

Satan's Arrows and God's

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that while Satan's arrows aim to deceive and despair, God's arrows pierce the soul to bring true conviction, repentance, and ultimately salvation.

Scripture: Lamentations 3:12-13, Matthew 28:19, John 3:16, Romans 5:1, Isaiah 53:5, Hebrews 10:26, Jeremiah 17:10, Revelation 21:27

Topics: "Spiritual Conviction", "Satanic Deception"

Description

In this powerful sermon, C.H. Spurgeon contrasts the destructive lies of Satan with the piercing truth of God's conviction. He explains how Satan's arrows aim to bring despair and hopelessness, while God's arrows bring true awareness of sin and the need for repentance. Spurgeon encourages listeners to recognize God's loving purpose behind conviction and to find comfort in His mercy and grace. This message serves as both a warning and a hopeful call to salvation.

Transcript

"He has bent His bow and set me as a mark for the arrow. He has caused the arrows of His quiver to pierce my soul." Lamentations 3:12,13.

JEREMIAH did not intend these verses to be a description of a sinner under conviction of sin. He was sorrowing over the woes of Jerusalem and the nation that had been so heavily punished for its sin, yet we may rightly apply his words to the most bitter of all human griefs—I mean, of all human griefs except that ruinous remorse which sometimes comes at the prelude of eternal destruction!

Dear Friends, when we preach to you, we do, as it were, shoot arrows at a mark but, alas, how few of them ever reach the target! If any of our arrows are shot without earnestness and zeal, they are almost certain to fall short of the mark. How sad it is that any of us who are sent by God to do such important work as this, should be cold-hearted or lukewarm! Shame on the preacher who does not bend the bow with all his might and throw his whole strength of spirit, soul and body into his efforts to win souls! At times our arrows fly too high. Perhaps we use expressions which our hearers do not understand, or do not talk sufficiently concerning the simplicities of the Gospel. In such a case we ought to repent and be grieved with ourselves that we have not better carried out our commission and so adapted the means we have used as to achieve the end we ought to have had in view. But even when we aim aright and put our whole force into the drawing of the bow, how often do our arrows glint off the steel armor of indifference in which so many of our hearers are encased from head to toe! The point of the arrow is blunted, or the shaft is

snapped as we shoot again and again at those who try to prevent the entrance of the Truth of God into their hearts. Year after year I have drawn my bow at some of you—I have used the sharpest arrows and the most polished shafts that my quiver could supply—and have thrown my whole strength into the effort, yet, up till now no arrow has pierced your hearts or reached your soul. But how different is the case when God Himself draws the bow! Ah, my Brothers and Sisters, His arrows never miss their mark! The joint in the sinner's harness is always visible to Him, and though it is but a very small opening which no one else can see, between the plates of the armor the arrow unerringly enters! God knows how to wound mortally, too. As the text reminds us, the arrow is driven right into one's soul—into those parts of our being where the vital principle is most active—so that there is no hope of escape from the arrows which God sends right into the heart, the soul, the conscience of the one at whom He shoots His shafts.

As God shall enable me, by his Holy Spirit, I intend to describe the case of those who have been pierced by God's arrows. But I want, first, to speak of some arrows which do not come from God's quiver at all, but which, nevertheless, cause very much pain to some sensitive spirits. So, first, I am going to try to break the devil's arrows! Secondly, to endeavor to describe God's arrows. And then, thirdly, to seek to comfort those who have been wounded by these arrows.

I. First, then, I am TO TRY TO BREAK SOME OF THE DEVIL'S ARROWS.

I will venture to say that nine out of ten of the terrible feelings which men have when under conviction of sin are not the work of God's Spirit, but are the result of the uprising of their own unbelief stirred and agitated by the diabolic suggestions of Satan. He knows that it is "now or never" with them—if he can now drive them to despair and keep them from coming to Christ, he will have gained his end. But if now the anxious soul should find shelter and rest in the Atonement of Christ, the Prince of Darkness will have lost it forever and, therefore, he exerts all his power and stirs up all his fellow fiends to do their utmost to keep the poor soul in despair!

One of the arrows which the devil shoots at such a time is this is that he says to the troubled soul, "Your sins are so great that it is not possible for God to forgive you. You have sinned so grossly and so long—remember your sin on such-and-such a day and on such-and-such a night? If you had not committed such-and-such a sin, you might have been forgiven, but now there is no hope for you! Besides, think of the many ways in which your offenses have been aggravated. You have sinned against light and knowledge—though you have often been reproved, you have hardened your neck and you shall surely be destroyed—and that without remedy. Your case is utterly hopeless." Now, although part of Satan's speech is quoted from the Scriptures, I dare to affirm that this arrow never came out of God's quiver! That quotation has no reference to one who sincerely repents of sin and comes to God seeking mercy for Jesus' sake. However great your guilt may have been, remember that "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him." If you had gone as far in sin as Satan, himself, could have led you, that great promise of the Lord Jesus Christ would still have been available for you, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto man." If the guilt of a thousand sinners had been concentrated in you, yet still, if you did but wash in the—

"Fountain filled with blood, Drawn from Immanuel's veins"—there is potency enough in that precious blood to make you whiter than the newly-fallen snow! O poor troubled one, let this arrow be broken in pieces once and for all! Let the thought of God's everlasting mercy and His boundless power to forgive snap it in two and cast it to the ground!

Another of the devil's arrows which often goes whizzing through the air is this—"The Holy Spirit cannot soften such a hard heart as yours. You cannot repent as a sinner should do—sin has got too firm a hold upon you. Why, you know that you can listen to a most earnest discourse and yet not be in the least impressed by it! Or if you are for a time moved by the message, you soon go back to your sin as the dog returns to his vomit and as the sow that was washed goes back to her wallowing in the mire. There is no tenderness left in you! Your conscience is seared as with a hot iron! The Holy Spirit is powerless to do anything in such a case as yours." That is another lie—a gross and slanderous lie! What is there that the Holy Spirit cannot do? O my Brothers and Sisters, when anyone is talking about what the Deity can do, the word, "powerless," must never be mentioned! Even the word, "difficult," is not to be put side by side with the name of God! "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither His ears heavy, that they cannot hear." Why, one drop of Jesus' precious blood could melt a mountain of ice as huge as a million worlds! One flash of the Holy Spirit's celestial fire could make a rock of granite run like the water that gushed from the smitten Rock in the wilderness! There is no doubt about the hardness of your heart and the badness of your nature—you are probably much worse than you think are—but it is impossible that your depravity could exceed the potency of the Holy Spirit's influence to renew your nature and change your whole life! So let this diabolical arrow also be smashed to atoms so that even the devil, himself, cannot use it again!

Here is another shot from Satan's quiver. The devil says to the poor troubled soul, "It is too late for you to repent. If you had repented and turned to God years ago, you might have been saved. When you were a young man, you had your day of Grace, but that is now over. Do you not remember being in a certain Chapel one Sunday night when the minister was so earnestly pleading with sinners and many were smitten down under conviction of sin? You also seemed to be impressed, but your anxiety was all gone in the morning—so you missed your opportunity and now the gates of Heaven are shut against you forever! You may seek the Lord, but you shall not find Him! You may call upon Him, but He will not answer you." That is another of Satan's lies, for there is no man living who has arrived at a period when it is too late for God to save him! We rightly sing—

"While the lamp holds out to burn, The vilest sinner may return."

Did not Christ save the dying thief? He was fastened to a cross and was soon to die, but when he repented of his sin and pleaded with Christ to remember him, he received the gracious assurance that he should be that day with Christ in Paradise! If old age could keep men out of Heaven, there are many now before the Throne of God who would never have been there! If you are seventy, or eighty, or even 90 years of age, it is a sad and solemn thing that you should have lived so long without Christ—but this is no reason why you should die and be damned! God's message to you is still this, "Turn you, turn you from your evil ways; for why will you die?" The commission to Christ's servants is still the same as when He gave it to His first disciples, "Go you into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature"—not merely to every

creature—under 50 years of age, but to everyone of the whole human race! If you are over a 100 years old, yet, as you are a creature, I have to preach the Gospel to you and the Gospel is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved!" So, if you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, however great your age may be, or however many times you may have refused to believe on Him, there is no doubt about God's willingness and power to still receive, pardon and accept you!

Another of Satan's arrows is this. He whispers in a sinner's ear, "You are not one of God's elect You are shut out of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is no use for you to think of being saved—a stern decree has blotted out all possibility of hope for you." But how does the devil know that? This is one of the things that God has never revealed to anyone, and I am sure that Satan has never been allowed to read the names in the Lamb's Book of Life, so do not let this arrow trouble you for a moment! Why should not you be one of God's elect as well as any other man? Have you been a drunk? Many drunks have been saved in spite of their drunkenness! Have you been addicted to profane swearing? There are many who once uttered the foulest oaths, but who were afterwards washed in the precious blood of Christ—and who are now singing the new song before the Throne of God in Glory! Have you been a willing servant of the devils? There are many who long served him here below, who are now playing their golden harps in the Presence of God above! You cannot tell whether you are one of the elect or not until you believe in Jesus—when you do that, you will have positive proof that God chose you unto salvation and gave you to His Son long before He formed the world! The Doctrine of Election is not one about which you need trouble yourself just now. Begin to read your Bible and the Gospel according to Matthew, and see there how you are bid to repent and invited to come to Christ. When you have done that, you can go on to the Epistles and read about election and all the other Doctrines of Grace, but your first business is to repent of sin and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ!

I have also known Satan whisper to a man, "It is no use for you to pray. You know that you have been praying for a long time, but you have got no comfort from it, so give it up, for it is an utterly useless exercise! It is no use for you to believe. There was a man the other day who said that he believed, but he was just as great a sinner afterward, so what good is it for you to believe?" Here again we have Satan's lies sat in contrast with God's Truth. It is of great use for everyone to pray, for our Savior said, "Everyone that asks, receives and he that seeks, finds. And to him that knocks, it shall be opened." There is not one case of true prayer that is exempt from this general rule! Then as to Satan's assertion that there are some who say that they have believed and yet they are not saved, we can reply that it is one thing to say that we believe, but quite another thing to really believe! No doubt there are some who say that they believe who are no better for it, but it is equally true that, "he that believes on the Son has everlasting life." Faith does justify the soul—"being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." So will you believe Satan's lie or God's

Truth?

I do not know what other arrows the devil may have shot at any of you. He may, perhaps have told you that you have committed the unpardonable sin, but that is certainly more than he knows. If you now desire to be saved, you may depend upon it that you have not committed that sin which is unto death! And if you are now believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have the best possible proof that this sin cannot be laid to your charges, for whomever believes in Him is not condemned, but has everlasting life! Cling to the Cross of Christ and you shall never sink down to Perdition.

II. Having thus tried to break some of the devil's arrows, I want, next, TO ENDEAVOR TO DESCRIBE SOME OF GOD'S ARROWS.

Here I will give you a piece of my own experience. When God began to deal with me, one of the first arrows that flew right into my heart was this, "You God see me." I recollected that God knew all about my sins, that He had seen them or heard them, and had noted them all down in His Book of Remembrance. I was greatly alarmed, for I had forgotten many of them and had dreamed that God also had forgotten them.

Then came another arrow, bearing this motto, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." I realized that God knew all about my motives and thoughts. He had seen my selfishness when I was seeking to do what was right merely that I might be saved by it. He had watched all the wanderings of my heart, and all the evil imaginations of my mind—and I was almost driven to despair as I thought what must be the fruit of my doings!

Then came another sharp arrow and it was labeled thus, "The soul that sins, it shall die. "I knew that I had sinned and I felt that I must die, for the Law can show no mercy—it can only punish the guilty. Then I heard that terrible sentence, "Cursed is everyone that continues not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them." Then was I sorely afraid, like Belshazzar was when he saw the mysterious handwriting on the wall!

Then came another arrow bearing this inscription, "Your commandment is exceedingly broad," and I began to see that the Law of the Lord was much more than I had thought it to be. I had fancied that if I kept the letter of the commandments, I would be accounted innocent, but I found that the commandment which said, "You shall not kill," meant that if I hated my brother, I would be a murderer! And that, "You shall not commit adultery" not only referred to that shameful act, but also included the lascivious look and the unclean thought! Ah, me, where was all my fancied righteousness, then? In view of the spirituality of God's Holy Law, I might well say with Moses at Sinai, "I exceedingly fear and quake."

Another arrow that came to me was marked, "Without Me you can do nothing." I found that by my own unaided power, I could not pray, I could not repent, I could not believe—but there I lay, as helpless as the dirt beneath my feet— and with no more power to save myself than a sere leaf driven by the blast of a tornado would have had!

Ah, these were sharp arrows, indeed, and just when I seemed covered with wounds all over me, I thought I had another arrow shot into me bearing this terrible message, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." When I went to sleep, I determined that I was in Hell—and when I woke up, I wondered that the earth did not open and swallow up such a sinner as I felt myself to be! Life became almost unbearable to me.

Then there came another arrow which caused me to suffer still more. It bore this missive, "You have sinned against light and knowledge. You were not ignorant, as many lads were, of what you ought to do. You had received gracious instruction and you knew what the Gospel was! You sinned against your father's prayers and your mother's tears." I recollected the Sunday evenings at home when my mother had prayed with me and pleaded with me to lay hold on eternal life, yet I had still refused to turn to God and to trust in Jesus as my Savior—and this thought came to my mind, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, and for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for you." Thus did the arrows of God's quiver enter into my soul!

These are God's arrows and the messages they bear are all true. It is true that God sees us. It is true that He reads our thoughts and motives. It is true that He punishes sin. It is true that His commandments are exceedingly broad. It is true that we are powerless to save ourselves. And if, my dear Hearers, you are feeling the force of any of these Truths of God, I congratulate you that God has thus made you a mark for His arrows!

III. Now, thirdly, I want TO SEEK TO COMFORT THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WOUNDED BY THESE ARROWS.

My dear afflicted Friends, thus troubled and distressed in mind, please consider why God sends these arrows to you. Remember that they are not sent to destroy you, but to save you—and to save you by destroying some things of which you are very fond! They are sent, first of all, to destroy your false peace. God cannot bear that you should say, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace and, therefore, He shoots these arrows to kill your carnal ease that you may be stirred up to seek His face. They are also sent to slay your self-righteousness—and they are blessed arrows that can do that! When Mr. Hervey asked a poor farmer what was the hardest thing to get rid of, he expected him to answer, "Sinful self." But the reply was, "Righteous self." And certainly, of the two, righteous self is much harder to part with than sinful self. These arrows are also sent to kill your strength. Remember, Sinner, when you can do nothing, then God will do everything! When you are so completely emptied that you have nothing left, God will give you everything! If you wish to save yourselves, do it, but God will have no share in the work under such conditions. If He is to save you, He must be Alpha and Omega—He must have all the praise because He gives all the power!

Next, as God's name and Nature are both Love, He cannot take any pleasure in seeing you suffer. He has a purpose in setting you as a mark for His arrows. He has a design in causing the arrows of His quiver to enter your soul. He does not wound you out of ill-will toward you, but He is aiming at your good all the while. So thank Him for shooting at you and beg Him not to spare any of His arrows, but to keep on shooting until He has killed the last relic of evil and self-righteousness that has kept you from coming to Christ!

Further, do not imagine that you are the first person who has suffered in this way. All the people of God, in their measure, pass through a similar experience. If they do not become God's target at the time of their conversion, they find that His quiver is emptied against them sooner or later. Therefore, my poor wounded Brother or Sister, look upon your

pathway as being the pathway of the saints—it is the King's Highway which has been trodden by the pilgrims to Heaven in all ages!

Once more, you are one of those who are especially invited in this blessed Book Listen—"Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden"—that must mean you! "And I will give you, rest." This is what you need. "Ho, everyone that thirsts"—that means you! "Come you to the waters, and he that has no money"—that means you! "Come you, buy, and eat; yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "Whoever will"—that must mean you, for you are willing enough to be saved—"let him take the water of life freely."

If you cannot get any comfort out of these invitations because you fear you are not the person described in them, remember that there is a general call given in the Gospel. Not only are we invited to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and bid to repent of sin, but as Paul said at Athens, "God now commands all men everywhere to repent." Be thankful that it is not too late for you to obey that command! The door of Heaven is not yet closed against you! The gate of Hell has not yet been fastened as your eternal prison—you are still on praying ground and on pleading terms with God—so "seek you the Lord while He may be found. Call you upon Him while He is near; let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon."

Above all, my dear Hearers, remember that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"—sinners, mark you—not the righteous, the good, the excellent, but the sinful, the bad, the guilty! God loved not men because of their goodness. Christ bought not men because of their moral beauty. The Holy Spirit quickened not those who were already alive—but "when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly," and "God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Look by faith, Sinner, to Him as He hung upon the Cross! It is God's eternal Son, "very God of very God," who died there, "the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." Recollect how He cried, "It is finished," before He bowed His head and gave up the ghost. What was finished? Why, the road from Hell to Heaven! The pathway along which the vilest sinner may travel to Glory—the Fountain in which the most scarlet sins may be washed away—the Redemption by which the bond-slaves of sin and Satan are forever set at liberty! All this and more than this was finished on Calvary! And if you will trust in Jesus now, a finished salvation shall be yours this very moment! May the Holy Spirit enable you, just as you are, to rest upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you will find that He who wounded you with His arrows, shall heal you by His Grace, and you shall be His forever and ever! God grant it, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: LAMENTATIONS3:1-35; JEREMIAH31:22-37.

I am about to read a portion of Holy Scripture which may seem very strange to some of you, but it belongs to a part of the congregation, and I hope it may be the means of giving them comfort. I read is as a picture of the suffering of a soul under a sense of sin. I think it is a most graphic portrait of a heart that is awakened and made to feel its lost estate. If there are any such here, they will be sure to see themselves in the picture.

Verse 1. I am the man that has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath. It is a mistake that most souls make when in trouble, to suppose that no others ever felt as they do. John Bunyan describes Christian as being very much comforted by hearing someone quoting Scripture as he went through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, for then he perceived that there were others in the same case with his own. Do not think, poor troubled Soul, that no one was ever so broken in pieces as you are—your path of sorrow is a well-trodden one,

2. He has led me and brought me into darkness, but not into light A Hebrew method of saying that it was a thick darkness without any light, either star-light or moon-light. You who have passed through this state of conviction know what it means—no comfort from ordinances, no comfort from God's Word, no comfort from your daily mercies. Every stream of comfort seems dried up to you—and sin lies heavily upon you.

3. Surely against me is He turned; He turns His hand against me all the day. As if when a man is about to strike, he smites not with his open hand but turns his hand, so the Prophet says God did with him. He felt that he was being smitten with the heaviest blows that God seemed able to give.

4. My flesh and my skin has He made old; He has broken my bones. As men through excessive grief sometimes appear to grow prematurely aged, so the Prophet says he had gone through grief. He felt as if his bones were broken. The sore vexations of his spirit had dashed the solid pillars of the house of Manhood from their place.

5. He has built against me, and compassed me with gall and travel That is to say, as the besiegers erected a mound against a city and threw up earthworks, so the Prophet says God seemed to have thrown up earthworks from which He might fire off the great guns of the Law against him.

6. He has set me in dark places, as they that are dead of old. As though he had to live in a tomb, where neither life nor light could come to him.

7. He has hedged me about, that I cannot get out: He has made my chain heavy. "My way seems blocked up, nothing prospers with me." As the convict sometimes drags about his chain, and has a ball at his foot, so the Prophet felt as if God had clogged him with a heavy chain so that he could not move because of its terrible weight.

8. Also when I cry and shout, He shuts out my prayer Which was the worst trial of all!

9. He has enclosed my ways with hewn stone, He has made my paths crooked. It was believed that hewn stones made the strongest wall as the joints would the more closely fit into one another. Jeremiah seems to speak as if God had taken care and trouble to build, not as men do roughly with common stones, but with polished and well-shapen troubles built like strong barriers in his way.

10. He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places. He felt as if the Justice of God was about to spring upon him. He was afraid to move, lest the couched lion should leap upon him and tear him to pieces. John Bunyan, in his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*, describes in his own experience precisely what the Prophet here speaks of.

11-13. He has turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: He has made me desolate. He has bent His bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. He has caused the arrows of His quiver to pierce my soul And all this while, to aggravate his grief, he found no comfort anywhere.

14. I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day. It is just so with a man who is under a sense of sin. His companions ask him why he is so melancholy. He has an attack of the mopes, they say. They do not want his society, they will chase him from their midst. I marvel not that they want not his company, for well do I know that he wants not theirs, but this adds much to his grief, to find that they make derision and laughter of his woe.

15. He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drunk with wormwood. What a strong expression the Prophet uses! As a drunken man has lost his wits and staggers he knows not where, even as is a sinner when he really begins to taste the bitterness of sin. He does not act as if he were endowed with reason—despair and sorrow have driven his senses away.

16. He has also broken my teeth with gravel stones, He has covered me with ashes. The Easterns usually baked their cakes on the hearth and very frequently there would be in the cakes pieces of grit, perhaps large lumps of cinder and sometimes small gravel stones, which would break the teeth. "So," the Prophet seems to say, "when I went to try to get some nourishment by the eating of bread, I was disappointed—my teeth were broken with gravel stones." I remember when I used to go up to the House of God to try to get comfort, but instead thereof, I came away more wretched than I went—for sin, that great devouring dragon, still followed me everywhere.

17-21. And You have removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope are perished from the LORD: remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul has them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. [See Sermon #654, Volume 11—

MEMORY—THE HANDMAID OF HOPE.] Notice the gracious change that

has taken place, as if the sun had risen after the blackness and gloom of the night! Now the birds of joy begin to sing and the flowers of hope begin to open their golden cups.

22. It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassion fails not. Bad as our state is, we are not yet in Hell—we are not yet beyond the reach of hope!

23. They are new every morning: great is Your faithfulness. We had new mercies this morning, and we have had fresh mercies this evening. God has not forgotten us! The very breath in our nostrils is a proof of His goodness to us. Let us, therefore, dear Friends, still hope for yet further favors from Him!

24, 25. The LORD is my portion, says my soul; therefore will I hope in Him. The LORD is good unto them that

of charge, at <http://www.spurgeongems.org> .] Can you get a hold of this blessed Truth of God, any of you troubled ones who are here? Broken-hearted Sinner, can you get a grip of this comforting assurance? If so, there will soon be peace for you!

26, 27. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD. It is good for a man

that he bear the yoke in his youth. [See Sermon #1291, Volume 22—THE BEST BURDEN FOR YOUNG SHOULDERS.] For this yoke, though it may seem to be very heavy for a time, when it has humbled us and brought us to Christ, will bring us innumerable blessings!

28-33. He sits alone and keeps silence, because he has borne it upon him. He puts his mouth in the dust so there may be hope. He gives his cheek to him that smites him: he is filled full with reproach. For the LORD will not cast off forever: but though He causes grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. Unless He has some gracious motive for it, He never afflicts or grieves them, and when He does act thus, it is as when a father smites his child. It is because it must be done and not because he loves to do it. See, then, the great mercy of God! May it lead the sinner to repentance, yes, and lead us all to put our trust in the Lord!

Jeremiah 31:22. For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man. Here is a prophecy of the birth of Immanuel, God With Us, born of a woman by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. Mary was indeed blessed among women and we rejoice in that Man who was thus miraculously born to be the Savior, Christ the Lord.

23-20. Thus says the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; As yet they shall use this speech in the land of Judah and in the cities thereof, when I shall bring again their captivity; The LORD bless you, O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness. And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and in all the cities thereof together, husbandmen, and they that go forth with flocks. For I have satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul. There are good times in store for Israel! Jerusalem shall then be the "habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness."

26. Upon this I awaked, and beheld; and my sleep was sweet unto me. Jeremiah woke up with a pleasant impression of his vision upon him, and well he might, for was there ever a more blessed one than that of which we have just read?

27, 28. Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, says the LORD. All the ingenuity of Heaven seems to be taxed to bless Believers! And just as man sought out many inventions for evil, God, in His Infinite Love and Mercy seeks out many inventions for the good of His people.

29, 30. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge. But everyone shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eats the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge. We live under a personal dispensation—there is no such thing as hereditary godliness or salvation by proxy! Every man must for himself repent, and for himself believe. Vain and foolish is the idea that because we have had Christian parents, therefore we also are Christians!

31, 32. Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the Covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which My Covenant they broke, although I was an Husband unto them, says the LORD. What bliss it is to know about this new Covenant! Let us notice its tenor.

33. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, says the LORD, I will put My Law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts [See Sermons #1687, Volume 28—THE LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART and

#2992, Volume 52—GOD'S WRITING UPON MAN'S HEART.] Not on the tablets

[See Sermon #2436, Volume 41—"HOW GOOD TO THOSE WHO SEEK."]

The passage here expounded is Jeremiah 31:22-37.

of stone, not on the walls of the Church, but "I will write it in their hearts."

33. And will be their God, and they shall be My people. You may have heard it said that Christ will not leave His people, but that His people may leave Him—but in this promise the second contingency is provided for as well as the first!

34-37. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, says the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus says the LORD, which gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divides the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of Hosts is His name: If those ordinances depart from before Me says the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever. Thus says the LORD, If Heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, says the LORD. What a God of Infinite Mercy He is!

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