

# THE PASTOR IN PRAYER

by C.H. Spurgeon

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*Spurgeon's devotional guidance on prayer and intimate spiritual connection with God for pastoral leaders, demonstrating the vital role of prayer in effective ministry.*

29 Chapters

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Chapter 1

## **BOOK: The Pastor in Prayer**

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The Pastor in Prayer A Collection of the Sunday Morning Prayers of C. H. SPURGEON by  
C.H. Spurgeon

## Chapter 1. The Personal Touch

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### Chapter 1

The Personal Touch 'If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole'

(Mark 5:28).

O Lord God, the great I AM, we do confess and cheerfully acknowledge that all conies of Thee. Thou hast made us and not we ourselves, and the breath in our nostrils is kept there by Thy continued power. We owe our sustenance, our happiness, our advancement, our ripening, our very existence entirely unto Thee. We would bless Thee for all the mercies with which Thou dost surround us, for all things which our eyes see that are pleasant, which our ears hear that are agreeable, and for everything that maketh existence to be life.

Especially do we own this dependence when we come to deal with spiritual things. O God, we are less than nothing in the spiritual world. We do feel this growingly, and yet even to feel this is beyond our power. Thy grace must give us even to know our need of grace. We are not willing to confess our own sinfulness until Thou dost show it to us. Though it stares us in the face our pride denies it, and our own inability is unperceived by us. We steal Thy power and call it our own till Thou dost compel us to say that we have no strength in ourselves. Now, Lord, would we acknowledge that all good must come of Thee, through Jesus Christ by Thy Spirit, if ever we are to receive it. And we come humbly, first of all acknowledging our many sins. How many they are we cannot calculate, how black they are, how deep their ill-desert; yet we do confess that we have sinned ourselves into hopeless misery, unless Thy free undeserved grace do rescue us from it. Lord we thank Thee for any signs of penitence — give us more of it. Lay us low before Thee under a consciousness of our undeserving state. Let us feel and mourn the atrocity of our guilt. O God, we know a tender heart must come from Thyself. By nature our hearts are stony, and we are proud and self-righteous.

Help everyone here to make an acceptable confession of sin, with much mourning, with much deep regret, with much self-loathing, and with the absence of anything like a pretence to merit or to excuse. Here we stand, Lord, a company of publicans and sinners, with whom Jesus deigns to sit down. Heal us, Emmanuel! Here we are needing that healing. Good Physician, here is scope for Thee; come and manifest Thy healing power! There are many of us who have looked unto Jesus and are lightened, but we do confess that our faith was the gift of God. We had never looked with these blear eyes of ours to that dear cross, unless first the heavenly light had shone, and the heavenly finger had taken the thick scales away. We trace therefore our faith to that same God who gave us life, and we ask now that we may have more of it. Lord, maintain the faith Thou hast created, strengthen it, let it be more and more simple. Deliver us from any sort of reliance upon ourselves, whatever shape that reliance might take, and let our faith in Thee become more childlike every day that we live; for, O dear Saviour, there is room for the greatest faith to be exercised upon Thy blessed person and work. O God, the Most High and All-sufficient, there is

room for the greatest confidence in Thee. O Divine Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, there is now sufficient room for the fullest faith in Thine operations. Grant us this faith. Oh, work it in us now while at the same time we do confess that if we have it not it is our shame and sin. We make no excuse for unbelief, but confess it with detestation of it that we should ever have doubted the truthful, the mighty, the faithful God. Yet, Lord, we shall fall into the like sin again, unless the grace that makes us know it to be sin shall help us to avoid it. And now, Lord, we ask thee to accept of us this morning whatever offerings we can bring. We bring our hearts to Thee, full of love to Thee for what Thou hast done, full of gratitude, full of faith, full of hope, full of joy. We feel glad in the Lord. But we do confess that if there be anything acceptable in these our offerings, they are all first given us of Thee. No praise comes from us till first it is wrought in us, for

'Every virtue we possess, And every victory won; And every thought of holiness, Are Thine, great God, alone.'

Well may we lay those fruits at Thy feet that were grown in Thy garden, and that gold and silver and frankincense which Thou Thyself didst bestow, only first give us more! Oh, to love the Saviour with a passion that can never cool; Oh, to believe in God with a confidence that can never stagger! Oh, to hope in God with an expectation that can never be dim! Oh, to delight in God with a holy overflowing rejoicing that can never be stopped, so that we might live to glorify God at the highest bent of our powers, living with enthusiasm, burning, blazing, being consumed with the indwelling God who worketh all things in us according to His will! Thus, Lord, would we praise and pray at the same time, confess and acknowledge our responsibilities, but also bless the free, the sovereign grace that makes us what we are. O God of the eternal choice, O God of the ransom purchased on the tree, O God of the effectual call, Father, Son and Spirit, our adoration rises to heaven like the smoke from the altar of incense. Glory and honour and majesty and power and dominion and might be unto the one only God, for ever and ever, and all the redeemed by blood will say, Amen.

Look at this time, we beseech Thee, upon us as a church and give us greater prosperity. Add to us daily. Knit and unite us together in love. Pardon church sins. Have mercy upon us that we do not more for Thee. Accept what we are enabled to do. Qualify each one of us to be vessels fit for the Master's use, then use each one of us according to the measure of our capacity. Wilt Thou be pleased to bless the various works carried on by the church; may they all prosper. Let our Sabbath school especially be visited with the dew of heaven, and the schools that belong to us and are situated a little distance away, may they also have an abundant shower from the Lord; and may all the Sabbath schools throughout the world be richly refreshed, and bring forth a great harvest for God.

Bless our College, O God; let every brother sent out be clothed with power, and may the many sons of this church that have been brought up at her side, preach with power today. It is sweet to us to think of hundreds of voices of our sons this day declaring the name of Christ. Blessed is the church that hath her quiver full of them, she shall speak with her adversaries in the gate; but the Lord bless us in this thing also, for except Thou build the house they labour in vain that build it. Bless our dear boys at the Orphanage. We thank Thee for the conversion of many. May they all be the children of God, and as Thou hast taken yet another away to Thyself, prepare any whom Thou dost intend to take. We pray Thee spare their lives but if at any time any must depart, may they go out of the world unto the Father. May the Lord bless all the many works that are carried on by us,

or rather which Thou dost carry on through our feeble instrumentality. May our colporteurs in going from house to house be graciously guided to speak a good word for Jesus. And Lord bless us. We live unto Thee; our one aim in life is to glorify Thee, Thou knowest. For Thee we hope we would gladly die; aye, for Thee we will cheerfully labour while strength is given; but, oh, send prosperity, and not to us only, but to all workers for Jesus, to all missions in foreign lands, and missions in the heathendom at home. Bless all Thy churches far and near, especially the many churches speaking our own language across the Atlantic, as well as in this land. The Lord send plenteous prosperity to all the hosts of His Israel. May Thy kingdom come!

And, Lord, gather in the unconverted: our prayers can never conclude without pleading for the dead in sin. Oh, quicken them, Saviour! and if any one here has a little daughter that lieth dead in sin, like Jairus may they plead with Jesus to come and lay His hand upon her that she may live. If we have any relatives unsaved, Lord, save them: save our servants, save our neighbours, save this great city, yea, let Thy kingdom come over the whole earth.

Let the nations melt into one glorious empire beneath the sole sway of Jesus the Son of David and the Son of God. Come quickly, O Lord Jesus, even so, come quickly. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1382 (4 November 1877).

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 9:9-31.

HYMNS: 174, 415, 603.

## Chapter 2. Jesus Interceding for Transgressors

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### Chapter 2

Jesus Interceding for Transgressors 'He bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors' (Isaiah 53:12).

Gracious God, we praise Thee with our whole hearts for the wondrous revelation of Thy love in Christ Jesus our Lord. We think every day of His passion, for all our hope lies in His death: but as often as we think upon it, we are still filled with astonishment that Thou shouldst so love the world as to give Thine only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life; that heaven's eternal darling should come to earth to be made a man, and in manhood's form to be despised and rejected of the very men whom He came to bless; and then should be made to bear the sin of many and to be numbered with the transgressors, and being found in that number to die a transgressor's death, a felon's death upon the gibbet of the cross.

Oh, this surpasses all belief if it had not indeed been actually so: and if the sure word of prophecy had not of old declared it, we could not have imagined it. It would have seemed blasphemy to have suggested such a thought, yet Thou hast done it. Thy grace has almost out-graced itself, Thy love has reached its height: love to rebels; so to love that even Thy Son could not be spared. O God, we are afflicted in our hearts to think we do not love Thee more after such love as this. Oh, were there not a stone in our hearts we should melt in love to Thee, we should account that there was no thought fit to occupy the mind but this one stupendous thought of God's love to us, and henceforth this would be the master-key to our hearts, that should unlock or lock them at Thy will — the great love wherewith Thou hast loved us.

We lie in the very dust before Thee in utter shame, to think that we have sometimes heard this story without emotion and even told it without tenderness. The theme truly has never become stale to us. We can say in Thy presence that the story of Christ's death still brings joy and makes our hearts to leap. But yet Lord, it never has affected us as we could have expected it would. Give us more tenderness of heart, give us to feel the wounds of Jesus till they wound our sins to death. Give us to have a heart pierced even as His was, with deep sympathy for His griefs, and an all-consuming love for His blessed Person.

We adore Thee, O Father, for Thy great love in the gift of Jesus: we equally adore Thee most blessed Jesus, for resigning Thy life for our sakes: and then we adore the Blessed Spirit who has led us to know this mystery and to put our trust in Jesus. Unto the one God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, do we pay our reverent homage this morning; only we see Him yet more clearly than the patriarchs of old did, for God in the face of Jesus Christ is seen in the clearest light that mortal eye can bear. And now we have a prayer to put up to Thee, Great God, and it is this, that in us Thy dear Son may see some portion of the travail of His soul. Lord, let Him see a reward for His sufferings in all of us being repentant for sin, and trusting in God, and confessing His name. We fear there are among us this morning some who still indulge in the sins which brought Christ to

death, some that still are trusting in their own righteousness and so are despising His, because if theirs will suffice then His were superfluous. O God, we beseech Thee, bring men away from all their false trusts to rest in the great sacrifice of Thy dear Son.

Let not one person here be so callous to the merit of Christ as not to love Him, or so indifferent to the efficacy of His blood as not to desire to be cleansed in it. Oh, bring every one of us now to believe in Jesus Christ with our whole heart unto eternal life, that so the thousands in this Tabernacle may belong to Jesus, that He may have a portion with the great. But even those who have believed in Christ have need to put up the same prayer. Our Lord and Master, Redeemer and Saviour, come and take entire possession of us. We own Thy right, but Thou must take by force what Thou hast purchased, or Thou wilt never have it. By force of arms, the arms must be those of love, wilt Thou capture our wilful, wayward spirit. Come and divide the spoil with the strong in us we pray Thee. Take every faculty and use it, overpower and sanctify it. Every moment of our time help us to employ for Thee, every breath may we breathe out to Thine honour. We feel that there is unconquered territory in our nature yet. Subdue, Lord, we beseech Thee, our corruptions, cast them out, and in our spirit rule and conquer. There set up Thine eternal throne — 'Wean our heart from every creature Thee to love and Thee alone.'

We do pray this with our whole hearts; and assist us, we pray Thee most blessed Redeemer, to show forth Thy praises in our lives. Sanctify us in our households. May we go in and out before Thee shewing the name and nature of Christ. Help us in our business, that in all we do among our fellow men we may act as Christ would have us act. Strengthen us in secret; there may we be mighty in prayer. Guard us in public, that neither in act nor word we may slip away from Thee. Above all, cast cords of love around our hearts. Oh, hold us Saviour, never let us go. Suffer no professed Christian here ever to violate the loyalty of his obedience to his King. May those dear wounds of His have more sway over us than ever silver sceptre had over the subjects of earthly princes. May we feel that if Pie drank for us the vinegar and gall, whatever cup He sets before us we will cheerfully drink. Rule us, Saviour, rule us, we beseech Thee. And let no believer here violate the chastity of his heart to the Beloved of his soul. O Jesus, let us love Thee so intensely, that whatever else there may be of loving relationship, still this may cover all and swallow up all. Oh, to be wholly Christ's! We do mourn that we cannot reach to this — that in the secret of our hearts every devil should be cast out, every demon driven to its deep, every sin made hateful, every thought of sin made loathsome to us, until only pure desires and inward longings after perfect holiness shall predominate in our nature. O God, let the scourge still be used to drive out the buyers and sellers: we would not ask to have them spared, but let the temple be the Lord's, seeing He hath built it and hath cleansed it with His blood.

Bless at this time very graciously the church to which we belong. Let us in this place know the power of prayer today and to-morrow: especially pour out upon the members of this church an intense spirit of supplication. May we agonize to-morrow for the glory of God, and today also, and let it not depart from us so long as we live. Send us, Lord, a mighty groundswell of intense desire for the glory of God, and may these Thy servants banded together in church fellowship recognise their sweet obligations to their dying Lord, and determine that the prayers of the church shall go up before Him like sweet perfume.

Lord, convert our friends that still remain unsaved. O mighty power of God, let none come into this house even accidentally and casually without receiving some devout impression. May the Spirit of God work mightily by our ministry and the ministration of all His servants now present, whether in the Sabbath school, or in the streets, or in the lodging houses, or from door to door, or when they privately speak to individuals. Oh, glorify Thyself in us. Dear Saviour, we pray Thee come and mark us all distinctly with the blood mark as being wholly Thine, and henceforth may we say with Paul, 'Let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.' As we have been buried with Thee by baptism into death, so would we be dead to all the world, and only live for Christ. God grant it may be so, and we will glorify Thee in life and death and for ever. As Thou hast bidden us pray for all men, so do we now especially pray for our beloved country. May every blessing rest upon this favoured isle. Upon the Queen, let Thy mercies always descend. Keep this land in peace we beseech Thee, and as for all other lands may peace yet reign. May oppression in every place be broken to shivers, and may truth and righteousness win the day. Break in pieces the power of Antichrist we pray Thee, and of the false prophet; and let the idols fall from their thrones, and may the Lord God Omnipotent yet reign, even Jesus, King of kings and Lord of lords. We ask it all in His name. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1385 (18 November 1877).

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 53:1-12 HYMNS 327, 412, 329.

## Chapter 3. God's Thoughts and Ways Far Above Ours

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### Chapter 3

#### God's Thoughts and Ways Far Above Ours

'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts'

(Isaiah 55:8-9).

O God, most high and glorious, the thought of Thine infinite serenity has often cheered us, for we are toiling and moiling, troubled and distressed here below beneath the moon, but Thou sittest for ever in perfect happiness. Thy designs cause Thee no care or fear, for Thou wilt surely carry them out. Thy purposes stand fast as the eternal hills: Thy power knows no bound, Thy goodness no stint. Thou bringest order out of confusion, and our defeats are but Thy victories.

We sow in tears, but Thou dost see us reap in joy. Our everlasting felicity is present to Thee, even while groans and mourning are our present lot. Glory be to the Lord most high, who sitteth on the clouds, who sitteth King for ever and ever. Our hearts rejoice to hear the gladsome tidings that the Lord reigneth. Let His kingdom be established over the sons of men, for His kingdom must come, and of it there will be no end. Behold, we come to Thy throne this morning bearing about with us a body of sin and death, and consequently much of sin, and much of care, and it may be much of sorrow; but we would be unburdened at Thy mercy-seat now. As for our cares we are ashamed that we have them, seeing Thou carest for us. We have trusted Thee now for many years, and Thy faithfulness has never been under suspicion, nor Thy love a matter of question.

We therefore leave every concern about our families or about ourselves, about our business, or about our souls, entirely with our God. And as for our sin, we bless Thee for a sight of the precious blood of Jesus: when Thou seest it Thou dost pass over us. No angel of justice smites where once the blood is sprinkled. Oh, let us have a sight of the blood of Jesus, too, and rest because Thou hast for ever put away our sin, because we believe in Jesus. Thus, Lord, help us to stand before Thee, entering into Thy rest as we enter into Thy presence; and may this be a time of peace wherein the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep the hearts and minds of His people through Christ Jesus.

Still, Lord, we have a burden which we must now lay before Thee, and ask Thee to help us in it. We mourn over the condition of Thy church, for on every side as we look around, we see men endeavouring to undermine the doctrines of the everlasting Gospel. Time was when a man was famous for lifting up his axe upon the trees of the forest, but now they with axes break down the carved work of Thy sanctuary - they despoil Thy truth. There is scarce a single doctrine of Thy

word which the wise men among us do not deny. Yea, and those that pretend to be the ministers of the gospel are amongst the first to speak against it, and to denounce it, and to sanction licence to sin because Thou wilt no more punish it, and to declare that Jesus Christ is not Thy Son. O Lord God, our heart often sinks within us; we are apt to wish to lay our hand upon the ark to steady it, for the oxen shake it; but we know it is in Thy hand, and having spread the case before Thee we leave it there. Many a Rabshakeh's letter have we read of late: behold we bring it into the sanctuary and spread it before the Lord. O Lord our God, rebuke the unbelief, rebuke the scepticisms of those who assail both Thee and Thy Christ, and the gospel of Thy truth. And we would ask Thee to do it thus if it please Thee, revive deep spirituality in the hearts of Thine own children. Oh, that we might live so near to the great Shepherd as to be familiar with His voice, to know its tones, that so a stranger we may not follow, for we know not the voice of strangers. If it were possible they would deceive even the very elect, and how shall Thine elect be kept from their deceptions but by abiding in the truth and walking in the power of the Holy Spirit. Oh, revive Thy church we pray Thee in this respect! Give to those who know Thee intenser faith in the eternal verities, burning into us by experience the things which we do know; may they be beyond all question to us. And may we never be ashamed to glory in the good old way, the way the fathers trod, the way which leads to heaven and to God. May we not be ashamed to vindicate it, and to bear reproach; for Thy gospel has of old been to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, and so we expect it ever to be a stumbling-block to those who go after the way of superstition, and also to be foolishness to the wise men of the world. O God, again confuse the knowledge of men by what they think to be the foolishness of the gospel. Again let it be seen that the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. O Jesus, Son of the Highest, we know that the truth is powerful, because Thou art the soul of it - the very essence of it. Put Thy life into it we pray Thee. May the eternal spirit go with every word which God-sent ministers shall proclaim, and may the Lord grant that as the mists fly before the sun, and the clouds before the wind, so error and superstition may be driven away by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in all the glory of His brightness.

We have also to bring before Thee another burden, and that is the godlessness of this present age. It is not alone the wise men but, behold, the men that know not seek not after God. O Lord, the multitude delight in sin. Drunkenness defiles our city, and filthy words are heard on every side. Be not wrath with this nation, we beseech Thee. It has been entrusted with wondrous privileges. Forgive it and have mercy upon its aggravated sin. Lay not its heavy responsibilities to its charge, but let this nation be saved. We pray for it as we are in duty bound to do, and as our love constrains us to do. Oh, let the masses of the people yet come to seek after Christ: by some means, by all means, by every means, may the ears of men be reached and then their hearts be touched. May they hear, that their souls may live; and may the Lord who in everlasting covenant sets forth His Son, glorify Him in the midst of the nations. Let all the nations know the Christ of God. Our Father, we pray Thee help the few, valiant few, that press forward into the dense area of the enemy. Help them to fight valiantly! May these pioneers of the Christian host in mission lands be increased in number, may they be kept in good heart, may they have confidence in God, and may the Lord send the day of victory much sooner than our feeble faith has dared to hope.

But, Lord, we have yet another burden — it is that we ourselves do not love Thee as we should, that oftentimes we grow lukewarm and chill, and doubt creeps over us, and unbelief mars our

confidence, and we sin and forget our God. O Lord help us! Pardon is not enough, we want sanctification. We beseech Thee let the weeds that grow in the seed plot of our soul be cut up by the roots. We do want to serve Thee. We long that every thought we think, and word we say or write, should be all for Thee. We would lead consecrated lives, for we are persuaded that we only live as we live unto God, that aught else is but trifling. Oh, to be taken up as offerings wholly to be consumed upon the altar of the Lord, joyfully ascending to Him in every outgoing of our life. Now this morning be pleased to refresh us. Draw nigh unto us, Thou gracious God; it is only Thy presence that can make us happy, holy, devout or strong. Shadow us now with Thy wings, cover us with Thy feathers, and under Thy wings may we trust. May we follow very near unto Thee, and so feel the quickening warmth, the joy which only Thy nearness can bring.

If any in Thy presence this morning are unsaved, oh, save them now. Do grant that the service of this morning may bring such glad tidings to their ear, that their heart shall leap at the sound of it, and they shall return unto God, who will abundantly pardon. Bless every preacher of the Word today, and all Sabbath schools, classes of young men and women, all tract distributing and street preaching, and preaching in the theatres, and every form of holy service. Accept the prayers and praises of Thy people. Receive them even from the sick beds of those detained at home. Let not one of Thy mourners, the weary watchers of the night, be kept without a smile from God. The Lord bless us now, and all His chosen people. Our soul crieth out for it. Break, O everlasting morning, break o'er the dark hills! Let our eyes behold Thee, and till the day break and the shadows flee away, abide with us, O our Beloved, abide with us now. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1387 (2 December 1877).

SCRIPTURE : Isaiah 55:1-9.

HYMNS: 36 (Song i.), 103, 202.

## Chapter 4. A Golden Prayer

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### Chapter 4

A Golden Prayer 'Father, glorify thy name'

(John 12:28).

O Lord, our God, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! Some of us have to thank Thee for many mercies bestowed. We thank Thee for them, for we feel that we are entirely in Thy hands in all respects. Others of us have been brought very low, bruised full sore, but having a little strength remaining, we desire to praise and bless the Giver of every gift. Thou art good when Thou givest, and Thou art good when Thou takest away. Thou art good when the night gathers heavy about us. Thou art good when the sun shineth and gladdeneth our pathway. Thou art always good and doest good, and blessed be the name of the Lord from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof, and through the night watches let His praise be still celebrated. In the recollection of all that Thou hast done for us Thy people, we are filled with amazement as well as with gratitude, that Thou shouldst have loved us before the foundation of the world, that sovereign love should have pitched upon us poor unworthy ones, that Thou shouldst so love us as to redeem us with the blood of Jesus and give the only Begotten to die for unworthy creatures like to us; that Thou shouldst love us notwithstanding our sins and transgressions, that Thou shouldst love us despite the hardness of our hearts and the rebellion of our nature. It is strange, it surpasses belief at times, yet do we know it to be so. And since the hour when we knew Thy love and learned to say Abba, Father, we do confess we have been unworthy still. We have but little felt Thy goodness; we have often acted very ungratefully, very distrustfully. But Lord, Thou hast not changed, but still doth Thy faithfulness abound to Thy servants; for which again we can only say, Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Especially would we make mention of the goodness of the Lord during another year. Each believer here has trodden a different pathway: to some it has been a very smooth road, to others a very rough climb: to some a deep descent into the valley of sorrow and humiliation. But Thou hast led Thy people by a right way. With all the twisting of the wilderness march, we are persuaded that when Thou ledest us about, still we go the nearest way. Thou knowest best, and oftentimes to retreat is to advance, and to be beaten back is to make surest headway. We would again in the recollection of the whole year, whatever it may have been, lift up the song of grateful praise, raise another stone of help to record the lovingkindness of our God. And now do we hoist sail and draw up anchor to sail into another year. O Thou blessed Pilot of the future as of the past, we are so happy to leave all to Thee; but in leaving all to Thee we have one wish, and it is that Thou wouldst in the next year glorify the Father's name in us more than in any other year of our lives. Perhaps this may involve deeper trial, but let it be if we can glorify God. Perhaps this may involve the being cast aside from the service that we love; but we would prefer to be laid aside if we could glorify Thee the better. Perhaps this may involve the ending of all life's pleasant work and the being taken home — well, Thy children make no sort of stipulations with their God, but this one prayer ascends from all true hearts this morning, 'Father, glorify Thy name.'

Wilt Thou glorify Thyself, great Father, by making us more holy. Purge us every day, we beseech Thee, from the selfishness that clings to us. Deliver us also from the fear of man, from the love of approbation so far as these might lead us astray. Help us to be resolute and self-contained to do, and think, and speak the right at all times. Give us great love to our fellow men. May we love them so that we could die for them if need be.

Above all, blessed Jesus, our Redeemer, let Thy love to us fire us with love to Thee. Stamp Thy dear image on our hearts, and let us never wander from the path of complete obedience to Thy will. Here we stand, asking to be washed again in the open fountain, that every sin may be put away; but also begging to be washed in the water 'from the riven side that flows', that every wrong desire, every base aspiration, everything contrary to the mind of God may be utterly taken away from us. We beseech Thee strengthen Thy servants for the battles of another year. Give them courage for all the trials, give them grace for all the joys. Help us to be a holy and a happy people! Let the redeemed of the Lord speak well of His name, and whatever their distress may be at times, yet over all may they lift up notes of perpetual joy, glorying in the name of the Lord their God.

We ask Thee, O God, at this time to revive religion in our land. Oh, that Thou wouldst be pleased to speak by the Holy Ghost that the gospel's power may be known; there be many that run away from the truth; Lord, hold us fast to it, bind us to it. May there be a people found in this place, and throughout this land, that will abide by the doctrines of the gospel, come what may. May we not be ashamed to be old fashioned, and to be thought fanatical. May we not wish to be thought cultured, nor aim to keep abreast of the times. May we be side by side with Thee, O bleeding Saviour; and be content to be rejected, be willing to take up unpopular truth, and to hold fast despised teachings of sacred writ even to the end. Oh, make us faithful — faithful unto death. And now Lord, bless this people, this our beloved church. Thou hast been very gracious to us; be gracious to us still. Oh, that we had health and strength to labour here as our heart desireth: may it please Thee yet to give us these! But if not, use what there is of us till the last is gone, and be pleased ever to find some one or other to go in and out before this people, to feed them with knowledge and understanding. 'Father, glorify Thy name.'

We ask Thee once more that Thou wouldst, by some means, cause peace to be re-established throughout the earth. Grant that this nation may not be drawn into war. We have been foolish once over it, grant that we may not be so again, but Oh, let Thy Kingdom come without the use of the sword. Oh, angel of war, wilt thou not rest! Oh, sword of the Lord, put thyself into thy scabbard and be still; for the sake of the great Prince of Peace we ask it. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1391 (30 December 1877).

SCRIPTURE: John 12:12-41.

HYMNS: 1035, 699, 663.

## Chapter 5. The Day of Salvation

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### Chapter 5

The Day of Salvation 'Behold, now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation'

(2 Corinthians 6:2).

O God, Thou art our exceeding joy. The very singing of Thy praises lifts our heart upward: when we can join in the solemn psalm or the sacred hymn, our heart doth leap within us. And when Thy name is glorified, when we see sinners glorifying the name of Jesus, when we look forward to the brighter days when myriads shall flock to the Crucified: above all, when we contemplate His final triumph, then is our heart very restful and our spirit rejoiceth in God our Saviour.

What a fountain of delight Thou art, and how richly hast Thou promised to bless the men that delight themselves in God. Thou hast said, 'Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desire of thine heart.' Dost Thou reward us for being delighted? Oh, pleasant duty, which hath appended to it so divine a promise. Shall we have the desire of our heart, when our heart finds all its desire in Thee? O blessed Lord, Thou dost indeed meet them that work righteousness and that rejoice in Thy ways; and Thou fillest Thy people with good things, so that their youth is renewed like the eagles'. We pray Thee help us who know Thee, to glorify Thee. We have known Thee from our youth, some of us, and hitherto have we declared Thy wondrous works. Oh, may there never be in our heart, and above all may there never come from our lips, or in our life, anything that might dishonour Thee. Oh, let us die a thousand deaths sooner than ever dishonour Thy hallowed name. This is dearer to us than the apple of our eye.

We have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth. Gather not our soul with sinners, nor our lives with cruel men; but let us be helped, even to the end, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, even if it be to Gethsemane and Calvary. Oh, to be perfect in heart towards the Lord! Our lives are faulty; we see much to grieve over; but we would have our whole heart towards Thy statutes; and we bless Thee that so it is, for our heart is in Thy ways, and we are willing to spend and to be spent for Thee. Reservation would we not make to the very slightest, but lay ourselves out for Thine honour only, for by us and in us, Father glorify Thy name.

Look down upon the great assemblies of this morning all over the world, and let Thine eye of tenderness rest here. Thou seest here many that love Thee - may we love Thee more! Thou seest many that live by the life of God - O life of God, live in us to the full! Thou seest also, we fear, some that are declining from Thy ways, in whom grace is but a flickering light. Lord, trim the lamps, bring back the wanderers, for there is no joy but in God. And perhaps, nay we fear it must be so, that Thou seest in this throng, ungodly ones, careless and indifferent.

O sword of the Lord, pierce them through, that carelessness may be slain, that their souls may live. O Thou who art as a polished shaft hidden in the quiver of the eternal, go forth today to smite to the heart the proud, the self-righteous, and those that will not stoop to ask mercy at Thy hands: but as for the humble and the contrite, look upon them; the broken-hearted and the heavy-laden do Thou relieve, and such as have no helper do Thou succour. Bring up the sinner from the prison house, let the lawful captive be delivered. Let the mighty God of Jacob lead forth His elect, as once He did out of Pharaoh's bondage. The Red Sea is already divided that they may march through it. The Lord save multitudes — He knoweth them that are His. Accomplish their number and let Jesus so be rewarded, though Israel be not gathered.

O Lord, we ask ourselves for strength to bear and to do. Some of us would ask, if it were Thy will, restoration to health; but Thy will be done. Others would ask deliverance out of trouble — again, Thy will be done. Some would come before Thee with conscious guilt, and ask for a new application of the precious blood. We had better all ask it, let us all have it. O God, bless this church and people more and more. How richly Thou hast blessed them! When we look back upon past years, what hath God wrought! Shalt Thou be without our song? Even when we are not as we would be, shall our voice, if it be cracked and broken, still be silent? No, if every harp-string shall be broken but one, that one shall still resound the love of Jesus, and the glory of God. Long as we live we will bless Thy name, our King, our God of love; for there is none like Thee. 'Whom have we in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that we desire beside Thee.' Our soul is clean divorced from all earth's good, and married to the Christ of God for ever. By bonds that never can be snapped we are one with Him, and who shall separate us from His love? The Lord be pleased to reveal Himself to His servants. Oh, for the uplifting of the veil, for the drawing near of the people that are made glad by the blood, for the speaking of God unto the soul, and the speaking of our soul unto God. Oh, for converse with the Eternal, for such fellowship as they may have who are raised up together with Christ, and made to sit in the heavenlies with Him. O Saviour, grant us a glimpse of Thy great love. One flash of Thine eye is brighter than the noonday. One word from Thy lips will be sweeter to us and more full of music, than the harps of angels. Grant it to every one of Thy children all over the world, both to the sick and to the dying. Oh, how gloriously will they die! And now Lord, we ask Thee to bless our country at this time, and by Thy great and infinite mercy preserve us, we beseech Thee, from war. Oh, that peace may reign yet all over the world, but let not this nation intermeddle and be as one that taketh a dog by the ear, but may there be wisdom given where we fear folly, and strength given where wisdom reigns. The Lord grant that wars may utterly cease unto the ends of the earth. Oh, make a way we pray Thee, for the progress of Christianity, of civilization, of liberty, of everything that is honest and of good repute. May Thy kingdom come, and Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven, for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1394 (13 January 1878).

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 49.

HYMNS: 241, 239, 406.

## Chapter 6. Sitting Over Against the Sepulchre

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### Chapter 6

Sitting Over Against the Sepulchre 'And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre'

(Matthew 27:6).

Most glorious Lord God, it is marvellous in our eyes that Thou shouldst become incarnate, that Thy Son should take our flesh upon Him. It surprises us greatly that the Lord of Life should condescend to die, and that the incorruptible One should be laid in the grave. We are full of loving gratitude, we are also full of adoring wonder. When we have stood at the sepulchre and looked into it and thought of Jesus having lain there, when we have seen it open and knew that it was empty, we bless Thy name that even He died and was buried, and magnify Thee that He is risen again from the dead. These great facts concerning our divine Lord are the foundation of our confidence in Him. We bless Thee that they have been attested by such four-fold witness, and yet further that afterwards He appeared alive to so large a number of those who knew Him, that the fact of His rising from the dead might never be questioned again. We do not question it, our hearts devoutly believe the fact, but Lord, we want by Thy Holy Spirit to know the facts in their living power. We wish that we might have fellowship with our Lord, who is our Head, in all this. Oh, that we might know how to die with Him, and to live with Him in newness of life.

O God, we do rejoice that the old man was crucified with Him. We would daily mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts. We wish to be to the world, to sin, to selfishness as dead and buried men; as dead men, out of mind, so would we be. Oh, that no faculty might hear the voice of the charmer when it charms us towards sin! may we be delivered from the mere power to obey the lusts of the flesh and the temptations of the devil. May grace so sanctify us that we may reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O God, we have too much of the ill alive about us. Go on to crucify it: let it die and, painful and lingering though the death may be, may we reckon the thing to be dead, because it is crucified, and never treat it as though it were a living thing to be fed and to have provision made for it: but let it die and let it be buried. May those of us who bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus be solemnly concerned that our baptism should be no fiction; but that we should be really baptized into the death of Christ with all the fulness of the deadening power that is about the sacred burial by fellowship with Him. And, O Lord, give us more and more to have the new life; yea, and to have it more abundantly, for this is one of the objects of His coming. May the new life always rule us, may we walk by its power, may we have strength through its influence, may we be elevated by its energies, may we be indeed entirely subjugated, as to our own entire manhood, to the control of the Holy Spirit through the new-born life. We do pant for this.

We ask especially on this Lord's Day, that we may be in the Spirit, and know the fulness of His quickening power. May we do nothing after the dead manner of formality. May there be no dead hymn, nor dead prayer. Lord, give the preacher life. Oh, give the hearers life. Oh, may this be living worship this morning, the bowing not of heads alone, but of hearts, and the closing not alone of the eyes to things that can be seen, but the closing of the eyelids of the thought to everything worldly.

O Lord, imprison us in the grave of Christ today, that within those sacred walls we may find a chamber where our Lord shall manifest Himself to us, as He doth not unto the world. A spring shut up, a fountain sealed art Thou, O Christ, to us, and we would be such to Thee; a garden enclosed for our Beloved, wherein He may take His delights. Our soul shall sing for joy, 'I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine; he feedeth among the lilies.'

Oh! for a day's release from every care! Now break the bands of our yoke. And oh, that we could live above care in the week-days too, casting all our care on Him who careth for us, and leaving all in those wise hands that rule the world, and can well rule our mean affairs. Today, gracious Lord, reproach Thy children and comfort them, also rebuke and reprove as may seem good unto Thee; but Oh, sanctify us for the skies, and prepare us for the place which Thou art preparing for us. The Lord be very mindful of all his sick servants at home, of any that are under depression of spirit, and especially of such as are near to die.

Oh, be very gracious to all Thy children under temptation, and if any are in very sharp trial, and are also conscious of having brought it upon themselves, which makes the trial worse than ever, yet of Thy mercy do Thou let the fulness of the power of Thy grace be manifest in them, that in the ages to come they may, with all saints declare the exceeding riches of Thy power and love in Christ Jesus. And now, Lord, bless the unconverted that come into this house today, or into any other place of worship. Be pleased to save them; let the eternal purpose be fulfilled in many today. Oh, bring home Thy prodigal children, and let such as are coming home be met by the loving Father, and may such as have come home have a feast of fat things today. May elder brethren today be made better tempered, be made more into sympathy with the great Father! May there be blessings all round today for all of us, and so may we together bless and magnify Thine august and sacred name. O Thou one God of Israel, whom we worship, let others worship whom they may; the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob is our God for ever and ever, and we worship Thee, O Jehovah Elohim, in the name of Jesus Christ Thine only-begotten Son. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1404 (24 March 1878).

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27:44-61; Mark 15:42-47;

Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42; Romans 6:1-13.

HYMNS: 909, 832, 844.

## Chapter 7. The Reason Why Many Cannot find Rest

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### Chapter 7

#### The Reason Why Many Cannot Find Rest

'Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up'

(James 4:7-10).

Permit us, Gracious Father, to come very near to Thee. May the drawings of the Divine Spirit now sweetly attract us to God; and most blessed Jesus, fulfil Thine office as Mediator, bring us now near to God by Thy precious blood. Oh, for the power to pray aright this morning! May Thy servant have it largely that he may be able to lead all this people, by the power of the Spirit, close to the mercy-seat.

First would we adore and bless and magnify our God; not only, O God, for what Thou art to us, but for what Thou art in Thyself, for Thou art incomparably glorious. In Thee, all perfections shine. Through the rebellion of our flesh we cannot delight ourselves in Thy ways, because they are hard and afflictive apparently; yet we do delight in Thee, and we will at all times rest our souls in the excellence and goodness and loving kindness of the Most High. As Thou hast revealed Thyself in Christ Jesus, Thou art now become to Thy people the object of inexpressible delight. Thou hast bidden us delight in Thee, promising to give us the desire of our hearts. We trust we can, many of us, truly say that Thou art our exceeding joy; the thought of God doth to our soul exceeding pleasure bring. Our soul exulteth in her God: He is our God and we will extol Him, He is our fathers' God and we will glorify Him.

But, Lord, we do confess that our nature is at enmity with Thee. The fallen corrupt nature of Adam has revolted and gone aside from God; and though we hope that by Thy free grace Thou hast renewed us, yet the old rebellions come up at times, and the evil nature urgeth us still to oppose Thee. Therefore our prayer this morning is that we may not only extol Thee with our words, as we do now; but by the entire submission of our hearts in loyal reverence to Thee, we may pay Thee the truest homage. But, Lord, lest we should not have done this, or thinking that we have done so,

should still have failed, we will make this the burden of our morning prayer. A large number of us have put on Christ by open confession of His name. O Searcher of hearts, are we really in Christ? Have we been by His spirit begotten again? Wilt Thou be pleased to search our hearts, that this question may be put beyond all suspicion. Help us to be very diligent in self-examination, observing whether our spirit be the spirit of Thy children, whether our griefs be the griefs that tear repenting hearts, whether our joys are the joys of faith or the delusions of presumption. May we make severe trial of ourselves, often and often putting ourselves into the balances of the sanctuary, to see whether we be full weight or no. One thing we hope we can say with confidence, that our trust is stayed where Thou wouldst have it stayed, even in the work, the blood, the righteousness, the person of Thy dear Son.

We have no confidence but in Christ, this we know; but Lord, if this be a true confidence it will work by love and purify the soul. Oh, that there might be the sweet results of faith about our secret character and public life. We do sin, the Lord grant we may never leave off grieving because of sin, never may we be contented with ourselves, never fancy that we have reached a point where we may rest and be thankful, and that there is nothing more for us to do in seeking to be more than conquerors of ourselves. As we have read the charge of Thy word against that unruly member, the tongue: as we have heard Thy servant James rebuking our envy and other evil spirits that are within us, we do feel humbled under Thy hand, and our prayer is, Lord, kill our envy, Lord, help us to command our tongue, grant us grace to be holy: may we be kind and gentle towards our fellow-men, having that fruit of the Spirit, which follows upon purity, even peace. Oh, that we might live for Thee and not for self. Slay self we pray Thee, gracious God, whenever there is a selfish, angry disposition about us; help us to trample it out, as men put out sparks lest a fire should arise therefrom.

Oh, to be Christly! We do desire to live on earth the life of Jesus - sent into the world by Him as He was sent into the world by the Father. We would closely copy all His acts, words, and spirit; for so only are we saved, when we are saved from the power of sin and transformed into the likeness of Christ. Let no drunkard here imagine that his life ought to be spent in a selfish endeavour to save himself from the flames of hell; but may he rather reckon that the grand object is to be saved from the power of sin, and to be consecrated unto God, and to live unto the glory of the most High.

O Lord, we do fear that selfishness even enters into our most holy things; we mar and spoil our prayers, and preachings, and teachings, with the unwashed hands with which we go about them. Oh, that Thou wouldst make us clean, we pray Thee; while we thus pray to Thee, we do also know that believing in Christ we are clean; we thank Thee we do not doubt His justifying power. While we are now crying to Him to be sanctified, may we not doubt His power to sanctify; but while crying, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death', as well we may, we do nevertheless shout exultingly, 'Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.' And now we beseech Thee, look upon some who are seeking salvation, but do not find it; who hear the simple gospel but somehow cannot enter into its rest. We know that something hinders — Satan hinders. There may be in the heart of seekers here, attachment to a favourite sin. Oh, deliver them from that fascination. There may be still some holding fast to evil associations, some predominance of evil passions. O God, help penitent souls to come to Thee, asking to be delivered from sin in every shape, from the sugar of sin as well as from the gall of sin.

Oh, make the soul of the seeker to be weary till he is delivered from corruption. May there be none here that shall fancifully seek after a pretended salvation, which will leave them as they are, but may they know that Jesus saves His people from their sins; and, oh, that with self-loathing, and deep contrition, and earnest heart searching, souls may come to Thee again and cast themselves before Thy face, trusting in Jesus, and crying out to be delivered from sin; and may this be the day of deliverance. Oh, that at this very hour, while we are trying to preach, Thou mayest raise up of these stones children unto Abraham. Men that seem naked and cold as stones, quicken by the mighty Spirit this very day; and may they be led to yield themselves unto God, and their members instruments of righteousness. The Lord grant it, and we will bless His name.

Lord, save us all, not only now, but in that day. So as by fire perhaps some of us will be saved, but we had rather pray that thou wouldst minister unto us an entrance abundantly into the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We have many things to ask of Thee, but Thou knowest, without our use of words. Give to all before Thee, and to all Thy people everywhere, exactly what Thou seest they need. We pray for the revival of the Church of God, for help to be given this day to all preachers, and teachers, and seekers after the souls of others. We pray Thee, Lord, to add to Thy church daily of such as shall be saved. With our whole heart many of us at least do pray Thee to bless our country, and spare it from the horrible evils of war. O God of peace, send us peace always, by all means.

Sword of the Lord rest and be quiet now; and may the gospel with its benign influences spread over all nations, till there shall be no selfish clutching, no rapacious grasping at territories, no oppression of one race by another; but may the laws of the King of Peace be universally proclaimed, and obeyed even by those who perhaps yield not their hearts to His sway; for we do know, great King, that whilst Thou hast a special kingdom in Thy people, yet the Lord hath given Thee power over all flesh; and we pray this may be recognised, and we may see it. Thy kingdom come, O Jesus; may Thy kingdom come, Thy Father's kingdom; and let His will be done on earth as it is in heaven; for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1408 (7 April 1878).

SCRIPTURE: James 3; James 4:1-12.

HYMNS: 907, 641, 119 (Song ii.)

## Chapter 8. The Conquest of Sin

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### Chapter 8

The Conquest of Sin 'For sin shall not have dominion over you:

for ye are not under the law, but under grace'

(Romans 6:14).

Glorious Lord God, our inmost hearts worship Thee; for Thou art high above the heavens, and yet Thou humblest Thyself to behold the things that are in heaven and that are on earth. And in Thy condescension Thou hast regard to the very lowest of mankind. Many of us can sing 'He hath regarded my low estate'; for Thou dost raise the poor out of the dust, and the needy out of the dunghill, that Thou mayest set them among princes, even the princes of the people. Who is a God like unto Thee: Hallelujah! our praises shall never cease from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, and all through the night watches, the Lord's name is to be praised. Our Father, for that is the sweetest title by which we can address Thee, we pray Thee save us entirely from sin. There are many in Thy presence who are resting in the peace which comes of justification by faith. We know that we are righteous through the righteousness of another, even Jesus Christ; but we pant and pine for personal likeness to Thyself. If Thou art our Father, then upon every child of Thine should be the Father's image impressed: so let it be. We beseech Thee, Lord, to enable us to recognise our death to sin; and when it tempts us may we be deaf to the voice of the charmer with the deafness of death; and when it would use our members as instruments of unrighteousness, may we be quite incapable thereof with the incapacity of death.

O God, deliver us we pray Thee from the invasion of sin, as well as from the dominion of it. Grant us to walk as Christ walked; in His newness of life may we live — may the life in the flesh be a life of faith upon the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us; and may it be a life of love, and consecration of burning zeal for God; a life of pure holiness; such a life as the incarnate God Himself has lived among the sons of men.

We lament that in the body of this death there is much that we abhor. We are tempted to indolence at times, and though busy in the world we become spiritually idle. Also, we are tempted to envy others because they excel us, and we mourn to confess the meanness of our spirit in this matter; and also we have to lament our pride. We have nothing to be proud of; the lowest place is ours; but Lord, we often conceive ourselves to be something when we are nothing. We pray Thee forgive all these vices of our nature; but at the same time kill them, for we hate ourselves to think we should fall into such evils. Especially have mercy upon us for our unbelief. Thou hast given us proof of Thine existence, and of Thy love to us, and of Thy care over us: especially hast Thou given us Thine only begotten Son, best pledge of love. And yet we acknowledge that we do doubt. Unbelief conies into the soul. We are quite ashamed of this. We could lie in the very dust to think it should be so. Lord, have mercy upon us; but also help us to be strong in faith in the future, giving glory to God.

We must sorrowfully also lament our hearts, how they wander. If Thou givest us a blessing we begin to idolize it. How often do we set our hearts upon children, upon some beloved object, or upon wealth or upon honour. Somehow or other, this spiritual adultery too often comes upon us, and the chastity of our hearts towards our God is violated. Be pleased to forgive us in this thing also.

'Take this poor heart and let it be, For ever closed to all but Thee' —

a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. Let the whole heart be Christ's alone, and never stray again.

Yet we do bless Thee this morning that we can pray in this fashion, for there was a time when it never struck us that there was much amiss with us, when sin was no plague to us; when we lived even in outward sin with but slight accusation of conscience, and certainly without any pain at heart. Thou knowest, Lord, that sin is our greatest curse; we would sooner suffer anything than sin, at least "when we are in our right mind we feel so. O God, deliver us from sin! At the very thought of its coming near to us we cry, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me;'" and we only find comfort in the blessed truth that Thou givest us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let that victory be very apparent, may it be very clear to our own consciousness, very much displayed in our lives. O God, help us to live towards Thee in all devotion, confidence, obedience, resignation and simple childlike trust. Help us to love Thee with all our heart and soul and mind. Enable us also to live to our fellow-men according to Thy Word, loving our neighbour as ourselves. Save us from all unneighbourly tempers, all hard thoughts, all slanderous words. Deliver us from bearing any anger in our heart: from everything that is ungenerous or unkind do Thou save us, and let the law of love be written on the fleshy tablets of our renewed heart, and be carried out in all the thoughts and words and acts of our lives. Especially help us to master our tongue, for if that be bridled the whole body will be manageable. Keep us, O God, when we are in company, and equally preserve us when we are in secret. Help us to keep the door of our lips; and grant that when that door is opened there may not come out of it sweet water and bitter: may we not both bless and curse, but may we speak that which is good to edification, and may our speech be also seasoned with salt.

Thus would we cry unto Thee after holiness. Thou knowest we do not expect to be saved by it; but we do look upon it as salvation to be saved from sin, to be delivered from corruption; to be emancipated from the bondage of the evil is the great thought of our spirit, and we look forward to heaven with this as one of its highest felicities, that we shall be without fault before the throne of God, and that nothing that defileth shall ever enter there. O Lamb of God, by whom we have been redeemed from sin and washed from uncleanness, wilt Thou graciously daily wash our feet that we may be clean every whit, and may enter in through the gates into the city, and be among those of whom it is written — 'They shall walk with Me in white for they are worthy' And at this hour, which is an hour of grace, we would ask Thee to help any of Thy children who are under bondage. If they have lost their hope, if their faith has become weak, if their love burns low, Lord, renew the youth of Thy people like that of the eagles; and let them mount up with eagles' wings and rise above their doubts, their deadness, and their care. Should any of Thy servants be in deep trouble, wilt Thou grant them grace to glory in tribulation also, because it worketh patience, experience, and hope. And may the Lord grant to all his tried and troubled ones, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Prosper Thy universal church. Send the preaching of the pure gospel again to the world. Silence the voices of those that are spreading infidelity and superstition: and may the day come when every pulpit shall resound with the pure gospel of Jesus Christ, and His people shall again return to their allegiance to the faith — the faith once delivered to the saints, never to swerve again.

O God, suffer us to intercede with Thee a moment for our unconverted ones. Give us to feel great sorrow and heaviness of heart for those who, as yet, are far off from God: Lord, bring them in. O God, awaken the careless and frivolous — there may be such here this morning, who have never given any solemn consideration to the matters of their soul. May they be awakened and aroused today; and while we set forth the way of salvation by grace, may they feel their need of it and be willing to accept it; and may the Lord save them this day. May any that are anxious, but are missing the mark, looking to themselves instead of to Christ, learn the way of life and run in it. Save them, O God; yea, save this people. Let all within the Tabernacle walls today be within the Temple gates above at the last. May every congregation of the faithful everywhere be under the Divine blessing.

Bless our country, we pray Thee, and we lift up again the voice of earnest prayer that peace may not be broken. Oh, let not bloodshed break forth in the midst of the continent; but may it please Thee to send wisdom to the counsellors of all nations, that by some means such a dreadful calamity may be avoided; and may He come who will end all danger of war, even the Prince of Peace Himself, in whose days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. The Lord hear us now; and forgive, and answer, and bless, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, and unto Israel's one God revealed to us in the Trinity of Mystic Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be glory by Christ Jesus. Amen, and Amen.

SERMON: No. 1410 (21 April 1878).

SCRIPTURE: Rom. 5, 6.

HYMNS: 911, 647, 646.

## Chapter 9. True Prayer—Heart Prayer

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### Chapter 9

#### True Prayer — Heart Prayer

'For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee'

(2 Samuel 7:27).

O Lord, our song reminds us of what we were, and, oh, we would begin our praise by the acknowledgment of our natural condition; we would remember the miry clay and the rock whence we were hewn, for we were 'by nature children of wrath even as others'.

Well do we remember when we felt this, and when the bitterness and gall were in our mouths, of which we had to drink both day and night. How heavy was the load of sin! All our thoughts were engrossed with that sense of pressure and of dread. We looked on the right hand and there was none, and on the left and we found no helper; but then Thou didst Thyself deliver us by leading us to cast a faith-look to the divine, only-begotten, and crucified Son. At this moment vividly is it upon our recollection how Thou didst bring us up out of the 'horrible pit': we remember now the new song which Thou didst put into our mouths as we found our feet fast on the rock and our goings established. It is long since then with some of us, but all the way has been strewn with mercies, and we desire this morning to record, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits'.

We thank Thee now, in the retrospect, for the trials which we have endured. Some of us have been brought very low with physical pain and mental weariness, and others have been sore smitten with bereavement, losses and crosses, and persecutions, but there is not one out of all our trials which we could have afforded to have been without. No, Lord, all has been ordered well, there was a need-be for every twig of the rod, and we desire now to thank Thee that we can see in looking back, how all things have even now worked together for good, though we know we cannot see the end as yet.

O Thou good God, Thou blessed God, like David we would fain sit down before Thee in silence and wait awhile, for our words when we do use them are totally inadequate to the expression of what we feel, much more of what we ought to feel concerning Thy goodness and Thy loving-kindness; yet we will bless Thy name with such language as we have. Jehovah, our God, let others worship whom they will and seek after what object of love they please, this God is our God for ever and ever, He shall be our guide even unto death. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Triune God of Israel, we express most solemnly the reverence we feel for Thee; and render to Thee our humble adoration as we acknowledge Thee to be the One and only God, by whom the heavens

and the earth were made, by whom all things consist, the Redeemer of Thy people, their Father and their Friend, for ever and ever! All our hearts worship Thee, O Thou glorious Lord! And truly since we have received so many mercies at Thy hand, we do feel that Thou wilt never forsake us, nor in any darkness which may be in our path in the future, wilt Thou desert Thine own. Thou hast done too much for us to desert us now. We have cost Thee so much — Oh, wondrous price that Thou hast paid for us - and Thou hast spent so much of wise thought, and gracious act upon us, that we are persuaded Thou wilt go through with the work which Thy wisdom has undertaken. But give us faith to believe this: when the stormy times come, let us not doubt, but what our Helmsman will bring us to the desired haven. Though winds and waves assault our keel, may we still find perfect peace and rest in the thought that He who is in the hinder part of the ship is Master of winds and waves. Comfort Thy children this morning, great Father, if any of them are in doubt just now; and bring them all into an assured confidence and perfect restfulness in the Lord their God.

Next, we would humbly entreat of Thee that we may each one be permitted to do some great service for Thee before we go hence: we do not mean great in the wisdom of our fellows, but let it be all that we can do. If we cannot build a house for Thee, yet have we set our hearts upon doing something; and if it be Thy will, direct our minds to what it shall be, lest our minds should not be Thy mind: but let not one of us be barren or unfruitful. If we have indeed been redeemed by the blood of Christ, may we reckon that we must live to Him; may the love of Christ constrain us, and may something come of our lives that shall be a blessing to the sons of men, ere we go hence. And our Father, while we offer this prayer, we will also pray with a deep gratitude for all Thy mercies: may they take possession of all our hearts that, as when David sat in his house of cedar he 'magnified the Lord', so may we also whenever things go smoothly with us. Lord, may the gratitude we feel prompt us to say again, 'What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits towards me?' Make every child of Thine here to be every day serving Thee; and serving Thee so that heaven's work may begin below, and something of heaven's pleasure may be enjoyed even now. But Lord, while we work for Thee, always keep us sitting at the feet of Jesus. Let our faith never wander away from the simplicity of its confidence in Him. Let our motive never be anything but His glory; may our hearts be taken up with His love, and our thoughts perpetually engaged about His person. Let us choose the good part which shall not be taken away — that if we serve with Martha we may also sit with Mary.

Let this church, Lord, receive a fresh anointing of the Holy Ghost, that all its members may be spending themselves for the Master. Wilt Thou quicken, we pray Thee, every agency; in all our Sabbath schools, may there be no lack of teachers, may our young friends find it a delight to be teaching the little ones; may there be even a superabundance of workers in this department. Let not anything flag to which the church has set her hand Prosper us in the education of our young men for the ministry! bless us, we pray Thee, with our dear orphan boys: may they, all of them, be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. Remember our colporteurs scattered about this country, and prosper them in their going from house to house with the Word of God, and may they be great soul-winners, all of them, that the Lord's name may be glorified. And all the thousand and one things which constitute the activities of the churches at large, do Thou bless and prosper them so far as they are according to Thy mind; and may it please Thee to give to the churches prayer in proportion to activity, and faith in proportion to zeal. O Lord! visit Thy church at this time, which is a time of peril, and in Thy mercy revive among us the love of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ.

Rebuke, we pray Thee, those who, with their philosophy and vain deceit, would mar and spoil the gospel of Jesus Christ. Grant that in all deliberations of any part of Thy church, which concern this great and grievous and crying evil, there may be decision and wisdom and help given, that all may be done and ordered to Thy glory.

Bless our nation, Lord, we pray Thee, and let the spirit of Christianity permeate it, enter into the high places, and flow down even to its darkest dens. And, we beseech Thee, let us have peace; may nothing happen to break it, may it be established on a firm and judicious footing, and for many a year may no sound of trumpet, or noise of cannon be heard throughout the whole earth. Let the people praise Thee, O God, and learn war no more! Let all the nations be blessed! May the gospel of Christ Jesus penetrate into the remotest regions, and where it is known may the power of it be felt far more.

Bless our brethren across the sea of another land, but who with the same tongue worship our Lord in spirit and in truth, and our brethren on the southern side of the globe, and all the scattered saints in every nation; visit them with the bedewing of the Holy Ghost, and make the gardens of the Lord amidst the desert to be green, and blossom as the rose. Now help us this morning, give to every one a sense of pardoned sin: forgive us, O Father, for Christ's sake! Give to each one of us also sanctifying power, that we may be cleansed from the influence of guilt. Give power in the delivery of the gospel. May the truth sink into the soul, and may this be a good and happy, devout and beneficial occasion to all of us here gathered. We ask it for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1412 (5 May 1878).

SCRIPTURE: 2 Samuel 7.

## Chapter 10. Distinction and Difference

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Distinction and Difference

'Ye have wearied the Lord with your words. Yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?'

'Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not'

(Malachi 2:17; Malachi 3:18).

Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. Thy people desire to set their seal to this, and to acknowledge that Thou art overflowing goodness. O Thou blessed God, Thou hast remembered both our temporal and our spiritual wants; Thou hast lifted us up from the gates of the grave, delivered our soul from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling. Thou hast dealt well with Thy servants, O Lord, according to Thy Word. There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, there is none that dealeth so bountifully; for as high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are His thoughts above our thoughts and His ways above our ways. Our soul, therefore, blesseth God the Lord, and all that is in us is stirred up His holy name to magnify and bless. 'Bless the Lord' is the utterance of our inmost soul this morning. 'From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, let the Lord's name be praised.' And now, Lord, Thou wilt listen to us while we confess before Thee how unworthy we have been of all Thy goodness; for we are a sinful generation, even as our fathers were. We have sinned times without number, and even those of us who are Thy people, and have been born into Thy house, we have even more than others to mourn over our sin, for Thou hast made us more sensible of it, and we have sinned against greater light, which we do sorrowfully confess. Our sins of pride, of unbelief, of hasty judgment of Thy providence, our neglect of searching into Thy mind in the Word, our neglect of possessing Thy mind in our daily life, our transgressions and our shortcomings make against us a great list of accusations. But we bless Thee that they will not stand as accusations; for, behold, none can lay anything to the charge of Thy people, seeing all was laid on Him upon whom the transgression of Thy people was laid of old by Thine own hand; and now, washed in His precious blood, and clothed in His matchless righteousness, we know that despite our faults we stand accepted in the Beloved, for which again we bless Thee. Deep down in our hearts shall the song

begin in humiliation of spirit because of our offences, but it shall rise to the very heights of heaven while with exultation we behold how we are 'raised up together and made to sit in the heavenly places', and are presented in Christ Jesus 'without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.'

Lord, we desire this morning to contemplate with admiration Thy ways toward us. Thou hast put some of us into the furnace. There is no child of Thine but knows something of the heat of the furnace, and we perceive that Thou art as a refiner unto us, and that the fire is meant to consume our dross and tin, therefore do we thank Thee for it For all the acts of discipline to which we are subject we would praise the wisdom and the love of our divine Father. Thou wouldst not have us live in sin; sin is much worse than furnace work. All the trial in the world is not so hard to carry as a sense of sin.

Lord, If Thou dost give us choice to keep our sins and to live in pleasure, or to have them burnt away with trial, we will say to Thee, Lord, give us the sanctified affliction, but deliver us from all the influences of sin, from every evil habit, from all the accretions of former sin, all the ore that is mixed with the precious metal, everything that diminishes the brightness of Thy grace in us, everything that keeps Thee from taking delight in us; take it away, we beseech Thee and if this life is to be to Thy people the crucible and the burning heat, even to a white heat, so let it be, so long as Thou dost sit at the furnace mouth to watch the ore that nothing should be lost. O blessed God, help any of Thy children that are in the midst of the heat now. Let them see the Lord sitting near and watching, and let them feel perfectly at ease, because in His hands all things must be well. And gracious God, we pray Thee, work in us, according to the chapter we have been reading, such a holy love to Thee, that we may render to Thee all that we have. We have sometimes said in our soul: 'Take not tithe, but take Thou all.' Keep us true to this. May we feel that we are 'not our own but bought with a price', and let this be no sentiment which ought to have power over us, but a real force which doth constrain us, because 'we thus judge that if one died for all, then all died, and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them and rose again.' We do pray for grace that we may spend all our time, every faculty, and all that we possess in glorifying our Lord and Master amongst the sons of men in.

'Works which perfect saints above And holy angels cannot do.'

This morning be pleased to accept the thanksgivings of Thy servants for any special mercies received, and especially of one who begs us to thank Thee for Thy grace and mercy extended to her and the fifty little ones with whom she was about to cross the sea. They went through fire and through water, but still Thou didst preserve them, and we pray God speed them on their way to the distant land: and bless that sister who spends her life in gathering the arabs of the street that she may take them to a land where they will be well cared for. O Lord, prosper her and all others that in any way seek the good of the poor and needy.

Bless, we pray Thee, all city missionaries, all visitors from house to house, all those who seek to reclaim fallen women, or waifs and strays among the children. Let the philanthropic work that is done in our city, ever be under Thine eye, and be upheld by Thy gracious hand. Our ragged schools, and especially our Sabbath schools, do Thou look upon with favour, and grant them ever to be a nursery for the Church of God. And the Lord bless all that in any way seek to make known the savour of the name of Jesus. Oh, give the humblest tongue that tells of Christ to speak with fire, and where the multitudes are gathered together, there give fervour and earnestness, sincerity

and depth of power to bring sinners to Jesus. 'Let the people praise Thee, O God, yea, let all the people Thee!'

Let our great cities be swept clean of vice and infidelity and superstition. Deliver our country villages and hamlets from the drunkenness and ignorance in which they dwell. Let the whole earth behold the brightness of the coming of the Lord. Let Jesus Christ reign from pole to pole until He Himself shall come openly and manifestly to take to Himself His great power, and all the kingdoms surrender themselves into His hands. And now, Father, save any in this house who remain unreconciled to their God. Touch now with Thy sacred finger some careless heart that may be using even the House of God as a place for the gratification of curiosity, desiring no spiritual gift whatsoever, yet wilt Thou be pleased to lay Thy hand upon that heart and make it feel that God is near, and may conscience say: 'Be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God hath come nigh unto you.' And, oh, that there might not be the power to put aside that kingdom, but may the conscience now be so touched and girded with strength that the will may submit, and the judgment yield, and the affections bow, that God may reign over many a heart which hitherto has been a rebellious province of His domain.

Again we say, 'Let the people praise Thee, O God, yea, let all the people praise Thee!' Save this assembly this day; let every one that is within these walls, or shall be here, be saved. And now may the good seed drop into furrows that shall welcome it, and from it may there spring a harvest to Thy glory, O Thou ever blessed, unto whose name be honour, world without end, through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1415 (19 May 1878).

SCRIPTURE: Malachi 2:17; Malachi 3:1-16.

HYMNS: 885, 714, 728.

## Chapter 11. Take Fast Hold

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### Chapter 11

Take Fast Hold 'Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go:

keep her; for she is thy life'

(Proverbs 4:13).

Blessed God, our heart doth praise Thee, our inmost soul exults in Thy name, for the Lord is good, and His mercy endureth for ever. Thy people praise Thee, O God, for all that Thou hast been unto them, and we can each one set forth Thy worthy praise by reason of our personal experience of Thy goodness.

Thou hast dealt well with Thy servants, O Lord, according unto Thy Word. We bless Thee for teaching us from our youth; for some of us have known Thee, even from our childhood, and Thy Word was precious to us even in our earlier days, when, like young Samuel, we were spoken to of the Lord. Now Thou hast borne and carried us these years in the wilderness with unchanging love and goodness, and there be some in Thy presence this morning who know that even to hoar hairs Thou art He - Thou hast made and Thou dost carry; Thou dost not forsake the work of Thine own hands.

'Thy mercy endureth for ever', and let Thy praise endure for ever also.

O Lord, we would cling to Thee more firmly than ever we have done: we would say, 'Return unto Thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee, for Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears and my feet from falling.' We would this morning 'take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord'. We would 'pay our vows unto the Lord now, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of all His people'. Blessed be the name of the Lord, we have been brought low, but the Lord hath helped us; we have oftentimes wandered, but He has restored us; we have been tried, but He has preserved us; yea, we have found His paths to be 'paths of pleasantness' and all the ways of His wisdom to be 'ways of peace'. We bear our willing witness to the testimony of the Lord, we set our seal that 'He is true' and we cry again, 'Bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords unto the horns of the altar.' From henceforth let no man trouble us, for we 'bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus'. We are His branded servants henceforth and for ever. Our ear is nailed to our Master's door-post, to go no more out for ever. And now, Lord, we beseech Thee, hear the voice of our cry. Thy people would first of all ask Thee to deepen in them all the good works of Thy grace. We do repent of sin — give us a deeper repentance! May we have a horror of it, may we dread the very approach of it, may we chastely flee from it and resolve, with sacred jealousy, that our hearts shall be for the Lord alone. We have faith in Jesus, blessed be Thy name, but oh, strengthen and deepen that faith! May He be all in all to us; may we never look elsewhere for ground of rest, but abide in Him with an unwavering, immutable confidence, that the Christ of God cannot fail nor be discouraged, but must for ever be

the salvation of His people. We trust we can say also that we love the Lord, but oh, that we loved Him more! Let this blessed flame feed on the very marrow of our bones. May the zeal of Thine house consume us; may we feel that we love the Lord with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, with all our strength, and hence may there be about our life a special consecration, an immovable dedication unto the Lord alone.

O Lord Jesus, deepen in us our knowledge of Thee. 'Thou hast made the first lines of Thy likeness upon our character; go on with this work of sacred art till we shall be like Thee in all respects. We wish that we had greater power in private prayer, that we were oftener wrestling with the covenant angel. We would that the Word of God were more sweet to us, more intensely precious, that we had a deeper hunger and thirst after it. Oh that our knowledge of the truth were more clear and our grip of it more steadfast. Teach us, O Lord, to know the reason of the hope that is in us, and to be able to defend the faith against all corners. Plough deep in us, great Lord, and let the roots of Thy grace strike into the roots of our being, until it shall be no longer I that live, but 'Christ that lives in me'.

Holiness also of life we crave after. Grant that our speech, our thoughts, our actions, may all be holiness, and 'holiness unto the Lord'. We know that there be some that seek after moral virtue apart from God. Let us not be of their kind, but may our desire be that everything should be done as unto the Lord, for Thou hast said, 'Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.' Help us so to do, to have no master but our God, no law but His will, no delight but Himself. Oh, take these hearts, most glorious Lord, and keep them, for 'out of them are the issues of life', and let us be the instruments in Thy hand, by daily vigilance, of keeping our hearts, lest in heart we go astray from the Lord our God.

Until life's latest hour may we keep the sacred pledges of our early youth. We do remember when we were baptized into the sacred Name - Oh, never may we dishonour that sacred ordinance by which we declared that we were dead to the world and buried with Christ. Some of us do remember our early covenant with God, when we made over to Him ourselves and all that we had. Oh, in life's last hour when we bow ourselves for weakness, may it be to bless that sacred bond and to 'enter into the joy of our Lord'. And if Thou hast taught us anything since then, if Thou hast given us any virtue or any praise, may we hear Thee say, 'Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.' Oh, let no brother or sister become distinguished in grace and then decline, let none bear fruit and afterwards become barren; but may our path 'shine more and more unto the perfect day'. It is this our spirit craveth after with strong desire, that the whole of our life from the commencement with Christ to its ending with our being with Christ, may glorify and bring help to His Church. And now hear Thou us again while we cry unto Thee. Our chief desire is for Thy cause in the earth. We are often very heavy about it. The days seem to us to be neither dark nor light, but mingled; oh that the element of light might overcome the darkness! We do pray Thee, raise up in these days a race of men that shall know the gospel and hold it fast. We do feel that we have so much superficial religion, so much profession without true possession to back it up. O Lord, may our churches be built with precious stones, and not with wood, hay, and stubble. May we ourselves so know the gospel that no one can beat us out of it; may we so hold it that our faces shall be like flints against the errors of the age, so practise it that our lives shall be an argument that none can answer, for the power of the gospel of Jesus. And with this be pleased to grant to Thy churches more power over the sons of men. O Lord, make Thy ministers throughout all the

world to be more fruitful in soul winning. Let us not rest without sowing the good seed beside all waters. Forgive us our coldness and indifference; forgive us that we sleep as do others, for it is high time for us to awake out of sleep

O Lord, do help us to live while we live; shake us clear of these cerements,<sup>1</sup> these grave clothes, which cling to us; say to us, most blessed Jesus, what Thou saidst concerning Lazarus of old, 'Loose him, and let him go.' May we get right away from the old death and the old lethargy, and live under the best conditions of life, diligently serving God. Convert the nations, we pray Thee! Help our dear brethren who stand far out in the thick heathen darkness, like lone sentinels; let them bear their witness well, and may the day come when the Christian church shall become a missionary church, when all over the world those that love Christ shall be determined that He shall conquer. Thou hast not yet made the church 'terrible as an army with banners:' would God she were. May those days of Christian earnestness come to us, and then shall we look for the latter day of glory. And now, Father, save any in this house that remain unconverted. May this day be the day of their salvation. We would most earnestly entreat that some word may drop into the most careless heart; and this prayer especially, convert this day in this house of prayer, if it may please Thee, some that shall be very earnest Christians in years to come; take hold today of some whom Thou hast ordained to be like Paul, who shall be missionaries to the ends of the earth! Take hold of some that are specially set against Thee, some that are very bold spirits even in sin, thorough-hearted in their wickedness — convert such now! Say unto them, 'See I have made thee a chosen vessel to bear my name unto the Gentiles', and may there come such power with it that they may not be disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Thy Church needs such men. Oh that such were brought out today! We put it up as a prayer to be registered in heaven, and we mean to look for its answer, that Thou wouldst today take hold of some men that shall become afterwards leaders in the church of God, this day striking them down with the sense of sin and leading them to Christ. The Lord bless our country. God save the Queen. Keep us in peace, we beseech Thee and in times of congress and deliberation may there sit; in the council chamber One higher than the kings of the earth, and greater than the ambassadors thereof. Oh that long-continued peace might: happen to this poor earth, for its wounds are many. Behold, how all things languish for the lack of peace -the Lord send it. Quicken trade and commerce, remove the complaining that is now heard in our streets. Kindly consider us in the matter of the weather, that the harvests may not be spoiled, and bless the people, O Lord. Let the people praise Thee, and 'then shall the earth yield her increase. 'The Lord grant all this, with the forgiveness of sin, the acceptance of our person, and assist us ever to live to His glory, for Jesus's sake. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1418 (9 June 1878).

SCRIPTURE: Prov. 4.

HYMNS: 560, 632, 684.

## Chapter 12. Trust and Pray

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### Chapter 12

#### Trust and Pray

'For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem:

thou shalt weep no more: he will be very

gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry;

when he shall hear it, he will answer thee'

(Isaiah 30:19).

O Lord God, the strength and the hope of Thy people, we would approach Thee through Jesus Christ Thy Son with notes of thanksgiving, for we are not ashamed of our hope, neither has our confidence led us into confusion. We have proven it to be true, that they that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which can never be moved, which abideth for ever.

We trusted in Thee with regard to our innumerable sins, and Thou hast cast them behind Thy back. We trusted in Thee, yea, we trusted in Thee when many evils compassed us about, and we were sore beset with temptation and Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place: Thou didst set our feet upon a rock and establish our goings. We trusted in Thee, alas! too feebly, in the hour of our distress 'when we were troubled exceedingly with earthly things, still Thou didst not fail us though our faith trembled: though we believed not Thou didst abide faithful. The Lord hath helped His people, yea the Lord hath been the strength and the help of His chosen. 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all', and at this moment, in looking back upon the past, we have nothing to do but to admire and to adore the constancy of love, the faithfulness of grace.

We thank Thee, O God, on the behalf of many of Thy people, our brethren, that Thou hast dealt so well with them. We knew them many years ago when their young hearts first believed in Thee, and here they are still the living, the living in Zion, to praise Thee as they do this day. Their feet have sometimes almost gone, their steps have well nigh slipped, but Thou hast held them up, and they are walking in their integrity, preserved as only grace could preserve them, living still to praise Thy name. We bless Thee on the behalf of the much tried among Thy children. They went through fire and through water; men did go over their heads, yet hast Thou preserved them. Their hope seemed to wither like the fading leaf, and the summer of their joy turned into a bleak winter of adversity, yet hath the spring time come to them and the time of the singing of birds; yea, they begin to pluck their first ripe fruits, and they joy and exult in the Lord.

O Lord, we praise Thee for keeping alive a testimony for the truth in the land. There have been dark and evil days, and some that professed to be Thy servants have turned traitors to the gospel; yet still Thou hast heard the cry of the faithful, and the candle is not put out, neither hath the sun

gone down, but even unto this day the Lord, the God of Israel reigneth in the midst of His people and His saints exult in His name. And now with this thankfulness upon our hearts, we would humbly ask Thee to strengthen us as to our future confidence in Thee. Are there any of Thy servants here at this time, or anywhere all over the world, whose confidence begins to fail them by reason of present affliction or deep depression of spirit? We beseech Thee, strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die; and let their faith no longer waver, but may they become strong in the Lord in full assurance of faith. O God, thou knowest the burden of every heart before Thee, the secret sighing of the prisoner cometh up into Thine ears.

Some of us are in perplexity, others are in actual suffering of body. Some are sorely cast down in themselves, and others deeply afflicted with the trials of those they love, but as for all these burdens our soul would cast them on the Lord - in quietness and confidence shall be our strength, and we would this morning, all without exception who are tried and troubled, take up the place of sitting still, leaving with quiet acquiescence everything in the hands of God. Great Helmsman, Thou shalt steer the ship and we will not be troubled. By Thy grace we will leave everything most sweetly in Thy hands. Where else should these things be left? and we will take up the note of joyous song in anticipation of the deliverance which will surely come.

Save Thy people from unbelief, save them from confidence in the creature. Bring us one and all to be as to the world even as a weaned child. May we have done with these things, and as to Thee, O Lord, may we with strong desire seek after yet more of Thee, and cling to Thee as our sure confidence for evermore. As for the future, we desire to bless Thy name that Thou hast covered it from our eyes, nor would we wish to lift even a corner of the veil which hides from us the things that are to be, but we delight to feel that He who hast ruled all things for our good changeth not. It may be Thou hast appointed for us great torrents of tribulation, but Thou wilt be with us if we pass through the river. Perhaps Thou wilt permit us to go through blazing fires of persecution or temptation, but we shall not be burned, for Thou hast assured us it shall be so, that we shall go through the fires unhurt since Thou wilt be with us.

Peradventure it is written in the tablets of Thine eternal purpose that we shall soon end this mortal life and die. Well, be it so, we shall the sooner see Thy face, the sooner drink eternal draughts of bliss. But if Thou hast appointed for us grey hairs and a long and weary time of the taking down of the tabernacle, only grant us grace that by infirmity our faith may never fail us, but when the windows are darkened may we still look out to see the hope that is to be revealed; and when the grasshopper becometh a burden still let our strength be as our days, even to the last day.

We now commit ourselves again to Thy keeping, O faithful Creator; to Thy keeping, O Saviour of the pierced hand; to Thy keeping, O eternal Spirit, Thou who art able to keep us from falling and sanctify us fully that we may be made to stand among the saints in light. O God, we can trust Thee, and we do. Our faith has gathered strength by the lapse of years. Each following birthday, we trust, confirms us in the fact that to rely upon God is our happiness and our strength, and we will do so, though the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. We will not fear since God abideth fast for ever, and His covenant cannot fail. And now today, wilt Thou lead others to trust Thee. Oh, be Thou so revealed wherever the congregations are met together, that men may come to Thee and live. Oh that the people in this house this morning, might not one of them go away unbelievers. If they have been indifferent to these things and have

never studied the ground of the believer's confidence, may they see it clearly this morning, and accept of it as the rock on which they shall build. Oh if there be in this audience, as we fear there must be, many that are living to trust in their wealth, or their talents, or their position in life, or who are trusting in nothing but raising their building without a foundation at all, Oh bring them this day to see that there is nothing worthy of an immortal soul's confidence except the immortal and everliving God, and this day come by Christ Jesus unto the Father. May many a heart end all its weary wanderings and sit still at Christ's feet and see the salvation of God.

God bless our country! May faith be multiplied in the land! Preserve our nation at this juncture. Guide, we pray Thee, the deliberations of councillors and princes. May peace be preserved, and at the same time may the great purposes of God with regard to the spread of liberty and of the gospel be subserved by every decree of the council. O God, we beseech Thee, ease the world of the sway of every evil principle. Let the day come when all classes of men shall study the interest of others as well as their own, when the various nations shall yield to the one sceptre of Christ and like kindred tribes shall melt into one. Yea, hasten His coming and His reign when the shout shall go up to heaven that the 'Lord God omnipotent reigneth'. As Thou bidst us, we pray for all in authority over us, especially asking that every blessing may rest upon the Queen. We pray for other nations also, and especially for countries and colonies where our language is spoken and our God is worshipped — may the Lord's choicest blessings rest there.

We also put up special prayer for any of our dear friends that are in trouble, asking Thee to help some who have been suffering bitter bereavement, others who are vexed with sickness in their own persons. The Lord be pleased to be gracious unto all who trust Him, and to make them trust Him in the darkest hour. And now, unto the Father, the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Israel's one God, be glory throughout all the world. Amen and Amen.

SERMON: No. 1419 (16 June 1878).

SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 30.

HYMNS. 125, 747.

## Chapter 13. King and Priest

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### Chapter 13

#### King and Priest

'Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both'

(Zechariah 6:13).

Glorious God, it is the flower of our being to worship Thee: this is the crown and glory of life, to adore and worship the Life-giver from whom all good things come. Worship hath often been to us as a bath in heavenly pleasure, and we have come out of it refreshed and comforted, blessed, and filled with heavenly delight. Oh, for the Holy Spirit's power to help us in worship now! Breathe upon us, O Divine Spirit, and let that breath cause us to forget the world, but bring us into the fullest life in the contemplation of God and heaven.

Blessed God, Father, Son, and Spirit, our whole spirit would reverence Thee, yet would we have such knowledge of Thy goodness that we might not be over awed with Thy greatness; such a sense of Thy nearness in the person of Jesus Christ the Man, the Branch, that we might not be driven away with terror, but may be drawn near with filial love and holy boldness. Lord, there was once a great gulf between us, but Thou hast bridged that gulf, for now the Lord Jesus Christ is brother to our souls, yet is He Son of the Highest; truly man, yet truly God, He is the Interpreter, one of a thousand, the Daysman, who doth this day lay His hand upon us both. Oh, how we joy in Christ, and Thou dost joy in Him too. We long to glorify Him, and Thou dost delight to glorify Thy Son. We would set Him on high, and Thou hast set Him 'far above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named'.

Now this day we pray Thee, 'behold our Shield and look upon the face of Thine Anointed;' and while we shelter behind Him as a shield, let Him stand for us, and let the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ be seen, that Thou mayest be precious to us unworthy ones.

But, O Lord, we worship with all our heart and adore the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and O most blessed Lamb of God, with all the saints before the throne, we pay Thee reverence - casting all that we have before Thee.

Crowns we have none, not even of silver and gold, but such as Thou hast graciously given, we would willingly lay at Thy feet, content to feel that everything is ours when it is Thine, and the more

ours when we have yielded it up to Thee. We wish we could live for Jesus wholly, that there were no distractions, no secondary channels into which the stream of life could flow, but that as He is all to us, so all of us might be unto Him alone. And now we present ourselves before the Throne of God, in the name of Jesus Christ our great High Priest. And first, we ask for pardon through the blessed blood.

Some of us Thou hast already pardoned: give us a new sense of it. Continue to pardon us; let us feel as if we came every day to the 'fountain filled with blood', and as if the washing were every day new. But, oh, have pity upon some that have never been pardoned. Hear the cry of sinners as they seek Thy face, and wherever there is a penitent spirit be pleased speedily to send it relief, and let forgiveness of sin be felt wherever the burden of sin weighs down the spirit.

Next would we ask Thee to subdue our iniquities. Lord, conquer the power of sin in all of us. Grant us power to live above it; let not the passions of the flesh, nor the lustings of the mind, bring the spirit into subjection; but may our spirit rule over mind and body; and may Christ rule over our spirit, and so may we know the 'liberty wherewith Christ makes us free'.

Next we ask for perfect consecration, that everything we are and have may be the Lord's, not in name, but in deed and in truth. And then we ask for fruitfulness. Oh, help us to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit to the glory of God. May our character get more beautiful every day. If there are any traces of Christ's artistic work upon us, may He go on with that Divine pencil until He shall have produced in us a perfect character, and we shall be among men copies of the perfectness of our Master.

O Lord, we do ask Thee to make us fit for heaven. We hope it is not long before we shall be there. We have sometimes had glimpses between the gates of pearl; we have had such foretastes of the 'place prepared', that sometimes we are in haste to be gone; the flavour of the grapes of Eschol is in our mouths, and we long to be where all the clusters grow. But we are conscious of unfitness for that state as yet. Oh, go on most blessed Spirit, with Thy patient work, until Thou shalt have made us heavenly, and then we shall be caught up to the heavenly places, to see the face of our Beloved.

Yet let not all Thy saints be gone as yet. Spare us some, we pray Thee, to build up Thy church below; for that they should abide with us is expedient for our weakness — that they may help us, that they may be to us instead of eyes, for they know where to encamp in the wilderness. Thou hast taught them experimentally Thy Word, and filled them with an unction from the Holy One, and, therefore, for our sakes let not Thy saints be hastened home for a while. We breathe this prayer with bated breath, because there is One who prays against us, whose prayer must always have the first reply; it is even He, the Well Beloved, whom our ears can hear saying at this moment: 'Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am.' O Lord Jesus, take us whensoever Thou wilt!

Now, standing thus before the throne of God without fear, we would humbly ask Thee to bless our country. Oh, that Thou wouldst look upon this nation which has sorely sinned, which has turned away from the path of peace to seek the ways of glory and of blood. O Lord, be pleased to turn its course aright again. We beseech Thee bring us out of the disasters which we have been made to suffer, and let the nation lie penitent at the feet of God. Oh, that the Christian party in this realm

might prevail - that the Church of God might have a little influence over the worldly mass. Oh, that the time were come when the salt shall more completely savour all the masses, and the glorious leaven shall work until all the measures of meal are leavened.

We do ask Thee, Lord, to give power to truth, to righteousness, to godliness, to peace, and to every other principle which is favoured of the Lord of heaven; and let this land be delivered from the curse of the Papacy, from all the incoming both of rationalism and ritualism; and let the truth as it is in Jesus prevail, not only here but everywhere, till the whole 'earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.'

Bless other nations also, we pray Thee, and the church of God in every land. For the saints of every tongue we pray, especially for those of our own kith and kin, scattered across the ocean hither and thither.

Make the whole of Thy people to be full of life and vigour, and may the day come when the missionary spirit shall be more fully caught by the church at home, and they that have gone forth shall bring tens of thousands to be built into the temple of God.

O Lord, we wait upon Thee now, and ask the overshadowing of Thy presence! Jesus of Nazareth, pass by just now! Divine Spirit, rest upon us now! Holy Father, look upon Thy children now, and make this place to be glorious at this good hour! We ask it in the name of the Well Beloved. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1495 (21 September 1879).

SCRIPTURE: Psalms 110; Zechariah 6:9-15; Ephesians 2:11-22.

HYMNS: 154, 419, 395.

## Chapter 14. The Sin of Mistrust of God

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### Chapter 14

#### The Sin of Mistrust of God

'And the Lord said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke Me? and how long will it be ere they believe Me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?'

(Numbers 14:11).

Our Father, blessed be the grace and love which have taught us to use that dear familiar name — 'Our Father, which art in heaven', and therefore highest and most exalted, and worthy to be breathed with awe and reverence by all that draw near to Thee.

'Hallowed be Thy Name.' Oh, that all the earth would ever reverence it. As for ourselves, enable us by Thy grace to use it with awe and trembling; and may a consideration of the glorious character which is intended by Thy gracious name, ever lay us in the very dust before Thee, and yet lift us up with holy joy and with an unwavering confidence. We come before Thee this morning through Christ Jesus to express our entire confidence in Thee. We believe that Thou art, and that Thou art the rewarder of them that diligently seek Thee.

Glorious Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, Thou hast not changed: Thou art still a covenant God, and Thou keepest that covenant to all Thy people; neither dost Thou permit a single word of it to fall to the ground. All Thy promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus to Thy glory by us, and we believe those promises will be fulfilled in every jot and tittle: not one of them shall want its mate, not one of them shall fall to the ground like the frivolous words of men. Hast Thou said and wilt Thou not do it? Hast Thou commanded and shall it not come to pass? We are utterly ashamed and full of confusion, because we have to confess that we have doubted Thee. Many of our actions have been atheistic. We have lived at times as if there were no God.

Lord, forgive us that death in life, in which so many of our years were spent, when we found something in the world apart from Thee, and were content with the things of the hour, the vile shadows, transient gusts of things which truly are not, for Thou alone art all in all. We have repented, as Thou knowest, through Thy grace, most bitterly of that time of death in which we tried to live; and now Thou hast given us to see our pardon in the wounds of Jesus, and our soul doth put her trust in Him. God incarnate is the ground of our hope that we are accepted and forgiven, notwithstanding that previous life of ours. But Lord, the worst of it is, that in many of our actions, even since then, we betray a disbelief of Thee. Like the children of Israel in the wilderness, Thou mayest well say of us, 'How long will it be ere they believe Me, though I have shewn all my signs and wonders among them?' O God, Thou hast been very faithful to Thy servants till now. In no one

instance is there a breach of promise. Thou hast tried us as silver is tried, but in very faithfulness Thou hast afflicted us. Thou hast brought us very low indeed, but underneath us have still been the everlasting arms. Thou hast brought us into the wilderness, but Thou hast furnished a table for us in the presence of our enemies.

Thou hast made us to see the end of all perfection, but Thy love, even then, has been perfected — perfected in our weakness. Thou art all goodness, and truth, and grace, and loving-kindness; and therefore blessed be Thy name for ever and ever. And now blot out the sin of Thy servants. Once again let this unbelief of ours be forgiven, and let us stand, with no sin upon the conscience, but absolved through Jesu's blood, in the enjoyment of such confidence with Thee, that we may lift up our face without a cloud, and may trust in Thee henceforth without a doubt, and go on our way rejoicing whatever that way may be.

Lord, teach us to be resigned to Thy will; teach us to delight in Thy law; teach us to have no will but Thy will; teach us to be sure that everything Thou doest is good — is the very best that can be done. Help us to leave our concerns in Thy divine hands, being persuaded that Thou hast sway even over evil; that out of it Thou bringest good, and better still, and better still in infinite progression, till Thy high purposes shall develop in Thine own perfect glory, and in the perfect bliss of all them that put their trust in Thee. Are any of Thy servants this morning in great trial? Lord help them. Whatever they fail in, let them not fail in faith. May we scorn to doubt our God, Oh, let not the devil get so much power over us as to cause us to mistrust the Eternal, who must not be mistrusted; but may we glorify Thee. May we snatch the great opportunities of glorifying Thee which troubles and trials bring, and count ourselves to have a high talent committed to us when we have the opportunity of showing our conquest of self and our glorying in God in the time of trial. The Lord bless His people here with Abrahamic faith, which staggers not at the promise through unbelief.

O God, have mercy upon the unbelievers that are here this morning, who have heard Thy Word, and who profess to believe in the inspiration of Thy sacred Book, and yet have never come and put their confidence in Christ. We know that they are condemned already, because they have not believed upon the Son of God. But, oh! deliver them from this great sin, and may they come at this very hour, and cast their helpless souls upon Him on Whom Thou hast laid our help. May they begin to believe this morning, and then they shall begin to live; and Thou wilt breathe peace into such, and Thou wilt give them rest, and strength, and holiness, and they shall be more than conquerors if they will but believe their God.

O Lord, we beseech Thee, save our unconverted friends and neighbours from this gall of bitterness, this horrible yoke of iniquity which consists in disbelieving God and His Christ.

And, then, deliver any of Thy children that have backslidden, and have got into a state of misbelief. May they be brought back; may they come with weeping and lamentation, and again trust the ever-blessed Father; and may our confidence become strong that our peace may be like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea.

God bless this beloved church! Give to it more faith: may the prayers that go up before Thee be salted with faith: when we preach, may we preach in faith, and may all that is done of the brotherhood for Christ, be done in simple confidence in God. We know that if we believe not we

shall never be established. We cannot expect to see result from our service except it is done in faith; for Thou hast said 'According to thy faith be it unto thee. 'O give the thousands of members of this church the childlike simplicity that never thinks of doubting God, but may we go forward — in all weakness made strong by the strength of the Mighty God of Jacob.

Give a blessing this morning, we pray Thee, to us all; may we make a distinct advance in the divine life; may we get to a higher platform; may we leave the mists of doubt and fear below us in the valley, and quit the marshes of the plain, and climb the glittering hill-tops of eternal security in Christ and blessed oneness with Him, by simply believing Him who cannot lie — who hath sworn by two immutable things and cannot from His purpose turn, nor from His Word draw back. O God, grant this faith to the entire church.

We believe the world will be brought in, when the church believes her God: the Kingdom will come, and the glory shall be made visible to all flesh, when once we have the confidence we ought to have in Him who is worthy to be praised, and to be trusted evermore. And now by the precious blood of Jesus accept this feeble prayer of ours, and send down a shower of benedictions; and to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1498 (5 October 1879).

SCRIPTURE: Numbers 13:20-23; Numbers 14:1-25; Hebrews 3:7-19.

HYMNS: 192, 239, 670.

## Chapter 15. The Foot Washing

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### Chapter 15

#### The Foot-Washing

'Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded'

(John 13:3-5)

O Jehovah, our God, Thou lovest Thy people. Thou hast placed all the saints in the hand of Jesus, and Thou hast given Jesus to be to them a Leader, a Commander, and a Husband; and we know that Thou delightest to hear us cry on the behalf of Thy church, for Thou carest for Him, and Thou art ready to grant to Him according to the covenant provisions which Thou hast laid up in store for Christ Jesus.

Therefore would we begin this morning's prayer, by entreating Thee to behold and visit the vine, and the vineyard which Thy right hand hath planted. Look upon

Zion the city of our solemnities; look upon those whom Thou hast chosen from before the foundation of the world, whom Christ hath redeemed with blood, whose hearts He has won and holds, and who are His own though they be in the world.

Holy Father, keep Thy people we beseech Thee, for Jesus' sake: though they are in the world let them not be of it; but may there be a marked distinction between them and the rest of mankind. Even as their Lord was 'holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners', so may it be with believers in Christ. May they follow Him; and may they not know the voice of strangers, but come out from the rest, that they may follow Him without the camp.

We cry to Thee this morning for the preservation of Thy church in the world, and especially for her purity. O Father, keep us, we beseech Thee, with all keeping, that the Evil One touch us not. We shall be tempted, but let him not prevail against us. In a thousand ways he will lay snares for our feet, but, oh, deliver us as a bird from the snare of the fowler. May the snare be broken that we may escape.

Let not the church suffer dishonour at any time, but may her garments be always white. Let not such as come in among her, that are not of her, utterly despoil her. O Christ, as Thou didst groan concerning Judas, so may Thy children cry to Thee concerning any that have fallen aside into crooked ways, lest the cause of Christ in the earth should be dishonoured. O God, cover we beseech Thee, with Thy feathers, all the people of Christ and keep Thy church even until He shall come who, having loved His own that were in the world, loveth them even to the end.

We would each one of us ask this morning that we may be washed as to our feet: we trust Thou hast bathed us once for all in the sin-removing fountain. Thou hast also washed us in the waters of regeneration, and given us the renewing of our minds through Jesus Christ. But oh, for daily cleansing! Dost Thou see any fault in us? — oh, we know that Thou dost wash us that we may be clean. Are we deficient in any virtue? Oh, supply it, that we may exhibit a perfect character, to the glory of Him who hast made us anew in Christ Jesus. Or, is there something that would be good, carried to excess? Be pleased to modify it lest one virtue should slaughter another, and we should not be the image of Christ completely. O Lord and Master, Thou who didst wash Thy disciples' feet of old, still be very patient toward us, very condescending towards our provoking faults, and go on with us, we pray Thee, till Thy great work shall be completed, and we shall be brethren of the First-born, like unto Him.

Gracious Master, we wish to conquer self in every respect; we desire to live for the glory of God and the good of our fellow men. We would have it true of us as of our Master, 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save.' Wilt Thou enable us especially to overcome the body with all its affections and lusts; may the flesh be kept under; let no appetite of any kind, of the grosser sort, prevail against our manhood, lest we be dishonoured and unclean. And let not even the most refined power of the natural mind be permitted to come so forward as to mar the dominion of the Spirit of God within us.

Oh, help us not to be so easily moved, even by pain: may we have much patience; and let not the prospect of death ever cause us any fear, but may the Spirit get the mastery of the body. We know nothing can hurt the true man — the inner, new born, cannot be smitten; nor is it to die: it is wholly incorruptible, and liveth and abideth for ever in the life that is in Christ Jesus.

Oh, for a complete conquest of self: especially render us insensible to praise, lest we be too sensitive to censure. Let us reckon that to have the approbation of God, and of our own conscience, is quite enough; and may we be content, gracious God, to hear the cavillings of unreasonable men; yea, and to hear the misrepresentations of our own brethren. Those that we love, if they love not us, yet may we love them none the less; and if by mistake they misjudge us, let us have no hard feelings towards them: and God grant we may never misjudge one another. Doth not our Judge stand at the door!

Oh, keep us like little children who do not know, but expect to know hereafter, and are content to believe things which they do not understand. Lord keep us humble, dependent, yet serenely joyful. May we be calm and quiet even as a weaned child; yet may we be earnest and active.

O Saviour, make us like Thyself; we wish not so much to do, as to be. If Thou wilt make us to be right, we shall do right. We have often to put a constraint upon ourselves to be right; but oh, that we were like Thee, Jesus, so that we had but to act out ourselves to act out perfect holiness. We

shall never rest till this is the case, till Thou hast made us to be inwardly holy; and then words and actions must be holy as a matter of course.

Now here we are, Lord, and we belong to Thee. We caught at that word as we read it —'Having loved His own.' Oh, it is because we are Thine own that we have hope. Thou wilt make us worthy of Thee. Thy possession of us is our hope of perfection. Thou dost wash our feet because we are Thine own. Oh, how sweet is the mercy which first took us to its heart, and made us all its own, and now continues to deal tenderly with us that, being Christ's own, we may have that of Christ within us which all may see and which proves us to be the Lord's.

Now this morning, we would bring before Thee all Thy saints, and ask Thee to attend to their trials and troubles. Some we know here are afflicted in person, others are afflicted in their dear friends; some are afflicted in their temporal estate, and are brought into sore distress. Lord, we do not know the trials of all Thy people, but Thou dost; for Thou art the Head, and the pains of all the members are centred in Thee. Help all Thy people even to the end.

Now we pray Thee to grant us the Sabbath blessing which we have already sought; and let it come upon all the churches of our beloved country. May the Lord revive true and undefiled religion here, and in all the other lands where Christ is known and preached: and let the day come when heathendom shall become converted, when the crescent of Mohammed shall wane into eternal night, and when she that sitteth on the Seven Hills, and exalteth herself in the place of God, shall be cast down to sink like a millstone in the flood. Let the blessed gospel of the Eternal God prevail: let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Oh, that we may live to see that day! The Lord bless our country: have pity upon it in all its present afflicted condition. God bless her Majesty the Queen with every mercy and blessing. Grant that there may be, in Thine infinite wisdom, a change in the state of trade and commerce, that there may be no complaint and distress.

Oh, let the people see Thy hand, and understand why it is laid upon them, that they may turn from wrongdoing, and seek righteousness and follow peace. The Lord hear us as, in secret, we often cry to Thee on behalf of our beloved land: the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon it yet again, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1499 (12 October 1879).

SCRIPTURE: John 13:1-17.

HYMNS: 186, 262, 263.

## Chapter 16. The Life Look

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### Chapter 16

#### The Life Look

'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life'

(John 3:14-15).

Our Father, we wish this morning to come to Thee anew in Christ Jesus. Many of us can look back to the happy moment when first we saw the law fulfilled in Christ, wrath appeased, death destroyed, sin forgiven, and our souls saved. Oh, it was a happy morning — a blessed time. Never did the sun seem to shine so brightly as then, when we beheld the Sun of Righteousness, and basked in His light.

Many days have passed since then with some of us, and every day we have had proofs of the faithfulness of God to the gospel of His Son. We have proved the power of Jesus' blood for daily cleansing; we have proved the power of His Divine Spirit for daily teaching, guidance, and sanctification; and now we want no other rock to build upon than that which we have built upon; we desire no other hope, nor even to dream of any other, but that hope which Thou hast set before us in the gospel, to which hope we have fled for refuge, and which hope we still have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. But Lord, we would still begin again this morning by looking unto Jesus Christ anew — whatever may be our sin, whatever Thy pure and holy eye can see amiss in us, which we cannot see: we desire to come to Jesus as sinners, guilty, lost, ruined by nature, and again to give the faith look, and to behold Him hanging on the cross for us.

Thou knowest with what heartiness, and depths of truthfulness, we can say, 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief' We again declare that all our hope is centred in the atoning Sacrifice, and in the risen Saviour, who has gone into the glory as the testimony of our justification, and of our acceptance in Him. Oh, dear Saviour, if in the course of years we have tried to add anything to the one foundation, if unconsciously we are relying now upon our knowledge, our experience, our Christian effort, we desire to clear away all this heap of rags and get down on the foundation again. None but Jesus! None but Jesus! Our soul rests in none but Jesus; and we hate and loathe, with our inmost nature, the very idea of adding anything to what He has finished, or attempting to complete what is perfect in Him.

Oh, this morning let Thy people feel that there is now no condemnation to them. Let them feel the completeness of the washing Christ has given, the blessed fulness of the righteousness which Christ has imputed, the eternal vitality of that life with which Christ has endowed us, the

indissoluble character of that union by which we are knit to Christ by ties that never can be broken; and may we today rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh; and do Thou write upon our hearts these blessed words, 'Filled with all the fulness of God', and may we know it is so, that we have all that we can hold; and may we be praying to be enlarged, that we may take in even more of Christ than we have as yet received; for He is all ours, altogether ours, and ours world without end. And now, Lord, we beseech Thee to help all in this house to look to Jesus Christ alone. Peradventure some backsliders here are questioning whether they ever did believe in Jesus. May they leave that question alone and believe in Him now. May they be content to let the past go by the wall, and once for all come, if they never did come, and embrace the Saviour whom Thou, great God, hast set forth as all-sufficient to save. Let Peter weep bitterly, but let him come to his Master again. Oh, let the most wandering cry to Thee, and may they look to Thy holy temple; and as they look, let the eternal life stream into them again, by the energy of the Eternal Spirit; and may they feel that whatever may have been the past, they are restored like prodigal children to a feast of love, restored for ever to the Father's house.

There may be some here that are so tossed about mentally, that are so dismayed with inward temptation, so out of their wits by the assaults of Satan, that they know not what to do. Lord, when they have no wit, give them wit enough to trust Christ; and when they can do nothing else, may they faint away upon the bosom of Eternal Love. The Lord help His servants, when they are in extremity, to feel that now is the time for God to begin; and when they are driven over the very verge of hope, and the precipice of despair is before them, oh, grant them grace to fall into the arms of Jesus, and there shall they find life from the dead. But oh, look in great mercy upon the many that may be here, who never have believed in Jesus.

O Strong Son of God, Immortal Love, whom, though we have not seen Thy face, we do believe in, and rely upon, ride forth this morning with Thine arrows clipped in Thine own blood, and shoot them out amongst this audience, that the people may fall under them, wounded with the sense of sin, smitten even to self-despair with a consciousness of guilt: and, oh, that they might get healing from the hands that wound them, may they get life from the hand that kills their hope. May they look to Thee, anointed of the Lord, ennobled in the highest heaven, who once received the sinner here below in Thine own Person, and who still receiveth sinners: oh, that they might come to Thee and live. There are many that are now joining us, great God, in this prayer, that we may have many conversions this very morning. We mean to look, and wait, and watch for it.

We ask that this very morning, while Jesus Christ is lifted up, many may look unto Him and be cured of the serpent's bite for ever. Thou hast promised to hear Thy people's prayer, and this is a prayer that must be according to Thy mind; and it is for the honour of Thy dear Son; and it is put up in faith, put up in faith in Jesus; therefore Thou canst not run back from it, but Thou must keep that word to which in humble, but adoring faith, we hold Thee, 'My word shall not return unto me void.' Give us then a great increase to the church by the preaching of the gospel this morning. The like blessing we ask for all churches, and for all ministers of the gospel of Jesus. We ask for a revival of true godliness all over the world. We pray Thee to grant that these disastrous times may drive Thy children nearer to Thee; may deliver many of them from a worldly spirit; and may it come to pass that while they grow poor one way they may grow rich in another, by the sanctification of their losses and afflictions.

God be gracious to this land. Send us, we pray Thee, the Holy Spirit more abundantly than ever; and may there be myriads born to Christ in these latter days. So do Thou with all the nations, till all lands shall bow before Thee, and all generations shall call Thee blessed.

We offer special prayers this morning for the rising generation. The Lord bless our Sabbath schools. Teach the teachers, bless and superintend the superintendents, and let the schools be more than ever a place where the lambs are cared for and tended, that they may grow up as sheep of the fold of Jesus. Many prayers have been offered already today for this end: we pray Thee hear them all, and let the richest benisons of heaven rest on those devoted men and women, who deny themselves many privileges that they may have the greater privilege of feeding the lambs of Christ. The Lord hear us and do for us exceeding abundantly above what we ask or even think, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1500 (19 October 1879).

SCRIPTURE: Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:1-18.

HYMNS: 240, 539, 331

## Chapter 17. Refuges of Lies

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### Chapter 17

#### Refuges of Lies

'Judgment also will I lay to the line, and  
righteousness to the plummet: and the hail  
shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the  
waters shall overflow the hiding-place'

(Isaiah 28:17).

O Lord, how shall we speak with Thee, for we are dust and ashes! May Thy Spirit speak in us, that we may speak unto Thy Spirit. And how shall we draw near to Thee, for we have no merits. Let the merits of Jesus stand for us, that we may acceptably approach our God, being 'accepted in the Beloved'. Lord, we are full of infirmities, and full of wants, and full of sin, and we come and cast ourselves at Thy feet. Being nothing, we would ask to receive everything of Thee; and being altogether undeserving, we would look to Thy loving kindness and tender mercy, and expect much from that divine source, through Jesus Christ Thy Son.

Help Thy servant now to pray for all this people, and may there be a voice in our prayer for every man's want before Thee. At the same time, help all this company to be instant in prayer; and may there not be a prayerless heart in the whole building, but may every man, and every woman too, come with his own request and burden, and may it be done unto him according to Thy grace.

First, we would lie humbly before Thee, confessing our sin, our frequent sin, our wilful sin; our sin against light and knowledge; sins of heart and thought, sins of word and sins of action. There is no power of body, or of the will, which has not been defiled with sin; and we confess this before Thee with much shame. So great has been the stream, that we are sure there must be a deep and large fount of pollution within our nature, and Thou hast made some of us to know that it is so.

Thou hast taken us into the chambers of imagery, that are within our spirit, and we have dug through the wall, and have gone from one chamber to another; and the deeper we search, the more we are shocked, and the further we have pryed into the secrets of our being, the more are we utterly ashamed that we should be such creatures as we are by nature.

We have been saying to Thee this morning, as we marked the leaves falling from the trees, 'We are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' 'We all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away' As the wind strips the leaves from the trees and leaves them bare, so we stand before Thee this morning. We have not by nature one green shoot or anything like fruit: we are unprofitable altogether, and only fit to be 'hewn down and cast into the fire': for what fruit we have borne, if it has been the fruit of our nature, has been more

the fruit of thorns and thistles, than of figs and grapes.

Lord God, we wonder Thou didst ever have any mercy on us at all; for in justice and judgment, if we were set upon the Throne, we could do no other than condemn ourselves, for there is no plea against Thy justice that can be found within our lives or nature.

Yet, Lord, we thank Thee that Thou hast saved many of us, and we would this morning exult in that salvation, and pray that all the rest here assembled might be saved also!

O God, Thou hast smitten a heavy blow at our proud self; Thou hast made us lie broken in pieces before Thee. Thou hast set up another in the place of the false god that ruled us. We do not live for self, nor even for self-salvation. Jesus Christ has become the Lord and Master of our spirit, and He has delivered us from the dominion of self and sin, and helped us to be obedient unto Thee. Now, henceforth, the strongest portion of our will is towards holiness. Oh, that we could be perfectly holy! we sigh after it and cry after it: we think we could bear all trials, we feel persuaded we could give up all pleasures, if we might but win the pleasure of complete obedience to God. This, indeed, is the target towards which, like arrows shot from an archer's bow, our lives are speeding. Though rough winds turn us aside, yet shall we strike the target by Thy grace. The Lord be pleased to help us every day to put down sin. O Lord, whenever pride arises, may we be more than ever humbled in Thy sight. Whenever self comes up, may we be determined it shall not live, but flee to the precious blood, that we may slay it. Lord, save us from self; save us from the love of the world; save us from the pride of the eye, and the pride of life; save us, we beseech Thee, from everything that is natural to fallen man, and let the new nature which Thou hast planted manifest itself day by day, till we shall be made like unto Christ, 'whom having not seen we love', but to whom we shall be conformed, for we shall 'see Him as He is'.

Look with great grace, we pray Thee, O Lord, upon the slaves of sin that are present here this morning: break their fetters. Oh, save this people. We know there are some in this house that as yet are in the 'gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity'. Move, O, Divine Spirit, over this audience, and fetch out from among us those that know not God, that they may know themselves and their God this day. Oh, make this to be 'a profitable, soul-winning Sabbath, one of the high days on which heaven's bells shall ring out more sweetly than ever, because many and many a prodigal child has come back to the Father's house to make the Father glad.

Save souls, we pray Thee, all over the world. Wherever Jesus Christ is lifted up, may He 'draw all men to Him', and may a great multitude look to Him and be lightened, that their faces may no more be ashamed! And now, Lord, look upon this people for good. Thou knowest the troubles of every burdened spirit. Thou knowest how some whom Thou lovest are sick; how others have to watch over their dearest ones fading away and withering like flowers. Lord, send comfort to the saints in trouble.

Oh, grant us grace to bear whatever Thy righteous will puts upon us without repining; and if business is going amiss, and if many things are cross to the desires of nature, may we feel it is Thy will, and therefore joyfully yield to that will; nay, more, may we take a delight in being stripped, if God strip us; take a delight in smarting, if it be God who makes us smart. When Thou dost use the chisel upon these blocks of stone that are to be built upon the Living Stone, Lord, do not only square us, and fashion us, but separate us from the old rock to which we have been wedded so

long: set us free from that hole of the pit, and let us be brought into the upper air, and built upon Christ, to lie there for ever.

Bless this our beloved church and its officers. We thank Thee for Thy mercy that many of us are spared to do service for Thee, notwithstanding many infirmities. We bless Thee for others, who having gone from us, have been brought back again; for the many Sunday School teachers among us; and ask that all may be anointed with fresh oil, that every working or suffering brother and sister may receive fresh grace this day; that this may be a time of the trimming of lamps, that all may shine brightly to the praise of Thy grace.

Bless our country. The Lord in mercy avert the horrors of war from us. Grant that, by some means, peace may be continued, and war come to an end where it still rages; and, oh, that the policy of truth and righteousness may once more be taken up in this land, and our nation be forgiven its great national crimes.

Bless the Queen with every blessing, and all peoples that dwell on the face of the earth visit with the splendour of Thy love. 'Let the people praise Thee, O God, yea, let all the people praise Thee: then shall the earth yield her increase, and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.'

Forgive the weakness of our prayer, forgive the wandering of our heart: but through the Well-Beloved, who stands before Thee now in all His beauty as risen from the dead; through Him whom our soul loveth, even as Thou lovest Him; through Him whom we adore as 'God over all, blessed for ever', though bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh - through Him and for His sake look kindly on us now! Amen and Amen.

SERMON: No. 1501 (26 October 1879).

SCRIPTURE: Matt. 7.

HYMNS: 118 (Song 2.), 822, 381.

## Chapter 18. "Your Adversary"

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### Chapter 18

#### 'Your Adversary'

'Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell  
in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and  
of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you,  
having great wrath, because he knoweth  
that he hath but a short time'

(Revelation 12:12).

Great God, we bless Thee that the battle between Thyself and the powers of darkness has never been uncertain. We praise Thy name that now it is for ever sure to end in victory. Our hearts this morning, amidst the struggles of the present day, would look back to the conflicts of Calvary, and see how our Lord for ever there broke the dragon's head. Oh, that Thy people this morning might know that they are contending with a vanquished enemy, that they go forth to fight against one who, with all his subtlety and all his strength, has already been overthrown by Him who is our Covenant Head, our Leader, our Husband, our all.

Grant to Thy dear children who are by any means depressed because they feel the serpent at their heel, that they may bless the dear name of Him whose heel was bruised before, but who in the very bruising broke the serpent's head. Our souls with songs of inward joy extol the mighty Conqueror. All honour and glory be unto Him who stood foot to foot with the Arch-Enemy, but who was never wounded by him: the prince of this world came, but there was nothing in Thee, O Jesus, no tendency to sin, no turning aside; but Thou didst win from the first, even to the last, a glorious victory over this dread adversary of mankind.

We see Thee now arrayed in Thy vesture dipped with blood, victorious over all Thy foes. Our spirit triumphs in the anticipation of the time when all thine enemies shall be destroyed, and death and hell shall be cast into the lake of fire, and God shall be all in all.

Oh, that the time were come, set for Thine advent, when the hidden shall be revealed, and the church of God shall no longer need her wings with which to fly, but shall come forth in all the glory with which Thy love arrays her, clothed with the sun and with the moon beneath her feet. Glory, and honour, and majesty, and power, and dominion, and might, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever! And now, we present ourselves before the throne of the great King to pay our reverence and homage there; for the Lord is God alone, and our heart doth worship Him intensely, reverently bowing unto the very dust before the Lord, for we are less than nothing, and Jehovah is all in all.

We would confess our many sins, with great self abhorrence and detestation of them. The Lord be pleased to forgive his servants in this thing, and let us each this morning feel the application of the precious 'blood which speaketh better things than that of Abel'. May every child of God know now that he is clean through the washing of the blood. Oh, that we might be certain that no guilt is recorded against us now, for it is blotted out for ever and the record is destroyed. Being justified by faith may we have peace, deep, lasting peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And, Lord, wilt Thou be pleased to heal us of any wounds that we have received in the great conflict. Thou knowest that during the week some of us have been in the thick of the battle, and manifold temptations have gathered about us. If we have gathered aught of defilement, be pleased to put it away. If in converse with the world we have mired or dusted our feet, wash them, blessed Master, this morning, that we may be clean every whit. If our faith has suffered any damage, or our hope is not so bright as it was, or if our love to Thee be not as fervent as at one time it was, if the soul be sinking under the pressure of the fight in any degree, O Thou whose every word is music, whose every promise is balm, whose every touch is life, draw near to the weary warrior now, and refresh us that we may rise again to the conflict, and never tire until the last enemy shall be beneath our feet, as beneath our Master's feet.

And, O Lord, if it may please Thee, look upon any of Thy servants who are more than ordinarily tried, or who by reason of bodily weakness or the stress of severe trial, may specially need consolation; put under such the everlasting arms. So let the whole host be refreshed. Let those that lie in hospital be brought out of it and made whole; and as it is said of the host when Thou didst bring it out of Egypt, 'there was not one feeble person in all their tribes', so may it be with us; may the weakest become as David, and David as the Angel of the Lord. Great Captain of the host, we ask this high favour of Thee on this Thy day, when Thine own are gathered together. Deny us not we beseech Thee. And now, we ask Thee to give victory to Thy church all over the world. Oh, look, Thou Mighty One, look down upon the heathen, and see how their gods stand riveted to their thrones. Cast them down, O Christ! Thou who hast cast out the dragon, cast down these inferior powers of darkness until not an idol god shall be left.

Thou seest also how the harlot of Babylon still sits upon her Seven Hills, and the multitudes wonder after her. Oh, that Thou wouldst cast her like a mill-stone in the flood and end her power for ever. And the 'false prophet' too, whose power is waning, let it be utterly eclipsed; and, oh, that Christ might reign! The Lord grant it! But sometimes we feel half staggered by the prayer, because our own dear land, and other lands where Christ is preached, are still so dark. Lord, look on countries where the gospel is proclaimed, and yet men live in sin, and the policy of many a state is unchristian, if not anti-christian. Oh, look Thou on the nations; gather out the remnant of the woman's seed, even from among them, and let the light of Thy chosen shine forth, that it may be seen that Thy saints are not only lights to themselves but lights of the world, lights of the nations wherein they dwell.

Lord, remember our great city: Oh, be not wroth very sore with it. Behold this day the gospel is preached, but the many turn their backs upon it. They might hear it, and they will not, and many that do hear it, reject it. The Lord raise up many voices yet that will be heard, that must be heard; and open men's ears; compel them to hear; yea, compel them to come into Thy marriage banquet, that Thy Son may have guests at His great feast of mercy. The Lord bless us this day. Help us to

be voices for God. Make this church to be full of such voices. May there be no silent member among us concerning the things of Christ; but may each one overcome through the blood of the Lamb and the word of His testimony.

O God, wilt Thou bless the various agencies carried on by us, that we may, as a church, help and do our part in the evangelization of the world. We remember the many men who have been trained at our side, and are preaching today: the Lord speak through them. We remember the many brethren and sisters that will spend the great part of this day in endeavouring to bring others to Christ: the Lord prosper them all. Oh, make us to be more and more a living church, a church in which God shall show forth the glory of His power. Oh, how we long for this! May all ministries among us be living ministries, Holy Ghost ministries, and so may it be in all the churches, that every golden candlestick may have a candle well lit; and may it come to pass that from the olive trees there shall pass into the golden pipes always sufficient of the sacred oil to keep the lights well burning to the glory of our God.

We cast ourselves upon Thee, and ask Thee to make us all useful today in our families, in our classes, in the church, in the world: and when Thou shalt have used us here, permit us the great joy of serving Thee day and night in Thy temple above.

One more prayer: it is, Convert those who sit with us from Sunday to Sunday and are unconverted. Lord have mercy upon some that once were professors of religion, but continue to come in and out among us without repentance, without turning back to Him whom once they professed to know. Lord have mercy upon others that are hearers, but hearers only, attentive hearers too, but not doers of the Word. Oh, save them speedily, bring them to Jesus at once. We ask it for His dear Name's sake. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1502 (2 November 1879).

SCRIPTURE: Rev. 12.

HYMNS: 317, 335, 449.

## Chapter 19. Risen With Christ

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### Chapter 19

#### Risen with Christ

'If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth'

(Colossians 3:1-2).

Our Father, we dare call Thee by that blessed name, for we feel the spirit of children. We have an earnest love to Thee, and an implicit trust in Thee; and we desire in all things to be obedient to Thy will, and to seek Thine honour. All our dependence is placed on Thee since the day when Thou didst teach us to believe in Jesus Christ: and now, Thou art all in all to us, Thou art our fulness, and we lose ourselves and find ourselves completely in Thee.

We would come to Thee this morning by the way which Thou hast appointed; and enabled by the Spirit whom Thou hast given, we would speak with Thee. Father, we are always grieving if more or less we offend against Thy holy mind; and we grieve ourselves, to think that we should grieve Thee. Our innermost desire is to be absolutely perfect. Oh, how we wish we were! We hate every false way, and every sin; and we desire, with all the power of our mind, to be delivered from the dominion of any sin, and to be led into the blessed freedom of complete obedience to God.

Thou knowest Lord, for Thou searchest the heart and Thou triest the reins of the children of men — Thou knowest we can truly say, unless indeed we be under a very deep delusion, that we do wish to promote Thy glory among the sons of men; and that we count nothing to be riches, but that which makes us rich towards God; nothing to be health, but that which is sanity before the Most High - holiness in Thy sight; and we reckon nothing to be pure, but what Thou hast cleansed; and nothing to be good, but that upon which Thy blessing rests. Yet Lord, though it be so, though our mind has been by Thy Spirit set towards holiness, there is a death within us; the old nature which strives against our life, and the members of the body often join with the corrupt nature within, to lead us astray. We swing towards holiness and then we seem like the pendulum, to swing the other way. We are wretched, because of this, and we cry out to Thee to deliver us. Oh, that Thou wouldst deliver us!

We do thank Thee that Jesus gives us the victory but we long to have that victory in ourselves more constantly realised — more perfectly enjoyed. We would lie in the very dust before Thee because of sin; and yet, at the same time, rejoice in the great Sin-bearer, that the sin is not imputed to us, that it is put away by His precious blood, that we are accepted in the Beloved. But even this does not content us; we are crying after the work of the Holy Ghost within, till Satan shall

be bruised under our feet, and sin shall be utterly destroyed.

Lord, Thou knowest the groanings of our heart; our prayers cannot express them: but we bless Thee that there is One who maketh intercession for us, with groanings that cannot be uttered, who is with us, and dwelleth in us, and is promised to be with us for ever. We shall overcome, we shall win the victory, we shall rise superior to depression of spirit, we shall overcome the doubts, and fears, and tribulations of our inward heart — we shall overcome, for Christ doth lead the way and victory lies in His cross; and we are sure of it, and therefore would we begin to sing the hymn of victory even now, saying — 'Thanks be unto God who causeth us always to triumph in every place, by Jesus Christ His Son.' At this time we would entreat Thee to visit us with Thy salvation. Lord we all want renewing, refreshing, reviving; but there are some of Thy people that sink very low by reason of physical infirmity and mental suffering; they lie in the very dust. But Lord, when our soul cleaveth to the dust, Thou canst still quicken us according to Thy Word and we ask Thee to make this a red-letter day in our experience. May we renew our youth: may the love of our espousals come back to us: may the joy of our first days be restored: may the childlike faith of the first steps we ever took towards Christ, be given to us now; and may we learn to rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

O Lord our God, we do beseech Thee look upon the faint hearted and such as are swooning through affliction.

Bring again from Bashan, yea bring up Thy people from the depths of the sea. Take away our mourning and give us music: remove our sackcloth and give us beauty: take away our sighs and fill our mouths with songs; and let this be a radiant day of gladness, and a time of feasting from the Bridegroom's own hand; and may our own spirits rejoice in Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. At this time also, great Father, wilt Thou visit this church with Thy great favour; and as Thou hast abounded toward us these many years in blessing, so give us now some new token, some fresh visitation for good. Lord, Thou hast not always given summer weather to the field of nature, but spring comes on and summer returns. Oh, give us summer weather as a church. May there be a great revival of religion in all the members, and especially in the minds of such as are growing cold or indifferent to holy things. Wherever there is any laxity of life, any slight holding of precious truth; wherever the world is creeping in with its corroding influences; wherever there is anything of sin which our eye sees not, but which Thine eye detects, be pleased to put it away. Fill the whole church with unity, with love, with life, with power.

We thank Thee for the many that are coming in among us fresh from the world. God be thanked for new converts; may they be like fresh blood in the veins of the church, keeping her alive and keeping her active; and may the Spirit of the Lord come down upon pastors, and elders and deacons, Sunday School teachers and workers and sufferers; and let the whole church be quickened. Yea, and not this church only but all the little hills of Zion, do Thou water with showers from on high. Let the country churches receive a blessed visitation. Let all the churches in foreign lands also be visited by the selfsame Comforter; and may there come to Thy church in these dark and dreary days, bright shining after the rain. May the time of the singing of birds come, and the voice of the turtle be heard in our land! And oh, whilst Thou art doing this, look on sinners! Oh, look on sinners! When Thou blessest Thy people, Thou dost make them blessings. When the church is vigorous, when the people praise Thee, then shall the earth yield her increase, then shall all the

nations praise Thee too; for the joy of Zion is the joy of the whole earth. When the Lord maketh glad His people then He maketh the earth sit still and rest, or even if it rages, yet still there is a time of salvation, a time of the ingathering of the hidden ones, and Christ's name is glorious.

But, Lord, there is a great tumult in the world just now: we pray Thee overrule it for Thy glory. Grant that the best ends of progress, of truth and righteousness may be subserved; and may it be seen still, that the Lord reigneth. Even though the people should riot and rebel against the truth, yet do Thou advance Thy cause; even by disaster and defeat, if so it must be, or by success and prosperity. Let Thy kingdom come, good Lord; let Thy kingdom come, and let Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, and our hearts shall sing with the angel choir, and be glad with all the ransomed before the throne, because God is glorified. This is our soul's grandest object, that Jesus' name be lifted high, and His throne be set up among the people, to the praise of the glory of His grace; and now unto the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, be glory, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen SERMON: No. 1530 (28 March 1880).

SCRIPTURE: Colossians 2:8-23; Colossians 3:1-15.

HYMNS: 306, 319, 873.

## Chapter 20. Intercession for the Saints

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### Chapter 20

#### Intercession for the Saints

'Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God'

(Romans 8:26-27).

Our Father, we bless Thee that we dare use that name without a question; for many of us feel the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. We thank Thee that we have passed from death unto life, and have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He that sitteth on the throne, and maketh all things new, hath made us new, and called us into newness of life, and made us to feel a life within us which must outlast the ages, for it is the life of God. Our Father, we would not crouch before Thee, like slaves before a tyrant, but feel the spirit of adoption, which shall draw us into familiar intercourse with Thee, though still with holy trembling, for Thou art God in heaven, and we are still but men upon the earth, and at the very sight of Thee we feel a trembling coming over us; yet is there joy with it; and Thou hast taught us to rejoice with trembling.

We would in spirit now pass into that inner place, into which the High Priest of Israel dared not come but once a year, and then not without blood. We bless Thee that the veil is rent; and now every believer is made a priest, and permitted to come into the Holy of Holies, and to draw near unto the mercy-seat, all blood-besprinkled, without fear of being regarded as an intruder, or smitten down like Nadab and Abihu.

O God, we stand, therefore, now in Thine immediate presence, and our very heart speaks to Thee, and we rejoice that Thou who searchest the heart, knowest what our heart would say; and if these lips should fail to speak out the heart's utterances, Thou wilt interpret what is written in every bosom; and if no lip this morning should express the desire of certain of Thy saints, because their groanings are such that they cannot utter them themselves, and, therefore, cannot expect anyone else to do it, yet Thou wilt read every heart; for every heart is open before Thee as a book, and Thou readest the thoughts and intents of the heart. And first, our Father, we would earnestly ask

that every believer here may feel the power of the sprinkled blood most vividly and consciously. May we hear Jesus say by it, 'Ye are clean, clean every whit'; and may we have a sense of entire security, because Thou hast Thyself said it — 'When I see the blood I will pass over you.' This is the blood of our passover, and no destroying angel can touch us.

Now, Lord, next to this give each one of Thy children power to become the sons of God in their actions. May we become more and more like the Firstborn; may we begin to exercise our sonship by conquering ourselves. Help us to put down sin. May every sinful thought be driven out, and every thought be brought into captivity to the Spirit of God. Oh, help us to be perfectly consecrated to Thy service, because we are the children of God. May we not live like children of the devil, neither serve him, nor serve our affections and lusts.

And, oh, grant us also to become sons by reason of the spirit of boldness that we shall feel. Give us not again the spirit of bondage that we may fear; but give us, we pray Thee, more and more of the spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father.

Lord, purify us! Thou hast pardoned; now purify, until every sin shall be destroyed within our hearts. We pray Thee hear the prayers of Thy children who also ask for strength and succour in their time of need. O Spirit of God help our infirmities. If we be pressed down with a load of sorrow; if we are in perplexity and know not what to do; if we are slandered and persecuted; if we in any way are made to feel the weight of the cross, help us, we pray Thee. Let not our weakness be staggered by that portion of our estate which comes under the head of tribulation. May we rather rejoice in infirmities, because the power of God doth rest upon us; and may we glory in tribulations also, because these work in us, by Thy good Spirit, all manner of holy graces to Thy glory. The Lord deliver His people from carking care; and, indeed, from caring about themselves! Oh, for power to roll our burden upon our God, and to sing all day long because we are the Lord's, and He is ours. 'The Lord is our Shepherd: we shall not want. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our life, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'

O Lord, make us a holy and a happy people. Help us to live the separated life, and to tread it with firm and brave step. Help us while we wrestle not with flesh and blood, to fight with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places; and may it be ours to be made, by Thy Spirit, to triumph in every place, being led in triumph by Thee from strength to strength, from time to time, from age to age, till the history of Thy whole church shall be one long triumph for the conquering Lord. Glorify Thyself in us, we pray Thee, even in these mortal bodies, and in our spirits which are Thine.

Now would we put up most fervent and earnest prayer for such who, as yet, do not know Thee. O Spirit of God, convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come; and especially convince the human heart of the sin of not believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, make this to be very clear to the heart, that not believing in Jesus is the highest act of enmity against God. The rejection of God when He becomes man and dies out of infinite love — surely this is the highest crime and misdemeanour against the great King. Oh, that this might strike, like an arrow, into the heart of some If they cannot accuse themselves of any gross sin of the body, yet may this grossest of all sins be laid, like a millstone, upon their conscience, that they have refused the Son of God and done despite to His precious blood; and how shall they escape if they neglect so great salvation!

O Spirit of God lay this home; and then convince them of righteousness. Let them see where righteousness is to be had even in Christ! Let them know that righteousness is demanded of them; and, if they have it not from Christ, they will never have it, and they must perish in their sins.

And, O Divine Spirit, set before them judgment to come Let them tremble at the thought that Thou wilt come, that the great assize shall be held, and rebels against God and His Christ must be punished with eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

Thus bring the sinner to his knees; thus bring the conscience to tenderness; and then, sweet Spirit, reveal Jesus Christ to the troubled heart, and let there be the peace of God through faith. We have many things to pray for this morning, but Lord, Thou knowest them all.

We specially pray for our country that God would bless it; and oh, that we might have a season of revival of pure and undefiled religion in the land. We perceive that Thou canst turn the hearts of the people, as the trees of the wood are moved in the wind. Oh, that there might come a deep searching of heart, great thoughtfulness of the Scriptures, reverence of God and the principles of justice and peace: and may this land make another stride in onward progress, and out of it may there be gathered a people whom Thou hast chosen, who shall show forth Thy praise. With equal affection do we pray for all countries and lands; and especially for that kindred nation where our own tongue is spoken, and our own God is worshipped. O Lord, grant that these two great lands may go hand in hand together in the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Lord, put down all false doctrine, all Popery, Mohammedanism and idolatry; and may the day come in which Christ Himself shall be King among the nations, and His reign shall be inaugurated by the manifestation of His redeemed; and unto Him be glory for ever and ever. Glory be unto the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1532 (11 April 1880).

SCRIPTURE: Romans 8:14-39.

HYMNS: 1009, 978, 460

## Chapter 21. The Sentence of Death in Ourselves

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### Chapter 21

#### The Sentence of Death in Ourselves

'But we had the sentence of death in ourselves,

that we should not trust in ourselves, but in

God which raiseth the dead'

(2 Corinthians 1:9).

Our Father, blessed be Thy name for ever and ever. Oh, that we praised Thee more! We must confess we never bless Thee as we ought, and our life is far too full of murmuring, or at the best too full of self-seeking, for even in prayer we may do this; and there is too little of lauding, and adoring, and praising, and magnifying, and singing the high praises of Jehovah.

O God, wilt Thou teach us to begin the music of heaven' Grant us grace to have many rehearsals of the eternal Hallelujah. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.' Grant us grace that we may not bring Thee blessings merely because Thou dost feed us, and clothe us, and because we receive so many mercies at Thy hand; but may we learn to praise Thee even when Thou dost put us under the rod, and when the heart is heavy, and when mercies seem but scant. Oh, that when the flocks are cut off from the stall, and there is no harvest, we may nevertheless rejoice in God.

O Lord, teach us this very morning the art of praise. Let our soul take fire, and like a censer full of frankincense, may our whole nature send forth a delicious perfume of praiseful gratitude unto the ever blessed One, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

O Lord, our chief desire this morning before Thee is to be right with Thee. Oh, make us right with Thee, great Father. There are some in Thy presence who are not right with Thee at all; Thy countenance they cannot behold, and Thou canst not accept their offering, for it is true of them, as of Cain, 'sin lieth at the door'. O God, roll every sin away; but we know they must first feel the burden of it, they must come to Thee and confess it, they must accept the great Substitute and rest in Jesus. And our prayer shall be, Father, if our sin be not forgiven, we would put our head into Thy bosom and sob out, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee and am no more worthy to be called Thy son.' Grant the kiss of forgiveness to each of Thy children this morning, and may we feel that Thou art faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; and in the joy of this, may we feel peace with Thee. But Lord, many of us have been forgiven years ago. We have walked with Thee now, with holy joy and confidence, some of us for a quarter of a century, and others for more; yet Lord there may be something between us and Thee even now, and if there be, 'shew me wherefore Thou contendest with me'. If Thou seest in Thy servants any wrong thing encouraged, any evil desire cherished; if there be anything that

we delight in that Thou dost not delight in; if we have any habit which grieves Thee; if in anything we vex Thy Holy Spirit — our Father, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and then point out to us the trespass, and teach our feet to keep the ways of Thy commandments, and to trespass no more; for our heart is right towards Thy statutes and we desire holiness.

Oh, we desire perfection. We know what it is to make a conscience of our every thought. We have looked upon every act of our lives and desired that in all things we might be conformed to Thy will, and Thou knowest this makes us walk very tenderly at times, and with much brokenness of spirit before Thee, because the more we look into our lives, the more we see to lament; and in proportion as Thou dost make us holy, in that very proportion do we spy out our unholiness, and find nests of sin where we never dreamt that the loathsome things had been. Father, cleanse us from secret faults. Purge us! Thou hast purged us with hyssop once, and we are clean; now wash us with water, even as Thou, blessed Jesus, didst wash Thy disciples' feet, and make us clean every whit, that we may be Thy priests and kings, sanctified wholly; and make us a people zealous of good works.

Bless, Lord, this our church, and let nothing spring up in this church that would grieve Thy Holy Spirit. We know that there are some among us that walk not after Thy commandments, some that grow cold, some that are negligent in prayer, some that add nothing to the strength of Thy service. But Lord, is it not so with all the churches? Oh, wilt Thou not still continue to look upon the faithful, and to make them yet more faithful; and to look upon the wandering, and the backsliding, and to restore them, lest they be an occasion of grief unto Thine Israel, as Achan was who had hidden away the goodly Babylonish garment, and the wedge of gold in his tent.

If Thou hast prospered any among us who may have grown rich, and have forgotten the God who gave them everything; or if Thou hast brought any into poverty and in their poverty they have not acted as they should; or if Thou hast left any brother to his own heart, and he has found out that he is a fool; if any of us have grieved Thee, oh, lay not this sin to the charge of Thy church, and lay it not to the charge of the offender either, but let a sweet forgiveness be bestowed, let a restoration be granted by Thy Spirit, and let the church be right with God. Oh, how we pray for this!

Lord, Thou hast not taken away Thy blessing from us. We do rejoice in this: every day dost Thou aid us, and this month Thou hast sent us perhaps more than ever — glory be to Thy name! And Thou dost provide for all the work of the church, and send prosperity to it in every part and quarter of it; and therefore do we fear and tremble because of all the goodness which Thou dost make to pass before us; and our heart is jealous with a godly jealousy, lest in anything we should vex the Spirit of God. O Lord, grant us to be holy, grant us to be accepted in the Beloved, and Thou shalt have all the praise.

Now we have but one other prayer; and that is, if we are right with Thee, help us to be right in all the transactions of daily life. Help us to be right with regard to Thy providential dealings with us. Lord give much patience to those that are tried. Give a holy resignation both to the sick and to the bereaved, and to such as are brought into poverty. Be very gracious to Thy dear children that they may never dishonour Thee when they are in affliction. And wilt Thou keep Thy people right with regard to the world. Oh, that the witness that we bear might be an unstained one. Oh, grant to us to be a light in the world, that we may never cast darkness instead of light over the minds of men.

Help us to live out Christ's life. O Lord, help us to be so consumed with zeal, that it may eat us up; and may we be so full of love, that those who are round about us may know that if we write a harsh letter, or say a strong word, love alone dictates it. May we in everything be Christly, Godly; for God is love. Conquer our tempers, subdue our passions, rule us in body, soul, and spirit. Make us so to live that, when death shall close our life on earth, heaven itself shall be but a continuance of the same life, because even now we have the beginnings of heaven in the earnest of the Spirit. And now, Lord, bless Thy universal church, and grant to it mercy and favour. Gather together Thine elect from under all heaven. Let the company of the faithful be accomplished, and the universal reign of Christ established.

Bless our own dear country. God save and bless the Queen with every mercy; and our rulers do Thou guide, uphold, sustain and direct. Let them be guilty of no folly; but the Lord teach our senators wisdom. And may it please Thee, Lord, to bless other countries too; especially those lands which love our common Christ, and speak our mother tongue; and, indeed, all the nations where Jesus Christ is known, do Thou visit with a revival; and heathen, and Mahometan, and Popish lands. Oh, let the light break in upon their midnight, let the day dawn and Christ be glorified.

What more can we ask? We ask all in His dear name, dear to us and dear to Thee, O our Father: and unto the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Ghost be glory everlasting. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1536 (2 May 1880).

SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 1:1-9.

HYMNS: 125, 624, 74

## Chapter 22. Intercession for One Another

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### Chapter 22

#### Intercession for One Another

'Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin  
against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but  
I will teach you the good and the right way'

(1 Samuel 12:23).

God of Israel, God of Jesus Christ, our God for ever and ever; help us now by the sacred Spirit, to approach Thee aright with deepest reverence, but not with servile fear; with holiest boldness, but not with presumption. Oh, teach us as children to speak to the Father, and yet, as creatures to bow before our Maker. Our Father, we would first ask Thee whether Thou hast ought against us as Thy children. Have we been asking somewhat of Thee amiss, and hast Thou given us that which we have sought? We are not conscious of it, but it may be so; and now we are brought, as an answer to our presumptuous prayers, into a more difficult position than the one we occupied before. It may be that some creature comfort is nearer to us than our God. We had better have been without it, and have dwelt in God, and have found our joy in Him. But now, Lord, in these perilous circumstances, give us grace that we may not turn away from Thee. If our position now be not such as Thou wouldst have allotted to us, had we been wiser, yet nevertheless grant that we may be taught to behave ourselves aright, even now; lest the mercies Thou hast given should become a cause of stumbling, and the obtaining of our heart's desire should become a temptation to us.

Rather this morning do we feel inclined to bless Thee for the many occasions in which Thou hast not answered our prayer, for Thou hast said that we did ask amiss, and therefore we could not have; and we desire to register this prayer with Thee, that whensoever we do ask amiss Thou wouldst in great wisdom and love be pleased to refuse us. O Lord if we at any time press our suit, without a sufficiency of resignation, do not regard us we pray Thee; and though we cry unto Thee day and night, concerning anything, yet, if Thou seest that herein we err, regard not the voice of our cry we pray Thee. It is our heart's desire in our coolest moments, that this prayer might stand on record as long as we live, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'

But, O Lord, in looking back, we are obliged to remember with the greatest gratitude, the many occasions in which Thou hast heard our cry. We have been brought into deep distress, and our heart has sunk within us, and then have we cried to Thee, and Thou hast never refused to hear us. The prayers of our lusts Thou hast rejected, but the prayers of our necessities Thou hast granted; not one good thing hath failed of all that Thou hast promised. Thou hast given us exceedingly abundantly above what we asked, or even thought; for there was a day when our present condition would have been regarded as much too high for us ever to reach; and, in looking back, we are

surprised that those who did lie among the pots of Egypt, should now sit every man under his vine and fig tree; that those who wandered in the wilderness, in a solitary way, should now find a city to dwell in; that we who were prodigals in rags, should now be children in the Father's bosom; that we who were companions of swine, should now be made heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

Oh, what encouragement we have to pray to such a prayer-hearing God, who far exceeds the requests of His children! Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever; our inmost heart is saying, Amen, blessed be His name! If it were only for answered prayer, or even for some unanswered prayers, we would continue to praise and bless Thee as long as we have any being. And now, Lord, listen to the voice of Thy children's cry this morning. Wherever there is a sincere heart seeking for greater holiness, answer Thou that request; or wherever there is a broken spirit seeking for reconciliation with Thyself, be pleased to answer it now. Thou knowest where there is prayer, though it be unuttered, and even the lips do not move. Oh, hear the publican who dares not lift his eyes to heaven; hear him while he cries, 'God be merciful to me, a sinner.' Hear such as seem to themselves to be appointed unto death. Let the sighing of the prisoner come before Thee. Oh, that Thou wouldst grant peace and rest to every troubled spirit within this house; aye, and to all such all over the world, who now desire to turn their faces to the cross, and to see God in Christ Jesus reconciling them unto Himself.

O Lord, if there are any of Thy servants exercised about the cases of others, we would thank Thee for them. Raise up in the church many intercessors, who shall plead for the prosperity of Zion, and give Thee no rest till Thou establish her, and make her a joy in the land.

There are some of us that cried to Thee about our country. Thou knowest how in secret, we groaned and sighed over evil times; and Thou hast begun to hear us already, for which we desire to praise and bless Thy name. But we would not cease to pray for this land, that Thou wouldst roll away from it all its sin - that Thou wouldst deliver it from the curse of drunkenness, from infidelity, from popery, from ritualism, from rationalism, and every form of evil; and that this land might become a holy land. O Lord bring the multitudes of the working men to listen to the gospel. Break in, we pray Thee, upon their stolid indifference; for how many there are of them who have not yet risen from their beds this morning, who have not thought of coming up to any place of worship — Lord give them a love to Thy house, a desire to hear Thy gospel. And then, wilt Thou look upon the poor rich who, so many of them, know nothing about Thee, and are worshipping their own wealth. The Lord grant that the many for whom there is no special gospel service, but who are wrapped up in self-righteousness, might be brought to hear the gospel of Jesus, that they also, as well as the poor, might come to Christ. God bless this land with more of gospel light; with more of gospel life and love. Thou wilt hear us O Lord!

Then would we pray for our children, that they might be saved. Some of us can no longer pray for our children's conversion: our prayers are heard already; but there are others who have children who vex them, and grieve their hearts. O God save sons and daughters of godly people. Let them not have to sigh over their children as Eli did, and as Samuel did; and may they see their sons and daughters become the children of the living God.

We would pray for our servants, for our neighbours, for our kinsfolk of near or far degree, that all might be brought to Jesus. Do Thou this, O God, of Thine infinite mercy! And as we are now

making intercession; we would, according to Thy Word, pray for all kings and such as are in authority, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives. We pray for all nations also. O Lord bless and remember the lands that sit in darkness; and let them see a great light; and may missionary enterprise be abundantly successful. And let the favoured nations, where our God is known, especially this land, and the land across the mighty ocean, that love the same Saviour and speak the same tongue, be always favoured with the divine presence, and with abundant prosperity and blessing. O Lord, Thou hast chosen this our race, and favoured it and multiplied it on the face of the earth; and whereas with its staff it crossed this Jordan, it hath now become two great nations.

Lord be pleased to bless the whole of this race, and those absorbed into it; and then all other races, that in us may be fulfilled the blessing of Abraham. 'I will bless you, and ye shall be a blessing.' And now, Father, glorify Thy Son! In scattering pardon through His precious blood, glorify Thy Son! In sending forth the eternal Spirit to convince men, and bring them to His feet, Father, glorify Thy Son! In enriching Thy saints with gifts and graces, and building them up into His image, Father, glorify Thy Son! In the gathering together of the whole company of His elect, and in the hastening of His kingdom, and His coming, Father, glorify Thy Son! Beyond this prayer we cannot go. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee; and unto Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1537 (9 May 1880).

SCRIPTURE: 1 Samuel 12:1-23.

HYMNS: 177, 972, 958.

## Chapter 23. The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved

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### Chapter 23

#### The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved

'Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee?'

(John 21:20).

Our Father, which art in heaven, Thou art infinitely beyond the grasp of our understanding; but in great condescension, Thou hast brought Thyself very near to the grasp of our love, and we trust this morning many of us can say with all sincerity, 'Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee.'

O Lord, it has seemed to us impossible not to love Thee; for Thou art so supremely lovable, so full of goodness, so perfect. Thou hast manifested Thyself to us as love, and shall not love go out towards love? Especially this morning do we feel our hearts warmed towards Thee, in the person of Thy dear Son. Surely we cannot see Him made our brother, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, sympathising with us, married to us, dead for us and risen again for us — we cannot gaze into His right royal face, without feeling our heart melt at the very sight of Him. O Jesus, we love Thee - we are Thine; and Thou art ours. Thou hast given Thyself to us, as well as for us; and now we cheerfully give ourselves back to Thee, feeling that we are never so much our own, as when we are Thine; that indeed we are not ourselves, until we are lost in Thee; but that then have we found our truest manhood, when it and all else is surrendered to the all-conquering power of Jesus Christ our Lord.

We come a second time to Thee in public worship this morning, with the same prayer with which we commenced — it is the prayer for love. We have expressed our love, but we are ashamed when we have done so, because, after all, what is our love? It is so faint, so cold to Thee, compared with Thy love to us. So we would adore Thee this morning for the love which Thou hast manifested to us. Thou didst love us before the foundation of the world: Thine is no new compassion; for whom Thou didst fore-know, Thou didst predestinate to be conformed unto the image of Thy Son, out of Thine own pure love to them: and because Thou hast loved us with an everlasting love, therefore with lovingkindness hast Thou drawn us, and we feel the drawings now.

Thou didst first pluck us like brands out of the burning. We remember well when Thou didst draw us from a corrupt world, and from our own self-righteousness, and we came to Jesus. But Thou art drawing still: we feel the sacred bands; we yield to them, glad to do so. Lord, draw us this morning upward to Thyself, nearer than ever. May we not be satisfied with those heights of devotion to

which we have attained; but may we reach somewhat higher today. Oh, that we might become more completely consecrated! May the image of Christ become more perfect upon us, stamp it deeper into our nature. We trust the image is there; but oh, that it set still deeper into our very selves, that all might see that the seal of the Holy Ghost was upon us, in the likeness of Christ our Lord. Our Father, wilt Thou be pleased today to fill us with delight because of Thy love. Are we heavy of heart — let Thy sweet love lighten the burden; for what after all can there be to trouble the man whom God loves? Shall we not find even in Thy rod a sweetness, as Jonathan did, when he dipped his rod in the honey? Hast Thou not said, 'as many as I love I rebuke and chasten'? Shall we not therefore take Thy rebukes and chastenings, and even rejoice in them, because therein the love of God is manifested toward us? Are Thy dear children poor, or are they sick in body, or are they losing those they love, or is there yet a newly digged grave over which they could shed floods of tears? Oh, sweet love of God, comfort them. Cover all the rocks, O mighty tide of everlasting love, till not a rock is seen, and on that glassy sea may our spirits float above the rocks, which else had wrecked our lives. We do pray Thee give us comfort, but also give us strength as well as consolation.

Lord, we are very weak, and in ourselves we have no desire to be otherwise, because when we are weak, then are we strong; but we are very strong in Thee, and we do wish to have faith to perceive this. Lord, some of Thy children think Thee weak, because they are; and suppose that grace will fail them, because the flesh does: but oh, teach them better, and may they know that it is just in the death of the creature, that they shall find the life of God revealed.

Oh, that our spirit might be always subject to the Divine Spirit; may its earthiness and feebleness only reveal the heavenliness and the strength of the indwelling Spirit of God. And oh, grant us to feel that we have power to overcome sin; that we have power to resist the lusts of the flesh, and to despise the pomp of the world, and the lust of the eyes. Though we groan within ourselves concerning the body of this death, yet sing we also, 'Thanks be unto God that giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.' Help Thy children to take the victory, to rejoice that they do conquer; yea that we are more than conquerors, through Him who hath loved us. And now that we are asking Thee to let Thy love be revealed to us in all its sweet influences, and now that we ask also that our love to Thee may be fervent, we pray Thee make us useful to our brethren. O Lord, we would not live unto ourselves; make us serviceable in gathering in the lost sheep. Make us wise that we may go after them in their devious wanderings, and discover them.

Lord, help us to speak a word in season to him that is sad of heart. When Thine arrows stick fast in the conscience, may we know how to apply the balm of Jesus' wounds. Make us ready to tell out the sweet gospel which has been so precious to our own souls; and as men that have newly come ourselves from the presence of a pardoning Saviour — men but newly washed in that dear blood which maketh white as snow, may we go and tell to our fellow-men, all black as they are, how they also can be made whiter than snow.

Lord, make us useful to Thine own children that have backslidden. May we be as Peter was to whom Thou saidst, 'When Thou art converted strengthen Thy brethren.' O Lord, make us useful among backsliders -this very day may some of us be enabled to do somewhat toward the fetching up of the rear guard, of those that loiter and linger, that the whole army of Christ may quicken its pace and march to victory. And now, Lord Jesus, we have a thousand things to ask of Thee, and

of Thy Father; but Thou knowest what we have need of before we ask. Give to each one of Thine own that special gift most needed: we may not even know what it is, but according to Thine own wisdom and prudence, deal out of Thy treasury things new and old, for the enrichment and comfort of Thy people.

Bless this our beloved church: keep them still in unity and earnestness of heart. In all fresh advances that we hope to make, be with us and help us.

Bless our dear orphan children, let them all be Thine. Help us in the building of new houses for orphan girls, and provide for our necessities in that matter.

Bless the dear sons of this church, trained at our own side, who go forth to preach the gospel: whether they be in the College, or whether they are preaching outside of it, let the blessing of the Lord be with every one of them. And all those who go from house to house with books, seeking to speak a word in season to the neglected; do Thou help them, and make this church still to be the fruitful mother of children. Yea, make every one of us useful to Thy glory.

All other churches do Thou remember with even a greater blessing. Let all the churches of Jesus Christ on the continent, as well as in this island, and far away in America and in all our distant colonies, all be revived and refreshed. Yea, and those that speak not our tongue, those advanced posts among the heathen: do Thou remember them favourably, and visit them graciously.

Oh, that the time were come when war shall cease, when drunkenness shall be put away, when all cruelty shall be abolished, when every superstition shall come to an end, and all oppression of man by man. When shall it be, save when He cometh, whose right it is to reign? At the very thought of His coming our spirits begin to glow and burn with lofty hopes. Come quickly; even so, come quickly Lord Jesus. 'Let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.'

SERMON: No. 1539 (23 May 1880).

SCRIPTURE; 1 John 2.

HYMNS: 810, 784, 798.

## Chapter 24. Free Grace, and Free Giving

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### Chapter 24

#### Free Grace, and Free Giving

'Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God,  
even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath  
given us everlasting consolation and good hope  
through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish  
you in every good word and work'

(2 Thessalonians 2:16-17).

Glorious Lord God; our faith is fully assured of Thy being, and our heart rejoices in Thine infinite love. Blessed was the day when first we knew our God. We mourn and lament with deep penitence, that we should have lived so long strangers to our best friend, to Him in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways.

It is of Thy grace that we were ever brought to know Thee. Had we been left to ourselves we should have wandered on, and have remained in darkness till this day; but blessed be Thy name, O Thou God of all grace, Thou hast revealed Thyself to us, Thou hast brought Thy life to our deaths and made us alive in Thee; Thou hast brought Thy light to our blindness, and made us to behold Thee; and now Thou art not only the greatest source of joy to our spirit, but Thou art all our joy — we have none apart from Thee. Whatever of comfort we find in the creature, we know it is but fickle; and while it is there, it comes from Thee, for all these things are empty, and vain, and void without Thee. Whom have we in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that we desire beside Thee! And Lord, we bless Thee for ever teaching us the way of faith; for enabling us to cast our guilty souls upon the Divine propitiation, made in Christ Jesus; for peace, like a river, has streamed into our spirit ever since. We bless Thee for the power to trust Thee with everything else, for time as well as for eternity. We are sure we never live except as we live by faith; that all else is but death, and the counterfeit of life. Lord God, Thou hast written death before our eyes on all the creature; Thou hast made us see the vanity of the most substantial things on earth. Behold we walk as in a vain show, and we disquiet ourselves in vain. All things are but shadows; but Thou, Thou art the eternal All. Casting our anchor upon Thee we are steadfast, and fixed, and safe; but all things else are quicksands. We cannot — dare not — find comfort in, nor make a hope of them. Thou, Lord, art all our expectation, all our salvation, and all our delight; and this morning, in the act of public devotion, we would cry, 'My soul waits only upon God; for my expectation is from Him.'

Now this day, be pleased, in infinite mercy by Christ Jesus, to visit Thine assembled people. Give us first a sense of perfect pardon. May there be nothing between any child of Thine and Thyself,

great Father, that could mar the perfection of communion. May we know that Thou hast forgiven us for Jesus Christ's sake. And as for anything in us that would grieve Thy Spirit, take it away at once, and then let Thy Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. Oh, now give us the spirit of adoption. If indeed we be Thine, by Thy Fatherly love to us, we do beseech Thee breathe into every child of Thine a sense of love, a sense of Thy near presence. And then, Lord, wilt Thou deal with us according to Thy wisdom and prudence. Take out of us every evil and false way: aught wherein we have deceived ourselves do Thou remove. Anything which looks like growth in grace, but which is mere puffing up, do Thou take away; aught which we prize, which is but counterfeit, do Thou utterly destroy: and oh, bring us of Thy great love to know Christ in truth, that what we know we may know, and not think we know. And oh, that there might be a deep reality about our Christian experience, and knowledge; that the truth of God may be incarnate in the truth which lives in us.

Dear Saviour, Thou knowest the peculiar trials and conditions of all these Thy people; and, we do pray Thee, now deal with each child of Thine according to his special need. Great Physician walk this hospital. Come and look on each special case, and may there be a masterpiece of Thy heavenly surgery in the case of each one of us.

Many of us need comfort; our heart is cast down within us. There are many of Thy saints in whose soul deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts. Command Thy lovingkindness this morning, and let Thy song be with us at this moment. Up from the shades may we ascend into the eternal light. Oh, that the sun of Thy love might shine full on our brows, till our faces shall be bright like the face of Moses!

Oh, that we might have such fellowship with God this morning, that we might defy Satan, defy unbelief, defy the flesh, defy the world, with a holy joy which comes not of the creature, and which the creature cannot mar -a joy unspeakable and full of glory', a draught out of the eternal mountains which well up from the deep which lieth under, in the immutable and everlasting love and decree of God. Oh, let it be so with every child of Thine at this good hour.

Now we do, with all our hearts, pray Thee to gather in the rest of Thy family who, as yet, are far off from Thee. O mighty grace, seek out the prodigal! O mighty love, receive the prodigals when they come back! O mighty grace, change their hearts and make them to love the great Father.

We do pray for all who are out of the way; for such, in this congregation as remain unsaved. Lord, let them not die in their sins. Have mercy upon some that have had a godly training, but remain ungodly. Oh, condemn them not, we pray Thee, with such a mass of guilt upon them; but save them yet. Lord, have great mercy upon such as are ignorant of Christ, and therefore sin, but know not what they do. Let them become trophies of Thy wondrous love. Gather them in; oh, gather them in today.

Now Thy servant, with a full heart, desires to bless Thee for the continual increase which Thou dost make to this church. Thou hast refreshed our soul by the testimonies of many that have lately found the Saviour. Blessed be the Lord, the Holy Ghost, who hath not suffered the Word to fall to the ground, but who hath added to the church daily of such as shall be saved. Lord, continue this great favour. Stir up our dear brethren and sisters to continual prayer for a blessing. May the fire on this altar never go out; but as we have enjoyed, these many years, an unexampled prosperity,

oh, that we might continue to enjoy it still, unworthy though we be. Still, Lord, help us in every holy word and work.

Prosper us in the enterprises to which we set our hands. Bless our young men that go forth from us to preach the Word. Blessed is the man that hath his quiver full of them. May there be many such reared up in this church that shall preach Christ crucified. Give to the church more and more the spirit of evangelization, and may many young men in the church, that are now sitting still and quiet, be moved to preach even in the streets, the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Lord, renew the zeal of the church towards the Sabbath school. May there be more coming forward to give themselves to the training of the young for Christ. Oh, say to many a Peter, 'Feed My lambs.'

Revive the church of God in every place, we beseech Thee, in this dear isle of ours, so highly favoured; and on the continent, and among our beloved brethren in America and Australia. Let the kingdom of Jesus Christ spread in all countries. Let Thy kingdom come, great God, aye, let it come speedily.

It doth not trouble us to think that Christ shall come; it is indeed our joy. Make no tarrying, O our Lord! But meanwhile make us watchful, earnest, active; and may we be as good servants, whose loins are girt, and whose lamps are trimmed. May we wait for the Master till He cometh.

Now give a blessing this morning: we come back to that prayer of ours - a blessing to each one. Bless me, even me also, O my Father! The prayer is offered in the name of Jesus Christ the Mediator. Amen.

SERMON: No. 1542 (13 June 1880).

SCRIPTURE: 2 Thessalonians 1:1 to 2 Thessalonians 2:4.

HYMNS: 728, 694, 248.

## Chapter 25. An Evening In Prayer #1

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### Chapter 25

#### An Evening Prayer — 1

'But without faith it is impossible to please him:

for he that cometh to God must believe that he

is, and that he is a rewarder of them that

diligently seek him'

(Hebrews 11:6).

Our Father, our faith is in Thee; our expectation is from Thee, our love goeth out towards Thee; we believe Thee; we accept every word of Thy sacred revelation as being eternal verity and immutable truth. Sometimes we are troubled to know whether the promises are for us -whether we really have a share in covenant blessings, but we thank Thee that Thou hast helped many of us to hold a trial in the court of conscience, and since our heart condemns us not we have confidence towards God. Let this be the portion of all Thy children. May we come away from doubting and fearing and hesitating, and may we believe. Oh, for the faith which trusts the bare promise of God! Let us not be asking for signs and wonders, and withholding faith because these are not given to us; but whatsoever we find in thy Word may we believe it to be sure truth, and hang our souls upon it. Above all things, give us grace to trust in Jesus, in the full atonement made, and the utmost ransom paid. 'He is all my salvation and all my desire.' May we each one be able to say this of Him who 'of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption':

'Thou, O Christ, art all we want;

More than all in Thee we find.'

Oh, let us never mistrust Thee. Thou blessed Son of God. May we have no doubt about Thy Father's love — no suspicion as to the love of the Spirit; but may we joy in God by Jesus Christ, through whom also we have received the atonement. May we come to anchor, and, casting anchor in the port of peace, may we never be troubled again about that question, but be able to say 'My Father' with an unflinching lip. The Lord grant that we may all of us have not only faith in Christ, but full assurance of faith, whereby we shall trust, for the present and for the future, everything in those dear hands that were nailed to the cross for us. Help Thy children to perform an act of faith tonight by leaving all their troubles apart and coming close to their Lord. He has sweat great drops for us, and now Thou biddest Thine own children to cease therefrom, even as of old Thou badest the priests to wear no garment that caused sweat, because they were to find rest in Thy service and peace in the performance of their holy duties. Even so may Thy people do.

O Lord God, even while we have been reading that chapter, of which some are so much afraid, we have felt that we could well trust Thee with a boundless sovereignty, and we do. Thou art so good, so kind, so just, so holy, that no mistake is possible to Thee. Thou art the fountain and source of all law: what Thou commandest it is ours to obey. We have heard the thunder of that sentence, 'Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?'; and in meekness of heart and lowliness of spirit we bow before the infinite glory of Thy majesty, and it is to us the most joyful of all songs, 'The Lord reigneth: let the earth rejoice. Let the multitudes of the isles be glad thereof

Lord, we yield up to Thy sovereignty all that we are and all that we have. Do as Thou wilt with us. Whenever our wishes grow into willings, and our willings become obtrusive fault-findings with Thy providence, have mercy upon Thy servants in this thing, and take away from us the evil heart of unbelief that dares to question Thee. Be this the finale of our every prayer, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt'; and be this the great pleading of our heart every day, 'Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

O Thou who art God, we have heard Thee say, 'Be still and know that I am God;' and what a silence hast Thou made in our heart, where else there had been murmuring and complaint, when we have understood, 'The Lord hath done it.' Aaron held his peace when he knew this; and so would we. Nay, we would do more. We would speak out of our griefs and our downcastings, and say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him, for the Lord is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. Blessed be His name.' And now, our Father, hear the pleadings of Thy children as we thus bow before Thee and yield everything to Thy parental will. Now bless Thy children. Sanctify us, Lord, spirit, soul, and body. Cleanse us even as with hyssop. Cleanse us in our inward parts, and make us to know wisdom in the secret places of our spirit.

And, Lord, wilt Thou also help such of Thy children as are very sorely burdened. When Thou layest on a burden, give strength equal to it, and if the burden should press heavier and heavier, hold the everlasting arms yet more consciously underneath us. Remember some present who have lately been bereaved. They lately had the sentence of death in themselves by reason of sore disease of body. Help, strengthen, comfort, deliver. The widow and the fatherless are always Thy care. Look, most tender and compassionate Lord, upon all such as are in any trouble of mind, or body, or estate; and let the rich comforts of the Comforter Himself be dispensed to them.

And, Lord, wilt Thou keep those that are not troubled. Let them rejoice with trembling. Wilt Thou preserve us all from any of the intoxication that comes of prosperity, and when our heart is glad, if it be not with the high joy that comes of God, let us always look to Thee to sober us in such moments. The Lord lead us safely on to His eternal kingdom. We will not ask whether the road will be rough or smooth. We leave that with Thee; only bring us to behold the face of Him we love. If Thou wilt give us bread to eat and raiment to put on, and bring us to our Father's house in peace, it is all we ask below. Whatsoever Thy will ordains, only do bring us to our Father's house in peace. Grant us this.

Father, one other prayer. It is that Thou wouldest bless those that do not know Thee. We pray Thee that we may have in our own hearts much of the heaviness that Paul knew, when we think of the many ungodly ones, especially of those that are of our own kith and kin, such as have heard the gospel from their very childhood, in whose father's house there was a prophet's chamber,

whose mother died with the name of Jesus on her lips, whose father, grown grey with age, is on the road to glory, and they are still unconverted. Oh, bring them in! Dear Father, there are many of us praying now from the bottom of our hearts that all our children may be Thy children, and that all related to us may be of the family of Chnst. Then, Lord, we thank Thee for that blessed word, 'The promise is unto you and to your children', but Thou didst not stop there, for Thou hast said, 'and to them that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.' Lord, bring in the far-off ones. Save poor fallen women: save the equally fallen men.

O God, have mercy upon heathen lands; upon Popish countries; upon those that sit in the Mahometan moon-darkness. The Lord be pleased to let His light shine over all the sons of men, and accomplish the number of His redeemed, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. And to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be glory, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

SUNDAY EVENING, 20 August 1885.

SCRIPTURE: Rom. 9.

HYMNS: 734, 623, 624.

## Chapter 26. An Evening In Prayer #2

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### Chapter 26

#### An Evening Prayer — 2

'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that  
he loved us, and sent his Son to be the  
propitiation for our sins'

(1 John 4:10).

Glorious God, there are many of us who can bless Thee that we know Thee. There was a time when we lived in Thy world but had never known the Creator. We were partakers of Thy providence, but we did not know the Provider. We went up and down in the sunlight, but we were blind. There were voices all around us, but we were deaf to all things spiritual. And some of us lived in this way for years.

Some in Thy presence are in that way this evening. They know not God: neither do they desire the knowledge of Thy ways. They can see and understand many things, but they do not desire to know Him in whom they live and move and have their being. It was a happy day for us when, in the infinite sovereignty of Thy love, Thou didst look upon us and call us by Thy grace. Then did the dead heart begin to beat. Then did light enter the darkened eye, and then we turned to Thee. It was the best discovery we had ever made when we found that there was, after all, a God, ready to hear us, willing to listen to our cries.

But, Lord, at the first this great discovery caused us much pain, for we found in our hearts an enmity to Thee, a natural alienation; and we found that we had grieved Thee, that we had vexed Thy spirit by sin. We admire Thee all the more for this, for we would not care for a God who did not hate sin. Oh, with what reverence we fell at Thy feet even when we heard Thee speak in tones of thunder, and say, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.' When Thy grace had really made us to know Thee, Thy justice, terrible as it was, had our submissive reverence. We felt that, if our souls were sent to hell, righteousness and justice would approve it well. O God, we remember how we lay at Thy feet. Our thoughts were as a case of knives cutting our hearts; and then didst Thou come to us, and Thou didst make known Thy love.

O blessed day, in which Thou didst reveal Thyself dressed in the silken robes of love! When we saw that Jesus died that we might live, that the cross was the best proof of divine affection, then we looked to Jesus suffering in our stead. We trusted in the great atonement, and we found a peace. Oh, what shall we say of it? Our very soul doth sing at the remembrance of the peace which has never been taken from us. Many days have passed since first we knew it, and many changes we have seen, but we have never lost our hold on Christ; nor has He ever lost His hold of us; and here we are still, to weep to the praise of the mercy that we have found, and to tell to

others, as we have breath to speak, that the Lord is a great sin-pardoning God. There is none like Him, passing by transgression, iniquity, and sin, and, for Jesu's sake, receiving the vilest of the vile to His bosom, and casting out none that come unto Him; taking up even the blasphemer and the drunkard, yea, the very worst, and washing even these from their crimson sins and making them whiter than newly-fallen snow.

O Lord, we sometimes wish that we could sing like cherubim and seraphim. Then would we praise Thee better. But as it is, human voices are all we have; but they shall be used to the praise of 'free grace and dying love', to which we owe all that we have, and all we ever hope to have.

Now, Lord, tonight, bless this people. O my Lord, bless these dear friends from whom I have been separated for a while. Bless and prosper them. Let those that fear Thy name be happy in Thee while we are preaching tonight. May those who are truly thine, have a joyous and happy season. May they rejoice in the great love of God, and feel their souls overflow with delight at their remembrance of it.

But, oh, we beseech Thee, especially save souls tonight. Make up for our ten dumb Sabbaths. Give us tonight ten times as much — nay, it must be eleven times as much: we cannot afford to lose this one. Oh, give us eleven times as much blessing as we have ever had before. May many, many, many be brought out of darkness into marvellous light, and delivered from the prison-house into the liberty of Christ.

Lord, there are some here that have heard us many times, and yet Thou hast not spoken to their hearts effectually. Oh, speak tonight. Take them in hand, great Lord. They shall be made willing in the day of Thy power. Oh, that this might be the day of Thy power! There are others who are quite strangers to this house, and perhaps to the gospel. May the new note strike them. From the silver cornet of the gospel may there come to them a sound unknown before, which shall reach their very soul; and may they answer to it. Bid them come to Christ and live tonight.

O divine love, sweetly draw them. Cast the bands of love about them, and the cords of a man, and draw them to Thyself. Young men and young women, aye, and old men and old women - draw them to Thyself, most divine Lord; and may there be many trophies to the power of the gospel tonight. All our prayer is now before Thee. We wish everybody in the house to be saved. The Lord grant it, for Christ's sake. Amen.

SUNDAY EVENING, 30 January 1887.

SCRIPTURE Gen. 22.

HYMNS: 199, 782, 288.

## Appendix 1. Keep In Mercy's Way

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### Appendix 1

#### Keep in Mercy's Way

Let sermons and prayers be thy delight, because they are roads wherein the Saviour walketh. Let the righteous be thy constant company, for such ever bring Him where they come. It is the least thing thou canst do to stand where grace usually dispenseth its favour. Even the beggar writes his petition on the flagstone of a frequented thoroughfare because he hopeth that among the many passers, some few at least will give him charity; learn from him to offer thy prayers where mercies are known to move in the greatest number, that amid them all there may be one for thee.

Keep thy sail up when there is no wind that, when it blows, thou mayest not have need to prepare for it; use means when thou seest no grace attending them, for thus wilt thou be in the way when grace comes. Better go fifty times and gain nothing, than lose one good opportunity. If the angel stir not the pool, yet lie there still, for it may be the moment when thou leavest it will be the season of his descending.

Think it not possible to pray too frequently; but at morning, at noon, and at eventide lift up thy soul unto God. Let not despondency stop the voice of thy supplication, for He who heareth the young ravens when they cry, will in due time listen to the trembling words of thy desire. Give Him no rest until He hear thee; like the importunate widow, be thou always at the heels of the great One; give not up because the past has proved apparently fruitless; remember Jericho stood firm for six days, but yet when they gave an exceeding great shout, it fell flat to the ground. 'Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord. Let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease.' Let groans, and sighs, and vows keep up perpetual assault at heaven's doors.

'Heav'n's never deaf, But when man's heart is dumb.'

There is not a single promise which, if followed up, will not lead thee to the Lord. He is the centre of the circle, and the promises, like radii, all meet in Him, and thence become Yea and Amen. As the streams run to the ocean, so do all the sweet words of Jesus tend to Himself: launch thy barque upon any one of them, and it shall bear thee onward to the broad sea of His love. The sure words of Scripture are the footsteps of Jesus imprinted on the soil of mercy — follow the track and find Him. The promises are cards of admission not only to the throne, the mercy-seat, and the audience-chamber, but to the very heart of Jesus. Look aloft to the sky of Revelation, and thou wilt yet find a constellation of promises which shall guide thine eye to the Star of Bethlehem. Above all, cry aloud when thou readest a promise — 'Remember Thy word unto Thy servant, on which Thou hast caused me to hope.' From *The Saint and His Saviour* (first published 1857, pp. 151-6).

## Appendix 2. Our Public Prayer

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### Appendix 2

#### Our Public Prayer

It has sometimes been the boast of Episcopalians that Churchmen go to their churches to pray and worship God, but that Dissenters merely assemble to hear sermons. Our reply to this is, that albeit there may be some professors who are guilty of this evil, it is not true of the people of God among us, and these are the only persons who ever will in any church really enjoy devotion. Our congregations gather together to worship God, and we assert, and feel no hesitation in so asserting, that there is as much true and acceptable prayer offered in our ordinary Nonconformist services as in the best and most pompous performances of the Church of England.

Moreover, if the observation be meant to imply that the hearing of sermons is not worshipping God, it is founded on a gross mistake, for rightly to listen to the gospel is one of the noblest parts of the adoration of the Most High. It is a mental exercise, when rightly performed, in which all the faculties of the spiritual man are called into devotional action. Reverently hearing the Word exercises our humility, instructs our faith, irradiates us with joy, inflames us with love, inspires us with zeal, and lifts us up towards heaven. Many a time a sermon has been a kind of Jacob's ladder upon which we have seen the angels of God ascending and descending, and the covenant God himself at the top thereof. We have often felt when God has spoken through his servants into our souls, 'This is none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven. 'We have magnified the name of the Lord and praised him with all our heart while he has spoken to us by his Spirit which he has given unto men. Hence there is not the wide distinction to be drawn between preaching and prayer that some would have us admit; for the one part of the service softly blends into the other, and the sermon frequently inspires the prayer and the hymn. True preaching is an acceptable adoration of God by the manifestation of his gracious attributes: the testimony of his gospel, which pre-eminently glorifies him, and the obedient hearing of revealed truth, are an acceptable form of worship to the Most High, and perhaps one of the most spiritual in which the human mind can be engaged.

Nevertheless, as the old Roman poet tells us, it is right to learn from our enemies, and therefore it may be possible that our liturgical opponents have pointed out to us what is in some instances a weak place in our public services. It is to be feared that our exercises are not in every case moulded into the best form, or presented in the most commendable fashion. There are meeting-houses in which the supplications are neither so devout nor so earnest as we desire; in other places the earnestness is so allied with ignorance, and the devotion so marred with rant, that no intelligent believer can enter into the service with pleasure. Praying in the Holy Ghost is not universal among us, neither do all pray with the understanding as well as with the heart. There is room for improvement, and in some quarters there is an imperative demand for it. Let me, therefore, very earnestly caution you, beloved brethren, against spoiling your services by your prayers: make it your solemn resolve that all the engagements of the sanctuary shall be of the best

kind. Be assured that free prayer is the most scriptural, and should be the most excellent form of public supplication. If you lose faith in what you are doing you will never do it well; settle it in your minds therefore, that before the Lord you are worshipping in a manner which is warranted by the Word of God, and accepted of the Lord. The expression, 'reading prayers', to which we are, now so accustomed, is not to be found in Holy Scripture, rich as it is in words for conveying religious thought; and the phrase is not there because the thing itself had no existence. Where in the writings of the apostles meet we with the bare idea of a liturgy? Prayer in the assemblies of the early Christians was unrestricted to any form of words. Tertullian writes, 'We pray without a prompter because from the heart' (Apologet. c. 30). Justin Martyr describes the presiding minister as praying 'according to his ability' (Apol. I, c. 68. p. 270. Ed. Otto). It would be difficult to discover when and where liturgies began; their introduction was gradual, and as we believe, co-extensive with the decline of purity in the church; the introduction of them among Nonconformists would mark the era of our decline and fall. The subject tempts me to linger, but it is not the point in hand, and therefore I pass on, only remarking that you will find the matter of liturgies ably handled by Dr. John Owen, whom you will do well to consult (A Discourse concerning Liturgies and Their Imposition, Owen's Works, vol. 15, Goold's Edition). Be it ours to prove the superiority of extempore prayer by making it more spiritual and earnest than liturgical devotion. It is a great pity when the observation is forced from the hearer, Our minister preaches far better than he prays: this is not after the model of our Lord; he spake as never man spake -and as for his prayers, they so impressed his disciples that they said, 'Lord, teach us to pray' All our faculties should concentrate their energy, and the whole man should be elevated to his highest point of vigour while in public prayer, the Holy Ghost meanwhile baptizing soul and spirit with his sacred influence; but slovenly, careless, lifeless talk in the guise of prayer, made to fill up a certain space in the service, is a weariness to man, and an abomination to God. Had free prayer been universally of a higher order a liturgy would never have been thought of, and to-day forms of prayer have no better apology than the feebleness of extemporaneous devotions. The secret is that we are not so really devout at heart as we should be. Habitual communion with God must be maintained, or our public prayers will be vapid or formal. If there be no melting of the glacier high up in the ravines of the mountain, there will be no descending rivulets to cheer the plain. Private prayer is the drill ground for our more public exercises, neither can we long neglect it without being out of order when before the people. Our prayers must never grovel, they must soar and mount. We need a heavenly frame of mind. Our addresses to the throne of grace must be solemn and humble, not flippant and loud, or formal and careless. The colloquial form of speech is out of place before the Lord; we must bow reverently and with deepest awe. We may speak boldly with God, but still he is in heaven and we are upon earth, and we are to avoid presumption. In supplication we are peculiarly before the throne of the Infinite, and as the courtier in the king's palace puts on another mien and another manner than that which he exhibits to his fellow courtiers, so should it be with us. We have noticed in the churches of Holland, that as soon as the minister begins to preach every man puts his hat on, but the instant he turns to pray everybody takes his hat off: this was the custom in the older Puritanic congregations of England, and it lingered long among the Baptists; they wore their caps during those parts of the service which they conceived were not direct worship, but put them off as soon as there was a direct approach to God, either in song or in prayer.

I think the practice unseemly, and the reason for it erroneous. I have urged that the distinction between prayer and hearing is not great, and I feel sure no one would propose to return to the old custom or the opinion of which it was the index; but still there is a difference, and inasmuch as in prayer we are more directly talking with God rather than seeking the edification of our fellow men, we must put our shoes from of our feet, for the place whereon we stand is holy ground.

Let the Lord alone be the object of your prayers. Beware of having an eye to the auditors; beware of becoming rhetorical to please the listeners. Prayer must not be transformed into 'an oblique sermon.' It is little short of blasphemy to make devotion an occasion for display. Fine prayers are generally very wicked prayers. In the presence of the Lord of hosts it ill becomes a sinner to parade the feathers and finery of tawdry speech with the view of winning applause from his fellow mortals. Hypocrites who dare to do this have their reward, but it is one to be dreaded. A heavy sentence of condemnation was passed upon a minister when it was flatteringly said that his prayer was the most eloquent ever offered to a Boston congregation.

We may aim at exciting the yearnings and aspirations of those who hear us in prayer; but every word and thought must be Godward, and only so far touching upon the people as may be needful to bring them and their wants before the Lord. Remember the people in your prayers, but do not mould your supplications to win their esteem: look up, look up with both eyes.

Avoid all vulgarities in prayer. I must acknowledge to having heard some, but it would be unprofitable to recount them; the more especially as they become less frequent every day. We seldom now meet with the vulgarities of prayer which were once so common in Methodist prayer-meetings, much commoner probably by report than in reality. Uneducated people must, when in earnest, pray in their own way, and their language will frequently shock the fastidious if not the devout; but for this allowance must be made, and if the spirit is evidently sincere we may forgive uncomely expressions. I once, at a prayer-meeting, heard a poor man pray thus: 'Lord, watch over these young people during the feast time, for thou knowest, Lord, how their enemies watch for them as a cat watches for mice.' Some ridiculed the expression, but it appeared to me to be natural and expressive, considering the person using it. A little gentle instruction and a hint or two will usually prevent a repetition of anything objectionable in such cases, but we, who occupy the pulpit, must be careful to be quite clear ourselves. The biographer of that remarkable American Methodist preacher, Jacob Gruber, mentions as an instance of his ready wit, that after having heard a young Calvinistic minister violently attack his creed, he was asked to conclude with prayer, and among other petitions, prayed that the Lord would bless the young man who had been preaching, and grant him much grace/that his heart might become as soft as his head'. To say nothing of the bad taste of such public animadversion upon a fellow minister, every right-minded man will see that the throne of the Most High is not the place for uttering such vulgar witticisms. Most probably the young orator deserved a castigation for his offence against charity, but the older one sinned ten times more in his want of reverence. Choice words are for the King of kings, not such as ribald tongues have defiled.

Another fault equally to be avoided in prayer is an unhallowed and sickening superabundance of endearing words..When 'Dear Lord,' and 'Blessed Lord,' and 'Sweet Lord,' come over and over again as vain repetitions, they are among the worst of blots. I must confess I should feel no revulsion in my mind to the words, 'Dear Jesus,' if they fell from the lips of a Rutherford, or a

Hawker, or a Herbert; but when I hear fond and familiar expressions hackneyed by persons not at all remarkable for spirituality, I am inclined to wish that they could, in some way or other, come to a better understanding of the true relation existing between man and God. The word 'dear' has come from daily use to be so common, and so small, and in some cases so silly and affected a monosyllable, that interlarding one's prayers with it is not to edification. The strongest objection exists to the constant repetition of the word 'Lord,' which occurs in the early prayers of young converts, and even among students. The words, 'O Lord! O Lord! O Lord!' grieve us when we hear them so perpetually repeated. 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain', is a great commandment, and although the law may be broken unwittingly, yet its breach is still a sin and a very solemn one. God's name is not to be a stop-gap to make up for our want of words. Take care to use most reverently the name of the infinite Jehovah. The Jews in their sacred writings either leave a space for the word 'Jehovah' or else write the word, 'Adonai', because they conceive that holy name to be too sacred for common use: we need not be so superstitious, but it were well to be scrupulously reverent. A profusion of 'ohs!' and other interjections may be well dispensed with, young speakers are often at fault here.

Avoid that kind of prayer which may be called — though the subject is one on which language has not given us many terms — a sort of peremptory demanding of God. It is delightful to hear a man wrestle with God, and say, 'I will not let thee go except thou bless me,' but that must be said softly, and not in a hectoring spirit, as though we could command and exact blessings from the Lord of all. Remember, it is still a man wrestling, even though permitted to wrestle with the eternal I AM. Jacob halted on his thigh after that night's holy conflict, to let him see that God is terrible, and that his prevailing power did not lie in himself.

We are taught to say, 'Our Father,' but still it is, 'Our Father who art in heaven.' Familiarity there may be, but holy familiarity; boldness, but the boldness which springs from grace and is the work of the Spirit; not the boldness of the rebel who carries a brazen front in the presence of his offended king, but the boldness of the child who fears because he loves, and loves because he fears. Never fall into a vainglorious style of impertinent address to God; he is not to be assailed as an antagonist, but entreated with as our Lord and God. Humble and lowly let us be in spirit, and so let us pray

Pray when you profess to pray, and don't talk about it. Business men say, 'A place for everything and everything in its place;' preach in the sermon and pray in the prayer. Disquisitions upon our need of help in prayer are not prayer. Why do not men go at once to prayer - why stand beating about the bush; instead of saying what they ought to do and want to do, why not set to work in God's name and do it? In downright earnestness, address yourself to intercession, and set your face towards the Lord. Plead for the supply of the great and constant needs of the church, and do not fail to urge, with devout fervour, the special requirements of the present time and audience. Let the sick, the poor, the dying, the heathen, the Jew, and all forgotten classes of people, be mentioned as they press upon your heart.

Pray for your people as saints and sinners — not as if they were all saints. Mention the young and the aged; the impressed and the careless; the devout and the backsliding. Never turn to the right hand or to the left, but plough on in the furrow of real prayer. Let your confessions of sin and your thanksgivings be truthful and to the point; and let your petitions be presented as if you believed in

God and had no doubt as to the efficacy of prayer: I say this, because so many pray in such a formal manner as to lead observers to conclude that they thought it a very decent thing to pray, but, after all, a very poor and doubtful business as to any practical result. Pray as one who has tried and proved his God, and therefore comes with undoubting confidence to renew his pleadings: and do remember to pray to God right through the prayer, and never fall to talking or preaching - much less, as some do, to scolding and grumbling. As a rule, if called upon to preach, conduct the prayer yourself, and if you should be highly esteemed in the ministry, as I trust you may be, make a point, with great courtesy, but equal firmness, to resist the practice of choosing men to pray with the idea of honouring them by giving them something to do. Our public devotions ought never to be degraded into opportunities for compliment. I have heard prayer and singing now and then called 'the preliminary services,' as if they were but a preface to the sermon; this is rare I hope among us — if it were common it would be to our deep disgrace. I endeavour invariably to take all the service myself for my own sake, and I think also for the people's. I do not believe that 'anybody will do for the praying.' No, sirs, it is my solemn conviction that the prayer is one of the most weighty, useful, and honourable parts of the service, and that it ought to be even more considered than the sermon. There must be no putting up of anybodies and nobodies to pray, and then the selection of the abler man to preach. It may happen through weakness, or upon a special occasion, that it may be a relief to the minister to have some one to offer prayer for him; but if the Lord has made you love your 'work you will not often or readily fulfil this part of it by proxy. If you delegate the service at all, let it be to one in whose spirituality and present preparedness you have the fullest confidence, but to pitch on a giftless brother unawares, and put him forward to get through the devotions is shameful.

'Shall we serve heaven with less respect Than we do minister to our gross selves?'

Appoint the ablest man to pray, and let the sermon be slurred sooner than the approach to heaven. Let the Infinite Jehovah be served with our best; let prayer addressed to the Divine Majesty be carefully weighed, and presented with all the powers of an awakened heart and a spiritual understanding. He who has been by communion with God prepared to minister to the people is usually of all men present the most fit to engage in prayer; to lay out a programme which puts up another brother in his place, is to mar the harmony of the service, to rob the preacher of an exercise which would brace him for his sermon, and in many instances to suggest comparisons between one part of the service and the other which ought never to be tolerated.

If unprepared brethren are to be sent into the pulpit to do my praying for me when I am engaged to preach, I do not see why I might not be allowed to pray, and then retire to let these brethren do the sermonizing. I am not able to see any reason for depriving me of the holiest, sweetest, and most profitable exercise which my Lord has allotted me; if I may have my choice, I will sooner yield up the sermon than the prayer. Thus much I have said in order to impress upon you that you must highly esteem public prayer, and seek of the Lord for the gifts and graces necessary to its right discharge.

Those who despise all extempore prayer will probably catch at these remarks and use them against it, but I can assure them that the faults adverted to are not common among us, and are indeed almost extinct; while the scandal caused by them never was, at the worst, so great as that caused by the way in which the liturgical service is often performed. Far too often is the church

service hurried through in a manner as indevout as if it were a ballad-singer's ditty. The words are parroted without the slightest appreciation of their meaning; not sometimes, but very frequently, in the places set apart for Episcopal worship, you may see the eyes of the people, and the eyes of the choristers, and the eyes of the parson himself, wandering about in all directions, while evidently from the very tone of the reading there is no feeling of sympathy with what is being read. (It is but fair to admit, and we do so with pleasure, that of late years this fault has grown more and more rare.)

I have been at funerals when the burial service of the Church of England has been galloped through so indecorously that it has taken all the grace I had to prevent my throwing a hassock at the creature's head. I have felt so indignant that I have not known what to do, to hear, in the presence of mourners whose hearts were bleeding, a man rattling through the service as if he were paid by the piece, and had more work to follow, and therefore desired to get it through as quickly as possible. What effect he could think he was producing, or what good result could come from words jerked forth and hurled out with vengeance and vehemence, I cannot imagine. It is really shocking to think of how that very wonderful burial service is murdered, and made into an abomination by the mode in which it is frequently read. I merely mention this because, if they criticise our prayers too severely, we can bring a formidable countercharge to silence them. Better far, however, for us to amend our own blunders than find fault with others. In order to make our public prayer what it should be, the first necessary is, that it must be a matter of the heart. A man must be really in earnest in supplication. It must be true prayer, and if it be such, it will, like love, cover a multitude of sins. You can pardon a man's familiarities and his vulgarities too, when you clearly see that his inmost heart is speaking to his Maker, and that it is only the man's defects of education which create his faults, and not any moral or spiritual vices of his heart. The pleader in public must be in earnest; for a sleepy prayer — what can be a worse preparation for a sermon? A sleepy prayer — what can make people more dislike going up to the house of God at all? Cast your whole soul into the exercise. If ever your whole manhood was engaged in anything, let it be in drawing near unto God in public. So pray, that by a divine attraction, you draw the whole congregation with you up to the throne of God. So pray, that by the power of the Holy Spirit resting on you, you express the desires and thoughts of every one present, and stand as the one voice for the hundreds of beating hearts which are glowing with fervour before the throne of God.

Next to this, our prayers must be appropriate. I do not say go into every minute detail of the circumstances of the congregation. As I have said before, there is no need to make the public prayer a gazette of the week's events, or a register of the births, deaths, and marriages of your people, but the general movements that have taken place in the congregation should be noted by the minister's careful heart.

He should bring the joys and sorrows of his people alike before the throne of grace, and ask that the divine benediction may rest upon his flock in all their movements, their exercises, engagements, and holy enterprises, and that the forgiveness of God may be extended to their shortcomings and innumerable sins.

Then, by way of negative canon, I should say, do not let your prayer be long. I think it was John Macdonald who used to say. 'If you are in the spirit of prayer, do not be long, because other people will not be able to keep pace with you in such unusual spirituality; and if you are not in the

spirit of prayer, do not be long, because you will then be sure to weary the listeners.'

Livingstone says of Robert Bruce, of Edinburgh, the famous contemporary of Andrew Melville, 'No man in his time spoke with such evidence and power of the Spirit. No man had so many seals of Conversion; yea, many of his hearers thought no man, since the apostles, spake with such power ... He was very short in prayer when others were present, but every sentence was like a strong bolt shot up to heaven. I have heard him say that he wearied when others were long in prayer; but, being alone, he spent much time in wrestling and prayer.' A man may, on special occasions, if he be unusually moved and carried out of himself, pray for twenty minutes in the long morning prayer, but this should not often happen. My friend, Dr. Charles Brown, of Edinburgh, lays it down, as a result of his deliberate judgment, that ten minutes is the limit to which public prayer ought to be prolonged. Our Puritanic forefathers used to pray for three-quarters of an hour, or more, but then you must recollect that they did not know that they would ever have the opportunity of praying again before an assembly, and therefore, took their fill of it; and besides, people were not inclined in those days to quarrel with the length of prayers or of sermons so much as they do nowadays.

You cannot pray too long in private. We do not limit you to ten minutes there, or ten hours, or ten weeks if you like. The more you are on your knees alone the better. We are now speaking of those public prayers which come before or after the sermon, and for these ten minutes is a better limit than fifteen. Only one in a thousand would complain of you for being too short, while scores will murmur at your being wearisome in length. 'He prayed me into a good frame of mind,' George Whitefield once said of a certain preacher, 'and if he had stopped there, it would have been very well; but he prayed me out of it again by keeping on. 'The abundant longsuffering of God has been exemplified in his sparing some preachers, who have been great sinners in this direction; they have done much injury to the piety of God's people by their longwinded orations, and yet God, in his mercy, has permitted them still to officiate in the sanctuary.

Alas! for those who have to listen to pastors who pray in public for five-and-twenty minutes, and then ask God to forgive their 'shortcomings'! Do not be too long, for several reasons First, because you weary yourselves and the people; and secondly, because being too long in prayer puts your people out of heart for hearing the sermon. All those dry, dull, prolix talkifications in prayer, do but blunt the attention, and the ear gets, as it were, choked up. Nobody would think of blocking up Ear-gate with mud or stones when he meant to storm the gate. No, let the portal be cleared that the battering-ram of the gospel may tell upon it when the time comes to use it.

Long prayers either consist of repetitions, or else of unnecessary explanations which God does not require; or else they degenerate into downright preachings, so that there is no difference between the praying and the preaching, except that in the one the minister has his eyes shut, and in the other he keeps them open. It is not necessary in prayer to rehearse the Westminster Assembly's Catechism. It is not necessary in prayer to relate the experience of all the people who are present, or even your own. It is not necessary in prayer to string a selection of texts of Scripture together, and quote David, and Daniel, and Job, and Paul, and Peter, and every other body, under the title of thy servant of old'. It is necessary in prayer to draw near unto God, but it is not required of you to prolong your speech till everyone is longing to hear the word 'Amen!

One little hint I cannot withhold — never appear to be closing, and then start off again for another five minutes. When friends make up their minds that you are about to conclude, they cannot with a

jerk proceed again in a devout spirit. I have known men tantalize us with the hope that they were drawing to a close, and then take a fresh lease two or three times; this is most unwise and unpleasant.

Another canon is do not use cant phrases. My brethren, have done with those vile things altogether; they have had their day, and let them die. These pieces of spiritual fustian cannot be too much reprobated. Some of them are pure inventions; others are passages taken from the Apocrypha; others are texts fathered upon Scripture, but which have been fearfully mangled since they came from the Author of the Bible. In the Baptist Magazine for 1861 I made the following remarks upon the common vulgarities of prayer-meetings.

'Cant phrases are a great evil. Who can justify such expressions as the following? We would not rush into thy presence as the unthinking (!! ) horse into the battle. As if horses ever did think, and as if it were not better to exhibit the spirit and energy of the horse than the sluggishness and stupidity of the ass! As the verse from which we imagine this fine sentence to be derived has more to do with sinning than with praying, we are glad that the phrase is on its last legs. Go from heart to heart, as oil from vessel to vessel, is probably a quotation from the nursery romance of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, but as destitute of sense, Scripture, and poetry, as ever sentence could be conceived to be. We are not aware that oil runs from one vessel to another in any very mysterious or wonderful manner; it is true it is rather slow in coming out, and is therefore an apt symbol of some people's earnestness; but surely it would be better to have the grace direct from heaven than to have it out of another vessel — a Popish idea which the metaphor seems to insinuate, if indeed it has any meaning at all. Thy poor unworthy dust, an epithet generally applied to themselves by the proudest men in the congregation, and not seldom by the most moneyed and grovelling, in which case the last two words are not so very inappropriate. We have heard of a good man who, in pleading for his children and grandchildren, was so completely beclouded in the blinding influence of this expression, that he exclaimed, 'O Lord, save thy dust, and thy dust's dust, and thy dust's dust's dust. 'When Abraham said, 'I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes,' the utterance was forcible and expressive; but in its misquoted, perverted, and abused form, the sooner it is consigned to its own element the better.

'A miserable conglomeration of perversions of Scripture, uncouth similes, and ridiculous metaphors, constitute a sort of spiritual slang, the offspring of unholy ignorance, unmanly imitation, or graceless hypocrisy; they are at once a dishonour to those who constantly repeat them, and an intolerable nuisance to those whose ears are jaded with them.'

Dr. Charles Brown, of Edinburgh, in an admirable address at a meeting of the New College Missionary Association, gives instances of current misquotations indigenous to Scotland, which sometimes, however, find their way across the Tweed. By his permission, I shall quote at length:

There is what might be called an unhappy, sometimes, quite grotesque, mingling of Scripture texts. Who is not familiar with the following words addressed to God in prayer, 'Thou art the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and the praises thereof!', which is but a jumble of two glorious texts, each glorious taken by itself — both marred, and one altogether lost indeed, when thus combined and mingled. The one is Isaiah 57:15, 'Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy.' The other is, Psalms 22:3, 'Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.' The inhabiting of the praises of eternity, to say the least, is

meagre; there were no praises in the past eternity to inhabit. But what a glory is there in God's condescending to inhabit, take up his very abode, in the praises of Israel, of the ransomed church.

Then there is an example nothing less than grotesque under this head, and yet one in such frequent use that I suspect it is very generally regarded as having the sanction of Scripture. Here it is, 'We would put our hand on our mouth, and our mouth in the dust, and cry out, Unclean, unclean; God be merciful to us sinners. 'This is no fewer than four texts joined, each beautiful by itself. First, Job 40:4, 'Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.' Second, Lamentations 3:29, 'He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.' Third, Leviticus 13:45, where the leper is directed to put a covering upon his upper lip, and to cry, Unclean, unclean. And fourth, the publican's prayer. But how incongruous a man's first putting his hand on his mouth, then putting his mouth in the dust, and, last of all, crying out, etc.! The only other example I give is an expression nearly universal among us, and, I suspect, almost universally thought to be in Scripture, 'In thy favour is life, and thy lovingkindness is better than life.' The fact is, that this also is just an unhappy combination of two passages, in which the term life is used in altogether different, and even incompatible senses, namely, Psalms 30:5, 'In his favour is life', and Psalms 63:3, 'Thy lovingkindness is better than life', where, evidently, life means the present temporal life.

'A second class may be described as unhappy alterations of Scripture language. Need I say that the 130th Psalm, 'Out of the depths,' etc., is one of the most precious in the whole book of the Psalms? Why must we have the words of David and of the Holy Ghost thus given in public prayer, and so constantly that our pious people come all to adopt it into their social and family prayers, 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared, and plenteous redemption that thou mayest be sought after,' or 'unto'? How precious the simple words as they stand in the Psalm (verse 4), 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared' (verses 7, 8); 'With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities!' Again, in this blessed Psalm, the words of the third verse, 'If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?', too seldom are left us in their naked simplicity, but must undergo the following change, 'If thou wert strict to mark iniquity,' etc.

I remember in my old college days, we used to have it in a much more offensive shape, 'If thou wert strict to mark and rigorous to punish!' Another favourite change is the following, 'Thou art in heaven, and we upon earth; therefore let our words be few and well ordered.' Solomon's simple and sublime utterance (full of instruction, surely on the whole theme I am dealing with) is, 'God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few' (Ecclesiastes 5:2). For another example under this class see how Habakkuk's sublime words are tortured, 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on sin without abhorrence! The words of the Holy Ghost are (Habakkuk 1:13), 'Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.' Need I say that the power of the figure, 'canst not look on iniquity', is nearly lost when you add that God can look on it, only not without abhorrence?

'A third class is made up of meaningless pleonasms, vulgar, common-place redundancies of expression, in quoting from the Scriptures. One of these has become so universal, that I venture to say you seldom miss it, when the passage referred to comes up at all. 'Be in the midst of us' (or, as some prefer to express it, somewhat unfortunately, as I think, 'in our midst'), 'to bless us, and to

do us good. 'What additional idea is there in the last expression, 'and to do us good'? The passage referred to is Exodus 20:24, 'In all places where I record my name, I will come unto you, and I will bless you.' Such is the simplicity of Scripture. Our addition is, 'Bless us, and do us good.' In Daniel 4:35, we read the noble words, 'None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?' The favourite change is, 'None can stay thy hand from working.' 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him! 'This is changed, 'Neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things'

Constantly we hear God addressed as 'the hearer and answerer of prayer', a mere vulgar and useless pleonasm, for the Scripture idea of God's hearing prayer is just his answering it: 'O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come;' 'Hear my prayer O Lord;' 'I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.' Whence, again, that common-place of public prayer, 'Thy consolations are neither few nor small'? The reference, I suppose, is to those words of Job, 'Are the consolations of God small with thee?' So one scarce ever hears that prayer of the seventy-fourth Psalm, 'Have respect to the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty,' without the addition, 'horrid cruelty', nor the call to prayer in Isaiah, 'Keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, without the addition, 'the whole earth'; nor that appeal of the Psalmist, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee,' without the addition, 'none in all the earth'.

These last may seem small matters, indeed. And so they are, nor were worth finding fault with, did they occur but occasionally. But viewed as stereotyped common-places, weak enough in themselves, and occurring so often as to give an impression of their having Scripture authority, I humbly think they ought to be discountenanced and discarded -banished wholly from our Presbyterian worship.

It will, perhaps, surprise you to learn that the only Scripture authority for that favourite, and somewhat peculiar expression, about the 'wicked rolling sin as a sweet morsel under their tongue', is the following words in the book of Job (20:12), 'Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue.' But enough of this. I am only sorry to have felt bound in conscience to be so long upon so unhappy a subject. I cannot, however, leave the point without urging upon you literal accuracy in all quotations from the Word of God. It ought to be a point of honour among ministers always to quote Scripture correctly. It is difficult to be always correct, and because it is difficult, it should be all the more the object of our care. In the halls of Oxford or Cambridge it would be considered almost treason or felony for a Fellow to misquote Tacitus, or Virgil, or Homer; but for a preacher to misquote Paul, or Moses, or David, is a far more serious matter, and quite as worthy of the severest censure. Mark, I said a 'Fellow,' not a Freshman, and from a pastor we expect, at least, equal accuracy in his own department as from the holder of a Fellowship You who so unwaveringly believe in the verbal-inspiration theory (to my intense satisfaction), ought never to quote at all until you can give the precise words, because, according to your own showing, by the alteration of a single word you may miss altogether God's sense of the passage. If you cannot make extracts from Scripture correctly, why quote it at all in your petitions?

Make use of an expression fresh from your own mind, and it will be quite as acceptable to God as a scriptural phrase defaced or clipped. Vehemently strive against garblings and perversions of Scripture and renounce for ever all cant phrases, for they are the disfigurement of free prayer.

I have noticed a habit among some — I hope you have not fallen into it — of praying with their eyes open. It is unnatural, unbecoming, and disgusting. Occasionally the opened eye uplifted to heaven may be suitable and impressive, but to be gazing about while professing to address the unseen God is detestable. In the earliest ages of the church the fathers denounced this unseemly practice.

Action in prayer should be very little used, if at all. It is scarcely comely to lift and move the arm, as if in preaching; the outstretched arms however, or the clasped hands, are natural and suggestive when under strong holy excitement. The voice should accord with the matter, and should never be boisterous, or self-asserting: humble and reverent let those tones be in which man talketh with his God. Doth not even nature itself teach you this? If grace does not I despair. With special regard to your prayers in the Sabbath services, a few sentences may be useful. In order to prevent custom and routine from being enthroned among us, it will be well to vary the order of service as much as possible. Whatever the free Spirit moves us to do, that let us do at once. I was not till lately aware of the extent to which the control of deacons has been allowed to intrude itself upon ministers in certain benighted churches.

I have always been accustomed to conduct religious services in the way I have thought most suitable and edifying, and I never have heard so much as a word of objection, although I trust I can say I live on the dearest intimacy with my officers; but a brother minister told me this morning, that on one occasion, he prayed in the morning service at the commencement instead of giving out a hymn, and when he retired into the vestry, after service, the deacons informed him that they would have no innovations.

We hitherto understood that Baptist churches are not under bondage to traditions and fixed rules as to modes of worship, and yet these poor creatures, these would-be lords, who cry out loudly enough against a liturgy, would bind their minister with rubrics made by custom. It is time that such nonsense were for ever silenced. We claim to conduct service as the Holy Spirit moves us, and as we judge best. We will not be bound to sing here and pray there, but will vary the order of service to prevent monotony.

Mr. Hinton, I have heard, once preached the sermon at the commencement of the service, so that those who came late might at any rate have an opportunity to pray. And why not? Irregularities would do good, monotony works weariness. It will frequently be a most profitable thing to let the people sit quite still in profound silence for two or five minutes. Solemn silence makes noble worship.

True prayer is not the noisy sound  
That clamorous lips repeat,  
But the deep silence of a soul  
That clasps Jehovah's feet.

Vary the order of your prayers, then, for the sake of maintaining attention, and preventing people going through the whole thing as a clock runs on till the weights are down.

Vary the length of your public prayers. Do you not think it would be much better if sometimes instead of giving three minutes to the first prayer and fifteen minutes to the second, you gave nine minutes to each? Would it not be better sometimes to be longer in the first, and not so long in the second prayer? Would not two prayers of tolerable length be better than one extremely long and one extremely short? Would it not be as well to have a hymn after reading the chapter, or a verse or two before the prayer? Why not sing four times, occasionally? Why not be content with two hymns, or only one, occasionally? Why sing after sermon? Why, on the other hand, do some never sing at the close of the service? Is a prayer after sermon always, or even often, advisable? Is it not sometimes most impressive? Would not the Holy Spirit's guidance secure us a variety at present unknown? Let us have anything so that our people do not come to regard any form of service as being appointed, and so relapse into the superstition from which they have escaped.

Vary the current of your prayers in intercession There are many topics which require your attention; the church in its weakness, its backslidings, its sorrows, and its comforts; the outside world, the neighbourhood, unconverted hearers, the young people, the nation. Do not pray for all these every time, or otherwise your prayers will be long and probably uninteresting. Whatever topic shall come uppermost to your heart, let that be uppermost in your supplications. There is a way of taking a line of prayer, if the Holy Spirit shall guide you therein, which will make the service all of a piece, and harmonize with the hymns and discourse.

It is very useful to maintain unity in the service where you can; not slavishly, but wisely, so that the effect is one. Certain brethren do not even manage to keep unity in the sermon, but wander from Britain to Japan, and bring in all imaginable subjects; but you who have attained to the preservation of unity in the sermon might go a little farther, and exhibit a degree of unity in the service, being careful in both the hymn, and the prayer, and the chapter, to keep the same subject prominent. Hardly commendable is the practice, common with some preachers, of rehearsing the sermon in the last prayer. It may be instructive to the audience, but that is an object altogether foreign to prayer. It is stilted, scholastic, and unsuitable; do not imitate the practice. As you would avoid a viper, keep from all attempts to work up spurious fervour in public devotion. Do not labour to seem earnest. Pray as your heart dictates, under the leading of the Spirit of God, and if you are dull and heavy tell the Lord so. It will be no ill thing to confess your deadness, and bewail it, and cry for quickening; it will be real and acceptable prayer; but simulated ardour is a shameful form of lying.

Never imitate those who are earnest. You know a good man who groans, and another whose voice grows shrill when he is carried away with zeal, but do not therefore moan or squeak in order to appear as zealous as they are. Just be natural the whole way through, and ask of God to be guided in it all.

Lastly — this is a word I utter in confidence to yourselves —prepare your prayer. You say with astonishment, 'Whatever can you mean by that?' 'Well, I mean what some do not mean. The question was once discussed in a society of ministers, 'Was it right for the minister to prepare his prayer beforehand?' It was earnestly asserted by some that it was wrong; and very properly so. It was with equal earnestness maintained by others that it was right; and they were not to be gainsayed. I believe both parties to have been right. The first brethren understood by preparing the prayer, the studying of expressions, and the putting together of a train of thought, which they all

said was altogether opposed to spiritual worship, in which we ought to leave ourselves in the hand of God's Spirit to be taught of him both as to matter and words. In these remarks we altogether agree; for if a man writes his prayers and studies his petitions, let him use a liturgy at once. But the brethren in opposition, meant by preparation quite another thing, not the preparation of the head, but of the heart, which consists in the solemn consideration beforehand of the importance of prayer, meditation upon the needs of men's souls, and a remembrance of the promises which we are to plead; and thus coming before the Lord with a petition written upon the fleshy tables of the heart. This is surely better than coming to God at random, rushing before the throne at haphazard, without a definite errand or desire. 'I never am tired of praying,' said one man. 'because I always have a definite errand when I pray.'

Brethren, are your prayers of this sort? Do you strive to be in a fit frame to lead the supplications of your people? Do you order your cause in coming before the Lord? I feel, my brethren, that we ought to prepare ourselves by private prayer for public praying. By living near to God we ought to maintain prayerfulness of spirit, and then we shall not fail in our vocal pleadings. If anything beyond this is to be tolerated, it would be the commitment to memory of the Psalms and parts of Scripture containing promises, supplications, praises, and confessions, such as may be helpful in the act of prayer.

It is said of Chrysostom, that he had learned his Bible by heart, so as to be able to repeat it at his pleasure: no wonder that he was called golden-mouthed. Now, in our converse with God, no speech can be more appropriate than the words of the Holy Ghost — 'Do as thou hast said,' will always prevail with the Most High. We counsel, therefore, the committing to memory of the inspired devotional exercises of the word of truth, and then your continued reading of the Scriptures will keep you always furnished with fresh supplications, which will be as ointment poured forth, filling the whole house of God with its fragrance, when you present your petitions in public before the Lord. Seeds of prayer thus sown in the memory will yield a constant golden harvest, as the Spirit shall warm your soul with hallowed fire in the hour of congregational prayer. As David used the sword of Goliath for after-victories, so may we at times employ a petition already answered, and find ourselves able to say with the son of Jesse, 'There is none like unto it,' as God shall yet again fulfil it in our experience.

Let your prayers be earnest, full of fire, vehemence, prevalence. I pray the Holy Ghost to instruct every student of this College so to offer public prayer, that God shall always be served of his best. Let your petitions be plain and heart-felt; and while your people may sometimes feel that the sermon was below the mark, may they also feel that the prayer compensated for all. Much more might be said, perhaps should be said, but time and strength both fail us, and so we draw to a close. From Lectures to My Students,

First Series, 1887, pp. 53-71.

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