

Beholding God's Church

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately exhorts believers to diligently and lovingly survey, defend, and cherish the Church of God as a living, divinely built temple, emphasizing its eternal foundation and spiritual vitality.

Scripture: Psalm 48:12-14, Matthew 16:18, Hebrews 6:18, Romans 8:38-39

Topics: "The Church", "God's Eternal Purpose", "Spiritual Vigilance"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon invites believers to deeply appreciate and actively engage with the Church of God as a divinely established, living temple. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the Church's eternal foundation, its spiritual defenses, and the vital role of prayer and vigilance. Spurgeon calls Christians to a comprehensive and heartfelt survey of the Church, encouraging unity and care across denominational lines. This message inspires a renewed commitment to the Church's glory and spiritual health.

Transcript

"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: count the towers thereof. Mark you well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that you may tell it to the generation following. For this (God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." Psalm 48:12-14.

THE proper study of the Christian is Christ. Next to that subject is the Church. And though I would by no means ever urge you to think of the Church as, for a moment, to put her in comparison with her Lord, yet think of her in relation to Him. You will not dishonor the sun by remembering that there is a moon! You will not lessen the glory of "the King in His beauty" by remembering that the Queen, His Spouse, is "all glorious within." You will not think any less of Christ for thinking much of His Church. So tonight I shall invite you to a consideration of the honor, and glory, and dignity of the Church of God as set forth in these verses. And our first point will be the survey which should be taken of the Church—"Walk about Zion, and go round about her: count the towers thereof. Mark you well her bulwarks, consider well her palaces." Secondly, here is the objective of this survey—"That you may tell it to the generation following." And here is, thirdly, a very excellent reason given for our seeking to accomplish this objective—"For this God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." So, then, let us think awhile of—

I. THE SURVEY WHICH WE SHOULD TAKE if we would become practically useful to coming generations—the survey we ought to take of the Church of God.

And let us begin by saying it should be complete. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her"—go completely round the wall. The Church is set forth as a walled city. The description calls to my mind the city of Chester. There you have the old wall standing, with here and there a most picturesque tower or turret. Now Jerusalem stood in that way, and the Church of God is likened to Jerusalem. "Go round about her"—make a complete circuit of all her walls, try to be acquainted with all of Church history, with that which concerns Apostolic times, and that which had to do with the ages of the first Christian persecution. With the Reformation, with the sufferings of our fathers and covenanting sires. And then on to the present day. Let your survey of the Church, as far as possible, include all portions of it. Remember that your denomination is not the whole of Zion—that although you do well to look carefully to the quarter in which your house is situated, yet there are other houses of God's servants in other parts of the city—and you should take a survey of those regions as well as those in which you immediately dwell. See how your Brothers and Sisters in Christ fare and take their pledge and report. Let it never be a joy to a Baptist if he hears that some Congregational Church does not prosper. Let it always be a joy to a Presbyterian when he hears that a Wesleyan is doing good. Let it be a great joy to us if any part of the Church of God prospers! And if in any place there is decay or decline, let us bear in our prayers that particular portion of the Church of God, and pray Him to strengthen that part of the city wall against the foe. Let your survey of the Church be as complete as you can make it. "Go round about her."

Let it also be frequent. I am afraid that some persons think very little, indeed, of the Church of God. I mean that while they know how the shop, and the State, and the world generally are getting on, they could scarcely tell how many members were added to the one Church to which they belong. Certainly they know little about other sections of the Church and, perhaps, care as little as they know! It should not be so with the citizens of Zion! The time to favor Zion will come when God's servants take pleasure in her stones and favor the dust thereof—when the very least thing that concerns the Church of God shall be important to the citizens of Zion! Frequently, my dear Friends, look not only on your own things, but also on the things of others. Does not the text say, first, "Walk about Zion"? Then it adds, "Go round about her," as if, after having done it once, you were to do it again, and yet again, and again—always caring for the Church and constantly making an earnest, enthusiastic inspection as to the prosperity of the great cause of Christ in the land.

And let your inspection and survey be deliberate. "Count the towers thereof." Look at the detail, count the towers, bring your careful pondering into the business. Do not give a mere glance, hurrying round and then saying, "I saw the city, but really do not know how many towers there were." Study the details of the Church of which you are a member. Try to look after the individual interests of your Brothers and Sisters. There may be a backslider to recover and rejoice over. There may be a mourner to comfort, a seeker to direct, or a faint heart to encourage. Mark well the towers! "Set your heart towards them," says the Hebrew—do not regard the interests of the Church of God as secondary to anything! If the Church prospers and Christ is glorified, all things else are little—but if there is defeat to the armies of Israel, nothing can console the Christian!

And let your inspection of the Church of God be always earnest. "Consider her palaces"—not a mere superficial look at the Church—reading the weekly paper—the weekly religious paper—which recounts the little events in your Zion, but consider well. I would to God we had many who in secret would so consider as to sigh and groan over the lack of love and earnestness that there is just now. The wave of revival seems, now, to have passed over us—and we are now like the shore when the sea retreats from it with the fullness of its strength. There needs to be some men of wisdom to discern the times and, "to know

what Israel ought to do." Each one of us who loves the Lord, and has a stake in the city as citizens, should seek to consider well its interests and endeavor to promote them earnestly and strenuously—seeking first to know thoroughly what they are—that we may render our share towards their serving. Although this exhortation may seem to some to be very tame and tritely commonplace, yet how much I wish we were all obedient to it—and surely, then, great practical results would follow! There are some who manifest a keen interest in all that happens in the Church. If there is a missionary going abroad, their prayers go with him. If there is a new voice lifted up for Christ, they are much more pleased than if they found a bag of gold! These same persons are often mourners in Zion when the Gospel is not fully preached, when Prayer Meetings are thinly attended, when no conversions are made, when worldliness sweeps over the Church. And the more we have of such men, the better—they are sure to be the very pick and cream of the Church, those who walk round Jerusalem, who go round about her—who mark well her bulwarks and consider her palaces!

But now let us be obedient to one of our own rules, namely, to take a matter in detail. So, taking the text in detail, we have, first, to walk about Zion, which I take to mean let us inspect the Church herself—let it often be a theme with us—a theme of study. What is the Church of God? On what is it founded? It is built upon a Rock and "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." The Church of God stands fast in the Immutable Love of God according to His eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. The Church of God was designed by Infinite Wisdom. It is not a corporation of men that come together according to their own agreement and will, and so at haphazard. It is not an organization framed by the shrewd wit and wisdom of man. God designed the true Church in Eternity! He is the Architect and Builder of the Temple in which He is, Himself, to dwell. Not only the great outline of that plan did He mark and settle, but every line of it! Yes, and every stone of it—and when that stone shall be quarried and how it shall be quarried—and where it shall be placed, and when it shall be placed in the appointed spot! The Divine Will of God and the Eternal purpose may be seen running through the whole of the Church, and it is well for us to look often to her foundations and look to the Designer, the great Artifice, who builds all things! This Church of God, as far as it is already built, has been built by Divine Power alone. Instruments have been used but all the power is of God! There have been builders and wise master-builders, but still, these have been the servants employed by the great Builder of all! He that built all things is God. That is especially true in the Church of God. If there are any other buildings which have been put up by human might, they will assuredly crumble from their place. Only that which God built will endure. All men's work will pass away and, perhaps, the sooner the better, for wood, and hay, and stubble would but destroy the beauty and the completeness of that building whose foundations are of precious stones, and whose walls shall glisten with gems in that day when the top stone shall be brought forth with shouts of, "Grace, Grace unto it!" The Church is a wonderful piece of architecture and well worth our walking round because, unlike any other, her strength is not merely material. The Church is built up of living stones. Life flows through the whole. We have seen marvelous buildings. As I have looked at the cathedral at Milan, I could hardly help thinking that it looked as if it had sprung up from the earth, watered by some miraculous shower! It seemed a thing of such beauty, but every stone was, after all, a stone. But the Church of God has grown under a Divine, miraculous hand, and every stone, from the foundation to the pinnacle glows with life! Wondrous Temple for a living God to dwell in! How should He dwell in temples made with hands, and pillars of iron, dust and ashes—things that were created but for baser uses? But He can live where hearts glow with emotion—where intelligence brightens with instruction, where holiness, peace and joy are the polished stones—the glory with which they glitter! It is a Temple of living stones—you may well go round about it!

The Temple has a glorious history, too. Strange histories have been connected with buildings. What would the stones of Stonehenge tell us if they could speak? What secrets might not the Pyramids reveal if for once they could break their solitary and solemn silence? Those far away temples of Carnac and Baalbec—what have they beheld? What armies have marched by them? What nations and generations have perished and passed beneath their shade? But this Zion, this habitation of the living God—her history how grand! When does it begin? In old Eternity God has ordained her. Along the whole page of human history you trace her most distinctly. How gloriously does she shine forth at the Red Sea, when God works plagues on Zoan and breaks the dragon in the midst of the sea! How brightly does the Church shine when you mention such names as David and all his victories, or Sennacherib and his hosts slain by the avenging angel! The history of the Church of God is an aggregation of histories, all of them miraculous, for the Christian Church is a miracle so far as its life is concerned—it is life in the midst of death—not only life in the sepulcher, but life in the very midst of death itself. Spiritual life in these poor bodies is just such, but oh, Brothers and Sisters, I am afraid that we are too silent about the history of the Church! We hear continually of patriots singing of the brave days of old when their fathers fought the foe. We ought to sing more often the songs of Moses and the Lamb—that the Lord God has gotten to Himself the victory, and given to His people rest and conquest. The Church is worth going round, for her history is so bright.

But best of all, the Church should be surveyed by us, because of Him who dwells within. It shall be said of no other place, "Here Jehovah specially and radiantly resides." I know men think of their ridged roofs and of their lofty pillars in their cathedrals, and think these ensure the Divine indwelling, but He is no more inside that building than outside! God is to be found on the loftiest mountain, as well as in the valley—and where the preacher stands upon a log of wood upon the village green, the place is just as consecrated as though a thousand years it had heard nothing but the song of praise and the voice of prayer! There are no holy places now—these are done with! They are the beggarly elements of the Law—in the living Church, built up of men and women who have been born unto God by His Spirit—there, Jehovah peculiarly dwells—in Heaven and in the little Heaven below in the midst of His elect people, whom He has ordained according to His purpose! There might be whole hours spent in talking about the Church, but enough of that first word, "Walk about Zion."

Brothers and Sisters, I shall invite you next, in your survey of Zion, to observe her conspicuous towers. "Count the towers thereof." Shall I be counted fanciful if I say that these towers may guard the Doctrines of the Gospel which stand prominently round the Church of God, for the protection and succor of the citizens? I shall not, certainly. The enemy have always looked upon these as towers, for attacks have been made one after another upon the different parts of our most holy faith. For a long time our Reformers stood like a wall round the tower of Justification by Faith, and the whole battle seemed to be waged around that particular portion. After a while the conflict shifted—and it continues to do so from year to year and day to day. Sometimes we have had to contend for the true Deity of our blessed Lord. Sometimes for the full and Divine Inspiration of Holy Scripture. There is not a tower in the whole compass of the walls that guard the Church, but what has had to maintain siege after siege, and bear upon it the brunt of the attack! And what is better, the shields of the mighty have been vilely cast away when Zion's troops have put the enemy to rout!

May not these towers also represent the place of observation of the Church? "Count the towers thereof." Where do God's watchmen go to observe the times, and to see what is coming? Do they not go to the chamber of communion, to the place of prayer, to the teaching of Holy Scripture and get near to God?

Then are they not able to see afar off and to mark where the foe will make his next assault? Surely I shall not be wrong if I say that in our times the pulpit has to become the tower of the watchmen. While that is well and faithfully maintained, no assaults of the foe shall prevail! As the Roman Catholic priests once said to Krummacher, "Unless you take the pulpit out of the way, we shall never be able to put you down." Let the Christian, then, go and count the towers of the Church! Let him watch the doctrines! Let him learn them! Let him understand them! Let him know how to defend them! Let every Christian pray for the minister of the Gospel! Brothers and Sisters, pray for him! Count the towers and if you see one that seems to be badly manned with watchmen, ask that God's Grace would raise up other and mightier men for the defense of Holy Zion! And if there is anything else, if there is any place that may not have a tower, think of it—think of it prayerfully—and carefully regard it in your prayers before God as an object of your solicitude!

But I must conduct you on, for our time flies. You are invited to an inspection of the ramparts of defense. "Mark you well her bulwarks." The bulwarks go entirely around the city—they are lines of ridges, ditches, trenches and fortifications. Now mark well the fortifications of the Church of God. God the eternal Father has thrown up a line of ram-parts—the Eternal Purpose—who shall frustrate it? The Everlasting Covenant—who shall make it void? The promise and the oath, the two Immutable things by which it is impossible for God to lie—who shall storm these two? Who shall break upon these two? We are safely defended behind them! The Power of God—who shall defeat it? The Wisdom of God—who shall outwit it? The Presence of God—who shall deprive us of it? The Love of God—who shall separate us from it? All these are the entrenchments of our Zion. When our foes have once looked upon them, they may well turn back with dismay. God, the Blessed One, has been pleased to make lines of fortifications, too. He has offered His precious Sacrifice—and between the Church and destruction there is the full stream of His atoning blood! Who, by any means, shall make the Atonement void, or the Cross of no effect? Between the Church and the foe stands the brass wall of the righteousness of Jesus Christ! God is not unfaithful, to forget the work of His dear Son. Stronger than iron is the intercession of Jesus Christ! For Zion's sake He will never cease or hold His peace, but will plead day and night for His people when they are tempted, that their faith fail not. And there is the mediatorial work of Christ, like a wall of fire about them. "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth." Who shall break through, upon the Church, through all power? Surely these—

"Munitions of stupendous rock, Our dwellingplace shall be! "

And then there is the Kingdom of Christ in the latter day promised to come—the promise of God to come with power and take His people to Himself. That is a sure guarantee of the security of the Church until the day of manifestation and the appearing of the Son of God!

Around the Church of God, too, the Holy Spirit has thrown up His rampart. He was pleased, first of all, to create the Church, and since that day He has preserved it safely. It is His to provide spiritual teaching. It is His to take of the things of Christ and show them unto it. It is His to comfort. It is His to sanctify. It is His to perfect. And all His gracious influences and operations are so many protections against the attacks off the foe. Aha! Aha, you enemy of Zion! If you had to do with poor puny men like us, you might soon put us to the rout! Your sophistries and worldly wisdom might soon bring us to the non-plus, but the Holy Spirit is with us and is in us—and we shall answer you with a wisdom that you shall not be able to counter!

"The best of all is," said John Wesley, "that God is with us." "God with us! God with us" is the shout of our victorious host! "Emmanuel"—in this name we conquer—by this name we overcome! So you see, Brothers and Sisters, you may mark well her bulwarks—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have

securely garrisoned and bulwarked the Church of the living God! You are called to notice, in the fourth place, her palaces. On which, but a word. Of course, the houses of Zion were inside the walls, and so the dwelling places, the meeting places of Believers are inside the line of defense. What kind of dwelling places are these that belong to the citizens of Zion? Are they cottages? Is it, "Mark you well her cottages"? No, not so. Is it, "Consider her alms houses"? No! It is, "Consider her palaces." Palaces are the abodes of those of the greatest wealth, of those having rank and dignity in life. Then am I to understand that the people of God are rich? They are not in earth's wealth very often—not in perishable gold and silver—but in what is infinitely better! They are rich in faith, rich in favor, rich in the loving kindness of the Lord. Then am I to understand that the people of God are honorable? They are not with worldly honor, but God has said, "Since you were precious in My sight, you have been honorable." And am I to remember that the people of God are royal? They are kings and priests! They are the true blood-royal of the universe. The blood-imperial is not in the veins of those who claim it, but in the veins of the descendants of the King of Kings! Their ancestry is the highest under Heaven! They are God's aristocracy. Consider, then, her palaces. Where are the palaces and what are they? Consider then, my Brothers and Sisters, the place where the saints worship, for where the saints meet together for prayer and praise, there are the palaces! Consider them and mark them well, to love them and say, "How amiable are Your tabernacles, oh, Lord of Hosts, my King and my God." Consider the palaces of Christian fellowship, for if it is in a barn—when Christians meet together, they make a palace of it! Consider the palace of fellowship with Christ. Wherever we meet with Him, we are at once in a palace! Consider the palaces of the promises—that it is better than a promise which is spoken of in that word, "He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust." These will be our dwelling places in all ages, and it is infinitely better than any earthly palace can possibly be!

"Consider her palaces." Thus I have gone into detail round the walls of Zion. Now, the second thing, very briefly, is—

II. THE OBJECTIVE TO BE ATTAINED BY OUR MAKING OURSELVES THUS ACQUAINTED WITH THE CHURCH OF GOD.

It is this—"That you may tell it to the generation following." The Church of God should take care that what God has done for one generation is told to the next. How much have you and I been helped by what our fathers told us? Those wonderful deeds that are kept on record—what God did in the days of old—have ministered great consolation to us in this present age. Let us take care that we hand down to our sons and daughters a record of what God has done. The pith of the matter is just this—each Christian ought to take a deep interest in the work of God in his time, that he may know how to teach his children, and especially to teach those who are born unto the family of God. Teach the young Christian what God has done, is doing and will yet do for His Church! I am very thankful that I have around me a number of Christian people who take a deep interest in the Cross of Jesus Christ. I believe that you are the people who will be sure to be succeeded by a generation who will take an equal interest in the same work. But if you were not, yourselves, interested, I could not suppose that it would be any concern to you to hand down the sacred traditions of your experience to the next generation. But now I trust that you will take care that there shall be kept alive in the world the record, the experimental record, of God's mighty acts towards His people in our day, even as in olden times! They speak of what the Lord did. Go you, each of you, and tell others what God has told you! Never hide the precious things that God reveals to you. What He speaks to you in the closet, proclaim upon housetops! Of course, it is well to learn first—do not try to teach before you have learned—but when you have learned, it is well to teach it immediately. Always mark well—"consider," says

the text—"that you may tell it to others." May we train up in all our Churches studious Christians, intelligent Christians, well-versed in all that concerns the Church of the living God! I believe that in proportion as Christian people are well-instructed, the attacks of the adversary will be repelled and defeated. But if we only gather together undisciplined bodies of men and women who merely come to hear preaching, but receive little or no instruction, they will become like flocks of sheep—the prey of the wolf whenever he shall come. Mark well, then the bulwarks of Zion, that when your turn comes to defend them, you may be at home in the battle—not come into the Church like a stranger, knowing nothing of what it is to do for Christ, or what Christ is doing for it. And now, lastly—

III. THERE IS A REASON GIVEN WHY WE SHOULD SEEK TO TRANSMIT THE RECORDS OF THE CHURCH TO OTHER GENERATIONS.

The story of God's love to His Church is to be told from one generation to another, and the reason is this—because "This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death." Observe, if Israel could change their God, it could as well forget what had occurred, but as she will have the same God forever and ever, let her remember what God did for her of old! And as that God will be the same to us, let each of us treasure up memories of what He has worked for us—for these are instructive as to what we may hope for in the future! He that helped you in years past will not fail you now. He that proved Himself faithful 20 years ago is faithful today. Is God All-Sufficient in your childhood? Is God All-Sufficient in your old age? With Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Remember, then, the past mercies are as forge ashes, from which you may gather the spark that may light the fire of today, and that even the future may be indebted to the same blaze!

Besides, we may well recollect what God has done, for if we tell it to others, we shall never have to retract, for God will continue to do the same as He always did. I am afraid that the Church has grown very faint-hearted as to the dealings of the Lord with her. We hardly expect to see such things done, as in the first age of the Church. "That was the heroic period," it is said, "but now we are in our decline." It is not so with this God of the Apostles! This God of the martyrs! This God of the Reformers! This God of Wesley and of Whitfield—this God is our God not for time only, but forever and ever—and I dare not give you any restricted sense of "forever and ever." There are some people who expect the Lord will want to turn us out of Heaven at the end of a certain time, or they must think, so to carry out their belief, that "forever and ever" may mean only for a limited time! That is one of the modern heresies of these boasted times. But for my part I believe, "forever," means forever and ever! And this God is our God, not for ages and ages, but forever and ever, world without end—beyond any possibility of coming to a conclusion! And He will be the same God right through the ages, onward. "And He will be our guide even unto death." Now, the text is not altogether correct in the translation of the Hebrew, for, "unto death," might very well be rendered "out of—beyond—death." He will be our guide to the River Jordan, and He will be our guide through it! He will be our guide into Canaan, where we shall rest forever, and never more be driven out! Well, then, may we talk of what He has done, because He will always go on to do the same! We may keep on talking even to Eternity, about what the Lord has done, for no period in Eternity (if periods there can be) can ever witness any change in the Most High! He will still be the same just God to the ungodly, and the same gracious God to His own people forever and forever!

Oh, talk you, then, of His mighty acts! Study them, and learn them! And then speak of them with the tongue, like the pen of a ready writer, or if you go stammering, let the tongue of the dumb sing with you! Oh, to speak of the everlasting mercy of our God! On such a theme as this, they who have been

heretofore silent may grow into orators, for the history of the Church of God and the story of God's love might well unloose our stammering tongues and make us tell of His immense, unsearchable love! Would to God that all the Church were orators for Him! Would that you who belong to this Church were! Many, I know, belong to divers sections of it, but alas, some are, perhaps, members of this Church, yet not members of the Church of God! And some of you are not even professedly members of God's Church. May you be converted! May you listen to the Gospel, whose message you doubt! It is a message even to you—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." This is the Gospel that He has sent us to preach, saying these words, "Go you into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be condemned." God bless and save you, for Christ's sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: ISAIAH 58:1-12, JEREMIAH 30; ISAIAH 58:1-12.

Verses 1, 2. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek Me daily, and delight to know My ways as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of Me the ordinances of justice: they take delight in approaching God. And what a strange thing this is, that there are some people who take delight in the ordinances of God and yet they are living in the most shameful sin. I must confess this remains a mystery to me. But I hear of some who will attend Prayer Meetings and seem to enjoy them—who are to be found in the House of God whenever the doors are opened, and yet, their characters will not bear the Light of God. One would think that they would not wish to be told of their sins, and to come under a faithful ministry—and yet they do—and the more faithful that ministry is, the more they seem to like it, and yet go on in their sins! Oh, what strange blindness is this which loves the Light and yet will not see by it—men that take to themselves niter and much soap, and yet will not wash—that heap up the bread about them as if they built a house with bread, and yet do not eat of it! Oh, infatuation most strange, to apparently love the Gospel and yet not to receive it into the heart so as to be changed by it. See how God talks to this religious people.

3. Why have we fasted, say they, and You see not? Why have we afflicted our soul, and You take no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast, you find pleasure, and exact all your labors. They fasted and then they said, "Why did not God accept our fasting?" Why, because they made their poor servants work up to the very last all that they could do! They never gave them any rest. They exacted all their labors and they, themselves, while they pretended to faint, were taking their pleasure!

4. Behold you fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: you shall not fast as you do this day so make your voice to be heard on high. They were fond of getting into religious disputes. And when they had a fast day they fell to loggerheads about different doctrines, and they got angry with one another, till they began to smite with the fist of wickedness! And they thought that a day spent in that manner would be acceptable to God? What kind of a God would He be?

5, 6. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will you call this a fast and an acceptable day to the LORD? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loosen the bands of wickedness. That is, if by any dishonesty you have got a man in your power, set him free—if you have oppressed him, give him his rights. This in God's kind of fasting!

6. To undo the heavy burden. Not to exact from a man what you have no right to have, but what, perhaps, the law may allow you to get out of him. This is God's fasting—"to undo the heavy burdens."

6, 7. And to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke. Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry? It is God's kind of fasting to give what you would have eaten yourselves to the other's feast. "To deal your bread to the hungry."

7, And that you bring the poor that are cast out of your house? When you see the naked, that you cover him: and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh? When you know that there are poor persons, perhaps of your own kith and kin—and, in one respect, we are all of one flesh—when we know that there are such, and yet refuse to help them, it is idle to talk about fasting! But if we would see to this, then comes this promise.

8, 9. Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your health shall spring forth speedily: and your righteousness shall go before you; the Glory of the LORD shall be your reward. Then shall you call, and the LORD shall answer: you shall cry, and He shall say, Here I am. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the putting forth of the finger That is, the scorning the poor man.

9-11. And speaking vanity. And if you draw out your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall your light rise in obscurity, and your darkness be as the noon day. And the LORD shall guide you continually and satisfy your soul in drought, and make fat your bones. You see, by giving comes getting! According to the philosophy of God, it is by watering others that we get watered ourselves! God feeds the man that feeds others. He made fat the bones of the hungry. Now God says He will make fat his bones. He satisfied the souls of those that were in drought as best he could, and now God will satisfy his soul in drought and make him—

11, 12. And you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not And they that shall be of you shall build the old waste places: you shall raise up the foundations of many generations and you shall be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. God help us to obey His precept that we may partake in His promise!

JEREMHAH30.

12, For thus says the LORD, Your bruise is incurable and your wound is grievous. See here is the bass again. We have got down into the sorrowful notes—all to make us sick of self and ready to receive the Grace of God.

13, 14. There is none to plead your cause, that you may be bound up. You have no healing medicines. All your lovers have forgotten you. Out of sight, out of mind. They have forgotten you. Oh, when God wounds, it is a wound, indeed! When He breaks the heart, who can comfort? If He does but speak, the earth trembles. He touches the hills and they smoke—

"When He shuts up in long despair, Who can remove the iron bar?"

14, 15. They seek you not; for I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, with the chastisement of a cruel one for the multitude of your iniquity; because your sins were increased. Why cry you for your affliction? Your sorrow is incurable for the multitude of your iniquity. "These are dark words," says one. If they are incurable, what more need be said? Ah, the things incurable with men are curable with God! Sin is the malady that none can cure but God alone.

15, 16. Because your sins were increased, I have done these things unto you. Therefore—Now I read this, this morning, and I could not help dwelling upon this, "therefore." It looks like a non sequitur, but there is a real argument in it. Therefore, because you have now come to the worst, because you cannot help yourself, because you are ruined and undone—

16, 17. All they that devour you shall be devoured: and all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into captivity; and they that spoil you shall be a spoil, and all that prey upon you will I give for a prey. For I will restore health unto you. Oh, the Sovereignty of Divine Grace! How it comes in when every hope is gone! Man's extremity is God's opportunity! An incurable sinner and, therefore, God comes to cure him! If you are brought so low that you cannot go any lower, God will put His everlasting arms underneath you. I speak to some, tonight, who are about to enter into peace, joy and rest. "I will restore health unto you; I will heal you of your wounds, says the Lord."

17. And I will heal you of your wounds, says the LORD; because they called you an Outcast, saying, This is Zion, whom no man seeks after. They said, "There is no hope for that man, there is no relief for that woman. Therefore God means to give up all relief." Nothing pleases Him better than to undertake a desperate case! God is great at a dead lift. When all the world is palsied, then is God Omnipotent.

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