THE KING'S WEIGHINGS

NO. 1736

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 26, 1883
BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT EXETER HALL

"Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."
1 Samuel 2:3

IT is very beautiful to see how the saints of old were accustomed to find comfort in their God. When they came into sore straits, when troubles multiplied, when helpers failed, when earthly comforts were removed, they were accustomed to go to the Lord, and to the Lord alone. Thus Hannah thinks of the Lord, and comforts herself in His name. By this means they were made strong and glad. They began to sing instead of sighing, and to work wonders instead of fainting under their burdens, even as here the inspired poetess sings, "My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD."

To them God was a reality, a present reality, and they looked to Him as their rock of refuge, their helper, and defense, a very present help in time of trouble. Can we not at the outset learn a valuable lesson from their example? Let us do as they did. Let us lean upon our God, and stay ourselves upon Him when heart and flesh are failing.

Does not the apostle say, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice"? There is always cause for thankfulness that the Lord lives, and that He is what He is, for "There is no rock like our God." And that He is ready still to lay bare the arm of His strength on the behalf of them that serve Him. Oh, believer, the fountain of your joy is never dried up! If, like Jonah, your gourds are withered, yet your God is living. If, like Job, your goods have been plundered, yet the highest good is still your own.

Are the rivers dry? Yet is this ocean full. Are the stars hidden? Yet the heavenly sun shines on in his eternal brightness. You have a possession that is unfading, a promise that is unfailing, and a protector who is unchanging. Though you dwell in a faithless world, you also dwell in a faithful God. Your trials are present, and so is your helper, who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

As the bird to the woods, and the cony to the rocks, so let your soul flee away unto the Lord, your refuge. "Straightforward makes the best runner." Do not beat the bush, and go about to friends and cry, "Have pity upon me! Have pity upon me!" but "Turn you to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope."

As for the son of man whose breath is in his nostrils, wherein is he to be accounted? Men are vanity in the hour of distress. Miserable comforters are they all. "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." The heath in the desert which sees neither dew nor rain is the fit image of this spiritual idolater. "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh." Oh, learn to live upon the Lord alone!

Hannah, who was once a woman of a sorrowful spirit, had so learned to delight herself in God that she could dwell upon the different points of the divine character with joyful adoration. Like others of God's instructed people, she was very happy in the thought of God's *holiness*. Notice the second verse, "There is none holy as the LORD." I have heard many persons praise the Lord for His goodness, but it is a far higher and surer mark of grace when a man can praise the Lord for His holiness.

Is it not noteworthy that in heaven, the abode of happiness, which happiness springs mainly out of the presence of their God, the adoration of the blessed chiefly tends to this point, the reverent celebration of His holiness? We read of the seraphim, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

We read again in Revelation concerning the living creatures, "They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Are you conscious that you are unholy? Then, O believer, rejoice that God is holy! Are those around you unholy? Is your soul among lions? Do you dwell among those that are set on the fire of hell? Yet say, as the Lord Jesus did, "Thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

Does it seem as if unholiness covered all things, breaking forth like a flood, and deluging the earth with its black and filthy waters? Yet the Lord sits upon the throne of His holiness, and cuts asunder the cords of the wicked. Let this be our song in the night, "There is none as holy as the LORD."

Hannah also tuned her heart to celebrate the *power* of JEHOVAH, saying, "Neither is there any rock like our God." One of the leading ideas in the metaphor of a rock is strength, abiding endurance, unmoving stability, unconquerable power. Let us also rejoice in the Lord God Almighty, and delight in the mighty God of Jacob, the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Even His finger brought plagues upon the Egyptians. And as for His hand, it utterly overthrew them. The Lord God omnipotent is the joy of His people, for the Lord is our strength and song, He also has become our salvation. He shall surely show Himself strong on the behalf of all them that put their trust in Him.

Fly, then, O timid soul, to the covert of JEHOVAH's wings! Abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and His divine power shall cause you to lie down in safety. Oh, for a well-tuned harp to celebrate these two attributes so terrible to the ungodly, so full of exultation to those who are saved by grace!

Hannah touched, in her rapturous hymn, upon the *wisdom* of the Lord, and sang thus, "For the LORD is the God of knowledge," or of "knowledges," for every kind of knowledge is with Him. We are not among those who impiously ask, "How doth God know?—and is there knowledge in the Most High?"

We are assured that nothing past, present, or future, is hidden from the eternal eye. In His knowledge there is no error, and to it there is no limit. The Lord knows them that are His, and He knows the way that they take. He knows how to deliver His people, and when to bring them out of the furnace.

Reverently do we worship the Lord and say, "O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

Let us rejoice that our God is not unconscious or ignorant. And when our own ignorance grieves us, let us rejoice that the Lord will teach us, and what we know not now, we shall know hereafter.

Hannah also derived comfort from the fact that God is strictly *just*, for she says with delight, "By him actions are weighed." It is to this that I would turn your attention. May the Holy Spirit direct our meditations. Justice is a very terrible attribute to the unforgiven, to those who are not justified by the righteousness of Christ, and even on God's own people it turns a heart-searching glance at times.

I. The staple of our discourse will consist of a consideration of THE PROCESS OF DIVINE JUDGMENT, which is continually going on.

"The LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." The figure of weighing suggests a thorough testing, and an accurate estimating of the matters under consideration. Solomon says, "All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, but the LORD weigheth the spirits." God sees men's actions, notes them, thinks upon them, and deliberately forms an estimate of them. "For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings."

Our first note here shall stand thus—*this is not as man dreams*. Many imagine that God takes no note of what is done among the sons of men. Indeed, their God does not appear to be a personal, intelligent existence, at all. Or if intelligent, they boast that he is too great to mark the trivial actions of

men. That is to say, in order to make God great, they would make him blind. Their idea of his greatness would seem to be loftiness, impassiveness, and a measure of ignorance.

Our notion of greatness is the reverse. We believe in a great God to whom all things are known, and by whom the least matters are observed. Our God is neither unobservant nor indifferent. "He humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth!" He is constantly observant of all that is done in heaven above, in the earth beneath, and in all deep places.

Each movement of the tiniest worm upon the sea bottom is marked by Him, together with the migration of fishes, the flight of birds, and the falling of the sear leaves. There are no forces so minute as to be beneath His notice, no movements so rapid as to escape His observation. And the psalmist says, "Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

The atheist cries, "No God," and he who would deny to God universal knowledge is twin brother to him. As good have no God as a God who does not know. "JEHOVAH is the God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."

This text plainly rebukes those who say—God is too merciful to take much account of what we do, poor creatures that we are, shot out of the back of a tumbril into the midst of a society all in chaos, which tempts us to indulge the passions of our nature. They dream that God will surely wink at such inconsiderable things as the actions of men.

But surely it is not so, since it is written, "The LORD is the God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." The Lord our God is merciful, but this mercy is consistent with the severest justice. He pardons sin, and yet He never suffers it to go unpunished.

Strange as the statement may seem, the Lord never ceases to be the righteous Judge, even when He is passing by transgression. The great and glorious God does not forgive sin because He does not know of it, or does not remember how sinful it is. But this is the wonder of His mercy, that He blots out the sins of His people with the fullest knowledge of their foulness.

After having weighed sin, noted its motive, marked its meaning, and considered its consequences, the Lord nevertheless forgives it for Jesus' sake. Do not fall into any error on this point, or imagine that the Lord thinks little of human guilt, and therefore readily pardons it. No. "The LORD is the God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."

Consider, next, that this form of procedure *is not as man judges*. By men, actions are judged flippantly, but "by God actions are weighed." By men, actions are more frequently counted. Such a man has done this and that, and that, and that, and that, what a wonderful man he is!

Yes, but by God human deeds are not so much measured in the bushel as weighed in the scale. A man's life may be made up of countless bubbles, each one brilliant as the rainbow, but what a collapse there will be when the Lord comes with the balances to weigh the deeds done in the body!

By men, actions are frequently measured as to apparent bulk, and persons placed in certain positions bulk very largely upon the public mind. Their doings fill the newspapers, though they are empty enough in themselves. You scarcely get a day's issue of a journal but what something is reported of a man of mark. Not that what he has done is by any means surprisingly good, or wise, or benevolent, but it is done by him, and therefore it must be emblazoned. Men and women must have something to talk about, and certain persons are selected for observation, and therefore to their lives an exaggerated importance is attached.

Let no such person delude himself. At the bar of divine justice, the acts of princes and peasants, of lords and laborers, shall have an equal trial, and shall be tested in the selfsame scales. Apparent greatness shrivels before the divine balance. Measure a cloud by its volume and it is vast. But condense it, and how small is the weight of the water! When our lives shall be freed from vapor, and judged by their solid contents, how small will some of us appear!

Constantly men measure actions by their brilliance. Oh, it was a splendid action, it was so dashing, so unlooked for, so extraordinary! Was it right and pure and holy? If not, the light of genius cannot save it from condemnation.

He who gave £10,000 to a fund did a brilliant act of charity. And yet the legacy may not have weighed so much as the two mites that made a farthing which were all the poor widow's living. He who silently adores the Lord may have given Him a greater weight of praise than he whose charming voice led the great congregation.

The godly life of a poor bedridden woman may have been more highly esteemed of the Lord than the flaming eloquence of the great preacher. Ah me! How easily are we deceived by appearances! But not so the Lord, for "by him actions are weighed."

Men are exceedingly apt to measure actions by their consequences. How wrong it is to measure actions by results, rather than by their own intrinsic character! A man upon the railway neglected to turn a switch, but by the care of another no accident occurred. Is he to be excused?

Another man was equally negligent, certainly not more so, but in his case the natural result followed—there was a collision, and many lives were lost. This last man was blamed most deservedly, but yet the former offender was equally guilty. If we do wrong and no harm comes of it, we are not thereby justified. Yea, if we did evil and good came of it, the evil would be just as evil.

It is not the result of the action, but the action itself which God weighs. He who swindles and prospers is just as vile as he whose theft lodged him in prison. He who acts uprightly, and becomes a loser thereby, is just as honored before God as if his honesty had led on to wealth. If we seek to do good and fail in our endeavor, we shall be accepted for the attempt, and not condemned for the failure.

You have all admired Grace Darling because of her gallant act in rescuing mariners from a wreck. But suppose she had not saved a single sailor, and had been herself drowned, would she not have been equally a heroine? Of course she would.

Her success had nothing to do with the excellence of her design. The moral weight of her conduct lay in the self-sacrificing courage which led her on such a howling, murky night to risk her life upon the cruel waters for her unknown fellow men. Had she been swallowed up by the remorseless deep, her actions would have weighed as much before the throne of God as when she landed the saved ones at the lighthouse.

If a man gives his life to convert the heathen, and he does not succeed, he shall have as much reward from God as he who turns a nation to the faith.

Two ministers have labored in the same field. The first preached the Gospel faithfully, but saw scant results. The second, following him, found the rough work done, and reaped full sheaves from the field. The thoughtless are apt to think the second man greatly superior to the first, but it is not so—one sows and another reaps. When God comes to weigh the actions of men, He may give greater praise to the sower than to the reaper.

We have odd ways of measuring up our fellow men—odd, I mean, as compared with our self-measurement. Usually we have two sets of weights—one for ourselves, and a second for our friends. When we place ourselves in the scale, we weigh pretty heavily—we are full weight, and a little bit over. It is very different with our fellow men. They may really weigh more than we do, but we adjust the machine in such a way that it is greatly to their disadvantage.

I am not an admirer of the machine called a "steel yard," for it is singularly easy to fix it according to your wishes, and certainly our estimates of others are as easily affected by prejudice. But by God, "actions are weighed" truly, honestly, righteously, and the result is very different from the judgment of men.

I would now have you note that *this weighing is a very searching business*. "By him actions are weighed." A man enters a goldsmith's shop and says, "Here is old gold to sell. See, I have quite a lot of it." "Yes," says the goldsmith, "let me weigh it." "Weigh it? Why, look at the quantity. It fills this basket."

What is the goldsmith doing? Looking for his weights and certain acids by which he means to test the metal. When he has used his acids, he puts the trinkets into the scale. "You are not going to buy by weight?" "I never buy in any other way," says the goldsmith. "But there is such a quantity." "That may be, but I buy by weight."

It is always so with God in all our actions. He estimates their real weight. We may hammer out our little gold, and make a great show of it, but the Lord is not mocked or deceived. Every dealing between us and God will have to be by a just balance and standard weight.

And in what way will He weigh it? The weights are somewhat of this sort. The standard is *His just and holy law*, and all which falls short of that is sin. Any want of conformity to the law of God is sin, and by so much our acts are found wanting. Remember this, you who would justify yourselves.

The Lord also inquires how much of *sincerity* is found in the action. You acted in such a manner, and therein you were right, but did you do this in pretense, or from force, or in sincerity and in truth? In worship did you heartily adore? In charity did you give cheerfully? Did your heart go with your voice and hand? You prayed so long—did your heart truly pray?

You attended so many religious services, but did you personally attend them, or did you send your chrysalis there, and leave the living thing at home? Yes, you did preach the truth, but did you believe it in your own soul? You did give your gold, was it with the motive of doing good, or that your name might be in the list, or because it would not look well for your name to be left out? That which is not done sincerely has no weight in it. It is weighed in the balances and found wanting.

The Lord also weighs actions according to their *motives*. He asks not only what you did, but why you did it. Was self the motive force? The preacher weighs his sermon this morning, and asks his conscience whether he seeks alone the glory of God. Will not you, my brethren, weigh what you are doing in this world? To what end are you living? What wind is filling your sails?

You have been kept from outward transgressions, your life has been moral and pure in the sight of men, but have you lived for God's glory? Have you sought to obey God and please Him? Have you been moved by love to God and man? Have you been in heart God's servant? If not, if another motive has ruled you, his servant you are whom you have obeyed.

The motive which lies at the fountainhead colors all the streams of action, and God who judges us, not according to what is done externally, but according to what is meant internally, will make short work of a great multitude of human virtues. When you cannot find a fault with a day's life as to what you have outwardly done, it may yet be faulty all through because of the reason which actuated you.

When you sum up your actions at night, pride may lean over your shoulder and whisper, "You have done well today!" At such a time it may be well for conscience to arouse itself and ask, "But was this done purely for the Lord's glory, and in dependence upon His grace?" An ill motive will poison all.

Another mode of judging is by our *spirit* and temper. If we live proudly, our actions lose weight. If we act from envy and ill-will, we fall short. If we are flippant, inconsiderate, prayerless, we spoil all. The odor of actions is a great thing. If they are not steeped in grace, they miss acceptance. An inch of grace has more weight in it than a mile of nature. To be in the fear of the Lord is solid living, all else is froth.

Sometimes actions may be weighed by the *circumstances* which surround them. Men are not to be considered good if their surroundings forbid their being what they would like to be. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Yonder man has been strictly truthful. Yes, but he could not have made a sixpence by being false, or it may be he would have lied heavily. Another man is placed where the whole custom of his trade is knavery, and he takes a firm stand, and at great risk refuses to swerve from strict integrity. Now, this second man will bear weighing, but the first will not.

Are not some children so carefully brought up from their childhood, happily for them, that their character is never discovered until they get out into life, and are tempted? And then it is seen that the truthful boy was a little hypocrite, and the thoughtful girl was as frivolous as any of the giddy throng. So you see that the fruit of tender culture may not always be what it should be or what it seems to be.

It is wonderful how amiable we all are until we are irritated. What a deal of patience we have when we have no sickness to bear! I had enough and to spare till my pains multiplied, and then my stock ran very low. I am afraid that most of us have a great quantity of fictitious goodness which arises out of our favorable circumstances, and has no other foundation.

Now God judges with this before Him, for He places some men into peculiar difficulties, and others in positions of special advantage, and this He takes into account in the weighing. Some men cannot run in the crooked road because they are lame and inactive. Let them not lay a flattering unction to their souls, and dream that they excel in goodness.

Many a man thinks himself a Joseph, and the only reason is that no Potiphar's wife has tried him. Many a man has never been an Achan because no wedge of gold or goodly Babylonish garment has come in his way. Multitudes of men are honest because they never had a chance of making a grand haul by setting up a bubble company—which is the modern mode of thieving. The lion in the Zoological Gardens is very good because he is behind iron bars, and many a man's goodness owes more to the iron bars of his position than to his own heart and motive.

Another weight to put in the scale is this—was there any *godliness* about your life? I may be speaking to men in Exeter Hall whose lives are such that they think themselves examples, and yet their lives are spoiled from end to end by a grievous flaw. This point must be inquired into. You are to be weighed by God, and this will be the main matter—has God been recognized in your life? O sirs, I fear that many of you are fitly described by David—"God is not in all their thoughts."

They have lived from childhood to manhood, and from manhood to old age, but God has not been considered in any of their actions. They have had great respect to society and to the law of the land, but if there has been no God, they would not have acted otherwise than they have done. God has not been an active agent in the influences which have moved their conduct.

Now that life has wandered from its true end, which has not God for its leading star. If you have not lived to your God, to whom have you lived? You are His creature, have you never served your Creator? You say that Christ is your Redeemer, but how has He redeemed you if you live unto yourself, and not as one that is bought with a price? This is the inquiry to test us all—is God the main object of our living? Do we throw ourselves with intensity into the pursuit of that which will glorify His blessed name? If not, the scales of the sanctuary will soon discover that we are sadly wanting.

Once more—have we lived by *faith*? For without faith it is impossible to please God, and if there be no faith in our life, then are we nothing worth. Hear me, O man, and answer these questions. Have you believed in God, and done anything because of that believing in Him? Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, and has this faith cleansed your way and purged your thoughts?

Have you believed the promises of God and His covenant, and has your life been ordered according to this belief? If not, you are weighed and rejected. Without faith in Him whom God has sent, you cannot be acceptable with God.

Thus, you see, in different ways God searches deeply into the life of man, and woe to that man who cannot bear the weighing. The greater his pretensions the more terrible his dismay when the scales refuse him.

This weighing of our lives must be exceedingly accurate because it is *done personally by God Himself*. Notice my text, "The LORD is the God of knowledge, and *by him* actions are weighed." One might not mind the text if it said actions are weighed by Gabriel, for he is fallible—an angel might make mistakes, and he might wink and be partial.

But when it is written that by God Himself actions are weighed, O man, there is no possibility of bribing this great tester of your life! He will judge righteous judgment. He is a God of knowledge, and therefore He knows not only your outward deeds, but your secret designs and desires.

Moreover, He knows the standard of right—with Him are the weights and the scales. Therefore knowing what our actions are, and what they ought to be, He readily enough discovers our discrepancies and mistakes, and there will be no possibility of our escaping His infallible decision. I wonder we are so

ready to deceive ourselves as we are. I wonder that so many count it worth their while to deceive their fellow Christians and their ministers. It is a poor ambition to live a life of deceit. Be what you seem to be, and seem to be what you are.

But oh, if we could cheat ourselves throughout life, and deceive all those who watch us, yet we should never once have deceived God, "for by him actions are weighed" so accurately that never a mistake is made! Ah me! I fear that many professors live a life of utter falsehood, comforting themselves with a lie.

I once heard a story (I do not know if it is true) of an old banker who said to his son to whom he bequeathed the business, "This is the key of our large iron safe, take great care of it. The bank depends upon that safe. Let the people see that you have such a safe, but never open it unless the bank should be in the utmost difficulty."

The bank went on all right as long as the iron safe was fast closed, but at last there came a run upon it, and in his greatest extremity the young gentleman opened it, and he found nothing in it—nothing at all. That was the stock of the bank—poverty carefully concealed, imaginary wealth winning confidence, and living on the results.

Are there not many persons who all their lives long are doing a spiritual banking business, and deriving a considerable income of repute from that which will turn out to be nothing? Beware of driving a trade for eternity upon fictitious capital, for failure will be the sure result. Time tries most things, but eternity tries all.

Who among us would care to trade without a capital? Who would go to sea in a rotten boat painted to look seaworthy? How wise it is to invite divine inspection that we may not be deceived! What a dreadful thing it is that so many professing Christian people are never willing to open the iron safe! They do not want to know whether all is right between God and themselves. They prefer to go on saying, "Peace, peace."

They love the lullaby of, "It is well; it is well." Preach sweetly-comforting sermons, and they will be well-content, and truly they might wisely be content if it were not written, "By him actions are weighed." God will not be charmed by our self-approving songs. He will weigh us and our actions, and reveal us before the sun.

Again, I want you to notice that this weighing *is carried on at this present time*—"By him actions *are* weighed." Not only shall they be weighed at the last great day, but every minute they are being weighed. How mean must a hypocrite feel to himself if he believes that he has never once deceived God! He knelt in prayer, but he did not pray. God knew that he did not, and perceived the insult.

At service-time he sang with the assembly, but his heart was never in communion with God, and the Lord knew it. He never established a reputation with heaven. His conduct was understood at all times, and he was always branded as false-hearted.

A man has joined the Christian church. He has risen in esteem till he has become an officer among his brethren, yet all the while he was never converted, grace was never in his soul. Does he think that God is taken in by him? Let him not be deceived. The Lord has gone on weighing all his acts as they have happened, and He has put them all aside as of short weight.

As at the bank all moneys are put through a process by which the light coins are detected, so evermore our life passes over the great weighing-machine of the Lord's justice, and He separates that which is short in weight from that which is precious, doing this at the moment as infallibly as at judgment day.

"By him actions are weighed." Please remember, dear hearers, that *this is true of all of us*—not of open sinners only, but of those who are considered saints. You are getting old I see, my friend, but not too old to have your actions weighed. Old age is venerable, but it cannot screen you from inspection. "Oh," said an old man the other day, "you can trust *me*. *I* am past temptation." Grey hairs should not talk such nonsense. You can be tempted still, and your actions are still weighed as well as those of that silly boy whom you blame for his rashness.

And you, good sir, who have been a professor of religion for forty years, and who, when you rise up to pray, stand like a cedar in the garden of God, your actions are still examined, and if you are rotten at heart, it is no matter how green you seem to be with the verdure of apparent grace, you will in due time be detected and destroyed.

The preacher here is being daily weighed, and he knows it. And so are all the members of the church. And however excellent our outward lives may be, we must still pass through the testing house. Not one of us shall escape from the upright judgment of the Most High.

And one day, to conclude this point, *the King's weighings will be published*—set up where men and angels shall read them. Oh, can you bear it that the whole of the secrets of your soul should be made public in the marketplace of the universe? That the actions which seemed so admirable should have their secret motives searched out, and should be seen to be leprous with selfishness? Can you endure to have your secret sins laid bare? Your private designs, deep intentions, and evil purposes set out in the open daylight? Can you bear to have your envyings, jealousies, plottings, lyings—all held up to public gaze?

With what shame will the wicked cover their faces when all their hidden things shall be read out and published through the streets of the universe! Then shall they be ashamed and confounded, while everlasting contempt shall be poured upon them. Most of all will men be ashamed who came into the church of God and wore Christ's livery, and were servants of Satan all the while. And of these most of all the ministers who climbed into pulpits, professing to preach Christ, and all the while declared their own vain thoughts instead of the Gospel of salvation.

How will men gaze on the unmasked! When the visors are knocked off, and their entire masquerade shall be over, how will men despise the hypocrites! They looked like kings, but behold, the puppets were nought but beggars! They seemed pure and holy, but a ray from the sun of truth has revealed their ulcered inner life, and all holy intelligences shrink from them. Oh, what discoveries there will be in that day when the record of the King's weigh-house shall be read of men and angels!

II. It is now time for me to observe THE HUMBLING NATURE OF THIS CONSIDERATION.

"Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth, for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."

The fact of divine judgment on ourselves should forever prevent our insulting over others. When you see anyone found out in wrong-doing, do not act as if you were his executioner. When you pass by a person who has lost his or her character, do not straighten your back and disdainfully regard him as the mire of the streets. Do not act the part of the very superior person. "By him actions are weighed."

Your actions are none too good. Perhaps there is not so much difference between you and the person whom you condemn, if all were known. You and the sinful one are not the least alike as to your outside wrappings and labelings, for you are labeled "saint," and she is labeled "a fallen woman." But if all were known, and all is known by God, the man without fault himself who would dare to cast the first stone is not sitting in your seat.

Ah, how the fact that we are ourselves to be judged should make us speak with bated breath when we are tempted to judge others! Let us not judge one another any more, for the Judge is at the door, and "by him actions are weighed." Let us leave judging to the Judge. Let everyone look to himself, and let no man despise his neighbor.

Next, I think we must give up all idea of speaking proudly in the presence of God. Our good works, what are they when weighed? They look very pretty indeed as we set them out in array, but when God puts them into the scales they look very different. We thought we did weigh something, but in the scale we seem turned into feathers. Our good works are high up in the air, and we are disappointed to see that the law is not uplifted by all that we have done.

I remember a good man who said when he was dying that he once began to separate his good works from his bad works, but he found them so much like one another in the light of eternity, that he ceased separating them and threw them all over, and determined to float to heaven on the cross of Christ.

This was wisely done, for our best things are so stained with sin, and the whole of a holy life is worth so little in the way of merit, that the shortcut of the whole matter is just to cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and rest ourselves on Jesus Christ alone.

Dear friend, if ever you have had the weighing process carried on in your own heart, I know you have given up all hope of being saved by your own merit or strength. If conscience has been awakened, and if the law has fulfilled its office upon you, you have given up all idea of appearing before God in your own righteousness. The man who boasts that he is perfect in the flesh either fails to weigh himself at all, or else he is in great need of a visit from the inspector, for his weights and scales are sadly out of repair.

It is very easy to appear perfect if you have an imperfect standard to measure by. But when the Lord Himself weighs us by the law, we cry out, "Who can understand his errors?" We have nothing with which to glory before God. The perfect character of our Lord Jesus Christ shuts our mouths as to all self-congratulation, and compels us to fall at His feet in deep humiliation. May the Lord carry on the weighing process in your consciences till you glory only in the Lord, and every false, pretentious thing is banished forever.

III. In closing, let us briefly consider THE POSITION IN WHICH ALL THIS LEAVES US.

If God weighs our actions and we are thereby found wanting, and can only cry, "Guilty" in His sight, what then? Then we are in God's hands. That is where I wish every one of my hearers to feel himself to be.

But who is the Lord? First, according to Hannah, He is *a God of salvation*. "My spirit hath rejoiced in thy salvation." Salvation for sinners, salvation for the guilty, salvation for those that are weighed in the balance and found wanting—free pardon, full remission, gracious acceptance, even for the worst and vilest, this is the Gospel of the blessed God. How sweet to be in the hands of a God who is able to save, and delights to save, and makes it His glory to save!

Next, according to Hannah's song, He is *the God who delights in reversing the order of things*. He throws down those who are on high, and sets up those that are down. "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent away empty." Is not that a hint to you to be empty, to be hungry, to be poor and needy?

If God is going to pick men from the dunghill and set them among princes, even the princes of His people, then the surest road to princely preferment is consciously to take your place on the dunghill. If the shields of the mighty are broken, but the weak are girded with strength, then it is wise to be weak before the Lord. Down, pride! Down! Down! Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and He shall exalt you in due time.

Once more, this God is one who *delights to carry on strange processes in the hearts of His people*. "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich; he bringeth low, and lifteth up." See! This is God's way of making men live—He kills them. This is God's way of giving them resurrection—He brings them to the grave. This is God's way of making men rich—He first makes them poor. This is God's way of lifting men up—they are first brought down.

Are you brought down this morning? Be of good courage, this is the royal road to comfort in Christ Jesus. Is the Holy Ghost making you conscious of sin? He does so that you may be conscious of pardon. Do you feel condemned? The Lord condemns you now that you may not be condemned with the world. Are you black, and foul, and vile in your own sight? It is that you may wash, and be whiter than snow through the Lord Jesus.

Oh how I rejoice to meet with a real sinner! Sham sinners are a vexation, but those who are really and truly so are precious in our sight. We hear of the *bona fide* traveler—give me the *bona fide* sinner.

"A sinner is a sacred thing;
The Holy Ghost has made him so."

He who is made to feel that he is truly lost is well-nigh saved. Christ died for such. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." O, you who are really a sinner, catch at that word!

God grant you may find salvation now, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
1 SAMUEL 2:1-10; PSALM 113; LUKE 1:46-55

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—103, 690, 560

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.