to come out, some of them, with many a painful tug; but they will have to come out in order that he may grow to a spiritual manhood: “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

Oh, how many things you and I have still to gain by losing! How much we are to be enriched by our losses! How we are to make progress by going backward! How we have yet to mount by sinking! How we have yet to rise by descending! Paradoxical as all this may seem it is to be so, according to the rule laid down in our text: “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” There may be a lesson here, not only for young converts, but, also for you who are experienced Christians. This passage may help you to understand some things which, perhaps, have seemed dark to you.

IV. Now I close by giving you some instances to be expected to which the rule of the text will apply: “He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”

Let all Who are of the family of Christ remember that God will soon take away from us everything that we have here below. He will take us away from it, which is the same thing as taking it away from us. But, as you anticipate this great change, do not look forward to it with sorrow; do not shed a single tear of regret at the thought of parting with anything that you now possess. Regret not the dear old house at home, notwithstanding all its happy associations. Mourn not that you must leave your beloved country, of which you say that, wherever you wander, it is still the joy of your heart, You will have to leave your native land, and to leave your happy home; but you may be comforted by the assurance of the text, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second;" for there is a better country, that is, the heavenly land. We, who believe in Jesus, are citizens of the New Jerusalem; and as all earthly cities and the fair prospects of the country shall melt away from our eyes, we shall look upon a fairer land, and a more glorious city, where no fog or blight shall over come; but where —

**"Rocks and hills, and brooks and vales,
With milk and honey flow.
"All o'er those wide extended plains,
Shines one eternal day;
There God the Sun for ever reigns,
And scatters night away.
"No chilling winds, or poisonous breath,
Can reach that healthful shore:
Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
Are felt and fear'd no more."**

God will take away our home on earth; but in our Father's house above, there are many mansions; therefore you may go, cheerful fireside; you may go, happy home; all that was loved, all that was delighted in may melt away, as I sing, —

**"My Father's house on high,
Home of my soul! how near,
At times, to faith's foreseeing eye,
Thy golden gates appear!"**

If Moses, from the top of Pisgah, was glad to die with the earthly Canaan in sight, how much more may we be happy to die with the heavenly Canaan just before us, into which we are to enter! "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

The Lord has been taking away from some of you considerable portions of your family. Some dear children, who were once nestling at your breast, are now with him in glory. Father also has gone, and mother; husband or wife, brother or sister, some of these dear ones are gone home. The members of your family have nearly all gone now, and you are left alone. You begin to count the friends of your youth upon your fingers. God is evidently taking away "the first." But do not forget how blessedly he is establishing the second." When you enter heaven, you will be no stranger inside those pearly gates. There will be many there, whom you knew and loved on earth, whom you will know and love above. They will meet you at the gates, and they will joy and rejoice with you before the great Father's throne.

"Alas!" says one, "I have lost all my family, and I am left alone and desolate." But if you are a child of God, remember what the apostle once Wrote, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Though God has taken away that first family, he has established that second, and far more numerous, and more glorious one. "Go, setteth the solitary in families." That is what he has done for you; he has taken away your first family connections, your first bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood, in order that he may establish the second higher relationships. He has dissolved the ties of blood that you may find better spiritual relationships among such as Jesus spoke of when he said, "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Even so we say of the saints on earth, ampi the saints before the throne of God in heaven, "These are sister, and brother, and father, and mother to us." "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."

And, brothers' and sisters, this poor body of ours, which is so full of aches and pains at times, will be taken away to make room for a more glorious one. This one is getting worn-out; some parts of it have fallen away already. It is like an old lath-and-plaster

building, and cannot last much longer; it very seldom stands to the end of the ninety-nine years' lease, but it soon crumbles away; and, by-and-by, with all of us, the old house will fall to pieces, and be done with. Shall we fret over it? Shall our soul cry, concerning the body, "Alas, my sister! Alas, my brother?" No; "he taketh away the first, that he may establish the second;" and as we have, in this body of our humiliation, borne the image of the earthy, we shall, in the second condition of this body, bear the image of the heavenly. It shall be sown in dishonor, but it shall be raised in glory. It shall be sown in weakness, but it shall be raised in power. It shall be sown a natural body, but it shall be raised a spiritual body. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." And, oh! what a glorious second that will be! Our resurrection body will know no pain, no weariness, no weakness, no taint of disease or sin, no possibility of corruption or death. Well may we sing, —

"O glorious hour! O blest abode!"

when this poor body shall be made like unto the glorious body of Christ Jesus our Saviour. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Let the first go, then, without a murmur or a sigh.

Once more, this earth shall be taken away to make room for the new one. In a little while, there shall be heard the blast of the archangel's trumpet. I know not when or how the various dosing events will happen, so as to put them together in chronological order; but I do know that, at God's bidding, this fair earth shall suddenly be wrapt in flames. It is a beautiful world, say what you will about it. In many other parts besides Ceylon, —

"Every prospect pleases,

And only man is vile."

Wherever man squats down, and raises up his long ranges of bricks and mortar, there everything is ugly; but out yonder, in God's forests, and on God's hills, and by God's sea, there everything is fair, and grand, and God-like, as if God himself might come and sojourn here, and not be ashamed of the world he has made, for still it is good. But in a moment, it will be wrapt in flames, and it will be utterly consumed. Nothing of this present creation shall abide in its present condition. The apostle Peter says, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." Yet weep not, beloved, neither lament, for Peter also says, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second; and, on a brighter morning than your eyes have ever seen, you shall wake up and see the new heavens and the new earth; and you, with all the spirits of just men made perfect, shall come hither to sing sweeter songs than the morning stars chanted when the world was first created. There will be a second creation, a second world, for the Lord will have taken away the first, but he will have established the second. The work of destruction will have been accomplished; but the work of re-creation will also have been finished; and, oh, what joy and bliss it will be for the redeemed from among men, and for the holy angels, too, when the New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a 'bride adorned for her husband, and the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he shall dwell among them! "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

I close by saying that it is my earnest prayer that some of you may, by God's grace, have your "first" taken away from you this very hour, that you may have "the second" given to you. Salvation lies not in "the first." That is all ruin and woe; the trail of the serpent is over it all. You will never go to heaven if you remain in the same nature as you had when you were born. You must be born a second time; or else, if there be not a second birth, you will have to endure the second death. God give you the grace to believe in Jesus, and to find in him that second, higher, better life that you may enter into the second and perfect world; for, then, you will give him all the praise for ever and ever. Amen.

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Hebrews 11:6 What Is Essential in Coming to God?

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"Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."—Hebrews 11:6

THE apostle had put Enoch down among the heroes of faith; and, to prove that Enoch was a man of faith, he says, "Before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." "Then," argues Paul, "if he pleased God, he must have been a believing man, for the very lowest form of approach to God needs faith: 'He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.' So, if the very lowest grade of approach to God needs faith, much more does that highest form of it in which a man walks with God so as to obtain the testimony that he pleases God." The argument of the apostle is clear and convincing; if any man shall be pleasing to God, as Enoch was, it must be the result of faith; since, even to come to God at all, in the very first steps that we take, we must have a measure of faith in him, we must at least believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

I. I am not going into the argument so far as it relates to Enoch, but I want you to join with me in examining Paul's statement concerning what is essential in coming to God. That will be my first division, The Essentials Of Faith In Our Coming To God.

The first essential is, that we must believe "that he is," we must believe that there is a God,—that these things, which we see, do not spring of themselves, or come by chance, or in any way whatever except that there is a personal God, who created all things, and by whom all things consist. If you do not believe that, you certainly will never come to God. How is it possible for a man to come to One whose very existence he doubts? That matter must be settled, or there cannot be any real coming to God. More than that, he that would come to God must believe that there is but one God, that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, is the only living and true God. If we are to come to God,—to the God of the Old and the New Testament,—we must accept him as he is there pleased to reveal himself. We must not try to fashion a god such as we would like to have, for that would be idolatry; but we must accept God as he is made known in the Scriptures, and especially as he has manifested himself in Christ Jesus, for it is in him that God has revealed himself to us for the practical purpose of our reconciliation. If we wish really to come to God, it must be by the way in which he has come to us; that is, through his Son, Jesus Christ. Neither, let me add, shall we ever come to God aright unless we ask for the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the blessed Trinity in Unity.

To believe that God is, means, however, much more than this. It means that, when I pray, I believe that he is where I am. I do not know whether any of us have yet been able really to get a grip of this first thought, that God is, for there is something wonderful about that truth; for, if God is, then God is everywhere; so, with what awe and reverence ought we to spend every moment of our lives! There is no place to sin in, for God is there. There is no place in which to trifle, for God is there. There is no place for blasphemy, for God is there: will you blaspheme him to his face? There is no place for rebellion, for God is there: wilt thou rebel against the King in his own courts? This makes all space most solemn, and all time truly sacred. Of every spot of ground whereon we stand, we may say, with Jacob, "How dreadful is this place!" Though it was a place abounding in stones, which served for his pillows, he said, when he awoke, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

I passed a church, the other day, and I saw on one of its doors the words, "The house of God." I thought, "Is it?" On the next door, I saw the words, "The gate of heaven;" and I said to myself, "It is not so, any more than any other door is." Is this Tabernacle God's house? While we worship him here, it is; but it is not any more holy than our own house is. One place is as sacred as another, for God's presence has consecrated it all. "The Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands." Every part of my garden, as I meditate upon God in it, is as holy as the aisles of the most venerable cathedral; your bed-chamber, as you kneel in prayer ere you lie down to sleep, is as sacred as the temple, of Solomon. Every spot, where there is a devout worshipper, is the abode of Deity; it is no more and no less so in one place than in another.

If you begin to fancy that one place is sacred above others, you will tread there with superstitious reverence; you will scarcely dare to put your foot upon the chance pavement, and you will bow to the East, as I have seen some do, as if there were something more holy in that direction than at other points of the compass. Ugh! but this is idolatry, and nothing better. The right thing is to look upon the street pavements as too sacred for you to sin there, and to turn to the East or West, to the North or South, and to say concerning every place, "God is before my eyes there, so that is a sacred spot; God is everywhere, and therefore I must not dare to offend against him anywhere."

They who would come to God must believe that he is everywhere, and that he is specially where they are praying to him. When we pray aright, we speak into God's ear,—into his very heart, for he is wherever there is a praying soul; and when you truly praise him, you are not singing to the wind, for God is there, and he hears you. How solemn would our praise be, and how intense would our prayers be, if we always realized God's presence! Yet, perhaps, when you go to bed, you drop down on your knees, and wearily repeat a few sentences; but you have not really prayed unless you have been conscious that God was there, and you have communed with him. Then, in the morning, if you are late in rising, you hurry over what you call your devotions; but there is no devotion in them unless you believe that God is there, and you really draw near to him in prayer. We should pray, dear friends, in

the same spirit as that in which the angels worship before the throne, with covered faces, and in lowly adoration; and thus we should pray if we did really believe in God's presence with us. But for anyone to say, "Yes, I know that there is a God, but I do not realize that he is here; when I am at my work, or at my recreation, I do not feel that he is specially with me; "is a sort of atheism, from which may God, in his great mercy, deliver all of us! If there be a place where God is not, you may go there, and sin; but there is no such spot in the whole universe. Remember what David says: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

The belief that God is, moreover, seems to me to involve, not only that he exists, and is everywhere present, but that he knows what we are doing,—that he perceives the wishes of our hearts,—that he is aware of all that we say, and all that we think. The Epicureans held the theory that God had a great many things to do,—of far more importance than listening to the prayers of men and women, yet that is not the teaching of the Scriptures. He counts the hairs on our head, and notices the falling of a sparrow to the ground; and he is as truly great in looking upon the lilies of the field, as in ordering the revolutions of the ponderous orbs of heaven.

It is not believing that God is when you say, "Oh, yes, there is a God, and God is everywhere; but, still, he does not concern himself about us, and no practical end will be served by prayer, for he will not interfere in our affairs." Ah, no! you will never come to him in that way, and I do not see any inducement for you to try. I do not want to approach a dead god; there are sufficient dead things in the world to sorrow over without a dead deity. I do not care for the Pantheist's god; what is he? An insensible, impalpable, something or nothing. I need a personal God, a living Person, a sympathetic Person, a Divine Person, and I find him in that blessed One who is the Son of God, and who, with the Father and the Spirit, is the one living and true God. I hope, dear friends, that you have come as far as this; even if you have not yet actually come to God, I hope you know, in the senses that I have mentioned, that "he is."

But, according to our text, there is a second thing to be believed before we can come to God,—that is, "that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." By which I understand the apostle,—mean that we must believe that God hears prayer, and answers it, too. You will not pray unless you believe that; at least, you will be very foolish, if you do. I suppose there are persons who think that the mere repetition of a certain form of words may do them good, but their intellect must be on a level with that of those who used to think that the word "abracadabra" could cure diseases or keep away ghosts and witches. I am afraid there is a kind of religion which is only on a level with witchcraft; when people think a particular place is sacred, and that a man is holy because he has certain clothes on, and reads out of a holy book, on a holy day, and performs with holy water, and a holy cup to hold it in, and holy this, and holy that,—I know not what,—it is all a mass of silly superstition. Let us keep clear of all that nonsense, and feel that, when we speak with God, there is reality in it, and that God hears us just as surely as we hear one another, and that he is prepared to answer our petitions;—I mean, literally to do so, not in some mysterious, unreal fashion, but actually and truly to give us that which is fitting for him to bestow, and right for us to ask. We cannot pray, as we ought, unless we believe that.

If we are to come to God, we must believe also, that he will bless those who endeavor thus to come to him; and, further, that it is a good thing to know God, to love God, to be reconciled to God, to be under the operations of God's Spirit, to be saved by God's Son. If we do not really believe all this, if we fancy that it is a mere matter of form, and has no vitality in it, we shall not care to come to God, for sensible men do not wish to deal in counterfeits and shams, they want realities.

To put the matter very plainly, he who would truly come to God must believe that a life of godliness will pay,—that it will answer his purpose to come to God, because "he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." A man with any sense will not follow after that which he conceives has no advantage in it; but when a man can honestly say, "The best interests of my highest nature depend upon my getting to God, becoming his servant, and having him as my Father and my Friend," then it is that he diligently seeks him. Dear friends, I believe that, if you would have the best of life, the highest bliss, the supremest, noblest, divinest joys of which our mortal nature is capable, you cannot find all this anywhere but in coming to God, through Jesus Christ his Son, and yielding yourselves up entirely to him, and becoming his faithful followers for ever. We must believe that diligently to seek him is the most profitable thing possible to us, or we shall never rightly come to God. Some will say, "To be moderately religious is a good thing, no doubt; but to be righteous overmuch, would be a very bad thing." Ah! you will never come to God if that is what you think; for, depend upon this, of all the miserable things in the world, a little religion is about the worst of all. I know some men who have just about enough religion not to be able comfortably to sin, but they have no comfort in Christ. The joys of the world,—and it has its delusions which worldlings call joys,—they dare not go after; and for want of faith they dare not claim the joys of the Spirit of God; so they are wretched. They are like bats, which fly by night, or which, in the twilight, come out, and get a little exercise. They are between-ites,—if there is such a word,—neither servants of God, nor yet out-and-out servants of Satan,—a miserable crew; let none of us belong to them. That man gets the most out of godliness who gives himself most to it. He whom the world calls a fanatic is often just the one who is thorough, sincere, and earnest; and he it is who finds that God is his rewarder, because he diligently seeks him;—not only seeks him, but seeks him with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength.

II. This brings me to my second division, which is this.

Coming To God Should Be The Result Of Any Man's Having These Essentials. I thought, as I looked upon this great assembly, that there might be a few here who doubted whether there was a God, or whether God was "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" but I know that almost everyone here says, "I believe there is a God, I never doubted it; and I believe that it is a good thing, a blessed thing, to serve him."

Very well, then; as you believe that there is a God, seek him. If I am addressing any who have been delivered from infidelity in the head, I want you also to be delivered from practical infidelity of the heart. Reason itself says to you, "If there be a God, and God is all around you, how can you continue to be his enemy?" Now, friend, if thou believest that there is a God, canst thou sit easily on thy seat so long as the Omnipotent One is angry with thee? Bow thy head, and confess thy transgression to him; pray to him to forgive thee for Christ's sake, to be reconciled to thee, and to reconcile thee to himself; for he has promised that he will forgive those who confess their transgressions to him, and who come unto him through Christ Jesus his Son. If there be a God, O ye burdened ones, ye weary ones, ye feeble ones, ask him to help you. You have no helper, perhaps, on earth; then cast yourself at his feet, and see what he can do for you. If you do indeed believe that God is,—that the Ever-merciful lives, and hears and pities those who trust him, rely upon his care now, and come unto him with your heartbreaking grief.

As there is a God, I am sure I do but reason rightly when I say, then let us serve him. Is it not right that he should be our Master, seeing that he made us, and that his service is so glorious that he makes into kings all those who enter it? Come, my soul, enlist afresh in the army of Emmanuel; and you who have not yet served him, yield yourselves up to him this very hour. As there is a God, we cannot be happy apart from him; and there is no happiness like that of having him for our Friend and Helper. Come, then, dear hearts, can you refuse this invitation? If you say, "There is no God," I am not speaking to you just now; but if you say, "Oh, yes! I know that God is, and that he is here, and I believe in Father, Son, and Spirit;—prove that you really believe in God by yielding to him, by being reconciled to him, by obeying him, by trusting his Son, and so finding eternal life. God grant you may!

Further, if you believe that God is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," come unto him. You say, "Oh, yes! I know that a Christian life is a happy life; I believe that the service of God is one that pays, that it is full of rewards, and full of happiness." Very well, then, will you not enter at once upon that service which has such gracious rewards attached to it? Will you not run away from your old master? You need not give him any notice; the prodigal did not. He was sent into the fields to feed swine, but he never gave his master a day's notice; if he had waited to do that, he would never have come away. He slipped right off, and left the swine to eat all the husks. I advise you to act in the same fashion. "Steal away to Jesus," without any delays, or hesitation, or questioning. I do not think that any man gets saved by thinking about it, and saying that it shall be by-and-by. No; now is the all-important moment; strike while the iron is hot, and, by God's grace, that one blow shall break the fetter, and set the captive free.

As there is a God, and he is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him," it behoves us, who do seek him, to seek him with the utmost diligence. David said, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; "and though it is not of debt, but of grace, yet there is a reward, and we find it to be so even now. Let us, therefore, give ourselves more than ever to prayer and to Christian service, and more than ever let us devote ourselves to his glory whose we are, and whom we serve.

Let me pull thee by the sleeve, my brother,—thou who sayest, "I am a Christian." You believe that God is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" do you seek him diligently? How much of the Scriptures have you read during the last week? How many hours have you spent in prayer? "Hours?" say you; "say minutes." How much have you lived for God during the past month? What have you done distinctly with a view to his glory? What souls have you tried to win? What truths have you tried to teach? What virtues have you tried to set forth? Thou sayest that he is "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" dost thou despise the reward? Art thou content with having made a profession of religion? Some professors remind me of the reply of the child, who was asked at the Sunday-school about her father, who never went to any place of worship. "Is your father a Christian, Jane?" "Yes," she replied, "but he has not worked much at it lately." There are many professors of that sort; they are like certain tradesmen, who have a notice on their door to say that they have gone out for a fortnight. They will not make a fortune in that way, I am persuaded; such a method of doing business generally ends in bankruptcy. What can I say of some professedly Christian people? They have no stock, they are doing no business for their Master, and their chief employment is that of asking,—

"Do I love the Lord, or no?"

Just so, brother; that is what I was thinking about you.

"Am I his, or am I not?"

Just so, sister; it is quite right of you to ask that question, and there are a good many more who are asking it concerning you; but why should you and I live in such a way that we are obliged to ask these questions? He who is, by God's grace, bringing forth fruit to God's glory does not need to sing that sorrowful tune; so may God grant to all his professing people grace to be thorough, to

give themselves up to the utmost diligence in his holy service, for it can only be by his grace that we shall do this!

III. Now I close by bearing testimony to the fact that The Result Of Coming To God Will Justify The Act Of Coming, And The Faith Which Was Essential To The Coming.

First, many have come to God, so they must have had faith in him, for no man can come to God without believing "that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." There have been men, who have believed this, who have not come to God; but there have been others who have come to God because they believed in him. In the olden time, Abraham rose up early in the morning, and went to a certain place where he prayed, and where God met with him, and spoke with him in words which Abraham could hear. God does not now utter words which our ears can hear; yet there are men—and they are honest, upright, truthful men,—who will tell you solemnly that they have often met with God, and have been as certain of his special presence as of their own existence. There have been times when our fellowship with the Father, and with the Son, has been as real to us as the atmosphere which we cannot see, but which we breathe. We cannot see God; yet "in him we live, and move, and have our being; "and we have been conscious of it. There is a mystic touch that comes not from any angelic hand; there is a sacred breathing upon the heart which comes not from mere wind; there is a whisper within the soul—a movement, a stirring, a brooding, an overshadowing,—I cannot describe it, but I have often felt it, and so have many of you, and you have been sure that God has come to you, and that you have come to God. I am bearing witness to what is as sure a fact to me as that I am speaking to you now; and it is not a fact to me alone, but to hundreds and thousands of living men and women to whom this life is made happy because they dwell with God, and abide in Christ Jesus.

Beside that, having come to God, we have found that God is. It has not been a dream, but a blessed reality. We have struggled to get to God; we have prayed to him; we have cried to him; we have longed for him; and we deliberately declare that God has come to us. When he has come to us, has there been any reality about it? Reality? Why, he has sometimes lifted us up out of the horrible pit of despair into unutterable ecstasies of joy. At times, when we have cried out to him in our distress, he has walked over the waters, and they have been like marble beneath his feet; and very soon, all has been calm and peaceful within our spirit. Tell us that God is not real, when we have been almost on the verge of sin,—one more step, and we should have been over the precipice,—but we have seen him, and we have started back; or, on the other hand, we were shirking a duty which seemed too hard for us, but we realized his presence, and then we shouldered the lead; and though it seemed as heavy as the world, we became like Atlas, by God's strength, and so we were able to bear the burden. Do you think I talk too boldly? Perhaps you are a bigger man than I am; if so, talk according to your size; but, to me, it has been enough to have been helped of God in my little world; and it has been the same with many a poor widow with half-a-dozen children about her. You may say, "Her case is a very small affair." It is not small to her; and when she has gone before the living God, with that heavy lead which to her is like a world, God has helped her, and has been the Advocate of the widow, and the Father of the fatherless; and it has not been in a dream, or in sentimental fiction, but in sober reality. I could find you many who would bear witness to such deliverances as this, and they would declare that God is.

They have also found that God rewards them. Does he? I will answer in the name of them all,—Yes, he does. How does he reward them? Well, sometimes, in a measure, in this life. He gives to his children, as he did to Abraham and to Isaac, happiness and prosperity, so that, even in this life, they feel that his ways are ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. But this is not the greatest reward he gives. He gives himself to his children, he becomes their portion. They are poor, and sick, and heavy-hearted; but he comes to them, as he did to Abraham, and says, "Fear not; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." He himself is their reward; and, possessing him as their God, they are happier without the riches of this world than the wealthiest man can be without God. Ask the Lord's servants how they get on with their Master. There are so many of them that, if he were not faithful, some one or other would tell the story. It is a thing that ought to be noticed, that, out of the millions of Christians who have died,—and death-beds are places where people usually speak the truth,—there has never been an instance of one person sitting up in his bed, and saying, "I am sorry I ever served the Lord. I regret that I was so diligent in seeking him, for I found no reward in it. My life would have been a great deal happier if I had served myself, or lived for the world; but I made a mistake, and I lived for God."

Now, surely, if this were the fact, there would have been one or two somewhere who would have said it; but the universal testimony—there is no exception—of all dying children of God has been this, "We wish we had sought him earlier, and loved him more, and served him better; we wish we had been more consecrated to him, and had practiced more self-denial, and given more generously to his cause; for, after all, the reality of our life lies in what he did for us, and in what he enabled us to do for him. All the rest was but the chaff of life; the best of our life is what we lived by faith upon the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us." They all say so; and, therefore, we must accept their testimony. If a mistress has a large number of maids, somebody might ask them, "What kind of mistress have you?" and they might all say, "Oh, she is a most delightful person," and so on, because they were afraid to speak the truth; but if there should be a dozen of them, by-and-by one would be found in the street, who would say, "You heard what those maids said, but it was not true, for she is a termagant." The truth would ooze out somehow; and if our God were

not faithful, one or other of his servants would be sure to tell of it; but we have none of us anything to complain of.

“But,” say you, “there are many of God’s people, who serve him faithfully, and they do not get any reward; they are very poor and needy.” Yet they will tell you that they are more than satisfied with the way their Lord has treated them; and, moreover, they will tell you that they are strangers and pilgrims here, and that their chief reward is yet to come. They are looking, by faith, for the everlasting remunerations that will follow the life of holiness, when this poor world and all its joys shall have melted like the morning mist, and gone for ever. Eternity, eternity, eternity,—we shall soon know, brothers and sisters, what it will be to be in eternity. There is not one of us who can live here for ever. When a very few years have gone, we shall all have departed. Imagine yourselves in the future state; if you have not lived for God, but have lived for the world, for yourself, what is your portion? Endless darkness; infinite despair; woe unutterable. But if you have lived for God; if, by his grace, you have put your trust in Jesus Christ, what is your portion? On yonder glittering hills you stand, in the midst of the white-robed host, and Christ is with you, and you are looking back upon what you suffered for his sake on earth, and you say, “Oh, it was nothing at all; I wish I had suffered far more for him who suffered so much for me!” As for what you did for him, you will say, “That is not worth mentioning; oh, that I had lived more intensely for him!” As for what you gave for him, “Oh!” you will say, “I never gave a thousandth part of what I would give now if I had it. I reckon that! wasted what was not spent upon his Kingdom; I reckon that I lost the time that I did not use for glorifying him; and only did I live as I ought to live, and as in heaven I now wish I had lived, when I lived entirely to him.” Then will you see, from before the throne of God, that “he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

So may it be with every one of us, for Christ’s sake! Amen.

Hebrews 11:34 God's Cure For Man's Weakness

NO. 697

DELIVERED ON SUNDAY MORNING, JUNE 24TH, 1866,

BY C. H. SPURGEON,

AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“Out of weakness were made strong.”-Hebrews 11:34.

SOME kinds of weakness are of God’s appointment, and necessarily incident to manhood; they are not sinful, and, therefore, we may continue to be subject to them without regret. In reference to such weaknesses it may be that after beseeching the Lord even thrice to remove them, it may be for our good that they should remain. Then will our gracious God give us, in place of removing the weakness, this reply, “My grace shall be sufficient for thee.” This is a case of in weakness made strong, and there are many of God’s saints who daily experience so blessed a privilege. They are weak, and continue weak; they have infirmities which they once wished to have removed, but which now they are content to bear; for now they are of the same mind with the apostle, that they glory in their infirmity, because when they are weak they are strong. But, dear friends, there is another kind of weakness which is sinful, a weakness which springs not from nature but from fallen nature; not from God’s appointment, but from our sinfulness, and out of this we should desire to be delivered. We cannot pray for strength in sinful weakness, but must earnestly plead for strength to come out of it and to be made strong. This seems to me to be the particular blessing which faith is said to have obtained in the text; “out of weakness were made strong.” It is the inestimable privilege of many a Christian to be strong in weakness when the weakness is only one of infirmity, but it is an equally precious boon to be made strong out of weakness, when that weakness is of a sinful kind. Looking round the church at large, with as impartial an eye as we can summon, we are afraid that for the most part it is now-a-days comparable to a huge infirmary rather than a camp filled with brave soldiers.

Both ministers and private members of the church are very generally weakly in one way or other. They are living, but they are sickly. They are working for God, but they are working in a feeble, inefficient manner. If I look upon the camps of the Lord’s enemies, whether Puseyite or Broad Church, I see intelligence and vigor so apparent that I am apt to think that never was error more earnest, more active, more intense than just now; there is a reality about the efforts of our opponents which may well alarm us: but when I look to the camp of the Lord Jesus Christ I lament a predominant luke-warmness, a want of enthusiasm, and deficiency in force, which, if it does not betoken a departure from God in heart, certainly indicates very great feebleness in the vital parts, producing comparative weakness in all the parts. I desire this morning to speak to those who are weak-weak where they ought not to be—and who feel a growing tendency to rest content in that weakness; I would stir up those who are beginning to imagine that weakness is the normal and proper state of a Christian; that to be unbelieving, desponding, nervous, timid, cowardly, inactive, heartless, is at worst a very excusable thing. I want, if God wills, to show to the sinfully weak ones that their condition is not proper at all, and that it is the work of faith to lift us right out of it; not to help us in our evil weakness, but to deliver us out of it and to make us strong, reversing our present condition by enabling us to be mighty in the work of God. Since the text teaches that faith is the grand cure for spiritual feebleness, I shall, first, cite a few cases of cure; in the second place, I shall analyse the remedy; in the third place, I shall endeavor to administer it; and in the fourth place, I shall say a word of praise to the Physician who prescribes it.

I. At the outset, we have said that faith is the cure for spiritual weakness, and I have to Mention Cases Of Cure.

I shall not now cite cases from the Old Testament of bodily cures which have been wrought by faith, though I might mention Hezekiah, who being sick unto death was by faith in God's promise restored to life, and his period of existence lengthened for fifteen years. In the apostolic times it was through faith that many sicknesses were made to fly before the healing touch of the apostles. That power of healing has probably become extinct, or is lying dormant in the church; yet there are still indications that faith has some power in that direction. I cannot but think that when honest John Wickliffe, raising himself up in the bed of sickness, said to the monks who surrounded him much expecting him to die and tempting him to recant, "I shall not die, but live to declare the wicked deeds of the monks" - I cannot but think that his faith had much to do with his cure; had he been a man of a timorous, wavering frame of mind, his sick bed might have been his death bed, but the vital forces were all thrown into energetic action by the mental energy of his faith, and the crisis was safely passed. I do not know how far faith may still operate upon the bodily frame, for there is certainly an intimate connection between the soul and the body. Those wondrous cases recorded in the life of Dorothea Trudel of Zurich, indicate the singular power of faith to assist in the cure of the body by its calming influence on the mind. That admirable woman, who has but just departed this life, became the foundress of a hospital in which cures were wrought mainly by the means of prayer and faith, cures which have been substantiated in the best possible manner, namely, by her enemies having dragged her before the law courts of Zurich for practising physic without a diploma, when she proved that the only physic used was directing the mind to Christ and proclaiming the gospel, by which a holy calm spread over the mind and the body derived manifest benefit. Such cases, and others, which we have noticed, go to show that if we had more faith in the living God, it might sometimes be possible for the soul so to overmaster the body that out of weakness we might still in Hezekiah's fashion be made strong. These hints are not however to the point, and relate rather to a theory than to revealed truth.

That faith strengthens Christian men has been proved often in the history of the church of God. The church's weakness springs mainly and mostly from a want of faith in her God, and in the revelation, which God has entrusted to her. When men believe intensely they act vigorously, and when their principles penetrate their very souls, and become precious to them as life itself, then no suffering is too severe, and no undertaking is too laborious, and no conflict too heroic. They will enter upon impossibilities, laugh at them, and overcome them, when once they know of a surety that the principles, which move them are most certainly from God. This seems to me to be the great work, which Luther did in his day, under God the Holy Spirit's power. He brought back the church to the strength of faith, and then her whole force returned. The man knew but very little of truth upon the doctrine of justification by faith; he was clear as the sun at noonday, but he was half a Romanist in most other respects, but this one all-important thing he did for the church, he made her believe in God and in God's truth with a vigorous decision, which had almost ceased from among men.

Though he knew not all the weapons of the divine armoury, yet the one he did know he wielded with such bravery of faith, and such tremendous dogmatism, that his resolute soul shamed others into steadfastness. See the man as he goes into Worms, defying a host of devils, though they were as many as the tiles on the roofs of the houses; see him standing up in the Diet of Worms, and alleging that he could not retract, So help him God! See him in his earlier days, nailing up his theses upon the church doors, as sailors nail their colors to the mast; or rending the Pope's bull in pieces and casting it into the fire, as men resolved on conquest break down the bridges behind them and render retreat impossible: it was the man's faith in God that helped him to do great exploits, and the church learned from him to believe that "God everywhere hath sway, and all things serve his might." When the church once more believed firmly, her spirit returned to her, and like a giant refreshed with new wine, she recommenced her race.

In the modern revival under Whitfield and Wesley the restoration of faith was the source of restored strength. Those brethren, differing in doctrine as they did, had this point in common, namely, that they were intense believers in the indwelling power and presence of the Holy Ghost in the church. Men had been disputing, and trying to prove or disprove everything. Sermons were frequent upon such topics as whether there were a God or no. Now, you never find Whitfield or Wesley wasting time over such matters; they were so full of God's Spirit, and could see him so clearly everywhere at work, that they felt no need of proving it. While men were discussing as to whether the Scriptures were inspired, and divines were writing books upon the evidences, these men preached the gospel, and infidelity fled before them. An age destitute of spiritual life generally amuses itself by trying to prove what is not worth proving, or wasting its energy upon external things to the neglect of the inward; an age spiritually alive takes itself to the Lord's work, and treats all doubt as folly and sin. The followers of Whitfield and Wesley, instead of proving with diffidence, and apologising for the gospel with half-heartedness, came forth with, "Thus and thus saith the Lord." They mounted their pulpits as monarchs mount their thrones; and stood forward not as timid apologists, but as ambassadors armed with divine authority they proclaimed the truth, and men owned its power, till from one end of the land to the other the dry bones arose to life and stood as an exceeding great army. Brethren, our churches must come back to the old faith, and to a firm belief in it. If you do not believe the articles of your faith reject them, and do not be sham believers. If the doctrines, which you profess be indeed true, grip them, hold them fast, get them engraven upon your souls, and burnt into your consciences. Have faith in God, and the truth-that the truth cannot be destroyed nor God defeated. Vitality and power in your faith will soon send force and life into all the other parts of your

spiritual manhood. What has been proved upon the largest scale has been true in all other instances. For instance, the weakness of depraved human nature always gives way before the energy of that faith which the Spirit works in us. The sinner in his weakness being aroused, sighs dolefully-

“I would but cannot sing,

I would but cannot pray.”

I would but cannot break the bonds of sin, I would but cannot melt my heart and soften it in penitence. When the sinner is pointed to the cross, and comes to trust himself with Jesus, viewing the blood sprinkled and the righteousness wrought out, then the man can pray, can sing, can melt in penitence, or can rise up in flames of love. The inability of human nature is instrumentally removed by the energy of faith. It was through believing that you became strong; if you had continued to live by work, or by feeling you would have been still as weak as ever, but when you looked out of self to Christ and trusted him, it was then your strength came to you.

The same is true of subsequent spiritual debility. Christians who are alive unto God, and are endowed with some divine strength, are attacked at times with a spiritual, universal decline. Just as we sometimes see a strong and healthy person growing pale and wan, losing appetite and falling into sickness, until he becomes a mere skeleton, because a general sapping and undermining of the constitution has come upon him: so have I seen it with Christians; they do not lose life, but they do lose all their energy, and become as listless and lifeless as some of you probably now are in body through the heat of the air. Then they can scarce walk, much less run, and mounting with wings as eagles were quite out of the question. Such persons will bear witness that the only way of recruiting their strength is by faith. They must come again to the first principles, and trust their souls anew with Jesus, believing over again with a novelty of energy the old doctrines of the gospel. They must go to God as to a real God in believing prayer, and they will not long remain weak. Out of weakness faith is sure to make us strong, and the change effected in us is equal to that which we see in a man who having been long confined to his couch at last returns to his labor showing no tokens whatever of disease.

I have still been dealing with the great principle of the text on a large scale; we will now particularise a little more. Take a few forms of weakness. Many believers who are vigorous in many respects are troubled with a hesitancy in testimony; they cannot speak up for Jesus. Whenever they try to say a good word, nervousness, or something akin to it, restrains them. They say with Moses, “Lord, I am slow of speech.” They hesitate, or are still. There is no cure for hesitancy in the confession of Christ equal to faith; observe Moses, he is so hesitating that God gives him Aaron to be his spokesman, and yet read through the history, and Moses is the better orator of the two. Aaron has a golden mouth, but, by degrees the confidence that Moses feels in his commission enables him to rebuke Aaron, and when Aaron goes up to Mount Hor to sleep in the arms of God, Moses stands up and in that last sermon he delivered, and that psalm he sung before the assembled multitude, you cannot detect the slightest trace of slowness of speech. The man hits overcome his weakness by faith; a holy faith has given him a holy courage, and the tongue once bound has become unloosed. I should advise some of you to try it. A strong dose of the essential oil of believing taken every morning and evening would enable you to tell to sinners round what a dear Savior you have found.

Another common weakness among Christians is timidity. Modesty is beautiful, but it may degenerate to cowardice. It is well to be humble, it is never well to be weakly fearful. Some are always afraid, they dare not try this, and dare not try that; and if they happen to be placed in office where they can influence others by their counsels, they are shockingly bad officers, because they are always keeping the church back from victory from a fear of defeat. What is a sure cure for timidity? Faith, belief in the truth, in the right, in God, in invisible energy, in helps which we cannot see, and aids which we should not have dreamed of. This shakes off timidity. Take as a specimen Barak. Barak is slow to go up against the enemies of God, till Deborah the mother of Israel says she will go with him. Woman sometimes lends superior courage to man, and the weaker sex proves itself the stronger. Look at Barak; after he has once believed in the power of God, he marches to the fight and wins the victory, and is commemorated in soul-stirring words by the poetess, “Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song; arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.” Mighty to conquer was the man who was timid to fight: when faith gave him courage, it made him triumph. Carry a vial of strong faith along with you, and a good draught thereof will drive off fainting fits. This is the true strong water, the genuine Elixir, the famous cordial, the heavenly Aqua Vitae.

A frequent form of weakness is despondency, which is so common in English churches as to be as much a national disorder as consumption, it is not so common among you as it was, but still more so than I could wish. We are not so gay and frivolous as our Gallican neighbors, and we are not quite so go-ahead as our trans-Atlantic friends, and I am afraid, as Englishmen, we have a natural tendency to become despondent. I know I feel it myself, and in the circle where I move it is not at all uncommon. Brethren, despondency is not a virtue, I believe it is a vice, I am heartily ashamed of myself for falling into it, but I am sure there is no remedy for it like a holy faith in God. Asaph, of old, was very subject to this weakness, and he said to himself, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul, why art thou disquieted within me?” But what was the medicine he took? “Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.” That was the remedy, and David prescribes it too, when he says, “Trust in him at all times, ye people;

pour out your hearts before him." Despondency hamstring a man; it makes him weak in the arena of conflict, when he ought to be like a well-trained athlete struggling with his foe, and contending for the mastery. Christian, beseech your Lord to increase your faith in him, your trust in the Unseen, your reliance upon his promise and fidelity; for when you get more faith you will rise superior to that weakness, and out of the weakness you will be made strong.

Impatience too, impatient murmuring, is another form of Christian weakness in which we must not expect to be made strong in grace, but must plead for grace to get out of it. It strikes me that Job may naturally have been an impatient body. He utters sundry very tart and snappish things to his friends, not one whit more sharp than they deserved, but he held fast to his integrity as if he had been a very Pharisee at first; but how strong he was, and how clear of his weakness, when by divine grace he could say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" There was the medicine you see, trusting in God. Job, full of faith, sitting on a dunghill, is a far more splendid sight than the Great Mogul upon his throne. I do not believe heaven and earth ever saw a more majestic spectacle, than the Patriarch on the dunghill covered with sore boils, scraping himself with a potsherd and yet saying, "Shall I receive good from the hands of the Lord, and not receive evil?" Princes, potentates, and kings, your power never reached to this, and even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed so gloriously as poor Job! Brethren, if we had more faith in God, that he makes all things work together for good to them that love him, we should not grow so impatient, we should bear the pain, the cross and the loss, with greater equanimity, feeling, "My Father sent it; my Father overrules it; good will come of it."

Perhaps you are weary of this list of weaknesses, but I must add one more, namely, weakness in overcoming besetting sins. I hope we are not among those who make light of sin. A genuine Christian dreads sin. He will not say, "Is it not a little one?" for he knows that a little sin is like a small dose of a very potent poison: it is sufficient to destroy our peace and comfort. There are some sins, which really seem as if we could not get the mastery over them. I will instance one, namely, a passionate disposition. A person who is of quick temper may get into the condition of thinking, "Well, I was born so and cannot help it, I always shall be of a quick temper." You always will be if you think that; but it strikes me that the grace of God must have power to overcome evil tempers, and that your hope will be in believing that yours can be overcome, and in struggling to mortify this among the other affections of the flesh. I know personally men who were once very passionate, but now are gentle; they were once likely to take fire as readily as tinder at a spark, but now they would stand fire right well; and if I had to select patient men, I would select those very men who were notorious for their fearful passionateness in years gone by. "Well," my dear friend, you will say, "I cannot do it, sir." No, I know you cannot, but there is one who can. The eternal God who is your helper can surely help to make you a reasonable being and rid you of this madness; for anger is temporary insanity. Surely God can make you morally sane, and bring you back to a calm state of mind; only believe in his power, and seek to be wholly sanctified by his grace, spirit, soul and body, and you will see that as he cast a legion of devils out of a man in days gone by he can now cast this devil out of you, so that you will not be pestered with it any longer. You may have to watch it as a householder watches a thief, but you will get it out of doors and keep it at arm's length. Oh for grace to get our temper under our foot and keep it there, that though it may have a tendency to rise we may keep it down. Anyhow, whatever may be our besetting sin-and we all have something against which we ought to strive-there have been cases in which such weaknesses have been cured by faith. We have not time to stop to mention any modern instances, but we know such. I trust some of us could adduce our own history as an instance of what faith in God can do. "Out of weakness they were made strong."

II. We will turn to our second head and Analyse The Medicine.

The subject is so very wide that I must confine myself to one instance, and shall speak of the medicine as it would be mixed and compounded for a man struggling at very dreadful odds against a gigantic system of evil. He was very weak, but through faith he becomes strong. One of the first ingredients of faith's medicine is a sense of right. Everybody admits that when a man is sure that right is on his side, he finds strength in that belief. Even if two men are going to law with one another, the one who knows that his case is founded upon justice enters the court with much more strength of mind than he who is conscious of several flaws in his suit, and only trusts to the blessed uncertainty of the law. There is truth in the old saying, that "a good conscience is the best armor." It is of no very great use in a real battle, for unfortunately the shots have no respect for saint or sinner, but when in the way are pretty sure to kill anybody who stops them; but of the utmost value in the battle of principle. A man who cannot argue, yet, when he knows he is right will somehow or other stand his ground. He says, "my opponent has more wit than I have; he understands logic better than I, but I know I am right;" and to know you are right necessarily gives you strength. Faith is a belief in the rightness of that which God reveals, a trusting in its truth, and who wonders that a man who believes, therefore becomes strong? A second ingredient is heavenly authority. Everybody knows that a man who is naturally weak will often act very bravely when he has authority to back him. Let the Christian combatant feel-as feel he will when he has faith-that he is armed with divine authority, and you will not wonder if from a dwarf he rises to a giant. "This," saith he, "is not my quarrel; I believe it to be God's war: the truth which I maintain at such hazards is no dogma of my own invention, it is God's own offspring; God has sent me to fight for it: God puts the word into my mouth." A man thus conscious that he has a mission from heaven cannot be afraid; he must be mighty; and when a man feels in addition to that, that God's decree appoints him to accomplish a certain end, that God's promise declares that

he shall succeed, and that from the eternal nature of truth it cannot sustain defeat; then surely he stands like a rook in the midst of the billows, and he cannot waver, he casts all thought of fear to the winds. Mixed with this is a consciousness of heavenly companionship, which makes the believer courageous. Many a man who would have been afraid to go to battle alone has marched along very cheerily because of the many thousands who are hurrying to the same attack. The Christian feels that he has the companionship of his God and Savior. Jesu's name is "Emmanuel, God with us." The best of all is, God is with us. If we suffer, Jesus suffers in one of his members; if we are slandered and reproached for Jesus' sake, it is the cross of Christ, which we are carrying, and Jesus bears it with us. We hear the more than angel whisper, "Fear not, I am with thee." Come then, let us sing as we march onward-

"If on my face for thy dear name,

Shame said reproach shall be

I'll hail reproach and welcome shame,

If thou remember me."

In addition to all this, faith has an expectation of supernatural help Faith hears the wheels of Providence working on her behalf. Mahomet in his earlier career, though his faith was but mere fanaticism, yet gave great courage to his men by the daring things, which he said and did. As he threw the handful of dust into the air, he believed that his foes were blinded, and his soldiers won an easy victory; he declared that he heard the noise of angels' horses as they came to the fight, and no sooner had he thus spoken than every man grew brave. Now the Christian, not in imagination, but in spiritual fact, can hear the wings of angels flying to the rescue of divine truth. Here I see to-day the hand of a man, but I see also with it the wing of an angel. God worketh for his people; the evil he hindereth and restricteth, the good he speedeth and multiplieth, and, therefore, strong in invisible succours, we must not wonder that out of weakness the believer is made strong. I must not omit one powerful ingredient in faith's life-draught, it is the prospect of ultimate reward. Faith bows her head in the day of battle when the poisoned arrows fly like hail. She whispers to herself, "I may fall, but I shall rise again," and she vows by the eternal God that when she rises, it shall be with the self-same banner in her hand for which she tell. She knows that in the end she cannot, must not, tall-that she s hall conquer. When a man fears defeat he will probably bring it upon himself, for his fear ensures it; but when a man does not know how to be defeated, the little petty disasters of the way all conduce to his ultimate victory. So, Christians, you who are warring for God and his truth, I hope you will not despair because of the gloomy aspect of the present age. It may appear as if infidelity and Puseyism together would eat out the very bowels of God's church, but courage, my brethren, courage,-these foes will eat up one another one of these days, or there shall rise a man out of their own ranks, who will be their downfall. We yet may live to thank God for the apparent retrograde movements of to-day, for upon this the Lord may ride to a brighter ultimate triumph. Faith is strong because she is sure of victory. Faith takes to herself this thought, that in the victory she shall share her reward. What will not men do for a crown? even for an ivy crown the Grecian Athlete would strain every nerve. Now they did it for a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible. Faith makes the crown of eternal life glitter before the believer's eye; it waves before him the palm branch. Sense pictures the grave, loss, suffering, defeat, death, forgetfulness: but faith points to the resurrection, the pompous appearance of the Son of Man, the calling of the saints from every corner of the earth, the clothing of them all in their triumphant array, and the entrance of the blood-washed conquerors into the presence of God with eternal joy. Thus faith makes us out of weakness to become strong. Let me remind you that the essential ingredients of faith's comfort are just these: faith sees the invisible and beholds the substance of that which is afar off: faith believes in God, a present, powerful God, full of love and wisdom effecting his decree, accomplishing his purpose, fulfilling his promise, glorifying his Son. Faith believes in the blood of Jesus, in the effectual redemption on the bloody tree, it believes in the power of the Holy Spirit, his might to soften the stone and to put life into the very ribs of death. Faith grasps the reality of this Book; she does not look upon it as a sepulcher with a stone laid thereon, but as temple in which Christ reigns; as an ivory palace out of which he comes riding in his chariot, conquering and to conquer. Faith does not believe the gospel to be a worn-out scroll, to be rolled up and put away; she believes that the gospel instead of being in its dotage is in its youth; she anticipates for it a manhood of mighty strugglings, and a grand maturity of blessedness and triumph. Faith does not shirk the fight; she longs for it, because she foresees the victory. I would compare faith to an emperor, of whom we have read that he summoned his counsellors and generally judged as to whether he should go to war by their opinion, but he did it in the following manner:-if they warned him that it would be a very fearful war, if they said that the enemy's cities would never be taken, that the armies on the other side were too numerous to be conquered, and the provinces too extensive to be held, he would reply, "We will do it then, for if there be anything which you, gentlemen, think to be easy, it is beneath the dignity of the emperor and the troops whom he commands, but if you reckon it impossible there is a clear field for honor." Was it not a man fit to be a soldier of such a prince, who when told that the Persian arrows were so numerous that they would obscure the light of the sun, replied, "We shall fight splendidly in the shade." Surely he was akin to Alexander, who, when they said that the Persians were as the sands on the seashore, replied, "One butcher is not afraid of a whole flock of sheep." So let it be with us; let us feel that we are men of another mould than to be afraid, that believing in God, we do not know how to spell "Cowardice," and as to fear of defeat or fear of man, we give that up for

the craven dogs who slink at their master's heels, and wear their master's collar, and eat the garbage which his bounty throws to them. We care not for the things that are seen; we have learned to live upon angels' diet, and to eat the bread which cometh down from heaven. Our motto is, "Courage, courage;" and our belief is that the day shall come-

**"When the might with the right,
And the right with the might
For evermore shall be,
And come what there may
To stand in the way,
That day the world shall see."**

III. The third point is to Administer This Medicine, but no time remains, and besides I cannot do it; you must go to him who compounded it, namely, the blessed Spirit of the living God; and take with you this prayer, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief," and this other one, "Lord, increase our faith;" but I will just give you a few hints.

Some of you are going through a present personal difficulty; you are embarrassed in money matters, or a child is sick, or the wife is dying, or some other providential trial is vexing you,-you are saying, "I cannot bear it!" I will not pray with you that you may be comforted in that sinful weakness, but I will and do beseech you to ask for faith in that Father's hand which wields the rod, that you may get out of the weakness, and may now be made strong to suffer with holy patience what your loving Father's wisdom appoints for you. Others have a spiritual duty before you, but you are shirking it because of its difficulty. You do not like to "go through the ordeal" -that is what you call it. You are disobediently timid. Now, I shall not ask God to comfort you in that weakness; you know your Master's will, and you do it not; may you be beaten with many stripes, and may the stripes be blessed to you. I will ask that, knowing your duty, you may rise out of that weakness by believing that God will help you to obey, and so out of weakness you may be made strong. Some of you are called where you live to contend earnestly for God and for his truth. You have many adversaries; now your weakness makes you withhold your testimony. You have been trimming a good deal; you have been worshipping that modern Diana called Charity, which is the devil in the form of an angel of light, and instead of bringing out all the truth you have given up the corners of it, I shall not ask that you may have any comfort in such weakness. May you be ashamed of having been ashamed of Christ and of his cross; but I do plead with God for you that believing the very sweepings of truth to be precious, and the very cuttings of the diamond of the gospel to be worth fighting for, you may escape from your weakness and be made strong in life and death to declare God's truth boldly. Some of you are always doubting your Father's love, the faithfulness of Christ, and your own interest in him; I will not comfort you in such a state. I will not pray God to comfort you while you are in it, but I do ask you to pray that you fly from such weakness. Do not doubt your God till you have cause to doubt him. Oh, brethren, if you will never distrust the Lord Jesus till he gives you an occasion for distrust, and till there is something in his character which should rationally excite your suspicion, you will never disbelieve again. I pray you seek more faith, and you will rise out of your fears. You who are afraid of dying-and there are some such here-shall I ask that you may be made strong while in that weakness? No. I dare not. Jesus Christ did not come to give you comfort while you are under the fear of death; but he came to deliver those who through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage. The plea shall be, therefore, that you may have such faith in God and such a view of the Canaan on the other side the flood, that you may look forward with delight, or at least with resignation, to the time when you shall pass the river and be for ever with the Lord. The text says out of weakness, brethren, and oh, may God grant that some of you who have been lying spiritually on a sick bed may through this sermon be made to take up your bed and walk; may all weakness be left behind even as the child leaves the little garments of the nursery behind him when he becomes a man.

IV. My last work was to Praise The Physician, and who is this?

Who is it that has taught us to believe? It is our Father who is in heaven, who has taught us and bidden us trust him: blessed be his name. Join with me-you need not sing with those lips-let your heart sing as you say, "Blessed be our heavenly Father, who has given us like precious faith in him. Source of all goodness, foundation of all confidence, we adore thee for teaching us the sweet art of trusting thee! Let us also with equal thankfulness, bless the Lord Jesus, for we had never been capable of faith in the invisible God if there had not been a Mediator by whom we might come to him. Blessed be those wounds and those agonies, and that death which is the door of our faith in the Father's love. Blessed moreover be that mysterious person, the Holy Spirit, for faith is his gift, and if it is to be increased in us, he must increase it. O blessed Spirit, be thou for ever praised for putting such a jewel as faith into our poor hearts; and blessed be thy power for keeping it there, for Satan would long ago have stolen it; and blessed be thine

energy which shall keep it till I am beyond the reach of the foe.”

Brethren and sisters, do not let what I have said this morning merely pass your ears. I am persuaded that though I have not put it as I could wish, there is a great deal of practical value in the truth, which I have stated. You must be strong. This is not an age in which weak Christianity will do. It is strong, energetic religion that we want now, and you cannot obtain it except by gaining strong faith, and much of it. Plead for it, and then, when you shall have obtained it, the world shall feel your power. God shall be glorified, and Christ's name shall be lifted high.

You who have no faith at all may learn something here. It is only by faith that the impotence and inability of human nature is overcome, so that the soul receives Christ unto salvation. May the Holy Spirit work that faith in you to your eternal salvation, for Jesus' sake. Amen.