

GOD'S BARRIERS AGAINST MAN'S SIN

NO. 220

A SERMON DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, NOVEMBER 16, 1856,
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 AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK.

“Fear you not Me? says the LORD: will you not tremble at My Presence, which has placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people has a revolting and a rebellious heart. They are revolted and gone.”
Jeremiah 5:22, 23

THE majesty of God, as displayed in Creation and Providence, ought to stir up our hearts in adoring wonder and melt them down in willing obedience to His commands. The Almighty power of Jehovah so clearly manifest in the works of His hands should constrain us, His creatures, to fear His name and prostrate ourselves in humble reverence before His Throne. When we know that the sea, however tempestuous, is entirely submissive to the behests of God; that when He says, “Hitherto shall you come, but no further,” it dares not encroach—“the pride of its waves is stayed.” When we know that God bridles the tempest, though “Nature rocks beneath His tread,” and curbs the boisterous storm—He ought to be feared—verily, He is a God before whom it is no dishonor for us to bow ourselves in the very dust! The contemplation of the marvelous works which He does upon “the great and wide sea,” where He tosses the waves to and fro and yet keeps them in their ordained courses, should draw forth our most devout emotions and I could almost say, inspire us with homage! Great are You, O Lord God! Greatly are You to be praised! Let the world which You have made and all that is therein, declare Your glory! I can scarcely conceive a heart so callous that it feels no awe; or a human mind so dull and destitute of understanding as fairly to view the tokens of God’s Omnipotent power and then turn aside without some sense of the fitness of obedience! One might think the impression would be spontaneous in every breast and if not, only let reason do her office and by slower process every mind should yet be convinced. Let your eyes behold the stars. God alone can tell their numbers, yet He calls them all by names—by Him they are marshaled in their spheres and travel through the aerial universe just as He gives them charge. They are all His *servants* who with cheerful haste perform the bidding of their Lord. You see how the stormy wind and tempest like *slaves* obey His will. And you know that the great pulse of the ocean throbs and vibrates with its ebb and flow entirely under His control. Have these great things of God—these wondrous works of His—no lesson to teach us? Do they not while declaring His Glory, reveal our duty? Our poets, both the sacred and the uninspired, have feigned consciousness to those inanimate agents that they might the more truthfully represent their honorable service. But if because we are rational and intelligent beings, we withhold our allegiance from our rightful Sovereign, then our privileges are a curse and our glory is a shame!

Alas then, the instincts of men very often guide them to act by impulse more wisely than they commonly do by a settled conviction! Where is the man who will not bend the knee in time of trouble? Where is the man who does not acknowledge God when he hears the terrible voice of His deep-toned thunder and sees with alarm the shafts of His lightning fly abroad, cleaving the thick darkness of the atmosphere? In times of plague, famine and pestilence, men are prone to take refuge in religion—they will make confession, like Pharaoh, when he said, “I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous and I and my people are wicked.” But like he, when “the rain and the hail and the thunders have ceased,” when the plagues are removed—then they sin more and their hearts are hardened! Hence their sin becomes exceedingly sinful, since they sin against Truths of God which even Nature itself teaches us are most just. We might learn, even without the written oracles of Scripture, that we ought to obey God if our foolish hearts were not so darkened. Thus unbelief of the Almighty Creator is a crime of the first magnitude! If it were a petty Sovereign against whom you rebelled, it might be pardonable. If He were a man like yourselves, you might expect that your faults would easily find forgiveness. But since He is the God who reigns alone where clouds and darkness are round about Him; the God to whom all Nature is obedient and whose high behests are obeyed both in Heaven and in Hell, it becomes a crime—the terrible character of which words cannot portray—that you should ever sin against a God so marvelously great! The greatness of God enhances the

greatness of our sin. I believe this is one lesson which the Prophet intended to teach us by the text. He asks us in the name of God, or rather, God asks us through him—"Fear you not Me? says the Lord—will you not tremble at My Presence?"

But while it is *a* lesson, I do not think it is *the* lesson of the text. There is something else which we are to learn from it. God here contrasts the obedience of the strong, the mighty, the untamed sea, with the rebellious character of His own people. "The sea," He says, "obeys Me. It never breaks its boundary. It never leaps from its channel. It obeys Me in all its movements. But man, poor puny man—the little creature whom I could crush as the moth—will not be obedient to Me. The sea obeys Me from shore to shore, without reluctance and its ebbing floods, as they retire from its bed, each of them says to Me, in the voices of the pebbles, 'O Lord, we are obedient to You, for You are our Master.' But My people," says God, "are a revolting and a rebellious people. They go astray from Me." And is it not, my Brothers and Sisters, a marvelous thing that the whole earth is obedient to God, except man? Even the mighty Leviathan, who makes the deep to be hoary, sins not against God, but his course is ordered according to his Almighty Master's decree. Stars, those wondrous masses of light are easily directed by the very wish of God. Clouds, though they seem erratic in their movement, have God for their Pilot. "He makes the clouds His chariot"—and the winds, though they seem restive beyond control, yet do they blow, or cease to blow just as God wills! In Heaven, on earth, even in the lower regions, I had almost said, we could scarcely find such a disobedience as that which is practiced by man—at least in Heaven there is a cheerful obedience. And in Hell there is compelled submission to God, while on earth man makes the base exception—he is continually revolting and rebelling against his Maker!

Still there is another thought in the text and this I shall endeavor to dilate upon. Let us read it again. "Fear you not Me? says the Lord: will you not tremble at My Presence?" Now here is the essence of the matter—"Which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people has a revolting and a rebellious heart. They are revolted and gone." "The sea," says God, "is not only obedient, but it is rendered obedient merely by the restraint of sand." It is not the rock of adamant that restrains the sea one half as easily as just that little belt of sand which preserves the dry land from the inundations of the ocean. "The sea obeys Me and has for its only check the sand and yet," He says, "My people, though they have restraints the strongest that reason could imagine, are a revolting and a rebellious people and scarcely can My commands, My promises, My love, My judgment, My Providence or My Word restrain them from sin."

That is the point we shall dwell upon this morning. *The sea is restrained by a belt of sand. But we, notwithstanding all the restraints of God, are a people bent on revolting from Him.*

The Doctrine of the text, seems to me to be this—that without supernatural means God can make all creatures obedient except man. But man is so disobedient in his heart that only some supernatural agency can make him obedient to God, while the simple agency of sand can restrain the sea without any stupendous effort of Divine power more than He ordinarily puts out in Nature. He can not thus make man obedient to His will.

Now, my Brothers and Sisters, let us look back into history and see if it has not been so. What has been a greater problem, if we may so speak concerning the Divine mind, than that of restraining men from sin? How many restraints God has put upon man! Adam is in the Garden, pure and holy. He has restraints that one would think strong enough to prevent his committing a sin so contemptible and apparently unprofitable as that by which he fell. He is to have the whole Garden in perpetuity, if he will not eat of that Tree of Life. His God will walk with him and make him His friend. Moreover, in the cool of the day he shall hold converse with angels and with the Lord, the Master of angels. And yet he dares eat of that holy fruit which God had set forth not to be touched by man. Then he must die. One would think it was enough—to promise reward for obedience and punishment for sin—but no, the check fails. Man, left to his own free will, touches the fruit and he falls. Man cannot be restrained, even in his purity, so easily as the mighty sea! Since that time, mark what God has done by way of restraint. The world has become corrupt. It is altogether covered with iniquity. Forth comes a Prophet. Enoch prophesies of the coming of the Lord, declaring that he sees Him coming with ten thousand of His saints to judge the world. That world goes on, as profane and unheeding as before! Another Prophet is raised up, and cries, "Yet a little while and this earth shall be drowned in a flood of water." Do men cease from sin? No—profligacy, crime, iniquities of the vilest class are as prevalent as before. Man rushes on to his destruction. The deluge comes and destroys all but a favored few. The new family goes out to people the earth—will not the world now be clean and holy? Wait a little and you shall see! One of these men will do a deed which shall render him a curse forever and his son, Canaan, shall in after years inherit his father's curse. Not long after that you see Sodom and Gomorrah devoured

with fire which God rains out of Heaven. But what of this? What though in later years Pharaoh and his chariots are drowned in the Red sea? What though Sennacherib and his hosts perish at midnight by the blast of an archangel? What though the world reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, being drunken with the wine of God's wrath? What though the earth be scarred and burned by war? What though it be deluged with floods? What though it be oppressed with famines, pestilences and diseases? She still goes on in the same manner. At this hour the world is a sinful, rebellious world and until God shall work a work in our day such as we shall scarcely believe, though a man tell it to us, the world shall never be pure and holy! The sea is restrained by sand. We admire the beautiful poetic fact. But man, being naturally more ungovernable than the storm and more impetuous than the ocean, is not to be tamed—he will not bend his neck to the Lord, nor will he be obedient to the God of the whole earth!

“But what of this fact?”—you say—“We know it is true! We do not doubt it.” Stay awhile. I am now coming to deal with your hearts and consciences and may the Holy Spirit help me in doing so! I shall divide, as God would divide them—*saints* and *sinner*s.

First of all, you *Saints*, I have a word to say to you. I want you to look at this as a Doctrine not more evident in the history of mankind at large than abundantly verified in your own case. Come, now, I want to ask of you this morning, whether it cannot be truly said of you—“The sea is bound by sand. But I am one of those people who are bent on revolting from God, neither can any of His restraints keep me from sin.” Let us review, for a few moments, the various restraints which God has put upon His people to keep them from sins which, nevertheless, are altogether ineffectual without the accompanying power of *Irresistible Grace*.

First, then, remember there is a restraint of gratitude which, to the lowly regenerated heart, must necessarily form a very strong motive to obedience. I can conceive of nothing that ought so much to prompt me to obedience as the thought that I owe so much to God. O Heir of Heaven, you can look back to eternity and see your name in life's fair Book of Life. You can sing of electing love! You believe that a Covenant was made with Christ in your behalf and that your salvation was made secure in that moment when the hands of the Eternal Son grasped the stylus and signed His name as the Representative of all the elect! You believe that on Calvary your sins were all atoned for. You have in your soul the conviction that your sins—past, present and to come were all numbered on the Scapegoat's head of old and carried away forever! You believe that neither death nor Hell can ever divide you from your Savior's breast. You know that there is laid up for you a crown of life which fades not away and your expectant soul anticipates that with branches of palms in your hands, with crowns of gold on your head and streets of gold beneath your feet, you shall be happy forever! You believe yourself to be one of the favored of Heaven, a special object of Divine Solicitation. You think that all things work together for your good, yes, you are persuaded that everything in Providence has a special regard to you and to your favored Brothers and Sisters. I ask you, O Saint, is not this a bond strong enough to keep you from sin? If it were not for the desperate unstableness of your heart, would you not be restrained from sin by *this*? Is not your sin exceedingly sinful because it is sin against electing love, against redeeming peace, against all-surpassing mercy, against matchless affection, against shoreless Grace, against spotless love? Ah, sin has reached its climax when it dares to sin against such love as this! O Christian, your affection to your Lord and Master should restrain you from iniquity! And is it not a fearful proof of the terrible character of your heart, of your heart even now—for you still have evil remaining in it—that all the ties of gratitude are still incapable of keeping you from unholiness?

The sins of yesterday rise to your memory. Oh, look back on them! Do they not tell you that you do sin most ungratefully? O Saint, did you not yesterday use your Master's name in vain and not your Master's, only, but your Father's name? Had you not yesterday an unbelieving heart? Were you not petulant when girded with favors that ought to make a living man unwilling to complain? Were you not, when God has forgiven you ten thousand talents, angry with your neighbor who owed you a hundred pence? Ah, Christian, you are not yet free from sin, nor will you be until you have washed your garments in death's black stream—then you shall be holy, as holy as the glorified and pure and spotless, even as the angels around the Throne—but not till then! I ask you, O Saint, viewing your sins as sins against love and mercy, against Covenant promises, Covenant oaths, Covenant engagements, yes, and Covenant fulfillments—is not your sin a desperate thing and are not you, yourself, a rebellious and revolting being seeing that you cannot be restrained by such a barrier of adamant as your soul acknowledges?

Next, notice that the saint has not only this barrier against sin, but many others. He has the whole of God's Word given him by way of warning. Its pages he is accustomed to read. He reads there that if he breaks the statutes and keep not the Commandments of the Lord, his Father will visit his transgressions with a rod and his iniquity with stripes. He

has before him in God's Word abundant examples. He finds a David going with broken bones to his grave after his sin. He finds a Samson shorn of his locks and with his eyes put out. He sees proof upon proof that sin will find a man out—that the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways. Abundant warnings there are for the child of God, not of saints who have perished, for we have none such on record in Scripture and none ever shall finally perish—but we have many warnings of great and grievous damages sustained by God's own children when they have sailed out of their proper course! And yet, O Christian, against all warning and against all precept you dare to sin! Oh, are you not a rebellious creature and may you not this morning humble yourself at the thought of the greatness of your iniquity?

Again—the saint sins against his own experience. When he looks back upon his past life he finds that sin has always been a loss to him. He has never found any profit, but has always lost by it. He remembers such-and-such a transgression. It appeared sweet to him at the time, but oh, it made his Master withdraw His Presence and hide His face! The saint can look back on the time when sin hung like a millstone around his neck and he felt the terrible flame of remorse burning in his soul and knew how evil a thing and bitter it is to sin against God. And yet the saint sins! Now, if the unconverted man sins, he does not sin against his own experience, for he has not had that true heartfelt experience that renders sin exceedingly sinful. But every time you sin, O gray-headed Saint, you sin with a vengeance, for you have had all through your life so much proof of what sin has been to you! You have not been deceived about it, for you have felt its bitterness in your heart—and when you sip the accursed draught you are infatuated, indeed, because you sin against experience! Yes, and the youngest of the saints—have you not been made to taste the bitterness of sin? I know you have, if you are saints—and will *you* go and dip your fingers in the nauseous cup? Will you again put the poisoned goblet to your lips? Yes, you will! And because you do so in the teeth of your experience, it ought to make you weep that you should be such desperate rebels against such a loving God—who has put not merely a barrier of sand, but a barrier of tried steel to keep in your lusts—and yet they still break forth! Verily you are a rebellious and revolting people!

Then again, God guards all His children with Providence in order to keep them from sin. I could tell you even from the little experience I have had of spiritual things, many cases in which I feel I have been kept from sin by Divine Providence. There have been seasons when the strong hand of sin has appeared for a while to get the mastery over us and we have been dragged along by some strong inherent lust which we were prone to practice before our regeneracy. We were intoxicated with the lust—we remember how pleasurable it was to us in the days of our iniquity—how we reveled in it, till we were all of a sudden dragged to the very edge of the precipice and we looked down—our brain reeled, we could not stand! And do we not remember how just then some striking Providence came in our way and saved us, or else we would have been excommunicated from the Church for violating the rules of propriety? Ah, strange things happen to some of us. Strange things have happened to some of you! It was only a Providence which on some sad and solemn occasion to which you never look back without regret, saved you from sin which would have been a scab on your character. Bless God for that! But remember, notwithstanding the girdling of His Providence, how many times you have offended. And let the frequency of your sin remind you that you must indeed be a rebellious creature! Though He has afflicted you, you have sinned. Though He has given you chastisement, you have sinned. Though He has put you in the furnace, yet the dross has not departed from you! Oh, how corrupt your hearts are and how prone you are to still wander, notwithstanding all the barriers God has given you to encompass you!

Yet, once more let me remind you, Beloved, that the ordinances of God's House are all intended to be checks to sin. He girds us by the worship of the sanctuary. He girds us by the remembrance of our holy Baptism. And all else that is connected with Christianity is intended to check us from sin. And great are the effects which these produce. Yet all are insufficient, without the preserving Grace of God, given to us day by day! Let us think, Beloved, too, that God has given to us a tender conscience, more tender than the conscience of worldly men because He has given us *living* consciences, whereas theirs are often seared and dead. And yet, against this living conscience; against the warnings of the Spirit; against precept, against promise, against experience, against the honor of God and against the gratitude we owe Him, the saints of God have dared to sin! And they must confess before Him that they are rebellious and have revolted from Him. Bow down your heads with shame while you consider your ways and then lift up your hearts, Christians, in adoring love, that He has kept you when your feet were making haste to Hell where you would have gone but for His preserving Grace! Shall not this long-suffering of your God, this tender compassion, be your theme every day—

*“While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures?”*

Will you not pray that God should not cast you away, nor take His Holy Spirit from you, though you are a rebellious creature and though you have revolted against Him? This is for the saints.

And now may the Spirit help me while I strive to apply it to *sinner*/Sinner, I have solemn things to say to you this morning. Lend me for a few minutes your very closest attention. I will speak to you as though this were the last message I should ever deliver in your ears. I have asked my God that I may so speak to you, O Sinner—if I win not your heart, may I at least be free from your blood. And if I am not able to convince you of your sin, I may at any rate make you without excuse in that day “when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel.” Come, then, Sinner—in the first place I bid you consider your guilt! You have heard what I have said. The mighty ocean is kept in obedience by God and restrained within its channel by simple sand. And you, a pitiful worm, the creature of a day, the ephemera of an hour—you are a rebel against God! The sea obeys Him, you do not. Consider, I beseech you how many restraints God has put on you—He has not checked your lusts with sand but with cliffs! And yet you have burst through every bound in the violence of your transgressions. Perhaps He has checked your soul by the remembrance of your guilt. You have this morning felt yourself a despiser of God. Or if not a despiser, you are a mere hearer and have no part nor lot in this matter. Do you not remember your sins in the face of your mother's counsels and your father's strong admonitions? Do they never check you? Do you never think you see a mother's tears coming after you? Have you never heard a father's prayer for you? When you have been spending your nights in dissipation and have gone home late to your bed, have you never thought you have seen your father's spirit at your bed side, offering one more prayer for an Absalom, his son, or for an Ishmael, his rebellious child? Consider what you have learned, child. Baptized with a mother's tears—almost immersed in them. You were early taught to know something of God. Then you went from your mother's knees to those of a pious teacher. You were trained in a Sunday school, or at any rate you were taught to read the Bible. You know the threats of God—it is no new tale to you when I warn you that sinners must be condemned. It is no new story when I tell you that saints shall wear the starry crown. You know all that. Consider, then, how great is your guilt. You have sinned against the Light of God and knowledge. You are not the Hottentot sinner who sins in darkness, but you are a sinner before high Heaven in the full light of day! You have not sinned ignorantly—you have done it when you knew better. And when you come to be judged, you shall have an additional doom—because you knew your duty but you did it not. I charge that home upon you! I charge it solemnly upon your conscience—is it true, or is it not?

Some of you have had other things. Don't you remember, some little time ago, when sickness was rife and you were stretched on your bed? One night you will never forget—sickness had got a strong hold of you and the strong man bowed himself. Do you not remember what a sight you had, then, of the regions of the damned? Not with your eyes, but with your conscience? You thought you heard their shrieks. You thought you would be among them, yourself, soon. I think I see you—you turned your face to the wall and you cried—“O God, if You will save my life, I will give myself to You!” Perhaps it was an accident. You feared that death was very near; the terrors of death laid hold of you and you cried, “Oh! God, let me but reach home in safety and my bended knees and my tears pouring in torrents shall prove that I am sincere in the vow I make.” But did you perform that vow? No, you have sinned against God. Your broken vows have gone before you to judgment! Do you think it a little thing to make a promise to your fellow creature and break it? It may be so in your estimation, but not so in that of honest men! But do you think it a little thing to promise to your Maker and to break your promise? That is no light penalty—sinning against the Almighty God. It will cost you your soul, Man, and your soul's blood forever if you go on in this fashion! Vow and pay, or if you pay not, vow not, for God shall visit those vows upon you in the day when He makes inquisition for blood and destroys your soul! You have been guarded thus—remember that you have had extraordinary deliverances, the disease did not kill you—your broken bones were healed. You did not die. When the jaws of death were uplifted, they did not close upon you—you are still here. Your life is spared.

Oh, my dear Hearers, some of you are the worst! You have regularly sat in these pews—God is my witness how earnestly I have longed for you all in the heart of Christ. I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God to you. If I had been a time-server and kept back part of the Truth of God, much more honor would I have received from men than I have received. But I have cleared my conscience, I trust, from your blood. How many times have I seen men and women cry, the hot tears falling down their cheeks in quick succession and expected that I should have seen a change in some of your lives? But how many of you there are who have gone on sinning against warnings, which, I am sure, though they may have been excelled in eloquence, have never been exceeded in heartiness! Do you think it a little thing to sin against God's ambassador? It is no little sin—every time we sin against the warnings we have received, we sin so much the more heinously. But there are some—I had hope for you—but you have gone back to the ways of perdition. I have cried, “Turn you, turn you, why will you die?” But I have been obliged to go to my Master with that exclamation, “Who has

believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Woe unto you Bethsaida! It were better for you that you had been Tyre and Sidon than that you should have been left in the midst of privileges, if you should perish at last! Woe unto you Hearers of New Park Street! Woe unto you who listen not to the voice of the minister here! If you perish beneath our warnings, you shall perish in a horrible manner! "Woe unto you, Capernaum! You are exalted unto Heaven, but you shall be cast down to Hell." Woe unto you, young woman! You have had a pious mother and you have had many warnings. Woe unto you, young man! You have been a profligate youth; you have been brought to this House of Prayer from your infancy and you are sitting there even now—often does your conscience prick you—often your heart has told you that you are wrong! And yet you are still unchanged! Woe unto you! Woe unto you! And yet will I cry unto my God that He would avert that woe and pardon you—that He would not let you die, but bring you unto Himself lest now you perish in your sins! Sinners! God has a controversy with you. He tames the sea, but you will not be tamed! Nothing but His marvelous Grace exerted in you will ever check you in your lusts. You have sinned against warnings and reproofs, against Providences, mercies and judgments—and still you sin.

Oh, my Hearers, when you sin, you do not sin so cheaply as others. For when you sin, you sin in the very teeth of Hell! There is not a man or woman in this place, I am sure, who, when he or she sins, does not know that Hell is the inevitable consequence! Sirs, you do not sin in the dark! When God shall give you the wages of your iniquity, you shall not be able to say to God, "I did not know this would be the pay for my labor." When you did sow tares, you could not expect that you should reap wheat! You knew "that they who sow carnal things shall reap carnal things." You are sowing to the flesh, but not with the hope that you will reap salvation, for you know that, "He who sows to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." Sinner, it is a dreadful thing to sin when God puts Hell before you! What? Sin when He has given out His threat? Sin while Sinai is thundering, while Hell is blazing? That is to sin, indeed! But how many of you, my dear Hearers, have sinned like this? I would to God that He would turn this house into a Bochim, that you might weep over your guilt. It is the hardest thing in the world to make men believe their guilt. If we could once get them to do that, we would find that Christ would reveal to them His salvation! I cannot, with my poor voice and my weak utterance, even bring you to think that it is Christ Jesus in the ministry of His Spirit who can give you a true and real sense of your sin. Has He done so? Has He blessed my words to any of you? Do any of you feel your sins? Do any of you know that you are rebellious? Do you say from this time forth you will mend your ways? Sirs, let me tell you, you cannot do that! Are you better than the mightiest of men? The best of men are but men at the best and they are convinced that they cannot tame their own turbulent passions! God says that the sea can be tamed with sand, but the heart of man cannot be restrained—it is still revolting. Do you think you can do that which God says is impossible? Do you suppose yourself stronger than God Almighty? What? Can you change your own heart when God declares that we must be born-again from above, or else we cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven? Others have tried to do it, but they cannot. I beseech you, do not try to do it with your own strength! I am glad you know your guilt. But O, do not increase that guilt by seeking to wash it out in the foul stream of your own resolutions! Go and tell God that you know your sin and confess it before Him and ask Him to create in you a clean heart and renew in you a right spirit. Tell Him you know that you are rebellious and you are sure that you always will be unless He changes your heart. And I beseech you, rest not satisfied until you have a new heart!

My Hearer, be not content with Baptism. Be not content with the Lord's Supper. Be not content with shutting up your shop on Sunday. Be not content with leaving off drunkenness. Be not content with giving up swearing. Remember, you may do all that and be damned! It is a *new heart* and a right spirit you need! Begin with that and when you have that, all the rest will come right. Think, my Hearer! You may varnish and gild yourself, but you can never *change* yourself! You may moralize, but you can never spiritualize your heart. Think! You are this morning lost and think of this—you can do nothing whatever to save yourself! Let that thought rise in your soul and lay you very low. And when you go to God, cry, "O Lord, do what I cannot do—save me, O my God—for Your mercy's sake."

My dear Hearers, have I spoken harshly to you or will you rather take it in love? You who have sinned thus terribly against God, do you feel it? Well, *I* have no Grace *to offer* to you! *I* have no Christ *to offer* to you but I have Christ *to preach* to you! Oh, what shall I say? This—you are a sinner! "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." Are you a sinner? Then He came to save you! Oh, joyful sound! I am ready to leap in the pulpit for very joy to have this to preach to you. I can clap my hands with ecstasy of heart that I am allowed again to tell you—"It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Let me tell you that when He came into this world He was nailed to the Cross and that there He expired in desperate grief and agony and there He shrieked, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" There the

blood ran from His hands and feet and because He suffered, He is able to forgive. Sinner, do you believe that? You are black in sin—do you believe, in the face of your vileness, that Christ's blood can make you clean? What do you say, Sinner? God has convinced you of your sin—are you willing to be saved in God's way this morning? If you are willing, you shall be saved. It is written—Whoever will, let him come.” Are you thirsty this morning? Come here and drink. Are you hungry? Come and eat. Are you dying? Come and live! My Master bids me tell you—all you who feel your sins—that you are forgiven! All you who know your transgressions, He bids me tell you this—“I, even I, am He that blots out your transgressions, for My name's sake.” Have you been an adulterer, have you been a whoremonger, a thief, a drunkard, a Sabbath-breaker, a swearer? I find no exception in this proclamation—“Whoever will, let him come.” I find no exception in this—“He who comes to Me I will in nowise cast out.” Do you know your guilt? Then I do not ask you what your guilt is. Though you are the vilest creature, again, I tell you, if you know your guilt, Christ will forgive you. Believe it and you are saved!

And now—will you go away and forget all this? Some of you have wept this morning. No wonder. The wonder is that we do not all weep until we find ourselves saved! You will go away tomorrow to your farms and to your merchandize, to your shops and to your offices. And the impression that may have been produced on you this Sabbath morning will pass away like the morning cloud. My Hearers, I would not weep though you should call me all the names you can think of—but I will weep because you will not weep for yourselves! Sinners, why will you be damned? Is it a pleasant thing to revolt in the flames of Hell? Sirs, what profit is there in your death? What? Is it an honorable thing to rebel against God? Is it an honor to stand and be the scorn of God's universe? Do you say you shall not die? You will put it off a little while? Sinner, you will never have a more convenient season. If today is inconvenient, tomorrow will be more so. Put it off today, wipe away the tears from your eyes and the day may come when you would give a million worlds for a tear—but you shall not be able to get *one*! Many a man has had a soft heart. It has passed away and in later years he has said, “Oh that I could but shed a tear!” O God! Make Your Word like a hammer this morning that it may break the rocky heart in pieces! You who know your sins—as God's ambassador—I beseech you, “be you reconciled unto God.” “Kiss the Son lest He be angry and you perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

Remember, once lost, you are lost forever! But if you are once saved, you are certainly saved forever! “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved,” said Paul of old. Jesus Himself has said, “He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.”

I will not finish with a curse! “He who believes shall be saved.” God give you all an interest in that eternal blessing for the Lord Jesus' sake! Amen and amen!

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

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