

THE CHAFF DRIVEN AWAY

NO. 280

**A SERMON
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AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.**

*“The ungodly are not so; but are like the chaff which the wind drives away.”
Psalm 1:4.*

AND who are the ungodly? Are they open and willful sinners—men who take God’s name in vain, and curse, and blaspheme—men who break the laws of man, the laws of the state—men who are scarcely to be trusted with liberty? Certainly these are included, but these are not mainly intended. While such men come under the category of “sinners” and “scorners,” there is another class expressly aimed at by the term, “ungodly.” And who are the ungodly? Are they the men who deny God’s existence, who neglect the outward forms of religion, who scoff at everything that is sacred and make a vulgar jest of things at which angels tremble? These are included, most certainly, but neither are these the men especially aimed at. They are the scornful, the pestilent—these are the men whose iniquities have gone beforehand to judgment against them and whose sins are clamoring before the throne of God for justice. But another class of men is intended under the term “ungodly.” And who are they? Surely, my brothers and sisters, the answer may well strike you with awe. I do trust there are not many in this hall who may be called scorners. And, perhaps, not very many who would come under the denomination of open degenerates, and rebels; but how large a proportion of all those who attend our places of worship may justly be ranked under the character of the ungodly! What does this mean, exactly? Let me just show its differences, once again, and then more precisely define it.

We sometimes call men irreligious; and, surely, to be irreligious is bad enough; but to be religious is not good enough. A man may be religious, but yet he may not be godly. There are many who are religious. As touching the law outwardly they are blameless—Hebrews of the Hebrews, Pharisees of the straightest sect. They neglect no decree, they break no law of their church, they are exceedingly precise in their religion; yet, notwithstanding this, they may rank under the class of the ungodly, for to be religious is one thing and to be godly is quite another. To be godly, then—to come at once to the mark—to be godly is to have a constant eye to God, to recognize Him in all things, to trust Him, to love Him, to serve Him. And the ungodly man is one who does not have an eye to God in his daily business, who lives in this world as if there were no God. While he attends to all the outward ceremonies of religion, he never goes to their core, never enters into their secret heart and their deep mysteries. He sees the sacraments, but he sees not God therein. He hears the preaching, he comes up to the house of prayer—into the midst of the great congregation—he bows his head, but there is no present Deity to him, there is no manifest God. There is no hearing of His voice; there is no bowing before His throne. Doubtless, there are a large number here who must confess that they are not trusting in the blood of Christ. They are not influenced by the Holy Spirit, they do not love God. They cannot say that the bent and tenor of their lives is towards Him. Why, you have been, the last six days, about your business, occupying all your time—and quite right is it to be diligent in business—but how many of you have forgotten God all the while? You have been trading for yourselves, not for God. The righteous man does everything in the name of God—at least this is his constant desire! Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he desires to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. But you have not recognized God in your shop; you have not acknowledged Him in your dealings with your fellow men. You have acted towards them as if there had been no God whatever!

And, perhaps, even this day you must confess that your heart does not love the Lord. You have never gone into His company. You do not seek retirement. You do not relish private prayer. Now God’s chil-

dren cannot be happy without sometimes talking to their Father. The sons of God must have frequent interviews with Jehovah. They love to cling to Him. They feel that He is their life, their love, their all. Their daily cry is, “Lord, draw me to Yourself; come to me, or draw me up to You.” They pant to know more of God. They long to reflect more of His image; they seek to keep His law; and it is their desire that they may be saturated with His Spirit. But such are not your desires—you have no such longings as these! It is true you are not addicted to strong drink, you do not swear—you are no thief, you are no harlot—in all *these* things you are blameless! But yet you are ungodly—without God in the world. He is not your friend, He is not your helper. You do not cleave to Him with purpose of heart. You are not His child; you have not “the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” You could do as well without a God as with one! In fact, you feel that the thought of God, if you think of it solemnly, strikes you with terror and excites in your breasts no emotions of delight. You are ungodly! Well then, mark—whatever I have to say this morning belongs to you. Don’t be looking around you and saying, I wonder how this will suit my neighbor? Do not, I beseech you, be thinking of some thriftless loon who has spent his estate in extravagance and debauchery, but be thinking of *yourself*. If you are not born-again, if you are not a partaker of the Spirit, if you are not reconciled to God, if your sins are not forgiven—if you are not this day a living member of the living church of Christ, all the curses that are written in this book belong to you—and that part of them in particular which it will be my solemn business to thunder out this morning! I pray God that this part may be applied to your soul, that you may be made to tremble before the Most High and seek Him who will certainly be found of you, if you seek Him with all your hearts.

You will readily perceive that my text may be divided into three parts. You have, first, *a fearful negative*—“The ungodly are not so.” You have in the next place *a terrible comparison*—“They are like the chaff.” Then you have, thirdly, *an awful prophesy*—“They are like the chaff which the wind drives away.”

I. First, then, you have here A FEARFUL NEGATIVE. The vulgate Latin version, the Arabic and Septuagint, read this first sentence thus—“Not so the ungodly, not so;” for according to their version there is a double negative here—“Not so the ungodly, not so.” Now in order to understand what is meant by this negative you must read the third verse. The righteous man is said to be “Like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper”—“Not so the ungodly, not so.”

To explore the negative, we must take each clause of this sentence. The ungodly are not like a *tree planted*; if they may be compared to a tree at all, they are as trees “twice dead plucked up by the roots.” Or if they are to be compared to anything that has life, then are they like the tree in the desert which is planted there by a chance hand, which has nothing to nourish it. It is the peculiar characteristic of the Christian that he is like “a tree planted.” That is to say, there is a special providence exercised in his position and in his culture. You all know the difference between a tree that is planted and a tree that is self-sown. The tree that is planted in the garden is visited by the gardener. He digs about it. He fertilizes it. He trims it, prunes it and looks for its fruit. It is an object of property and of special care. The wild tree in the forest—the tree which is self-sown upon the plain—no one owns; no one watches over it. No heart will sigh if the lightning flash shall shiver it. No tears will be wept if the blast should light upon it and all its leaves should wither. It is no man’s property. It shelters no man’s roof, no man cares for it. Let it die! Why does it stand there to suck nourishment from the soil and yield no fruit?

The ungodly are, it is true, the subjects of a universal providence, even as everything is ordered of God. But the righteous have a special providence over them. They are *trees planted*. Everything which takes place works together for their good. The Lord their God is their guardian. He watches the earth that it should bring forth for them its fruit. The precious things of the heavens, the dew and the deep that couches beneath and the precious fruits brought forth by the sun and the precious things put forth by the moon—these are their heritage. He watches everything round about them. If pestilence stalks through the land, He permits not one of its shafts to hit, unless He sees it is for good. If war arises, behold, He stretches His protection over His children! And if famine comes, they shall be fed and in the days of scarcity they shall be satisfied. Is it not a glorious thing for the Christian to know that the very hairs of

his head are all numbered, that the angels of God keep watch and ward over him? The Lord is his Shepherd and, therefore, he shall not want. I know this is a doctrine that often comforts me—let what will, happen, if I can but fall back upon the thought that there is providence in everything, what do I need? There assuredly is providence in the great and in the little to every child of God! It may be said of every tree of the Lord's right hand planting—"I the Lord do keep it and will water it every moment. Lest any hurt it, I will watch it night and day." Upon the righteous there are not only 10 eyes, but there are all the eyes of the Omniscient always fixed both by night and day! The Lord knows the way of the righteous. They are like the planted tree. Not so you who are ungodly, not so you! There is no special providence for you. To whom will you carry your troubles? Where is your shelter in the day of wrath? Where is your shield in the hour of battle? Who shall be your sun when darkness shall gather about you? Who shall comfort you when your troubles shall encompass around you? You have no eternal arm to lean upon. You have no compassionate heart to beat for you. You have no loving eye to watch you. You are left alone! Alone! Alone! Like the heath in the desert, or like the forest tree which no man regards, until the time comes when the sharpened axe shall be lifted up and the tree must fall. "Not so," then; "the ungodly, not so." It is a fearful negative! The ungodly man is not the object of the special providence of God.

But we must proceed. The righteous man is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. Now a tree that is planted by the rivers of water sends out its roots and they soon draw sufficient nourishment. The tree that is planted far away upon the arid desert has its times of drought. It depends upon the casual thundercloud that sweeps over it and distils the scanty drops of rain. But this tree planted by rivers of water has a perennial supply. It knows no drought, no time of scarcity. Its roots have but to suck up the nourishment which pours itself lavishly there. "Not so the ungodly, not so." They have no such rivers from which to suck their joy, their comfort and their life. As for the believer, come what may, he can—even if earth shall fail him—look to heaven! If man forsakes him, then he looks to the divine man, Christ Jesus! If the world should shake, his inheritance is on high! If everything should pass away, he has a portion that can never be dissolved! He is planted not by brooks that may be dried up—far less in a desert, which only has a scanty share—but by the rivers of water! Oh, my beloved brothers and sisters, you and I know something about what this means. We know what it is to suck up the promises, to drink of the rivers of Christ's fullness. We know what it is to partake and satisfy ourselves with marrow and fatness. Well may we rejoice with unspeakable joy and full of glory, for our storehouse is inexhaustible; our riches can never be spent! We have wealth that cannot be counted—a treasury that can never be drained! This is our glory, that we have a something to rely upon which can never fail us. We are trees planted by the rivers of water! Ah, but not so you that are ungodly, not so! Your days of drought shall come. You may rejoice, now, but what will you do upon the bed of sickness, when fever shall make you toss from side to side, when head and heart shall be racked with anguish, when death shall stare upon you and shall glaze your eyes? What will you do when you come into the swellings of Jordan? You have joys today, but where will your joys be then? You have wells now, but what will you do when these are all stopped up, when these shall all fail, when your skin bottles are dried, when your broken cisterns have emptied themselves of their last drop—what will you do then, you ungodly? Surely, this negative is full of awful threats to you! You may have a little mirth and merriment, now, you may enjoy a little excitement at present, but what will you do when the hot wind comes upon you—the wind of tribulation? And above all, what will you do when the chilling blast of death shall freeze your blood? Ah, where, oh where will you then look? You will look no longer to friends, nor to the comforts of home. You cannot find in the hour of death, consolation on the bosom of the most loving wife! You will be quite unable, then, to find peace in all your riches or your treasures! As for your past life, however good it may seem, if you are ungodly, you will find no comfort in the retrospect. And as for the future, you will find no comfort in the prospect, for there will be nothing for you but "a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation." Oh, my ungodly friends, I beseech you, think upon this matter—for if there were nothing worse—the first sentence of my text sounds like the trumpets of doom and has in it bitterness like the vials of the Revelation!

Again we must go forward. It is said of the righteous man, that he, "*brings forth his fruit in his season.*" "Not so the ungodly, not so"—they bring forth no fruit! Or if there is, here and there, a shriveled

grape upon the vine, it is brought forth in the wrong season when the genial heat of the sun cannot ripen it and, therefore, it is yellow and worthless. Many people imagine that if they do not commit positive sins they are all right. Now let me give you a little sermon in the midst of my sermon. Here is the text—“Curse you Meroz,” said the angel of the Lord, ‘curse you bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.’” First, what had Meroz done? Nothing. Secondly, is Meroz cursed? Yes, cursed bitterly. Why?—*for doing nothing*. Yes, *for doing nothing*. “Curse you bitterly the inhabitants thereof”—for what they did *not* do—“Because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” Did Meroz fight against God? No. Did Meroz put on a buckler and boldly lay on shield and spear and go forth against the Most High? No. What did Meroz do? Nothing! And is it cursed? Yes, cursed bitterly, with the inhabitants thereof, “Because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” Preach that sermon to yourselves when you get home. Draw it out at length and perhaps while you are sitting down you will say, “Meroz! Why, that is I! I don’t fight against God, I am no enemy to Christ, I do not persecute His people—in fact, I even love His ministers—I love to go up and hear the Word preached. I would not be happy if I spent my Sunday anywhere but in God’s house, but still, that must mean me, for I do not go up ‘to the help of the Lord against the mighty.’ I do *nothing*. I am an idle do-nothing. I am a fruitless tree.” Ah, then remember you are cursed, and cursed bitterly, too! Not for what you do, but for what you *don’t do*. So here it is—one of the sad curses of the ungodly—that they bring forth no fruit in their season. Why, look at many of you! What is the good of you in this world? With regard to your families, you are their mainstay and prop. God bless you in your work and may you train up your children well. But as to the church, what good are you? You occupy a seat—you have had it these many years. How do you know but that you have been occupying a seat which might have been the place where some other sinner would have been converted had he been there? It is true, you sit and hear the sermon. Yes, but what of that, if that sermon shall add to your condemnation? It is true that you make one among many, but what if you should be a black sheep in the midst of the flock? What are you doing for Christ? Of what value are you? Have you added one stone to His spiritual temple? Have you done as much as the poor woman who broke the alabaster box upon His head? You have done nothing for Him! He has nourished you and brought you up and you have done nothing for Him. “The ox knows his owner and the ass his master’s crib,” but you do not know, you do not consider! Behold, the Lord has a controversy with you this day—not for what you have done, but for what you have not done! He has sent you the ministry. You are invited every Sabbath. With tears running down my cheeks have I warned you and invited you. You are hearing the Word continually; you are enjoying privileges. God is feeding you in His providence, clothing you in His compassion, and you are doing nothing for Him! You are a cumberer of the ground, bringing forth no fruit at all. O my dear hearer, I beseech you lay this to heart, for this is a curse as well as a sign to you! It is not only a bad trait in your character, but it is a curse from God! You are ungodly, and therefore fruitless. You love Him not, therefore you are useless. You trust not in Christ, and therefore you are not like the tree which “brings forth his fruit in his season.”

Continue with the description—his leaf also shall not wither—“Not so the ungodly, not so.” The ungodly man’s leaf *shall* wither. I see before me this day many proofs that God’s promise is verified to His people. Look round and behold what a large number of gray-headed men assemble every Lord’s Day to hear the Word. There are many of them who loved Christ in their youth. Then they had “a joy unspeakable and full of glory” in making a profession of His dear name. And now they have come into what men call the dried and yellow leaf of life, but they do not find it so, for they still bring forth fruit in old age! They are still fat and flourishing to show that the Lord is upright! Their leaf has not withered; they are just as active in the cause of Christ as ever they were and perhaps 10 times more happy. Instead of bringing forth no fruit, they bring forth richer and more luscious clusters than they ever did before. Walking in the midst of the younger ones, they shine as lights in the midst of the world. Or to return to the simile, they are like trees whose branches hang down by reason of the abundance of their fruit, even as their heads bow down by reason of the abundance of their years. What a mercy it is, dear brothers and sisters, to have Christ for your portion in youth and such a Christ, too, as will last us all our life long! To

see good old Rowland Hill preaching when he was tottering on the borders of the grave, and talking of the faithfulness of Christ—what a glorious sight! There was a proof! That leaf did not wither—was there ever a tree like this that would maintain its greenness 80 years and yet not wither? Was there ever a religion like this that would make the old men youthful and make their tottering feet leap for joy? And yet this is the religion of Christ! Our leaf withers not, but oh, “Not so the ungodly, not so.” Your leaf shall wither; at least when they who look out of the windows are darkened, when the grinders fail because they are few, when your days of old age shall come upon you and the grasshopper shall be a burden, if not before, shall your leaf wither! And how many there are whose leaves do wither! There comes a blight from God, and the tree which looked once green becomes brown and dead, and at last it blackens and has to be removed. We have seen such in our lives. Men who seemed to be getting on in this world, rich and happy and respected by almost everybody—but they had no solid background, they had no rock to stand on—no God to trust. I have seen them spreading themselves like a green bay tree and I have often envied them as the Psalmist did, but “I looked and lo, they were not.” I passed by and lo, there was not so much as a stump of them left—God had cursed their habitation! As a dream when one awakes, their image had been despised; as the wax before the fire, they had melted away—like the fat of rams had they been consumed. Into smoke did they consume away. “Not so the ungodly, not so,” says the text and surely experience proves it—the ungodly man’s leaf must and shall wither!

And then it is added concerning the *righteous man*, “Whatever he does, shall prosper.” Godly men, it is true have many tribulations, but I am not sure that they have more than the wicked. I think that when a man is converted he will find it to be true that religion’s “ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace,” and he has a better hope of even worldly prosperity when he becomes a Christian, than the ungodly man has. Christian habits are the best business habits, if men would but believe it. When a man mixes his religion with his business and allows every act of his life to be guided by it, he stands the best chance in this world, if I may be allowed such a secular expression, for, “Honesty is the best policy” after all, and Christianity is the best honesty! The sharp cutting competition of the times may be called honesty—it is only called so down here, it is not called so up there, for there is a good deal of cheating in it. Honesty in the highest sense—Christian honesty—will be found, after all, to be the best policy in everything and there will ordinarily be a prosperity, even worldly prosperity, attending a good man in the patient industrious pursuit of his calling. But if he does not have that success he craves, still there is one thing he knows—he *would* have it if it were best for him. I often know Christian men talk in this fashion, “Well, I do but very little business,” says one, “but I have enough coming in to live upon comfortably and happy. I never cared much for push and competition. I never felt that I was fit for it, and I sometimes thank God that I never thrust myself out into the rough stream, but that I was content to keep along shore.” And I have marked this one thing—and, as a matter of fact, I know it cannot be disproved—that many such humble-minded men are the very best of Christians. They live the happiest lives, and whatever they do prospers, for they get what they expected though they did not expect much, and they get what they need though their needs are not very large. They are not going in for anything very great, and therefore they do not come out plucked and empty handed, but they just hold on their way, always looking to providence for their supplies, and they have all they require. And whatever they do prospers.

The man that has no God; has no prosperity. Is he fat? He fattens for the slaughter! Is he in adversity? Behold the first drops of the fated storm have begun to fall on him! To the ungodly man there is nothing good in this life. The sweet that he tastes is the sweetness of poison. That which looks fair is but as paint upon the harlot’s face—beneath there are loathsomeness and disease. There may be a greenness and a vegetation upon the mound, but within there lies the rotting carcass, the loathsomeness of corruption! Whatever the believer does, it shall prosper. “Not so the ungodly, not so.” Surely this first part of my text is quite bad enough—to have the gate of blessedness shut against you; to have the promises denied you; to be without the blessing which is given to the godly—this punishment of the lost surely were enough to make us start in dismay!

II. Now very briefly upon the second point. Listen for a while to THE TERRIBLE COMPARISON. “The ungodly are like the chaff.” They are not like the wild tree, for that has life and they are dead in

sin. They are not compared, here, even to the dead tree plucked up by the roots, for that may be of some service—floating down the stream, the hands of poverty may recall it from the water and kindle its fire and relieve its cold. They are not even like the heath in the desert, for it has some uses and tends to cheer the arid waste. They are like nothing that has life, nothing that is of any value. They are here said to be like chaff which the wind drives away! Now you will at once see how terrible is this figure, if you look at it a moment. They are like chaff. Chaff envelopes good wheat, but when the wheat is cut down and carried into the barn, the grain, alone, is useful. The grain alone is looked at and that chaff which has grown side by side with the good living wheat is now become utterly useless and is to be separated and driven away. And the wicked are compared to chaff—think for a moment, of two or three reasons. First, because they have no sap, and no fruit. Chaff has no sap of life in itself. It is of no use, of no service. Men do but desire to get rid of it. They take the fan into their hands that they may thoroughly purge their floor. They cast up the wheat before the wind with the winnowing shovel, that the breath of the air may blow away the chaff and leave the wheat pure. All that they care for the chaff is that they may get rid of it—that it may be blown away to waste—for it is sapless and fruitless! Then again, you notice that it is light and unstable. The wind sweeps through the wheat, the wheat remains unmoved, the chaff flies away. When cast up in the shovel, the wheat soon finds its place and returns to the spot from which it has been lifted up. But the chaff is light, it has no stability. Every eddying wind, every breath moves it and carries it away. So are the ungodly. They have nothing stable. They are light; they are but as the froth upon the water. They are but as a bubble on the breaker—seen today and gone—here and there and then carried away forever!

Again—the wicked are compared to chaff because it is base and worthless. Who will buy it? Who cares for it? In the East, at least, it is no good; no use whatever can be made of it. They are content to burn it up and get rid of it and the sooner they are rid of it, the better pleased are they. So is it with the wicked. They are good for nothing, useless in this world, useless in the world to come. They are the dross, the waste of all creation! The man who is ungodly, however much he may value himself, is as nothing in the estimation of God. Put a gold chain around his neck, put a star upon his chest, put a crown upon his head and what is he but a crowned heap of dust? He is useless, perhaps worse than useless—base in God's sight—He tramples them beneath His feet. The potter's vessel has some service and even the broken potsherd might be used; some Job might scrape himself with it. But what shall be done with the chaff? It is of no use anywhere and no one cares for it. See, then, your value, my hearers, if you fear not God! Cast up your accounts and look at yourselves in the right light. You think, perhaps, that you are good for much, but God says you are good for nothing! You are "like the chaff which the wind drives away." I linger no more upon this comparison, but choose, rather to dwell upon the third head, which is—

III. THE AWFUL PROPHECY contained in the verse—"They are like the chaff which the wind drives away." How near the chaff is to the grain! It is, in fact, its envelope. They grow together. My hearers, I wish to speak now very pointedly and personally. How nearly related are the ungodly to the righteous? One of you, it may be, now present, an ungodly man, is the father of a godly child. You have been to that child what the chaff is to the wheat! You have nourished the child—cherished it in your bosom—you have been wrapped about it like the chaff about the grain. Is it not an awful thing for you to think that you should have been in such close relationship to a child of God, but that in the great day of division you must be separated from it? The chaff cannot be taken into heaven with the wheat! I point to another. You are the son of a godly mother. You have grown up at her knee. She taught you, when you were but a little one, to say your little prayer and to sing the little hymn—

"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon a little child."

That mother looked upon you as her joy and her comfort. She is gone now. But you were once to her what the chaff is to the wheat. You grew, as it were, upon the same stock; you were of the same family and her heart was wholly wrapped up in you. You were her joy and her comfort here below. Does it not cause you one pang of regret that, dying as you are, you must everlastingly be separated from her? Where she is you can never go! Perhaps, too, I have here a mother who has lost several infants. She has been to those infants what the chaff is to the wheat—wrapped up in her bosom for a little while she fon-

dled them. And they, God's good wheat, have been gathered into the garner and there they are now in Jesus' arms. There are their little spirits rejoicing before the throne of the Most High! The mother who is left thinks not of it, but she is the mother of angels and, perhaps, herself a child of hell. Ah, mother! What do you think of this? Is this separation from your child eternal? Will you be content to be found at God's great winnowing-day, the chaff—and will you be driven from your children? Shall you see them in heaven—they in heaven and yourselves then cast out forever? Can you bear the thought? Has your heart become brutish? Is your soul harder than a nether millstone? Surely, if it is not, the thought of your present intimate connection with God's people and of your sure separation will make you tremble!

And oh, my hearers, here are some of you sitting side by side with the godly! You sing as they sing, you hear as they hear. Perhaps you assist the outward needs of the church. You are to the church just what the chaff is to the wheat. You are the outward husk, the congregation which surrounds the inner living nucleus of the church. And must it be—must you be separated from us? Are you content to go from the songs of the saints to the shrieks of the doomed? Will you go from the great convocation of the righteous to the last general assembly of the destroyed and cursed in hell? The thought checks my voice! I must speak slowly on this matter for a while. Well, dear brothers and sisters, well I know that this thought used to be dreadful to me. My mother said to me once, after she had long prayed for me, and had come to the conviction that I was hopeless, "Ah," she said, "my son, if at the last great day you are condemned, remember your mother will say, 'Amen' to your condemnation." That stung me to the quick. Must the mother that brought me forth and who loved me, say, "Amen," to my being condemned at last? Yet such things must be! Does not the wheat say, "Amen," to the chaff being blown away? Is it not, in fact, the very prayer of the wheat that it may be separated from the chaff? And surely when that prayer is heard and answered, the wheat must say, "Amen," to the chaff being blown away into unquenchable fire! Think, my dear hearers, think again! And must it be—must I bid farewell to her I love, who served the Lord in spirit? Must I see her body committed to the grave and as I stand there must I bid her a last, a final farewell? Must I be forever separated from her, because I fear not God, neither regard Him; and therefore cannot have a portion among the Lord's chosen ones? What? Have you lost your relatives forever? Are your pious fathers and mothers buried in a "sure and certain hope" to which you are strangers? Will you never sing the song of rejoicing with them in heaven? Is there never to be another salutation? Is death a gulf that cannot be bridged to you? Oh, I hope it is the joy of some of us to know we shall meet many of our kindred above and as we have lost one after another, this has been our sweet consolation—they are gone, but we shall soon follow them! They are not lost but gone before us. They are buried as to their flesh, but their souls are in Paradise and we shall be there, also! And, when we have seen our Savior's face and have rejoiced in that glorious vision, then shall we see them, also, and have deeper and purer fellowship with them than we ever had before in all the days of our lives. Well, here is a sad prophecy! The wicked are "like the chaff which the wind drives away."

But you will remark that the awful character of my text does not appear upon the surface. They "are like the chaff which the wind drives away." Where—where—where? Where are they driven? The man is in health. The sun shines, the sky is calm, and the world is still about him. Suddenly there is seen a little cloud the size of a man's hand. A little signal overtakes him. The hurricane begins to rise but first it is but a faint breath. The wicked man feels the cold air blowing on him, but he screens it with the physician and he thinks that surely he shall live. The storm is on. God has decreed it and man cannot stop it. The breath becomes a gale, the gale a wind, the wind a storm, the storm a howling hurricane. His soul is swept away! To go to heaven on angels' wings is a glorious thing. But to be swept out of this world with the wicked is an awful thing—to be carried, not on wings of cherubs—but on the eagle wings of the wind! To be borne, not by yon songsters up to their celestial seats, but to be carried away in the midst of a howling tempest by grim fiends! The wicked are like the chaff which the wind drives away. Do you not catch the thought? I do not know how to bring out the fullness of its poetry—the great storm sweeping man from the place on which he stands. He is driven away. And now cannot your thoughts go further on while I again repeat the question, where is he driven? Ah, where is he driven? I see him driven from the solid shore of life. He is carried away. But—

"In vain my fancy strives to paint the moment after death."

I cannot tell you into what state that soul at once enters, that is to say, I cannot tell you by any guess of my own—that were frivolous and were to play with a solemn matter. But I can tell you one thing, Jesus Christ Himself has said it—“He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” You die, but you die not! You depart, but you depart to fire that never shall be quenched! I will not dwell upon the topic. I return again to ask the question—“Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” Who here is prepared to make his bed in hell? Who shall lie down and rest forever in that Lake of Fire? You will, my hearers, if you are ungodly, unless you repent! Are there any of you here who have been living without Christ and without hope in the world? Are there any of you? Surely there are some such. I beseech you, think of your destiny—death—and after death *the judgment*. The wind and after the wind the whirlwind and after the whirlwind the fire and after the fire, more fire—forever, forever—forever lost, cast away, where ray of hope can never come! Where the eyes of mercy can never look upon you and the hands of grace can never reach you! I beseech you, oh, I beseech you by the living God, before whom you stand this day, tremble and repent! “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.” “Tophet is ordained of old, yes, for the king it is prepared. He has made it deep and large. The pile thereof is fire and much wood. The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, does kindle it.” “Turn you, turn you, why will you die O house of Israel?” “Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts—and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.”

Oh, I pray God the Holy Spirit to touch some ungodly hearts now and make you think! And remember my dear hearers, if there is in your bosoms this morning one desire towards Christ, cherish it, blow the little spark till it comes to a flame! If your heart melts ever so little, this morning, I beseech you, resist not, and quench not the heavenly influence. Yield up yourselves and remember the sweet text of last Sunday morning—[See Sermon #280, Volume 5—COME AND WELCOME— read/download all 63 volumes of CHS sermons free of charge at www.spurgeongems.org] “Whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.” I thunder at you, but it is to bring you to Christ! Oh that you would but come to Him! Oh poor hearts, I wish that you did but feel! Oh, that you knew how to weep for yourselves as I could weep for you now! Oh, that you knew what a fearful thing it will be to be cast away forever into hell! Why will you die? Is there anything pleasing in destruction? Is sin so luscious to you that you will burn in hell forever for it? What? Is Christ so hard a Master that you will not love Him? Is His cross so ugly that you will not look towards it? Oh, I beseech you by Him whose heart is love, the crucified Redeemer, who now speaks through me this morning and in me weeps over you! I beseech you look to Him and be saved, for He came into the world to seek and to save those who are lost and he who comes to Him, He will in nowise cast out, for, “He is able also to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by Him.”

Today, O Spirit, bring sinners to Yourself! I exhort you, sinners, lay hold on Christ! Touch the hem of His garment now! Behold, He hangs before you on the cross! As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so is Jesus lifted up! Look, I beseech you; look and live! Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved! As though God did beseech you by me, I pray in Christ’s place, be reconciled to God! And O, may the Spirit make my appeal effectual! May angels rejoice this day over sinners saved and brought to know the Lord! Amen.

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