

NEW USES FOR OLD TROPHIES

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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“King David’s spears and shields, that were in the temple of the Lord.”
 2 Kings 11:10.*

When David had fought with an adversary, and overcome him, he took away his armor and his weapons, and as other victorious heroes were likely to do, he bore them home as mementoes of his prowess, the trophies of the battle. These were placed in the House of the Lord. Perhaps David, at the same time, dedicated in like manner the shield and the sword which he had himself used in battle. After Solomon had built the temple, these trophies, which seem to have been very numerous, were hung up there. So they adorned the walls. So they illustrated the valor of noble sires. So they served to kindle emulation, I doubt not, in the breasts of true-hearted sons.

Thus it was while generations sprung up and passed away—till at length other days dawned, darker scenes transpired—and sadder things filled up the chronicles of the nation. You will, all of you, remember the crisis to which my text refers. Athaliah, daughter of Ahab, wife of Jehoram, king of Judah, the usurping queen of Judah, had played the tyrant for well-near seven years. The endurance of the people had been tried to the uttermost. A just recompense was in store, and a well-concerted plan ready for execution.

The time had come when she should be put to death and the young prince who had been hidden away should be proclaimed king. It was arranged that he should be proclaimed in the temple court. Yet the men that were to be the body-guard were not armed with weapons, for fear an alarm might be given, and the matter discovered too soon. But these weapons that were hung up of old in the temple were taken down, and the Levites and other friends were armed with them.

When Athaliah came in and saw the young king surrounded by his bodyguard, and strangely equipped with the old weapons of former days ready to protect him, she rent her clothes, and cried, “Treason, Treason!” But her doom was sealed—escape was impossible—she was slain. To such good account then and there was the good old armor turned. This simple fact appears to me to suggest a striking moral.

I. The matter I shall speak to you about tonight will lie under four heads. We will give them to you as they occur to us. And the first is this: it is well for us to hang all our trophies in the House of the Lord. We, too, are warriors. Every genuine Christian has to fight. Every inch of the way between here and Heaven we shall have to fight—as up to now every single step of our pilgrimage has been one prolonged conflict. Sometimes we have victories, a presage of that final victory, that perfect triumph we shall enjoy with our Great Captain forever—

*“Oh, I have seen the day
 When with a single word,
 God helping me to say ‘My trust is in the Lord,’
 My soul has quelled a thousand foes,
 Fearless of all that could oppose.”*

When we have these victories it behooves us to be especially careful that in all good conscience we hang up the trophies in the House of the Lord. The reason for this lies here—it is to the *Lord* that we owe any success we have ever achieved. We have been defeated when we have gone in our own strength. But when we have been victorious it has always been because the strength of the Lord was put forth for our deliverance. You never fought with a sin, with a temptation, or with a doubt and overthrew it, except by the Spirit’s aid. You never won a soul for Jesus, you never spoke a valiant word that repelled an error, you never did an enterprising deed which really told well for the success of the kingdom, but God was in it all—virtually, no, *actually* enabling you.

And He did it of His own good will. What is it but a simple matter of justice that He who worked the wonder should have the honor of it? It would have been a crying shame if Miriam had sung to the praise of *Moses* and *Aaron* at the Red Sea. They were but the outward instruments of the people's coming out of Egypt. As she took her timbrel, she rightly said, in the hymn that Moses had given her for the occasion—"Let us sing *unto the Lord*, for He has triumphed gloriously."

So in every struggle that transpires in our hearts, in every combat waged in the world—ascrcribe the power to Him to whom it belongs, "The right hand of the Lord is exalted. The right hand of the Lord does valiantly." As before the fight, in His name we set up our banner, so after the fight, in His name, again, we give the conquering banner to the breeze. "All glory be unto Him that won the victory." This will save us from pride and self-sufficiency. Scarcely can God trust us with a victory, lest we begin fingering it with our own hands, as if our own ingenuity, our own wisdom, or our own strength had done marvels. As of old, Israel sacrificed to her net when a great draught of fish was taken, or to her drag when a great harvest had been threshed out. And so are we, too, apt to sacrifice to our own ability, our own industry, our own superiority in one respect or another—and think that there is some virtue or merit in us to which the Almighty has awarded the palm.

Instead of looking only to God, we begin to look in some degree to ourselves. You cannot do otherwise than put the honor somewhere. If you do not ascribe it to God, the temptation will be too strong for you, you will be sure to take it for yourself. And if you do this the most fatal consequences will follow, for they that walk in pride God will assuredly abase. No matter how dear you are to Him, if pride is harbored in your spirit He will whip it out of you. They that go up in their own estimation must come down again by His discipline. You cannot be exalted in self without being by-and-by brought low before Him.

God will have it so. It is always the rule, "He has put down the mighty from their seat, and has exalted them of low degree." He goes forth with the axe, and this is the work He does among the thick trees—He cuts down the high tree and dries up the green tree—but He exalts the low tree, and makes the dry tree to flourish, that all the glory may be unto Himself alone. "For," says He, "I the Lord have spoken and have done it." Let us take care, therefore, that we ascribe the glory to God and do not forget to honor Him. We have received so many mercies, my Brethren, that they come to us as common things.

We receive them, and scarcely know, perhaps, that we have received them. According to the old Proverb we do not know the value of our mercies till we miss them. But it ought not to be so. Must we be defeated in order to let us know that God gives us victory? Is it necessary that you and I should suffer some great disaster in order to make us grateful for past success? Will you never prize health as one of the choicest gifts of Heaven till some grievous malady has sapped your strength, and made all the enjoyments of life tasteless or even nauseous?

Well, if it is necessary, it is a necessity of our own producing. It is a terrible pity that we should challenge the ills we complain of, and incur the reverses we so bitterly deplore. O that we may never slight the good things we have, or trifle with the benefits we receive from the hand of the Lord! Especially, my dear Brethren, let us bless God for every spiritual success achieved, and take care to make a record of it on the tablet of our grateful heart. If we should one day have to flee before the enemy. If our work for God should one day seem to be without success, we may look back with much smiting of heart upon those ungrateful times when God dealt so generously with us, and yet we did not take the trouble to sing Him a Psalm or offer up a vow, or do any act of homage to express our gratitude to Him.

Hang up Goliath's sword—do not put it by to rust. Hang up the shields and the spears of the Philistines. If by God's help you have taken them, set store by them, and make the world see what the Lord has done on your behalf, whereof you are glad. Make the Church join your grateful song. There is too much of the cold silence of ingratitude among us. Too seldom do we chant forth our *Te Denm landamus* with solemn, lively air. Stir the hearts of others because your own heart heaves with deep emotions of thankfulness to the Most High.

I am persuaded, my Brethren, that it is only in this way that we can secure for ourselves future success. David's life was a series of dilemmas and deliverances. With what sort of face, do you think, could he have invoked rescue from fresh perils had he failed to recognize God's help in past preservation? If, when flushed with victory, he had usurped the honor to himself, what assistance would he have received the next time he was curried with impending disaster? Or, had he not taught the Israelites in the hour of triumph to sing, "*Non nohis, Domine*"—"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto

Your name give glory,” how could he have engaged their hearts in the hour of trial to wail forth the litany of supplication—“The Lord hear you in the day of trouble. The name of the God of Jacob defend you, send you help from the sanctuary, and strengthen you out of Zion”?

Without consistency we cannot exert any moral influence with men, or obtain any spiritual prevalence with God. May not many of our barren seasons be ascribed to the fact that we did not thank God for fruitful ones? If the preacher has been honored in his ministry to win souls to Christ, but has not duly blessed his God for the enabling of the Holy Spirit granted to himself. Or for the witness of the Holy Spirit given to the people. Or worse still—if he has complimented himself on his own talents, and the use he makes of them—need he wonder if, when next he goes forth, as Samson of old, and shakes himself as before, he finds his strength has departed from him?

“Give unto the Lord, O you mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name. Else when most you need Him, you may find His strength is taken from you and your honors will have departed, too. Hang up the shield, hang up the spear—let Jehovah’s name be exalted. Bring forth the forgotten memorials of loving kindness. Expose them to public view—put them before your own mind’s eye tonight—gratefully remember them, lovingly praise Him and magnify His name.

I am sure we, as a Church whom God has blessed so long, ought not to be slow to hang up the trophies of His loving kindness in our midst. If God has done anything for you, proclaim it. If He has delivered you out of trouble, tell it. If He has fed your soul in the wilderness, say it. If you have lately been converted, tell it. If you have found Christ precious to you, though just now you were a poor lost soul, shout it! Hang up the shields and spears. Let each individual do it, let the whole Church do it!

And often by our enlarged endeavors for the dear Savior’s sake, by our consecrated self-denials, let us show that we do feel how much we owe to the infinite power of the God of Victory who makes us strong in the day of battle. That is the first point. If we have any victories, let all the trophies be dedicated to the Lord.

II. The second is this—THESE TROPHIES MAY COME IN USEFUL AT SUCH TIMES AS WE CANNOT FORESEE, AND UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES AS WE KNOW NOT OF. Little could David have thought, when he gave Abiathar the sword of Goliath, that he would ever go to the priests of God and ask them to lend him a sword. And that they should say, We have no sword here, save the sword of Goliath, the Philistine, whom you slew in the Valley of Elah. Behold it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod.

He gave it to God, but he did not think that he would ever have it back again with a priestly blessing on it, so that he should be able to say, “There is none like that: give it me.” And when, in after years, he hung up the swords and shields which he had taken away from Philistine heroes, he did not surmise that one of his descendants, or the seed royal, would find the need to employ his own, his grandsire’s, or, further back from himself—his forefather’s trophies—in order to establish himself on the throne.

We never know, my Brethren, when we praise God for mercies, but what the very praises might come back into our bosoms, and the offerings we make to God in the way of thankfulness may be our own enrichment in the days to come. The memorials we put up to record God’s goodness may be to us in after years among the most useful things in all our treasury. To ourselves and others the memorials of the victories we have won may be signally profitable, strangely opportune, seemingly indispensable. Let me try to show this.

Years ago you and I were fighting battles with unbelief. We were struggling after a Savior. Our sins rose up against us thick and furious. The fiery darts of the enemy rained upon us like hail. That conflict we never shall forget. We bear the scars of it to this very day. Glory be to God! By His Grace we won the victory and overcame through the blood of the Lamb. We looked at Jesus Christ upon the Cross, and in that moment our sins fled away. The whole host of them was defeated. A dying Savior was the symbol of victory. What then? Let us use the mementoes we laid up before the Lord of that day—the trophies that we took in that battle—for ourselves and for others.

For ourselves. If ever we have another struggle against sin—perhaps we shall have many. I mean such alarming assaults as involve severe struggles—let us remember how Jesus met with us the first time, and “if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” He saved us with a great salvation when we first came home as prodigals covered with rags. Will He not help us now when we come

to Him as His own children, clothed in His own righteousness, and say, “Abba, Father,” being already accepted in the Beloved?

I think it often proves a great blessing to a man that he had a terrible conflict, a desperate encounter, a hard-fought engagement in passing from the empire of Satan into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. Sooner or later each saved man will have his hand-to-hand fight with the Prince of Darkness. And as a general rule, it is a great mercy to have it over on the outset of one’s career, and be able afterwards to feel, “Whatever comes upon me, I never can suffer as I suffered when I was seeking Christ. Whatever staggering doubt, or hideous blasphemy, or ghastly insinuations, even of suicide itself, may assail my feeble heart, they cannot outdo the horror of great darkness through which my spirit passed when I was struggling after a Savior.”

Now I do not say that it is *desirable* that we should have this painful ordeal, much less that we should seek it as an evidence of regeneration. But when we have passed through it victoriously, we may so use it that it may be a perpetual armory to us. If we can now defy all doubts and fears that come because they cannot be so potent as those which already in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior we have overthrown—shall we not use that for ourselves? And can we not equally well use it for others? Full often have I found it good, when I have talked with a young convert in deep distress about his sin, to tell him something more of his anxious plight than he knew how to express. And he wondered where I had found it, though he would not have wondered if he knew where I had been, and how much deeper in the mire than he.

He may have talked about some horrible thought that he has had with regard to the impossibility of his own salvation, and I have said, “Why, I have thought that a thousand times, and yet have overcome it through the help of God’s Spirit.” I know that a man’s own experience is one of the very best weapons he can use in fighting with evil in other men’s hearts. Often their misery and despondency, aggravated as it commonly is by a feeling of solitariness, will be greatly relieved before it is effectually driven out when they find that a Brother has suffered the same, and yet has been able to overcome.

As I show him how precious the Savior is to my soul, he glorifies God in me. Right soon will he look into the same dear Face and be lightened. And then he will magnify the Lord with me—and we shall exalt His name together! Thus good it is, you see, to take the old shields and spears away from the enemies and to use them again against new foes of the house of David.

Since that time, dear Brethren, when we had the first struggle, we have had to fight with many evil passions and propensities. Perhaps we have had one besetting sin. We were a long time before we came up to beard that. We avoided it, and refrained from rising up against it until at length we perceived that it must be killed or it would kill us. It was very like pulling out our eyes, but we saw it must be done. We stood foot to foot with it. A sharp time it was, for the sin threatened to prevail against us. If we threw it down it seemed to rise again, like the giant of old, strengthened by its fall.

Did you ever have a personal, mental, moral conflict with some great dragon of besetting sin? If so, you have been enabled to smite it valiantly, and slay it utterly. I know you have gained trophies to hang in the House of God. To do so will be of no small advantage to ourselves, because you can take them down and use them in the future. And you will find they are footholds of your strength to fight with the next sin that comes upon you. The strength which God has educated and fostered in the last struggle will greatly assist you in the next.

The man who gives way to one sin will very readily give way to another. But a man who, through God’s Grace, has won a very high vantage ground by mastering one sin will be very likely to win another. The spoils taken from the last Philistine will help us to go forth and win more, and in the name of God we shall get the victory. Many a man has had a hard struggle at first. He has been drawn to Christ, proved the Grace of acceptance, and taken the vows of allegiance and henceforth it behooves him to depart from iniquity, and not turn again to folly. Perhaps he has been addicted to swearing, and he has to get rid of that wicked habit at any cost.

Perhaps he has been accustomed to frequent the public house, to sit in the seat of the scornful, and enliven his companions with jest and song. He has forthwith to relinquish that place and take leave of that company forever. Then perhaps there has been some other vice which he has cherished in secret, and clung to with the more tenacity because it so tenaciously clung to him! Of that evil he has purged himself, and from that bondage he has escaped. Is it not possible that there yet remains one transgression which lurks in the breast of such a one?

Very likely at this time he has a passionate temper. Down with it, my Brother. You slew the lion, and you slew the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them. Do not be afraid to grapple with it. Do not say, "I have a quick temper, and I cannot help it." There is no need for it. God's Grace can drive it out even as the rest. Beard it in the name of the Most High, and use the *trophies* that you stole from past success—no, fairly won them from the foes you have vanquished—use those with which to combat sins that now assail you.

To change the figure, it is the lot of some of us to be called to withstand great errors. We have been sorely harassed at times with doubts and misgivings about some established Truth of God. I suppose no one is a firm believer who has not once been a doubter. He knows no faith who never had a fear—for candid enquiry must go before absolute credence. How can anyone know the proofs and vouchers of his faith unless he has taken pains to dig into the volume of evidence that lies at its base?

Now it is a fine, a noble thing, when you have had a conflict in your own soul with some plausible heresy, some seductive perversion of the Truth, and have put it to flight with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. It is a noble feat, I say, to capture the arms of your assailant and to use the very weapons of the adversary against him. You have detected his sophistry, you have found out his devices, and now for the future you will not be so readily carried away with every wind of doctrine.

This time you are too old to be taken with his chaff. You were deceived once, but by God's Grace you are not willing any longer to lend a ready ear to the fair speech which casts a mist over plain facts. You henceforth resolve to prove the spirits whether they are of God. So from the spoils of past conflicts you are made strong to win present victories. Texts of Scripture are sometimes used by the adversaries of the Gospel, and turned against us. I know some ministers who, when they meet with a passage that they cannot immediately reconcile with the orthodox faith, alter the reading, or put a fresh sense on the words, or twist it and turn it to suit their purpose.

It is a bad plan, my Brethren. The texts of Scripture are to be taken as they stand, and you may rest assured they will always defend, never overturn, the faith once delivered to the saints. When I have seen a text sometimes in the hand of the enemy made use of against the Deity of Christ, or against the doctrine of election, or against some other important and vital doctrine, I have not felt at all inclined to give up the text or think lightly of it. I rather admire those Americans in the South, who when they had lost some guns, were asked by the commanding officer whether they had not spiked the guns before they gave them up to the foe.

"Spiked them? No," they said, "we did not like to spoil such beautiful guns. We will take them again tomorrow." And so they did. I would not have a Text touched. Grand old Text! We honor you even while we cannot keep the field, or ward you from the aggression of the invader. But shall we spoil it, or give it up as lost? Never! We will take it out of the hand of the enemy, use it for the defense of the Gospel, and show that it does not mean what they think, or answer the ends to which they would apply it.

Are we baffled in attack? Or do we lose ground in an argument? It is for us by more diligent study, and closer research, to take the guns, the good old guns, and use those which the enemy used against ourselves—to turn them round and use them against him. Depend upon it, the great temple of Truth is not like a house divided against itself. Nothing equivocal or prevaricating has come forth at any time from the mouth of the Lord. As for our understanding, it is always weak. And as for our tactics in upholding the right, they are often at fault. But the Word of God is steadfast. It does not change with the times or yield to suit any man's purpose.

The weapons of our warfare are good—it is the hands that wield them that are so unskillful. Thus I might continue to show that in all the battles we fight, the trophies which we win should be stored. For they may come in for future use at some time or other. There is no experience of a Christian that will not have some ultimate service to render him. He may say to himself, "What can be the good of this feeling, what can be the practical advantage of that agony of mind through which I passed?"

My Brother, you know not what may be the history of your life. It is yet unfinished. If you did know, you would see that in this present trial there is a preparation for some future emergency which will enable you to come out of it in triumph. The shields and spears of David are hung up for future action.

III. In the third place, our text may mean that David hung up the spears and shields which he was accustomed to use himself. And if so, we shall remark that ancient weapons are good for present use. I should like to show you this by

taking you on to a battlefield. I did take you there just now, but you did not recognize it, perhaps, as a battleground. We will go to it. It is not Sadowa or Sedan, it is a grander arena by far—the old Seventy-Seventh. Turn to the Seventy-Seventh Psalm, and you have a battlefield there.

Should you ever have to fight the same battle, by looking through this Psalm you will see David's shields and spears, and you will soon learn how to screen yourself with the one, and how to do exploits with the other. Here is David fighting with despondency—an old enemy of mine. I daresay some of you are afflicted with it. But observe how he fought with it. The first weapon he drew out of the scabbard was the weapon of all-prayer. And how grandly he used it! "I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice."

Satan trembles when he hears the sound of prayer. They are the conquering legions that know how to pray. Despondency soon flies when a man knows how to ply this all-conquering and ever-useful weapon of petition to the Most High. Then note how he used this weapon continually. "My hand was stretched out all night," says he, according to the marginal reading of the second verse. If the first prayer did not help him, he prayed again. If an hour's prayer did not bring him peace, he would pray two hours. And all night long he kept at it. You will get a like result too, my Brothers and Sisters, if you exercise a like perseverance. You *must* get a like result if you know how to linger at the Mercy Seat.

When he had used the weapon of prayer, what did he do next? He took out another spear. It was that of remembering God. He had long enough pored in thought over himself and his present sinfulness and weakness, and now he remembered God's mercy, God's faithfulness, God's loving kindness, God's power, God's Covenant, God in the Person of Christ. Oh, this is, indeed, to prepare a salvo against the enemy! And to fortify one's own position with fresh succors. He can win the battle that knows how to use this artillery of remembering God.

Going on with the strategy of war, what next? Why, in the fifth verse we read how he maintained his courage and his constancy—"I considered the days of old." He enquired of hoary fathers, and looked back upon the inspired traditions, if I may be allowed the expression, of the early Church. He strained to see whether God ever did forsake any of His people, rightly judging that if He never did, He never would. He firmly resolved that till he could find a clear case of God's unfaithfulness he would not yield an inch of soil, nor give up a stone of any fortress, but would hold on and fight the battle out.

That inward musing helped him much. The enemy began to weary while he recruited his strength. But now he used another weapon. He looked to his own experience—see the sixth verse. "I called to remembrance my song in the night." Past experience acknowledged gratefully and taken as the index of what the future will be—this is another of David's shields and spears. And then he seemed to put a whole path of spears before the enemy, and hold up an entire wall of shields when he came to close quarters with him, and said, "Will the Lord cast off forever? Will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone forever? Does His promise fail forevermore? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?"

Oh, this is how to win the battle! The next time, dear Friend, you find yourself downcast in trouble, do not run away because Giant Despair is so strong. Though pressed by danger and beset by foes, feed not this frenzy of the soul with gloomy black forebodings. Armed with David's shield and spears, attack him! Show a bold front and so shall you yet resist the devil and find that he flees from you. And you shall come back from the conflict with louder notes of victory than you had dreamed before.

There are some persons here, however, who are not yet far enough advanced to understand this battle of the Seventy-Seventh. I will take them to another battle, the battle of the Fifty-First. That is the sinner's battle. We shall see David's shields and spears there. A tremendous battle it was with sin. With a guilty conscience, with despairing thoughts. Some of you, perhaps, are fighting such a battle tonight. I rather hope you are. I was preaching the other day, I think it was last Tuesday evening, at Acton. I went my way after service hopeful, prayerful that some fruits might be reaped from my labors.

Not long after, I received a letter from the minister to this effect—"My dear Friend, I could not help writing to tell you that last Tuesday night when I was in bed and asleep, there was a knock at my door. I came down and found a railway porter wanting to see me. "O Sir," he said, "I cannot sleep. I was obliged to come and wake you up though it is late. I heard the sermon at your Chapel tonight, and I want to know what I must do to be saved? It is time for me to seek the Lord, and I shall never get rest till I find Him."

Oh, it is good for us to be awakened up at night to answer anyone that comes on such an errand as that! Would God it were every night in the year, if it were to hear a sinner saying, “What must I do to be saved?”

Now, if one here present is in such a condition as that, just let him follow me to this battlefield and see how David fought. His shields and spears in such case consisted first in an appeal to God’s mercy. Do not appeal to Justice, Sinner. *That* is against you—appeal to Mercy. “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness!” Prayer he brings before God, but it is prayer tipped with a hope in the mercy of God.

Go, Sinner, and plead with God and fight your sins with hope in His mercy. When he had done with that, he then turns to confession—“I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me.” No weapon to drive away guilty fears like making a clean breast of your sins! Tell your Father you have offended. Do not plead any extenuations or mitigations. Confess that you deserve His wrath. Put yourself before the throne of God’s clemency. Confess that if it were turned to a throne of vengeance you would well deserve it.

Prayers, tears, pleas for mercy, and full confession—these are weapons to conquer with. But note the master weapon! See where the battle began to turn into victory. It is here when he cries in the seventh verse, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” You know that was a little bunch of hyssop—a brush used to dip into the blood. There was a basin full of blood, and then with this brush of hyssop the priest sprinkled the guilty man, the unclean man, and he was counted clean. So the master argument in this verse is blood. Oh, how this destroys our sins, how this scatters all our doubts and fears—the almighty weapon of the Cross—the Divine weapon of the atonement.

Let sins come on, and let them be more than the hairs of my head, loftier than mountains and deeper than the unfathomed ocean, let them come on—God’s flaming wrath behind them, Hell itself coming to devour me. Yet if I can but take the Cross and hold it up before me! If I can plead the precious blood I shall be safe! And I shall be saved and prove a conqueror, notwithstanding all. Beloved, see that in all your fights you use the old, old weapons of David himself—his shields and spears—by these same weapons shall *you* also win the day.

IV. And now, lastly, let me suggest to you a fourth version of the text. Did not David herein prefigure Him that was to come—David’s Son and David’s Lord? Jesus Christ, our King, has hung up many shields and spears in the House of the Lord. I shall not occupy many minutes, but I invite every Believer’s heart to look at the great temple that Christ has built, and see how He has hung it round with trophies of His victory.

Sin—Christ has borne it in Himself, endured its penalty and overcome it. He has hung up the handwriting of ordinances that was against us as a trophy in the House of the Lord. He has nailed it to the Cross. Satan—our great foe—He met him foot to foot in the wilderness and discomfited him—met him in the garden—overcame him on the Cross. Now Hell, too, is vanquished—Christ is Lord!

The Prince of the power of the air is but His serf. The King of kings has led captivity captive, and all the crowns of this Prince of the power of the air are hung up as trophies. Broken are their spears—their shields all battered and vilely cast away—hang up as memorials of what Christ has done. Death, too—the last enemy—Christ has taken spoils from him when He rose again Himself from His prison house, and ascended on high, leading captivity captive. And the enmity of the human heart, my Brethren. Oh, I how many of these enmities has Christ hung up in the hall, for He has conquered that enmity and made the hater into a lover!

My heart, your heart, I hope that all our hearts, too, are trophies of what Christ’s love can do. There are some great sinners at this day who are wonderful tokens of the power of love. When we look round the temple and see the shields and spears hung up, we say, “Who did those shields and spears belong to?” One says, “Why, that is the shield and spear of John Newton, the old blasphemer!” Glory be to God, Christ conquered him! Whose shield and spears are those? Why, that is the shield and spear of John Bunyan, the blasphemer on the village green. God’s mercy conquered him, too! Yes, there will be a pillar for many of us, and I do not know which will bring Christ most honor, for he had much ado to bring us down.

I wonder whether there will be a place for you, you old sailor? These many years you have been living without God and without Christ. You have been a frequenter of every place of sin, every filthy haunt in London. I do trust God’s Grace will meet with you. The poor harlot, Mary, the woman that was a sinner—there hangs her shield and spear. She was a hard fighter, a very Amazon! But Christ conquered her, hung up her shield and spear, and there it shall hang

forever, to the praise of the glory of His Grace, who vanquished even her, and made her His willing servant! No! His Beloved Friend!

What will Heaven be when all of us shall be trophies of His power to save, and when our *bodies* shall be there, as well as our souls? “O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” When not only souls, but bodies shall be in Heaven, too, all trophies of what Christ has done when He plucked His people from the jaws of the grave and delivered them from the grasp of the sepulcher will be gloriously revealed!

I came just now, before I entered here, from a sight which did my very soul good. One of our dear and beloved Sisters lies very sick. I think She is dying—in all human probability a few hours will see her in another world. I looked at her as one of the trophies of Christ’s power to save. I would not have missed the visit for I know not what. She was not only calm, but joyous! No, triumphant! Expecting the time of her departure and longing for it, speaking of everlasting faithfulness, of sure promises, and of the Presence of Christ as a *reality*—which she enjoys even now—before the veil of flesh is rent that hides His blessed face from ours.

I said to her, “How long is it since the cloud has broken away from you?” She said, “I have had a good deal of peace of mind, but never such joy as I have now. Now that I am going where I shall soon see His face without a veil between.” The victories of dying spirits substantiate the Gospel. When Christian people have no motive to overrate their assurance, and certainly no inducement to play the hypocrite. When they have nothing in their present sensations to inspire courage, raise enthusiasm, or buoy them up with suspicious comfort—for heart and flesh fail—there is much to admire in their constancy, much to animate us in their faith—

*“Our dying friends are pioneers to smooth
Our rugged path to death, to break those bars
Of terror and abhorrence Nature throws
Across our obstructed way, and thus to make
Welcome, as safe, our port from every storm.”*

When you can see the eye, soon to be closed, sparkling with ecstasy, and hear the voice feeble because the throat is choking, as brave, and braver still than ever it has been before. And when you mark the look of deep composure, no, of heavenly expectancy, upon the pale, pale face—oh, this makes our soul, my Brethren, to feel that we have a faith that is worth prizing—a Christ that is worth trusting! These are trophies!

And these deathbed trophies are hung up in that part of the temple where we can see them. Let us take care that we have good confidence, always walking by faith—whether the path of our pilgrimage is rough or smooth. And let us be ever maintaining the fight of faith, however fierce our temptations or fiery our trials. So when we come to die we may hang up our trophies, too, saying to death and Hell that we bid them defiance, for Christ is with us to the last, making our dark moments to be bright with the light of His Presence. God grant that all of us may be trophies of Christ, and hung up thus as memorials forever. Amen.

Portion of Scripture Read Before Sermon—Psalm 72

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