

Spurgeon Sermons on Joel

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Joel Commentaries

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Sermons by C H Spurgeon On Joel

Joel 2:8 Order is Heaven's First Law

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“Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path.” — Joel 2:8.

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

I. As I considered this remarkable fact in insect life, my meditations led me to note The Order Which Reigns, not amongst locusts only, but Throughout The Whole Of God’s World; and then I said within myself, — After this fashion should there be order and arrangement in the Christian Church. God has trained his great insect army, and among them order reigns; but this is no exception to the general rule, for all the hosts of God are marshalled in rank and file, and are never left to be a disorganized mob of forces. From the most minute to the most magnificent, all creatures feel the sway of order, and they well observe the laws imposed by their Creator.

Look up to the heavens, and observe the innumerable stars that glisten there so plenteously, that numeration fails. Looked at through the telescope, stars are so abundant that the heavens appear to be covered with dust of gold; and yet, we have no record that one of these bodies has ever interfered with the orbit of its fellow sphere, or if such a catastrophe has ever been permitted, it has been part of the all-comprehending scheme. The majestic orbs move, each one in its own orbit, and all in perfect harmony. Even the aberrations, as we call them, are nothing but the result of regular law, and the astronomer finds that he can calculate them with the greatest possible accuracy. There are no irregularities, discords, or failures among the constellations; and if to the student of the heavens such should appear to be the case, he has but more fully to master the universal law, and he discovered, with astonishment, that every eccentricity is a necessary incident in a system grander than he had thought. Mere tyros in astronomy talked of irregularities, but Newton and Kepler found a mathematical precision manifest in all. At no point need we be afraid that the universe will be thrown out of gear. If a man had placed innumerable wheels in a machine, there would be, in due time, a breakdown somewhere. Oil would be wanted here, a cog would be broken there, a band would be snapped in this place, or a piston would be immovable there; but God’s great machine of the universe, whose wheels are so high that the sublime Ezekiel, when he saw them, felt that they were terrible, has continued to revolve these many thousands, perhaps millions, of years, and has never yet been stopped for cleaning or repair, because God has impressed upon every atom of it the most docile spirit of submission, and his powerful hand is at work every instant amidst the machinery giving force to his laws.

Nor is it so in the coarser inanimate forms of matter only, but the same law holds good with the whole animal creation. Not locusts alone, but the fish of the sea, and the birds of the air, all observe their Maker is bidding, and both live and move according to rule

and order, all forming portions of the perfect circle struck out by the divine compasses. What a wonderful thing it is that mighty streams of fish should come, during certain seasons, from the North, and swim near enough to our coasts to afford our fellow-citizens so large a portion of their daily food! If there be complaining in our streets, there need not be, for extended fisheries would supply all the inhabitants of Britain, even if they were multiplied a hundred times, and yet there would be no perceptible diminution in the teeming population of all the sea, for God has so arranged it that there shall be most of those kinds which are most required for food. But what a marvel that, at the fixed period, the unguided fish should migrate in such countless shoals, and should return again, in due season, to their old abodes among the Arctic waves!

Mark, too, how every tribe of animals is needful to all the rest. So beautiful is the order of nature, that we cannot want only destroy a race of little birds without suffering from their removal. When the small birds were killed in France, by the peasantry, who supposed that they ate the corn, the caterpillars came and devoured the crops. Man made a defect in an otherwise perfect circle; he took away one of the wheels which God had made, and the machine did not work perfectly; but let it alone, and no jars or grindings will occur, for all animals know their time and place, and fulfill the end of their being. You spoil the harmony of nature's concert if even the sparrow's chirrup is unheard. The stork and the crane fly at God's bidding, the swallow and the martin know their pathway; the prowling beasts and rapacious birds, as well as the domestic cattle, all hold their own in nature's arrangements. Like the bejewelled breastplate of the high priest, nature is full of gems, each one in its setting, and the glory is marred if one be wanting. Be assured that the wild ass and coney, leviathan and behemoth, eagle and dove, gnat and lizard, are all arranged for the highest good, and are beautiful in their season. "Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path."

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

Coming down from these great things to our own selves, depend upon it that all the events in our own little lives are marching straight on to a gracious consummation. You, child of God, sometimes say, "What can be the design of this cross? What can be meant by that bereavement? Why am I perplexed by this dilemma? Why is this difficulty piled like a barricade across my path? Well, you know not now, but you shall know hereafter; meanwhile, settle it firmly in your faith that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Your affliction does not jostle your prosperity, but promotes it. Your losses do not cause your loss, they really increase your true riches. Onward still, laden with untold blessings, every event is marching for the righteous and for the humble spirit. God has his way in the whirlwind, and the clouds are the dust of his feet; only be you patient, and wait upon him with childlike confidence, and the day shall come when you shall wonder, and be astonished, that there should have been such order in your life when you thought it was all confusion, such love when you thought it unkindness, such gentleness when you thought it severity, such wisdom when you were wicked enough to impugn the rightness of your God. Brethren, the events of our history march on as rightly as a victorious legion under a skillful leader. Do not let us arraign the wisdom of that which happens to us, or fancy that we could order our affairs in better style. Our good and ill, our joy and grief, all keep their places. "Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path."

II. But we must rise still higher. We have come from the world of matter to the world of living creatures, and up to the world of intellectual beings, and Now Let Us Think Of God Himself.

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

On the other hand, many injure their minds very greatly by reflecting solely upon the one thought of God, that he is good. It is a blessed truth, that he is good and benevolent, and full of compassion, and Holy Scripture tells us that "the Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works." God forbid that we should seek to diminish the kindness of God, or think lightly of it, "for his mercy endureth for ever." Yet some look at that one emerald ray as though it were the whole of the spectrum; they gaze upon one star, and regard it as the Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus, all in one; and, alas! worse results follow, for they are tempted to think sin to be a mere trifle, since they ignore the justice and sovereignty of God. They so exclude God's righteousness and vengeance from their minds that, when they hear of hell, and of the wrath that will come upon the impenitent, they shudder with inward unbelief, and try to doubt it; and, perhaps, manage to find texts of Scripture which look as if they helped them in their perverted and jaundiced view of the Most High. They think they are glorifying God, but they are really dishonoring him, for God is no more altogether mercy than he is altogether sovereignty, and he is no more altogether sovereignty than he is altogether mercy.

The fact is, that every glory meets in God. All that is good, and excellent, and great, may be found in him in complete perfection. God would have thee so to think of him, for, in the atonement, which is his grandest revelation of himself, he has been pleased to show them

"How grace and justice strangely join;

Piercing his Son with sharpest smart,

To make the choicest blessings thine."

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

You have heard of the two travelers who met opposite the statue of Minerva, and one of them remarked, "What a glorious golden shield Minerva has!" The other said, "Nay, but it is bronze." They argued with one another, they drew their swords, they slew each other; and, as they fell, dying, they each looked up, and the one who said the shield was made of bronze discovered that it had a golden side to it, and the other, who was so bold in affirming that it was gold, found that it had a bronze side too. The shield was made of two different metals, and the combatants had not either of them seen both sides. It is just so with the truth of God, it is many-sided and full of variety. Grand three-fold lines run through it; it is one yet three, like the Godhead. Perhaps you and I have only seen two of the lines, — many persons refuse to see more than one, — and these may be a third yet to be discovered, which shall reconcile the apparently antagonistic two, when our eye shall be clarified by the baptism in the last river, and we shall ascend the hill of the Lord to read the truth of God in the light of the celestial city.

However, it is clear that salvation is altogether of grace, and equally clear that, if any man perishes, it is not for want of invitations on God's side, — honest, invitations to come to Christ. We hear our Master saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Some friends are so afraid of that text that they generally quote it "weary and heavy laden," which is not the true reading; but the laboring ones are invited to Jesus. Many such invitations did Christ give, yet did he not also say, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him?" Amid the soft rain of tenderness we hear thundering overhead that solemn truth, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. "As we listen to that thunder, we bow to the sovereignty of God; yet, amid the pauses, we hear the Master say, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," and we also hear him say, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. "Let us believe both sets of truths, and not oppose ourselves to friends who hold either the one or the other, but seek to bring them to believe both; for as the Bible is true, they are both of them the truth of the living God. Observation leads me to think that those persons, who are willing to hold the whole of revealed truth, are generally Christians of a more active spirit, and more desirous for the conversion of souls than those who contract their minds, and only hold some one or two great theological dogmas. If we will but

lay aside our Chinese shoes, and allow our feet to grow as they should, we shall find it far better walking on the road to heaven, and we shall be more ready for any work which our Master may call us to do.

III. Now we turn to The Christian Life.

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

As to our thoughts, we ought to endeavor, as God shall teach us by his Spirit, to keep our thoughts of God's Word in their due harmony. Some brethren, for instance, are altogether doctrinal in their inclinings. Doctrinal study is admirable; may God send us much of it! Yet doctrine is not all that we are taught in the Sacred Word; there are duties and promises also; why despise these? Then again, other professors of religion are altogether of a practical turn; and, while they value James, they depreciate Paul. They do not like an expository sermon, they cannot endure it; but if you give them a precept, they rejoice greatly. They are quite right as far as they go. The Lord send us much more practical Christianity! But this is not all. There are others who are altogether experimental, and some of these will hear no sermon unless it treats upon the corruption of the human heart, or upon the dark frames of the child of God: others will hew no experience but the bright side, you must always preach to them out of the Canticles, inditing the good matter concerning the sweet love of Christ towards his spouse. Now, each of these forms of preaching is good in its season; but he who would keep close to the Scriptures, and preserve completeness in his thoughts, must weigh well the doctrine, and seek to get a clear view of the covenant of grace, and the economy of salvation; he must, study the precepts, and ask the Holy Spirit to give the fleshy heart, upon which those precepts may be written as upon living tablets; and then he must watch his experience, mourning over inbred sin, but rejoicing also in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, through whose blood we have the victory.

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

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

The beauty of the human countenance does not consist exclusively in having a bright eye; no, the fine eye helps, but all the other features of the face must balance it. A man may have the finest possible forehead, and yet he may be extremely ugly because his other features are out of proportion; so it is with character. Character must have all the graces, and all the graces in harmony. Take, for instance, the virtue of meekness; it is a lovely thing to be of a meek and quiet spirit, but then, my brethren, how could reforms ever be wrought if all were so meek that they could not speak out against error? Where would you find your Luthers and your Calvins? Meekness must be balanced by the virtue which is its compensating quality, namely, courage. Affection must be strengthened by fidelity. A man must be patient under affliction, but he is not to be so patient as to be idle; he must couple energy with his patience, in order to manifest a practical faith. When we have each of these, we shall be what Paul and James call "perfect." Then shall we have come to be "entire, wanting nothing," having reached "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Christian men should be men-Christians. If your child should have a rapid growth in its arms, but not in its legs, or if its legs should lengthen, but not its arms, what a strange being it would be! What a monster! It is the growth of each limb in proportion that brings a man to perfection. So, my brethren, when our heads grow faster than our hearts, it is an ill sign; yet how many know a great deal more than they feel, and criticize much more than they believe! It is also an evil thing when a man's tongue grows bigger than his head, when he has more to say than he knows or does; when, like Mr. Talkative, he can talk about the road to heaven, but makes no progress in it.

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

Again, the difficulty will often occur to you, my brethren, as to how much is due to diligence in business and how much to fervency in spirit. No one can draw the line for another. Each one must judge for himself, but this must be the law: "Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path." "There may be a season in which you may lawfully give all the hours of the day to business. Your business may require it, and there are junctures with commercial men when, to go to week-day services, would be almost insanity; they must keep to their work, or else there will come a failure; and then the name of Christ will be evil spoken of. There will be times, too, with the working-men, when, if he were to insist upon coming to the Monday evening prayer meeting, or to the Thursday night lecture, he would be altogether out of the path of duty; there is a demand for labor just at some particular time, and he must obey the call, and he is in the path of duty in so doing. I am afraid that there are not many who fail in that way, but crowds who err in the opposite direction. Some will keep the shop open so late that there is no time for family prayer; and others will confine their servants so strictly that they can never get out, on week-nights to hear a sermon. It does not strike the employer's mind that some of the young people would perhaps like to be at the prayer-meeting on Monday night, nor will the employer be there himself. Now, I cannot say to you, you must give so much time to God, and so much the business; you yourself must ask God the Holy Spirit to guide you; but recollect, you must not let one thrust another. It is a good saying of an old divine, "Never bring to God one duty stained with the blood of another." As much as lieth in you, give to each distinct duty its due proportion.

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

Sometimes, the matter of the conduct of children towards parents has come under our notice. A harsh parent has said, "My children shall not carry out their religious convictions." In such cases, we have had occasionally to recommend the child to wait until he has grown a little older; at other times, we have bidden till a child break through the parent's evil command, since we cannot hold that the parent can have any right to make his child disobey God. In the matter of the child's religion, when it is able to judge for itself, it is as free as its parent, and has a right to choose for itself; and while the parent should seek intelligently to guide it, coercion must never be tried. If the parent be ungodly, the child is free from all obedience to wicked commands; and must act then in obedience to a higher Parent, and to a greater law, namely, the law of God. The like happens, at times, with regard to the husband and the wife. Of course, a good wife continually wishes to do that which will please her husband, and she is happy to be subservient to him as far as may be; but when it comes to a point of conscience, and the two relations clash, the relations of the Heavenly Bridegroom and the earthly husband, it is not always easy to decide upon a fitting course of action; but we may at least be certain that we must not be actuated by selfishness, nor by a desire to, avoid persecution, nor to please men; but we must stand on the side of honesty to God, fealty to the King of kings, and a regard for the truth as it is in Jesus. Do try if it be possible, and I believe it is possible, in every case to harmonize all your relationships, so that neither one of them shall thrust another, but each shall walk in its own path.

IV. So, brethren, my concluding remark shall be that, as this is to be true in the little commonwealth of the heart, and the home, it Ought Also To Be True Of The Church At Large.

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

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

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

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

And so, to conclude, it ought to be with the different denominations. I sometimes think that these will continue for ever. They are of no hurt to the Church of God, but a great blessing; for some of them take up one point of truth which is neglected, and others take up another; and so, between them all, the whole of truth is brought out: and it seems to me that the Church of Christ is even more one than if all the various sections were brought together into one grand ecclesiastical corporation; for this would, probably, feed some ambitious person's vanity, and raise up another dynasty of priestcraft, like the old Babylon of Rome. Perhaps it is quite as well as it is; but let each body of Christians keep to its own work, and not sneer at the work of others. Let all feel, "We have this to do, and we will do it in the name of God." Let each body of Christians try to correct its neighbor in its errors and mistakes, but let each work hand in hand, and stand foot, to foot in the common battle and the common service; for, O my brethren, the time will come when our little narrow jealousies will all melt away like the hoar frost when the sun arises! When the King shall come in his glory, or we are carried to the other side of the stream of death, and see beyond the curtain which parts us from the invisible world, we shall look with very different eyes upon some things which seem so important now. We shall then see that God has forbidden us to glory in anything but the cross of Christ, and that the one thing needful, after all, to contend for was, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."

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

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Joel 2:32: One More Cast of the Great Net

NO. 1931

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

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

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

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

I shall handle it in the plainest manner. In a book of practical surgery you do not look for figures of speech; all is plain as a pike-staff; such will my sermon be. I hand out the bread of heaven, and you do not expect poetry from a bake house.

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

Look at the connection of our text in Joel, and you will find that it is preceded by terrible warnings: “I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come.” Nor is this all; this broad gospel statement is followed by words of equal dread. “Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is

great. The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." It was true of the prophets as of the apostles that, knowing the terrors of the Lord, they persuaded men. They were not ashamed to use fear as a powerful motive with mankind. By the prophet Joel the diamond of our text is placed in a black setting, and its brilliance is thereby enhanced. As a lamp is all the more valued when the night is dark, so is the gospel all the more precious when men see their misery without it. To remove from men's minds the salutary fear of punishment for sin is to draw up the flood-gates of iniquity. He who does this is a traitor to society. If men are not warned of the anger of God against iniquity, they will take license to riot in evil.

Certain modern teachers pretend that they are so delicate that, if they believed in the Scriptural doctrine of eternal punishment, they could never smile again. Poor sufferers! One is therefore led to suppose that they are persons of superior piety, who are so deeply in love with the souls of men that they weep over them day and night, and labor to bring them to repentance. We should expect to see in them a perpetual agony for the good of their fellows, since they judge themselves to be so qualified to instruct others in the art of compassion. But, my brethren, we have not been able to discover in these sensitive persons any very hallowed sympathy with the ungodly; nay, we have heard of their having communion with the worldly in their sports rather than in their sorrow for sin. I have not seen in these men who forewear the use of the terrors of the Lord any remarkable powers of attracting men to Jesus by love. I have not noted any special zeal in them for the conversion of men, either by tender arguments, or by any other means. I question if they believe in conversion at all. On the other hand, the seraphic evangelists who have journeyed around the earth to preach the gospel, and have worn themselves down with evangelical earnestness, are, in all cases, men who feel the pressure of the wrath to come. These, though sneered at by the superfine delicates, have shown a tender love to which their judges are strangers.

He who speaks honestly concerning the judgment to come is the man of the tenderest heart. He who pleads with sinners, even to tears, usually does so because he believes that they will be everlastingly ruined except they repent. I do not believe that this modern zeal to conceal the justice of God and hide the punishment of sin is accompanied by an overflowing compassion for souls; I fear that, on the contrary, it is little other than an incidental form of a flippant unbelief which treats all doctrines of God's Word as antiquated notions, deserving to be jested at by men of advanced views. My brethren, the love of Jesus did not prevent his warning men of future woe. He cried aloud, amid a flood of tears, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together!" and he did not withhold the dreadful fact — "Your house is left unto you desolate." The knowledge of the coming destruction of the city aroused his sympathy; and he showed his pity, not by concealing the dreadful future, but by warning men of it. I venture to say that, so far as I have observed, no man ever preaches the gospel at all unless he has a deep and solemn conviction that sin will be punished in a future state in a manner most just and terrible. Preachers gradually get further and further away from the gospel, and its atoning sacrifice, in proportion as they delude themselves with the idea that, after all, sin is a small matter, and its punishment a questionable severity. Those also who look for a future opportunity for the impenitent may well consider it to be of small consequence whether men now believe in Jesus, or remain in unbelief. Such a taxing of things easy cannot suggest itself to me, for I believe in everlasting punishment. O my hearers, if you do not fly to Jesus, you will be eternally lost, and this urges me to entreat you to be saved! That blood and fire, that darkening sun and crimsoned moon, of which Joel speaks, arouse me to exhort you to seek deliverance. That great white throne, and the dread sentence of him that shall sit upon it, when he shall say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," all move me to persuade you to flee to Jesus. Therefore it is my delight to come to you with a free, broad, blessed, gospel promise, in the earnest hope that those of you who are now in danger may at once escape for your lives, and flee from the wrath to come.

With that preface I come to the handling of my text, moved by a burning desire that God may bless it. First notice that it contains a glorious proclamation — "It shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." But this is accompanied with an instructive declaration, to which we shall give a measure of attention as time permits — "In mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call."

I. Listen, first, to The Glorious Proclamation. As we have no time to spare, we will proceed at once to our theme.

The blessing proclaimed in our text is precious. — "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered," or "shall be saved." Salvation is a very comprehensive blessing; it is, in fact, a constellation of favors: a mass of mercies condensed into a word. It is a boon which reaches from the door of hell to the gate of heaven. The salvation which we have to preach to you at this time is salvation from sin in all senses of that term. It is a diamond with many facets. You who dread the eternal consequences of iniquity will be glad to learn that there is salvation from the punishment of sin — complete and eternal salvation. This is no small matter to a soul crushed beneath a consciousness of guilt, and the certainty that the necessary consequences of sin must be overwhelming. The results of sin are not to be thought of without trembling. Verily, dismay may well take hold of the stoutest heart while reflecting upon the judgment to come. We preach salvation from the unutterable woe which follows on the heels of sin. Whatever may be the terrors of that tremendous day, for which all other days were made, we proclaim in God's name salvation from them all. Whatever may be the gloom of that bottomless abyss, into which the guilty shall sink for ever, we are enabled to proclaim complete deliverance from that endless fall — salvation for every soul that believeth in Jesus Christ the Lord. No form of accusation shall be drawn up against the believer. No sentence of condemnation shall ever be uttered against him. Salvation sends

the prisoner out of court completely cleared. All the penal consequences of all sin shall be turned aside from all who by divine grace are led to call upon the name of the Lord.

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

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

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

Further, notice, in the next place, that the time of this proclamation is present; for Peter tells us that the time spoken of by the prophet Joel began at Pentecost. When the rushing, mighty wind was heard, and the flaming tongues sat upon the disciples' heads, then was the gospel dispensation opened in all its freeness. The Holy Ghost, who then came down to earth, has never returned; he is still in the midst of the church, not working physical wonders, but performing moral and spiritual miracles in our midst, even to this day. To-day, through his power, full remission is preached to every repenting sinner; to-day is complete salvation promised to every one that believeth in Jesus. This day the promise stands true, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

I put aside as altogether unscriptural the notion that the day of grace is past for any man who will call upon the name of the Lord. If you will call, you shall be heard, be the day what it may; yea, though it wane to the eleventh hour. The day of grace is never past to any soul that lives, as long as it is willing to believe in Jesus. I am not told to go and say there is grace for men up to a certain point, and beyond that point there is none. No, there is no limit set to the willingness or ability of Christ to save those who call upon his name. Who dares to limit the Holy One of Israel in the deeds of his grace? As long as faith is possible, salvation is possible. I have my Master's order to preach the gospel to every creature. He has said to his servants, "As many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." We are bound to say to every one, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Whether you are a child of ten, or a man of fifty, I have the same message for you. If you have lived to be a hundred, the gospel promise still holds good, despite the lapse of years. The times of your ignorance God has winked at; but he now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. He graciously declares of all who seek him, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Day of grace past, indeed! It is a whisper of Satan. Have nothing to do with that falsehood; for still the Savior bids you come to him and live. Even at the ebb of life he cries, "Come now, and let us reason together."

"Life is the time to seek his face:

Through life he freely gives his grace,

And while that lamp holds out to burn,

The vilest sinner may return."

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

Next, notice that, as the boon is precious, and the time is present, so the range of this proclamation is promising. It is full of good

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

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

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

"None are excluded hence but those

Who do themselves exclude;

Welcome the learned and polite,

The ignorant and rude.

**While grace most freely saves the prince,
The poor may take their share;
No mortal has a just pretense
To perish in despair."**

There is the text "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered," or "saved." Believe it, and obey it. It is a gracious gift; take it, and be rich for ever.

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

days worship a god of their own invention. They do not make an image of clay, or of gold, but they construct a deity in their minds according to their own thoughts. They proudly judge as to what God ought to be, and they will not receive God as he really is. What is this but a god-making as gross as that which is performed by the heathen? What can be more wicked than to attempt to imagine a better god than the one true and living God? As the deity of your fancy has no existence, I would not recommend you to trust in him. There is one living and true God, and that living God has revealed himself in the two Books of the Old and New Testament. In these he is more clearly seen than in his works of creation or of providence. In this God you must trust; and if you trust him, he will not deceive you. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." If you trust in "thought," or "progress," or any other deity of your own making, you will perish; but if you rely upon the living God, he will not, cannot, forsake you. Trust in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and you shall be delivered. "He that believeth on him shall not be confounded." A simple, child-like trust in God as he reveals himself in his Word, and especially as he unveils himself in the blessed person of the Lord Jesus Christ, will save you. In the Lord Jesus dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; trust in him, and you are saved.

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

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

"Trust and pray."

And when you have done this, then remember that to call upon the name of the Lord means also to confess that name. We read in the Old Testament, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." Not that they then first prayed, but they then began to meet together avowedly to worship Jehovah. They came out from among men, and named the sacred name as that of their God and Lord; declaring that, whatever others did, they would serve him. The Lord requires all saved ones to do this. You must confess that the Lord is your God, and Jesus is your Savior. You must say, "This God is our God for ever and ever." Our Lord put it, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Paul saith, "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." You must, in some way or other, confess your faith; and the best way is that which the Lord has himself ordained, saying, "Thus it cometh us to fulfill all righteousness." No longer wishing to live without God, no longer trusting to what you can see, and hear, and do, you must henceforth place your whole reliance upon God alone, and own the Lord as your God and Father. No man doing this shall be left to perish. Out of temporal and eternal troubles you shall be delivered. God will help you all your life long if you trust him. "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust, his truth shall be thy shield and buckler." Whosoever trusts, prays, and avows himself to be on the Lord's side, shall be saved.

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

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

And now, to wind up as to the proclamation: remember that, although it is so far-reaching as to embrace a wide world of believers, yet it is a personal message to you at this hour. "Whosoever" includes yourself; and if you see it from the right angle, it peculiarly

looks at you. You, calling upon God, shall be saved; you, even YOU! Friend, I do not know your name, nor do I need to know it; but I mean this word for you. You shall be saved if you call upon the name of the Lord. "Ah!" you say, "I wish my name was written down in the Bible." Would it comfort you at all? If it were written in the Scripture, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon shall be saved," I am afraid I should not get much comfort out of the promise, for I should go home, and fetch out the London Directory, and see if there was not another person of that name, or very like it. How much worse would it be for the Smiths and the Browns! No, my brethren, do not ask to see your name in the inspired volume; but be content with what you do see, namely, your character! When the Scripture says, "Whosoever," you cannot shut yourself out of that. Since it is written, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved," call on that name, and grasp the blessing. Despair itself can scarcely evade the comfort of this blessed text. O Holy Spirit, the Comforter, seal it upon each heart!

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

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

II. I could almost wish to close with this soft music, but I dare not maim a text. I will deal with the second part of it with exceeding brevity, but I dare not silence it altogether.

The second portion of the text contains An Instructive Declaration. "It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered." That was abundantly fulfilled at Pentecost, for on that day a great multitude believed, and were baptized, and were saved: thus those who called on the name of the Lord were delivered. But listen, "In mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance." This also was literally true: the first preaching of the gospel was to the Jews at Jerusalem itself. Salvation came to mount Zion, and to the city of the great King. The fountain for sin and for uncleanness was opened at Jerusalem.

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

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

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

"Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,

A remnant weak and small."

The Jewish church is a very insignificant portion of the Jewish people. The apostle tells us that "at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace;" and Isaiah says, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Poor Israel, poor Israel! Most favored for many an age, and yet only a remnant brought to call upon the saving Lord! Many come from distant lands, and sit down with Abraham, and

Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God; but the children of the kingdom are cast out into outer darkness, — all but a mere remnant.

To my mind it is most instructive to notice that even that remnant never called upon the name of the Lord until the Lord called upon them, — “The remnant whom the Lord shall call.”

We all of us need a miracle of grace to make us perform the simple act of calling upon God. This was manifestly true in the case of Israel, for as a nation it rejected Jesus of Nazareth, and only a few were converted by the power of the Holy Ghost. But whether Jews or Greeks, we are similarly depraved; and unless effectual calling shall call us out of our natural state, the very last thing that we shall ever do will be to come to Jesus, and to rest in him. Unhappy condition, to refuse the highest good!

Believing Jews are a remnant to this day, and only here and there is one called by grace. You say, “What have we to do with that?” We have much to do with it. Let us pray for our Lord’s own countrymen. Let us labor for them. This also let us do: let us learn from their fall. O you that are children of godly parents, you that habitually attend places of worship, you who sit in this house of prayer year after year — you are much in the same position as Israel of old! Yours are the outward privileges, will you reject the hopes which they set before you? My fear is lest you should get so accustomed to hearing the gospel that you should think that mere hearing is enough. I tremble lest you should grow so habituated to the externals of religion that you should be dead to all the internal parts of it, and only a remnant of you should be saved. Think of the multitudes in England who hear the gospel, and of the comparatively few who are called by grace to come and believe in Jesus Christ. It is sorrowful to think of the breadth of gospel grace and the narrowness of man’s acceptance of it. The feast is great; the guests are few. I see an ocean of mercy without a shore; and on it there floats an ark wherein but few are saved. Shall it be always so? Oh, come, and receive the gift of free grace! Alas! I see men sunk in the darkness of unbelief, and only a remnant rising to the light of faith! Altogether, in this London, out of four or five millions, we have not half a million at worship at any one time! Out of that half million, how many do you think are real Christians? Truly, it is a remnant still. Oh, that you and I may be of that remnant!

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

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