

The Leafless Tree

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that despite external trials and apparent lifelessness, the true vitality of God's people—both Israel and the Church—lies in the 'holy seed' within, which preserves their substance and ensures their ultimate restoration and flourishing.

Scripture: Isaiah 6:13, Romans 11:1-5, Genesis 12:3, Matthew 23:39, Psalm 122:6

Topics: "God's Faithfulness", "The Remnant", "Church Perseverance"

Description

In 'The Leafless Tree,' C.H. Spurgeon explores the enduring faithfulness of God to His people through the metaphor of trees that lose their leaves yet remain alive. He explains how both the Jewish nation and the Church, despite severe trials and apparent decline, are preserved by a faithful 'holy seed' within them. Spurgeon encourages believers to see themselves as part of this vital remnant, whose prayers and faith sustain the life of the Church. This sermon offers hope and assurance that God's promises endure beyond visible hardships.

Transcript

"But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and it shall be eaten as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof."—Isaiah 6:3.

OUR FIRST business to-night will be briefly to explain the metaphor employed in the text. The prophet was told that despite all the remonstrances he was instructed to deliver, and notwithstanding the eloquent earnestness of his lips, which had been just touched by a live coal from off the altar, still the people of Israel would persevere in their sins, and would therefore be certainly destroyed. He asked the question, "Lord, how long?" that is, How long will the people be thus impenitent? How long will thy sore judgment thus continue? And he was informed that God would waste and destroy the cities and their inhabitants, till the land should be utterly desolate. Then it was added, for his comfort, "Yet in it shall be a tenth." And so it happened; for when "Nebuchadnezzar carried away all Jerusalem," the historian gives this reservation—"none remained save the poorer sort of the people of the land." They were left by the captain of the guard, "to be vine-dressers and husbandmen." Thus in it there was a tenth; this small remnant of the people, however, was to be nearly destroyed too. "It shall return and shall be eaten;" the sense is, eaten up or consumed. The poor creatures left in the land, many of them fled into Egypt at the time of the conspiracy of Ishmael (not Ishmael, the son of Hagar, but an unworthy member of the royal family of

Judah), and there in Egypt most of them were cut off and perished. “But,” says God, “although this tenth only shall be preserved, and then even this small part shall be subjected to many perils yet Israel shall not be destroyed, for it shall be as a terebinth tree and as an oak;” their “substance is in them, when they cast their leaves,” and so lose their verdure and their beauty; thus, in like manner, a holy seed, a chosen remnant, shall still be the substance of the children of Israel, when the fruitful land is stripped of its foliage, and that fair garden of earth is barren as the desert.

The figure is taken, first of all, from the terebinth or turpentine tree—here translated the teil tree. That tree is an evergreen, with this exception, that in very severe and inclement weather it loses its leaves; but even then the terebinth tree is not dead. And so of the oak; it loses its leaves every year, of course, but even then it is not dead. “So,” says God, “you have seen the tree in winter, standing naked and bare, without any sign of life, its roots buried in the hard and frozen soil, and its naked branches exposed to every blast, without a bloom or a bud; yet the substance is in the tree when the leaves are gone. It is still alive, and it shall, by and by, in due season, bud and bloom; so,” says he, “Nebuchadnezzar shall cut off all the leaves of the tree of Israel—take away the inhabitants, only a tenth shall be left, and they shall well nigh be eaten up; still the church of God and the Israel of God never shall be destroyed; they shall be like the terebinth tree and the oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”

I hope I have made the meaning of the passage as plain as words can make it. Now, then, for the application—first, to the Jews; secondly, to the Church; thirdly, to each believer.

I. First, TO THE JEWS.

What a history is the history of the Jew! He has antiquity stamped upon his forehead. His is a lineage more noble than that of any knights or even kings of this our island, for he can trace his pedigree back to the very loins of Abraham, and through him to that patriarch who entered into the ark, and thence up to Adam himself. Our history is hidden in gloom and darkness; but theirs, with certainty, may be read from the first moment even down till now. And what a checkered history has been the history of the Jewish nation. Nebuchadnezzar seemed to have swept them all away with the huge broom of destruction; the tenth left was again give over to the slaughter; and one would have thought we should have heard no more of Israel; but in a little time they rose phoenix-like, from their ashes. A second temple was builded and the nation became strong once more, and though often swept with desolations in the mean time, yet it did not abide, and the scepter did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came. And, since then, how huge have been the waves that have rushed over the Jewish race! The Roman emperor razed the city to the ground, and left not a vestige standing; another emperor changed the name of Jerusalem into that of Eliah, and forbade a Jew to go within some miles of it, so that he might not even look upon his beloved city. It was plowed and left desolate. But is the Jew conquered? Is he a subjugated man? Is his country seized? No; he is still one of earth's nobles—distressed, insulted, spit upon; still it is written, “To the Jew first, and afterward to the Gentile.” He claims a high dignity above us, and he has a history to come which will be greater and more splendid than the history of any nation that has yet existed. If we read the Scriptures aright, the Jews have a great deal to do with this world's history. They shall be gathered in; Messiah shall come, the Messiah they are looking for—the same Messiah who came once shall come again—shall come as they expected him to come the first time. They then thought he would come a prince to reign over them, and so he will when he comes again. He will come to be king of the Jews, and to reign over his people most gloriously; for when he comes, Jew and Gentile will have equal privileges, though there shall yet be some distinction afforded to that royal family from whose loins Jesus

came; for he shall sit upon the throne of his father David, and unto him shall be gathered all nations. O!

“Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,

A remnant weak and small,”

ye may indeed,

“Hail him who saves you by his grace,

And crown him Lord of all;”

your church shall never die, and your race shall never become extinct. The Lord hath said it. “The race of Abraham shall endure for ever, and his seed as many generations.”

But why is it that the Jewish race is preserved? We have our answer in the text: “The holy seed is the substance thereof.” There is something within a tree mysterious, hidden, and unknown, which preserves life in it when every thing outward tends to kill it. So in the Jewish race there is a secret element which keeps it alive. We know what it is: it is the “remnant according to the election of grace;” in the worst of ages there has never been a day so black but there was a Hebrew found to hold the lamp of God. There has always been found a Jew who loved Jesus; and though the race now despise the great Redeemer, yet there are not a few of the Hebrew race who still love Jesus, the Saviour of the uncircumcised, and bow before him. It is these few, this holy seed, that are the substance of the nation; and for their sake, through their prayers, because of God's love to them, he still says of Israel to all nations, “Touch not these mine anointed, do my prophets no harm. These are the descendants of Abraham, my friend. I have sworn, and will not repent; I will show kindness unto them for their father's sake, and for the sake of the remnant I have chosen.”

Let us think a little more of the Jews than we have been wont; let us pray oftener for them. “Pray for the peace old Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love her.” As truly as any great thing is done in this world for Christ's kingdom, the Jews will have more to do with it than any of us have dreamed. So much for the first point. the Jewish nation is like “a terebinth tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”

II. And now, secondly, THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, whereof the Jewish people are but a dim shadow, and an emblem.

The church has had its trials; trials from without and trials within. It has had days of blood-red persecution, and of fiery trial; it has had times of sad apostacy, when an evil heart of unbelief and departing from the living God has broken out, and a root of bitterness springing up has troubled many, and thereby they have been defiled. Yet, blessed be God, through all the winters of the church she still lived, and she gives signs now of a sweeter spring-tide, a fresher greenness and a healthier condition than she has shown before for many a day. Why is it that the church is still preserved, when she looks so dead? For this reason: that there is in the midst of her—though many are hypocrites and impostors—a “chosen seed,” who are “the substance thereof.” You might have looked back a hundred years ago upon the professing church of Christ in this land, and what a sad spectacle it would have exhibited! In the Church of England there was mere formality; in the Independent and Baptist denominations there was truth, but it was dead, cold, lifeless truth. Ministers dreamed on in their pulpits, and hearers snored in their pews; infidelity was triumphant; the house of God was neglected and desecrated. The church was like a tree that had lost its

leaves: it was in a wintry state. But did it die? No; there was a holy seed within it. Six young men were expelled from Oxford for praying, reading the Bible, and talking to poor people about Christ; and these six young men, with many others whom the Lord had hidden by fifties in the caves of the earth, secret and unknown—these young men, leaders of a glorious revival, came out, and though ridiculed and laughed at as Methodists, they brought forth a great and glorious revival, almost equaling the commencement of the gospel triumphs under Paul and the apostles, and very little inferior to the great Reformation of Luther, of Calvin, and Zwingli. And just now the church is to a great degree in a barren and lifeless state. But will she therefore die? you say that true doctrine is scarce, that zeal is rare, that there is little life and energy in the pulpit and true devotion in the pew, while formality and hypocrisy stalk over us, and we sleep in our cradles. But will the church die? No; she is like a teil tree and an oak; her substance is in her when she has lost her leaves; there is a holy seed in her still that is the substance thereof. Where these are we know not; some, I doubt not, are here in this church—some, I hope, are to be found in every church of professing Christians: and woe worth the day to the church that loses her holy seed; for she must die, like the oak blasted by the lightning, whose heart is scorched out of it—broken down, because it has no substance in it.

Let me now draw your attention, as a church connected with this place, to this point—that the holy seed is the substance of the church. A great many of you might be compared to the bark to the tree; some of you are like the big limbs; others are like pieces of the trunk. Well, we should be very sorry to lose any of you; but we could afford to do so without any serious damage to the life of the tree. Yet there are some here—God knoweth who they are—who are the substance of the tree. By the word “substance” is meant the life, the inward principle. The inward principle is in the tree, when it has lost its leaves. Now, God discerns some men in this church, I doubt not, who are toward us like the inward principle of the oak; they are the substance of the church. I would feign hope that all the members of the church in some degree contribute to the substance; but I can not think so. I am obliged to say I doubt it; because when one hath fallen and another, it makes us remember that a church hath much in it that is not life. There be some branches on the vine that be cut off, because they do not draw sap from the heart of it, they are only branches bound on by profession, pretended graftings that have never struck root into the parent stock, and that must be cut off, and hewn down, and cast into the fire. But there is a holy seed in the church that is the substance of it.

Please to note here, that the life of a tree is not determined by the shape of the branches, nor by the way it grows, but it is the substance. The shape or a church is not its life. In one place I see a church formed in an Episcopalian shape; in another place I see one formed in a Presbyterian shape; then, again, I see one, like ours, formed on an Independent principle. Here I see one with sixteen ounces to the pound of doctrine; there I see one with eight, and some with very little clear doctrine at all. And yet I find life in all the churches, in some degree—some good men in all of them. How do I account for this? Why, just in this way—that the oak may be alive, whatever its shape, if it has got the substance. If there be but a holy seed in the church, the church will live; and it is astonishing how the church will live under a thousand errors, if there be but the vital principle in it. You will find good men among the denominations that you can not receive as being sound in faith. You say, “What! can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” and you go through, and find that there are even in them some true Nazarites of the right order. The very best of men found in the worst of churches! A church lives not because of its rubrics, and its canons, and its articles; it lives because of the holy seed that is in it as the substance. No church can die while it has a holy seed in it, and no church can live that has not the holy seed, for “the holy seed is the substance thereof.”

Observe, again, that the substance of the oak is a hidden thing; you can not see it. When the oak or the terebinth is standing destitute of leaves, you know that life is there somewhere. But you can not see it. And very likely you can not and do not know the men that are the holy seed, the substance of the church. Perhaps you imagine the substance of the church lies in the pulpit. Nay, friend! Let us pray to God that such of us as are in the pulpit may be a part of that substance; but much of the substance of the church lies where you don't know any thing of it. There is a mine near Plymouth, where the men who work in it, two hundred and fifty feet below the surface, have a little shelf for their Bibles and hymn-books, and a little place where every morning, when they go down in the black darkness, they bow before God, and praise him whose tender mercies are over all his works. You never heard of these miners, perhaps, and do not know of them; but perhaps some of them are the very substance of the church. There sits Mr. Somebody in that pew; O! what a support he is to the church. Yes, in money matters, perhaps; but do you know, there is poor old Mrs. Nobody in the aisle that is most likely a greater pillar to the church than he, for she is a holier Christian, one who lives nearer to her God and serves him better, and she is "the substance thereof." Ah! that old woman in the garret who is often in prayer; that old man on his bed who spends days and nights in supplication; such people as these are the substance of the church. O! you may take away your prelates, your orators, and the best and greatest of those who stand among earth's mighty men, and their place could be supplied; but take away our intercessors; take away the men and women that breathe out prayer by night and day, and like the priests of old offer the morning and evening lamb as a perpetual sacrifice, and you kill the church at once. What are the ministers? They are but the arms of the church, and the lips of it. A man may be both dumb and armless, and yet live. But these, the heavenly seed, the chosen men and women who live near their God, and serve him with sacred fervent piety—these are the heart of the church; we can not do without them. If we lose them we must die. "The holy seed is the substance thereof."

Then, my hearers, thou art a church member. Let me ask thee—art thou one of the holy seed? Has thou been begotten again to a lively hope? Has God made thee holy by the sanctifying influence of his Spirit, and by the justifying righteousness of Christ, and by the application to thy conscience of the blood of Jesus? If so, then thou art the substance of the church. They may pass by thee and not notice thee, for thou art little; but the substance is little; the life-germ within the grain of barley is too small for us, perhaps, to detect; the life within the egg is almost an animalcula—you can scarcely see it; and so the life of the church is among the little ones, where we can scarcely find it out. Rejoice, if you are much in prayer; you are the life of the church. But you, O you proud man, pull down your grand thoughts of yourself; you may give to the church, you may speak for the church, and act for the church, but unless you are a holy seed you are not the substance thereof, and it is the substance which is in reality of the greatest value.

But here let me say one thing before I leave this point. Some of you will say, "How is it that good men are the means of preserving the visible church?" I answer, the holy seed doth this, because it derives its life from Christ. If the holy seed had to preserve the church by its own purity and its own strength, the church would go to ruin to-morrow; but it is because these holy ones draw fresh life from Christ continually that they are able to be, as it were, the salvation of the body, and by their influence, direct and indirect, shed life over the whole visible church. The prayers of those living ones in Zion bring down many a blessing upon us; the groans and cries of these earnest intercessors prevail with heaven, and bring down very argosies of mercy from the gates of paradise. And besides, their holy example tends to check us and preserve us in purity; they walk among us like God's own favored ones, wrapped in white, reflecting his image wherever they go, and tending, under God, to the sanctifying of believers, not through their vaunting any self-righteousness, but by stirring up believers to do more for Christ, and to be more like him.

“The holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”

III. And now I come to the third point. this is true of EVERY INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER: his substance is in him when he has lost his leaves.

The Arminian says that when a Christian loses his leaves he is dead. “No,” say God’s Word, “he is not; he may look as if he were dead, and not have so much as here and there a leaf upon the topmost bough; but he is not dead. Their substance is in them even when they lose their leaves.”

By losing their leaves allow me to understand two things. Christian men lose their leaves when they lose their comforts, when they lose the sensible enjoyment of their Master’s presence, and when their full assurance is turned into doubting. You have had many such a time as that, have you not? Ah! you were one day in such a state of joy, that you said you could

“Sit and sing yourself away

To everlasting bliss.”

But a wintry state came, and your joy all departed, and you stood like a bare tree, after the wind had swept it in the time of winter, with just perhaps one sere leaf hanging by a thread on the topmost bough. But you were not dead then; no, your substance was in you, when you had lost your leaves. You could not see that substance, and good reason why, because your life was hid with Christ in God; you saw not your signs, but you had your substance still, though you could not discover it. There were no heavings of faith, but faith was there; there were no lookings out of hope, but though hope’s eyelids were shut, the eyes were there, to be opened afterwards; there was no lifting, perhaps, of the hand of ardent prayer, but the hands and arms were there, though they hung powerless by the side. God said, afterwards, “Strengthen the feeble knees, and lift up the hands that hang down.” Your substance was in you when you had lost your leaves. Good Baxter says—“We do not see graces, except when they are in exercise; and yet they are as much there when they are not in exercise as when they are.” Saith he, “Let a man take a walk into a wood; there lieth a hare or a rabbit asleep under the leaves; but he can not see the creature until it is frightened, and it runneth out, and then he seeth it to be there.” So if faith be in exercise you will perceive your evidence, but if faith be slumbering and still, you will be led to doubt its existence; and yet it is there all the while.

“Mountains when in darkness hidden,

Are as real as in day,”

said one; and truly the faith of the Christian, when shrouded by doubts and fears, is just as much there as when he rejoiceth devoutly in the display of it.

It is a common error of young converts that they attempt to live by their experience, instead of tracing their life up to its precious source. I have known persons rejoicing in the fullest assurance one day, and sinking into the deepest despondency the next. The Lord will sometimes strip you of the leaves of evidence to teach you to live by faith, as John Kent says—

“If to-day he deigns to bless us

With a sense of pardoned sin;

He to-morrow may distress us

Make us feel the plague within;

All to make us

Sick of self and fond of him."

But, ah! there is a worse phase to the subject than this. Some Christians lose their leaves not by doubts, but by sin. This is a tender topic—one which needs a tender hand to touch. O! there are some in our churches that have lost their leaves by lust and sin. Fair professors once they were; they stood green among the church, like the very leaves of paradise; but in an evil hour they fell, the slaves of temptation. They were God's own people by many infallible marks and signs; and if they were so, though it is grievous that they should have lost their leaves, yet there is the sweet consolation, their substance is in them still: they are still the Lord's, still his living children, though they have fallen into the coma of sin, and are now in a fainting fit, having gone astray from him, and having their animation suspended, while life is still there. Some, as soon as they see a Christian do any thing inconsistent with his profession, say, "That man is no child of God; he can not be; it is impossible." Ay, but, sir, remember what he thought who once said—"If a brother err, ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It is a fact, deny it who will, and abuse it, if you please, to your own wicked purposes; I can not help it—it is a fact that some living children of God have been allowed—and an awful allowance it is—to go into the very blackest sins. Do you think David was not a child of God, even when he sinned? It is a hard subject to touch; but it is not to be denied. He had the life of God within him before; and though he sinned—O! horrid and awful was the crime!—yet his substance was in him when he lost his leaves. And many a child of God has gone far away from his Master; but his substance is in him. And how know we this? Because a dead tree never lives again; if the substance be really gone, it never lives; and God's holy Word assures us, that if the real life of grace could die out in any one, it could never come again; for saith the apostle, "it is impossible, if they have been once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost"—if these fall away—"it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." Their tree is "dead, plucked up by the roots." And the apostle Peter says—"For if, after they have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, they are again turned back, their last end shall be worse than the first." But now take David, or take Peter, which you please. Peter we will have. O! how foully did he curse his Master! With many an oath he denied him. But had not Peter the life of God in him then? Yes; and how do we know? Because when his Master looked upon him, he "went out and wept bitterly." Ah! if he had been a dead man, hardened and without the substance in him, his Master might have looked to all eternity, and he would not have wept bitterly. How know I that David was yet alive? Why, by this—that although there was a long, long winter, and there were many prickings of conscience, like the workings of the sap within a tree, abortive attempts to thrust forward here and there a shoot before its time, yet when the hour was come, and Nathan came to him and said, "Thou art the man," had David been dead, without the life of God, he would have spurned Nathan from him, and might have done what Manasseh did with Isaiah, cut him in pieces in his anger; but instead of that he bowed his head and wept before God; and still it is written, "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." His substance was in him, when he lost his leaves. O! have pity upon poor fallen brethren. O! burn them not; they are not dead logs; though their leaves are gone their substance is in them. God can see grace in their hearts when you can not see it; he has put a life there that can never expire, for he has said, "I give unto my sheep eternal life," and that means a life that live for ever; "the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." You may choke the well up with big stones, but the

water will find its way out yet, and well up notwithstanding. And so the heir of heaven may, to the grief of the church and to the injury of himself, most grievously transgress—and weep, my eyes, O weep for any that have done so, and O bleed, my heart, and thou hast bled, for any that have so sinned—but yet their “substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed”—that is, Christ within them, the Holy Ghost within them, the new creature within them—“the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.” Poor backslider! here is a word of comfort for you. I would not comfort you in your sins; God forbid! But if you know your sins and hate them, let me comfort you. Thou art not dead! As Jesus said of the damsel, “She is not dead, but sleepeth,” so let me say of thee, “Thou art not dead; thou shalt yet live.” Dost thou repent? Dost thou grieve over thy sin? That is thee bud that shows that there is life within. When a common sinner sins he repents not, or if he doth repent it is with a legal repentance. His conscience pricks him, but he hushes it. He does not leave his sin and turn from it.

But did you ever see a child of God after he had been washed from a foul sin? He was a changed man. I know such an one, who used to carry a merry countenance, and many were the jokes he made in company; but when I met him after an awful sin, there was a solemnity about his countenance that was unusual to him. He looked, I should say, something like Dante, the poet, of whom the boys said, “There is the man that has been in hell;” because he had written of hell, and looked like it—he looked so terrible. And when we spoke of sin there was such a solemnity about him; and when we spoke of going astray the tears ran down his cheeks, as much to say, “I have been astray too.” He seemed like good Christian, after he had been in Giant Despair’s castle. Do you not remember, beloved, the guide who took the pilgrims up to the top of a hill called Clear, and he showed them from the top of the hill a lot of men with their eyes put out, groping among the tombs, and Christian asked what it meant. Said the guide, “These are pilgrims that were caught in Giant Despair’s castle; the giant had their eyes put out, and they are left to wander among the tombs to die, and their bones are to be left in the court-yard.” Whereupon John Bunyan very naively says, “I looked, and saw their eyes full of water, for they remembered they might have been there too.” Just as the man talked and spoke that I once knew. He seemed to wonder why God had not left him to be an apostate for ever, as the lot of Judas or Demas. He seemed to think it such a startling thing that while many had gone aside altogether from God’s way, he should still have had his substance in him, when he had lost his leaves, and that God should still have loved him. Perhaps, beloved, God allows some such men to live, and sin, and afterward repent, for this reason. You know there are some voices needed in music that are very rare, and when, now and then, such a voice is to be heard, every one will go to hear it. I have thought that perhaps some of these men in heaven will sing soprano notes before the throne—choice, wondrous notes of grace, because they have gone into the depths of sin after profession; and yet he had loved them when their feet made hast to perdition, and fetched them up, because he “loved them well.” There are but few such; for most men will go foully into sin; they will go out from us because they are not of us, for if they had been of us they would doubtless have continued with us. But there have been a few such—great saints, then great backsliding sinners, and then great saints again. Their substance was in them when they had lost their leaves. O! you that have gone far astray, sit and weep. You can not weep too much, though you should cry with Herbert—

“O, who will give me tears? Come, all ye springs,

Dwell in my head and eyes; come, clouds and rain!

My grief hath need of all the water things

That nature hath produced.”

You might well say—

“Let every vein

Suck up a river to supply mine eyes,

My weary, weeping eyes; too dry for me,

Unless they get new conduits, new supplies,

To bear them out, and with my state agree.”

But yet remember, “He hath not forsaken his people, neither hath he cut them off;” for still he says—

“Return, O wanderer, return,

And seek an injured father’s heart.”

Return! return! return! Thy Father’s bowels still move for thee. He speaks through the written oracles at this moment, saying, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, O Israel? How can I make thee as Adimah? How can I set thee as Zeboim?” My bowels are moved; my repentings are kindled together; for I will heal their backslidings, I will receive them graciously, I will love them freely, for they are mine still. As the terebinth and as the oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, even so the holy seed within the elect and called vessels of mercy, is still the substance thereof.

And now, what have I to say to some of you that live in black sin, and yet excuse yourselves on account of the recorded falls of God’s people? Sir, know this! Inasmuch as you do this, you wrest the Scriptures to your own destruction. If one man has taken poison, and there has been a physician by his side so skillful that he has saved his life by a heavenly antidote, is that any reason why thou, who hast no physician and no antidote, should yet think that the poison will not kill thee? Why, man, the sin that does not damn a Christian, because Christ washes him in his blood, will damn you. Said Brookes—and I will repeat his words and have done—“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, said the apostle, be his sins never so many; but he that believeth not shall be damned, be his sins never so few. Truly your sins may be little; but you are lost for them without Christ. Your sins may be great; but if Christ shall pardon them, then you shall be saved. The one question, then, I have to ask of thee, is—Hast thou Christ? For if thou hast not, then thou hast not the holy seed; thou art a dead tree, and in due time thou shalt be tinder for hell. Thou art a rotten-hearted tree, all touch-wood, ready to be broken in pieces; eaten by the worms of lust; and ah! when the fire shall take hold of thee, what a blazing and a burning! O! that thou hadst life! O! that God would give it to thee! O! that thou wouldst now repent! O! that thou wouldst cast thyself on Jesus! O! that thou wouldst turn to him with full purpose of heart! For then, remember, thou wouldst be saved—saved now, and saved for ever; for “the holy seed” would be “the substance thereof.”

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