

The Best of All—god Is With Us

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon passionately affirms that God's abiding presence empowers believers to faithfully build His spiritual temple, encouraging them to trust in His continual guidance and strength.

Scripture: 1 Chronicles 22:18, Psalm 90, Hebrews 11:40, Matthew 28:18-20, John 4:23-24, Isaiah 41:10, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Acts 1:8

Topics: "God's Presence", "Spiritual Temple", "Faith and Trust"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound truth that God is always with His people, empowering them to build a spiritual temple through faith and obedience. Drawing from the example of David and Solomon, Spurgeon encourages believers to focus on their God-given tasks with confidence in His abiding presence. He assures listeners that God's grace and strength are sufficient for every challenge, inspiring hope and steadfastness in the Christian journey.

Transcript

"Is not the LORD your God with you?" 1 Chronicles 22:18.

WHILE we were reading this chapter you must all have been struck with the melting of one man's life into another. Here is David most anxious about the building of the Temple at Jerusalem—he is not permitted to erect it, himself, and, therefore, he sets to work with diligent care to gather together the gold and the silver, the brass and the iron, the timber and the stone that would be required. He also instructed the workmen who would be needed so that, when he was gone, and his son, Solomon, had ascended the throne, the Temple might be built. Did David live in vain? Can it be truly said that he failed in the grandest project of his life? Assuredly not! He did all that he was permitted to do and, by making those elaborate preparations, he was really the means of the building of the Temple.

Let every man and every woman among us judge of our life, not merely from that little narrow piece of it which we, ourselves, live, for that is but a span, but let us judge it by its connection with other lives that may come after our own! If we cannot do all we wish, let us do all we can, in the hope that someone who shall succeed us may complete the project that is so dear to our heart. That is a blessed prayer which Moses wrote in the 90th Psalm, "Let your work appear to your servants, and your glory to their children." We shall be quite satisfied to do the work and scarcely see the glory if we may but know that in another generation the work that we shall have done shall produce glory to God which shall be seen among the sons of men! No, Elijah, you must not do all the Lord's work—but your mantle must fall upon Elisha and

with it shall come a double portion of your spirit—and he shall work twice as many miracles as you did and shall do greater things for the Lord God of Israel!

I do not think it ought ever to be any question of ours what people will do after we are dead and gone. The God who did very well without us, before we were born, will do very well without us after we are dead! It is enough for us to do today's work in the day—let somebody else do tomorrow's work if we are not spared to do it. Today do that which comes to your hand and be not dreaming of the future. Put down that telescope—you have nothing to do with peering into the next hundred years! The important matter is not what you spy with your eyes, but what you do with your hands! Do it, and do it at once, with all your might, believing that God will find somebody else to go on with the next piece of the work when you have finished your portion.

There is also another delightful thought, here, and that is the continuity of the Divine blessing. God was with David in the gathering together of the great stores of treasure for the building of the Temple, but then God was also with Solomon. Oh, what a mercy it is that God did not give all His Grace to other people before we came into the world! The God of Grace did not empty the whole horn of Grace upon the head of Whitefield or Wesley! He did not pour out all the blessings of His Spirit upon Romaine and John Newton, so as to leave nothing for us! No, and to the end of time He will be the same God as He was yesterday and as He is today. There is no break in the Lord's blessing—He has not ceased to be gracious—His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, nor is His ear heavy that He cannot hear. God buries His workmen, but His work goes on and He, the Great Worker, wearies not of it, nor shall He ever fail or be discouraged! All His everlasting purposes shall be accomplished and Christ shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Therefore, let us be of good heart if we have been apt to look upon the future with fear. The Lord Jesus still lives and He will take care that His Church shall live and work on until He, Himself, shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God!

This text seems to me, dear Friends, to have a very immediate bearing upon ourselves. David is talking to Solomon and the princes of Israel about the building of a temple. We are not building a material temple, but we are building a spiritual temple. We do not believe in gorgeous architecture, nor in the expenditure of needless gold and silver upon the house wherein we meet to worship God, for we still hear our Lord and Master say, "The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." We sing with Cowper—

"Jesus, wherever Your people meet, There they behold Your Mercy Seat. Wherever they seek You, You are found, And everyplace is hallowed ground."

We believe that God is as much present beneath the blue sky, and out there in the street, as He is in any kind of building that we can erect for Him. It is very amazing that as soon as the Temple was built, true religion began to decline—the day when Solomon opened it was the culmination of the glory of true godliness in Israel—and from that hour it began to darken down into an awful night! Yet it was proper that there should be a Temple which, in its magnificence, should call for the respect of men towards God, being typical of that far greater Temple not made with hands, even the glorious Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We, however, are engaged in the building of a temple in a spiritual sense. God has sent His servants into the world to gather together for His beautiful house, stones hewn out of the quarry of nature to be shaped,

polished and prepared for building into the Temple of His Grace. The Church is the living Temple of God, "exceedingly magnificent." It is a wondrous idea that men's hearts and souls can be blended together and built up into a spiritual Temple wherein God will dwell. This Temple is to be built of stones taken from the quarry of nature and, God being with us, you and I are to go out and to hew out and shape and prepare the stones for the building of this house of the Lord which shall endure forever.

In order to do this, we certainly need the Presence and the help of God, for what can we do without Him? In the work of conversion, what can be done without the Spirit of God? I would like anybody who thinks he can convert another person without Divine help, to try and do it, and see what a wretched failure he will make of it, or what a dire hypocrisy he will produce by his apparent success! We must have God with us for this work—we cannot create a spark of Grace—how, then, can we create a new heart and a right spirit? Conversion is an absolute creation, regeneration is a miracle of Divine Grace, the works of the Spirit of God—and altogether beyond our power! We need the Spirit of God to aid us in the building of a Temple for God, but, Brothers, with the Lord's Presence, we can do it!

The text says, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" I will go any length with the Brother who likes to preach upon the incapacity of man, the utter and entire weakness of the creature apart from the Creator. You cannot, I think, exaggerate there, but do not always keep dwelling upon your own weakness—remember that when you are weak, you are strong if you do but fall back upon the Omnipotence of God! "Is not the Lord your God with you?" Has He sent us into the world with the Gospel and will He not be with us in the preaching of it? Has He sent us to be the means of seeking souls and made our hearts to ache because of the sins that men have committed against Him—and will He not be with us? Do not let us talk as if we had to live and labor without our God! We have been brought to know Him, we have been made members of the mystical body of Christ. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, if we are what we profess to be—the Church of the living God—will He not occupy the house that He has built? "Is not the Lord your God with you?" Then, what can be too difficult for you?

Now, dear Friends, I shall treat our text, first, as an assertion, for, oftentimes in Scripture, a question is one of the strongest modes of assertion when it is anticipated that to that question there can be no other reply than, "Yes." Secondly, I shall treat it as a question, for there are some here to whom it is a question—some doubting, trembling ones to whom we must say, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" When I have handled it, first as an assertion, and then as a question, I will briefly use it as an argument—"Is not the Lord your God with you?" Therefore, arise and do something! Something great and glorious ought to be done by men who have so Divine a Helper with them!

I. First, then, this is AN ASSERTION.

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, the Lord our God is with us! I do not entertain any doubt upon that point and I hope you do not. Is the Lord your God? Is He your God by a holy Covenant? Have you entered into bonds of fellowship with

Him? Have you taken Him to be your God by trust, by love and by the consecration of your body, soul and spirit to Him? Can you say of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, "This God is our God forever and ever: He will be our Guide even to death"? Very well, then, if He is your God, He is with you. Do you ask how I know that?

Well, I know it, first, because He has pledged Himself to be with His people. "He has said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Is not the Lord your God with you, then? Assuredly He is, if He keeps His

promise! And you do not doubt His fidelity, do you? Can He forget His promise, or, remembering it, will He treat it as if it were mere verbiage, words without meaning? There are men who can do that, we know—but does God act so? Can you suppose it possible? No, not for an instant! Then, as He has said, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you," He will keep His word! We say, "Never is a long day," and so it is, for it covers all time. And the Lord has said, "I will never leave you"—in poverty, in sickness, in slander and reproach, in depression of spirit, in the hour of death, in the day of judgment—"I will never leave you, nor forsake you." He has pledged Himself to this and God forbid that we should, for even a moment, doubt that He will keep His word! To Believers in their Church capacity, there is a pledge given by the blessed Lord Jesus, Himself, which refers especially to His work—"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth. Go you, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world. Amen."

"Lo, I am with you," says Christ! As much as to say, "Not only do I promise to be with you, but I am with you, I am already fulfilling My promise to you! For the past, for the present and for the future, 'Lo, I am with you always.'" Let not any Church of God hesitate to answer this question, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" If He is your God, He is with you as individuals and He is especially with you as a Christian community going forth to preach His Gospel to every creature! That ought to be enough, surely? He has pledged Himself to be with us.

Next, He is pleased to be with us. It is the good pleasure of God to be with His people. He is our Father and do not fathers love to be with their children? The loving father says, when he has little ones at home, "I will get back from my business early that I may spend my evening with the family." We feel ourselves happiest when, laying aside external cares, we leave the world and rest with our loved ones at home. And so is God at home with His people! As a Father, He delights in His children. Remember how Divine Wisdom said, "My delights were with the sons of men." It is a wonderful thing to be able to say, but God takes a great deal more pleasure in us than we do in Him! Yet there seems in us nothing that can give Him pleasure, while in Him there is everything that can afford us delight. The Lord so loves His people that He is never far away from them. You know that dear relationship into which our Lord has entered with His Church—she is His bride, He loves her as He loves His own soul! In some respects, He loves her better than He loves Himself, for He gave Himself for her, and do you think that He is happy away from His bride, His spouse? It is not so! He says to her, "Let Me see your countenance, let Me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice and your countenance is comely." And whenever she calls for Him, saying, "Let my Beloved come into His garden," His quick answer is, "I am come into My garden, My sister, My spouse."

He so loves us that when we shut the door against Him, He stands and knocks and cries to us, "Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled, for My head is filled with dew and My locks with the drops of the night." Do not think that He has gone from you when He loves you so as your Father and as the Husband of your soul! Moreover, He will be with His Church in her work because her work is His work—and wherever there is a heart on the earth, sanctified by the Holy Spirit, in sympathy and harmony with the heart of Christ, depend upon it—He is assuredly there, for that sympathy and that harmony are created by His very Presence. Well, then, as He has pledged Himself and He is, Himself, pleased to be with His people, we believe the assertion which is implied in the enquiry, "Is not the Lord your God with you?"

I hope also, beloved Brothers and Sisters, we can say that we have had proofs that God is with us. In this house we have had many plain proofs of the Lord's Presence. If you could have been with me last

Tuesday week and the Tuesday before that, it might have made your hearts ring for joy! All the bells of your soul would have given forth blessed chimes as you heard how God had saved one and another who had strolled in here as if by accident, and others who had come in great heaviness of heart, but who, here, found the Lord! Our ministry is nothing, but the Lord makes it something! He makes it everything to many souls and, blessed be His name for that! And you, Brothers and Sisters, in your labor and service for the Master, have brought many souls to Christ. Therefore I say to you, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" Assuredly He is, or you would not have beheld all this blessedness!

The Lord has proved His Presence with us by preserving us in the hour of temptation. Some of you who have been lately converted to God have had very fierce temptations since then. In this wicked city our young people—but I do not know that I need say only our young people—have been exposed to a furnace of temptation which has been seven times heated! The days in which we live are grievous to the last degree and if the Lord had not been with us, our soul would not have escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowler! Often our feet have well-near slipped and we would have fallen if the Lord had not been with us to preserve us. "Is not the Lord your God with you" when you have been kept alive with death so near? Assuredly He is!

Some of you also know that the Lord is with you because you have been so greatly comforted in time of trouble. A Sister said to me, the other day, "I could not have thought that I could have lived through the bereavements I have lately endured. When I used to think of the possibility of my husband's death, it seemed to me that I must die with him." Yet she is not dead and she does not despair—though she had to endure that bereavement and another as well, she said, "Oh, how good God was to me to sustain me as He did!" "Is not the Lord your God with you?" I know some dear friends who have experienced very great temporal trouble through heavy losses in these trying times, yet they are as happy as when they had 10 times as much! The little birds still sing at the window, the blue sky hovers overhead and the heart's-ease still grows in their garden—and they love it well. Yes, dear Friends, the comforts that God gives us in times of deep trouble are a sufficient proof that He is with us!

Beside that, there have been times when we have been in the House of Prayer, or when we have been alone in our chamber, yes, in the middle of the night, sometimes, when pain has kept us from sleeping—when we have felt that we did not need to sleep—for we have been flooded with delight! Did you ever feel that deep calm which sometimes comes over a Believer when there seems to be no evil in the world, when we could not invent a doubt if we tried? When we could not have a dark thought concerning our Lord? After our Savior had been tempted in the wilderness, angels came and ministered to Him. Do you know what that experience is when there seem to be angels upstairs, downstairs and all through the house ministering to you? And your life seems set to the tune of a gentle Psalm and, instead of the sound of the trumpet calling you to battle, there is only the dulcet music of an instrument of 10 strings praising the God who has given you rest? So, when the question is put, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" you can answer, "Yes, that He is, and blessed be His holy name!"

Oh, what a blessing it is to live with a present God! If anyone says to me that there is no God, he might as well tell me that there is no air! I cannot see it, but I know that I am living in it, and that I could not live without it, so, "in Him we live, and move, and have our being." The Lord is Life, Light, Love, Liberty and All in All to some of us. "Is not the Lord your God with you?" is no question to us, for we know that He is with us and we glorify His holy name that it is so!

II. Now, secondly, we must devote a few minutes to those poor weary souls to whom this is A QUESTION—"Is not the Lord your God with you?"

"Oh," says one, "I have no joy! I have very little rest! I have nothing but trouble—deep calls to deep at the noise of his waterspouts and I am so weak, so feeble, so faint, I cannot imagine that the Lord is with me! I see no signs of His Presence, neither do I perceive even a star of hope amid the dense darkness of the night." Listen, dear Friend, have you taken Him to be your God? Are you trusting Him? Are you determined to rely on nothing but the finished work of Christ? Then He is with you though you do not perceive His Holy Spirit—in the deepest darkness He is with you!

If the Lord had not been with you, your despondency might have become despair. If He had not been with you, your despair might have gone still further. You are yet alive, remember! You have not laid violent hands upon yourself, as you might have done if you had been left to yourself. God is with you, keeping you, even while you live on the very brink of despair. I know that there are some here who were sure God was with them in their darkness because it did not grow any darker. It was a black night, but still, it was not altogether dark—there was a gleam of light left. Ah, yes, it was your gracious Lord who gave you that little ray of hope!

Tell me, sad Heart, what is it that causes you to hate sin and makes you so wretched without the Presence of the Savior? It is because you have His Presence though you do not know it. You have, perhaps, seen your boy play with a magnet and a needle—the needle is above the table and the magnet, though out of sight, acts upon it—the needle feels the attraction of the magnet and moves after it. and those desires, those groans, those cries, that inward anguish, that self-despair, that horror of great darkness—all these prove that God is secretly working with you and drawing you to Himself. He is with you and if you take Him afresh to be your God—if you come and trust in His promises, I should not wonder but that, even now, your midnight shall burst into a glorious meridian! The Lord send it to you right speedily! Only, rest in Him.

The Lord is not far from any of us—a cry will fetch Him—He will hear even a groan and He will quickly come to the rescue of those who call upon Him. Do but trust Him, do but take Him to be yours and then He cannot leave you! "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yes, they may forget, yet will I not forget you." There is such love in God's heart towards the very feeblest of His people that He cannot turn away from them! Mother, is it not so in your family, that the child who is most ill, most weak, most full of pain, is the one who is best remembered by you? While you have been sitting here, this evening, you have not thought of John and Thomas, who have grown up and gone out into the world, and are strong and healthy, but you have thought of poor little Jane, whose spine is injured, or of the little boy who has to lie still so many hours a day and who suffers so much. I am sure that while I have been preaching, your thoughts have been trotting home to that dear child and you have been thinking much of him. Well, remember that, "Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pities them that fear Him."

And remember, also, how the Lord takes the mother's part as well as the father's and says, "As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." These are cheering Truths of God for those who raise the question! I wish they could enable you to get rid of that question and to know assuredly that the Lord is with you. I remember how Mr. Joseph Irons used to say of some who were always hoping, "It is all very well to have hope, but do not keep on hoping and hoping, or hopping and hopping, but put both feet down and begin to run." I trust you may do the same and get beyond the "hoping" and the "hopping" to the full assurance of faith—

"And are You with us, gracious Lord,

To dissipate our fear?

Do You proclaim Yourself our God,

Our God forever near?"

Then, as Doddridge continues to sing—

"Why droop our hearts, why flow our eyes,

While such a voice we hear?

Why rise our sorrows and our fears,

While such a Friend is near?" III. Our last point is that here is AN ARGUMENT—"Is not the Lord your God with you?" It is a reason for us to arise and be doing something. You observe how it is put in the 16th verse, "Arise therefore, and be doing something, and the Lord shall be with you"—so it is in the original. Let all true Christian people arise and be doing something, because the Lord is with them! Perhaps, I need not say much to my own people about that matter, for most of you are doing what you can for your Lord. There is a Brother who is going out to Australia—when he came to bid me farewell, he gave me a little sketch of his life during his 23 years here. It has been a time of incessant activity in the Church and he said to me, "Yes, Sir, you drove me out to work for Christ. You would not let me be idle. You said, 'The worst kind of lazy people are lazy Christians.' And you also said, 'To come here twice on a Sunday and hear me preach, and to be doing nothing for the Master, is not at all the right thing.'" Then the good man added, "I do not often get to hear you, now. I have been secretary of a Sunday school for some time and I often go out preaching, so I cannot come to the Tabernacle."

I delight in so many of the members not coming to hear me because they are doing the Master's work elsewhere! I know that in many churches the main thing is to sit down in a corner pew and be fed. Well, of course, every creature needs to be fed—from the pig upwards! You must excuse my mentioning that unclean animal, for he is the creature whose principal business is to eat and he is not a nice creature at all—and I do not at all admire Christian people whose one business is to eat and eat! Why, I have heard them even grumble at a sermon that was meant for the conversion of sinners because they thought there was no food for them in it! They are great receptacles of food, but, dear Christian people, do not any of you live merely to eat—not even on heavenly food! If God is with you, as you say He is, then get to His work!

"What shall I do?" asks one. That is no business of mine—you have to find work for yourself! He who works for God does not need to go to this man, or that man and enquire, "What shall I do?" Why, do the first thing that comes to hand, but get to work for your Master! Many Christians live in country villages where there is no preaching of the Gospel—then, preach it yourself, Brother! "Oh, but I could not!" Well then, get somebody who can! "But we have no Chapel," says one. What do you need with a Chapel on these bright days? Preach on the village green, where the old trees that were cut down a year or two ago are still lying and will serve for seats. "I could not preach," says one, "I would break down." That would be a capital thing to do—break-down sermons are often the best for breaking down other people as well as the preacher! Some of the greatest enterprises in the world have sprung from very little causes—the forest of the mightiest oaks in the world was once only a handful of acorns! Oh, that we might all do what we can

for Him who laid down His life for us and who still continues to abide in us, to be our joy and our strength!

David also exhorted these people to set their hearts upon what they had to do—"Now set your heart and your soul to seek the Lord your God." Oh, how much there is of our religion that is a kind of celestial going to sleep! The preacher preaches as if he had not really awakened yet—and the people hear in the same fashion! Are there not, even in our Churches, many who, if a guinea were to jingle, would be sufficiently wide awake to look for it—but when the Gospel is being preached, they are not thoroughly awakened? As to speaking to strangers and saying a word for the Master, that has not yet occurred to them!

"I do not know what I can do," says one. Brother, if the text is true, I do not now know what you cannot do! The text says, "Is not the Lord your God with you?" "Well, I could not." "Could not—could not"—do you put God and "could not" together? I think it would be infinitely better to put God and, "can," or God and, "shall," together! If God is with us, what can be impossible, what can be even difficult for us? God being with His people, "he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them."

I cannot speak longer to you, nor is there any need that I should do so. If you Christians will all go out and seek to save sinners, you will be prolonging my sermon—not only for a few minutes, but for many a day and many a year to come! God be with you, Brothers and Sisters, in this holy service! And if any to whom I am speaking are obliged to say, "No, God is not with me, I am not saved," remember that the way of salvation is to trust the Lord Jesus Christ! If you trust Him, He is with you and you are saved, for, "he that believes on the Son has everlasting life." God is with you if you are trusting Him—and you may go forth in His might to serve the Lord who has redeemed you! God bless you, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—46 (VERSION II), 338, 766.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: 1 CHRONICLES 21:7-30; 22.

Chapter 21:7. And God was displeased with this thing. This numbering of Israel which David had carried out in spite of Joab's protest—"God was displeased with this thing."—

7-15. Therefore He smote Israel. And David said to God, I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing: but now, I beseech You, do away the iniquity of Your servant; for I have done very foolishly. And the LORD spoke to Gad, David's Seer, saying, Go and tell David, saying, Thus says the LORD, I offer you three things: choose one of them, that I may do it to you. So Gad came to David, and said to him, Thus says the LORD, Choose you either three years famine; or three months to be destroyed before your foes, while that the sword of your enemies overtakes you; or else three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence, in the land, and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel. Now therefore advise yourself what word I shall bring again to Him that sent me. And David said to Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hands of the LORD; for very great are His mercies: but let me not fall into the hands of man. So the LORD sent pestilence upon Israel and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. And God sent an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it: and as he was destroying, the LORD beheld, and He repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed, It is enough, stay now your hand. See the power of the mercy of God? Even when the angel has drawn his sword and is already executing the Lord's just judgments, God's mercy interposes and holds back the blade of death. Should we not love the Lord for His great long-suffering toward us? "He has not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

15, 16. And the angel of the LORD stood by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between the earth and the Heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. This was the very best clothing and the very best posture for men who were under the chastising hand of God! They had put on sackcloth and they had fallen upon their faces. O guilty Sinner, if God's sword of vengeance is drawn against you, you cannot do better than put sackcloth upon your soul, if not upon your body, and prostrate yourself before the Most High!

17. And David said to God, Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that has sinned and done evil, indeed, but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray You, O LORD my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on Your people, that they should be plagued. Here we see David at his best—and what a true patriot he is! He interposes himself, willing, rather, that he should be destroyed than that the people should die. This was the spirit of Moses when he said to the Lord, "If you will forgive their sin...but if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which You have written." And this was the spirit of Paul when he wrote, "I could wish that I, myself, were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." There are times when our great love for others will overflow all bounds of moderation—when we shall say, and say from our hearts—what we would not have dared to utter in cooler moments!

18-27. Then the angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up, and set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spoke in the name of the LORD. And Ornan turned back and saw the angel, and his four sons with him hid themselves. Now Ornan was threshing wheat. And as David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David, and went out of the threshing floor, and bowed himself to David with his face to the ground. Then David said to Ornan, Grant me the place of this threshing floor, that I may build an altar therein to the LORD: you shall grant it to me for the full price: that the plague may be stayed from the people. And Ornan said to David, Take it to you, and let my lord the king do that which is good in his eyes: lo, I give you the oxen, also, for burnt offerings, and the threshing instruments for wood, and the wheat for the meat offering; I give it all. And king David said to Ornan, No; but I will verily buy it for the full price: for I will not take that which is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings without cost. So David gave to Ornan for the place six hundred shekels of gold by weight. And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called upon the LORD, and He answered him from Heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt offering. And the LORD commanded the angel; and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. See what was done by David's intercession and sacrifice? And remember that there is a greater David who, with a richer Sacrifice and mightier intercession, sheathes the sword of God, so that His people are spared!

28-30. At that time when David saw that the LORD had answered him in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon. But David could not go before it to enquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Chapter 22:1. Then David said, This is the house of the LORD God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel. From that moment this place was set apart as the site of the future temple and the center of the hopes of the people of God. And, dear Friends, what better site could have been selected than the spot where the angel sheathed his sword, where prayer was heard and where sacrifice was accepted? And now, today, you and I have only one Temple, and that Temple is the Person of the Lord

Jesus Christ, the Well-Beloved, for in Him the sword is sheathed! In Him the Sacrifice is accepted and in Him intercession still prevails!

2-4. And David commanded to gather together the strangers that were in the land of Israel and he set masons to hew worked stones to build the House of God. And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails for the doors of the gates, and for the joints and brass in abundance without weight; also cedar trees in abundance: for the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. See, a great deliverance brings a great offering! Because God had bid the angel sheath his sword, there is to be a Temple commenced and David is busy preparing for it. O you who have been saved from death and Hell, what can you render to God for all His benefits toward you?

5. And David said, Solomon my son is young and tender, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and of glory throughout all countries: I will therefore now make preparation for it. So David prepared abundantly before his death. If he might not build the Temple, he would, at least, gather the materials for it. So, let us try to do all we can in the cause of God. There is said to have been a king who felt so grateful to God for some special favor that he determined to build a great temple and pay for it all himself—no one was to help at all in it. One night, in his dreams, he was told that the honor of building that temple would not belong to him as he desired, and he thought within himself, "To whom, then, can it be, for I have not allowed any person to work for me without full wage and I have done it all?" At last he discovered that there was a poor woman in his kingdom who also loved his God and, not daring to help in the temple building, she had brought little handfuls of hay to give to the horses that had dragged the stones, so hers was to be the greater honor! If you may not do all you would, do all you can, for God will accept it of you if it is rendered by a willing mind and a loving heart.

6-9. Then he called for Solomon his son, and charged him to build an house for the LORD GOD of Israel. And David said to Solomon, My Son, as for me, it was in my mind to build an house to the name of the LORD my God; but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, You have shed blood abundantly and have made great wars: you shall not build an house to My name because you have shed much blood upon the earth in My sight. Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: for his name shall be Solomon—That is, peaceful, or peaceable—

9-14. And I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. He shall build an house for my name; and he shall be My son, and I will be his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever. Now, my Son, the LORD be with you; and prosper you, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said of you. Only the LORD give you wisdom, and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you take heed to fulfill the statutes and judgments which the LORD charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. Now, behold in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the LORD an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver, and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber, also, and stone have I prepared; and you may add thereto. At the very lowest calculation, David had laid up eighteen millions of money for the building of this house for the Lord! It was an enormous sum and he must have been long in saving it, yet he gives Solomon leave to increase it—"You may add thereto." I like that way of putting the matter! And when some of you see good help rendered to the cause of God by others who are able to do more than you can, do not, therefore, say, "I need not give anything," but remember what David said to Solomon, "You may add thereto." There is room in the treasury of God for your mite as well as David's millions!

15. Moreover there are workmen with you in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work. God will always find the right man in time for His own work! In His Church there are "all manner of cunning men for every manner of work."

16-19. Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, there is no number. Arise therefore, and be doing something, and the LORD be with you. David also commanded all the princes of Israel to help Solomon, his son, saying, Is not the LORD your God with you? And has He not given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hands and the land is subdued before the LORD, and before His people. Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God. Arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, to bring the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD, and the holy vessels of God, into the house that is to be built to the name of the LORD.

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