

THE DROMEDARIES NO. 1504

A SERMON
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

We will read a few verses first, and at the close of them you will find the text.

“Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. And Solomon’s provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl. For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. And Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. And those officers provided victual for King Solomon, and for all that came unto King Solomon’s table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing. Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge.”
1 Kings 4:20-28.

The last words are the text for this occasion.

From the whole passage you will see that the kingdom of Israel under the sway of Solomon was a fair type of the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps it most exactly describes His future dominion, in the long-expected glory of the latter days. The present state of the church may be compared to the reign of David, splendid with victories, but disturbed with battles. But there are better days to come, days in which the kingdom shall be extended and become more manifest—and then the Lord Jesus Christ shall be even more conspicuously seen as the Solomon of the kingdom, “who shall have dominion from sea to sea.”

Yet even now, as “we that have believed do enter into rest,” so do we also enter into the richest provision which is made in the covenant of grace, even at this present, and I may say of all who have come under the sway of Christ, that we dwell in a region of *peace*, seated every man under his vine and fig tree, and none making us afraid. “There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” and, “therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “The peace of God which passes all understanding” does keep our heart and mind by Jesus Christ.

Israel under Solomon had *abundance* as well as peace. What says the historian? They were “as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking and making merry.” It is said that there was such plenty in the land in Solomon’s time that gold was of no more value than silver, and silver became of little more value than iron, and as for the other metals, they were little accounted of. So common had precious metals become that they were scarcely precious any longer, they were so plentiful. The whole land flowed with milk and honey, and the people rejoiced and were glad.

Certainly the Lord Jesus Christ has brought His people into a state of the greatest plenty, for “all things are yours; whether things present, or things to come; or life, or death; all are yours; and you are

Christ's; and Christ is God's." What plenty must that man have to whom the Lord has said, "No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly"! "Whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive." He has given us *carte blanche* in prayer. He has put into our hands the keys of His treasury and has bidden us take what we will. He has said, "Delight yourself also in the LORD, and he shall give you the desires of your heart." And He has added, "Open your mouth wide and I will fill it." If we have not, it is "because we ask not, or because we ask amiss."

So, too, we dwell in a kingdom which is ruled with *wisdom*. It is said of Solomon in this chapter that he had wisdom and understanding exceeding much and largeness of heart, even as the sand on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Is not this also our honor and privilege? Behold, this day the Lord Jesus Christ is "made unto us wisdom." "We have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things" while we dwell in Him, for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." "If any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine." "All your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children."

Hence we dwell under a rule of wisdom, which wisdom imparts itself to each one of us according to his capacity to receive it, yea, even to those whose experience is but shallow, "to teach the young men wisdom, and the babes knowledge and discretion." "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God that gives to all men liberally and upbraids not."

Israel had a king who was full of *power*. Solomon had squadrons of horse and chariots of war, and he was so strong that the kings of the earth dared not come into conflict with him, but paid him tribute. As for our King, He has better forces than horses and chariots of war, for He has but to speak to His Father and He will presently send Him twenty legions of angels. All power is delivered unto Him in heaven and in earth. The fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him for the defense and help of His people, and if you will but open your eyes, you shall see horses of fire and chariots of fire round about your Lord.

Hosts of angels are ascending and descending upon the Son of Man and all heaven is in motion for the purposes of God in Christ Jesus. Not an angel stands still beneath the sway of Christ, but each one either ascends or descends to do his Master's bidding. Talk of mighty princes—He is the Prince of the kings of the earth, the "blessed and only Potentate," to whom belongs rule over all principalities and powers. I might go on with the parallel, but that is not the object of my discourse.

The great kingdom of Solomon was managed by a well-appointed body of officers and certain persons were set over each province, who, amongst other duties, had to provide for king Solomon's table and stable. The table was very sumptuously furnished, as you saw in the reading, and in the stable stood horses of war and also swift dromedaries, which were used in the same manner as our modern post-horses—to carry messages rapidly from one station to another. These swift horses and dromedaries were made to run from town to town with the royal mandates and thus the whole country was kept in speedy communication with the capital. Appointed officers were bound to provide for these horses and dromedaries and all else that concerned the king's business, and my subject at this time will illustrate the likeness between this arrangement and the methods of our Lord's kingdom.

I. First we shall note that EACH OF SOLOMON'S OFFICERS HAD A CHARGE.

The text says, "Every man according to his charge." We have officers about modern courts who may be highly ornamental, but when you have said that, there is very little else to add. On high days and holidays they wear many decorations and glitter in their stars and garters, and sumptuous garments, but what particular charge they fulfill, it is beyond my power to say. *In Solomon's court all his officers had a service to carry out*, "every man according to his charge." It is exactly so in the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we are truly His, He has called us to some work and office, and He wills us to discharge that office diligently. We are not to be gentlemen-at-ease, but men-at-arms, not loiterers, but laborers, not glittering spangles, but burning and shining lights.

It is an exceeding glory to be the lowest servant of King Jesus. It is more honor to be a scullion in Christ's kitchen than to be a peer of the realm. The lowliest position that can be occupied in the kingdom of Jesus Christ, if any can be mean in such a service, has a touch of divine glory about it and if we rightfully discharge it, though it is only to wash the saints' feet, we partake in the honor of our Master, who Himself did not disdain to do the like.

But no man is put in any office in the church that he may merely be ornamental. We are set in our places with an end and design, every man according to his charge—every woman according to *her* charge. My dear brother, you do not occupy the post of a minister or a pastor that you may be respected, but that you may “adorn the doctrine of God your Savior in all things.” You are not, my dear brother, ordained to be an elder or a deacon in a church that our Lord may put honor upon you, though He does put honor upon you in it, but that you may bring glory to God—that the people may see the grace of God in you and may magnify God in you. Churches were not made for ministers, but ministers for churches.

We who are officers in the church are not ordained for our own sakes, but for the people's sake and we should always recollect that fact and live with it in our eye. Dear friend, if you are called to teach in the school, if you are called to visit from house to house, or to act as a City Missionary or a Bible woman, you have work to do and you must do it well, or render a sorrowful account at the last. Office is not given to you that you may get credit by it and have the honor of filling it, but that you may do real service to your Lord and Master Jesus Christ. No servant of Christ can be faithful if he regards that title as one of barren honor involving no responsibility. If we would be servants and officers under our great King, we must bow our necks to the yoke and not imagine that it will suffice to bind burdens upon other men's shoulders, and act as lookers-on ourselves. It is said of Job's cattle, that “the oxen were plowing and the asses were feeding beside them,” but in our Lord's field, we must all be oxen and steadily keep to the furrow.

Those who served Solomon were officers under a strict king, for such was his wisdom that he would not tolerate unfaithfulness in any office. He chose the best men and so long as he retained them, he meant business and expected prompt attention. If they did not do their duty, he did his and sent them packing. It is very much so in the church of Jesus Christ. I am not speaking as if the children of God could perish, but I do say this—in the service of Christ if you are not a faithful servant you will soon have to make room for another.

You may be laid aside by sickness and then you will have suffering instead of serving, or you may be made to drop into the rear rank and go behind and weep in sorrow because you did not faithfully do your duty in the front. Recollect that text, “The Lord your God is a jealous God,” and rest assured that our Lord Jesus Christ is like His Father, He will have the diligent obedience of His servants and their faithful zeal, or else He will cashier them and take away their commissions.

“Be you clean,” says He, “that bear the vessels of the LORD,” for He will be had in reverence of them that are about Him, and unholy servants and unfaithful servants shall soon find that their Master can do without them. Many a minister has had to come away from a place of advantage because he has not zealously used it to win souls and lead the people on to the holy war. I do not doubt that many rising officers have been sent back to the ranks because the Commander-in-Chief could not have patience with them any longer in their positions. They were removed because they discouraged their fellow-soldiers and checked the progress of the campaign.

Do not suppose that our Lord Jesus Christ is any less strict in His discipline than Moses, for love is always severe towards those it highly favors. I greatly question the love of that man who can tolerate unchastity in his wife—certainly the Husband of the church will not do so. The love of our Lord Jesus is of so fervent a character that He cannot bear a divided heart or a negligent walk in any of us. There is a text which some Christian people do not like and so they cut the heart out of it, “Our God is a consuming fire.” They say, “God, out of Christ, is a consuming fire.” The text does not say so. It speaks of “*Our* God,” and that means our covenant God, our God *in Christ* and it is God in Christ Jesus who is a consuming fire.

Beware how you deal with Him, for while His love is strong as death, His jealousy is cruel as the grave, and if our hearts and motives and aims in His service once become divided, it will be as great a crime as if one of Solomon's servants should have been playing into the hands of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Solomon would have taken care that a man who had two lords should not have him for one of them. None of us can serve two masters—certainly, if Christ is one of them, He will be the only one. A divided heart is abhorrence to the loving Savior and we must not insult Him with it.

The officers of Solomon were also obliged to recollect that the *orderly working of the whole system* depended upon each one of them. That is to say, Solomon had so arranged it that there was a certain troop of horses in a certain town and the appointed officer must see to their fodder—barley and straw were to be on the spot in full quantity for the horses at that particular depot. It would not have done to send it anywhere else and if an officer had failed to supply his department, the horses must have starved and the system been thrown out of gear.

Now, in any well-arranged Christian church, a Christian who is not faithful to his charge little knows what mischief he does, but as far as he can, he puts the whole machine out of gear, and apart from the interposing mercy and supreme wisdom of Christ, he would throw the whole economy of the Lord's house into disorder. Brethren and sisters, we think when we neglect a part of our service that it ends there, but it does not.

A father neglects his duty to his children—there is mischief to the child, but it goes further—that child in later life spreads the evil by his example and transmits it to his descendants. Ay, to his children's children after him. A Christian man in a church keeps in the background when he should be in the front, or he comes to the front when he should be in the rear, and this is just the upsetting of the whole business so that affairs cannot move smoothly. The little church cannot prosper because an influential member is where he ought not to be.

In a great house, the servants must keep their places and if the cook will persist in doing the chambermaid's duties and does not prepare the meals, everything is in a muddle. And if, on the other hand, the maid who has to clean the rooms neglects that duty, but must needs be in the kitchen, there will be no comfort either by day or by night. You can all see the bearing of this upon a Christian church.

To change the figure, a church is like a house and if the windows are put where the doors should be, or if what should make the roof is laid on the floor, the house is out of order. To be "fitly framed together" is the true condition of the Lord's house. The church is also compared to the body. If the eye should transfer itself to the foot, or if the ear should move to the hand, or if the hand should take the place of the foot, or the foot should attempt to do the work of the mouth, our comely frames would become monstrosities. So it must be in the system of the church of Jesus Christ if His arrangements are broken through. Under God everything depends upon each child of God having his "charge" and looking well to it. If he does not look well to his own department, the Christian man does damage to others as well as to himself.

In Solomon's kingdom it came to pass that *the spirit of the king infused itself into all his officers* and therefore the country was well governed. Beloved, I pray that it may be so with this church and with all the churches of Jesus Christ, that the Spirit of our great King may infuse itself into us all. Nothing makes men fight like having a hero for a leader. When Cromwell came to the front, nobody was afraid. Away went the cavaliers like chaff before the wind when once he was present. And surely, when our glorious Master, the Captain of our salvation, the standard bearer among ten thousand, is seen to be in the midst of a church, then everything goes well and we all fight with confidence and daring.

One man sometimes seems to have the power of pervading thousands of other men. His spirit appears to govern, to move, to stir the hearts of his fellow men till the man lives in them all. And so is it supremely with the Lord Christ. We live in Him and He lives in us. If we are all moved by the Spirit which dwells in Jesus—the Spirit of love, of self-denial, of consuming zeal, and of ardor—then all will be done gloriously. If we imitate His consecration, His prayerfulness, His boldness, and His gentleness, what a troop shall we make and how well will our Solomon's kingdom be administered!

Only one more thought here. *When Solomon's kingdom came to mischief it was through one of his officers.* You recollect that, when Solomon died, Jeroboam split the kingdom in twain and he was a runaway servant. Whenever a church comes to ruin, we grieve to confess that it is generally through its own officers. I fear it is more often the ministers than any other persons.

The great heresies which have infested the church have not sprung from the mass of the people, but from certain famous leaders. And at this day, the heart of our churches, I believe, is infinitely more sound than the ministry. I wish it were not so, but I cannot conceal my fears. When our Lord was betrayed, it was not by private followers such as Mary Magdalene, Zaccheus, or Joseph of Arimathaea—but by Judas, the treasurer of the College of Apostles. It was an apostle who sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver.

Still the fault is equally grievous if it is committed by the lowest officer. As I have already said, we are all servants—we are all clothed with responsibilities and we can, if the Holy Spirit shall leave us to it, do grievous damage—more damage than the outside world can ever accomplish. Let the raging crowd surround Zion's walls. Let them cast up their banks and seek to shoot their arrows there. But lo, the virgin daughter of Zion has shaken her head at her foes and laughed them to scorn.

But when the traitor comes within—when it is written that, “Judas also which betrayed Him knew the place”—then is the Master betrayed in the garden where He resorted for prayer. When from the heart of the church there springs a serpent, even her head must be stung thereby. Let the question go round, “Lord, is it I?” And may God of His grace grant that none of us may ever betray our charge and so bring damage to the glorious cause and kingdom of our blessed King.

II. Our second head is somewhat like the first. We now note that EACH MAN WAS BOUND TO ACT ACCORDING TO HIS CHARGE—“Every man according to his charge.”

The officers were bound to obey their orders, first, as to *matter*. Certain of them had to provide fat oxen for Solomon's table, and others had to see that the roebucks were hunted and that the fowls were hunted for the same purpose. While others were commissioned to provide the barley and the straw for the horses and the camels. As I have already said, if they had gone out of place—if the man who had to provide the barley for the horses had fed the chickens with it and if the officer who was bound to hunt the roebucks had occupied himself with carting the straw, there would have been great confusion.

And so, dear brother, when you will not do what you were evidently meant to do and are quite able to do, but must needs attempt something quite out of your range, all goes amiss. Observe your own body—if your ear were to have a feeling that it ought to eat instead of hear, the mouth would be interfered with and the feeding of the frame would be very badly done. The eye is a very serviceable member, but if it persisted in refusing to see and must needs take to hearing, we should be run over in the streets. Each member has its own office in the body and must attend to its own work and not to the office of another.

Dear friend, have you found out what you can do—what the Lord has fitted you to do and what He has blessed you in doing? Then keep to it and do it better and better, and by no means complain of your vocation. Do not find fault with others whose work differs from your own. The eye would be very foolish if it should say, “Do not tell me about that frivolous member, the ear—it is of no use—it only knows what it is told and it is so blind that it could not see a house if it were within a yard of it, nor even a mountain a mile high.”

Equally idle would it be if the ear should say, “Do not tell me about the mouth. It is a selfish organ, always wanting to be fed. It is good for nothing, for it cannot hear, and if a cannon were fired off close to it, it would not perceive it.” Neither may the mouth say, “That roving foot is always running about. Why does it not work like the hand?” Nor may the hand find fault with the tongue because it boasts great things and does nothing. There would be sad confusion in the body if such a spirit prevailed. But the hand keeps to its work and even there is a subdivision of service. The little finger plays a part which the thumb cannot fulfill, and there is something for the thumb which the forefinger cannot do. So should

it be in the church of God—you should each find out what you can do and then seek, God the Holy Spirit helping you, to do that to the very best of your ability out of love to Jesus.

Observe that with Solomon it was “every man according to his charge” as to *measure*, for if a man had charge of a stable where there were two thousand horses, he had to send in more barley and straw than the officer who superintended a smaller stable of only five hundred horse. The purveyor who was ordered to supply Solomon’s table with fat bullocks had to send more than he who fed the tables of the inferior officers. Note this well, for certain of us are bound to do much more than others.

Some of us bear heavy responsibilities and if we were to say, “I shall do no more than anybody else. I need not overburden myself,” we should be unfit to occupy the position to which God has called us. Dear friends, I am not afraid that any of you will do too much for Jesus Christ, but I would like you to try. Just see now whether you can be too ardent, too self-sacrificing, too zealous, or too consecrated. It were a pity that such a thing should not be attempted.

I have never known anybody who could accuse himself of so rare a crime. Oh, no, we all feel that all we can do, and more, is well deserved by our blessed Master who has given us our charge. Do not forget that you who are fathers ought to be better men than those single men who have no children to look up to them and to copy their example. You who are large employers ought to be better men, because your workmen will watch how you live. You who have talents and abilities ought to be more active than those who have none, for five talents call for more interest than one.

Do remember the rule of proportion. If you have five talents and your brother has only one, you may do twice as much as he does and yet fall short. He is faithful with his small capital, but your proportion is five times as much and therefore twice as much falls short of what is expected from you. Many a servant girl gives her four penny-piece to the offering and if the same proportion were carried out among those who are wealthy, gold would not be so rare a metal in the Lord’s treasury. A tithe may be too much for some, but a half might not be enough for another. Let it be, “Every man according to his charge,” as to measure as well as to matter.

“Every man according to his charge,” applied to *place*, for if the servant who had to send in barley for the dromedaries to Jerusalem had sent it off to Joppa, or if the Joppa man had sent all his fodder to Jericho, there would have been considerable trouble and outcry in the stables. And if the fatted beef and the venison for Solomon’s table, when he stopped in the house of the forest of Lebanon, had been sent over to his other house on Mount Zion, the king would have had his table ill supplied.

Some men are not satisfied to serve God in their proper place—they must run fifty miles off, or a hundred, before they can work. Is this right? I remember a little text in the Proverbs, “As a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man that wanders from his place.” There is a sphere for every star which decks the sky and a blade of grass for every drop of dew which spangles the mead. Oh that everyone would keep his place.

Very much depends on position. Statues upon a building may look magnificent and seem to be in fine proportion, but if those statues were one night to say, “We do not like standing up here in this exposed place. We will walk down and stand in the public square,” you would see at once that the artist never meant them to be there, for they would be out of proportion in their new position.

So a man is a man when he keeps his niche, but he may be a nobody if he leaves it. Many a man have I known who has done nothing till he has found his place and then he has astonished his friends. I find it so with young men entering the ministry—a brother has not succeeded, in fact, he has been an utter failure in his first position and yet, when God has opened the proper door for him, he has done marvels. Why did he not succeed before? Because he was out of his place. The best thing applied to the purpose for which it is not suited is a mere waste, and the best man in an unsuitable position may unwittingly be a hindrance to the cause he loves. Solomon’s officer would have been very foolish if he had sent his barley down to Dan when it was his duty to supply Beersheba.

Find your place, good brother, and do not be in a hurry to move. He who keeps in a shop in a dozen towns in a dozen years will at the end look in vain for a shop which will keep him. The spirit of roving

tends to poverty. Those who are eager to move because they imagine that they will leave their troubles behind them are much deceived, for these are found everywhere. You may soon get into some such predicament as Jonah, who thought that all would be well if he could avoid Nineveh trials, but he had forgotten the troubles of being aboard ship in a storm. I do not suppose he ever ran away to Tarshish again. That one experiment satisfied him and I hope you will profit by his experience.

Do not try running away on your own account, for if you endeavor to escape your Lord's hard work, I would have you remember that the sea is quite as tempestuous now as ever, and whales are fewer now than in Jonah's day—and not at all so likely to carry a live man to shore. Keep your place, "every man according to his charge."

Once more, every man was to act according to his charge as to *time*, because the passage speaks of each one "in his month." If the January man had taken care to provide for Solomon's table in February, what would have happened? There was a man for February and there would have been two supplies for one month, but none for the first weeks of the year. If the August officer had kept back till September the corn which was wanted by the horses and the dromedaries in August, what would the poor creatures have done during that month? While the barley was coming, the steeds would have been starving.

In serving Christ, there is a great deal in being up to time, punctual in everything. Not tomorrow, brother—not tomorrow, that is somebody else's day—today is the day for you. Up and do the day's work. Some soul is to be won for Christ, some truth to be vindicated, some deed of kindly charity to be wrought, some holy prevalent prayer to be offered and it is to be done *at once*.

Or ever tomorrow's sun has risen, see that you have carried out your charge, for time in reference to these solemn matters is life. Promptness we always admire in responsible persons. If they have any public duty to do, we cannot endure to see men leaving matters in arrears, to be done by-and-by, or never done at all. If Jesus Christ "straightway" did this and that, as Mark always takes care to tell us He did, let us imitate His promptitude and serve God without the sluggard's delays.

III. I close with the third point, that EACH MAN WOULD RECEIVE SUPPLIES "ACCORDING TO HIS CHARGE."

I do not quite understand the precise and definite bearing of my text. Surely it means not only that one set of officers was to send in the barley, but that another set of officers was to receive the barley and the straw in proportion to the number of horses and dromedaries. "Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where the officers were, every man according to his charge." That is to say, according to the number of horses to be provided for, such was the amount of corn and of straw that was sent in for their food.

So I gather, first, that concerning the servants of our Lord Jesus Christ *a great charge from Him is a guarantee of great supplies*. There is something very comfortable about this as to temporals. Some declare that God sends mouths and does not send bread, or at least they say He sends the mouths to one house and the bread to another. If it is so, those who get too much bread should send it round to their neighbors. Yet I note that somehow where there are mouths, bread does come.

It often amazes me, I must confess, and it brings tears to my eyes when I see it and indeed it is perfectly wonderful that poor widows with a swarm of little children feed them in some fashion. The poor woman comes to the Orphanage about a little boy and she does not like to part with him, but want compels, and when we have said, "My good woman, how many children had you when your husband died?" she has replied, "Seven, sir, and none of them able to earn a penny." "You have been fighting your way alone these three or four years, how have you done it?" "Ah, sir," she answers, "God only knows. I cannot tell you."

No, no and there are many of God's dear children who could not tell you how they lived, but they have lived and their children, too. The Lord leaves them a great charge and in His own way He sends a supply. Most of us have found that if our King sends us the dromedaries, He sends us the barley. It has been so in my case in the matter of our two hundred and fifty orphan children at Stockwell. Our gracious God has always sent us enough and the boys have known no lack. And when we receive another two

hundred and fifty children, and have girls as well as boys, I feel sure our heavenly Father will provide for them all.

I hope you will all recollect that the provision must come instrumentally through the Lord's own people and much of it through the readers and hearers of the sermons, but come it will. If my Lord puts more dromedaries into my stable, I shall look for the corresponding increase in the barley and the straw, for I am quite sure He will send it. When I think of my dear friend, Mr. George Muller, with two thousand and fifty orphan children and nothing to depend upon, as they say, but just prayer and faith, I rejoice greatly. He never has a fear or a want and is as restful as if he were an incarnate Sabbath. If we had twenty thousand orphans to feed, our Master is quite able to supply them all. He feeds the universe and we may well trust Him. If we have a simple, childlike faith, we shall find that a great charge is a guarantee of a great supply—"Every man according to his charge."

As it is in temporals, so is it in grace. When God gives a man a few people to look after, He gives him grace enough, and when He gives him ten times that number, He gives him more of His Holy Spirit. And when He gives him a hundred times that number, He increases the divine anointing. If the Lord sends you a little trial, dear brother, you shall have grace enough, and if He sends you a huge trial, you shall still have grace enough. If He gives you some little work to do in the back settlements, your strength shall be as your day, and if He allots you a great charge in the front of the enemy's fire, you shall not come short. "Every man according to his charge."

You will not have a farthing's worth of grace over. You shall never have so much that you can boast about it and talk of having lived for months without sinning, and the like kind of nonsense. You shall be forced to feel that, when you have done all, you are an unprofitable servant. Never in my life have I had in the morning, left from yesterday's manna, as much as would cover a three penny-piece. I have always been so hungry that I have had to devour all I could get there and then. I have lived from hand to mouth—the hand has been that of my Lord, which is ever full, and the mouth has been mine, and it has been always gaping for more. When in my ministry I have had a double quantity of food, I have had a double number to feed upon it. The Lord's grace has been sufficient for my necessities, but it has never left me room for glorying in self. Still, take it as a sure fact that a great charge is a guarantee of a great supply.

Now we will turn the truth over and say that *a great supply indicates a great charge*. O that some would think of this! A man has grown richer than he used to be. Brother, with more barley and more straw you ought to keep more dromedaries. I mean that God did not send that corn for the mice to destroy, but He means it to be eaten. When God gives men money or means of any sort, they ought to feel that they are His stewards and must use all they have for their Master. If you do not use it, but hoard it, it will happen to you as once befell a little brook.

It had always been running, rippling along, rolling its gladsome stream down to the river and thus ever emptying itself, but remaining ever full. This little brook became greedy and said, "I have been too extravagant. I have made no provision for the hot summer weather. I always give all I get—it keeps running through me in one perpetual stream and none of it stays. This must be altered. I will make a great store and become full." So there came a bank across it—it was dammed up and the waters kept on swelling and rising. After a little time, the water turned green and foul. It became encumbered with all sorts of weeds, was the haunt of all manner of creeping things, and gave forth an offensive smell. It became a very great nuisance to the villagers and they called in the sanitary commissioners to get rid of it, for it was breeding fever.

How now, you once sparkling brook! What an end has come to your bright and cheerful life. Do you see the drift of the parable? Recollect that in Palestine there is one sea which always receives and never gives out. What is its name? The Dead Sea. It must always be the Dead Sea while this is its character. If they were to cut a channel into the great ocean, to let its waters run away, it might grow sweet, but otherwise it never can do so.

The man who much receives but nothing gives is dead while he lives. He who has great receipts should reckon that he has a great charge and act accordingly. When a brother has great talents, great possessions, great influence—when he is great at anything—by God’s grace let him say, “God requires great things of me; for to whom much is given, of him shall much be required.” It is a law of the kingdom of Christ—a law which He will take care is always carried out.

So I finish up with this. Somebody will say, “I could almost wish that I could escape from the responsibility of being a servant of Christ.” Dear brother, take note of these two or three facts.

You cannot better your circumstances as a servant of Christ by diminishing your charge. If you say, “I shall not attempt quite so much,” you will not improve your circumstances by that course, for if you diminish work, the Lord will diminish the strength. Our great Solomon will stop some of the supplies if you have fewer dromedaries to feed and so you will be no better off. If you have to keep six, He will give you provision for six. If you take to keeping three, He will only give you supplies for three and you will be poorer rather than richer.

Neither can you improve your circumstances by entirely and only increasing the supply. For if you receive more straw and barley, certainly our Solomon will send you more dromedaries. When you have more strength, you will have more trials. When God’s children do not discharge their service with the means which He entrusts to them, He frequently lets them take shares in a “limited liability company,” which is the same thing as throwing your money into the river. Or He leaves them to become shareholders in a breaking bank with unlimited catastrophe as its capital and this is more terrible still.

It often happens to a man who has scraped and saved, and stinted the cause of Christ, that in his later years he is in straits and he cries to himself, “It is all gone and I wish I had used it better before it went. It would have been far better to give it to the Lord than to see the lawyers devour it.” Ah, your sin has found you out. Your Master could not trust you and so He has taken away His goods from you, and now you wish that you had behaved yourself. Let us take warning from such bad managers and let us see that as our charge is so we cry for supplies, and that as the supplies come, we use them wisely.

Everything for Jesus, the glorious Solomon of our hearts, the Beloved of our souls! Life for Jesus! Death for Jesus! Time for Jesus! Eternity for Jesus! Hand and heart for Jesus! Brain and tongue for Jesus! Night and day for Jesus! Sickness or health for Jesus! Honor or dishonor for Jesus! Shame or glory for Jesus! Everything for Jesus, “every man according to his charge.” So may it be! Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 62
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—686, 681, 745**

TO MY CHURCH, CONGREGATION, AND SERMON READERS

Dear Friends—During my absence you expect to hear from me by means of a little note at the end of the weekly sermon. The kindly interest which suggests this expectation is very precious to me and therefore I will not disappoint it. I would run the risk of being egotistical rather than treat Christian affection with coolness. There is none too much of it in the world and where it survives it deserves to be cultivated. More than most men I am favored with brotherly love and I am most grateful for it.

I have commenced a short period of rest in this delightful region. Taking the advice of physicians, I left *before* rheumatic affections had prostrated me, and I am in hope that I shall in this genial climate escape my usual attack, and gather strength, and then return in the middle of January fortified to endure the rest of the winter. On former occasions, the major part of my vacation has been spent in slowly recovering from weakness of body and depression of spirit, but this time I trust it will be used in gathering thoughts and storing force for future use. Pray for me that it may be so, for I would fain carry on the work of the Lord without the serious hindrances caused by the sicknesses of former years.

Dear friends at home, I entreat you suffer nothing to decline. Cheer by your presence those who preach for me. Keep up the prayer meetings and the weeknight services, and sustain the offering for the

College, which is at present somewhat behind. It will need more than forty pounds each week to make up the one thousand eight hundred and seventy-nine pounds.

The weekly sermon is always carefully prepared by me, and it will not be less interesting because it does not happen to have been preached last Sunday. The discourse will be as new to most of my readers as if it were delivered yesterday, since they have never seen or heard it before. I hope to write a few sermonettes under the olive trees, and I will do my very best to make them interesting. I pray my readers, therefore, not to imagine that my absence from London will make any difference to the weekly publication of these sermons. I hope that a little thoughtful repose will enable me to preach better when I return, but otherwise my temporary absence from England will not affect the regular weekly issue of the *Tabernacle Pulpit*.

A month or so ago the sermon entitled, "*Among the Lions*" excited unusual interest. I hope that the present sermon, entitled, "The Dromedaries," will be found equally useful, though it is not a solace for the slandered, but a stimulus for the active.

With fervent Christian affection,
Yours most heartily,
C. H. Spurgeon

Mentone Hotel de la Paix
November 14, 1879

Taken from The C. H. Spurgeon Collection, Version 1.0, Ages Software. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.