

THE STORM AND THE SHOWER

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“Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.”
Zechariah 13:7

WE are sure that we understand this passage, for we have our Lord Jesus Christ’s application of it to Himself—“All ye,” said He to His disciples, “shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” It is always well, when we are considering a text in the Old Testament which we think may refer to Christ, if we can be certified that it does so by some declaration of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, or by some testimony from the lips of the Master Himself, as we have in this case.

The passage seems to me to be best illustrated by a description I once heard from one of our Lord’s servants, who pictured a tempest as gathering in the heavens, the darkness deepening, and by and by came the thunder and lightning, and the storm shook the earth. He saw before him a towering mountain, with its peak lifted high up towards heaven, at the foot of it lay a sheltered hamlet. The storm seemed all concentrated around the mountain’s brow, that was the center of the battle of the elements.

That lofty peak seemed to be split and broken to shivers by the dread artillery of God. The hamlet down below was in comparative peace, only some gentle drops of rain fell on it, fertilizing its fields. And he who gave the illustration said, “That peak was the Christ of God, Jesus the Substitute and Surety of His people, standing in our stead, on whom burst the full tempest of JEHOVAH’S wrath, that the soft drops of pity and of grace might fall on the people for whom He suffered.”

Looking at the text in that light, we have, first, *the thunder of the tempest*, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” Then we have *the soft and gentle shower*, “I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.” There is the war-note first, the crack and clang of conflict, and then it is peace, with the music of rest and joy.

I. First, then, LET US WATCH THAT TERRIBLE STORM.

And let us notice first, *the Victim upon whom it fell*. According to the text, the sword was to awake against One who is called by God, “My shepherd,” and who is further described as “the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts.” We gather, therefore, that Jesus, who suffered in our stead, holds the office of a shepherd, a shepherd appointed by God, and sent by Him to take care of the sheep.

It is not my objective, at this time, to speak at length upon this office of the Lord Jesus Christ [Mr. Spurgeon preached many sermons upon Christ’s office as Shepherd, including the following, #995, The Sheep and Their Shepherd, #1877, Our Own Dear Shepherd, #2120, The Security of Believers—Or Sheep who shall Never Perish, and #3006, “The Lord is My Shepherd”], but just to remind you that, as Jacob, when he was shepherd to Laban, was responsible for all the flocks under his care, so has God committed His own chosen flock into the hands of Jesus, “that great shepherd of the sheep,” and He has become responsible for them.

They will pass again under the hand of Him that tells them, and He will say to His Father, “Here am I, and the sheep that thou didst give into my hand. Of all that thou gavest me, I have lost none.” It is Christ’s office to keep His sheep even to the end, and to lead them at last to lie down upon the hilltops of heaven, not one of them having been lost by the way.

Dear friend, let us exult in this relationship between Christ and His people. We are as weak and foolish and as full of wants as sheep can be, but we have a Shepherd who perfectly understands us, who so loves us that He will preserve to the end even the very least among us.

I want to dwell now upon the personal description of Christ that is given by the Lord of hosts Himself, “the man that is my fellow.” We never wish to deny the real manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not always possible to speak of that manhood without making some mistakes, but for my part, I believe the mistake of falling short of a description of full and proper manhood is far more frequent than the mistake of carrying that description too far.

Jesus Christ felt as we feel, suffered as we suffer, and was tempted in all points like as we are. He was a man as to His body, and He was a man as to His soul. He was born as we are, and from infancy grew to boyhood, and “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” He reasoned as we reason, but without the evil bias which the fall has given to our judgment. He lived as we live, only without that tendency to evil which has come to us through our natural depravity. In everything that is included in pure manhood, Christ was one with us.

Sin was not present in the first ideal of manhood, and it was not present in Christ, “in him was no sin.” Do not, I pray you, ever set Jesus Christ up so high as to imagine that His manhood was not like yours, so that He cannot sympathize with you, for then you cannot sympathize with him, and the next thing will be that you cannot love Him, and that you cannot trust Him, and that you cannot come unto Him, and have fellowship with Him.

Believe, beloved, that He was in all points such as you are, with the exception of your sin. He had infirmities such as you have, though they were sinless ones, He felt just such aches and pains as trouble you, and the depressions and downcastings that vex your spirit. Yes, He who stood in our stead was a man. The law demanded that man, who had done dishonor to it, should also vindicate it, and it was so, for the Son of Mary stood in the gap on our behalf. The second Adam, the true representative man, stood there to render unto divine justice full payment of the debt which the first Adam, representing us, had incurred.

But the text is equally clear in the description of Christ’s Godhead, “the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts.” What a wonderful description this is! A man, and yet “My fellow, saith the LORD of hosts.” The word translated “fellow” signifies companion, associate, confidant and equal. I could not express the full meaning of it in fewer words than those.

Christ was God’s Companion, “the Word was with God.” “I was by him, as one brought up with him.” Christ was God’s associate, with whom the Father constantly communed in fullest fellowship. He was God’s confidant, He had seen all things that His Father had done, and therefore He was able to make them known to us. He was also equal with the Father, and we may go even beyond our text, and say that He was one with God, for so He claimed to be when He said, “I and my Father are one.”

I never wonder, when persons once doubt the deity of Christ, if they go to great lengths in slandering His character. I heard, the other day, something said with regard to our Savior’s birth which it is not right for any man to repeat, yet I said, when I heard it, “Yes, and it would be so if He were not really God.” The mystery of His birth does become a matter that we have to speak of with bated breath if He was not the Son of the Highest, and His life itself (I say this with the utmost reverence to His holy name) was a barefaced imposture if He was not the Son of God, for that He certainly claimed to be.

But beloved, we know of a surety that Christ was the Son of the Highest, and “very God of very God,” and such He is to us in His power within our souls. He has done for us what no mere man could ever have done, and we are resting all our hopes for time and for eternity upon One who is able to save us unto the uttermost because He is divine. He is indeed the “fellow” of the Eternal, and I delight to think that He, who stood in our place, and suffered in our stead, though man, was not merely man.

It was the Infinite who became an infant, the God who became man, that He might stand in the sinner’s place, and that so the atonement might have an infinite value which otherwise it could not have had. It was God who bore my sins in His own body on the tree, and the apostle spoke under divine

inspiration when he said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, “Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” The expression must be allowable, or it would not have been used in such a connection, so I also will use it. It was my God who bled for me on Calvary, that I might live with Him forever. Oh, what consolation there is in this truth, that He, who was smitten instead of us, was most truly God as well as most certainly man!

I have thus, then, clearly set before you that wondrous Victim of the terrible storm.

Now think, next, of *the sufferings He endured*. Concerning them, the text says, “Awake, O sword...smite the shepherd.” It was a sword, then, with which He was smitten. Upon Christ there did not so heavily fall the rod of chastisement as the sword of punishment. He was chastised for our sake, for “the chastisement of our peace was upon him,” but more than that, there was the sharp penal sword which demanded life itself. Against our Savior the most fatal weapon was used. He must not merely be sorrowful even unto death, but He must actually die.

Dear Friends, that sword was so keen and piercing that it cut Him to the very soul. I talk of these great truths very simply, for I do not think there is any occasion here for using flowers of speech, but if we were as we ought to be, we should be very deeply affected at the thought that the Son of man most perfect, and the Son of God most glorious, should have the sword of divine vengeance against sin plucked out of its scabbard that it might be used upon Him.

O darling of JEHOVAH, must You bleed? You fairest among ten thousand fair, You who are altogether lovely, must You be dragged down into the dust of death? O face like the noontide sun, must You be eclipsed in darkness? O eyes brighter than the evening star, must You be sealed in the midnight of death, after having first been quenched in floods of tears? It must be so. The sword which is for criminals, the sword which is to avenge high treason, the sword which cannot be quiet so long as there is sin before the throne of God—that sword must leap out of its scabbard, and sheathe itself in the heart of Christ.

*“JEHOVAH bade His sword awake,
O Christ, it woke 'gainst Thee!
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake,
Thy heart its sheath must be.
All for my sake, my peace to make:
Now sleeps that sword for me.”*

And then you will notice that the very wording of the text indicates the sharpness of the suffering, it is, “Awake, O sword,” as if the sword of God had been asleep before, yet I have read of Pharaoh and his hosts destroyed at the Red Sea, and of Amalek cut off from before the Lord, and of Canaanites extirpated from their native land, and of Sennacherib’s vast army slain in a single night. Was not the sword of the Lord awake then? No—it was only, as it were, starting in its sleep.

The sword of divine justice was stirring in its scabbard, but God’s long-suffering was pushing it back, but now He cries to it, “Awake, O sword! End your slumbering now. Human sin has startled you many a time, but I have said to you, ‘Sleep on, my patience must have her perfect work; so wait,’ but now, leap out of your scabbard, O sword, for your Victim is before you! He is come upon whom human sin is concentrated, the Victim whom you are to smite, because upon Him the Lord has laid the iniquity of all His people.”

It seems a dreadful thing to me. I cannot express what I have thought about it, and felt about it, that this sword of God’s vengeance, which, uplifted at any time, would smite us to hell, must be bidden to awake, that is, to arouse itself to more than its usual sharpness, to cut and hew and hack as it did when Christ was exposed to its keen blade. His physical sufferings, His mental griefs, and His spiritual torments, are beyond all description. When God’s infinite justice was wide awake, and in sternest action, you may guess in a measure, but you cannot fully conceive, what our Lord must have endured.

Observe once more, for this adds to the force of the language, that this sword was awakened by the voice of God Himself. I can imagine the cry that arose to God’s sword when the world was corrupt and

full of sin in the days of Noah, and man's sin cried aloud, "Awake, O sword!" I can understand how the groans and tears of the children of Israel when they were in Egypt, in cruel bondage, said, "Awake, O sword!" I can imagine the unutterable abominations of the Canaanites crying, "Awake, O sword!" I think I can even hear your sins and mine saying, "Awake, O sword!" Yet God did not suffer that sword to awake to the fullest extent, even in those dreadful times, and in the case of believers, not at all, for "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

But at last, God spoke, God, the Lord of hosts, spoke and said, "Awake, O sword!" Now the sword must awake, for it is God who calls to it, and when God Himself bids the sword of divine justice smite His Son, He knows, as we cannot, what those blows must have been. "Yet it pleased JEHOVAH to bruise him; he hath put him to grief."

The bruising of the Roman scourge were terrible, but His Father's bruising were far worse. Neither Jew nor Gentile could put Him to grief as the Father did. That was the keenest agony of all which made Him cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" So it was God who awakened the sword, and God who smote the Shepherd with power omnipotent, which, if Christ also had not been omnipotent, would have utterly destroyed Him. I believe that our poet was right when he said that Christ—

***"Bore all incarnate God could bear,
With strength enough, yet none to spare."***

Now notice, thirdly, while I am speaking about the storm, *the startling effect of it upon those who were with the Victim*, "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The disciples were alarmed at the very approach of the Savior's sufferings, they feel asleep even while He was praying in the garden, and they ran away, like cowards, when He was arrested. Some of them crept back by stealth to see Him in the hall of judgment, but one of them denied Him even there, and none of them had the courage to stand by Him in His time of trial. We may blame them, but there is a view of their conduct which may be taken which, though it does not excuse them, may at least show how much we are like them.

I think they were startled at His agony, astonished at His griefs, amazed that such a One as He was could be treated with such scorn and ignominy, and be put to such a shameful death. They believed Him to be the Son of the Highest, and they could not understand how He could be made to suffer so. And when I have seen sin laid on Jesus, I must confess that I have been astonished, and startled, and overwhelmed by His griefs, and I have thought that if I had been with Him in His agony, as His disciples were, I might have been scattered with them.

The sufferings of the man who was the fellow of the Lord of hosts, in place of us poor worms of the earth, were more than we can comprehend. God grant us grace, if startled as we hear about them, to rally again to Him, and each one of us to say, with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God," and then to cling to Him through life and in death, come what may.

II. I will not further describe this great storm, for I want your patient attention for a little while longer while I speak of THE BLESSED SHOWER OF MERCY WHICH FOLLOWED IT, "I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."

Where does this shower of mercy fall? "Upon the little ones." What means that expression? *It is a name of fondness and endearment.* We who are parents love to talk about our little ones, and God, who is the Father of the family of which Christ is the Elder Brother, calls us His little ones to show how He loves us. There is a propensity about love to speak of its object as little, you know how we make little words of endearment, and apply them to those of whom we are very fond. So God calls His children—His people—His little ones, and says that He will turn His hand upon them.

How little we all are in comparison with God! We are not worthy even to be mentioned in connection with Him. We talk about the little ants which toil and tug to move one tiny grain of wheat, but the ants might very well say to us, "We are not little at all, compared with you, in comparison with

what you are when you are contrasted with the great God who made both us and you.” He fills all things, and compared with Him, we are less than nothing. Then how sweet it is to know that God will turn His hand upon His little ones, such insignificant nothings as we are, born yesterday, living today, and dead ere tomorrow comes, mere flowers that bloom but to fade and die! O God, how good You are to think about us who are so little!

And then, further, *those whom the Lord loves are little in their own estimation*, and the promise of the text is to those who are little, “I will turn mine hand upon the little ones”—little as to excellence, yea, with no excellence of which you dare to boast—little as to natural strength to do that which is good, yea, with no natural strength at all, but feeling yourselves to be helpless and hopeless apart from Christ—so little that you need to be swaddled in the bands of grace, carried in the arms of power, fed from the bosom of eternal love, and to be nurtured, kept, preserved, protected by God all your life long, for you can do nothing of yourselves.

Well, if you feel your littleness, here is the promise for just such as you are, “I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.” You strong ones may take care of yourselves, if you can. You who exult in your own native strength may go your own way. You who are rich and increased in goods may glory in what you have, but my Master fills the hungry with good things, He lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, and sets him among princes. Thus He turns His hand upon the little ones, and happy are you who are the objects of His mercy.

Next, think of *the Giver of the mercy*, “I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.” Then it is God, Himself, that same Lord of hosts who smote the Shepherd, who turns His own hand upon the little ones. Was He strong to smite, beloved? Then He is equally strong to save. Did He smite His Son with omnipotent blows? Then He will bless us with omnipotent love.

Oh, think of this! The hand that smote the Shepherd is now turned in another direction, but with the same power in it, to bless the sheep. How just, then, is the grace which we receive! The right hand of God wields the sword, and with it He smites His well-beloved Son, but having smitten Him, He draws the sword, and the same hand of infallible justice now deals out the bounties of the covenant, for every blessing which any child of God receives comes from Him as justly as if it were not a gift of mercy, for when Christ died for us, and so discharged all our debts, it was but just that we should be justified in Him.

When He had stood in our place, and offered a perfect righteousness and a complete atonement for us, it was only justice that we should be “accepted in the Beloved.” Every gift that now comes to God’s people comes in a way of which divine justice itself approves, nay, more, it so comes that it would not be just if it had not come. The right hand which smote Christ on our behalf is the same right hand which is now turned upon the little ones.

Oh, how blessed it is to see justice and mercy thus united in the covenant of grace! How honorable it is to be found in such a condition that God’s own royal hand has now become our protection! Yes, Lord, I have learned the inflexible character of Your justice in the death of Your dear Son, and as I have seen Him bleed and die, my soul has been crushed into the dust, and I have been terrified because of Your severity, but now that I know that just such a One as You were in all Your sternness in smiting Your Son, just such You are in Your loving care of all Your elect, and therefore does my spirit exult in You.

Take the attribute of justice away from God, and you have taken away that which makes all the other attributes sure to the people of God, but when you see that He, who is the God of infinite justice is also the God who turns His hand upon us in mercy, there is a sweetness about the whole matter which otherwise we should not have been able to perceive.

So I close by noticing *what this mercy is which comes to the people of God*, “I will turn mine hand upon the little ones,” that is, “My hand of compassion. Before, through their sin, I put them away from Me, but now that I have smitten their Shepherd instead of them, I will draw near to them, I will be with them, I will touch them, I will be their God, and they shall be My people. I will turn My hand upon them in compassionate familiarity.”

“I will turn mine hand upon them,” That is, “My hand of power to protect them. When any come forth to attack them, I will put forth My hand to shield them from danger, nay, more, I will take them up into My hand, and none shall pluck them thence. I will keep them as the apple of Mine eye. I will cover them with My feathers, and under my wings shall they trust, My truth shall be their shield and buckler. I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones, so that though they were defenseless before, My omnipotent power shall guard them against danger of every kind.”

“I will turn mine hand of bounty towards these little ones.” God’s hand is a full hand, and He gives of His fullness to His little ones, and satisfies their mouth with good things. He opens His hand, and supplies the needs of every living thing, so He will certainly not neglect those little ones for whom Christ died as a Substitute.

Next, “I will turn my hand of gracious working upon the little ones,” as if we were, like the potter’s vessels upon the wheel, only half fashioned as yet, but God will turn His hand upon us. He has done something to us, and He will keep on doing more and more till He has made us perfect. Already, the image of Jesus Christ is, in a measure, set upon all His chosen, but the Lord will keep His hand at work upon us until He has made our likeness to Christ complete. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him,” for God’s own hand working continually upon us shall make us so, and then “we shall see him as he is.” Is there not much joy in this thought?

I think I ought to add here that as, after our Lord had been smitten on Calvary, the day of Pentecost came, and thousands were gathered into the church, and in that respect God’s hand was turned upon the little ones to gather them in, so I bless His name that He still has a chosen people whom He means to gather with His almighty hand of gracious power, because He has smitten Christ in their room and stead.

And my hope concerning every sinner here lies in this truth, that Jesus Christ has a people purchased with His blood, many of whom do not yet know this, and ignorant of Him, are still lying outside the fold, but them also He must bring in, that there may be one flock [See sermon #1713, Other Sheep and One Flock] and one Shepherd.

We preach the Gospel to you unconverted people for this reason, because God, having smitten Christ in the sinner’s stead, has promised to lay His hand upon the little ones, and we trust that you may be among those upon whom He will lay His hand of omnipotent grace, and bring you in, that you may be His forever.

O unconverted people, do learn from the text how much it cost the Savior to bear our sin! He had to be smitten with God’s sword though He was only bearing the sin of others, what will it cost you if you have to bear the punishment of your own sin forever and ever? Tremble at that thought, and answer the question if you can. Christ sweat great drops of blood even while anticipating the agonies of the cross, and if you could know what it would be for you to have to suffer for your own sin forever, it would not be extraordinary if you also were to sweat great drops of blood at this moment.

It is such an awful thing to fall into the hands of the living God while unforgiven, so beware, you whose sins are unpardoned, lest that sword which has been sleeping with regard to you until now, should leap out of its scabbard, and pierce you to the heart. It must and will do so ere long if you remain unrepentant. If Christ had to suffer so much for the sins of others, how will you suffer when the burden of your own sins shall be laid upon you!

See, sinners, the only way of peace for you, it is through Jesus suffering in your stead. Your debts to God you can never pay, nay, not one in a million of them, but Christ paid the debts of all who believe in Him. You can make no atonement for yourself, but everyone who trusts in Jesus can claim His atonement for his own. Oh, may God’s infinite mercy move you to trust in Christ this very hour, and that being done, the sword of justice will be sheathed so far as you are concerned, and God will turn His gracious hand upon you, and bless you from this time forward, and even for evermore.

As for you who are saved by Christ, see what you owe to Him. By every groan He suffered, love Him; by every pang He endured, love Him; by the piercing of that sharp sword even to the death, love

Him; and as you love Him, live for Him; and as you love Him, speak well of Him; and as you love Him, pray for the coming of His kingdom; and as you love Him, keep His commandments; and as you love Him, grow more and more into His likeness every day you live, until you go to be with Him forever. God bless you, dear friends, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—291, 406

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 22

This psalm so sweetly and so accurately pictures the inward griefs of our divine Savior that it might have been written after the crucifixion rather than so many hundreds of years before it. I call your attention to the fact that this psalm is followed by the twenty-third, which begins, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want," to remind you that you and I would never have had that sweet twenty-third psalm to sing if our divine Shepherd had not been made, with groans and tears, to weep out the twenty-second psalm, which begins with our Savior's saddest cry from the cross. [See sermons #2133, "Lama Sabachthani?" #2562, Cries from the Cross, and #2803, The Saddest Cry from the Cross] .

1. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

Every word here is emphatic. Take the first two words, "My God, my God." These reveal our Savior's claim upon God as His God. "Why hast thou forsaken me?" I can understand that others should leave Me, but why have *You* done so?" Then lay the stress upon the last word, "Why hast thou forsaken me—Your only begotten Son, your ever-obedient Son, your well-beloved Son?"

1-2. *Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent.*

See our Savior hanging on the cross, hear Him utter these sorrowful words, and remember that He had come up from Gethsemane, all crimson with the bloody sweat which had oozed from every pore as He had agonized in prayer, yet no deliverance had come to Him, for God had left Him to die in accordance with the covenant into which He had voluntarily entered.

3. *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

He will not bring any charge against God, even though He has left Him, and beloved, in your bitterest griefs, never lay any blame upon your God. Like Job, say, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." [See sermon 3025, Fifteen Years After!].

4-6. *Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man;—*

So low did Christ stoop, for our sake, that He became less than man. There is a little crimson worm, to which this passage alludes, which seems to be made altogether of blood, and Christ felt as if He were nothing but a mass of suffering, a poor trodden "worm, and no man."

6-8. *A reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.*

It is very easy to read these words, or to hear them read, but it is not so easy to realize the sorrow they must have caused Christ. He was dying, in unutterable agonies, yet His cruel enemies thrust out their tongues at Him, hissed their bitter taunts, and made a jest even of His prayers. If you have ever been in great suffering, and have then been ridiculed, you know something of the acute anguish that must have been felt by our Savior when He was dying amidst mockery and scorn without a friend to help Him.

9-11. *But thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help.*

Men recollect how God took care of them in the time of their infancy, and when they are brought very low, they look to Him who guarded them in the times when they could not lift a finger to help themselves. The Savior did so. He was peculiarly born of God, there was a specialty about His birth which entitled Him to plead it when He was in His death throes.

12. *Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.*

He was looking on the Scribes and Pharisees, and the strong Roman soldiery who made a ring around the cross.

13. *They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion.*

There was no look of pity, no token of sympathy, they were all eager for His death. The mighty men of the day and the religions men of the day were not content until they had slain the one and only Savior of men.

14. *I am poured out like water,—*

He feels as if He were being dissolved, there is such a sense of faintness upon Him that every muscle, every ligature, seems to be turning to liquid, and He cries, "I am poured out like water,"—

14. *And all my bones are out of joint:*

The jarring of the cross when they dashed it into its place had dislocated our blessed Redeemer's bones. What must His pain have been!

14. *My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.*

Now the terrible death-faintness comes over Him. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity," but when his heart melts, how can he bear the strain any longer? Yet our Savior speaks of Himself again,—

15. *My strength is dried up like a potsherd;*

The wounds in His head, and hands, and feet, and all the tortures of the crucifixion had brought a raging fever upon Him, so that He was dried up like the burnt clay of which men make potsherds.

15. *And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*

He felt as if every particle of His body was beginning to separate itself from the rest, and He was turning into dust again while yet alive. It is a fearful picture of pain, and they who understand what the effect of crucifixion is tell us that this is a very graphic, minute, and accurate descriptions of the agonies of one dying as our Savior died.

16. *For dogs have compassed me:*

There is the ribald crowd, the common multitude, howling at Him, and eager for His blood.

16-17. *The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*

They had stripped Him, and this was no small part of the Savior's grief and shame that He hung there a spectacle of scorn to ten thousand cruel eyes that looked and stared at Him.

18. *They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

Now He returns to prayer,—

19-21. *But be not thou far from me, O LORD: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.*

He had been delivered before, and He expected deliverance again, and He had it, but He had to pass through the iron gates of death to get it, and to win the victory over death by His own death.

Now there is a change in the Psalm. The Savior's griefs are drawing to an end, and He begins to look at the result of His passion. He sees what is to follow from His crucifixion, and He talks thus to Himself,—

22. *I will declare thy name unto my brethren:*

“I shall live again, I shall see Peter and James and John, and many more whom I have loved, and I will talk with them about My Father.”

22. *In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.* [See sermon #799, Jesus the Example of Holy Praise].

He knew that He would rise from the dead, and that He would praise God in the midst of His brethren.

23-24. *Ye that fear the LORD, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; neither hath he hid his face from him; but when he cried unto him, he heard.*

He is telling to Himself, in the little quiet interval just before He breathed out His soul, what His testimony would be concerning God—how He did hear Him and help Him at the last.

25-26. *My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation: I will pay my vows before them that fear him. The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him:* [See sermon #1312, Good News for Seekers].

He is still talking to Himself about what would happen after His death and resurrection—how gracious men would praise the Lord, and how He Himself would live again to praise God among them. He so realizes the existence of those whom He has redeemed that He seems to talk to them as if they were actually present, He says,—

26. *Your heart shall live for ever.*

“I die, but by My death you shall live forever.” He sees them, as it were, gathered around His cross and He congratulates Himself upon the fact that He has bought eternal life for them.

27. *All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the LORD: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.*

The conversion of the nations shall be the fruit of His death.

28. *For the kingdom is the LORD’S: and he is the governor among the nations.*

See how He distributes crowns, and talks of thrones, just as He is about to die—so sure is He that His soul shall not rest in hades, neither shall His holy body see corruption, but that He shall rise again, and be forever “King of kings, and Lord of lords.”

29-31. *All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before him: and none can keep alive his own soul. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come,—*

I should have liked to hear those syllables fall from those dear lips of His. “They shall come,” He says to Himself, “They shall come,”—

31. *And shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born,—*

He sees the great host of the regenerate, the twice-born, who shall be saved through His death.

31. *That he hath done this.*

It would be a very literal translation if I read these last words thus, “It is finished.” Thus the psalm ends, and so ended the great sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, “It is finished.”

*“It is finish’d!”—Oh what pleasure
Do these charming words afford!
Heavenly blessings without measure
Flow to us from Christ the Lord:
‘It is finish’d!’
Saints, the dying words record.”*

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.