

The Carnal Mind Enmity Against God

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon powerfully expounds that the carnal mind is inherently and universally hostile to God, revealing humanity's fallen nature and need for spiritual transformation.

Scripture: Romans 8:7, Isaiah 14:12-15, Psalm 51:5, Romans 7:24, Psalm 14:1

Description

In this compelling sermon, C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound biblical truth that the carnal mind is fundamentally hostile to God. He examines the fallen state of humanity, the universal nature of this enmity, and its deep spiritual implications. Spurgeon calls listeners to recognize their need for spiritual regeneration and to humbly submit to God's transforming grace. This sermon challenges believers to confront the reality of sin and the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work in overcoming the natural opposition to God.

Transcript

“The carnal mind is enmity against God”—Romans 8:7.

This is a very solemn indictment which the Apostle Paul here prefers against the carnal mind. He declares it to be enmity against God. When we consider what man once was, only second to the angels, the companion of God, who walked with him in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day; when we think of him as being made in the very image of his Creator, pure, spotless, and unblemished, we cannot but feel bitterly grieved to find such an accusation as this preferred against us as a race. We may well hang our harps upon the willows, while we listen to the voice of Jehovah solemnly speaking to his rebellious creature. “How art thou fallen from heaven, thou son of the morning!” “Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering—the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so; thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee, and thou hast sinned; therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God; and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.”

There is much to sadden us in a view of the ruins of our race. As the Carthaginian, who might tread the desolate site of his much-loved city, would shed many tears when he saw it laid in heaps by the Romans; or as the Jew, wandering through the deserted streets of Jerusalem, would lament that the ploughshare

had marred the beauty and the glory of that city which was the joy of the whole earth; so ought we to mourn for ourselves and our race, when we behold the ruins of that goodly structure which God had piled, that creature, matchless in symmetry, second only to angelic intellect, that mighty being, man—when we behold how he is “fallen, fallen, fallen, from his high estate,” and lies in a mass of destruction. A few years ago a star was seen blazing out with considerable brilliance, but soon disappeared; it has since been affirmed that it was a world on fire, thousands of millions of miles from us, and yet the rays of the conflagration reached us; the noiseless messenger of light gave to the distant dwellers on this globe the alarm of “A world on fire!” But what is the conflagration of a distant planet, what is the destruction of the mere material of the most ponderous orb, compared with this fall of humanity, this wreck of all that is holy and sacred in ourselves? To us, indeed, the things are scarcely comparable, since we are deeply interested in one, though not in the other. The fall of Adam was OUR fall; we fell in and with him; we were equal sufferers; it is the ruin of our own house that we lament, it is the destruction of our own city that we bemoan, when we stand and see written, in lines too plain for us to mistake their meaning, “The carnal mind”—that very self-same mind which was once holiness, and has now become carnal—“is enmity against God.” May God help me, this morning, solemnly to prefer this indictment against all! Oh! that the Holy Spirit may so convince us of sin, that we may unanimously plead “guilty” before God.

There is no difficulty in understanding my text; it needs scarcely any explanation. We all know that the word “carnal” here signifies fleshly. The old translators rendered the passage thus; “The mind of the flesh is enmity against God”—that is to say, the natural mind, that soul which we inherit from our fathers, that which was born within us when our bodies were fashioned by God. The fleshly mind, the phronema sarkos, the lusts, the passions of the soul; it is this which has gone astray from God, and become enmity against him.

But, before we enter upon a discussion of the doctrine of the text, observe how strongly the Apostle expresses it. “The carnal mind,” he says, “is ENMITY against God.” He uses a noun, and not an adjective. He does not say it is opposed to God merely, but it is positive enmity. It is not black, but blackness; it is not at enmity, but enmity itself; it is not corrupt, but corruption; it is not rebellious, it is rebellion; it is not wicked, it is wickedness itself. The heart, though it be deceitful, is positively deceit; it is evil in the concrete, sin in the essence; it is the distillation, the quintessence of all things that are vile; it is not envious against God, it is envy; it is not at enmity, it is actual enmity.

Nor need we say a word to explain that it is “enmity against God.” It does not charge manhood with an aversion merely to the dominion, laws, or doctrines of Jehovah; but it strikes a deeper and surer blow. It does not strike man upon the head; it penetrates into his heart; it lays the axe at the root of the tree, and pronounces him “enmity against God,” against the person of the Godhead, against the Deity, against the mighty Maker of this world; not at enmity against his Bible or against his gospel, though that were true, but against God himself, against his essence, his existence, and his person. Let us, then, weigh the words of the text, for they are solemn words. They are well put together by that master of eloquence, Paul, and they were moreover, dictated by the Holy Spirit, who telleth man how to speak aright. May he help us to expound, as he has already given us the passage to explain.

We shall be called upon to notice, this morning, first, the truthfulness of this assertion; secondly, the universality of the evil here complained of; thirdly, we will still further enter into the depths of the subject, and press it to your hearts, by showing the enormity of the evil; and after that, should we have time, we will deduce one or two doctrines from the general fact.

I. First, we are called upon to speak of the truthfulness of this great statement. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." It needs no proof, for since it is written in God's word, we, as Christian men, are bound to bow before it. The words of the Scriptures are words of infinite wisdom, and if reason cannot see the ground of a statement of revelation, it is bound, most reverently, to believe it, since we are well assured, even should it be above our reason, that it cannot be contrary thereunto. Here I find it written in the Scriptures, "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" and that of itself is enough for me. But did I need witnesses, I would conjure up the nations of antiquity; I would unroll the volume of ancient history; I would tell you of the awful deeds of mankind. It may be I might move your souls to detestation, if I spake of the cruelty of this race to itself, if I showed you how it made the world an Aceldama, by its wars, and deluged it with blood by its fightings and murders; if I should recite the black list of vices in which whole nations have indulged, or even bring before you the characters of some of the most eminent philosophers, I should blush to speak of them, and you would refuse to hear; yea, it would be impossible for you, as refined inhabitants of a civilized country, to endure the mention of the crimes that were committed by those very men who, now-a-days, are held up as being paragons of perfection. I fear, if all the truth were written, we should rise up from reading the lives of earth's mightiest heroes and proudest sages, and would say at once of all of them, "They are clean gone out of the way; they are altogether become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

And, did not that suffice, I would point you to the delusions of the heathen; I would tell you of their priestcraft, by which their souls have been enthralled in superstition; I would drag their gods before you; I would let you witness the horrid obscenities, the diabolical rites which are to these besotted men most sacred things. Then after you had heard what the natural religion of man is, I would ask what must his irreligion be? If this is his devotion, what must be his impiety? If this be his ardent love of the Godhead, what must his hatred thereof be? Ye would, I am sure, at once confess, did ye know what the race is, that the indictment is proven, and that the world must unreservedly and truthfully exclaim, "guilty."

A further argument I might find in the fact, that the best of men have been always the readiest to confess their depravity. The holiest men, the most free from impurity, have always felt it most. He whose garments are the whitest, will best perceive the spots upon them. He whose crown shineth the brightest, will know when he hath lost a jewel. He who giveth the most light to the world, will always be able to discover his own darkness. The angels of heaven veil their faces; and the angels of God on earth, his chosen people, must always veil their faces with humility, when they think of what they were. Hear David: he was none of those who boast of a holy nature and a pure disposition. He says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Hear all those holy men who have written in the inspired volume, and ye shall find them all confessing that they were not clean, no not one; yea, one of them exclaimed, "O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

And more, I will summon one other witness to the truthfulness of this fact, who shall decide the question; it shall be your conscience. Conscience, I will put thee in the witness-box, and cross-examine thee this morning! Conscience, truly answer! Be not drugged with the laudanum of self-security! Speak the truth! Didst thou never hear the heart say, "I wish there were no God?" Have not all men, at times, wished that our religion were not true? Though they could not entirely rid their souls of the idea of the Godhead, did they not wish that there might not be a God? Have they not had the desire that it might turn out that all these divine realities were a delusion, a farce, and an imposture? "Yea," saith every man; "that has crossed my mind sometimes. I have wished I might indulge in folly; I have wished there were no laws to restrain me; I have wished, as the fool, that there were no God." That passage in the Psalms, "The fool

hath said in his heart, there is no God," is wrongly translated. It should be, "The fool hath said in his heart, no God." The fool does not say in his heart there is no God, for he knows there is a God; but he says, "No God—I don't want any; I wish there were none." And who amongst us has not been so foolish as to desire that there were no God? Now, conscience, answer another question! Thou hast confessed that thou hast at times wished there were no God; now, suppose a man wished another dead, would not that show that he hated him? Yes, it would. And so, my friends, the wish that there were no God, proves that we dislike God. When I wish such a man dead and rotting in his grave; when I desire that he were non est, I must hate that man; otherwise I should not wish him to be extinct. So that wish—and I do not think there has been a man in this world who has not had it—proves that "the carnal mind is enmity against God."

But, conscience, I have another question! Has not thine heart ever desired, since there is a God, that he were a little less holy, a little less pure, so that those things which are now great crimes might be regarded as venial offences, as peccadillos? Has thy heart never said, "Would to God these sins were not forbidden! Would that he would be merciful and pass them by without an atonement! Would that he were not so severe, so rigorously just, so sternly strict to his integrity." Hast thou never said that, my heart? Conscience must reply, "Thou hast." Well, that wish to change God, proves that thou art not in love with the God that now is, the God of heaven and earth; and though thou mayest talk of natural religion, and boast that thou dost reverence the God of the green fields, the grassy meads, the swelling flood, the rolling thunder, the azure sky, the starry night, and the great universe—though thou lovest the poetic beau ideal of Deity, it is not the God of Scripture, for thou hast wished to change his nature, and in that hast thou proved that thou art at enmity with him. But wherefore, conscience, should I go thus round about? Thou canst bear faithful witness, if thou wouldst speak the truth, that each person here has so transgressed against God, so continually broken his laws, violated his Sabbath, trampled on his statutes, despised his gospel, that it is true, aye, most true, that "the carnal mind is enmity against God."

II. Now Secondly, we are called upon to notice the universality of this evil. What a broad assertion it is. It is not a single carnal mind, or a certain class of characters, but "the carnal mind." It is an unqualified statement, including every individual. Whatever mind may properly be called carnal, not having been spiritualized by the power of God's Holy Ghost, is "enmity against God."

Observe then, first of all, the universality of this as to all persons. Every carnal mind in the world is at enmity against God. This does not exclude even infants at the mothers' breast. We call them innocent, and so they are of actual transgression, but as the poet says, "Within the youngest breast there lies a stone." There is in the carnal mind of an infant, enmity against God; it is not developed, but it lieth there. Some say that children learn sin by imitation. But no; take a child away, place it under the most pious influences, let the very air it breathes be purified by piety; let it constantly drink in draughts of holiness; let it hear nothing but the voice of prayer and praise; let its ear be always kept in tune by notes of sacred song; and that child, notwithstanding, may still become one of the grossest of transgressors; and though placed apparently on the very road to heaven, it shall, if not directed by divine grace, march downwards to the pit. Oh! how true it is that some who have had the best of parents, have been the worst of sons; that many who have been trained up under the most holy auspices, in the midst of the most favorable scenes for piety, have nevertheless, become loose and wanton! So it is not by imitation, but it is by nature, that the child is evil. Grant me that the child is carnal, and my text says, "the carnal mind is enmity against God." The young crocodile, I have heard, when broken from the shell, will in a moment begin to put itself in a posture of attack, opening its mouth as if it had been taught and trained. We know that young lions, when tamed and domesticated, still will have the wild nature of their fellows of the forest, and were liberty given

them, would prey as fiercely as others. So with the child; you may bind him with the green withes of education, you may do what you will with him, since you cannot change his heart, that carnal mind shall still be at enmity against God; and notwithstanding intellect, talent, and all you may give to boot, it shall be of the same sinful complexion as every other child, if not as apparently evil; for “the carnal mind is enmity against God.”

And if this applies to children, equally does it include every class of men. There be some men that are born into this world master-spirits, who walk about it as giants, wrapped in mantles of light and glory. I refer to the poets, men who stand aloft like Colossi, mightier than we, seeming to be descended from celestial spheres. There be others of acute intellect, who, searching into mysteries of science, discover things that have been hidden from the creation of the world; men of keen research, and mighty erudition; and yet of each of these—poet, philosopher, metaphysician, and great discoverer—it shall be said, “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” Ye may train him up, ye may make his intellect almost angelic, ye may strengthen his soul until he shall take what are riddles to us, and unravel them with his fingers in a moment; ye may make him so mighty, that he can grasp the iron secrets of the eternal hills and grind them to atoms in his fist; ye may give him an eye so keen, that he can penetrate the arcana of rocks and mountains; ye may add a soul so potent, that he may slay the giant Sphinx, that had for ages troubled the mightiest men of learning; yet, when ye have done all, his mind shall be a depraved one, and his carnal heart shall still be in opposition to God. Yea, more, ye shall bring him to the house of prayer; ye shall make him sit constantly under the clearest preaching of the word, where he shall hear the doctrines of grace in all their purity, attended by a holy unction; but if that holy unction does not rest upon him, all shall be vain; he shall still come most regularly, but, like the pious door of the chapel, that turneth in and out, he shall still be the same; having an outside superficial religion, and his carnal mind shall still be at enmity against God. Now, this is not my assertion, it is the declaration of God’s word, and you must leave it if you do not believe it; but quarrel not with me, it is my Master’s message; and it is true of every one of you—men, women, and children, and myself too—that if we have not been regenerated and converted, if we have not experienced a change of heart, our carnal mind is still at enmity against God.

Again, notice the universality of this at all times. The carnal mind is at all times enmity against God. “Oh,” say some, “it may be true that we are at times opposed to God, but surely we are not always so.” “There be moments,” says one, “when I feel rebellious; at times my passions lead me astray; but surely there are other favorable seasons when I really am friendly to God, and offer true devotion. I have (continues the objector), stood upon the mountain-top, until my whole soul has kindled with the scene below, and my lips have uttered the song of praise,—

“These are thy glorious works, parent of good,

Almighty, thine this universal frame,

Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!”

Yes, but mark, what is true one day is not false another; “the carnal mind is enmity against God” at all times. The wolf may sleep, but it is a wolf still. The snake with its azure hues, may slumber amid the flowers, and the child may stroke its slimy back, but it is a serpent still; it does not change its nature, though it is dormant. The sea is the house of storms, even when it is glassy as a lake; the thunder is still the mighty rolling thunder, when it is so much aloft that we hear it not. And the heart, when we perceive not its ebullitions, when it belches not forth its lava, and sendeth not forth the hot stones of its corruption,

is still the same dread volcano. At all times, at all hours, at every moment, (I speak this as God speaketh it), if ye are carnal, ye are each one of you enmity against God.

Another thought concerning the universality of this statement. The whole of the mind is enmity against God. The text says, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." That is, the entire man, every part of him—every power, every passion. It is a question often asked, "What part of man was injured by the fall?" Some think that the fall was only felt by the affections, and that the intellect was unimpaired; this they argue from the wisdom of man, and the mighty discoveries he has made, such as the law of gravitation, the steam-engine, and the sciences. Now, I consider these things as being a very mean display of wisdom, compared with what is to come in a hundred years, and very small compared with what might have been, if man's intellect had continued in its pristine condition. I believe that the fall crushed man entirely, albeit, when it rolled like an avalanche upon the mighty temple of human nature, some shafts were still left undestroyed, and amidst the ruins you find here and there, a flute, a pedestal, a cornice, a column, not quite broken, yet the entire structure fell, and its most glorious relics are fallen ones, levelled in the dust. The whole of man is defaced. Look at our memory; is it not true that the memory is fallen? I can recollect evil things far better than those which savor of piety. I hear a ribald song; that music of hell shall jar in my ear when gray hairs shall be upon my head. I hear a note of holy praise; alas! it is forgotten! For memory graspeth with an iron hand ill things, but the good she holdeth with feeble fingers. She suffereth the glorious timbers from the forest of Lebanon to swim down the stream of oblivion, but she stoppeth all the draff that floateth from the foul city of Sodom. She will retain evil, she will lose good. Memory is fallen. So are the affections. We love everything earthly better than we ought; we soon fix our heart upon a creature, but very seldom on the Creator; and when the heart is given to Jesus, it is prone to wander. Look at the imagination, too. Oh! how can the imagination revel, when the body is in an ill condition? Only give man something that shall well nigh intoxicate him; drug him with opium; and how will his imagination dance with joy! Like a bird uncaged, how will it mount with more than eagles' wings! He sees things he had not dreamed of even in the shades of night. Why did not his imagination work when his body was in a normal state—when it was healthy? Simply because it is depraved; and until he had entered a foul element—until the body had begun to quiver with a kind of intoxication—the fancy would not hold its carnival. We have some splendid specimens of what men could write, when they have been under the accursed influence of ardent spirits. It is because the mind is so depraved that it loves something which puts the body into an abnormal condition; and here we have a proof that the imagination itself has gone astray. So with the judgement—I might prove how ill it decides. So might I accuse the conscience, and tell you how blind it is, and how it winks at the greatest follies. I might review all our powers, and write upon the brow of each one, "Traitor against heaven! traitor against God!" The whole "carnal mind is enmity against God."

Now, my hearers, "the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants;" but whenever I find a certain book much held in reverence by our Episcopalian brethren, entirely on my side, I always feel the greatest delight in quoting from it. Do you know I am one of the best churchmen in the world; the very best, if you will judge me by the articles, and the very worst, if you measure me in any other way. Measure me by the articles of the Church of England, and I will not stand second to any man under heaven's blue sky in preaching the gospel contained in them; for if there be an excellent epitome of the gospel, it is to be found in the articles of the Church of England. Let me show you that you have not been hearing strange doctrine. Here is the 9th article, upon Original or Birth Sin: "Original Sin standeth not in the following of Adam; (as the Pelagians do vainly talk); but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature

inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth always contrary to the spirit; and, therefore, in every person born into this world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek, phronema sarkos, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the Law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe and are baptized, yet the apostle doth confess, that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin." I want nothing more. Will any one who believes in the Prayer Book dissent from the doctrine that "the carnal mind is enmity against God?"

III. I have said that I would endeavor, in the third place, to show the great enormity of this guilt. I do fear, my brethren, that very often when we consider our state, we think not so much of the guilt as of the misery. I have sometimes read sermons upon the inclination of the sinner to evil, in which it has been very powerfully proved, and certainly the pride of human nature has been well humbled and brought low; but one thing always strikes me, if it is left out, as being a very great omission; viz.—the doctrine that man is guilty in all these things. If his heart is against God, we ought to tell him it is his sin; and if he cannot repent, we ought to show him that sin is the sole cause of his disability—that all his alienation from God is sin—that as long as he keeps from God it is sin. I fear many of us here must acknowledge that we do not charge the sin of it to our own consciences. Yes, say we, we have many corruptions. Oh! yes. But we sit down very contented. My brethren, we ought not to do so. The having those corruptions is our crime which should be confessed as an enormous evil; and if I, as a minister of the gospel, do not press home the sin of the thing, I have missed what is the very virus of it. I have left out the very essence, if I have not shown that it is a crime. Now, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." What a sin it is! This will appear in two ways. Consider the relation in which we stand to God, and then remember what God is; and after I have spoken of these two things, I hope you will see, indeed, that it is a sin to be at enmity with God.

What is God to us? He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth; he bears up the pillars of the universe; his breath perfumes the flowers; his pencil paints them; he is the author of this fair creation; "we are the sheep of his pasture; he hath made us, and not we ourselves." He stands to us in the relationship of a Maker and Creator; and from that fact he claims to be our King. He is our legislator, our law-maker; and then, to make our crime still worse and worse, he is the ruler of providence; for it is he who keeps up from day to day. He supplies our wants; he keeps the breath within our nostrils; he bids the blood still pursue its course through the veins; he holdeth us in life, and preventeth us from death; he standeth before us, our creator, our king, our sustainer, our benefactor, and I ask, is it not a sin of enormous magnitude—is it not high treason against the emperor of heaven—is it not an awful sin, the depth of which we cannot fathom with the line of all our judgment—that we, his creatures, dependent upon him, should be at enmity with God?

But the crime may seem to be worse when we think of what God is. Let me appeal personally to you in an interrogatory style, for this has weight with it. Sinner! why art thou at enmity with God? God is the God of love; he is kind to his creatures; he regards you with his love of benevolence; for this very day his sun hath shone upon you, this day you have had food and raiment, and you have come up here in health and strength. Do you hate God because he loves you? Is that the reason? Consider how many mercies you have received at his hands all your life long! You are born with a body not deformed; you have had a tolerable share of health; you have been recovered many times from sickness; when lying at the gates of death, his arm has held back your soul from the last step to destruction. Do you hate God for all this? Do you hate him because he spared your life by his tender mercy? Behold his goodness that he hath spread

before you! He might have sent you to hell; but you are here. Now, do you hate God for sparing you? Oh, wherefore art thou at enmity with him? My fellow creature, dost thou not know that God sent his Son from his bosom, hung him on the tree, and there suffered him to die for sinners, the just for the unjust? And dost thou hate God for that? Oh, sinner! is this the cause of thine enmity? Art thou so estranged that thou givest enmity for love? And when he surroundeth thee with favors, girdeth thee with mercies, encircleth thee with loving kindness, dost thou hate him for this? He might say, as Jesus did to the Jews, "For which of these works do ye stone me?" For which of these works do ye hate God? Did an earthly benefactor feed you, would you hate him? Did he clothe you, would you abuse him to his face? Did he give you talents, would you turn those powers against him? Oh, speak! Would you forge the iron and strike the dagger into the heart of your best friend? Do you hate your mother, who nursed you on her knee? Do you curse your father, who so wisely watched over you? Nay, ye say, we have some little gratitude towards earthly relatives. Where are your hearts, then? Where are your hearts, that ye can still despise God, and be at enmity with him? Oh! diabolical crime! Oh! satanic enormity! Oh! iniquity for which words fail in description! To hate the all-lovely—to despise the essentially good—to abhor the constantly merciful—to spurn the ever beneficent—to scorn the kind, the gracious one; above all, to hate the God who sent his son to die for man! Ah! in that thought—"The carnal mind is enmity with God;" there is something which may make us shake; for it is a terrible sin to be at enmity with God. I would I could speak more powerfully, but my Master alone can impress upon you the enormous evil of this horrid state of heart.

IV. But there are one or two doctrines which we will try to deduce from this. Is the carnal mind at enmity against God? Then salvation cannot be by merit; it must be by grace. If we are at enmity with God, what merit can we have? How can we deserve anything from the being we hate? Even if we were pure as Adam, we could not have any merit; for I do not think Adam had any desert before his Creator. When he had kept all his Master's law he was but an unprofitable servant; he had done no more than he ought to have done; he had no surplus, no balance. But since we have become enemies, how much less can we hope to be saved by works! Oh! no; but the whole Bible tells us, from beginning to end, that salvation is not by the works of the law, but by the deeds of grace. Martin Luther declared that he constantly preached justification by faith alone, "because," said he, "the people would forget it; so that I was obliged almost to knock my Bible against their heads, to send it into their hearts." So it is true; we constantly forget that salvation is by grace alone. We always want to be putting in some little scrap of our own virtue; we want to be doing something. I remember a saying of old Matthew Wilkes: "Saved by your works! you might as well try to go to America in a paper boat!" Saved by your works! It is impossible! Oh! no, the poor legalist is like a blind horse going round and round the mill, or like the prisoner going up the treadmill, and finding himself no higher after all he has done; he has no solid confidence, no firm ground to rest upon. He has not done enough—"never enough;" conscience always says, "this is not perfection; it ought to have been better," Salvation for enemies must be by an ambassador,—by an atonement,—yea, by Christ.

Another doctrine we gather from this is, the necessity of an entire change of our nature. It is true, that by birth we are at enmity with God. How necessary then it is that our nature should be changed! There are few people who sincerely believe this. They think that if they cry, "Lord, have mercy upon me," when they lay a-dying, they shall go to heaven directly. Let me suppose an impossible case for a moment. Let me imagine a man entering heaven without a change of heart. He comes within the gates. He hears a sonnet. He starts! It is to the praise of his enemy. He sees a throne, and on it sits one who is glorious; but it is his enemy. He walks streets of gold, but those streets belong to his enemy. He sees hosts of angels; but those hosts are the servants of his enemy. He is in an enemy's house; for he is at enmity with God. He could not join the song, for he would not know the tune. There he would stand, silent, motionless; till Christ

would say, with a voice louder than ten thousand thunders, "What dost thou here? Enemies at a marriage banquet? Enemies in the children's house? Enemies in heaven? Get thee gone? 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire in hell!'" Oh! sirs, if the unregenerate man could enter heaven, I mention once more the oft-repeated saying of Whitefield, he would be so unhappy in heaven, that he would ask God to let him run down to hell for shelter. There must be a change, if ye consider the future state; for how can enemies to God ever sit down at the banquet of the Lamb?

And to conclude, let me remind you—and it is in the text after all—that this change must be worked by a power beyond your own. An enemy may possibly make himself a friend; but enmity cannot. If it be but an adjunct of his nature to be an enemy, he may change himself into a friend; but if it is the very essence of his existence to be enmity, positive enmity, enmity cannot change itself. No, there must be something done more than we can accomplish. This is just what is forgotten in these days. We must have more preaching of the Holy Spirit, if we are to have more conversion work. I tell you, sirs, if you change yourselves, and make yourselves better, and better, and better, a thousand times, you will never be good enough for heaven, till God's Spirit has laid his hand upon you; till he has renewed the heart, till he has purified the soul, till he has changed the entire spirit and new-made the man, there can be no entering heaven. How seriously, then, should each stand and think. Here am I, a creature of a day, a mortal born to die, but yet an immortal! At present I am at enmity with God. What shall I do? Is it not my duty, as well as my happiness, to ask whether there be a way to be reconciled to God?

Oh! weary slaves of sin, are not your ways the paths of folly? Is it wisdom, O my fellow-creatures, is it wisdom to hate your Creator? Is it wisdom to stand in opposition against him? Is it prudent to despise the riches of his grace? If it be wisdom, it is hell's wisdom; if it be wisdom, it is a wisdom which is folly with God. Oh! may God grant that you may turn unto Jesus with full purpose of heart! He is the ambassador; he it is who can make peace through his blood; and though you came in here an enemy, it is possible you may go out through that door a friend yet, if you can but look to Jesus Christ, the brazen serpent which was lifted up.

And now, it may be, some of you are convinced of sin, by the Holy Spirit. I will now proclaim to you the way of salvation. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Behold, O trembling penitent, the means of thy deliverance. Turn thy tearful eye to yonder Mount of Calvary! See the victim of justice—the sacrifice of atonement for your transgression. View the Saviour in his agonies, with streams of blood purchasing thy soul, and with intensest agonies enduring thy punishment. He died for thee, if now thou dost confess thy guilt. O come, thou condemned one, self-condemned, and turn thine eye this way, for one look will save. Sinner! thou art bitten. Look! It is naught but "Look!" It is simply "Look!" If thou canst but look to Jesus, thou art safe. Hear the voice of the Redeemer: "look unto me, and be ye saved." Look! Look! Look! O guilty souls.

"Venture on him, venture wholly,

Let no other trust intrude;

None but Jesus, kind and loving,

Can do helpless sinners good."

May my blessed Master help you to come to him, and draw you to his Son, for Jesu's sake. Amen and Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/the-carnal-mind-enmity-against-god/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net