



Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 57: 1911

by

Charles Spurgeon

About *Spurgeon's Sermons Volume 57: 1911* by Charles Spurgeon

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The Curse Removed

A Sermon

(No. 3254)

Published on Thursday, June 15th, 1911.

Delivered by

C. H. SPURGEON,

More than a half century ago.

NOTE: This is taken from an early published edition of the original sermon. The version that appears in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 57, was edited and slightly abbreviated. For edition we have restored the fuller text of the earlier published edition, while retaining a few of the editorial refinements of the *Met Tab* edition.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."—Galatians 3:13

THE law of God is a divine law, holy, heavenly, perfect. Those who find fault with the law, or in the least degree depreciate it, do not understand its design, and have no right idea of the law itself. Paul says, "the law is holy, but I am carnal; sold under sin." In all we ever say concerning justification by faith, we never intend to lower the opinion which our hearers have of the law, for the law is one of the most sublime of God's works. There is not a commandment too many; there is not one too few; but it is so incomparable, that its perfection is a proof of its divinity. No human lawgiver could have given forth such a law as that which we find in the decalogue. It is a perfect law; for all human laws that are right are to be found in that brief compendium and epitome of all that is good and excellent toward God, or between man and man.

But while the law is glorious, it is never more misapplied than when it is used as a means of salvation. God never intended men to be saved by the law. When he proclaimed it on Sinai, it was with thunder, fire, and smoke; as if he would say, "O man, hear my law; but thou shalt tremble while thou hearest it." Hear it! It is a law which hath the blast of a terrible trumpet, even like the day of destruction, of which it is but the herald, if thou offendest it, and findest none to bear the doom for thee. It was written on stone; as if to teach us that it was a hard, cold, stony law—one which would have no mercy upon us, but which, if we break it, would fall upon us, and dash us into a thousand pieces. O ye who trust in the law for your salvation! ye have erred from the faith; ye do not understand God's designs; ye are ignorant of every one of God's truths. The law was given by Moses to make men feel themselves condemned, but never to save them; its very intention was to "conclude us all in unbelief, and to condemn us all, that he might have mercy upon all." It was intended by its thunders to crush every hope of self-righteousness, by its lightnings to scathe and demolish every tower of our own works, that we might be brought humbly and simply to accept a finished salvation through the one mighty Mediator who has "finished the law, and made it honorable, and brought in an everlasting righteousness," whereby we stand, stand complete before our Maker at last, if we be in Christ. All that the law doth, you will observe, is to curse; it can not bless. In all the pages of revelation you will find no blessings that the law ever gave to one that offended it. There were blessings, and those were comparatively small, which might be gained by those who

kept it thoroughly; but no blessing is ever written for one offender. Blessings we find in the gospel; curses we find in the law.

This afternoon we shall briefly consider, first, *the curse of the law*; secondly, *the curse removed*; thirdly, *the great Substitute who removed it*—"He was made a curse for us." And then we shall come, in the last place, *solemnly to ask each other, whether we are included in the mighty number for whom Christ did bear iniquities, and for whom "He was made a curse."*

I. First, then, THE CURSE OF THE LAW. All who sin against the law are cursed by the law; all who rebel against its commands are cursed—cursed instantly, cursed terribly.

1. We shall regard that curse, first as being *a universal curse*, resting upon every one of the seed of Adam. Perhaps some here will be inclined to say, "Of course the law of God will curse all those who are loose in their lives, or profane in their conversation. We can all of us imagine that the swearer is a cursed man, cursed by God. We can suppose that the wrath of God rests upon the head of the man who is filthy in his life, and whose conversation is not upright, or who is a degraded man, under the ban of society." But ah! my friend, it is not quite so easy to get at the real truth, which is this, that the curse of God rests upon every one of us, as by nature we stand before him. Thou mayest be the most moral in the world, but yet the curse of God is upon thee; thou mayest be lovely in thy life, modest in thy carriage, upright in thy behavior, almost Christlike in thy conduct, yet, if thou hast not been born again, and regenerated by sovereign grace, the curse of God still rests upon thine head. If thou hast but committed one sin in thy life, God's justice is so inexorable, that it condemns a man for one solitary offense; and though thy life should henceforth be one continued career of holiness, if thou hast sinned but once, unless thou hast an interest in the blood of Christ, the thunders of Sinai are launched at thee, and the lightnings of terrible vengeance flash all around thee.

Ah! my hearers, how humbling is this doctrine to our pride, that the curse of God is on every man of the seed of Adam; that every child born in this world is born under the curse, since it is born under the law; and that the moment I sin, though I transgress but once, I am from that moment condemned already; for "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."—cursed without a single hope of mercy, unless he find that mercy in the Substitute "who was made a curse for us." It is an awful thought, that the trail of the serpent is on the whole earth; that the poison is in the fountain of every heart; that the stream of the blood in all our veins is corrupt; that we are all condemned; that each one of us, without a single exception, whether he be philanthropist, senator, philosopher, divine, prince, or monarch, is under the curse unless he has been redeemed from it by Christ.

2. The curse, too, we must remark, while universal, *is also just*. This is the great difficulty. There are many persons who think that the curse of God upon those who are undeniably wicked is, of course, right; but that the curse of God upon those who for the most part appear to be excellent, and who may have sinned but once, as an act of injustice. We answer, "Nay, when God pronounces the curse, he doth it justly;

he is a God of justice; 'just and right is he.'" And mark thee, man, if thou art condemned, it shall be by the strictest justice; and if thou hast sinned but once, the curse is righteous when it lights upon thy head. Dost thou ask me how this is? I answer, Thou sayest thy sin is little; then, if the sin be little, how little trouble it might have taken thee to have avoided it! If thy transgression be but small, at how small an expense thou mightest have refrained from it! Some have said, "Surely the sin of Adam was but little; he did but take an apple." Ay, but in its littleness was its greatness. If it was a little thing to take the fruit, with how little trouble might it have been avoided! And because it was so small an act, there was couched within it the greater malignity of guilt. So, too, thou mayest never have blasphemed thy God, thou mayest never have desecrated his Sabbath; yet, insomuch as thou hast committed a little sin, thou art justly condemned, for a little sin hath in it the essence of all sin; and I know not but that what we call little sins may be greater in God's sight than those which the world universally condemns, and against which the hiss of the execration of humanity continually rises. I say, God is just, although from his lips should rush thunders to blast the entire universe; God is just, although he curses all. Tremble, man, and "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish by the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

So the curse is universal, and it is just.

3. But let us notice, next, the curse is also *fearful*. Some there be who think it little to be cursed of God; but O! if they knew the fearful consequences of that curse; they would think it terrible indeed. It were enough to make our knees knock together, to chill our blood, and start each individual hair of our head upon its end, if we did but know what it is to be under the curse of God. What does that curse include? It involves death, the death of this body; that is by no means an insignificant portion of its sentence. It includes spiritual death, a death of that inner life which Adam had—the life of the spirit, which hath now fled, and can only be restored by that holy Spirit who "quickeneth whom he will." And it includes, last of all, and worst of all, that death eternal, a dwelling forever in the place

"Where solemn groans, and hollow moans,
And shrieks of tortured ghosts,"

make up the only music. Death eternal includes all that can be gathered in that terrible, that awful—we had almost said unutterable—word "hell." This is a curse which rests on every man by nature. We make no exception of rank or degree; for God has made none. We offer no hope of exception of character or reputation; for God has made none. The whole of us are shut up to this, that (so far as the law is concerned) we must die—die here and die in the next world, and die a death which never dies; feel a worm which shall gnaw forever, and a fire which never can be extinguished, even by a fold of tears of future penitence. There we must be forever, O! forever lost. Could we estimate that curse, I say again, the torments that tyrants could inflict we might well afford to ridicule, the injuries that this body can sustain we might well afford to despise, compared with that awful avalanch of threatening which rushes down with fearful force from the mountain of God's truth. Condemnation—that curse of God—abideth on us all.

4. We hasten from this point, beloved, for it is fearful work to speak upon it; but yet we must not depart from it entirely, till we have hinted at one thought more; and that is, that the curse of God which comes upon sinful men is *a present curse*. O! my dear hearers, could I lay hold of your hands, if ye be not converted, I would labor with tears and groans to get you to grasp this thought. It is not so much a condemnation in the future that you have to dread as a damnation *now*. Yes, sitting where thou art, my hearer, if thou art out of Christ, thou art condemned now; thy condemnation is sealed; thy death-warrant has been stamped by the great seal of the Majesty of heaven; the angel's sword of vengeance is already unsheathed, and over thy head this afternoon. Whosoever thou mayest be, if thou art out of Christ, there hangeth a sword over thee, a sword suspended by a hair, which death shall cut; and then that sword shall descend, dividing thy soul from thy body, and sending both of them to pains eternal. O! ye might start up from your seats with fear, if ye did but know this, some of you. Ye are reputable, ye are respectable, ye are honorable, perhaps right honorable, and yet condemned men, condemned women. On the walls of heaven ye are proscribed, written up there as deicides, who have slain the Saviour—as rebels against God's government, who have committed high treason against him; and perhaps even now the dark-winged angel of death is spreading his pinions upon the blast, hastening to hurry you down to destruction. Say not, O sinner, that I would affright thee; say, rather, that I would bring thee to the Saviour; for whether thou hearest this or not, or believest it or not, thou canst not alter the truth thereof—that thou art now, if thou hast not given thyself to Christ, "condemned already;" and wherever thou sittest, thou art but still in thy condemned cell; for this whole earth is but one huge prison-house, wherein the condemned one doth drag along a chain of condemnation, till death takes him to the scaffold, where the fearful execution of terrific woe must take place upon him. Now condemned and forever condemned; hear that word. "The curse of the law!"

II. But now I must speak, in the second place, of THE REMOVAL OF THAT CURSE. This is a sweet and pleasant duty. Some of you, my dear friends, will be able to follow me in your experience, while I just remind you how it was, that in your salvation Christ removed the curse.

1. First, you will agree with me when I say that the removal of the curse from us is done in a moment. It is *an instantaneous thing*. I may stand here one moment under the curse; and if the Spirit look upon me, and I breathe a prayer to heaven—if by faith I cast myself on Jesus—in one solitary second, ere the clock hath ticked, my sins may be all forgiven. Hart sung truly, when he said—

"The moment a sinner believes,
And trusts in his crucified God,
His pardon at once he receives,
Salvation if full, through his blood."

You will remember in Christ's life, that most of the curses he wrought—yea, I believe all—were instantaneous cures. See! there lies a man stretched on his couch, from which he hath not risen for years. "Take up thy bed, and walk," said Christ in majesty. The man takes up that bed, and without the intervention of weeks of

convalescence at once carries it, leaping like a hart. There is another. From his closed lips a sound hath scarcely ever escaped; he is dumb; Christ toucheth his lips; "Ephphatha, be opened;" and he sings at once. He does not barely speak, but he speaks plain; the tongue of the dumb sings. Ay, and even in the cases where Christ healed death itself, he did it instantaneously. When that beautiful creature lay asleep in death upon the bed, Jesus went to her; and though her dark ringlets covered up her eyes, which were now glazed in death, Jesus did but take her clay-cold hand in his, and say, "Talitha cumi! damsel, I say unto thee, Arise;" and no sooner had he said it, than she sat up, and opened her eyes; and to show that she was not merely half alive, or half restored, she rose up, and ministered to him. We do not say that the great work of conversion is instantaneous; that may take some time; for Christ commences in the heart a work, which is to be carried on through life in sanctification; but the justification, the taking away the curse, is done in a single moment. "Unwrite the curse," says God. It is done. The acquittal is signed and sealed; it taketh not long.

"Fully discharged by Christ I am,
From sin's tremendous curse and blame."

I may stand here at this moment, and I may have believed in Christ but five minutes ago; still, if I have believed in Christ but that short space of time, I am as justified, in God's sight, as I would be should I live until these hairs are whitened by the sunlight of heaven, or as I shall be when I walk among the golden lamps of the city of palaces. God justifieth his people at once; the curse is removed in a single moment. Sinner, hear that! Thou mayest now be under condemnation; but ere thou canst say "now" again, thou mayest be able to say—"There is, therefore, now no condemnation to me, for I am in Christ Jesus." We may be fully absolved in a moment.

2. Mark, beloved, in the next place, that this removal of the curse from us, when it does take place, is *an entire removal*. It is not a part of the curse which is taken away. Christ doth not stand at the foot of Sinai, and say, "Thunders! diminish your force;" he doth not catch here and there a lightning, and bind its wings; nay, but when he cometh he bloweth away all the smoke, he putteth aside all the thunder, he quenqueth all the lightning; he removeth it all. When Christ pardoneth, he pardoneth *all* sin; the sins of twice ten thousand years he pardons in an hour. Thou mayest be old and gray-headed, and hitherto unpardoned; but though thy sins exceed in number the stars spread in the sky, one moment takes them all away. Mark that "*all!*" That sin of midnight; that black sin which, like a ghost, has haunted thee all thy life; that hideous crime; that unknown act of blackness which hath darkened thy character; that awful stain upon thy conscience—they shall be all taken away. And though thou hast a stain upon that hand—a stain which thou hast often sought to wash out by all the mixtures that Moses can give thee—thou shalt find, when thou art bathed in Jesus' blood, that thou shalt be able to say, "All clean, my Lord, all clean; not a spot now; all is gone; I am completely washed from head to foot; the stains are all removed." It is the glory of this removal of the curse that it is all taken away; there

is not a single atom left. Hushed now is the law's loud thunder; the sentence is entirely reversed, and there is no fear left.

3. We must say again upon this point, that when Christ removes the curse, *it is an irreversible removal*. Once let me be acquitted, who is he that condemns me? There be some in these modern times who teach that God justifieth, and yet, after that, condemns the same person whom he has justified. We have heard it asserted pretty boldly, that a man may be a child of God to-day—hear it, ye heavens, and be astonished—and be a child of the devil to-morrow; we have heard it said, but we know it is untrue, for we find nothing in Scripture to warrant it. We have often asked ourselves, Can men really believe that, after having been "begotten again to a lively hope," that birth in God, through Christ, and by his Spirit, can yet fail? We have asked ourselves, Can men imagine that, after God hath once broken our chains, and set us free, he will call us back, and bind us once again, like Prometheus, to the great rocks of despair? Will he once blot out the handwriting that is against us, and then record the charge again? Once pardoned, then condemned? We trow, that had Paul been in the way of such men, he would have said, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" There is no condemnation to us, being in Christ Jesus; we "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." It is a sweet thought, that Satan himself can never rob me of my pardon. I may lose my copy of it, and lose my comfort; but the original pardon is filed in heaven. It may be that gloomy doubts may arise, and I may fear to think myself forgiven: but

"Did Jesus upon me shine?

Then Jesus is for ever mine."

"O! my distrustful heart!

How small thy faith appears.

Far greater, Lord, thou art,

Than all my doubts and fears.

'Midst all my sin, and fear, and woe,

Thy Spirit will not let me go."

I love, at times, to go back to the hour when I hope I was forgiven through a Saviour's blood. There is much comfort in it to remember that blessed hour when first we knew the Lord.

"Dost mind the place, the spot of ground,

Where Jesus did thee meet?"

Perhaps thou dost; perhaps thou canst look back to the very place where Jesus whispered thou wast his. Canst thou do so? O! how much comfort it will give thee! for, remember, once acquitted, acquitted forever. So saith God's word. Once pardoned, thou art clear; once set at liberty, thou shalt never be a slave again; once hath Sinai been appeased, it shall never roar twice. Blessed be God's name! we are brought to Calvary, and we shall be brought to Zion too. At last shall we stand before God; and even there we shall be able to say—

"Great God! I am clean;

Through Jesus' blood I'm clean."

III. And now we are brought, in the third place, to observe THE GREAT SUBSTITUTE by whom the curse is removed.

The curse of God is not easily taken away; in fact, there was but one method whereby it could be removed. The lightnings were in God's hand; they must be launched; he said they must. The sword was unsheathed; it must be satisfied; God vowed it must. How, then, was the sinner to be saved? The only answer was this. The Son of God appears; and he says, "Father! launch thy thunderbolts at me; here is my breast—plunge that sword in here; here are my shoulders—let the lash of vengeance fall on them;" and Christ, the Substitute, came forth and stood for us, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." It is our delight to preach the doctrine of substitution, because we are fully persuaded that no gospel is preached where substitution is omitted. Unless men are told positively and plainly that Christ did stand in their room and stead, to bear their guilt and carry their sorrows, they never can see how God is to be "just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly."

We have heard some preach a gospel, something after this order—that though God is angry with men, yet out of his great mercy, for the sake of something that Christ has done, he does not punish them, but remits the penalty. Now, we hold, that this is not of God's gospel; for it is neither just to God, nor safe to man. We believe that God never remitted the penalty, that he did not forgive the sin without punishing it, but that there was blood for blood, and stroke for stroke, and death for death, and punishment for punishment, without the abatement of a solitary jot or tittle; that Jesus Christ, the Saviour, did drink the veritable cup of our redemption to its very dregs; that he did suffer beneath the awful crushing wheels of divine vengeance, the self-same pains and sufferings which we ought to have endured. O! the glorious doctrine of substitution! When it is preached fully and rightly, what a charm and what power it hath. O! how sweet to tell sinners, that though God hath said, "Thou must die," their Maker stoops his head to die for them and Christ incarnate breathes his last upon a tree, that God might execute his vengeance, and yet might pardon all believers in Jesus because he has met all the claims of divine justice on their account.

Should there be one here who does not understand substitution, let me repeat what I have said. Sinner, the only way thou canst be saved is this. God *must* punish sin; if he did not, he would undeify himself; but if he has punished sin in the person of Christ for thee, thou art fully absolved, thou art quite clear; Christ hath suffered what thou oughtest to have suffered, and thou mayest rejoice in that. "Well," sayest thou, "I ought to have died." *Christ hath died!* "I ought to have been sent to hell." Christ did not go there to endure that torment forever; but *he suffered an equivalent for it*, something which satisfied God. The whole of hell was distilled into his cup of sorrows; he drank it. The cup which his father gave him, he drank to its dregs.

"At one tremendous draught of love,
He drank destruction dry."

for all who believe in him. All the punishment, all the curse, on him was laid. Vengeance now was satisfied; all was gone, and gone for ever; but not gone without having been taken away by the Saviour. The thunders have not been reserved, they

have been launched at him, and vengeance is satisfied, because Christ has endured the full penalty of all his people's guilt.

IV. Now we come to answer that last question: HOW MANY AMONG US CAN SAY, THAT "CHRIST HATH REDEEMED US FROM THE CURSE OF THE LAW, HAVING BEEN MADE A CURSE FOR US?"

The first part of our discourse has been entirely doctrinal; some of you have not cared for it, because you did not feel you were interested in it. It was natural it should be so. At the reading of a will, doth the servant stay to listen? Nay, there is nothing for her; but if a man be a son, how doth he open his ear to catch the sound, to know if there be an estate for him; and however ill the lawyer may read that will, how anxious he is to catch every word, and know if there is a portion for him among the children! Now, beloved, let us read the will again, to see if you belong to those for whom Christ made a satisfaction. The usual way with most of our congregation is this—they write themselves down for Christ's long before God has done it. You make a profession of religion, you wear a Christian's cloak, you behave like a Christian, you take a seat in a Christian church or chapel, and you think you are christianized at once; whereas one half of our congregations who fancy themselves to be Christians have made a great mistake; never were they more apart from any character than from being true Christians. Let me beg you not to suppose yourselves to be believers, because your parents were so, or because you belong to an orthodox church. Religion is a thing which we must have for ourselves; and it is a question which we all ought to ask, whether we are all interested in the atonement of Christ, and have a portion in the merits of his agonies?

Come, then, I will put a question to thee. First, let me ask thee this, my friend—*Wast thou ever condemned by the law in thine own conscience?* "Nay, sayest thou, "I know not what thou meanest." Of course thou dost not; and thou hast no hope, then, that thou art safe. But I will ask thee yet again: Hast thou been condemned by the law in thy conscience? Hast thou ever heard the word of God saying in thy own soul, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them?" And hast thou *felt* that thou wast cursed? Didst thou ever stand before God's bar, like a poor condemned criminal before the judge, ready for execution? Hast thou, as John Bunyan would have had it, ever had the rope upon thy neck? Hast thou ever seen the black cap put upon the face of thy Judge? Hast thou ever thought thyself about to be turned off from the gallows? Hast thou ever walked the earth, as if at every step the earth would open beneath thee, and swallow thee up? Hast thou ever felt thyself to be a worthless, ruined, sin-condemned, law-condemned, conscience-condemned sinner? Hast thou ever fallen down before God, and said: "Lord, thou art just; though thou slay me, I will say, Thou art just; for I am sinful, and I deserve thy wrath?" As the Lord liveth, if thou hast never felt that, thou art a stranger to his grace; for the man who acquits himself God condemneth; and if the law condemn thee, God will acquit thee. So long as thou hast felt thyself condemned, thou mayest know that Christ died for condemned ones, and shed his blood for sinners; but and if thou foldest thine arms in self-security, if thou sayest: "I am good, I am righteous, I am honorable," be thou

warned of this—thine armor is the weaving of a spider; it shall be broken in pieces; the garments of the righteousness are light as the web of the gossamer, and shall be blown away by the breath of the Eternal, in that day when he will unspin all that nature hath ever woven. Ay, I bid thee now take heed; if thou hast never been condemned by the law, thou hast never been acquitted by grace.

And now another question I will ask thee: *Hast thou ever felt thyself to be acquitted by Christ?* "No," saith one, "I never expected to feel that; I thought that we might know it perhaps when we came to die—that a few eminent Christians might then possibly know themselves to be forgiven; but I think, sir, you are very enthusiastic to ask *me* whether *I* have ever *felt* myself to be forgiven." My dear friend, you mistake. Do you think, if a man had been a galley-slave, chained to an oar for many a year, if he were once set free he would not know whether he were free or not? Do you think that a slave who had been toiling for years, when once he trod upon the land of freedom, if you should say to him: "Do you know that you are emancipated?" Do you think he would not know it? Or a man that has been dead in his grave, if he were awakened to life, do you think he would not know it? There may be times when he hath forgotten the season; but he will know himself to be alive; he will feel and know himself to be free. Tell me it is enthusiastic to ask you whether you have ever felt your chains broken? Sirs, if you have never felt your chains fall off from you, then be it know that your chains are on you; for when God breaketh our chains from off us, we know ourselves to be free. The most of us, when God did set us free from our prison-house, did leap for very joy; and we remember the mountains and the hills did burst forth before us into singing, and the trees of the field did clap their hands. We shall never forget that gladsome moment; it is impressed upon our memory; we shall remember it till life's latest hour. I ask thee, again, Didst thou ever feel thyself forgiven? And if thou sayest "No," then thou hast no right to think thou art. If Jesus hath never whispered in thine ear, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions," thou hast no right to think thyself pardoned. O! I beseech thee, examine thyself, and know whether thou hast been condemned by the law, and whether thou hast been acquitted by Christ!

And, lastly, my friends, I may have, and doubtless have, many present here who have simply come to spend an hour, but who have no care, no interest, no concern about their own souls—who are, perhaps, utterly and entirely careless as to whether they are condemned or not. O! if I could speak to you as I would wish, I would speak—

"As though I ne'er might speak again,
A dying man to dying men."

When I remember that I shall likely enough never see the faces of many of you again, I feel that there is a deep and an awful responsibility lying on me to speak to such of you as are careless. There are some of you who are putting off the evil day; and you are saying, "If I be condemned, I care not for it." Ah! my friend, if I saw thee carelessly asleep on thy bed, when the flames were raging in thy chamber, I would shout in thine ear, or I would drag thee from thy couch of slumber. If I knew that while thou hadst a bad disease within thee, thou wouldst not take the medicine,

and that if thou didst not take it thou wouldst die, I would implore thee on my knees to take that medicine that would save thee. But, alas! here you are; you are in danger of destruction, many of you, and you have a disease within you that must soon destroy your lives; and yet what careless, hardened, thoughtless creatures you are, just caring for the body, and not seeking for Christ! As the angel put his hand upon Lot, and said, "Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain, but flee to the mountain," so would I do to you. I would come to each of you, and say, "My brother, carelessness may avail thee now; but carelessness will not stop the voice of *death* when *he* speaks. Indifference may silence *my* voice in your conscience; but when that gloomy skeleton tyrant comes to address thee, indifference will not do then. Now thou mayest laugh; now thou mayest dance; now thou mayest be merry; now thy cup may be full to the brim; but what wilt thou do in that day, when the heavens are clothed with glory, when the books are opened, when the great white throne is set, and when thou comest to be condemned or acquitted before thy Maker? Do, I beseech thee, do forestall the day. I beg of thee, for Christ's sake, bethink thyself even now before thy Judge; conceive him there in yonder heavens upon his throne; imagine that now thou art looking upon him. Oh! my hearer, what wilt thou do? Thou art before the judgment-throne, without Christ; thou art there naked. 'Rocks! hide me! hide me! hide me! I am naked!' But thou art dragged out, sinner! What wilt thou do now? Thou art dragged naked before thy Judge. I see thee bend thy knee; I hear thee cry, 'O Jesus, clothe me now!' 'Nay,' saith Jesus, 'the robe now is hung up forever, not to be worn by thee.' 'Saviour! spread thy wings over me!' 'Nay,' saith he, 'I called, and ye refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.'" Do I talk realities, or mere fictions? Why, realities; and yet if I were reading a novel to you, you would be lost in tears; but when I tell you God's truth, that soon his chariot shall descend to earth, and he shall judge us all, you sit unmoved and careless of that event. But oh! be it known to every careless sinner, death and judgment are not the things they fancy; everlasting wrath and eternal severance from God are not such light things to endure as they have conceived. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall abide with everlasting torments?"

But to close: have I one here who is saying, "What must I do to be saved, for I feel myself condemned?" Hear thou Christ's own words—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Dost thou ask me what it is to believe? Hear, then, the answer. To believe is to look to Jesus. that little word "look" expresses beautifully what a sinner is to do. There is little in its appearance, but there is much in its meaning. Believing is letting the hands lie still, and turning the eyes to Christ. We can not be saved by our hands; but we are saved through our eyes, when they look to Jesus. Sinner! it is no use for thee to try and save thyself; but to believe in Christ is the only way of salvation; and that is, throwing self behind your back, and putting Christ right before thee.

I never can find a better figure than the negro's one: to believe is to fall flat down upon the promise, and there to lie. To believe is as a man would do in a stream. It

is said, that if we were to fold our arms, and lie motionless, we could not sink. To believe is to float upon the stream of grace. I grant you, you shall *do* afterward; but you must *live* before you can do. The gospel is the reverse of the law. The law says, "Do and live;" the gospel says, "Live first, then do." The way to do, poor sinner, is to say, "Here, Jesus, here I am; I give myself to thee." I never had a better idea of believing than I once had from a poor countryman. I may have mentioned this before; but it struck me very forcibly at the time, and I can not help repeating it. Speaking about faith he said, "The old enemy has been troubling me very much lately; but I told him that he must not say any thing to me about my sins, he must go to my Master, for I had transferred the whole concern to him, bad debts and all." That is believing. Believing is giving up all we have to Christ, and taking all Christ has to ourselves. It is changing houses with Christ, changing clothes with Christ, changing our unrighteousness for his righteousness, changing our sins for his merits. Execute the transfer, sinner; rather, may God's grace execute it, and give thee faith in it; and then the law will be no longer thy condemnation, but it shall acquit thee. May Christ add his blessing! May the Holy Spirit rest upon us! And may we meet at last in heaven! Then will we "sing to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

The Wordless Book

A Sermon

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"Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."—Psalm 51:7.

I DARESAY you have most of you heard of a little book which an old divine used constantly to study, and when his friends wondered what there was in the book, he told them that he hoped they would all know and understand it, but that there was not single word in it. When they looked at it, they found that it consisted of only three leaves; the first was black, the second was red, and the third was pure white. The old minister used to gaze upon the black leaf to remind himself of his sinful state by nature, upon the red leaf to call to his remembrance the precious blood of Christ, and upon the white leaf to picture to him the perfect righteousness which God has given to believers through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ his Son.

I want you, dear friends, to read this book this evening, and I desire to read it myself. May God the Holy Spirit graciously help us to do so to our profit!

I. First, LET US LOOK AT THE BLACK LEAF.

There is something about this in the text, for the person who used this prayer said, "Wash me," so he was black and needed to be washed; and the blackness was of such a peculiar kind that a miracle was needed to cleanse it away, so that the one who had been black would become white, and so white that he would be "whiter than snow."

If we consider *David's case when he wrote this Psalm*, we shall see that he was very black. He had committed the horrible sin of adultery, which is so shameful a sin that we can only allude to it with bated breath. It is a sin which involves much unhappiness to others besides the persons who commit it; and it is a sin which, although the guilty ones may repent, cannot be undone. It is altogether a most foul and outrageous crime against God and man, and they who have committed it do indeed need to be washed.

But David's sin was all the greater because of the circumstances in which he was placed. He was like the owner of a great flock, who had no need to take his neighbour's one ewe lamb when he had so many of his own. The sin in his case was wholly inexcusable, for he so well knew what a great evil it was. He was a man who had taken delight in God's law, meditating in it day and night. He was, therefore, familiar with the commandment which expressly forbade that sin; so that, when he sinned in this way, he sinned as one does who takes a draught of poison, not by

mistake, but well knowing what will be the consequences of drinking it. It was wilful wickedness on David's part for which there cannot be the slightest palliation.

Nay, more; not only did he know the nature of the sin, but he also knew the sweetness of communion with God, and must have had a clear sense of what it must have meant for him to lose it. His fellowship with the Most High had been so close that he was called "the man after God's own heart." How sweetly has he sung of his delight in the Lord. You know that, in your happiest moment, when you want to praise the Lord with your whole heart, you cannot find any better expression than David has left you in his Psalms. How horrible it is that the man who had been in the third heaven of fellowship with God should have sinned in this foul fashion!

Besides, David had received many providential mercies at the Lord's hands. He was but a shepherd lad, and God took him from feeding his father's flock, and made him king over Israel. The Lord also delivered him out of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear, enabled him to overthrow and slay giant Goliath, and to escape the malice of Saul when he hunted him as a partridge upon the mountains. The Lord preserved him from many perils, and at last firmly established him upon the throne; yet, after all these deliverances and mercies, this man, so highly favoured by God, fell into this gross sin.

Then, also, it was a further aggravation of David's sin that it was committed against Uriah. If you read through the lists of David's mighty men, you will find at the end the name of Uriah the Hittite; he had been with David when he was outlawed by Saul, he had accompanied his leader in his wanderings, he had shared his perils and privations, so it was a shameful return on the part of the king when he stole away the wife of his faithful follower who was at that very time fighting against the king's enemies. Searching through the whole of Scripture, or at least through the Old Testament, I do not know where we have the record of a worse sin committed by one who yet was a true child of God. So David had good reason to pray to the Lord, "Wash me," for he was indeed black with a special and peculiar blackness.

But now, turning from David, let us consider *our own blackness in the sight of God*. Is there not, my dear friend, a peculiar blackness about your case as a sinner before God? I cannot picture it, but I ask you to call it to your remembrance now that your soul may be humbled on account of it. Perhaps you are the child of Christian parents, or you were the subject of early religious impressions, or it may be that you have been in other ways specially favoured by God, yet you have sinned against him, sinned against light and knowledge, sinned against a mother's tears, a father's prayers, and a pastor's admonitions and warnings. You were very ill once, and thought you were going to die, but the Lord spared your life, and restored you to health and strength, yet you went back to your sin as the dog returns to his vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Possibly a sudden sense of guilt alarmed you, so that you could not enjoy your sin, yet you could not break away from it. You spent your money for that which was not bread, and your labour for that which did not satisfy you, yet you went on wasting your substance with riotous living until you came to beggary, but even that did not wean you from your sin. In the house of God you had many solemn warnings, and you went home again

and again resolving to repent, yet your resolves soon melted away, like the morning cloud and the early dew, leaving you more hardened than ever. I remember John B. Gough, at Exeter Hall, describing himself in his drinking days as seated upon a wild horse which was hurrying him to his destruction until a stronger hand than his own seized the reins, pulled the horse down upon its haunches, and rescued the reckless rider. It was a terrible picture, yet it was a faithful representation of the conversion of some of us. How we drove the spurs into that wild horse, and urged it to yet greater speed in its mad career until it seemed as if we would even ride over that gracious Being who was determined to save us! That was sin indeed, not merely against the dictates of an enlightened conscience, and against the warnings which were being continually given to us, but it was what the apostle calls treading under foot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doing despite unto the Spirit of grace.

Let me, beloved, before I turn away from this black leaf, urge you to study it diligently, and to try to comprehend the blackness of your heart and the depravity of your lives. That false peace which results from light thoughts of sin is the work of Satan; get rid of it at once, if he has wrought it in you. Do not be afraid to look at your sins, do not shut your eyes to them; for you to hide your face from them may be your ruin, but for God to hide his face from them will be your salvation. Look at your sins and meditate upon them until they even drive you to despair. "What!" says one, "until they drive me to despair?" Yes; I do not mean that despair which arises from unbelief, but that self-despair which is so near akin to confidence in Christ. The more God enables you to see your emptiness, the more eager will you be to avail yourself of Christ's fulness. I have always found that, as my trust in self went up, my trust in Christ went down; and as my trust in self went down, my trust in Christ went up, so I urge you to take an honest view of your own blackness of heart and life, for that will cause you to pray with David, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Weigh yourselves in the scales of the sanctuary, for they never err in the slightest degree. You need not exaggerate a single item of your guilt, for just as you are you will find far too much sin within you if the Holy Spirit will enable you to see yourselves as you really are.

II. But now we must turn to the second leaf, THE BLOOD-RED LEAF OF THE WORDLESS BOOK, which brings to our remembrance the precious blood of Christ.

When the sinner cries, "Wash me," there must be some fount of cleansing where he can be washed "whiter than snow." So there is, but there is nothing but the crimson blood of Jesus that can wash out the crimson stain of sin. What is there about Jesus Christ that makes him able to save all who come unto God by him? This is a matter upon which Christians ought to meditate much and often. Try to understand, dear friends, the greatness of the atonement. Live much under the shadow of the cross. Learn to—

"View the flowing
Of the Saviour's precious blood,
By divine assurance knowing
He has made your peace with God."

Feel that Christ's blood was shed for you, even for you. Never be satisfied till you have learned the mystery of the five wounds; never be content till you are "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."

The Power of Jesus to cleanse from sin must lie, first, in the greatness of his person. It is not conceivable that the sufferings of a mere man, however holy or great he might have been, could have made atonement for the sins of the whole multitude of the Lord's chosen people. It was because Jesus Christ was one of the persons in the Divine Trinity, it was because the Son of Mary was none other than the Son of God, it was because he who lived, and laboured, and suffered, and died and was the great Creator, without whom was not anything made that was made, that his blood has such efficacy that it can wash the blackest sinner so clean that they are "whiter than snow." The death of the best man who ever lived could not make an atonement even for his own sins, much less could it atone for the guilt of others; but when God himself "took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men," and "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross," no limit can be set to the value of the atonement that he made. We hold most firmly the doctrine of particular redemption, that Christ loved his Church, and gave himself for it; but we do not hold the doctrine of the limited value of his precious blood. There can be no limit to Deity, there must be infinite value in the atonement which was offered by him who is divine. The only limit of the atonement is in its design, and that design was that Christ should give eternal life to as many as the Father has given him; but in itself the atonement is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world, and if the entire race of mankind could be brought to believe in Jesus, there is enough efficacy in his precious blood to cleanse everyone born of woman from every sin that all of them have ever committed.

But the power of the cleansing blood of Jesus must also lie in the intense sufferings which he endured in making atonement for his people. Never was there another case like that of our precious Saviour. In his merely physical sufferings there may have been some who have endured as much as he did, for the human body is only capable of a certain amount of pain and agony, and others beside our Lord have reached that limit; but there was an element in his sufferings that was never present in any other case. The fact of his dying in the room, and place, and stead of his people, the one great sacrifice for the whole of his redeemed, makes his death altogether unique, so that not even the noblest of the noble army of martyrs can share the glory with him. His mental sufferings also constituted a very vital part of the atonement, the sufferings of his soul were the very soul of his sufferings. If you can comprehend the bitterness of his betrayal by one who had been his follower and friend, and of his desertion by all his disciples, his arraignment for sedition and blasphemy before creatures whom he had himself made; if you can realize what it was for him, who did no sin, to be made sin for us, and to have laid upon him the iniquity of us all; if you can picture to yourself how he loathed sin and shrank from it, you can form some slight idea of what his pure nature must have suffered for our

sakes. We do not shrink from sin as Christ did because we are accustomed to it, it was once the element in which we lived, and moved, had our being; but his holy nature shrank from evil as a sensitive plant recoils from the touch. But the worst of his sufferings must have been when his Father's wrath was poured out upon him as he bore what his people deserved to bear, but which now they will never have to bear.

"The waves of swelling grief
 Did o'er his bosom roll,
 And mountains of almighty wrath
 Lay heavy on his soul."

For his Father to have to hide his face from him so that he cried in his agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" must have been a veritable hell to him. This was the tremendous draught of wrath which our Saviour drank for us to its last dregs so that our cup might not have one drop of wrath in it for ever. It must have been a great atonement that was purchased at so great price.

We may think of the greatness of Christ's atonement in another way. It must have been a great atonement which has safely landed such multitudes of sinners in heaven, and which has saved so many great sinners, and transformed them into such bright saints. It must be a great atonement which is yet to bring innumerable myriads into the unity of the faith, and into the glory of the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven. It is so great an atonement, sinner, that if thou wilt trust to it, thou shalt be saved by it however many and great thy sins may have been. Art thou afraid that the blood of Christ is not powerful enough to cleanse thee? Dost thou fear that his atonement cannot bear the weight of such a sinner as thou art? I heard, the other day, of a foolish woman at Plymouth who, for a long while, would not go over the Saltash Bridge because she did not think it was safe. When, at length, after seeing the enormous traffic that passed safely over the bridge, she was induced to trust herself to it, she trembled greatly all the time, and was not easy in her mind until she was off it. Of course, everybody laughed at her for thinking that such a ponderous structure could not bear her little weight. There may be some sinner, in this building, who is afraid that the great bridge which eternal mercy has constructed, at infinite cost, across the gulf which separates us from God, is not strong enough to bear his weight. If so, let me assure him that across that bridge of Christ's atoning sacrifice millions of sinners, as vile and foul as he is, have safely passed, and the bridge has not even trembled beneath their weight, nor has any single part of it ever strained or displaced. My poor fearful friend, your anxiety lest the great bridge of mercy should not be able to bear your weight reminds me of the fable of the gnat that settled on the bull's ear, and then was concerned lest the powerful beast should be incommoded by his enormous weight. It is well that you should have a vivid realization of the weight of your sins, but at the same time you should also realize that Jesus Christ, by virtue of his great atonement, is not only able to bear the weight of your sins, but he can also carry—indeed, he has already carried upon his shoulders the sins of all who shall believe in him right to the end of time; and he has borne them away into the land of forgetfulness, where they shall not be remembered or

recovered for ever. So efficacious is the blood of the everlasting covenant that even you, black as you are, may pray, with David, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

III. This brings me to THE WHITE LEAF OF THE WORDLESS BOOK, which is just as full of instruction as either the black leaf or the red one: "Wash me, and I shall be *whiter than snow*."

What a beautiful sight it was, this morning, when we looked out, and saw the ground all covered with snow! The trees were all robed in silver; yet it is almost an insult to the snow to compare it to silver, for silver at its brightest is not worthy to be compared with the marvelous splendour that was to be seen wherever the trees appeared adorned with beautiful festoons above the earth which was robed in its pure white mantle. If we had taken a piece of what we call white paper, and laid it down upon the surface of newly-fallen snow, it would have seemed quite begrimed in comparison with the spotless snow. This morning's scene at once called the text to my mind: "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." You, O black sinner, if you believe in Jesus, shall not only be washed in his precious blood until you become tolerably clean, but you shall be made white, yea, you shall be "whiter than snow." When we have gazed upon the pure whiteness of the snow before it has become defiled, it has seemed as though there could be nothing whiter. I know that, when I have been among the Alps, and have for hours looked upon the dazzling whiteness of the snow, I have been almost blinded by it. If the snow were to lie long upon the ground, and if the whole earth were to be covered with it, we should soon all be blind. The eyes of man have suffered with his soul through sin, and just as our soul would be unable to bear a sight of the unveiled purity a God, our eyes cannot endure to look upon the wondrous purity of the snow. Yet the sinner, black through sin, when brought under the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus, becomes "whiter than snow."

Now, how can a sinner be made "whiter than snow"? Well, first of all, *there is a permanence about the whiteness of a blood-washed sinner which there is not about the snow*. The snow that fell this morning was much of it anything but white this afternoon. Where the thaw had begun to work, it looked yellow even where no foot of man had trodden upon it; and as for the snow in the streets of London, you know how soon its whiteness disappears. But there is no fear that the whiteness which God gives to a sinner will ever depart from him; the robe of Christ's righteousness which is cast around him is permanently white.

"This spotless robe the same appears
When ruin'd nature sinks in years;
No age can change its glorious hue,
The robe of Christ is ever new."

It is always "whiter than snow." Some of you have to live in smoky, grimy London, but the smoke and the grime cannot discolour the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness. In yourselves, you are stained with sin; but when you stand before God, clothed in the righteousness of Christ, the stains of sin are all gone. David in himself was black and foul when he prayed the prayer of our text, but clothed in the

righteousness of Christ he was white and clean. The believer in Christ is as pure in God's sight at one time as he is at another. He does not look upon the varying purity of our sanctification as our ground of acceptance with him; but he looks upon the matchless and immutable purity of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he accepts us in Christ, and not because of what we are in ourselves. Hence, when we are once "accepted in the Beloved," we are permanently accepted; and being accepted in him, we are "whiter than snow."

Further, *the whiteness of snow is, after all, only created whiteness*. It is something which God has made, yet it has not the purity which appertains to God himself; but the righteousness which God gives to the believer is a divine righteousness, as Paul says, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And remember that this is true of the very sinner who before was so black that he had to cry to God, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." There may be one who came into this building black as night through sin; but if he is enabled now, by grace, to trust in Jesus, his precious blood shall at once cleanse him so completely that he shall be "whiter than snow." Justification is not a work of degrees; it does a progress from one stage to another, but it is the work of a moment, and it is instantaneously complete. God's great gift of eternal life is bestowed in a moment, and you may not be able to discern the exact moment when it is bestowed. Yet you may know even that; for, as soon as you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are born of God, you have passed from death unto life, you are saved to all eternity. The act of faith is a very simple thing, but it is the most God-glorifying act that a man can perform. Though there is no merit in faith, yet faith is a most ennobling grace, and Christ puts a high honour upon it when he says, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Christ puts the crown of salvation upon the head of faith, yet faith will never wear it herself, but lays it at the feet of Jesus, and gives him all the honour and glory.

There may be one in this place who is afraid to think that Christ will save him. My dear friend, do my Master the honour to believe that there are no depths of sin into which you may have gone which are beyond his reach. Believe that there is no sin that is too black to be washed away by the precious blood of Christ, for he has said, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," and "all manner of sin" must include yours. It is the very greatness of God's mercy that sometimes staggers a sinner. Let me use a homely simile to illustrate my meaning. Suppose you are sitting at your table, carving the joint for dinner, and suppose your dog is under the table, hoping to get a bone or a piece of gristle for his portion. Now, if you were to set the dish with the whole joint on it down on the floor, he would probably be afraid to touch it lest he should get a cut of the whip; he would know that a dog does not deserve such a dinner as that, and that is just your difficulty, poor sinner, you know that you do not deserve such grace as God delights to give. But the fact that it is of grace shuts out the question of merit altogether. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." God's gifts are like himself, immeasurably great. Perhaps some of you think you would be content with crumbs or bones from God's table. Well, if he were to give me a

few crumbs or a little broken meat, I would be grateful for even that, but it would not satisfy me; but when he says to me, "Thou art my son, I have adopted thee into my family, and thou shalt go no more out for ever;" I do not agree with you that it is too good to be true. It may be too good for you, but it is not too good for God; he gives as only he can give. If I were in great need, and obtained access to the Queen, and after laying my case before her, she said to me, "I feel a very deep interest in your case, here is a penny for you," I should be quite sure that I had not seen the Queen, but that some lady's maid or servant had been making a fool of me. Oh, no! the Queen gives as Queen, and God gives as God; so that the greatness of his gift, instead of staggering us, should only assure us that it is genuine, and that it comes from God. Richard Baxter wisely said, "O Lord, it must be great mercy or no mercy, for little mercy is of no use to me!" So, sinner, go to the great God, with your great sin, and ask for great grace that you may be washed in the great fountain filled with the blood of the great sacrifice, and you shall have the great salvation which Christ has procured, and for it you shall ascribe great praise for ever and ever to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God grant that it may be so, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

PSALM 51.

It is a Psalm, and therefore it is to be sung. It is dedicated to the chief Musician, and there is music in it, but it needs a trained ear to catch the harmony. The sinner with a broken heart will understand the language and also perceive the sweetness of it; but as for the proud and the self-righteous, they will say, "It is a melancholy dirge," and turn away from it in disgust. There are times, to one under a sense of sin, when there is no music in the world like that of the 51st Psalm, and it is music for the chief Musician, for "there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth;" and this is the Psalm of penitence, and there is joy in it, and it makes joy even to the chief Musician himself.

Verse 1. *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

Here is a man of God, a man of God deeply conscious of his sin, crying for mercy, crying with all his heart and soul, and yet with his tear-dimmed eyes looking up to God, and spying out the gracious attributes of Deity, lovingkindness, and tender mercies, multitudes of them. There is no eye that is quicker to see the mercy of God than an eye that is washed with the tears of repentance. When we dare not look upon divine justice, when that burning attribute seems as if it would smite us with blindness, we can turn to that glorious rainbow of grace round about the throne, and rejoice in the lovingkindness and the tender mercies of our God.

2. *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

"If washing will not remove it, burn it out, O Lord; but do cleanse me from it; not only from the guilt of it and the consequent punishment, but from the sin itself. Make me clean through and through. 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.'"

3. *For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.*

"As if the record of it were painted on my eyeballs. I cannot look anywhere without seeing it. I seem to taste it in my meat and drink; and when I fall asleep, I

dream of it, for thy wrath has come upon me, and now my transgression haunts me wherever I go."

4. *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.* 1

This is the sting of sin to a truly penitent man, that he has sinned against God. The carnal mind sees nothing in that. If ever it does repent, it repents of doing wrong to man. It only takes the manward side of the transgression; but God's child, though grieved at having wronged man, feels that the deluge of his guilt—that which drowns everything else—is that he has sinned against his God. It is the very token and type and mark of an acceptable repentance that it has an eye to sin as committed against God.

Now observe that the psalmist, having thus sinned, and being thus conscious of his guilt, is now made to see that, if the evil came out of him, it must have been in him at first; he would not have sinned as he had done had there not been an unclean fountain within him.

5, 6. *Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:—*

Then it is not sufficient for me to be washed outside, and being outwardly moral is not enough. "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts:"—

6. *And in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

In that part which is even hidden from myself, where sin might lurk without my knowing it, there wouldst thou spy it out. I pray thee, Lord, eject all sin from me, rid me of the most subtle form of iniquity that may be concealed within me.

7. *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

This is a grand declaration of faith. I know not of such faith as this anywhere else. The faith of Abraham is more amazing; but, to my mind, this faith of poor broken-hearted David, when he saw himself to be black with sin and crimson with crime, and yet could say, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow," is grand faith. It seems to me that a poor, trembling, broken-down sinner, who casts himself upon the infinite mercy of God, brings more glory to God than all the angels that went not astray are ever able to bring to him.

8. *"Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we cannot sin with impunity. Worldlings may do so as far as this life is concerned; but a child of God will find that, to him, sin and smart, if they do not go together, will follow very closely upon one another's heels. Ay, and our Father in heaven chastens his people very sorely, even to the breaking of their bones; and it is only when he applies the promises to our hearts by the gracious operation of his Holy Spirit, and makes the chambers of our soul to echo with the voice of his lovingkindness, that we "hear joy and gladness" again. It is only then that our broken bones are bound up, and begin to rejoice once more.

9. *Hide thy face from my sins,*

David could not bear that God should look upon them.

9. *And blot out all mine iniquities.*

"Put them right out of sight. Turn thy gaze away from them, and then put them out of everybody's sight."

10. *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."*

Make me over again; let the image of God in man be renewed in me. Nay, not the image only, but renew the very Spirit of God within me."

11, 12. *Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me, restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;*

"Lift me up, and then keep me up. Let me never sin against thee again."

12,13. *And uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;*

There are no such teachers of righteousness as those who have smarted under their own personal sin; they can indeed tell to others what the ways of God are. What are those ways? His ways of chastisement,—how he will smite the wandering; his ways of mercy,—how he will restore and forgive the penitent.

13. *And sinners shall be converted unto thee.*²

He felt sure that they would be converted; and if anything can be the means of converting sinners, it is the loving faithful testimony of one who has himself tasted that the Lord is gracious. If God has been merciful to you, my brother or my sister, do not hold your tongue about it, but tell to others what he has done for you; let the world know what a gracious God he is.

14. *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.*³

I like that confession and that prayer of David. He does not mince matters, for he had guiltily caused the blood of Uriah to be shed, and here he owns it, with great shame, but with equal honesty and truthfulness. As long as you and I call our sins by pretty names, they will not be forgiven. The Lord knows exactly what your sin is, therefore do not try to use polite terms about it. Tell him what it is, that he may know that you know what it is. "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation."

"But surely," says someone, "there is nobody here who needs to pray that prayer." Well, there is one in the pulpit at least, who often feels that he has need to pray it; for what will happen if I preach not the gospel, or if I preach it not with all my heart? It may be that the blood of souls shall be required at my hands. And my brothers and sisters, if anything in your example should lead others into sin, or if the neglect of any opportunities that are presented to you should lead others to continue in their sin till they perish, will not the sin of bloodguiltiness be possible to you? I think you had better each one pray David's prayer, "Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation." "And then, O Lord, if I once get clear of that, 'my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.'"

15. *O Lord, open thou my lips;*

He is afraid to open them himself lest he should say something amiss. Pardoned sinners are always afraid lest they should err again.

15, 16. *And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest no sacrifice; else would I give it:*

"Whatever there is in the whole world that thou desirest, I would gladly give it to thee, my God."

16-18. *Thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou will not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:—*

You see that the psalmist loves the chosen people of God. With all his faults, his heart is right towards the kingdom under his charge. He feels that he has helped to break down Zion, and to do mischief to Jerusalem, so he prays, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion:"—

18, 19. *Build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

Once get your sins forgiven, and then God will accept your sacrifices. Then bring what you will with all your heart, for an accepted sinner makes an accepted sacrifice, through Jesus Christ.

NOTES:

See *The New Park Street Pulpit*, No. 86, "Unimpeachable Justice"

See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1,130, "The Christian's Great Business."

See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 713, "Soul-murder—who is Guilty?"

The Broad Wall

A Sermon

(No. 3281)

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Delivered by

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At the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Newington.

NOTE: This is taken from an early published edition of the original sermon. The version that appears in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. 57, was edited and slightly abbreviated. For edition we have restored the fuller text of the earlier published edition, while retaining a few of the editorial refinements of the *Met Tab* edition.

"The broad wall."—Nehemiah 3:8.

IT SEEMS that around Jerusalem of old, in the time of her splendor, there was a broad wall, which was her defence and her glory. Jerusalem is a type of the Church of God. It is always well when we can see clearly, distinctly, and plainly, that around the Church to which we belong there runs a broad wall.

This idea of a broad wall around the Church suggests three things: *separation*, *security*, and *enjoyment*. Let us examine each of these in its turn.

I. First, the SEPARATION of the people of God from the world is like that broad wall surrounding the holy city of Jerusalem.

When a man becomes a Christian he is still in the world, but he is no longer to be of it. He was an heir of wrath, but he has now become a child of grace. Being of a distinct nature, he is required to separate himself from the rest of mankind, as the Lord Jesus Christ did, who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." The Lord's Church was separated in his eternal purpose. It was separated in his covenant and decree. It was separated in the atonement, for even there we find that our Lord is called "the saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." An actual separation is made by grace, is carried on in the work of sanctification, and will be completed in that day when the heavens shall be on fire, and the saints shall be caught up together with the Lord in the air; and in that last tremendous day, he shall divide the nations as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, and then there shall be a great gulf fixed, across which the ungodly cannot go to the righteous, neither shall the righteous approach the wicked.

Practically, my business is to say to those of you who profess to be the Lord's people, *take care that you maintain a broad wall of separation between yourselves and the world*. I do not say that you are to adopt any peculiarity of dress, or to take up some singular style of speech. Such affectation gendereth, sooner or later, hypocrisy. A man be as thoroughly worldly in one coat as in another, he may be quite as vain and conceited with one style of speech as with another; nay, he may be even more of the world when he pretends to be separate, than if he had left the

pretence of separation alone. The separation which we plead for is moral and spiritual. Its foundation is laid deep in the heart, and its substantial reality is very palpable in the life.

Every Christian, it seems to me, should be more scrupulous than other men *in his dealings*. He must never swerve from the path of integrity. He should never say, "It is the custom: it is perfectly understood in the trade." Let the Christian remember that custom cannot sanction wrong, and that its being "understood" is no apology for misrepresentation. A lie "understood" is not therefore true. While the golden rule is more admired than practiced by ordinary men, the Christian should always do unto others as he would that they should do unto him. He should be one whose word is his bond, and who, having once pledged his word, sweareth to his own hurt, but changeth not. There ought to be an essential difference between the Christian and the best moralist, by reason of the higher standard which the gospel inculcates, and the Saviour has exemplified. Certainly, the highest point to which the best unconverted man can go might well be looked upon as a level below which the converted man will never venture to descend.

Moreover, the Christian should especially be distinguished *by his pleasures*, for it is here, usually, that the man comes out in his true colors. We are not quite ourselves, perhaps, in our daily toil, where our pursuits are rather dictated by necessity than by choice. We are not alone; the society we are thrown into imposes restraints upon us; we have to put the bit and the bridle upon ourselves. The true man does not then show himself; but when the day's work is done, then the "birds of a feather flock together." It is with the multitude of traders and commercial men as it was with those saints of old, of whom, when they were liberated from prison, it was said, "Being let go, they went unto their own company." So will your pleasures and pastimes give evidence of what your heart is, and where it is. If you can find pleasure in sin, then in sin you choose to live, and unless grace prevent, in sin you will not fail to perish. But if your pleasures are of a nobler kind, and your companions of a devouter character; if you seek spiritual enjoyments, if you find your happiest moments in worship, in communion, in silent prayer, or in the public assembling of yourselves with the people of God, then your higher instincts become proof of your purer character, and you will be distinguished in your pleasures by a broad wall which effectually separates you from the world.

Such separation should be carried, I think, *into everything which affects the Christian*. "What have they seen in thy house?" was the question asked of Hezekiah. When a stranger comes into our house it should be so ordered that he can clearly perceive that the Lord is there. A man ought scarcely to tarry a night beneath our roof, without gathering that we have a respect unto him that is invisible, and that we desire to live and move in the light of God's countenance. I have already said that I would not have you cultivate singularities for singularity's sake; yet, as the most of men are satisfied if they do as other people do, you must never be satisfied until you do more and better than other people, having found out a mode and course of life as far transcending the ordinary worldling's life, as the path of the eagle in the air is above that of the mole which burrows under the soil.

This broad wall between the godly and the ungodly *should be most conspicuous in the spirit of our mind*. The ungodly man has only this world to live for; do not wonder if he lives very earnestly for it. He has no other treasure; why should he not get as much as he can of this? But you, Christian, profess to have immortal life, therefore, your treasure is not to be amassed in this brief span of existence. Your treasure is laid up in heaven and available for eternity. Your best hopes overleap the narrow bounds of time, and fly beyond the grave; your spirit must not, therefore, be earth-bound and grovelling, but soaring and heavenly. There should be about you always the air of one who has his shoes on his feet, his loins girded, and his staff in his hand—away, away, away to a better land. You are not to talk of this world as though it were to last for ever. You are not to hoard it and treasure it up, as though you had set your heart upon it, but you are to be on the wing as though you had not a nest here, and never could have, but expected to find your resting-place among the cedars of God, in the hill-tops of glory.

Depend upon it, the more unworldly a Christian is the better it is for him. Methinks I could mention several reasons why this wall should be very broad. *If you are sincere in your profession, there is a very broad distinction between you and unconverted people*. Nobody can tell how far life is removed from death. Can you measure the difference? They are as opposite as the poles. Now, according to your profession, you are a living child of God, you have received a new life, whereas the children of this world are dead in trespasses and sins. How palpable the difference between light and darkness? Yet, you profess to have been "sometimes darkness," but now you are made "light in the Lord." There is, therefore, a great distinction between you and the world if you are what you profess to be. You say, when you put on the name of Christ, that you are going to the Celestial City, to the New Jerusalem; but the world turns its back upon the heavenly country, and goes downward to that other city of which you know that destruction is its doom; your path is different from theirs. If you be what you say you are, the road you take must be diametrically opposite to that of the ungodly man. You know the difference between their ends. The end of the righteous shall be glory everlasting, but the end of the wicked is destruction. Unless then you are a hypocrite, there is such a distinction between you and others as only God himself could make—a distinction which originates here, to be perpetuated throughout eternity. When the social diversities occasioned by rank and dependency, riches and poverty, ignorance and learning, shall all have passed away; the distinctions between the children of God and the children of men, between saints and scoffers, between the chosen and the castaway, will still exist. I pray you, then, maintain a broad wall in your conduct, as God has made a broad wall in your state and in your destiny.

Remember again, *that our Lord Jesus Christ had a broad wall between him and the ungodly*. Look at him and see how different he is from the men of his time. All his life long you observe him to be a stranger and a foreigner in the land. Truly, he drew near to sinners, as near as he could draw, and he received them when they were willing to draw near to him; but he did not draw near to their sins. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." When he went to his own

city of Nazareth, he only preached a single sermon, and they would have cast him headlong down the hill if they could. When he passed through the street, he became the song of the drunkard, the butt of the foolish, the mark at which the proud shot out the arrows of their scorn. At last, having come to his own, and his own having received him not, they determined to thrust him altogether out of the camp, so they took him to Golgotha, and nailed him to the tree as a malefactor, a promoter of sedition. He was the great Dissenter, the great Nonconformist of his age. The National Church first excommunicated, and then executed him. He did not seek difference in things trivial; but the purity of his life and the truthfulness of his testimony, roused the spleen of the rulers and the chief men of their synagogues. He was ready in all things to serve them and to bless them, but he never would blend with them. They would have made him a king. Ah! if he would but have joined the world, the world would have given him the chief place, as the world's Prince said on the mountain: "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But he drives away the fiend, and stands immaculate and separate even to the close of his life. If you are a Christian, be a Christian. If you follow Christ, go without the camp. But if there be no difference between you and your fellow-man, what will you say unto the King in the day when he cometh and findeth that you have on no wedding garment by which you can be distinguished from the rest of mankind? Because Christ made a broad wall around himself, there must be such an one around his people.

Moreover, dear friends, you will find that *a broad wall of separation is abundantly good for yourselves*. I do not think any Christian in the world will tell you that when he has given way to the world's customs, he has ever been profited thereby. If you can go and find an evening's amusement in a suspicious place, and feel profited by it, I am sure you are not a Christian; for, if you were a Christian indeed, it would pain your conscience, and unfit you for devouter exercises of the heart. Ask a fish to spend an hour on dry land, and, I think, did it comply, the fish would find that it was not much to its benefit, for it would be out of its element. And it will be so with you in communion with sinners. When you are compelled to associate with worldly people in the ordinary course of business, you find much that grates upon the ear, that troubles the heart, and annoys the soul. You will be often like righteous Lot, vexed with the conversation of the wicked, and you will say with David:

"Ah! woe is me that I
In Meshech dwell so long:
That I in tabernacles stay,
To Kedar that belong!"

Your soul would pine and sigh to come forth and wash your hands of everything that is impure and unclean. As you find no comfort there, you will long to get away to the chaste, the holy, the devout, the edifying fellowship of the saints. Make a broad wall, dear friends, in your daily life. If you begin to give way a little to the world, you will soon give way a great deal. Give sin an inch, and it will take an ell. "Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves," is an apt

motto of economy. So, too, guard against little sins, if you would be clear of the great transgression. Look after the little approaches to worldliness, the little givings-up towards the things of ungodliness, and then you will not make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Another good reason for keeping up the broad wall of separation is, that *you will do most good to the world thereby*. I know Satan will tell you that if you bend a little, and come near to the ungodly, then they also will come a little way to meet you. Ay, but it is not so. You lose your strength, Christian, the moment you depart from your integrity. What do you think ungodly people say behind your back, if they see you inconsistent to please them? "Oh!" say they, "there is nothing in his religion, but vain pretence; the man is not sincere." Although the world may openly denounce the rigid Puritan, it secretly admires him. When the big heart of the world speaks out, it has respect to the man that is sternly honest, and will not yield his principles—no, not a hair's breadth. In such an age as this, when there is so little sound conviction, when principle is cast to the winds, and when a general latitudinarianism, but of thought and of practice, seems to rule the day, it is still the fact, that a man who is decided in his belief, speaks his mind boldly, and acts according to his profession—such a man is sure to command the reverence of mankind. Depend upon it, woman, your husband and your children will respect you none the more because you say, "I will give up some of my Christian privileges," or "I will go sometimes with you into that which is sinful." You cannot help them out of the mire if you go and plunge into the mud yourself. You cannot help to make them clean if you go and blacken your own hands. How can you wash their faces then? You young man in the shop—you young woman in the work-room—if you keep yourselves to yourselves in Christ's name, chaste and pure for Jesus, not laughing at jests which should make you blush: not mixing up with pastimes that are suspicious; but, on the other hand, tenderly jealous of your conscience as one who shrinks from a doubtful thing as a sinful thing, holding sound faith and being scrupulous of the truth—if you will keep yourselves, your company in the midst of others shall be as though an angel shook his wings, and they will say to one another, "Refrain from this or that just now, for so-and-so is there." They will fear you, in a certain sense; they will admire you, in secret; and who can tell but they, at last, may come to imitate you.

Would ye tempt God? Would ye challenge the desolating flood? Whenever the church comes down to mingle with the world, it behooves the faithful few to fly to the ark and seek shelter from the avenging storm. When the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair to look upon, then it was that God said it repented him that he had made men upon the face of the earth, and he sent the deluge to sweep them away. A separate people God's people must be, and they shall be. It is his own declaration, "The people shall dwell alone; they shall not be numbered among the people." The Christian is, in some respects like the Jew. The Jew is the type of the Christian. You may give the Jew political privileges, as he ought to have; he may be adopted into the State, as he ought to be; but a Jew he is, and a Jew he must be still. He is not a Gentile, even though he calls himself English, or Portuguese,

or Spanish, or Polish. He remains one of the people of Israel, a child of Abraham, a Jew still; and you can mark him as such—his speech betrayeth him in every land. So should it be with the Christian; mixing up with other men, as he must in his daily calling; going in and out among them, like a man among men; trading in the market; dealing in the shop; mingling in the joys of the social circle; taking his part in politics, like a citizen, as he is; but, at the same time even, having a higher and a nobler life, a secret into which the world cannot enter, and showing the world by his superior holiness, his zeal for God, his sterling integrity, and his unselfish truthfulness, that he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. You cannot tell how concerned I am for some of you, that this broad wall should be kept up; for I detect in some of you at times a desire to make it very narrow, and, perhaps, to pull it down altogether. Brethren, beloved in the Lord, you may depend upon it that nothing worse can happen to a church than to be conformed unto this world. Write "Ichabod" upon her walls then; for the sentence of destruction has gone out against her. But, if you can keep yourselves as—

"A garden walled around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground,"—

you shall have your Master's company; your graces shall grow; you shall be happy in your own souls; and Christ shall be honored in your lives.

II. Secondly; the broad wall round about Jerusalem INDICATED SAFETY.

In the same way, a broad wall round Christ's church indicates her safety too. Consider who they are that belong to the church of God. A man does not become a member of Christ's church by baptism, nor by birthright, nor by profession, nor by morality. Christ is the door into the sheepfold; every one who believes in Jesus Christ is a member of the true church. Being a member of Christ, he is a member, consequently, of the body of Christ, which is the church. Now, around the church of God—the election of grace, the redeemed by blood, the peculiar people, the adopted, the justified, the sanctified—around the church there are bulwarks of stupendous strength, munitions which guard them safely. When the foe came to attack Jerusalem, he counted the towers and bulwarks, and marked them well; but after he had seen the strength of the Holy City, he fled away. How could he hope ever to scale such ramparts as those? Brethren, Satan often counts the towers and bulwarks of the New Jerusalem. Anxiously does he desire the destruction of the saints, but it shall never be. He that rests in Christ is saved. He who hath passed through the gate of faith to rest in Jesus Christ may sing, with joyful confidence—

"The soul that on Jesus hath lean'd for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake."

"I will be," saith Jehovah, "a wall of fire round about thee." Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

The Christian is surrounded by *the broad wall of God's power*. If God be omnipotent, Satan cannot defeat him. If God's power be on my side, who, then, shall hurt me? "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

The Christian is surrounded by *the broad wall of God's love*. Who shall prevail against those whom God loves? I know that it is vain to curse those whom God hath not cursed, or to defy those whom the Lord hath not defied; for whomsoever he blesseth is blessed indeed. Balak, the son of Zippor, sought to curse the beloved people, and he went first to one hill-top and then to another, and looked down upon the chosen camp. But, aha! Balaam, thou couldst not curse them, though Balak sought it! Thou couldst only say, "They are blessed, yea, and they shall be blessed!"

God's law is a broad wall around us, and so is his *justice* too. These once threatened our destruction, but now the justice of God demands the salvation of every believer. If Christ has died instead of me, it would not be justice if I had to die also for my sin. If God has received the full payment of the debt from the hand of the Lord Jesus Christ, then how can he demand the debt again? He is satisfied, and we are secure.

The *immutability of God*, also, surrounds his people like a broad wall. "I am God, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." As long as God is the same, the rock of our salvation will be our secure hiding-place.

Upon this delightful truth, we might linger long, for there is much to cheer us in the strong security which God has given in covenant to his people. They are surrounded by the broad wall of *electing love*. Doth God choose them, and will he lose them? Did he ordain them to eternal life, and shall they perish? Did he engrave their names upon his heart, and shall those names be blotted out? Did he give them to his Son to be his heritage, and shall his Son lose his portion? Did he say, "They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my jewels," and shall he part with them? Has he who maketh all things obey him no power to keep the people whom he has formed for himself to be his own peculiar heritage? God forbid that we should doubt it. Electing love, like a broad wall, surrounds every heir of grace.

And oh, how broad is the wall of *redeeming love*. Will Jesus fail to claim the people he bought with so great a price? Did he shed his blood in vain? How can he revive enmity against those whom he hath once reconciled unto God, not imputing their transgressions unto them? Having obtained eternal redemption for them, will he adjudge them to everlasting perdition? Has he purged their sins by sacrifice, and will he then leave them to be the victims of satanic craft? By the blood of the everlasting covenant, every Christian may be assured that he cannot perish, neither can any pluck him out of Christ's hand. Unless the cross were all a peradventure, unless the atonement were a mere speculation, those for whom Jesus died are saved through his death. Therefore he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.

As a broad wall which surrounds the saints of God is *the work of the Holy Spirit*. Does the spirit begin and not finish the operations of his grace? Ah no? Does he give life which afterwards dies out? Impossible! Hath he not told us that the Word of God is the incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth for ever? And shall the powers of hell or the evil of our own flesh destroy what God has pronounced immortal, or cause dissolution to that which God says is incorruptible? Is not the Spirit of God given us to abide with us for ever, and shall he be expelled from that heart in which he has taken up his everlasting dwelling place? Brethren, we are not

of their mind, who are led by fear of fallacy to hazard such conjectures. We rejoice to say with Paul, "I am persuaded that he who hath begun a good work in you will carry it on." We like to sing—

"Grace *will* complete what grace begins,
To save from sorrows or from sins;
The work that wisdom undertakes
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes."

Almost *every doctrine of grace* affords us a broad wall, a strong bastion, a mighty bulwark, a grand munition of defence. Take, for instance, Christ's suretyship engagements. He is surety to his Father for his people. When he brings home the flock, think you he will have to report that some of them are lost? At his hands will they be required. Not so!

"I know that safe with him remains,
Protect by his power,
What I've committed to his hands,
Till the decisive hour."

"Here am I," will he say, "and the children whom thou hast given me, of all whom thou hast given me I have lost none." He will keep all the saints even to the end. *The honor of Christ* is involved. If Christ loses one soul that leans upon him, the integrity of his crown is gone; for if there should be one believing soul in hell, the prince of darkness would hold up that soul and say—"Aha! Thou couldst not save them all! Aha! Thou Captain of Salvation, thou wast defeated here! Here is one poor little Benjamin, one Ready-to-Halt, that thou couldst not bring to glory, and I have him to be my prey for ever!" But it shall not be. Every gem shall be in Jesu's crown. Every sheep shall be in Jesu's flock. He shall not be defeated in any way, or in any measure; but he shall divide the spoil with the strong, he shall establish the cause he undertakes, he shall eternally conquer; glory be unto his great and good name!

Thus I have tried to show you the broad walls which are round about believers. They are saved, and they may say to their enemies, "the virgin daughter of Zion hath shaken her head at them, and laughed them to scorn! Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that hath risen again from the dead; who sitteth at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us! For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

III. The idea of a broad wall, and with this I close, SUGGESTS ENJOYMENT.

The walls of Ninevah and Babylon were broad; so broad that there was found room for several chariots to pass each other. Here men walked at sunset, and talked and promoted good fellowship. If you have ever been in the city of York you will know how interesting it is to walk around the broad walls there. But our figure is drawn from the Orientals. They were accustomed to come out of their houses and walk on the broad walls. *They used them for rest from toil*, and for the manifold

pleasures of recreation. It was very delightful when the sun was going down, and all was cool, to walk on those broad walls. And so, when a believer comes to know the deep things of God, and to see the defences of God's people, he walks along them and he rests. "Now," saith he, "I am at rest and peace; the destroyer cannot molest me; I am delivered from the noise of archers in the place of the drawing of water, and here I can exercise myself in prayer and meditation! Now that salvation is appointed for walls and bulwarks, I will sing a song unto him who hath done these great things for me; I will take my rest and be quiet for he that believeth hath entered into rest; there is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Broad walls, then, are for rest, and so are our broad walls of salvation.

Those broad walls were also *for communion*. Men came there and talked with one another. They leaned over the wall and whispered their loving words, conversed of their business, comforted one another, related their troubles and their joys. So, when believers come unto Christ Jesus they commune with one another, with the angels, with the spirits of just men made perfect, and with Jesus Christ their Lord, who is best of all. Oh! on those broad walls, when the banner of love waves over them, they sometimes rejoice with a joy unspeakable, in fellowship with him who loved them and gave himself for them. It is a blessed thing in the Church when you get such a knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel that you can have the sweetest communion with all the Church of the living God.

And then the broad walls were also intended *for prospects and outlooks*. The citizen came up on the broad wall, and looked away from the smoke and dirt of the city within, right across to the green fields, and the gleaming river, and the far off mountains, delighted to watch the mowing of hay, or the reaping of corn, or the setting sun beyond the distant hills. It was one of the common enjoyments of the citizen of any walled city, to come to the top of the wall in order to take views afar. So, when a man once gets into the altitudes of gospel doctrines, and has learned to understand the love of God in Christ Jesus, what views he can take! How he looks down upon the sorrows of life! How he looks beyond that narrow little stream of death! How, sometimes, when the weather is bright and his eye is clear enough to let him use the telescope, he can see within the gates of pearl, and behold the joys which no mortal eye hath seen, and hear the songs which no mortal ear hath heard, for these are things, not for eyes and ears, but for hearts and spirits! Blessed is the man who dwelleth in the Church of God, for he can find on her broad walls places from which he can see the king in his beauty, and the land which is very far off!

Ah! dear friends, I wish that these things had to do with you all, but I am afraid they have not; for many of you are outside the wall, and when the destroyer comes none will be safe but those who are inside the wall of Christ's love and mercy. I would go to God that you would escape to the gate at once, for it is open. It will be shut—it will be shut one day, but it is open now. When night comes, the night of death, the gate will be shut, and you will come then and say, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But, the answer will be—

"Too late, too late!

Ye cannot enter now."

But it is not too late yet. Still Christ saith, "Behold, I set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it." Oh! that thou hadst the will to come and put thy trust in Jesus; for if thou dost so, thou shalt be saved. I cannot speak to some of you about security, for there are no broad walls to defend you. You have run away from the security. Perhaps you have been patching up with some untempered mortar a righteousness of your own, which will all be thrown down as a bowing wall and as a tottering fence. Oh! that you would trust in Jesus! Then would you have a broad wall which all the battering-rams of hell shall never be able to shake. When the storms of eternity shall beat against that wall, it shall stand fast for aye.

I cannot speak to some of you about rest, and enjoyment, and communion, for you have sought rest where there is none; you have got a peace which is no peace, you have found a comfort which will be your destruction. God make you to be distressed, and constrain you by sore stress to flee to the Lord Jesus and get true peace, the only peace, for "he is our peace." Oh! that you would close in with Christ and trust him, then you would rejoice in the present happiness which faith would give you; but, the sweetest thing of all would be the prospect which should then unfold to you of the eternal happiness which Christ has prepared for all those who put their trust in him.