

“THERE IS FORGIVENESS”
NO. 2422

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD’S DAY, JULY 21, 1895.
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, JUNE 23, 1887.

“But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”
Psalm 130:4.

HAVE you noticed the verse which comes before the text? It runs thus, “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” That is a confession. Now, confession must always come before absolution. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” If we try to cloak our sin, “if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,” and no pardon can come from God to us. Therefore, plead guilty, plead guilty! You ought to do it, for you *are* guilty. You will find it wisest to do it, for this is the only way to obtain mercy. Cast yourself upon the mercy of your Judge and you shall find mercy—but first acknowledge that you *need* mercy. Be honest with your conscience and honest with your God—confess the iniquity which you have done and mourn over the righteousness to which you have not attained.

You notice that this confession is recorded with a kind of grave astonishment: “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” This is as much as for the psalmist to say, “I am sure that I cannot, and who can?” And, my dear brothers and sisters, if God shall deal with us according to our iniquities, where shall *we* stand, and who among us shall stand anywhere? I dare not stand to preach if God shall judge me according to my iniquities! You dare not stand to sing—what have you to do with singing if God is marking your iniquities? I wonder that men can stand at their counters and stand at their work while their sin is unforgiven! And then how shall we stand in the Day of Judgment? The best saint on earth, if he stands in his own righteousness, alone, and is judged according to his own offenses, why, the justice of God will blow him away like the chaff, or consume him as with a flame of fire! “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”

It is a dreadful fact that this, “if,” is no, “if,” to those who are not believers in Christ, but it is a matter of terrible certainty! God marks the iniquities of you who are unbelievers. Although as yet He does not visit them upon you, else you could not stand, yet He sees them and He records them! As gold and silver are put into a bag and sealed up, so are your iniquities. All the transgressions of your past life are in the book of record, from which they can never be blotted out except by one gracious hand! Would to God that you would accept pardon from that pierced hand! But, apart from that, your iniquities are engraved as in eternal brass! And in that day when the forgotten things shall be brought to light, all the sins that now lie at the bottom of the sea of time shall be cast up upon the shore and all shall be seen. And every secret thing shall be set in the light of day, and every transgression and iniquity shall be revealed by the light of the great white throne—and the ungodly shall be punished for all their ungodly words and ungodly deeds and ungodly thoughts according to the rules of equity in that last day of assize! O sirs, God *will* mark iniquity and then, whoever is out of Christ shall be able to stand! Whoever has never hidden in the riven Rock of Ages shall find no shelter! No, shall they not all cry to the mountains to fall upon them, to hide them from the dreadful face of Him who shall sit upon the throne of God? Even at this time there are some in this house of prayer whose sins are lying upon them and whose transgressions are written in God’s book of remembrance! How can they dare to stand, even, before a throne of grace, and how will they stand before the throne of judgment?

That third verse makes an appropriate preface to my text—it is the black thundercloud upon which I see written, as with the finger of God and with a lightning flash, the wonderful words we are now to consider, “But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”

I. My first head is taken from the first word of the text: “But.” Here is A WHISPER OF HOPE. “If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? *But*”—Oh, the sweet music of that little word! It seems to come in when the terrible drum of alarm is being beaten and the dreadful clarion of

judgment is sounding forth! There is a pause with this word, “*But there is forgiveness.*” It is a soft and gentle whisper from the lips of love: “*But there is forgiveness.*”

This comes into the soul *after a full confession of sin*. When you have knelt down before God and acknowledged your transgressions and your shortcomings, and your heart is heavy, and your soul is ready to burst with inward anguish, then may you hear this gracious Word of God, “*But there is forgiveness.*” When, under a sense of sin, it seems as if the very fiends of hell were shrieking in your ears because of the awful doom which is drawing near—when you shall be driven from hope and from the presence of God, then, when you fall on your face in the terror of your soul because of your iniquity, *then* comes this sweet Word of God: “*But there is forgiveness.*” It is all true which your conscience tells you. It is all true which the Word of God threatens concerning you! Then acknowledge that it is true and bow yourself in the dust before God—and then you shall hear in your soul, not only in your ears, but in your *heart*, this blessed Word of God, “*But there is forgiveness.*”

Some of us remember when we first heard this Word. When it came, it was to us like the clear shining after rain: “*But there is forgiveness.*” Some of us were, perhaps, for weeks and months without any knowledge of this blessed truth of God—pining for it, hungering for it—and when the Lord brought it home with power into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, oh, there was no music like it! Angels could not sing any tune so sweet as these Words of God spoken to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, “*But there is forgiveness.*” Go your way, my hearer, and confess before God all your sin! I will not say what it has been. Perhaps you have lived for many years in the pursuit of sinful pleasures. Perhaps you have been dominated by your own will—you have tried to be lord and master, or queen and mistress of your own wicked spirit. And, perhaps, you have done evil as often as you could, and you are sensible of your sin, and your wounds bleed before God because of it. Well, then, in comes this whisper of hope: “*But there is forgiveness.*” God make it as sweet to you to hear it as it is to me to tell of it!

This whisper of hope sometimes comes to the soul by the Spirit of God *as the result of observation*. A man, full of sin, thinks to himself, “*Well, but others, also, have been full of sin, yet they have been forgiven. What if I have been a blasphemer and injurious? Yet so was Saul of Tarsus and he had forgiveness from the Lord. What if I have been a thief? Yet so was he who hung upon the cross, and that day was with his Lord in Paradise. What if I have been a fallen woman, and have been defiled with sin? Yet there is forgiveness, for she was forgiven who was a sinner, and came and washed Christ’s feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, loving much because she had much forgiven. What, even if I have been an adulterer? Yet such was David. What if I have been a persecutor? Yet such was Manasseh. Into whatever sin I may have fallen, I observe that others like I have been snatched from these horrible pits—and why should not I be?*” I would whisper this message into the ear of anybody here who is conscious of sin. If you will but look about you, you will see others like yourself who have been washed, cleansed and sanctified. Some of them are on earth, and many more of them are in heaven, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb! Sweet, then, is this whisper of hope arising out of observation of others: “*But there is forgiveness.*”

This whisper also comes in *opposition to the voice of despair*, for despair says to a soul under a sense of sin, “*There is no mercy for you! You have sinned beyond all limits. Your death warrant is signed, the verdict has been given against you, and there remains nothing for you but everlasting burnings!*” No, Soul, God’s Word against your word any day! God’s Word says, “*There is forgiveness.*” Nothing can destroy despair except a message from God, Himself, and this passage is like a huge hammer to break in sunder the gates of brass and dash in pieces the bars of iron: “*There is forgiveness.*” “*All manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.*” In the greatness of His heart, Jehovah declares that He delights in mercy, and this is the song which went up to Him in the old Jewish church with many a repetition, and is just as true today—

*“For His mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure!
He His chosen race did bless
In the wasteful wilderness.
For His mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.
He has, with a piteous eye,
Looked upon our misery!
For His mercies shall endure,
Ever faithful, ever sure.”*

You have not gone beyond His mercy! You cannot go beyond His mercy if you will trust His Son! “There is forgiveness.” Let this whisper drive away despair! What a blessed whisper it is! “There is forgiveness.” “There is forgiveness.” Let it enter your soul and drive those grim ogres and hobgoblins of despair away into the sea of forgetfulness. “There is forgiveness.”

This whisper of hope is, further, *the answer to conscience*. When Mr. Conscience is really at work, he has a very terrible voice. There is no lion in the thicket that roars like a truly awakened conscience. Conscience says, “You knew your duty, but you did not do it. You have sinned away many a day of grace—you have refused gospel invitations, you have striven against the light of nature and the light of God—you will go down to hell well deserving your doom! When the millstone is about your neck, to sink you into the abyss, you will deserve to have it so, for you have earned all this for yourself by your iniquities.” I will not seek to stifle conscience, nor ask you to shut your ear to his voice. Let him speak, but still, do you not hear between his roars this sweet note as of a silver harp, “But-but-but-but there is forgiveness”? O conscience, there is forgiveness! I am as guilty as you say I am, and much more, for you cannot see all the sin that I have committed: “but there is forgiveness.”

Let me go still further and say that this whisper of hope is *an answer, even, to the law of God*. The Ten Commandments are like ten great cannons fully charged and if we were, like the rebels in India, tied to the muzzles of them and blown to pieces, it would be only what we deserve! But just when the fuse is lighted and about to be applied, there rings out this blessed Word of God, “There is forgiveness. There is forgiveness.” The law says, “The soul that sins, it shall die,” and the law knows no mercy—it cannot know any mercy. Sinai has never yet yielded one drop of water to cool the parched tongue of a guilty sinner! Never did a shower reach its craggy peaks! It is a mountain of fire and the thunder rolls over its summit with the sound of a trumpet exceedingly loud and long, making all who hear it to tremble! God, when He comes to judge, must judge according to justice: “but-but-but-but there is forgiveness”! There is another mountain besides Sinai—you have not come unto Mount Sinai—but you have come unto Mount Zion! There is another lawgiver besides Moses! There is Jesus, the Son of God! There is another covenant besides the covenant of Works—there is a covenant of rich, free, sovereign grace, and this is the essence of it: “There is forgiveness.” Oh, that I could convey that whisper into the ear of every sinner who is here! I *can* do that, but oh, that God the Holy Spirit would put it into your *heart*, that you might never forget, “There is forgiveness”!

II. Now I advance to my second division. In our text I see, besides the whisper of hope, AN ASSURANCE OF THE WORD OF GOD—

“There is forgiveness with You.”

Dear friends, “there is forgiveness.” nature could never tell you this great truth of God. You may walk the cornfields at this moment and see the bounty of God in the waving grain, but you cannot read forgiveness there. You may climb the hills and see the beauty of the landscape. You may look upon silver streams that make glad the fields, but you cannot read forgiveness there. You can see the goodness of God to man, but not the mercy of God to sinners! But if you come to this Book, you can read it here.

Turn to the Old Testament and you will see that *it reveals sacrifice*—lambs, bullocks and goats. What did they all mean? They meant that there was a *way of pardon through the shedding of blood*—they taught men this, that God would accept certain sacrifices on their behalf. Then turn to the New Testament and there you will see it revealed more clearly that God has accepted a sacrifice, the sacrifice which He, Himself, gave, for, “He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all.” In this Book you read how He can be “just, and the Justifier of him that believes.” How He can be a just God and yet a Savior. How He can forgive and yet be just as righteous as if He punished and showed no mercy. This, in fact, is the revelation of the gospel! This is what this Book was written to teach, to tell you that, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” Therefore we come to you, not merely with a hopeful whisper, but with a full, distinct, emphatic, unquestionable assurance: “There is forgiveness.” “There is forgiveness.”

Turn to this Word of God and you will find *the certainty of forgiveness*. “I believe in the forgiveness of sins.” What a grand article of the creed that is! Do you believe it? Then do not doubt, do not hesitate: “There is forgiveness.” You must know that there is such a thing, or else you will not be eager to seek for it! It is in vain to go in quest of a myth or a perhaps—but here is a certainty for you. “There is forgiveness.” Doubt it not! Believe it to be so and then seek after it with all your heart. “There is forgiveness.” That is a matter of certainty.

Notice, if you please, *the broad indefiniteness of the text*: “There is forgiveness.” It does not say, “There is forgiveness for this sin or for that,” but, “There is forgiveness.” Where God draws no limit, do

not you draw any! If God sets the door wide open and says, “There is forgiveness,” then come along, you sinners, whoever you may be, from jails and penitentiaries! Come along from your Pharisaic places of boasting and self-righteousness! Come along with you, for there is forgiveness even for you! You rich, you poor, you learned, you ignorant that know nothing, know at least this: “There is forgiveness.” This text shuts out nobody! I bless God, sometimes, for the grand vagueness of His speech. When He draws lines of distinction, as sometimes He does, then are we anxious to know who is shut in and who is shut out. But when He simply says, “There is forgiveness,” let us jump at it and grasp it by an act of faith and, once let us but grasp it, He will never take it from us, for Jesus Himself said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.”

Notice, too, *the immediate presentness of the text*. Our version has it, “There is forgiveness,” but there is no verb in the Hebrew. The translators put in the words, “There is,” so we are to read it, “There *was* forgiveness.” “There *is* forgiveness.” “There *will be* forgiveness as long as life lasts.” But I like it as it stands here. “There is forgiveness” *tonight*. “There is forgiveness” *now*. “There is forgiveness” where you sit, just as you are, just now! Oh, that I could say it so as to convince you of the truth of it, and give a grip, a squeeze of my right hand, to each one of you! I would like to do it! O my dear friends, do not despair, do not be bowed down any longer, “there is forgiveness.” There is forgiveness now!

And it is intended to have a *personality about it*. It is no use telling anybody that there is forgiveness for other people, but none for him. This text is made for you, dear friends, and the preacher is sent to proclaim this truth of God to you, for he is sent to preach, as far as he can, to every creature under heaven. “There is forgiveness” for you, though you think there is none! Your thoughts are not as God’s thoughts—neither are your ways as His ways. There is, there surely is, at this moment, forgiveness! Oh, that you would prove it by an act of faith! The moment you believe in Christ, your sins are all forgiven! Look to Him whom I would hold up before you, as Moses held up the brazen serpent on the pole! Look, for there is life in a look to Him that died for guilty men—

***“There is life for look at the Crucified One!
There is life at this moment for thee.
Then look, sinner—look unto Him, and be saved—
Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.”***

May this be the moment when the Spirit of God shall make it to be so to many here present! “There is forgiveness.”

III. Now I must go a little farther and notice, in the text, A DIRECTION OF WISDOM: “There is forgiveness with You.” “With You.”

Do you hear this, dear heart? You are shrinking from your God. You are anxious to run away from Him—but *that is where the forgiveness is*—with God! Where the offense went, from that very place the forgiveness comes: “There is forgiveness with You.” “Against You, You only, have I sinned,” but, “there is forgiveness with You,” with the very God whom you have offended! It is with God in such a way that it *is part of His nature*. “He delights in mercy.” “God is love.” He glorifies Himself by passing by transgression, iniquity and sin. There is forgiveness with God. It is in God’s very nature that it lies. Fly not away, then, from the very place where forgiveness awaits you!

“There is forgiveness with You.” Some read the passage, “There is a propitiation with You.” Now, *the Lord Jesus Christ is that propitiation*, and He is with God. He has gone up into glory and He is at the right hand of the Father even now. Make your way to God, for the propitiation is there before you! Meet your God at the mercy seat lest you have to meet Him at the judgement seat! There is forgiveness always with God, for Jesus is always there. Therefore, go to Him and find it.

“There is forgiveness with You,” that is to say, *God has it in His immediate gift*. He will not have to hunt for it, for it is with Him, He has it ready to bestow! He will not need you to plead for it with so many sighs, cries and tears, but He has it waiting for you. The writ by which you shall be set free is already made out! “There is forgiveness with You.” The Lord Jehovah has signed you free pardon, it lies before Him now—go and take it! “There is forgiveness with You,” immediately, and if you do but believe in Jesus, you shall receive it from His hand!

“There is forgiveness with You.” Then, depend upon it, there is *a way for forgiveness to get to me*, for if God has it, He can somehow get to me with it! I may be far off from hope. I may be surrounded, as it were, with brick walls, shut in like a man in one of the dungeons of the Bastille, where men lay till they were forgotten and the very jailer did not know who they were, nor when they came there. If you are even in such a sad state as *that*, God can get at you—there is forgiveness with Him—and He can get it to you!

And if it is with God, then *there is a way for you to get to it*, for there is One who stands between you and God! There is a Mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus—but you do not need a mediator between Christ and yourself—you can come to Him just as you are! You need a Mediator with God and there is Jesus Christ, who is God and man, able to lay His hands both on you and on your gracious God, and to bring you into His presence!

I feel somehow certain that I am going to have some souls, tonight, to be my reward. I love to ring those charming bells, “Free grace and dying love.” A great part of the pleasure of preaching is derived from the fact that I know that God’s Word will not return to Him void, but that some who hear the gospel message will receive it and be saved! Listen to this Word of God, you doubting, trembling, despairing sinner: “there is forgiveness”—that forgiveness is with God! If I told you that it was with me and that I was the priest, perhaps you would be foolish enough to believe me. But I will tell you no such lie! It is not with any priest on earth—it is with the Lord! “There is forgiveness with You,” and you may go to God just as you are, with nothing in your hands, and cast yourself at His feet, quoting the name of His dear Son. Rest there and the work is done, for, as God lives, it is true, that there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared!

IV. I close with this word. The last part of the text shows A DESIGN OF LOVE: “There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”

Somebody said, “I should have thought that it would have read, ‘That You may *be loved*.’” Yes, so I would have thought, but then, you see, fear, especially in the Old Testament, *includes* love! It includes every holy feeling of reverence, worship and obedience towards God. That is the Old Testament name for true religion: “*the fear of God*.” So I might say that the text declares, “There is forgiveness with You, that You may be loved, worshipped, and served.” Still, even in the sense of fear, it is a most blessed fact that they who fear the Lord are delightful to Him. “The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His mercy.”

Do you not see how it is, dear friends, that men fear the Lord because He forgives their sins? It must be so because, first, if He did not forgive their sins, *there would be nobody left to fear Him*, for they would all die! If He were to deal with men after their sins, He must sweep the whole race of mankind off the face of the earth! But there is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared.

Next, if it were certain that God did not pardon sin, *everybody would despair*, and so, again, there would be nobody to fear Him, for a despairing heart grows hard like the nether millstone. Because they have no hope, men go on to sin worse and worse—but there is forgiveness with God that He may be feared. The devils never repent, for there is no pardon for them. There is no gospel preached in hell and, consequently, there is no relenting, no repenting, and no turning towards God among lost spirits. But there is forgiveness with Him that He may be feared by you. What a wonderful effect pardon has upon a man!

What a wonderful effect it has upon a man to know that he is pardoned, to be sure that he is forgiven! *He begins to tremble all over*. Remember how it is written, “And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them, as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against Me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against Me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them: and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it.” A man who has been forgiven is afraid that he should go and sin again after such love and such mercy. He is melted down by the goodness of the Lord. He does not know what to make of it. For a time he can hardly believe that it is true! I know that when I was converted, I felt at first like Peter when the great iron gate was opened, and the angel brought him out of prison. He knew not what was done to him by the angel and he thought he saw a vision—he could not believe it to be true that he was really released! So is it with the saved sinner—you are so amazed, you are so overwhelmed, that you are filled with fear at the intense delight of pardon, being half afraid that it cannot really be true that such a wretch as you can have been pardoned and that all your iniquities are blotted out forever! The wondrous grace of God makes you tremble with a holy reverential fear and you sing, with Dr. Watts—

*“When God revealed His gracious name
And changed my mournful state,
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,
The grace appeared so great!”*

Are there any of God’s people here who are afraid that they do not fear God enough? If you want to revive your fear of God and have it deepened, believe in your pardon. Believe! It is a singular way to come to fear God, but *believe* that you are forgiven, *prize* your forgiveness, *know* that your sins are blotted out, *cling* to the cross and all that sweet fear of God, by which is meant the *whole of piety*, will abound in your soul!

Some think that it will be a good way of deepening their graces to begin to question whether they are Christians. That is the wrong way altogether! Unbelief does not heal anybody—it is *faith* that heals! Believe up to the hilt! Believe, come what may! Believe in Christ, though your sins rage and rave and roar! Believe in Christ, though the devil tells you, you are damned! Should hell seem to open at your feet, believe in your pardon through the precious blood! Do not stagger at the promises of God through unbelief, and you shall feel yourself filled with a holy fear, joy, peace, love, zeal and a burning desire to serve Him who has done all this for you! “There is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”

If any of you poor people, here, who have not yet found the Savior, are saying, “We wish that we could feel our sin more. We wish that we could fear the Lord more.” Let me tell you that this fear is to come to you *afterwards*. There is forgiveness, first, and *then* the fear comes afterwards. All the fear in the world that is worth having is the result of pardoned sin. The fear that is not to be cast out, the fear that has no torment in it, is that fear which comes of a sense of every iniquity being blotted out! I charge you, believe in Jesus Christ! In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, I say to you unbelieving ones—Believe in Him now! Rise, take up your bed, and walk. I, who have no power whatever of myself, yet speaking in my Master’s name, know that His power will go with His gospel and that His Word shall not return to Him void. Believe and live! God bless you, for Jesus’ sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:
PSALMS 129; 130; 131.

Three Songs of degrees.

Psalm 129:1, 2. *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth, may Israel now say: many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet they have not prevailed against me.*

The trials of some of God’s people begin very early. When first we put on the armor of God, the adversary is usually very bitter against us. Some of our old friends and acquaintances cannot bear to see the change in us—and they bitterly oppose us—so that God’s children may have to say, “From our youth they have afflicted us.” But you must not think that the beginning of sorrows will be the end of them. Oh, no! “Many a time have they afflicted me.” God’s children are often called to pass under the rod and the rod is frequently held in the hands of the children of men. Your Savior carried the cross and He expects you to carry it, too. He does not tell you to take it up now and then, but to take it up *always*, and to follow Him with a constant will, cheerfully bearing it for His dear name’s sake. “Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth: yet”—is not that sweetly put?—“yet they have not prevailed against me.” You remember how Joseph’s brothers envied him and, at last, sold him into Egypt? Yet from the dungeon he rose to the throne and he could say, “Yet they have not prevailed against me.” If you are of the seed royal, one of the chosen people of God, they shall not prevail against you! Even proud Haman, with all his plotting, was not able to overcome poor Mordecai! And the Lord your God will preserve you from the fury of all your adversaries and bring good to you out of all the evil they try to do to you.

3. *The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.*

Like one that has been cruelly scourged until each cut of the lash seemed to make a furrow through the quivering flesh. “The plowers plowed upon my back: they made long their furrows.” How truly could our blessed Lord utter these words when He was delivered up to wicked men to be scourged!

4. *The LORD is righteous: He has cut asunder the cords of the wicked.*

“The Lord is righteous.” *There* is our hope and comfort! He takes away from them the scourge and cuts up the cords of which it is made. And those cords with which they would bind the righteous He cuts into pieces, so that they can do nothing against them: “He has cut asunder the cords of the wicked.”

5. *Let them all be confounded and turned back that hate Zion.*

So it seems that the one aimed at and made to suffer is the Church of God: “Zion.” She has often been scourged and afflicted! Her experience is like that of her covenant head, and her triumph will be like His triumph.

6-8. *Let them be as the grass on the housetops, which withers before it grows up: wherewith the mower fills not his hand; nor he that binds sheaves to his bosom. Neither do they which go by say, The blessing of the LORD be upon you: we bless you in the name of the LORD.*

So the adversaries of the Church of God may grow as fast as grass on the roof of a house, but they will perish just as fast, and there will be nothing left of them! They threaten, they bully, they rage, and they rave—but it is only for a little while. Now we will read the “De Profundis” Psalm.

Psalm 130:1. *Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O LORD.*

God’s people have to go into the depths and God’s people pray in the depths—and often they pray best in the depths! The rarest pearls lie deepest in the sea and the most precious prayers come out of the depths of affliction: “Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O Lord.” Cannot many of you say the same? Looking back upon your past afflictions and trials, yet you can feel that you did pray in them. He that can pray in the depths will soon sing in the heights! If you can pray, you cannot be drowned by all the seas that roll over you. God who brought you into them will bring you out of them if you can pray.

2. Lord,

Or, “Adonai,” Sovereign Lord—

2. Hear my voice: let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

“Hear me, Lord!” What is the use of prayer if God does not hear it? It is said to be a profitable spiritual exercise. So it is, because we believe that God hears it! But apart from that, it would be an idle waste of words. “Lord, hear my voice: let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.”

3. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

Not one of *us*, surely! If God were to now deal with us according to our sins, who among us could stand in His presence?

4, 5. *But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His Word do I hope.*

See, this is all in the first person. Dear friend, can you use it in the first person? Can you say, “I wait for Jehovah”? Blessed are they that are content to wait His will, but yet, with holy eagerness, are prepared to do that will or to suffer it, as He pleases. “My soul does wait, and in His Word do I hope.” All my hope is there. If it were not for His promises I would have no confidence, but one Word of God is better than all the things that can be seen! It is better to trust in God’s declaration than in man’s oaths. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.

6. My soul waits for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.

I say, more than they that watch for the morning! Those on the sick bed, who long for their weary waiting to be over. Those afflicted ones who cry in the night of pain, “Would God it were morning!” Those, too, that stand as sentinels, the night before the battle, or after the fight, watch and long to see the morning light. There are many such weary waiters and my soul is one of them, waiting for the Lord, “more than they that watch for the morning.”

7. Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption.

Enough to buy us back from all our slavery and to buy back our inheritance as well. Our Redeemer is the redeemer of the inheritance that has been mortgaged and now is burdened by the enormous debt of sin: “with Him is plenteous redemption.”

8. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

That is our worst slavery, our in-equities, our lack of equity, our having acted unfairly to God and unfairly to man. He will redeem us from all that evil—yes, He has redeemed us by price—and He will redeem us by power!

Psalm 131:1. *LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.*

I commend this verse to some who profess to be Christians, but who are always puzzling their poor brains with intricate questions—who want to solve the mystery of where free will and predestination can meet, how man can be responsible, and yet God’s predestination can be fulfilled; and I know not what beside! These are great waters the waves whereof are too big for our little boats! We have quite enough to do, my brothers, to attend to the plain things of God’s Word, and to strive after holiness and the salvation of our fellow men, without addicting ourselves to tying knots and trying to untie them! It is an unprofitable business; it genders to pride rather than to anything else, and well did David say, “My heart is

not haughty, nor my eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me.”

2. *Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child.*

That is a very blessed thing to be able to do, to quiet yourself when, like a weaned child, you are crying under the afflicting hand of God—when you feel a proud spirit murmuring, or when you want to pierce the darkness that veils divine truth and want to understand what cannot be understood—and you worry because you are not omniscient. Oh, it is a blessed thing, then, to say to yourself, “Be quiet, child! Be quiet!” What are you but a child, after all, at your best? What do you know? What *can* you know? Are you not satisfied to hear your Father say, “What you know not now, you shall know hereafter”? Do you not know that here we know but in part, and see but in part? By-and-by, we shall know even as we are known, but not yet. “I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother”—as a child who sucks his thumb and goes to sleep, sobbing: “my soul is even as a weaned child.” David did not say, “My soul is even as a *weaning* child”—fretting, worrying, wanting to have its own will. There is no happiness in that state! But when it is not the, “ing,” but the, “ed”—not the present participle, but the past—then we get into comfort! “My soul is even as a weaned child,” who has given up his old comfort, which he thought was as necessary to him as his life. He finds that, after all, he can live without it, and grow without it, and come to a better manhood without it than with it! “My soul is even as a weaned child.”

3. *Let Israel hope in the LORD—*

You will never be weaned from Him if you are His, but if you are weaned from the world, so as to have all your hope in the Lord, thrice happy are you! Now, too, you will grow. Now you will come to the fullness of the stature of a man in Christ Jesus which you could never have done if you had not been weaned! I remember that when Sarah weaned Isaac, there was a great feast at the weaning, and I believe that God’s children often have a great feast at their weaning from the world. All the while they are but babes, and suck their comforts from the world, they get but little real joy. But when, by divine grace, they outgrow that state of things, then is there a great feast made for them!

3. *From henceforth and forever.*

That is real comfort that you may always enjoy, hoping in the Lord from henceforth and forever! In life and in death here is a blessed confidence that will never fail you! God grant that we may enjoy it now and evermore! Amen.

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

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