

A WARRANT FOR YOUR APPREHENSION **NO. 2235**

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 20, 1891,
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
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“The word of the Lord is against you.”
Zephaniah 2:5.

THE word of the Lord was against the land to which these words were spoken. The whole verse reads, “Woe unto the inhabitants of the sea coast, the nation of the Cherethites! The word of the Lord is against you; O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy you, that there shall be no inhabitant.” This contest could have only one end, for behind “the word of the Lord” was the Lord Himself. “Woe unto him that strives with his Maker!” Who shall dare to oppose His sovereign will? All forces are at His command, and they are foolish indeed who say to Him, “What are You doing?” I have not come here, however, to speak to you simply about the land of the Philistines, and the sinners who dwelt there. The burden of my sermon is concerning men and women who are living now, and to whom I may truthfully say, “The word of the Lord is against you.” May you wake up to see the truth of this terrible sentence, and by the power of the Holy Spirit be at once moved to flee from the wrath to come!

The Philistines were one of the Canaanite nations, and they were so prominent that they gave their name to the whole country. Palestina was the land of the Philistines. These people had a fine physical development, and among them were persons of unusual stature. There were giants in their cities; Goliath of Gath is the one most familiar to us, because of his encounter with David, but there were many others. They were, moreover, a very warlike race. When God brought His people out of Egypt into the land of promise, the five lords of the Philistines were to be destroyed, and their cities were to be taken by the Israelites. But they were not destroyed, neither were their cities captured, for the Israelites had not faith enough, and the Philistines were men of courage, and defended their country stubbornly. They even came to be the oppressors of Israel, and becoming a great and powerful nation, held the Hebrews in subjection for many a year. Even when Israel was strong, and brought Philistia under tribute, the Philistines constantly revolted and harassed the Israelites. They were always against God, and against God's people, and though Jehovah waited long and patiently, that they might have space for repentance, yet they repented not. When this prophecy was given, their cup was full; they had so sinned against God that at last the day of their doom came, and the prophet Zephaniah, in the name of God, said to them, “The word of the Lord is against you.”

I do not know that anybody else was against them. They were a people who feared nobody, and for many years, when they were attacked, first by one and then by another, they held their own. They had strongly-fenced cities, some of which stood, after the time of Christ, even in the age of the Crusaders, so that they had no reason to fear the other nations of the earth. They could maintain their rights against all comers, and it seemed as if they would never be moved. But prosperity is often deceitful. Their fancied security was only like a thin crust over a lava bed, and the volcano lay beneath ready to burst forth at any moment.

They had one overwhelming cause for dread, though they knew it not. They could conquer all nations, but a foe was marching upon them, against which they would fight in vain. When the prophet delivered the message, “The word of the Lord is against you,” he rang the knell of their doom. What an adversary is this, “The word of the Lord”! This enemy is more powerful than Egypt, or Assyria, or any of the tribes of men on the face of the earth. It is more terrible, too, than the voice of the storm. Many

times the Lord had thus scattered those that opposed themselves against Him; “The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yes, He sent out His arrows, and scattered them; and He shot out lightning, and discomfited them.” Those who have the word of the Lord against them have an enemy to fear more dreadful than the most fearful convulsion of nature, more terrible than the simoom of the desert, the sirocco of the plain, or the euroclydon of the sea. The prophet does not attempt to show the Philistines by what instrumentality God would break them in pieces, whether by plague, or famine, or pestilence, or war. He simply says, “The word of the Lord is against you.” That is enough; he states the cause; the effects are sure to follow.

Today, as the result of the warfare mentioned in my text, Philistia is swept away, and its cities are destroyed. Gaza and Ekron, Ashdod and Ashkelon, have perished by the judgment of God. I have not time to give you the evidence of travelers to prove that the prophecy against them has been kept to the very letter. Where it seemed as if it had failed, there has been only a more complete fulfillment of the sentence against the Lord’s enemies.

My main business at this time is not, however, with the Philistines. God’s word is against a good many other people besides them, and I am going to try to talk to some of them in words of solemn warning. My message to many must be, “The word of the Lord is against you.” Oh, that God may help me so to speak that your life may be changed, and that the word of God may be against you no longer! Hark-en, then, to this word, you that are living in sin, you that are refusing the Savior, you that are delaying the time of repentance, you that have backslidden, you that are opposing the gospel; “The word of the Lord is against you.” I would like to get hold of some man who is in this terrible condition of rebellion against God, and hold him by the hand, while I speak to him, in a kind and friendly and fraternal way, this solemn word of warning; “The word of the Lord is against you.”

First, I shall simply state the general fact, that *it is so*—the word of the Lord is really against many men and women. Secondly, I shall endeavor to make it clear that if you are living with the word of the Lord against you, *it is a very terrible thing*. And, thirdly, if you are awakened to see your danger, I shall try to set before you *what can be done in the matter*.

I. First, concerning many people, my text is literally true, “the word of the Lord is against you.” It is so. Just as surely and as sorrowfully as we can say today that the law of England is against some of the people in England, we can affirm that the word of the Lord is against many of the inhabitants of the earth. The word of the Lord will not, cannot change, and there it stands, bearing testimony against many, who, in due time, unless they become partakers of the grace of the Lord Jesus, shall be overwhelmed, and destroyed without remedy.

I am quite sure that “the word of the Lord” is against some of you, because *you are against the word of the Lord*. There is war between you and this wonderful Book. You do not enjoy the reading of it; no, perhaps, you have come even to hate it. You oppose it; possibly you even wish there were no Bible. Perhaps you have been drinking in theories of inspiration that make it to be practically no Bible; deposing it from its rightful position as a full and authoritative guide in all matters of faith and practice. If you do not accept it as such, you are against it. If this is true of you, I fear that it is because you do not understand the Bible. God’s word carries within itself the evidence of its truth. It teaches men who are not encased in prejudice, and enlightens those who will open their eyes to see. You cannot be against it unless you have a clear suspicion that it is against you. The fact is, the Bible does not please you; it does not let you sin with impunity; it presents to you a way of salvation that does not pander to your pride, or flatter your intellect. Therefore, you do not like the Book. “The word of the Lord is against you.” Now, be you sure of this, that if you are against the word of the Lord, it is because the word of the Lord is against you.

Again, I am sure that the Bible is against you, for *you do not care to read it*. Your conscience will be with me when I urge this reason, for many of you know well that you have a strange distaste for the Bible. Can you tell me why, in some countries, Romanists are forbidden to read the Scriptures? Why do the priests or their emissaries take from the people the Bibles which the booksellers have scattered? The reason is to be sought for in the false teaching and superstitious observances of the Church of Rome. If you went into a shop to buy an article, and the first thing that the man did was to turn down the gas or blow out the candle, you would say to yourself, “He is going to sell me bad wares, and he does not want

me to have too much light lest I should find him out.” The reason why the priest is against the Bible is because the Bible is against *him*. Now it is just so with you. You would read the Book willingly enough if you were agreed with it, but because it is too truthful, too faithful, and exposes your faults too much, therefore you do not like it, and you do not read it. How long is it since some of you have read even a chapter of Scripture? How long is it since you have thought over one gracious text? Oh, my dear friends, if I probe you, if I press this matter upon some of you, it will be clear enough that the word of God is against you, for you yourself know that it is, and therefore do not read it. You do not want to be plagued by it. It condemns your sins; it disturbs your false security; it robs you of your sleep in evil. “The word of the Lord is against you,” your neglect of the word shows that this is true.

And truly the word of the Lord must be against you, for it must be against sin, and *you delight in sin*. If you live in sin, and love sin, should God send you a book to pacify your conscience in such a state? If that which is unjust, intemperate, and unholy, is hidden in your heart, and is practiced in your life, would you expect the Holy Spirit to write a Book to help you on in such a way as that? It is blasphemy to think that it could be so. All through the Book, sin is uniformly and universally condemned, from the day when Adam was driven out of the garden because of his transgression, until the flood came upon guilty man because “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” On Sinai the same truth was thundered out. This was the burden of the prophets’ messages. The word of God is always against sin, and many times the warning is given, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” If you are a sinner steeped in sin, depend upon it that this Book is against you, and ought to be against you. You could not wish it to be otherwise, if you are a right-minded person. You will say, “Whatever I may be, I do not want the Bible tampered with, to make it suit my ungodly life, nor do I wish Holy Scripture to favor me in an evil pursuit.”

This Book must be against some of you because *you have refused Christ*. God has given His dear Son to die to save men. He has appointed the one way of salvation to be through faith in the precious blood of Christ. If you will not have the appointed way, if you refuse the ordained Savior, this Book may well quarrel with you, for you quarrel with God. What! The blood of His dear Son given to redeem, and yet you reject it! Mercy dressed in crimson to save you, and yet you fly from it! Love incarnate in a bleeding Savior, and yet you spurn it! Perhaps you imagine that you are good enough to be saved without Christ, but what infamous pride this is on the part of a poor sinful worm of the dust! Perhaps your whole confidence is in your own good works, and you hope they will be found sufficient without the blood of Calvary. Presumptuous arrogance and vain conceit for a man who is born in sin, and shaped in iniquity! Truly “the word of the Lord” cannot side with you. If it is given to reveal Christ as the Savior of men, it cannot take the part of him, who refuses that Savior, slights the blood of Christ, and does despite to the Spirit of grace. Oh, my dear friend, when I used to read the Bible, and had not yet looked to Christ, how sternly it used to speak to me! It had an angry look; it threatened me; it seemed to draw a sharp sword, and thrust it at my heart. I bless the Bible for being severe with my unbelief. It was the wound of a friend which it gave me; when I was wounded, I fled to Christ for cure. If the word of God were not against you in your rejection of Christ, it could not be the word of God, and, if you did not know it to be against you, it would be an unhappy thing for you to be rocked in the cradle of unbelief, and allowed to remain far from God without a warning. Until you believe in Christ, be you sure of this, “the word of the Lord is against you.”

Even if you do not read God’s word, and thus discover that it is against you, *your conscience tells you that it ought to be so*. Many men and women, who are sitting here, if they did but begin to think, would say, “I must be wrong. God’s Book, which is truth itself, must be against me.” Men will not allow conscience to speak, but if they do, it soon bears testimony in the same line as God’s own word, for you cannot very readily make your conscience a false witness. There are some who preach that all men will be saved, whether they believe in Christ or not. I remember what a certain hearer said to a minister who preached that doctrine; “Sir, if what you have preached today is true, we do not need you; indeed, we do not need any minister at all; we can get along all right without one. And if what you have preached is not true, we do not want you; so in either case we have no need of your ministrations.” The hearer knew that what the minister had preached was not the truth; conscience confirmed the declarations of the word of God. The word would be true, whether conscience confirmed it or not; but conscience does tell men that

it cannot be the same with the wicked as with the righteous; it cannot be the same with those who reject the Savior as with those who accept Him. You cannot silence that voice within the heart. A Unitarian minister, who preached that wild doctrine of universal salvation which is so popular just now, once met an old-fashioned Baptist brother, who was not a well-educated man, but who had a crowded congregation, while his learned brother had only a dozen or two to hear him eloquently discourse. The Unitarian said, "I cannot make out how it is that there is such a difference in our congregations; you get so many to hear you, and I get so few. I preach a very pleasing doctrine. I tell the people that all will be right with them all at last. I do not worry them with any doctrines of repentance and faith and atonement, and yet they will not come to hear me. You preach a very dreary doctrine, and you tell the people that except they repent they shall perish and be cast into hell, and yet they crowd your place to hear you. How is that?" "Well," said the old man, "I think it is, my friend, because they have a shrewd suspicion that what I say is true, and that what you say is not true." There he hit the nail on the head. It is so. The conscience of men bids them distrust the word which tells them that there will be no difference between the righteous and the wicked. God has somehow written on the heart of man this judgement; "Sin must be punished. It cannot be the same with the godly and the ungodly at the last." Hear that voice of your conscience. Listen to it, and it will tell you that "the word of the Lord is against you."

One thing more. You who live in sin, and will not have a Savior, may be sure that "the word of the Lord is against you." *Your efforts to harden your heart prove it.* The struggle you have to make in order to keep all things quiet within your own bosom leaves no room for doubt that "the word of the Lord is against you." Sometimes, when you are being spoken to about your soul, you do not like it. You feel irritable. You make some jest, or you utter some blasphemy, or repeat some old worn-out slander, to stiffen yourself to reject the word, and when you get home, it takes you all your time to press down the sparks which the gospel has kindled in your heart. You are kept very busy trying to stamp them out, for you know that you have some inflammable stuff in your soul, and you are afraid that there will be a fire within. If you did not think the word of God was against you, you would not have to make such a vigorous effort to prevent its having its due effect upon your mind. Oh, that you would yield young man; oh, that you would let God's word do its will with you, young woman! Oh, that you would let it break you in pieces, wound you, kill you, and then make you alive, and heal you; all you of whom it is true, "The word of the Lord is against you"!

II. In the second place, I want to say that if "the word of the Lord is against you," IT IS A VERY TERRIBLE THING. When the word of Pharaoh was against the Israelites, they suffered cruel bondage, but the word of the Lord was stronger than the word of the mighty despot; and when He spoke, by Moses and Aaron, His people were brought out free. When the word of King Saul was against David, he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains; but the word of the Lord was confirmed to him, and he was delivered from the hand of his enemy, and at last seated on the throne. When the word of Nebuchadnezzar was against the three Hebrew youths, they were cast into the burning fiery furnace; but the Lord delivered them, as He also delivered Daniel when the word of Darius was against him. But when "the word of the Lord is against you," its judgment is more to be dreaded than the bondage of Egypt, more to be feared than the fiery furnace or the den of lions, for there is none that can deliver you from the power of the Lord, whose word has gone forth against you. If this is your case, you are truly in a terrible state.

If "the word of the Lord is against you," you have great cause for trembling, for *it cannot be bribed.* Many a wealthy man has escaped the punishment he deserved because he has used his silver and his gold judiciously. It cannot be so easily done now in this country as it used to be, though there is still a gift that blinds the eyes, and many a man of position has escaped his deserts because of his wealth. But you cannot bribe the word of God, though there are some who seem to try to do it. They live a whole life regardless of God and His word, amassing money by fair means or foul, and then, when they cannot use it further, they leave it for some religious purpose, in the hope of thus meriting favor with God, taking care all the while, generally, to have their own name lastingly associated with the gift. But there is nothing which you can give that will be taken by the word of the Lord as a payment for your wrong. It will speak, and it will effect its purpose in spite of all your bribes.

If “the word of the Lord is against you,” you may well be dismayed as you remember that *it will never be changed*. You cannot, by any possibility, so long as you are what you are, make it cease to be against you. If a man is against me today, he may be my friend tomorrow. The wind does not always blow from the same quarter. Tides that flow will also ebb, but God’s word never changes. From everlasting to everlasting it never turns an inch aside from the straight path. If you remain the same, and that word is against you, it will be against you in life, and against you in death, against you at the day of judgement, and against you through all eternity. Oh, my dear hearer, it is a dreadful thing to have this immutable, unchanging word against you!

It is a terrible position, again, to have the word of the Lord against you, because *it cannot be escaped*. You may get away from the Queen’s writ by flying to the Continent, you may escape a warrant of arrest by fleeing to certain countries, though I scarcely know where you can now go to; but how can you escape from the word of God? That word changed chaos into order; that word came into the thick darkness, and there was light. “He spoke, and it was done.” The word of the Lord can come into your bedchamber. If you journey to the ends of the earth, the word of God can find you out, even though you never read it. It can reach you even if you should become a seven-fold infidel. You cannot change the threat by disbelieving it, nor escape the vengeance by professing that there is no such thing. The Psalmist’s words about God’s omnipresence apply also to the word of the Lord; “Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend up into heaven, You are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Your hand lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.” The word of the Lord is everywhere; it cannot be escaped.

Furthermore, it is a terrible thing to have the word of the Lord against you, for *it cannot be resisted*. If a man is against you, you can fight it out with him. You may oppose force to force, and cunning to cunning; but if the word of the Lord is against you, what power have you? By His word were the heavens made; by His word the heavens and the earth shall pass away and be dissolved. How can you fight against the word of God? As well might Pharaoh fight with the plagues that Jehovah sent upon him. God’s word is too strong for you. “Woe unto him that strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth,” but strive not you with Him who has all power, and whose word is “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

And now let me speak to you very solemnly. If “the word of the Lord is against you,” *what a state you must be in!* For, God is love, and He will not say a word against a man if He can help it. God is gracious, tender, loving, and when God Himself has to be against a man, the condition of that man’s heart must be something very terrible, and his state of life must be so depraved as to demand that love should give place to justice. Why, this Book of God was written for sinners, written to cheer penitent hearts, and if *it* is against you, what a state *you* must be in! Here is food prepared for an invalid; if you cannot eat that, if it turns your stomach, how diseased you must be! If the medicine becomes poison, if the sweet is sour, if the light itself is darkness to you, O wretched madman, you have come into an evil plight indeed! God have mercy upon you! If God’s word is against you, you are in an awful state indeed.

Not only is this true, but *what a sad state you will soon be in!* Whether you believe it or not, you will soon be dead, and, dying, you will pass into another world; and, being there, you will come to the seat of judgment to be tried for the things done in the body. You will need witnesses in your favor, and this Book will be called to give its testimony. What will it say about you? If the Book could speak, it would say, “Great God, he never read me. I bear witness to his neglect of You, for he never read me.” And many a text of Scripture would rise up in that last day, and say, “I was preached to him; his mother quoted me to him; his sister wrote this in a letter; a friend sent him this verse, and pleaded with him to take it to heart; but he heeded none of them.” If “the word of the Lord is against you,” the law will say, “He knew me, and he broke me;” the gospel will say, “He knew me, and he refused me;” the Bible itself will say, “He understood something of me, but he ridiculed me.” It will go hard with a man who has such testimony against him at the bar of the great Judge. Let me have the Bible on my side, and I will fearlessly face the whole world; but if the Bible is against me, I must be conquered; if it is against me in the last day, I must be speechless. He whom the word condemns has the foretaste of that final condem-

nation which shall be his in the next state, unless by sovereign grace he shall be constrained to turn to God before it is too late. I cannot speak as I would on this awful theme, but I am trying to plead with you from my very soul. Oh, that God the Holy Spirit would send home the word to many!

Remember, my dear hearers, there is not a waste word in this Book. Whatever God says will happen to the ungodly, will happen to them. Judgment is God's strange work, but what He threatens, He will certainly perform. How terrible will it be when the threats of His word come to pass! See, even in the verse from which our text is taken, a glimpse of what it may mean. First, there is woe. "Woe unto the inhabitants of the seacoast." Then there is destruction, "I will even destroy you." When the woe is past, there is utter destruction; "There shall be no inhabitant." Oh, the woe of having the word of the Lord against you! Behold, again, how those cities which Christ would have blessed so highly, were cursed when they rejected His message. "Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! Woe unto you, Capernaum!" These repeated "woes" sound like a funeral knell. Today those cities are wholly swept away, because the word of the Lord was against them. Learn, also, from the history of Jerusalem, how surely the word of the Lord against a man or against a city is fulfilled. Christ was rejected by the people of Jerusalem, so that it is not surprising that "when He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it," for He knew what a terrible doom awaited the guilty capital. Well might that demented man, of whom Josephus tells us, go through the streets of the city, when it was being besieged by Titus, and call out in tones of horror, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" Rest assured that the Lord will "render to every man according to his deeds." Those who obey His word shall be forever blessed; but those who have the word of the Lord against them shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

I have been accused sometimes of picturing the wrath to come in too horrible a way, but I have never described it more sternly than Christ Himself did. It was His gentle lips that declared, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." It was He who spoke of a place "where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." It was He who uttered the most awful words about the wrath to come. I pray you, do not wish to know, in your own experience, all that "the wrath to come" may mean. Flee from it. Seek rather to know what salvation means, and God help you to obtain it even now! If I am addressing any person who feels that the word of God is against him, I do beseech and conjure him not to rest any longer in that condition. If you have a quarrel with God's word, you are wrong; God's word cannot be in error. If the word of God offends you, you must be offended; or, rather, you have offended against it; it will never beg your pardon, you must beg its pardon; or, rather, seek forgiveness from the Lord whose word is against you, and who is Himself also against you. Said I not truly that when "the word of the Lord is against you," it is a terrible thing? If that is your position, may it soon be changed!

III. Now I come to my third and last point. If it is true that "the word of the Lord is against you," and that it is a terrible thing to be in such a state, **WHAT CAN BE DONE IN THE MATTER?** Is there any way of escape, any loophole through which deliverance may come? If the word cannot be bribed, changed, escaped, or resisted, what are we to do, since we cannot sit calmly beneath the curse of God?

I think that the first thing to be done, if you would escape out of this direful position, is to *confess that you are wrong*. There is a writ out against you. You have run away from it. Come home; submit yourself to the court; be willing to be put under arrest. There is no other right course. I knew one who, being charged with embezzlement, fled the country. He still has to stay away. If he had submitted himself to whatever punishment might have come upon him, he would have passed through it long ago. But now he still remains under the censure of the law, and cannot return. Now, you runaway from God, come home at once! Sinner, against whom the Lord has issued His warrant, yield yourself to the officer of divine justice at this moment! You need not move from your present position; but just where you are, humbly whisper in your heart, "Lord, I am guilty; I submit to Your word. Whatever Your word says is true, and I will no longer fight against it; but here, bowing my head, I confess that the wrong is with me, not with Your word. I confess that." Have you made this confession? Then it is well, for if "the word of the Lord is against you," your only hope lies in taking the side of the word of the Lord, and being against yourself.

But when a man gives himself up to justice, he has next to stand his trial. If "the word of the Lord is against you," it is against you in your present position, and in your present character, and you must

change your position. Come, then, and escape the hostility of the word of the Lord by altering your attitude towards it. If you have loved sin, repent and hate it. May God the Holy Spirit work in you a loathing of the evil thing which the word condemns, for when you are no longer a sin-lover, but a sin-loather, the word that was against you will be for you! God has no thunderbolts for those who hate their sins. If your soul and sin are divorced, your soul and mercy may be married, but not otherwise. When you do give up your sin, God will give up His suit against you. If you turn not, He will whet His sword, but if you turn, He will sheathe that sword, and speak comfortably to you.

Another change must take place. You must no longer stand in yourself, but in another. The word of the Lord is against you, but what if you could change places with another, on whose side the word of the Lord is, and in whom you could lawfully and rightly stand? What if Christ stood in your place and you should stand in Christ's place? Then this word would not condemn you, but it would acquit you, and more than that, it would defend you against all your adversaries. Behold a miracle of mercy! Christ Jesus, the innocent Son of God, dies for the guilty sons of men, that they may be covered with His righteousness, and accepted in His name. This is the pith and marrow of the gospel; "I stand in Christ's place because He stood in mine. The law cannot be against Him, for He fulfilled it, and made it honorable. The word of the Lord cannot be against Him, since He hid it in His heart that He might not sin against God, and if I come to be in Him, where the word is hidden, it can no longer be against me."—

*"Confounded, Lord, I wrap my face,
And hang my guilty head;
Ashamed of all my wicked ways,
The hateful life I've led.
I yield—by mighty love subdued;
Who can resist its charms?
And throw myself, by wrath pursued,
Into my Savior's arms."*

Let me say to you further, that if you have up to now had the word of the Lord against you, *be very careful to be right with the word.* In seeking to be saved, avoid, above everything, a sham salvation. When a man has a bad sore, it is a mischievous thing to let it heal with proud flesh in it. To cover over a wound may be to create seven dangers instead of one. Come to the word of God, and search yourself. Use the lances, take the probe, examine into the depth of your wound and sore. Let your prayer be, "O God, let me never be comforted apart from Your word; let me have no foundation apart from Christ to build upon! Let me never think that I am saved unless Christ is my Savior." My dear hearer you had better be hungry than to eat poisoned meat, and you had better be in despair than get comfort that does not spring out of the word of God. If you think that you are saved, and yet find that "the word of the Lord is against you," you may be sure that you are not saved, and should hasten to cast away your false confidence as quickly as possible. You can never be saved unless you are right with the word of God—

*"This is the judge that ends the strife,
Where wit and reason fail,
My guide to everlasting life
Through all this gloomy vale."*

One more thing and I have done. If to have the word of God against you is an overwhelming calamity, *how happy are they who have the word of the Lord with them!* I have heard of two Romanists, a man and his wife, who came in possession of a copy of the Scriptures, of which they had never seen one before. The man began to read it, and one night, as he sat beside the fire with the open book, he said, "Wife, if this book is right, we are *wrong*." He continued reading, and a few days afterwards he said, "Wife, if this book is right, we are *lost*." More eager now than ever to see what the word of the Lord was, he studied the book until, one night, he joyfully exclaimed, "Wife, if this book is true, we are *saved*." The same word that showed them that they were undone, revealed also the gospel of salvation. This is the glory of the word of God; it is against us until it leads us out of our sins, and then we find that death becomes the gate of life to our souls, and the word of God is on our side. The same word that reveals the terrors of the Lord, also says, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life." I believe on the Son of God as my Savior, therefore I have everlasting life! The word of the Lord is now for me, and assures my deliverance. It further says, "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but

that the world through Him might be saved.” When I read this, my heart sings for joy, for the word which was against me, now justifies me. Again it says, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” As I tremble because it is written, “He that believes not shall be damned,” I rejoice because the same word says, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” I believe, and I have been baptized; therefore I am saved. If you have the word of God for you, you want no other advocate. Even your own conscience may be lawfully overridden by the word of the Lord. “If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.”

This is the sum of the whole matter. Come just as you are, and trust Christ as your Savior. Leave your sin, and seek after holiness. Have done with your own willfulness, and seek the meek and lowly mind that was in the Man of Sorrows. In a word, come and lie at Jesus’ feet, and lift your tearful eyes to His loving gaze, and say—

*“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Your kind arms I fall;
Be You my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.”*

Trust Christ, trust Him now, trust Him only, trust Him wholly, trust Him forever, and you shall be eternally saved. As surely as the Bible is true, you are safe for time and for eternity if you believe in Jesus.

God bless this feeble word of mine! I have tried to preach the word of God faithfully, that, at the day of account, I may be clear of the blood of all men. I shall not then be asked whether I spoke eloquently, or whether I had energy of mind or power of voice; but I shall be asked if I warned you to escape from sin and seek the Savior, and *that* I have done to the utmost of my power. I wish that I knew how to persuade men to seek the Lord. Oh, that I could learn the art of reading the hearts of men! What do you want with fine speeches? Escape for your lives! What do you want with polished phrases and rounded periods? “Lay hold on eternal life.” Repent, believe the gospel, and be saved. O God, the Holy Spirit, lead men to this blessed decision at this very moment, for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JEREMIAH 26.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—501, 520, 589.

LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON.

BELOVED READERS—This sermon was preached with great anxiety for the souls of those who heard it; and now that it comes forth from the press, I again lift my heart to God with the prayer that it may arouse many who are slumbering in indifference. Believing readers will greatly oblige me if they will place their copies in the way of persons for whose salvation they are pleading with God. It may be that the Lord will use this discourse to the end they so much desire. My silent Sabbaths breed in me a great hunger for the salvation of those to whom I can only speak through the press. Oh, that my Lord would honor me by making me fruitful in this winter of my weakness!

I have a word for this season, which I must not forget. Christmas is near. Our orphan children must have their festival, though I cannot have the joy of presiding at it. Will my kind friends remember my family of five hundred, keep up the general funds, and add some little treat for the boys and girls?

I am sending a Christmas letter to all the subscribers whose names we have on our list; but as we may miss some, let them not feel that they are left out. I invite their thoughtful consideration of the matter. Direct to the Secretary, Stockwell Orphanage, Clapham Road, London, and thus gratify

Your old friend,

C. H. Spurgeon,

Mentone, December 12, 1891.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

PLEASE PRAY THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL USE THIS SERMON TO BRING MANY TO A SAVING KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST.

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