

REMOVAL
NO. 2811

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, DECEMBER 28, 1902
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, MARCH 24, 1861

At the last service before removing to the Metropolitan Tabernacle

“If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.”
Exodus 33:15

THIS is a prayer which has been used hundreds of times, and which is found quite in place on many different occasions. Moses was in the wilderness when he uttered it, he was about to lead the people into Canaan, the land that flowed with milk and honey, yet he felt that he would rather continue to endure the inconveniences of the tent and of the wilderness, with the presence of his God, than enjoy the rest and the fatness of the land of promise without Him. God had made the desert to become to Moses like a garden, he felt that all the gardens of Canaan and the vineyards of Eschol would be as nothing to him if God should withdraw His presence.

Throughout the history of the church of Christ, there have been particular places where men of God have been compelled to fall on their knees, and pray this prayer of Moses. I can conceive of our Puritan forefathers, when they first left this spot, Southwark, to seek in another land the liberty which they could not find here, bowing their knees before they entered their little vessel, “The Mayflower,” and crying to God, “If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”

I can imagine John Bunyan—after he had been twelve years in prison, and had become almost habituated to it, ere he crossed the threshold, when the time of his imprisonment was over—looking upon the cold, damp walls of the prison on Bedford Bridge, and saying to his Lord, “If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.” The immortal dreamer would rather abide in his “den” with his God than go forth into the world, and leave his Master behind him.

Many a time, dear friends, in your experience and mine, have we also had to feel the force of such a prayer as this. When, rather more than seven years ago, I left my kind and loving little flock at Waterbeach to come and preside over this great assembly, I could not help crying out to God, from my inmost soul, “If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.”

When you, beloved, have to pass through any changes in life, when in God’s good providence, you are removed from one sphere of service to another, I think that you also may look up to God in prayer and say, “If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.” And at last, when you and I shall be about to die, when the hour shall approach for us to leave this world behind us, and to wade through the cold stream of death, what prayer can be more appropriate than this, “If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence”?

To go anywhere without our God is terrible, but to die without the presence of God, would be awful beyond expression. To go down into death’s dark river with no kind helper, with no loving voice saying to us, “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; my rod and my staff shall comfort thee,” would be sad indeed. It must be indeed a solemn thing to meet death alone, to have no presence of God to cheer us in the last dread conflict.

I have thus mentioned various circumstances in which we might pray this prayer, and expect a gracious answer to it, but I think, as a church and people, such a text as this is peculiarly appropriate at this time. We are about to leave this place, which has to many of us, very hallowed associations. When

some of our older friends left Carter Lane Chapel, which once stood on the site now occupied by the London Bridge railway, I have no doubt that they felt it to be a very dreadful thing to leave the old place, yet perhaps, it was one of the best things that could have occurred to the church, that they were obliged to come out, and build a larger structure—although it is built, I suppose, in as bad a place as they could have found by a microscopic survey of this entire metropolis. There are, doubtless, many who will always cherish great love for this place because here Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth before their eyes, crucified among them.

I think all of these will join with us, who are younger, and therefore less subject to pain concerning changes, and we will all unite—despite all the advantages which we hope will follow our entering upon a larger and more public place of worship—despite the fact that three or four times as many will be able there to listen to the Word of God as can listen to it here—despite all this, we will unite in saying to our Lord, “‘If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.’ Here let us abide unless You, who are the true Shekinah, will go with us, and still shine forth from between the cherubim.”

I feel inclined to stop my sermon, and to bow my head, and ask you to bow yours, that we may together present this petition to our God, but as you have already prayed by the mouth of two or three brethren, I spread it before you, and “stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance,” and urge you to plead it in secret, and at your family altars, before your God, “‘If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.’”

I will arrange my subject under three heads. First, *what the presence of God always involves*, secondly, *what our present removal involves*, and thirdly, *the sins by which God’s presence may be driven away, and the means by which that presence may still be secured to us*.

I. First, then, let us think WHAT THE PRESENCE OF GOD ALWAYS INVOLVES.

The one great need in the church of Christ is the presence of God. What is wanted in our places of worship is not that they should be specimens of the highest style of architecture, although certainly, God’s house ought not to be meaner than our own. It is not necessary that they should be sumptuously adorned, although the greatest riches are not too much to be devoted to the service of God. It is not essential that rich people should be in the congregation, although there is a promise which says, “The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift; even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor.” It is not absolutely needful that the minister should be eloquent or talented, although it is well that if a man has ten talents, he should consecrate them all to Christ, since talent never glitters so much as when it is consecrated and given up to God.

There are many things that the churches may need, or may not need, but certainly, the one thing they need beyond everything else is the presence of God. It was better for the church of Christ in England when her members met together by tens and twenties in the woods, and were hunted about by informers, and their ministers hauled off to prison, it was better for them to be persecuted, and even put to death, in the conscious enjoyment of the Lord’s presence, than it would have been for them to have had such soft, palmy, gentle days as these, but not to have had their Lord with them.

It was better for the church of Christ in Scotland when Cargill read his text by the lightning’s flash, and when the Covenanter’s worshipped God, in dens and caves at midnight, through fear of Claverhouse’s dragoons—it was better for them to have their Lord with them in the midst of the snow and the tempest than to meet, calmly and peacefully, in a fine ceiled house from which the Lord Himself was absent.

It would be far better for us to go back to the age of old barns, and dingy thatched buildings, and to the times of an uneducated ministry, when God’s power was manifestly with His servants, rather than to go forward, and to become great, and mighty, and intellectual, but to lack the presence, and power, and blessing of the most High God. It is the presence of God that makes the house glorious. Where He is, there is glory, and where He is not, “Ichabod” is written on the wall, even though that wall should be covered with pure gold.

Why is God's presence the one thing needful for His church? *Is it not God's presence that makes joy in His sanctuary?* When are we most glad? Is it not when we consciously realize the presence of our God? That puts more joy into our hearts than when our corn, and wine, and oil are increased. What is it that comforts the mourners in Zion? Is it not a sight of Jesus' face, and a vision of His glory? What handkerchief can wipe the weeping eye like that which is held in the hand of a covenant keeping God? Where is the balm for our wounds, and the cordial for our fears, but in Him? "As the hart pants after the water brooks," so does our spirit cry out for God, even the living God; and unless we have His presence, our soul refuses to be comforted.

Further, *what is it, but the presence of God that makes His people holy?* Is it not, because they see the face of Christ, that they are transformed into His likeness? It is not mere teaching that can make a man Christlike, it is beholding Christ—Christ shining upon that man's face, and the man reflecting the light which he has thus received. The presence of God is absolutely essential for the edification, instruction, growth, and perfecting of believers.

If we have not this, the means of grace are empty, and vain, and void—clouds without rain, that mock the thirsty land—wells without water, that tantalize the perishing caravan, but yield no moisture to burning lips—a mere mirage in the desert, looking like pools of water, and fruit bearing palm trees, but only mocking the wayfarer's gaze. We must have the presence of God for His people's sake, for without Him they can do nothing.

And my brethren, *where is the power of our ministry with sinners unless we have the presence of God?* We sow the seed, I grant you, but who prepares the soil, and makes the furrows soft with showers? Who is it sends the genial sunshine? Would not the seed rot under the clods unless the heavenly Husbandman watched over it, and took care of it? There was never yet one sinner who was converted by man. It is not in man's power to create, nor is it in his power to new-create. Let a man first attempt to make a fly, and if he succeeds in doing that, then let him try to make a new heart and a right spirit.

Go, you who think you can do anything to change human nature, and change the Ethiopian's blackness into snowy whiteness, or remove the spots from the leopard's skin—go, check Niagara in its dashing might, and make the stream leap upward, and return to its source—go, bit the tempest, and bind the clouds, and bid the winds only howl to music, and the waves dance in chorus—but when you have done all this, even then you may not hope to make a new heart and a right spirit by any ministry apart from the Spirit of God.

Ah, my friends! we have had the presence of God here full often, as many of you can testify. If this were the time and place to do so, there are hundreds of you who could stand up and say, "Here Christ met with me, standing on yon spot where the crowd is now"—here, or there, or in the schoolroom—ay, and behind the pillar too!

There have been many of you who have heard the Word to purpose in this place. Drunkards have strayed in here, and some arrow, from the bow drawn at a venture, has reached their heart. The harlot has come into these aisles, on the way to the bridge to destroy herself, and Christ has met with her, and she now lives to praise His name. Here the thief, the burglar, the passer of bad money, and the very worst and vilest of men have stepped in, and Christ has met with them, glory be to His holy name!

No man shall stop me from this glorying as I remember how God has here plucked brands from the burning. All the philosophers in the world have never, by their philosophy, wrought such a work as the Gospel has wrought here, for I can point to hundreds—I might probably with truth say thousands—of those who, having aforesaid scorned God, and scoffed at His name, now love Him with all their heart, and desire to live to His glory, and who would be willing even to die for His honor.

You may tell this in Gath, and publish it in the streets of Askelon, let the mighty men of Philistia tremble, and let fear take hold of the sons of Moab, for God has made bare His arm, and smitten His enemies, and the old Gospel has proved itself worthy of its ancient prowess. God has triumphed gloriously, and put to flight both our sins and our adversaries. But what should we do now without His

presence? It is He who has accomplished all that has been done, so again we cry to Him, “If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”

II. Secondly, consider WHAT OUR PRESENT REMOVAL INVOLVES.

We are about to remove to our new Tabernacle, we must remove. It is not even humane to continue to worship here. On the lowest ground of common humanity, it is not right that such a multitude of people should be crowded into so small a structure. With every attempt that we have made to get proper ventilation, it is not possible, in such a building as this, overcrowded as it is, that persons should be able to breathe in a healthy way. I feel it as the minister, and I am quite certain that you must feel it as the congregation.

If I ever by chance see anybody asleep—and that has occurred, I think, only twice in the last seven years—it is no matter of astonishment to me, the wonder is, that you do not all go to sleep under the influence of such insalubrious air as is often bred here by the multitudes.

But on far higher grounds, we must go hence. Here, every Sabbath night, there are crowds in the streets. Let the faintest gleam of sunshine come out, and there are many more obliged to go away than are able to enter this building. It is a pleasing thing that so many are willing to listen to the same minister for seven years right on. The glory must be given to God, the responsibility is with us. If people will come to hear, the least thing that the church of God can do is to find accommodation for them. The time was when many of us would almost have plucked out our right eye to get them to come. When they are anxious to come, it is but a small thing that we should provide a suitable structure where they may be housed.

The theater services are, no doubt, a great blessing. To my mind, however, they lack one great essential for permanent success, not being connected with any distinct place of worship, whatever good may be done is scarcely heard of, great efforts are put forth with small apparent results. In the theater, the seed is sown, but there is no barn provided in which the harvest can be housed. If some two or three men could be found constantly to preach, and if endeavors could be made to induce the people to advance from what is, after all, an irregular form of worship, to some place which should be their own spiritual home, where they could worship God constantly, more permanent good to the church of Christ at large would certainly result. We pray God to speed every effort for the proclamation of the Gospel, but we are most glad when there seems the greatest prospect of permanent success.

We must move then, to our new Tabernacle, but still the prayer recurs, “If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.” *We are going to a place concerning which we entertain great expectations.* We hope there to see vast multitudes attentively listening to the Word. We trust that many of these will be converted, that the church will be largely increased, and that out of the church there will spring up young men who will be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, men who will preach the truth, as it is in Jesus, throughout this land, and some of them, we hope, in far distant countries.

But if God’s presence go not with us, our expectations [All who are familiar with the story of Mr. Spurgeon’s ministry in the Tabernacle know how fully these expectations were realized. His own account is given in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle, its History and Work*, and in *C. H. Spurgeon’s Autobiography*] will be vain, we shall have flattered ourselves with a pleasing picture which shall never be completed, we shall have raised a cup to our lips, the sweet draught of which we shall never drink if God’s presence go not with us.

Next, *we are going to a place of great opportunities.* What opportunities you will all have for doing good—myself especially, though I certainly do not lack for opportunities, I have ever before me a wide and open door. Oh, that I had the strength to do more, and that there were more time in which I could work! Still, when some five or six thousand people are constantly being addressed, it is no small opportunity for usefulness. Who can tell how many holy thoughts may be inspired, how many wrong desires quenched, how many evil motives exposed, how many right designs prompted in human hearts?

O Lord, You have indeed, given to Your servant high opportunities, but what are these if Thy presence go not with us? They are opportunities that will be wasted, they are chances of attack upon the enemy that must certainly end in our own defeat if the presence of God is not with us.

It is the same with each of you in your measure, Sabbath school teachers, I hope there will open up before you a far wider sphere. Ragged-school teachers, and you who distribute tracts, you who preach in the streets, and all of you who feel any desire to do good to your fellow creatures, all of you, I think, will have presented before you a golden opportunity, the like of which seldom occurs.

Pray, I beseech you—by all that is good and holy, I implore you to pray to God that His presence may go with you, for if not, these opportunities will all be thrown away. It would have been as well for you to have been obscure Christians in some remote hamlet of the Orkneys or Shetlands, where you could not reach a congregation without peril of your lives, as to be members of this largest of Dissenting churches, and yet not to have the presence of God with you.

There is a more solemn thought still. *Our great house will involve greater responsibilities.* Many persons kindly suggest to me the solemnity of my position. I know I do not feel it as I might, but I do realize it as fully as I dare. I sometimes feel, in preaching to such multitudes, as a man must feel who walked along a tightrope, and was always in danger of falling, and I shall fail if I look down.

But if I look up, I can walk there even though hell itself is foaming at my feet. There is no need of fear to the man who relies upon his God, but there is every reason for fear to the man who begins to rely upon himself. The Prophet Habakkuk says, “The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds’ feet, and he will make me to walk upon my high places.”

So may it be with us, but what an awful responsibility it is! You know how the Lord said to the prophet Ezekiel, “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hand.”

I think I have chewed and masticated that text many times. My deacons know well enough how, when I first preached in Exeter Hall, there was scarcely ever an occasion, in which they left me alone for ten minutes before the service, but they would find me in a most fearful state of sickness produced by that tremendous thought of my solemn responsibility, and even now, if I ever sit down, and begin to turn that thought over, and forget that Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, I am always affected in the same way. I scarcely dare to look that thought in the face, and I am compelled to put my responsibilities where I put my sins, on the back of the Lord Jesus Christ, hoping, trusting, believing, knowing, that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that last great day.

You also have your responsibilities, you must be a holy people. “A city set on a hill cannot be hid.” I never care what is said of me, except one thing. When I hear that any member of this church has been betrayed into an unholy deed, that cuts me to the very quick. I had sooner that you should diminish by death one half, than that there should be even one in a hundred who should fall into sin. It is sorrow enough to bury our friends, but it is a greater sorrow still to have to excommunicate them from fellowship or to censure them for misdeeds.

You must be a holy people, nor less must you be an active people. If God has done so much for you, and you begin to sleep upon your oars, or to sit still and say, “We have done enough, now we will be quiet,” the curse of God will fall upon you. As surely as you are men or women, He has not brought you to this post of duty that you may cease your efforts or stand still. He does put you into the middle of the battle that you may fight with sterner vigor, that you may deal your blows with both your hands, to win the battle for your Lord and Master. There are responsibilities, that lie upon you as a church, that will crush you utterly unless this prayer is answered for you, “If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence.”

III. Thirdly, we are to consider THE SINS BY WHICH GOD’S PRESENCE MAY BE DRIVEN AWAY, AND THE MEANS BY WHICH THAT PRESENCE MAY BE RETAINED.

We can easily get rid of God’s presence *if we grow proud.* Stand inside your new house and say, “This great Babylon that I have builded!” and it will be a Babylon to you at once. Begin to say, “We are a great people, we can do anything that we wish, we have but to attempt, and we can accomplish,” offer

incense to your own acts, bow down and worship your own sword as though it had gotten you the victory, and the Lord shall say, and the ears of Christians shall hear it as distinctly as the Jews at the siege of Jerusalem, heard the rustling of wings, and a voice saying, "Arise, let us go hence." A proud heart is never God's palace, and a proud church will never be honored by the Lord.

Further, you can easily drive away the Holy Spirit *by sloth*. Be as lazy as some churches are, or do as little as they do, be as little consecrated, as sleepy, as dull, as cold, as lukewarm, as too many professing Christians are, and you shall soon find that the Lord has withdrawn Himself from you. It is fire in the church that is constantly needed, divine energy to quicken the whole man into an intense activity for his Lord and Master's cause. If you, as a church, fall into sloth, you will hear Him say, "This is not my rest. If it be the place of your sleep, you have polluted it, and I will depart from you."

Disunion, too, among yourselves will soon cause the Holy Spirit to remove from you. It has been my constant joy to see union in the church. We are men, and therefore we do not always see eye to eye with one another. But I trust that we are also Christian men, and therefore that we are always willing to bear with one another's infirmities. I daresay that you have a good deal to put up with from me, I know that I have sometimes, a good deal to put up with from some of you.

Sometimes there is one person, and at other times there is another person, who would give offense, and it has been one part of my work since I have been pastor, whenever the ship has sprung a leak, not to say much about it, but to pick the oakum myself, and to go down and drive it in, and so stop the water from coming in at that place.

There are some of you who have often done similar work. This ship would have been scuttled long ago if it had not been for some loving spirits who would not let other people disagree. If any of you have disagreed, I hope you will settle your disagreements at once. If there are any dissensions, I hope you will leave them all behind at Park Street. If any of you are not perfectly at one with each other, we cannot expect God's presence to go with us until these things are once for all forgiven and forgotten.

Let us feel as perfectly one as though we were all perfect men and women, and may God grant us evermore such a spirit of mutual forbearance! May He give to us that charity which hopes all things, believes all things, and endures all things, for then we shall have the Master's presence, but without this, the Holy Spirit, who is the Dove, will never stay with us.

Furthermore, if we wish to have God's presence taken from us, there is another quick way of securing that end, that is *by getting slack and slow in prayer*. The prayer meeting is the gauge of the church's spiritual condition. You may always test our prosperity by the multitudes that assemble to pray. Ay, and if we could enter your families, and hear how you pray there—and if my ear could be close to your closet door, that I might hear how you pray for the church in private—then I would know how the church will succeed. Grow lax and careless here, do but cease to entreat the Lord for a blessing, and then He will say, "I will not bless this people; I will not give unto them, for they do not cry unto me; my door of mercy shall not be opened to them, for they refuse to knock." O beloved, let us be instant and earnest in prayer!

And let us have more faith. I wish I could leave all my unbelief behind me, and I wish you could all do the same, it would be a blessed legacy, I am sure, to this chapel, and the next person who comes to preach here would, I trust, sweep it all out. Oh, that we could get rid of our wicked distrust of our God, and our suspicion of His faithfulness, our doubts as to His veracity, our troubles and our fears about the future! O Lord, help us to stay ourselves on Thee! May we now, as a church and people, expect great things, attempt great things, do great things, and believe great things, then shall we see greater things than we have ever yet beheld. Give us more faith, Lord, and drive away our unbelief!

But how can we keep the Spirit of God with us now that we are about to go to our new Tabernacle? We can do it by His aid, by cultivating those graces which are just the reverse of the evils I have mentioned. First, *we must be humble*. Walk humbly with your God, walk humbly towards one another, be patient towards all men. Brethren, we must be willing to be nothing, we shall never be anything till

we are willing to be nothing. If any man will be perfectly content to be nobody, he shall be somebody, but he who must be somebody shall be nobody.

I have always noticed, in a somewhat wide observation of personal character, that the most assuming and pretentious are the least respected, but the most humble, and disinterested, and self-denying, and even self-detracting, are those whom men delight to honor. Crown yourself, and every fool will try to knock the crown off your head, go crownless, and there will be some who will be wise enough to say, "That man deserves a crown, let us put one on his head." For Christ's sake, as a church, let us be humble.

Then, *let us be united*. The apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord." They were two women, and even good women will quarrel sometimes. Perhaps you ask, "What did it matter that they were not of the same mind?" Ah! but they were members of the church at Philippi, and the apostle Paul did not like for even two women to disagree if they were members of the same church. What shall I say of two male members of the church—what shall I say of two aged members of the church—what if I should look around me and say, "There are some who, I fear, are not perfectly at one with each other"?

Nay, I will not say it, I will suppose that there are none in that condition, but if there are, let me now entreat them to be of the same mind in the Lord. What if one of them has an angry temper and the other has a hard disposition? What if one thinks he has a grievance, and the other says that he is the one who ought to complain? What if one of you has spoken ill of another, and he has spoken ill of you in return? Do not attempt to revive those old quarrels, but let them be buried. Come, let me throw the first handful of earth upon them. "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust."

Yet I must gratefully confess that I never knew, or heard, or read of a church more thoroughly and intensely one than this church is, but it may be that we have in our midst, some such as I have been describing, and if so, I pray that if you would have the presence of God to go with us to our new sanctuary, you will see to it that all this evil is done away with once for all.

Next to this, my dear friends, let us go up into our new sanctuary with *a mind to work*. I do not think I ever have to whip you to work, but I do get a great deal of work out of you. I always seek, whenever there is anything extra to be done, to preach Christ to you in such a way that you fall in love with Him over again, and you want to do something more for Him than you have ever done before. You hardly know all that you have already done, and I believe you are just as ready to build another new Tabernacle now as you were when we first began. You would have more faith, I daresay, concerning building a second than you had concerning the first. Let each man who has done nothing for the Master hitherto, now say, "I must begin to do something at once. Though I have been lazy at New Park Street, I must not be lazy in the new Tabernacle."

You know that we are going near "The Elephant and Castle." Well, when we once get there, let every elephant carry his own castle, or in other words, let every man bear his own burden, let every Christian do his own work, whether that service is the offering of prayer and praise, or the hewing of wood and the drawing of water for the house of the Lord.

Then again, let us take care that we carry up to that new place, *fervent hearts full of prayer*. Come, brethren, let us fill our censers afresh ere we start, let us put in the frankincense, and all manner of precious spices, and let us plead for the sacred fire to descend, and then let us stand, as long as that house stands, or we live, waving those censers between the living and the dead, praising the Lord for His mercies, and praying to Him for yet further favors. I do not know how to plead with you as fervently as I could wish to do, but I trust that I have set my text before you in such a way as to make you cry to the Lord, "If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence."

Finally, let us ask for *greater faith*. When sailing in the little ship, you had the little man's faith. You are about to step on board the larger vessel, so seek to get larger faith in proportion to it. Suppose we all had three times as much faith as we now possess, might we not do three times as much work? Ay, but surely that will not be our limit, will it? No, Lord, give us ten times as much faith. Take away our

unbelief, help us to believe Your Word, and teach us to act as though we believed it. Then shall we see far greater things than we have ever yet seen.

My dear friends, after all, the main objective of our ministry is the winning of souls to God. Have I any here who have listened to me for these seven years, but who are still unconverted? Oh, what if this last hour in this house should be the time of your conversion? Soul, are you willing to die without a hope in Christ? Surely not. You know yourself to be lost, ruined, and undone. I pray you, just as you are, to make a confession of your guilt, and come to Christ's cross. He is just as willing to receive you now as He was when I first addressed you, seven years ago. Though you have refused His invitation all these years, His bowels still yearn with compassion over you. He has spared your life until now, He has not cut down the old cumber ground yet.

Sinner, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. O Spirit of God, change you the sinner's heart! Give him faith, that he may now cast himself on Christ. "Come now"—*now*, this moment—"and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." May each one of us now pray the prayer of the penitent thief upon the cross, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

2 SAMUEL 7:18-29

Verse 18. *Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD,—*

This was not the usual Oriental posture of prayer, but David was mingling meditation with his supplication, so that his attitude was not according to ordinary rules.

18. *And he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD?*

Why, you are David, the valiant man who slew Goliath! No, no, no, the man of God is nobody in his own esteem.

18-19. *And what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?*

No, it is not the manner of man in general, but it is the manner of the Man Christ Jesus.

20-22. *And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.*

There is some sweet doctrine here. The Lord blesses David, not because of David's virtue, or David's merit, or David's prowess, but for His own sake, "For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them." The reason why streams of love flow from God is just this, it is according to His nature. He is a fountain, so the blessing must flow from Him. He is a sun, so He must shine. It is not only because we need His love, but because, "God is love," that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.

Now what is the inference from all this? Does David say, "Wherefore, O Lord, I am great and honorable"? Oh, no! he has nothing to say in praise of himself, he says, "Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

23-25. *And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD,*

art become their God. And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said.

What a blessed prayer this is, “Do as thou hast said”! Get hold of a promise of the Lord, take it to the throne of grace, and then urge this plea, “Do as thou hast said.” It is a good argument to use with every upright man when we remind him of his promise, and asks him to keep his pledged word, and certainly we may use this plea with the thrice holy God, “Do as thou hast said.”

26. *And let thy name be magnified for ever,—*

Or “be greatened”—be made great “for ever.” Notice the way David returns to God the words that were addressed to himself. The Lord said to him, “I have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great that are in the earth;” so David replies, “Let thy name be made great for ever. Thou, JEHOVAH of hosts, art God over Israel; if thou hast made me king, and if my throne shall be established, much more shall thine.”

26-27. *Saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel,—*

Notice how the name of the Lord seems to grow in this chapter until here it comes to its full force, and dignity, and majesty, “Thou, O JEHOVAH of hosts, God of Israel,”—

27. *Hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.*

That is the best place to find a prayer—in your heart, no prayer comes up before God, with acceptance, but that which comes out of the very heart, which should be like the sacred ark of old, wherein were hidden Israel’s most precious things. God’s words had gone right down into David’s heart, and touched the secret springs of it, and now they welled up in this blessed prayer—

28-29. *And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it:*

There is that grand pleading again, “Thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it.” If you can remind God of His own promise, you may have whatsoever you will of Him, if He has said anything, His word shall surely be fulfilled.

29. *And with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.*

END OF VOLUME 48

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.