

The Sparrow and the Swallow

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that despite our insignificance and needs, believers find a secure and welcoming refuge in Christ, who offers salvation freely to all who seek Him by faith.

Scripture: Psalm 84:3, Luke 12:6, John 6:37, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Proverbs 30:28, Isaiah 55:6, Hebrews 4:3

Topics: "Salvation", "Faith", "Divine Mercy"

Description

In 'The Sparrow and the Swallow,' C.H. Spurgeon draws from Psalm 84:3 to illustrate how even the most insignificant and needy find a secure and welcoming refuge in Christ. He passionately exhorts listeners to seek and personally appropriate salvation through faith, emphasizing God's mercy and the safety believers have in Jesus. This sermon encourages both believers and seekers to trust boldly in the finished work of Christ and find rest in His presence.

Transcript

"Yes, the sparrow has found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O LORD of Hosts, my King, and my God." Psalm 84:3.

WHEN David was far away from the services of the Tabernacle, he envied the birds that had built their nests near the sacred shrine. And Christians, in like manner, when they are debarred from the holy associations of Christian fellowship and united worship, always sigh over the lost privilege of meeting with their Brothers and Sisters in Christ. With even greater emphasis we may say that when a Christian loses the realization of the Presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the "Minister of the sanctuary and of the true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man," then it is, above all other seasons, that he sighs and cries for a renewal of communion with Christ. We would envy any, however poor and insignificant they may be, who can maintain unbroken fellowship with their Lord. And when it falls to our lot, through our own sin or neglect, or in the inscrutable wisdom of Divine Sovereignty, to be, for awhile, spiritually in the dark, seeking our Savior and not finding Him, we would willingly take the place of the godly captive pining in the persecutors' dungeon, or of the dying yet enraptured saint, if we could but once again enjoy the Presence of our Master! This was David's state of heart when he languished for the ancient Tabernacle services or, more probably, when he longed for that communion with his Lord which, perhaps, had been suspended together with his attendance upon the public worship of God's House. It was then, as I believe, that he was inspired to pen this "Pearl of the Psalms," including the verse upon which I am going to try to speak, praying that the Holy Spirit may enable me to utter words which shall be to the profit of both hearers and

readers.

It seems that the birds which came to David's mind when he wrote this Psalm had found two things—houses for themselves and nests for their young. And these two things Christians find in Christ and also, in a certain sense, in the assemblies of His servants for public worship in His name.

I. First, I want to remind you that CHRISTIANS FIND IN CHRIST AND, IN A CERTAIN SENSE, IN THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE FAITHFUL, HOUSES FOR THEMSELVES.

Turn to the text and read—"Yes, the sparrow has found a house." And upon that our first question shall be, What were those creatures that there found a house?

Well, they were only sparrows, yet they found a house near the altars of God and, therefore, David envied them. Now, sparrows are very insignificant things. 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?' said Christ to His disciples. And you and I, dear Friends, when we really know ourselves as we are in God's sight, are led to feel that because of our sin, we are even more insignificant than sparrows—and to realize that our being blotted out of the universe would be rather a gain to it than a loss! What unworthy creatures we see ourselves to be when once God pours upon us the bright light of His Word! Then we think that any mercy is too great and any blessing is far too good for us to receive. Yet, as the sparrows were permitted to find their house under the eaves of God's ancient Tabernacle, we, insignificant and worthless as we are, may come and build under the shelter of God's great House of Mercy. There we may find a safe refuge from every danger, a perfect security for all time, and even for all eternity. O you who think yourselves despised and forgotten, remember that the sparrow has found a house on God's altar! Come, then, and see if there is not also space there for you! Jesus said, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." And the Apostle Paul, writing under Inspiration, says, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak

things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, has God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His Presence." Therefore, poor despised one, though you feel yourself to be a nobody, come and welcome to the Savior, come to Him with cheerful confidence, for He will not, He cannot reject you!

The sparrows were not only very insignificant, they were also very needy. They needed a house, they needed a place of shelter—and they found it at God's altar. How needy, also, are we! Though we are insignificant, our needs are anything but insignificant. How much we need! Who can tell what we do not need? Were it not for God's super abounding mercy, we would all be in Hell. Were it not for His unspeakable goodness, we would, this day, have no hope of Grace, no prospect of pardon, no assurance of a holy, happy hereafter in Heaven. Our needs are countless—every moment brings a fresh one—and all the supplies of the past and the present are not sufficient to meet the voracious demands that will come upon us in the future. The sparrow, needy creature that she was, having nothing to bring to God's House, found there a house freely given to her and, you needy souls, the infinite supply of Divine Mercy in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is freely given to you! You need not bring anything with you when you come to Christ, only come and trust Him, and all your needs shall be supplied. Whatever your souls can need to bear them safely through the troubles of earth—and bring them to the bliss of Heaven—you shall have it freely given to you if you do but come flying with the wings of faith to find a house and a home in Jesus Christ. At the great altar where Christ was offered as the one Sacrifice for sin forever, the most

needy soul that ever lived on the face of the earth will find a hearty welcome!

These sparrows were uninvited guests, yet they found a house and took possession of it. And they were never blamed for doing so. But in this verse David seems to commend them—he certainly envied them. But, my dear Hearers, you who have never come to the Lord Jesus Christ are not uninvited guests. The Gospel invitation rings through this building every Sabbath day—

"Come and welcome, Come to Jesus, Sinner, come!"

We not only invite you, but we earnestly press you, in Christ's name, to come and put your trust in His great Sacrifice, assuring you that if you do, you shall find an everlasting and blessed home for your souls. So, as the sparrows came to God's House without an invitation, will not you come to Christ with one? They were bold enough to find a house when no man bade them do so. Therefore will not you be bold enough, trembler though you are, to take what Divine Mercy freely proffers to you? Do you not remember how Agur commends the spider as being "exceedingly wise" because she "takes hold with her hands and is in kings' palaces"? No one ever asked the spider to come into the palace. She was a loathsome creature, quite out of place in a palace, and her web would mar the beauty of the place, yet the spider knew by instinct that a storm was coming on and so sought shelter in the king's palace. There was Solomon's fine house of the forest of Lebanon, and the spider said within herself, "Why should not I, spider though I am, abide here?" So she crept about till she found a window open and in she slipped and made herself at home by taking hold with her hands, first of one wall and then of another, till she found herself at ease! There came along one who said, "Let that spider and her web be removed. What business has she to be here?" But Solomon thought otherwise, so the spider is immortalized in this Book of Proverbs, because of her wisdom in taking hold with her hands even on the walls of a royal palace!

O Soul, perhaps you are consciously to yourself as loathsome as that spider was, and the King's great House of Mercy seems too fair a place for you to enter! You ask, unbelievably, "Shall I ever be made a saint? Shall I ever be cleansed from sin? Shall I ever be taken up to dwell with the great King in Heaven?" Talk not so, but rather see whether you cannot find an entrance into the King's palace! And if you can find it, go in! Surely there is a window open for you where it is written by the King, Himself, as I reminded you just now, "Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out." Then there is another window where the King has hung up the invitation, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Does not that invite you? Come in, poor spider-sinner! Take hold of the walls of Christ's great House of Love and Mercy, and I can assure you that my royal Master will not be angry with you! But when He sees you there, He will immortalize you in His "Book of Life." You shall have a name and a place there and He will think you wise, not intrusive, in daring to believe Him and to come into His palace, spider-sinner as you are! He delights to have great things thought of Him—and if you will but think great things of His love and mercy, I will guarantee you that you

will never think thoughts that shall outstrip the reality, for what He has said is true, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

Let us learn, then, from the sparrow finding her house near to God's altar, that although we are inconsiderable and insignificant, although we are full of needs and although we may even deem ourselves to be uninvited, yet we are at liberty to come to the Savior and find in Him our eternal dwelling place!

Next, what does the text tell us that these sparrows did? We should learn something from that.

The text says, "Yes, the sparrow has found a house." Then, first of all, she looked for it. The sparrow needed a house and she searched to see where she could find it. One great reason why many do not find salvation is because they do not look for it. Many of them do not even know that they need it or, if they know it as a matter of doctrine, they do not believe it so as to look for it and appropriate it as their own. I feel persuaded that no man ever did sincerely seek salvation, through Jesus Christ, without finding it. I do not believe that among all the lost, there is one who will be able to tell the Lord that he honestly and earnestly sought His mercy, yet did not obtain it. If you have not found Christ, my dear Hearer, it is because you have not sought Him, for He said, "He that seeks, finds, and to him that knocks it shall be opened." I grant you that the blessing may be delayed for awhile—you may be some time in finding peace, perhaps through your ignorance, or through some cherished sin that you have not given up—but if you truly come to the Throne of Grace and cry in real earnest for mercy, as surely as God is in Christ Jesus, He will stretch out His silver scepter toward you and you shall touch it and find Grace in His sight! Be encouraged, O you Seekers, to persevere in your search for salvation! Ask that the aid of the Holy Spirit may be given to you that you may wisely and rightly seek the way of faith and may speedily find it!

Further, "the sparrow found a house"—then there was a house for her, or she could not have found it. A traveler in Palestine writes in his journal that as he was wandering among the ruins on the site of the Temple at Jerusalem, he noticed a little bird—known in the Hebrew as tzipor, or sparrow—fly out of a crevice between two great stones where the mortar or cement had been removed—and he thought at once of these words, "The sparrow has found a house." That is just what David meant. The sparrow no doubt found a little vacant place, just what she wanted, and in she went and there was her "house" ready-made for her! And let me say to you, O Seeker, that if you would find rest in Christ, there is rest prepared for you in Him! He who has prepared your heart to seek Him has prepared that which you would gladly find. It is not for you to make a salvation for yourself—your salvation is finished and you have but to find it. It is not for you to make an Atonement for yourself—the one Atonement for sin was made, once and for all, on Calvary! It is not for you to make a righteousness for yourself—the righteousness that Christ Jesus worked out for you is perfect and you may not add thereto any supposed righteousness of your own. If you are an honest seeker after Christ, for you there is already prepared by those dear hands that once were pierced for you, the salvation that shall lift you up from the depths of sin to the heights of Glory! As Bunyan said—"Does not your mouth water as you hear this? Do you not say, 'Is all this really prepared for me?' Then why do I not have it?" Ah, why not, why not indeed? In my Master's name, I assure you that "all things are ready" for all who will seek Him, for every soul that will trust Him. If you seek Him not. If you will not believe, there is no mercy for you! But if you seek heartily and trustfully, you shall assuredly find it, for it was prepared for you long ago by Him who has gone to Heaven to prepare Glory, having already prepared Grace for you!

"Yes, the sparrow has found a house." That also means that when she had discovered it, she appropriated it. There was the little place, so snug and cozy, just on the warm side of the Tabernacle where the South wind would blow and she would be shielded from the cold—and in went the little bird. She had found it and she took care to make it her own by personal appropriation. Now, we may find Christ, in a sense, so as to know much about Him, to read about Him, to hear about Him and even to understand much about Him, yet not truly find Him. The root of the matter is to get Christ for yourself! In this respect, you must be selfish and you can thus be selfish without being sinful. You must personally lay hold of Christ if you would be saved!

One who desired to teach a little girl this lesson, tried to do it when the child was waiting upon him while he was ill. "Please pour out my medicine, Jane," said the sick man. And when it was poured out, he said to her. "Now, Jane, take that medicine for me." "O Sir!" she said. "I would willingly do it, if it were the right thing to do, but the medicine would not do you any good if I took it." "You're right," he said, "and as I must personally take the medicine before it can do me good, my child, you must personally believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, or else another person's faith will do you no good." The idea of anything like sponsorship in religion—one person vowing and promising certain things for another—is utterly without any foundation in the Word of God! Religion is wholly and only a personal thing—you must repent for yourself, believe for yourself and lay hold on Christ for yourself! It would have been no benefit to that little bird if all other sparrows had found houses for themselves if she, herself, had been driven about, shelterless, in the storm. Oh, no—she must have a house for herself, "and the swallow a nest for herself," where she might lay her young.

You and I, dear Friends, will be wise if we do as this sparrow did, for she found a house for herself because she looked for it. She found it because it was already there for her and she found it by appropriating it so that it became her very own. Thus may we appropriate the Lord Jesus Christ—by an act of faith—and so make Him our very own!

I have, at various times, learned some lessons concerning living by faith. A friend frequently drives me through the streets of London and, one day, when all the cabs and wagons seemed to leave us no room to move, I said to him, more than once, "I am afraid we shall have an accident." When I had said that to him, perhaps for the third time, he put the reins into my hand and said, "Here, if you cannot trust me, drive yourself." Suppose God should say to us when we fear that we are getting into difficulties, "If you cannot trust Me, arrange for yourselves"? What a position we would be in then! If He left the reins in our hands for a single hour, we would be like the one who sought to drive the chariot of the sun and set the world a-blaze! When we leave all in the hands of God—and we must leave all there whether we are willing or not—then we can sing that sweet little song which Luther said that the sparrows always sing—

"Mortal, cease from care and sorrow, God provides for the morrow." May we all be able to sing that little song and to sing it to ourselves, too!

We will further prolong this simile by noticing what the sparrow found.

"Yes, the sparrow has found a house." The word is a very simple one, but there is much meaning in it. And when we find, in the Lord Jesus Christ, a house for our souls, we find safety in Him, even as the sparrow found safety in her "house." When the stormy wind blew all around her, the sparrow felt safe in her house hard by the altar in God's ancient Tabernacle. And when the storm of conscience beats upon us, we feel safe in our hiding place in the altar where Jesus suffered for us! And when the last dreadful storm of Divine Judgment shall come, we shall be safe beneath the shelter of the Atonement that He offered upon Calvary. He that believes in Jesus is safe forever! When the earth and all its works are burned up and the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, no hurt shall come to the man to whom Jesus is "a hiding place from the wind and a shelter from the tempest."

Next to safety, we find rest in Christ. The soul that is out of Christ knows not what true rest is, but, "we who have believed do enter into rest."—

"'Tis done! The great transaction's done! I am my Lord's, and He is mine!"

My salvation is finished, my sins are pardoned, my security is established by the promise and oath of God, Himself, ratified by the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. If this is your happy condition, you can enjoy the blissful sleep of the Beloved of the Lord, "and the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Just as the little sparrow felt perfectly at rest when she had entered her "house" in the Tabernacle, so do we, come what may, enjoy complete, absolute, unbroken rest when we have truly believed in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You: because he trusts in You!"

Further, a house is a place of abode. The sparrow lived in her house in the Tabernacle—and he who finds the Lord Jesus Christ, finds in Him a spiritual abode—he lives in Christ. He has heard his Master's blessed command, "Abide in Me," and he desires to dwell there, hard by the pierced heart of Jesus. My Brothers and Sisters in Christ, you have not a mere temporary lodging place, out of which you may someday be driven back into the cold world where you used to live. That would be a poor prospect for us—but we need not anticipate such a sad future, for we can say with Moses, "Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations." And He always will be, blessed be His holy name!

Once more, a house is, or ought to be, a place of delight. When a man reaches his home, he is at his ease and can unwind himself. If he is not happy at home, where can he be happy? The little sparrow, when it reaches its home, is perfectly content. Its day's work is over, its day's needs are supplied, and it chirps its evening song of joy. So when we make our abode in Christ our soul is filled with delight! We have a bliss that is not only full to the brim, but it even

overflows. Truly happy are those who are Christ's servants, thrice happy are they who are looking alone to His Cross for their salvation!

But the point upon which David seemed to lay the greatest emphasis was that the sparrow's house was near to God's earthly dwelling place and oh, when we abide in Christ, how near we are to God! You remember how Christ prayed to His Father concerning His disciples, "That they all may be one; as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You...I in them, and You in Me, that they may be made perfect in one." No nearness imaginable can be greater than Christ's nearness to His Father! Yet, as we are in Christ, we are, in His Person, as near even as He is!

I can only spare a minute or so for the secondary meaning which may be found in our text. In a certain sense, Christians, like the sparrow, find a house in the assemblies of the saints.

When the sparrow went to her house in the Tabernacle, she never needed to be driven there, but she went there of her own accord. And I trust that when we came up to our solemn assemblies, we need nothing to compel us to come, but that our own delightful remembrances of fellowship with God, in seasons past, make us long for the renewal of such seasons again and again! I hate to see people going to any place of worship as if they were being marched off to jail. But I rejoice to see them come up to the House of God with alacrity and holy joy, and with fleet footsteps as if they were delighted to think that the time had come when they could once more unite with their Brothers and Sisters in worship before the Throne of the Most High God. If you, like the sparrow, have found a house in God's House, you will go there with joy! And when you are there, you will be happy to be there. And when the service is over, you will wish that it had to begin again and you will long for the time when you will reach that city of God—

"Where congregations never break up, And Sabbaths have no end!"

There are many poor people here who scarcely ever have any peace except when they are sitting in this House of Prayer and who find here the richest enjoyments they ever know. I know some of God's afflicted children who have but little sacred mirth except when the holy hymn goes up in glorious peals to Heaven and they can join in it—

"Then they forget their pains a while,

And in the pleasure lose the smart." Cultivate more and more your love for the assemblies of the saints! We have no reverence for bricks and mortar, stones and wood, glass and iron—we do not believe in the sanctity of any one place above others—but we have a reverence for the living Temple of God, built up of living men and living women whose hearts are sanctified by the Holy Spirit! And we can say of their assemblies—

"I have been there, and still will go, 'Tis like a little Heaven below"—

and we can also say—

"There my best friends, my kindred dwell, There God my Savior reigns."

The sparrow has found a house and we too have found a house, where God's people meet, and of that house we sing—

"Here do I find a settled rest,

While others go and come, No more a stranger or a guest, But like a child at home."

II. After a man is himself saved, his first anxiety, if he is a father, will be concerning his children. The next clause of the text will be helpful to such parents—"The swallow (has found) a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Your altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King, and my God." Every Christian should think that what is good for himself is good for his children! He who does not labor and pray for the salvation of his own offspring has good reason to doubt whether he knows the Grace of God, himself. Believing parents cry, with Thomas Hastings—

"God of mercy, hear our prayer

For the children You have given!

Let them all Your blessings share,

Grace on earth, and bliss in Heaven."

Children should early be brought to the House of God! To keep to the figure of the text, THE ASSEMBLIES OF THE SAINTS SHOULD BE A NEST FOR OUR LITTLE ONES.

First, because they are safe there. At any rate, you need not fear that they will be hurt when they are where God is being worshipped in spirit and in truth. In the Sunday school, under the loving tuition of godly people, they will be safe. We never feel any need to ask whether they will be in a place of danger when we take them with us where Christ is preached and His Gospel is simply, earnestly and faithfully proclaimed. Bring, then, your children with you to the House of God, for it is a place where you may expect that your little ones, as well as yourselves, will be blessed.

The "swallow" is expressed, in the Hebrew, by a word which signifies liberty. It is the bird of freedom. It is not to be caged. Even a whole continent does not give room enough for its rapid, untiring flight over hill and dale, mountain and plain, so it crosses the ocean and flies to other lands far away. The swallow is the bird of liberty, yet David writes of one that found her nest where she might lay her young at God's altar—and if you want your children to be truly free, train them in the fear of God and the love of His Truth. The spirit of liberty will always be maintained in this land as long as we have the open Bible, the family altar and the training up of our children in the way that they should go. But take these things away and Popery will again enchain our country and bring back the curse from which our fathers set free our land even at the cost of their own lives!

Further, the nest is a place of delight to the little birds and so ought the House of God to be to children. And so it would be if preachers would always seek to make their language simple and would illustrate what they have to say so that the children can comprehend it. It is a bad sign concerning any man's ministry when the children do not understand him! I always look upon it as being one of the highest compliments I ever receive when I see some little boy's or girl's bright eyes, that are all too apt to wander here and there, fixed upon me while they seem to be drinking in what I have to say. There is a great lack in the preachers of the present day in this respect—we need to have the Master's words to Peter, "Feed My lambs," as well as the command, "Feed My sheep," more and more impressed upon our hearts! May you, Beloved, find a place of prayer for your children where it shall be their delight to go with you and to join intelligently in the worship of God.

When you take them there—as I have already hinted to you, they are in the way that the blessing is often given. I do not say that they will all be saved through coming to God's House, but if they are there with you, He who called you by His Grace, may also call them. And that ever-blessed Spirit who led you to find the Savior may also lead them to Him. Bring them to Bethesda, "the house of mercy," and pray to Christ to say to them, as He said to the impotent man, "Will you be made whole?...Rise...and walk." At any rate, do not let your children miss the blessing through neglecting to use the means which the Lord has blessed to you and to many others, both old and young.

Your children, if you take them with you to God's House, will be like the swallows in this respect, they will be pretty sure to return to the nest even if they leave it for awhile. Though the swallows may fly over the deep blue sea to the lands that are far away, yet when the next season comes, they find their way back again to the old nest and home. So, though some of our sons and daughters may grow up and leave the House of God for awhile, they cannot altogether forget it. The recollection of their father's prayers and of their mother's tears will follow them wherever they roam. Refrain your eyes from weeping, dear mothers! Your sons and daughters shall come back again! Possibly, when you sleep beneath the clods of the valley, they will recollect what they heard when, as children, you took them with you to the House of God. Words that have been forgotten for 50 years may yet ring in their souls and lead to their eternal salvation! At any rate, as the swallows found a nest for their young at God's altar, mind that you Christian parents make the House of God your children's house. Associate them, as far as you can, with all that is going on there so that they shall feel at home when they go with you to the place where you worship the Lord and serve Him.

But after all it is not the main thing to merely bring our children to the House of God—oh, that we could bring them to Christ! That is where we long to lay our young, for only there shall they be truly safe, happy and blessed! Christian parents, can you rest content as long as your children are unconverted? I am ashamed of you if you can! Do you say that you hope they will be converted in future years? I hope so,

too, but are you not concerned that they are out of Christ now? Perhaps you remind me of what I said just now, that your instruction may be blessed to their salvation long after you have been called Home. Yes, I recollect that I said that and I do not wish to withdraw what I said—yet I would like to ask whether you are willing to run the fearful risk of your children dying unsaved? The objective of parents,

preachers and teachers should be that children should be saved while they are children! That while they are yet young their names should be enrolled in the army of the Church militant!

How can we lay our children before Christ, as the swallow laid her young before God's altar? I answer, first, by prayer. The Lord will hear our prayers for our children as He heard our fathers' prayers for us. Example will also help toward the end we have in view—godly example at home. And personal precept will also help. We must talk to our children, one by one, alone, about their souls. I am afraid that some of you parents do not do this. But if you do not see your children grow up to do what is right, you will have to blame yourselves because you never personally pleaded with them to flee from the wrath to come. I know that the words of my father with me, alone, when he prayed for me and bade me pray for myself—not to use any form of prayer, but to pray just as I felt and to ask from God what I felt that I really needed—left an impression upon my mind that will never be erased. I have heard of an idiot who was one day scouring a brass plate to get the name out. But the more he scoured, the more clearly it shone! And when the devil tries to erase the impressions made upon my mind and heart by my mother's tears and my father's prayers, he is as much like an idiot as he possibly could be, for, let him scour as he may, those impressions will never be removed, but will continue to shine yet more brightly!

Do, dear Christian parents, resolve that if your children perish, it shall not be through any fault of yours. But why should they perish? Why should I suppose that such a thing is possible? "The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Did not Paul and Silas say to the jailer at Philippi, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved, and your house"? Do not be content with being saved yourselves! Say, "No, my Master, I cannot be put off with half Your promise—it is, 'and your house,' and I would gladly have it all, and see my children—and if I live long enough, their children, too, all encompassed in the arms of Your love and all of them saved." Brothers and Sisters, if you are like the sparrow, and have found a house, now be like the swallow and find not only a nest for yourself, but a place where you may lay your young, even God's altar upon which Christ offered His great atoning Sacrifice.

I wonder what other birds are represented here. Alas! Alas! I fear that I am addressing some who will not heed what I have been saying. They are not like the sparrow and the swallow. Perhaps they are like the eagle that was far too ambitious to think of building her nest anywhere near God's altar—too fond of soaring and struggling, too fond of high and lofty things. But there will come a time when the pride of man shall be laid low. Beware, beware, you who are like the eagle! Possibly there is one here who is like the vulture—far too foul to think of building in God's House! He is fond of everything that is unclean—wicked amusements and sinful pleasures, which are sadly miscalled, "pleasures." Ah, the time will come when sin will be as bitter to you as now it is sweet! Yes, and far more so, for it "will eat as does a canker." When you come to the dregs of the cup of sinful pleasure, you shall find that there is Hell in them and that forever! Or, perhaps there is one here who is like the cormorant who will not build on God's House because he is far too greedy after the world, seeking to gather gold and to amass property. Ah, Sir! Have you never heard of the rich fool whose soul was required of him the very night on which he boasted of his wealth? Play not you the fool, but be willing to leave all those things and come and seek enduring riches!

If you do not care for your own souls, it must seem to you an idle task for me to talk to you about your children, yet I will venture to say to any unconverted person here that it will increase his misery intolerably to see his children lost through his own example! If you must perish—if you are resolved to perish—why need you drag your child down with you? If you must drink, why need that boy of yours be taught the base habit into which you have fallen? If you will swear, do not let your child hear you. I would not have you swear at all, but if you will do so, why should your child learn from you to curse and blaspheme God? O Sirs, you will find it dreadful enough to perish, yourselves, but to bring down one, two, three—I know not how many children you have—to bring them down, one after the other to that same place of awful and eternal misery—what a terrible increase to your own wretchedness! You could not look at your dear child's face and then do him harm. I know that you would not touch him so as to break a bone, or do his body any injury. No, you pat his curly head, and say, "God bless you!" Yes, but why do you then do injury to his soul by your evil example? Why do you take your boy where you know he will learn no good and much harm? How dare you take him to places where the amusement is defiled and defiling, lascivious, unclean? No, if you really mean it when you say, "God bless my boy!" then live so that you will bless him by your example! May you be saved yourself, and then may you be a true parent.

to your children for immortality as well as for time! May these words abide with you and God bless them, so that we and our children may meet in Heaven, for Christ's sake! Amen.

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