

FAST-DAY SERVICE
NO. 154-155

HELD AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE, SYDENHAM
ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 1857
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON

*Being the Day appointed by Proclamation for a Solemn Fast, Humiliation, and Prayer
before Almighty God in order to obtain Pardon of our Sins
and for imploring His Blessing and Assistance on our
Arms for the Restoration of Tranquility in India*

BRIEF INVOCATION

O GOD, the God of heaven and of earth, we do this day pay Thee reverence and meekly bow our heads in adoration before Thine awful throne. We are the creatures of Thine hand. Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves. It is but just and right that we should pay Thee our adoration.

O God! we are met together in a vast congregation for a purpose which demands all the power of piety and all the strength of prayer. Send down Thy Spirit upon Thy servant, that he, whilst trembling in weakness, may be made strong to preach Thy Word, to lead forth this people in holy prayer, and to help them in that humiliation for which this day is set apart.

Come, O God, we beseech Thee, bow our hearts before Thee. Instead of sackcloth and ashes, give us true repentance and hearts meekly reverent. Instead of the outward guise, to which some pay their only homage, give us the *inward spirit*, and may we really pray, really humiliate ourselves, and really tremble before the Most High God.

Sanctify this service. Make it useful unto us and honorable to Thyself. And O Thou dread Supreme, unto Thee shall be the glory and the honor, world without end. Amen.

Let us now praise God by singing the first hymn. I shall read it through, and then, perhaps, you will be kind enough to sing it through.

*“Before JEHOVAH’s awful throne,
Ye nations bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone;
He can create and He destroy.*

*His sovereign power, without our aid,
Made us of clay and form’d us men!
And when like wand’ring sheep, we stray’d,
He brought us to His fold again.*

*We are His people, we His care,
Our souls and all our mortal frame;
What lasting honors shall we rear,
Almighty Maker to Thy name?*

*We’ll crowd Thy gates with thankful songs,
High as the heavens our voices raise;
And earth with her ten thousand tongues,
Shall fill Thy courts with sounding praise.*

*Wide as the world is Thy command;
Vast as eternity Thy love;
Firm as a rock Thy truth must stand,
When rolling years shall cease to move.”*

EXPOSITION

DANIEL 9:1-19

“In the first year of Darius the Son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans;

“In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

“And I set my face unto the LORD God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes:

“And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O LORD, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

“We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:

“Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

“O LORD, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee.

“O LORD, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.

“To the LORD our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him.”

There is the first bright star which shines in the midst of the darkness of our sins. God is merciful. He is just—as just as if He were not merciful. He is merciful—as merciful as if He were not just, and in very deed more merciful than if He were too lenient—instead of blending a wise severity of justice with a gracious clemency of longsuffering.

My brethren, we should rejoice that we have not this day to address the gods of the heathens. You have not today to bow down before the thundering Jove. You need not come before implacable deities, who delight in the blood of their creatures, or rather, of the creatures whom it is pretended that they have made.

Our God delights in mercy and in the deliverance of Britain from its ills. God will be as much pleased as Britain, yea, when Britain shall have forgotten it, and only the pages of history shall record His mercies, God will still remember what He did for us in this day of our straits and our difficulties. As to the hope that He will help us, it is a certainty.

There is no fear that when we unite in prayer God will refuse to hear. It is as sure as that there is a God, that God will hear us. And if we ask Him aright, the day shall come when the world shall see what Britain’s God has done, and how He has heard her cry and answered the voice of her supplications.

“Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets.

“Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

“And he hath confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under this whole heaven hath not been done as hath been done upon Jerusalem.

“As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth.

“Therefore hath the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed not his voice.

“And now, O LORD our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hath gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly.”

The prophet in his prayer pleads what God has done for them as the reason why He should make bare His arm. He tells how God delivered Israel out of Egypt and he therefore prays that God would deliver them from their present trouble.

And my brethren, not Israel itself could boast a nobler history than we, measuring it by God's bounties. We have not yet forgotten an armada scattered before the breath of heaven, scattered upon the angry deep as a trophy of what God can do to protect His favored Isle. We have not yet forgotten a fifth of November, wherein God discovered divers plots that were formed against our religion and our commonwealth.

We have not yet lost the old men, whose tales of even the victories in war are still a frequent story. We remember how God swept before our armies the man who thought to make the world his dominion, who designed to cast his shoe over Britain, and make it a dependency of his kingdom. God wrought for us. He wrought with us and He will continue to do so. He has not left His people and He will not leave us, but He will be with us even to the end.

Cradle of liberty! Refuge of distress! Storms may rage around you, but not upon you, nor shall all the wrath and fury of men destroy you, for God has pitched His tabernacle in your midst and His saints are the salt in the midst of you.

“O LORD, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

“Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the LORD's sake.

“O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

“O LORD, hear; O LORD, forgive; O LORD, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.”

And now for a few moments, let us endeavor to pray—

PRAYER

OUR Father, which art in heaven," we will be brief, but we will be earnest if Thou wilt help us. We have a case to spread before Thee this day. We will tell out our story and we will pray that Thou wouldst forgive the weakness of the words in which it shall be delivered and hear us, for Jesus' sake.

O Father, Thou hast smitten this our land, not in itself, but in one of its dependencies. Thou hast allowed a mutinous spirit to break out in our armies, and Thou hast suffered men who know not Thee, who fear neither God nor man, to do deeds for which earth may well blush, and for which we, as men, desire to cover our faces before Thee.

O Lord God, Thou couldst not bear the sin of Sodom. We are sure Thou canst not endure the sin which has been committed in India. Thou didst rain hell out of heaven upon the cities of the plain. The cities of Inde are not less vile than they, for they have committed lust and cruelty, and have much sinned against the Lord. Remember this, O God of heaven.

But O Lord our God, we are not here to be the accusers of our fellow-men. We are here to pray that Thou wouldst remove the scourge which this great wickedness has brought upon us. Look down from heaven, O God, and behold this day the slaughtered thousands of our countrymen. Behold the wives, the daughters of Britain, violated, defiled!

Behold her sons, cut in pieces and tormented in a manner which earth has not beheld before. O God, free us, we beseech Thee, from this awful scourge! Give strength to our soldiers to execute upon the criminals the sentence which justice dictates. And then, by Thy strong arm and by Thy terrible might, do Thou prevent a repetition of so fearful an outrage.

We pray Thee, remember this day the widow and the fatherless children. Think Thou of those who are this day distressed even to the uttermost. Guide the hearts of this great multitude that they may liberally give and this day bestow of their substance to their poor destitute brethren.

Remember especially our soldiers, now fighting in that land. God shield them! Be Thou a covert from the heat! Will Thou be pleased to mitigate all the rigors of the climate for them! Lead them on to battle. Cheer their hearts. Bid them remember that they are not warriors merely, but executioners, and may they go with steady tramp to the battle, believing that God wills it that they should utterly destroy the enemy, who have not only defied Britain, but thus defiled themselves amongst men.

But O Lord, it is ours this day to humble ourselves before Thee. We are a sinful nation. We confess the sins of our governors and our own particular iniquities. For all our rebellions and transgressions, O God have mercy upon us! We plead the blood of Jesus. Help every one of us to repent of sin, to fly to Christ for refuge, and grant that each one of us may thus hide ourselves in the rock, till the calamity be overpast, knowing that God will not desert them that put their trust in Jesus.

Thy servant is overwhelmed this day. His heart is melted like wax in the midst of him. He knoweth not how to pray. Yet Lord if Thou canst hear a groaning heart which cannot utter itself in words, Thou hearest his strong impassioned cry, in which the people join. Lord save us! Lord arise and bless us, and let the might of Thine arm and the majesty of Thy strength be now revealed in the midst of this land, and throughout those countries which are in our dominion.

God save the Queen! A thousand blessings on her much-loved head! God preserve our country! May every movement that promotes liberty and progress be accelerated, and may everything be done in our midst which can shield us from the discontent of the masses, and can protect the masses from the oppression of the few.

Bless England, O our God. "Shine, mighty God, on Britain shine," and make her still glorious Britain! "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth." Lord accept our confessions, hear our prayers, and answer us by Thy Holy Spirit! Help Thy servant to preach to us and all the glory shall be unto Thee, O Father, to Thee, O Son, and Thee, O Holy Spirit, world without end. Amen and Amen.

Let us now sing the second hymn. It is made up of verses selected from different Psalms, which I thought to be appropriate to the occasion.

*“Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.*

*“Under the shadow of Thy throne,
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defense is sure.*

*“Our foes insult us, but our hope
In Thy compassion lies;
This thought shall bear our spirits up,
That God will not despise.*

*“In vain the sons of Satan boast
Of armies in array;
When God has first despised their host,
They fall an easy prey.*

*“Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come.
Be Thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.”*

Hoping to receive help from God’s Holy Spirit, I shall now proceed to address you from a part of the ninth verse of the sixth chapter of Micah.

SERMON

*“Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.”
Micah 6:9*

THIS world is not the place of punishment for sin. Not *the* place. It may sometimes be *a* place, but not usually. It is very customary among religious people to talk of every accident which happens to men in the indulgence of sin, as if it were a judgment. The upsetting of a boat upon a river on a Sunday is assuredly understood to be a judgment for the sin of Sabbath-breaking. In the accidental fall of a house, in which persons were engaged in any unlawful occupation, the inference is at once drawn that the house fell because they were wicked.

Now, however some religionists may hope to impress the people by such childish stories as those, I, for one, forswear them all. I believe what my Master says is true, when He declared, concerning the men upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, that they were not sinners above all the sinners that were upon the face of the earth. They were sinners, there is no doubt about it, but the falling of the wall was not occasioned by their sin, nor was their premature death the consequence of their excessive wickedness.

Let me, however, guard this declaration, for there are many who carry this doctrine to an extreme. Because God does not usually visit each particular offense in this life upon the transgressor, men are apt to deny altogether the doctrine of judgments. But here they are mistaken.

I feel persuaded that there are such things as national judgments, national chastisements for national sins—great blows from the rod of God, which every wise man must acknowledge to be either a punishment for sin committed, or a monition to warn us to a sense of the consequences of sins, leading us by God’s grace to humble ourselves and repent of our sin.

O, my friends, what a rod is that which has just fallen upon our country! My poor words will fall infinitely short of the fearful tale of misery and woe which must be told before you can know how smartly God has smitten and how sternly He has chidden us. We have today to mourn over revolted subjects, for today a part of our fellow-countrymen are in open arms against our government.

That, of itself, were a heavy blow. Happily the government of this land is so constituted that we know little of revolutions except by name. But the horrors of anarchy, the terrors of a government shaken to its foundations, are so great, that should I preach alone upon that subject, you might hear the rod and cry aloud beneath its strokes.

But this is as but the letting forth of water. A flood succeeds. The men who have revolted were our subjects and I challenge all the world to deny what I am going to say—they were our subjects rightly. Whatever the inhabitants of India might be (and undoubtedly that people have grave faults to find with us), the Sepoys had voluntarily given themselves up to our dominion. They had themselves taken oaths of fealty to Her Majesty and their officers, and they have no cause to murmur if they are made to endure the sentence uttered by a government of which they were the sworn and willing supporters.

They were always petted, always rocked upon the knee of favoritism. Their revolt is not the revolt of a nation. If India had revolted, history might perhaps have taught us that she had patriots in her midst who were delivering her from a tyrannical nation. But in the present case, it is only men who are impelled by a lust and ambition for an empire, who have risen against us.

And ah! my friends, what crimes have they committed! Not today shall I detail their acts of debauchery, bloodshed, and worse than bestiality—this tongue will not venture to utter what they have dared to do. You would rise from your seats and hiss me from the pulpit which I now occupy, if I should but dare to hint at the crimes which have been done of them, not in secret, but in the very streets of their cities.

And again, equally as painful, we have now rebels to be executed. I look upon every gallows as a fearful chastisement. I regard every gibbet as being a dreadful visitation upon our land. And I think that whenever the arm of the ruler is outstretched for the punishment of death, it must always be looked upon by the country as a serious affliction to it. Just as the father thinks it a high affliction to chastise his child, so should a country ever esteem it to be a visitation when they have to punish, especially with the punishment of death.

Now, these men must be punished. Both heaven and earth demand it. I am no soldier, I love not war. I do not believe that this is a war at all, in the proper sense of the term. We are not fighting with enemies. Our troops are going forth against revolted subjects—against men who, by their crimes, by their murder, and by other unmentionable sins, have incurred the punishment of death. And as the arrest of a murderer by authority of the law is not war, so the arrest of Indian Sepoys, and their utter destruction is not war—it is what earth demands and what I believe God sanctions.

But it is a horrible necessity. It is a dreadful thing to think of taking away the lives of our fellow-subjects. We must look upon *it* as being an affliction, and today, amongst the other evils that we bemoan, we must bemoan this—that the sword must be taken out of its sheath to cut off our fellow-subjects by their thousands. The rod, *the rod*, THE ROD has indeed fallen heavily. No mortal tongue can tell the anguish it has caused, nor perhaps can we yet dream where its ill effects shall end.

Remember, however, the words of my text. It is a rod, but it is an *appointed* rod. Every deed that has been done against us has been appointed by God. God is most fully to be cleared from the sin of it, but it is undoubtedly true that He has overruled and permitted it. The rod was ordained of God. I myself see God everywhere. I believe that “The foreknown station of a rush by the river is as fixed as the station of a king, and the chaff from the hand of the winnower as steered as the stars in their courses.”

And I see God in this war. The wheels of providence may revolve in a mysterious manner, but I am certain that wisdom is the axle upon which they revolve, so that at last it shall be seen that God, who ordained the rod, only permitted it that greater good might follow, and that His name might be exalted through the earth. The sin is man's own deed, but the affliction that we suffer through it, God has ordained. Let us bow before it and let us now hearken to the exhortation of the text, "Hear ye the rod, and him that hath appointed it."

I shall have your attention while as briefly as I can, I endeavor to bid you hear this rod of God.

First, let me remark, it would have been as well if we had heard this rod BEFORE IT FELL upon us. God's rod by the wise man may be heard before it smites. He that understands God's moral government knows that sin carries punishment in its bowels. A wise man believing revelation could have prophesied that God would visit us.

The sins of the government of India have been black and deep. He who has heard the shrieks of tormented natives, who has heard the well-provoked cursing of dethroned princes, might have prophesied that it would not be long before God would unsheathe His sword to avenge the oppressed. With regard to India itself, I am no apologist for our dominion there. With regard to the Sepoys, they are our voluntary subjects, they deserve the utmost rigor of the law. From their own oath they were our subjects. And if they have revolted, let them suffer the punishment of their treason.

But had it been the Indian nation that had revolted, I would have prayed God that they might have been brought under British rule again, for the sake of civilization, but I would not have preached a crusade against them, lest haply we would have been smiting patriots who were but delivering an oppressed country.

My brethren, I say it would have been as well if the rod had been heard before it fell. If in the midst of sin the Indian government had paused, and endeavored to undo the evil, it would have been well for them—if instead of following the policy of creed, they had followed the policy of right, they might have looked for divine support.

They never ought to have tolerated the religion of the Hindus at all. I believe myself (for it in no way infringes the law of right) entitled to my religion, but if my religion consisted in bestiality, infanticide, and murder, I should have no right to my religion, unless I were prepared to be hanged for it.

Now, the religion of the Hindus is neither more nor less than a mass of the rankest filth that ever imagination could have conceived. The gods they worship are not entitled to the least atom of respect. Had they given a decent character to their demons, we might have tolerated their idolatry. But when their worship necessitates everything that is evil, not religion, but morality must put it down.

I do not believe that in this land there ever ought to have been any toleration for the Agapemone. A place of lust and abomination, where sin is committed before which God's sun might blush, never ought to be tolerated. Any religion that does not infringe upon morality is beyond the force of legislature. But when once religious teachers teach immorality, and when once a religion compels men to sin, down with it. No toleration to it. It is impossible that there should be any quarter strewn to vice, even though embellished with the name of religion.

If it be any man's religion to blow my brains out, I shall not tolerate it. If it be any man's religion to meet me as the Thugs do, and garrote me, and murder me, I shall not tolerate his Thugism. If it be a man's religion to commit bestial acts in public, I for one would touch his conscience, but believing that he has none, I would touch him somewhere else.

Such a religion as the religion of the Hindu, the Indian Government were bound, as in the sight of God, to put down with all the strength of their hand. But they have allowed it, in some cases they have even aided and abetted their filthy deeds. And now God visits them. And I repeat, it would have been well if they had heard the rod before it fell. They might have perhaps avoided all this evil and certainly they would have avoided the remorse which some of them must feel in having thus brought it upon themselves.

But it *has* fallen. The rod has smitten. The scourge has ploughed deep furrows upon India's back. What then? "Hear ye the rod," that has fallen. Now, it is an opinion published by authority—and who am I, that I should dispute the great authorities of England?—that one part of the reason for this dreadful visitation is the sin of the people of England themselves. We are exhorted this day to humble ourselves for sin.

Granting me that as being a truth—and mark, I am not the originator of it, it is in the Proclamation—who am I, that I should dispute such a high authority as that?—it is our sin that has brought this on us, so they say—what, then, are our sins? Now, I will be honest with you—as honest as I can, and I will try and tell you. What are the most glaring sins for which, if it be true that God is now punishing us, are the most likely to have brought this visitation upon us?

First, there are sins in the community that never ought to have been allowed. O Britain, weep for deeds which your governors have not yet strength of mind to stop. We have long been allowing the infamous nuisances of Holywell-street. Bless God they are pretty well done for!

But now what do I see every night? If I return from preaching in the country, in the Haymarket and in Regent-street, what stares me before my eyes? If there be a crime for which God will visit England, it is the sin of allowing infamy to walk before our eyes thus publicly. I do not know whose fault it is—some say it is the fault of the police—it is somebody's fault, that I do know, and against that somebody I do now most solemnly protest. It is a most fearful thing that those who are honest and moral cannot walk the streets without being insulted by sin in the robes of the harlot. My voice perhaps this day may reach some who have power to repeat this protest powerfully and successfully.

I see before me gentlemen who are the representatives of the press. I believe they will do their duty in that matter. And if they will sting as some of them can sting, right sharply, they perhaps may be able to sting a little virtue into some of our governors, and that will be a good thing.

But I do protest that this has been one of the causes why God has visited us, if indeed our sins have brought this evil upon us, as I verily believe. Look you too, men and brethren, at some of those amusements of yours, in which you are likely to indulge. God forbid I should deny you those of your amusements which are innocent, but I must maintain that they should be always moral.

When we know that lords and ladies of the land have sat in playhouses and listened to plays that were a long way from decent, it is time that some voice should be lifted up against them. These are glaring sins. I am not now raking for private faults. We have had these things before our eyes and there have been some who have dared to protest against them long ago. I say, these sins of the community in part have brought the rod upon us.

But my friends, I am inclined to think that our *class sins* are the most grievous. Behold this day the sins of the rich. How are the poor oppressed! How are the needy downtrodden! In many a place, the average wage of men is far below their value to their masters. In this age, there is many a great man who looks upon his fellows as only stepping stones to wealth. He builds a factory as he would make a cauldron. He is about to make a brew for his own wealth. Pitch him in! he is only a poor clerk, he can live on a hundred a year. *Put him in!*

There is a poor time-keeper, he has a large family. It does not matter, a man can be had for less—in *with him!* Here are the tens, the hundreds, and the thousands that must do the work. *Put them in.* Heap the fire, boil the cauldron, stir them up. Never mind their cries. The cry of the laborers kept back may go up to heaven, it does not matter, the millions in gold are safe. The law of supply and demand is with us, who is he that would interfere? Who shall dare to prevent the grinding of the faces of the poor? Cotton lords and great masters ought to have power to do what they like with the people, ought they not?

Ah! but you great men of the earth, there is a God, and that God has said He executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. And yet the seamstress in her garret, and yet the tailor in his den, and yet the artisan in his crowded factory, and yet the servants who earn your wealth, who have to groan under your oppression, shall get the ear of God, and He will visit you. "Hear ye the rod." It is for this the rod falls on you.

Mark, again, the sins of merchants. Was there ever an age when the merchants of England had more fallen from their integrity? The mass of them, I believe, are honest to the core, but I do not know who among them are so. We can trust none in these times. You heap up your companies and you delude your myriads. You gather the money of fools. You scatter it to the winds of heaven, and when the poor call upon you, you tell them it is gone, but where?

O England, you were once true, upright, honest. Men could not rightly call you, then, “Perfidious Albion.” But now, O Britain, alas! for you! Unless you do recover yourself, who can trust you? God will visit the nation for this and it shall be seen that this alone is one of the things which God would have us hear, when we hear the rod.

There are many of you that are poor. I saw you smile when I spoke to the rich. I will have at you also. If we are to humble ourselves this day as a nation, you have cause also to humble. Ah, my God, what multitudes there are of men who deserve but little of their employers, for they are eye-servers, men-pleasers, and do not with singleness of heart serve the Lord. Were men better workmen, their masters would be better.

There are hundreds of you who are here today who are the best hands in all the world to prop up walls, when you ought to be busy at your own work—who, when your time is bought and paid for, steal it for something else.

And how many there are in what are called the lower ranks—and God forgive the man who invented that word, for we are none of us lower than the other before the Judge of all the earth—how many are there who do not know what it is to look up to God and say, “Though He has made me a servant, I will discharge my duty, and I will serve my master, and serve my God with all my might.” Many are the sins of the poor. Humble yourselves with the rich. Bow your heads and weep for your iniquities, for these things God does visit us and you should hear the rod.

It is impossible for me today to enter into all the sins of illiberality, of deceit, of bigotry, of lasciviousness, of carnality, of pride, of covetousness, and of laziness which infest this land. I have tried to indicate some of the chief and I pray God humble us all for them.

And now, “Hear ye the rod,” O church of God, the rod has fallen and *the church* ought to hear it. I am afraid that it is the church that has been the greatest sinner. Do I mean by “the church” that established by law? No, I mean the Christian church as a body. *We*, I believe, have been remiss in our duty.

For many and many a year pulpits never condescended to men of low estate. Our ministers were great and haughty. They understood the polish of rhetoric, they had all the grandeur of logic. To the people they were blind guides and dumb dogs, for the people knew not what they said, neither did they regard them.

The churches themselves slumbered. They wrapped themselves in a shroud of orthodoxy and they slept right on. And while Satan was devouring the world and taking his prey, the church sat still and said, “Who is my neighbor?” and did not arouse herself to serve her God.

I do hope that we have already seen the beginning of a revival. The last year has seen more preaching than any year since the days of the apostles. We are stirring in ragged schools and in various efforts for doing good. But still the church is only half awake. I fear she still slumbers. O church of God! Awake! Awake! Awake! for verily the rod has fallen for your sake. “Hear thou the rod, and him that hath appointed it.” We have had many rods, friends. We have had many great afflictions, and we did bear them for a time.

And now I close my sermon by saying, “Hear ye the rod, when the rod SHALL AGAIN BE STILL.” We trust that in a little while our soldiers will carve us out peace and victory with their triumphant swords. We trust that perhaps this very day a great fight is being fought and a great victory being won. I seem to hear today the shout of the triumphant warrior. I think I hear the trump of victory even now. The hour of prayer is often the hour of deliverance.

At any rate, we hope that ere long this black cloud will be overblown and then I fear you will all forget it. You will pray today—will you pray when victory comes? You will buy some fireworks, will you not? That is how you will thank God! You had a victory over a potent enemy and peace was established—your votive offerings consisted of rockets and illuminations—grand offerings to the Dread Supreme! If a heathen were here, he would say, “Their God is the God of humiliation, not the God of victory—their God is a God of trouble, certainly not the God of blessings, for they forget Him when they receive deliverance.”

I remember, when last time the cholera swept through your streets, you hurried to your churches, and you prayed. Terror sat upon your countenances and many of you cried aloud for deliverance. It came. What did you do? Alas! for your piety! It was as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it passed away. It will be so again. It is but as the lashing of the water. It is smitten, but it soon recovers itself, and all marks are erased.

It is so with this land. I fear it is so with each of us to a degree. How often have you and I been laid upon our beds with cholera, or with fever, or with some other disease which threatened to take us away! We prayed. We sent for the minister. We devoted ourselves to God. We vowed, if He would spare us, we would live better.

Here you are, my hearer, just what you were before your sickness. You have forgotten your vow, but *God has not forgotten it*. Your resolutions were filed in heaven and in the day of judgment God shall take them forth and say, “Here is one solemn covenant broken. Here is another vow forgotten, another resolution made in sickness broken after recovery!”

I do think that today will be a most solemn mockery if our humiliation ends today. With some of you it will not even begin today, and therefore, it will not end, for it is not begun. But the mass who will pray today, will they pray in a week? Not they. They will go their way, to heap again the faggots of their sins upon the pile of vengeance, and still stand by and weep, because the fire is burning, the fire which they themselves have kindled.

Oh! my hearers, permit me to charge home to your hearts. And would God that He would make the charge of my language against your consciences as heavy as the charge of British soldiery against the enemy! How many of you have been awakened, convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment! How many times have you vowed you would repent! How many times have you declared that you did hear the rod and that you would turn to God! And yet you have been liars to the Almighty. You have defrauded the Most High. And while the bill is due, it still stands dishonored. Tremble! God may smite you yet.

And if today you are despisers of Christ, remember, you have no guarantee that you will be in this world another hour. You may before this sun is set stand before your Maker’s bar. What then? What then? What then? To perish forever is no light matter. To be cast into the flames of hell is no little consideration. “Turn ye, turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel!” Repent! “The times of your ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.”

And remember that when *He* gives repentance and faith, He has appended the blessing to them. “Jesus Christ of the seed of David” was nailed to a cross. He died that we might not die, and to every believer heaven’s gate is open, to every penitent the path to paradise is free. Sinner! Do you believe? If so, Christ has blotted out your sin. Be happy! Soul! Do you repent? You are safe. God has helped you to repent, and inasmuch as He has done that, He has proved that He loves you.

Oh! if I might but have some souls won to Christ today, what would I give? What is all this great gathering to me? It is an extra labor, that is all. For this I do not labor. God is my witness, I sought you not. Never once have I said a thing to court a smile from any man. When God first sent me to the ministry, He bade me fear no man, and I have not yet met the man to whom I have feared to tell of God’s truth.

Nor have I sought to please, nor you have I sought to gather here. I would preach the Gospel, may God give me some souls as my reward! And if but one poor sinner shall look to Jesus, clap your wings, you angels! Enough is done, for God is honored.

I have finished my sermon but I want to make an appeal to you to give liberally.

Lives there a man in England who will this day refuse his help to those of his countrymen who have suffered? No. There does not live such a man—not such a Briton. Is there a miserable miscreant without a heart, who will, when God has given him enough, shut up his bowels of compassion against those whose sons and daughters have been murdered and who themselves have escaped as by the skin of their *teeth*?

No, I will not slander you by such a supposition. I cannot think that I have such a monster here. When the box shall pass round, give—give as you can afford. If it be a penny, let the working man give. You who are rich must not give pence, however. Many a man has said, “There is my mite.” He was worth a hundred thousand pounds and it was not a mite at all. If he had given a thousand, it would only have been a mite to him.

Give as you can afford it. May God be pleased to grant a liberal spirit.

The following Chorus was then sung,

***“GLORY, honor, praise, and power,
Be unto the Lamb for ever;
Jesus Christ is our Redeemer,
Hallelujah, Amen.”***

After which, the benediction having been pronounced, the service terminated.

There were upwards of 24,000 persons present at this service and the amount collected towards the Indian Relief Fund amounted to nearly £500, of which £25 was given by Miss Nightingale. The Crystal Palace Company contributed £200 in addition—making a total of nearly £700.

“To God be all the glory.”

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. 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.