

THE SCALES OF JUDGMENT

NO. 257

DELIVERED ON SABBATH MORNING, JUNE 12, 1859,
BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS.

“TEKEL; You are weighed in the balances and are found wanting.”
Daniel 5:27.

There is a weighing time for kings and emperors and all the monarchs of earth, albeit some of them have exalted themselves to a position in which they appear to be irresponsible to man. Though they escape the scales on earth, they must surely be tried at the bar of God. For nations there is a weighing time. National sins demand national punishments. The whole history of God's dealings with mankind proves that though a nation may go on in wickedness, it may multiply its oppressions, it may abound in bloodshed, tyranny and war—but an hour of retribution draws near—when it shall have filled up its measure of iniquity. Then shall the angel of vengeance execute its doom. There cannot be an eternal damnation for nations as nations. The destruction of men at last will be that of *individuals* and at the bar of God each man must be tried for himself. The punishment, therefore, of nations, is national. The guilt they incur must receive its awful recompense in this *present* time state.

It was so with the great nation of the Chaldeans. They had been guilty of blood. The monuments which still remain and which we have lately explored, prove them to have been a cruel and ferocious race. A people of a strange language they were and stranger than their language were their deeds. God allowed that nation for a certain period to grow and thrive, till it became God's hammer, breaking in pieces many nations. It was the axe of the Almighty—His battle axe and His weapon of war. By it He smote the loins of kings, yes, and slew mighty kings. But its time came at last. She sat alone as a queen and said, “I shall see no sorrow,” nevertheless, the Lord brought her low and made her grind in the dust of captivity and gave her riches to the spoiler and her pomp to the destroyer.

Even so must it be with every nation of the earth that is guilty of oppression. Humbling itself before God, when His wrath is kindled but a little, it may for awhile arrest its fate. But if it still continues in its bold unrighteousness, it shall certainly reap the harvest of its own sowing. So likewise shall it be with the nations that now abide on the face of the earth. There is no God in Heaven if the iniquity of slavery goes unpunished. There is no God existing in Heaven above if the cry of the Negro does not bring down a red hail of blood upon the nation that still holds the black man in slavery. Nor is there a God anywhere if the nations of Europe that still oppress each other and are oppressed by tyrants do not find out to their dismay that He executes vengeance. The Lord God is the avenger of everyone that is oppressed and the executor of everyone that oppresses.

I see, this very moment, glancing at the page of the world's present history, a marvelous proof that God will take vengeance. Piedmont, the land which is at this time soaked with blood, is only at this hour suffering the vengeance that has long been hanging over it. The snows of its mountains were once red with the blood of martyrs. It is not yet forgotten how there the children of God were hunted like partridges on the mountains. And so has God directed it—that the nations that performed that frightful act upon His children—shall there meet, rend and devour each other in the slaughter. And both sides shall be almost equal, so nothing shall be seen but that God will punish those who lift their hands against His anointed.

There has never been a deed of persecution—there has never been a drop of martyr's blood shed yet, but shall be avenged and every land guilty of it shall yet drink the cup of the wine of the wrath of God. And especially certain is there gathering an awful storm over the head of the empire of Rome—that spiritual despotism of the firstborn of Hell. All the clouds of God's vengeance are gathering into one—the firmament is big with thunder, God's right arm is lifted up even now and before long the nations of the earth shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire. They that have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication shall soon also have to drink with her of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. And they

shall reel to and fro, their loins shall be loose, their knees shall smite together when God fulfils the old handwriting on the rock of Patmos.

Our duty at this time is to take heed to ourselves as a nation that we purge ourselves of our great sins. Although God has given so much light and kindly favored us with the dew of His Spirit, yet England is a hoary sinner. Favorably with mercy does God regard her then let each Christian try to shake off the sins of his nation from his own skirt and let each one to the utmost of his ability labor and strive to purify this land of blood and oppression and of everything evil that still clings to her. So may God preserve this land. And may its monarchy endure till He shall come, before whom both kings and princes shall lose their power right cheerfully even as the stars fade when the King of light—the Son—lifts up His golden head.

With this brief preface, I will leave nations and kings all to themselves and consider the text principally as it has relation to each one of us. And may God grant that when we go out of this hall most of us may be able to say, “I thank God I have a good hope that when weighed in the scales at last I shall not be found wanting.” Or, if that is too much to expect, may I yet trust some will go away convicted of sin, crying in their own spirits, “I am wanting now, but if God in His mercy meets with me, I shall not be wanting long.”

I shall notice, first, that there is certain preliminary weighing which God would have us put ourselves to in this world and which indeed He has set up as kind of tests whereby we may be able to discover what shall be the result of the last decisive weighing. After I have mentioned these, I shall then come to speak of the last tremendous weighing of the Judgment Day.

I. LET US JUDGE OURSELVES THAT WE MAY NOT BE JUDGED. It is for us now to put ourselves through the various tests by which we may be able to discover whether we are, at this present time, short weight or not.

The first test I would suggest is that of human opinion. Now understand me. I believe that the opinion of man is utterly valueless when that opinion is based upon false premises and, therefore, draws wrong conclusions. I would not trust the world to judge God’s servants and it is a mercy to know that the *world* shall *not* have the judging of the Church, but rather, the *saints* shall judge the *world*. There is a sense in which I would say with the Apostle, “With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment—yes, I judge not myself.” Human opinion is not to be put in competition with Divine Revelation. But I speak now of judging ourselves and I do not think it safe, when weighing our own character, to prefer our own and exclude our neighbor’s judgment.

The esteem or contempt of honest men, which is instinctively shown without reference to party or prejudice, is not by any means to be despised. When a man knows that he is right he may snap his fingers in the face of all men but when a man’s conscience tells him that he is wrong—if at the judgment bar of men he is found guilty, he must not despise it, he must rather look on the judgment of men as being the first intimation of what shall be the judgment of God. Are you, my Hearer, at this time in the estimation of all your fellow creatures condemned as one who should be avoided? Do you clearly perceive that the righteous shun you because your example would contaminate them? Have you discovered that your character is not held to be estimable among honest and respectable men?

Let me assure you that you have good reason to be afraid, for if you cannot stand the trial of an honest fellow creature—if the laws of your country condemn you—if the very laws of society exclude you—if the imperfect judgments of earth pronounce you too vile for its association, how fearful must be your condemnation when you are put into the far more rigid scale of God’s justice! And how terrible must be your fate when the perfect community of the first-born in Heaven shall rise as one man and demand that you shall never behold their society! When a man is so bad that his fellow creatures themselves, imperfect though they be, are able to see in him not the mere seeds, but the very flower, the full bloom of iniquity, he should tremble. If you cannot pass that test, if human opinion condemns—if your own conscience declares that opinion to be just, you have good need to tremble, indeed, for you are put into the balances and are found wanting.

I have thought it right to mention this balance. There may be some present to whom it may be pertinent, but at the same time, there are far better tests for men, tests which are not so easily to be misunderstood. And I would go through some of these. One of the scales into which I would have every man put himself, at least once in his life—I say at least once, because, if not, Heaven is to him a place the gates of which are shut forever—I would have every man put himself into the scales of the Divine Law. There stands the Law of God. This Law is a balance which will turn, even were there

but a grain of sand in it. It is true to a hair. It moves upon the diamond of God's eternal immutable Truth. I put but one weight into the scale. It is this—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all your strength," and I invite any man who thinks himself to be of the right stamp and flatters himself that he has no need of mercy—no need of washing in the blood of Jesus Christ—no need of any atonement—I invite him to put himself into the scales and see whether he is full weight, when there is but so much as this one commandment in the other scale.

Oh, my Friends, if we did but try ourselves by the very first commandment of the Law, we must acknowledge that we are guilty. But when we drop in weight after weight, till the whole sacred ten are there, there is not a man under the scope of Heaven who has one grain of wit left, but must confess that he is short of the mark—that he falls below the standard which the Law of God requires. Mrs. Too-Good has often declared that she herself has done all her duty and perhaps a little more. That she has been even more kind to the poor than there was any occasion for. That she has gone to Church more frequently than even her religion requires. That she has been more attentive to the sacraments than the best of her neighbors and if she does not enter Heaven she does not know who will. "If I have not a portion among the saints, who can possibly hope to see God's face in light?"

No, Madam, but I am sorry for you. You are light as a feather when you go into the scales. In these wooden balances of your own ceremonies you may, perhaps, be found right enough, but in those eternal scales, with those tremendous weights—the Ten Commandments of the Law—the declaration is suspended over your poor, foolish head. "You are weighed in the balances and are found wanting,"

There may, perhaps, in congregations like this, be some extremely respectable body who has from his youth up, as he imagines, kept God's Law. His country, family, or associates can bring no charge against him and so he wraps himself up and considers that really he is *the man* and that when he appears at the gates of Heaven, he will be received as a rightful owner and proprietor of the reward of the righteous. Ah, my Friend, if you would take the trouble just to sit down and weigh yourself in the scales of the Law. If you would take but one command, the one in which you think yourself least guilty, the one that you imagine you have kept best and really look at its intent and spirit and view it in all its length and breadth in the Truth of God I know you would step out of the scale and say, "Alas, when I hoped to have gone down with a sound of congratulation, I find myself hurled up, light as the dust of the balance, while the tremendous Law of God comes sounding down and shakes the house." Let each man do this and everyone of us must retire from this place saying, "I am weighed in the balances and I am found wanting."

And now the true Believer comes forward and he claims to be weighed in another balance, for says he, according to this balance, if I am what I profess to be, I am not found wanting, for I can bring with me the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. And that is full weight, even though the Ten Commandments of the Law are weighed against it. I bring with me the full atonement, the perfect satisfaction of Jesus' blood and the perfect righteousness of a Divine Being, the spotless righteousness of Jesus the Son of God. I can be weighed against the Law and yet sit securely, knowing that now and forever, I am equal to the Law. It has nothing against me since Christ is mine. Its terrors have no power to frighten me and as for its demands they can exact nothing of me for they are fulfilled to the utmost in Christ. Well, I propose now to take professors and put *them* into the scales and try them. Let each one of us put ourselves into the scale of *conscience*. Many make a profession of religion in this age. It is the time of shams. There were never so many liars in the world since the days of Adam, as there are now. The Father of Lies has been more prolific of children at this than at any other period. There is such an abundance of newspapers and of talkers and of readers—and consequently flying reports. Wrong news and evil tales are far more numerous than ever. So, too, there is a great deal of vain show with religion. I sometimes fear we have not a grain more religion in England now than we had in the time of the Puritans. Then, though the stream in which it ran was narrow—it did run very deep, indeed.

Now, the banks have been burst. A great extent of country is covered with religious profession. But I tremble lest we should find at last that the flood was not deep enough to float our souls to Heaven. Will each one now in this congregation put himself into the scale of *conscience*, sit down and ask, "Is my profession true? Do I feel that before God I am an heir of the promises? When I sit at my Savior's table, have I any right to be a guest? Can I truly say that when I profess to be converted, I only profess what I have actually proved? When I talk experimentally about the things of the kingdom of God, is that experience a borrowed tale, or have I felt what I say in my own breast? When I stand up to preach, do I

preach that which I have really tasted and handled, or do I only repeat that which I have learned to utter with the lips, though it has never been fused in the crucible of my own heart?"

Conscience is not very readily cheated. There are some men whose consciences are not a safe balance. They have by degrees become so hardened in sin that conscience refuses to work. But still I will hope that most of us may abide by the test of our own conscience, if we let it freely work. Dear friends, I would that you would often retire to your chambers alone—shut the door and shut out all the world and then sit and review your past life. Scan carefully your present character and your present position. And do, I beseech you, try to get an honest answer from your own conscience. Bring up everything that you can think of that might lead you to doubt. You need be under no difficulty here. For are there not enough sins committed by us every day to warrant our suspicions that we are not God's children?

Well, let all these black accusers for death, let them all have their say. Do not cloak your sins. Head your diary through, let all your iniquities come up before you—(this is the pith of confession)—and then ask conscience whether you can truly say, "I have repented of all these. God is my witness, I hate these things with a perfect hatred. God also hears my witness that my trust is fixed alone in Him who is the Savior of sinners for salvation and justification. If I am not awfully deceived, I am a partaker of Divine Grace, having been regenerated and begotten again unto a lively hope." Oh that conscience may help each of us to say, "I am not a mere painted image of life, but I trust I have the life of Jesus made manifest in my body. My profession is not the pompous pageantry with which dead souls are carried respectably to perdition. It is the joy, the hope, the confidence of one who is being borne along in the chariot of mercy to his Father's home above."

Ah, how many people are really afraid to look their religion in the face! They know it to be so bad they dare not examine it. They are like bankrupts that keep no books. They would be very glad for a fire to consume their books, if they ever kept any, for they know the balance is all on the wrong side. They are losing, breaking up and they would not wish to keep an account of their losses or villainies. A man who is afraid to examine himself may rest assured that his ship is rotten and that it will not be long before it founders in the sea, to his eternal shipwreck. Call up conscience—put yourself in the scale and God help you, that the verdict may not be against you—that it may not be said of you, "You are weighed in the balances and are found wanting."

I would have every man also weigh himself in the scales of God's Word—not merely in that part of it which we call legal and which has respect to us in our fallen state. But let us weigh ourselves in the scale of the Gospel. You will find it sometimes a holy exercise, to read some Psalm of David, when his soul was most full of grace. And if you were to put questions as you read each verse, saying to yourself, "Can I say this? Have I felt as David felt? Have my bones ever been broken with sin as his were when he penned his penitential Psalms? Has my soul ever been full of true confidence in the hour of difficulty, as his was when he sang of God's mercies in the cave of Adullam, or the holds of Engedi? Can I take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord? Can I pay my vows now unto the Lord, in the courts of His house, in the presence of all His people?"

I am afraid that the book of Psalms itself would be enough to convince some of you that your religion is but superficial, that it is but a vain show and not a vital reality. God help you often to try yourselves in that scale. Then read over the life of Christ and as you read, ask yourselves whether you are conformed to Him, such as He describes a true disciple. Endeavor to see whether you have any of the meekness, any of the humility, any of the lovely spirit which He constantly inculcated and displayed. Try yourselves by the Sermon on the Mount—you will find it a good scale in which to weigh your spirits. Take, then, the Epistles and see whether you can go with the Apostle in what he said of his experience. Have you ever cried out like he—"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Have you ever felt like he, "That this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"?"

Have you ever known his self-abasement? Could you say that you seemed to yourself the chief of sinners and always accounted yourself less than the least of all saints? And have you known anything of his devotion? Could you join with him and say, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain"? Oh, Brothers and Sisters, the best of us—if we put the Bible into the scales for the proof of our state, if we read God's Word as a test of our spiritual condition—the very best of us has cause to tremble! Before Almighty God, on our bended knees, with our Bible before us, we have good reason to stop many a time and say, "Lord, I feel I have never yet been here, oh, bring me here! Give me true penitence, such as this I

read of. Give me real faith, oh, let me not have a counterfeit religion! Give me that which is the current coin of the realm of Heaven—Your own sterling Grace, which shall pass in the great day, when the gates of Heaven shall be opened and alas, the gates of Hell wide open, too.” Try yourselves by God’s Word and I fear there are some who will have to rise from it and say, “I am weighed in the balances and found wanting.”

Yet again, God has been pleased to set another means of trial before us. When God puts us into the scales I am about to mention, namely, the scales of Providence it behooves us very carefully to watch ourselves and see whether or not we are found wanting. Some men are tried in the scales of adversity. Some of you, my dear Friends, may have come here very sorrowful. Your business fails, your earthly prospects are growing dark. It is midnight with you in this world. You have sickness in the house. The wife of your bosom languishes before your weeping eyes. Your children perhaps, by their ingratitude, have wounded your spirits. But you are a professor of religion, you know that God is dealing with you now. He is testing and trying you. He knows you and He would have you know that a summer-time religion is not sufficient. He would have you see whether your faith can stand the test of trial and trouble.

Remember Job. What a scale was that in which he was put! What weights of affliction were those cast in one after another, very mountains of sore trouble. And yet he could bear them all, by His grace, and he came out of the scales proof against all the weight that even Satanic strength could hurl into the scale. And is it so with you? Can you now say—“The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord”? Can you submit to His will without murmuring? Or if you cannot master such a phase of religion as this, are you able still to feel that you cannot complain against God? Do you still say, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him”? Oh, my Friends, remember that if your religion will not stand the day of adversity, if it affords you no comfort in the time of storms, you would be better in that case without it than with it. For with it you are deceived, but without it you might discover your true condition and seek the Lord as a penitent sinner. If you are now broken in pieces by a little adversity, what will become of you in the day when all the tempests of God shall be let loose on your soul?

If you have run with the footmen and they have wearied you, what will you do in the swellings of Jordan? If you cannot endure the open grave, how can you endure the trump of the archangel and the terrific thunders of the Last Great Day? If your burning house is too much for you, what will you do in a burning world? If thunder and lightning alarm you, what will you do when the world is in a blaze and when all the thunders of God leave their hiding places and rush screaming through the world? If mere trials distress you and grieve you, oh, what will you do when all the hurricanes of Divine vengeance shall sweep across the earth and shake its very pillars till they reel and reel again? Yes, friends, I would have you, as often as you are tried and troubled, see how you bear it—whether your faith then stands and whether you could see God’s right hand, even when it is wrapped in clouds. Whether you can discover the silver lining to the black clouds of tribulation. God help you to come out of the scales, for many are weighed in them and have been found wanting.

Another set of scales there is, too, of an opposite color. Those I have described are painted black. These are of golden hue. They are the scales of *prosperity*. Many a man has endured the chills of poverty who could not endure sunny weather. Some men’s religion is very much like the palace of the queen of Russia which had been built out of solid slabs of ice. It could stand the frost—the roughest breeze could not destroy it. The sharp touch of winter could not devour it. They but strengthened and made it more lasting. But summer melted it all away and where once were the halls of revelry, nothing remained but the black rolling river. How many have been destroyed by prosperity? The fumes of popularity have turned the brains of many a man. The adulation of multitudes has laid thousands low. Popular applause has its foot in the sand, even when it has its head among the stars.

Many have I known who in a cottage seemed to fear God, but in a mansion have forgotten Him. When their daily bread was earned with the sweat of their brow, then it was they served the Lord and went up to His house with gladness. But their seeming religion all departed when their flocks and herds increased and their gold and silver was multiplied. It is no easy thing to stand the trial of prosperity. You know the old fable—I will just put it in a Christian light. When the winds of affliction blow on a Christian’s head, he just pulls around him the cloak of heavenly consolation and girds his religion about him all the tighter for the fury of the storm. But when the sun of prosperity shines on him, the traveler grows warm and full of delight and pleasure—he ungirds his cloak and lays it aside—so that what the storms of affliction never could accomplish, the soft hand and the witchery of prosperity has been able to perform.

It has loosed the loins of many a mighty man. It has been the Delilah that has shorn the locks and taken away the strength of many a Samson. This rock has witnessed the most fatal wrecks—

*“More the treacherous calm I dread,
Than tempests rolling over head.”*

But shall we be able to say, after passing through prosperity, “*this* is not my rest, *this* is not my God. Let Him give me what He may, I will thank Him for it, yet will I rejoice in the Giver rather than the gift. I will say unto the Lord, *You* only are my rest.” It is well if you can come out of these scales enabled honestly to hope that you are not found wanting.

There are again the scales of *temptation*. Many and many a man seems for a time to run well. But it is temptation that tries the Christian. In your business you are now honest and upright, but suppose a speculation crosses your path which involve but a very slight departure from the high standard of Christianity and, indeed, would not involve any departure from the low standard which your fellow tradesmen follow? Do you think you would be able to say, “How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” Could you say, “Should such a man as I do this? Shall I hasten to be rich, for if I do I shall not be innocent?” How has it been with you? You have had your trials. There has been an opportunity of making a little—have you taken it? Has God enabled you to endure when tempted, whether to unlawful gain, or to lustful pleasure, or to pride and vanity? Have you been enabled to stand against all these and to say, “Get you behind me Satan for you savor not the things which be of God, but those which be of man and of sin”?

How have you stood the test of temptation? If you have never been tempted you know nothing about this. How can we tell the worthiness of the ship till she has been at sea in the storm? You cannot know what you are till you have been through the practical test of everyday life. How, then, has it been with you? Have you been weighed in the balance and have you been enabled to say, “I know through grace I have been kept in the hour of temptation and with the temptation the Lord has always sent a way of escape. And here I am glorying in His Grace. I cannot rest in myself, but still I can say, ‘I am truly His.’ The work within me is not of man, neither by man—it is the work of the Spirit. I have found succor and support when my heart and my flesh have failed me”?

It is probable, my Hearers, that most of you are professors of religion. Let me ask you again, very earnestly, to test and try yourselves—whether your religion is real or not. If there are many false prophets in the world and those prophets have followers, must there not be many false men who are fatally deceived? Do not suppose, I beseech you, because you are a deacon, or have been baptized, or are a member of the Church, or are professors, you are therefore safe. The bleaching bones of the skeletons of self-deceived ones should warn you. On the rock of presumption thousands have been split that once sailed merrily enough. Take care, O Mariner! Though your boat may be gaily trimmed and may be brightly painted, yet it is none the surer after all. Take heed, lest the rocks be seen beneath the keel, lest they pierce you through and lest the waters of destruction overwhelm you. Oh, do not, I entreat you, say, “Why make this stir? I dare say I shall be all right at last.” Do not let your eternal state be a matter of suspicion or doubt. Decide now, I beseech you, decide now in your conscience whether you are Christ’s or not. Of all the most miserable men in the world and the most hopeless, I think those are most to be pitied who are indifferent and careless about religion.

There are some men whose feelings never run deeper than their skin. They either have no heart, or else it is so set round with fatness that you can never touch them. I like to see a man either desponding or rejoicing—*anxious* about his eternal state, or else *confident* about it. But you who never will question yourselves—you are just like the bullock going to the slaughter, or like the sheep that will enter the very slaughter-house and lick the knife that is about to take its blood. I wish I could speak this morning more earnestly. Oh, if some sparks from the Divine fire would now light up my soul, then, by His grace, I could speak to you like some of the Prophets of old—when they stood in the midst of a professing generation—to warn them. Oh that the very voice of God would speak to each heart this morning! While God is thundering on high may He thunder below in your souls! Be warned, my Hearers, against self deception. Be true to yourselves. If God is God, serve Him and do it truly. If the devil is God, serve him and serve him honestly and serve him faithfully. But do not pretend to be serving God while you are really indifferent and careless about it.

II. I must now close by endeavoring to speak of THE LAST GREAT BALANCE. And here would I speak very solemnly and may the Spirit of God be with us. Time shall soon be over. Eternity must soon begin. Death is hurrying onward. The pale horse at his utmost speed is coming to every inhabitant of this earth. The arrow of death is fitted to the string and soon it shall be sent home. Man’s heart is the target. Then, after death, comes the judgment. The dread assize

shall soon commence. The trump of the archangel shall awake the sleeping myriads and, standing on their feet, they shall confront the God against whom they have sinned. Methinks I see the scales hanging in Heaven—so massive that none but the hand of Deity can uphold them. Let me cast my eye upward and think of that hour when I must myself enter those scales and be weighed once and for all.

Come, let me speak for each man present. Those scales yonder are exact. I may deceive my fellows here, but deceive God I cannot. I may be weighed in the balances of earth which shall give but a partial verdict and so commit myself to a false idea that I am what I am not—that I am hopeful when I am hopeless. But those scales are true. There are no means, whatever, of flattering them into a false declaration. They will cry aloud and spare not. When I get there, the voice of flattery shall be changed into the voice of honesty. Here I may go daily crying, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” But there the naked Truth of God shall startle me and not a single word of consolation shall be given me that is not true.

Let me, therefore, ponder the fact that those scales are exactly true and cannot be deceived. Let me remember, also, that whether I will or not, into those scales I must go. God will not take me on my profession. I may bring my witnesses with me—I may bring my minister and the deacons of the Church to give me a character, which might be thought all-sufficient among men, but God will tolerate no subterfuge. Into the scales He will put me do, what I may—whatever the opinion of others may be of me and whatever my own profession. And let me remember, too, that I must be altogether weighed in the scales. I cannot hope that God will weigh my head and pass over my heart—that because I have correct notions of doctrine, therefore He will forget that my heart is impure, or my hands guilty of iniquity. My *all* must be cast into the scales.

Come, let me stretch my imagination and picture myself about to be put into those scales. Shall I be able to walk boldly up and enter them, knowing whom I have believed and being persuaded that the blood of Christ and His perfect righteousness shall bear me harmless through it all? Or shall I be dragged with terror and dismay? When the angel comes and says, “You must enter.” Shall I bend my knee and cry, “Oh, it is all right,” or shall I seek to escape? Now, thrust into the scale, do I see myself waiting for one solemn moment? My feet have touched the bottom of the scales and there stand those everlasting weights and now which way are they turned? Which way shall it be? Do I descend in the scale with joy and delight, being found through Jesus’ righteousness to be full weight and so accepted? Or must I rise, light, frivolous, unsound in all my fancied hopes—and kick the beam? Oh, shall it be, that I must go where the rough hand of vengeance shall seize and drag me downward, into fell despair?

Can you picture the moments of suspense? I can see a poor man standing on the drop with the rope round his neck and oh, what an instant of apprehension must that be! What thoughts of horror must float through his soul! How must a world of misery be compressed into a second? But O, my Hearers, there is a far more terrible moment still for you that are Godless, Christless, careless—that have made a profession of religion and yet have it not in your hearts. I see you in the scales, but what shall we say? The wailings of Hell seem not sufficient to express your misery. In the scales *without Christ!* Not long before you shall be in the jaws of Hell, without pity and without compassion. O, my dear Hearers, if you could hope to get to Heaven without being weighed—if God would believe what you say without testing you—I would not dare admit asking you this morning to ascertain the state of your own hearts. But if God will try you, try yourselves. If He will judge you, judge your own hearts.

Don’t say that because you profess to be religious therefore you are right—that because others imagine you to be safe that therefore you are. Weigh yourselves—put your hearts into the balance. Do not be deceived. Pull the bandage from your eyes, that your blindness may be removed and that you may pass a just opinion upon yourselves as to what you are. I would have you not only see yourselves as others see you, but I would have you see yourselves as God sees you. For that, after all, is your real state. His eye is not to be mistaken. He is the God of Truth and just and right He is. How fearful a thing will it be, if any of us who are members of Christ’s Church shall be cast into Hell at last! The higher we ascend, the greater will be our fall—like Icarus in the old parable who flew aloft with wax wings—till the sun did melt them and he fell.

And some of you are flying like that—you are flying up with wax wings. What if the terrible heat of the Judgment Day should melt them! I sometimes try to picture how terrible the reverse to be if found to be rejected at last. Let what I shall say for myself suit us all. No, and must it be, if I live in this world and think I am a Christian and am not—must it be that I must go from the songs of the sanctuary to the curses of the synagogue of Satan? Must I go from the cup of the

Eucharist to the cup of devils? Must I go from the table of the Lord to the feast of fiends? Shall these lips that now proclaim the word of Jesus one day utter the wailings of perdition? Shall this tongue that has sung the praises of the Redeemer be moved with blasphemy? Shall it be that this body which has been the receptacle of so many a mercy—shall it become the very house and home of every misery that vengeance can invent? Shall these eyes that now look on God's people, one day behold the frightful sights of spirits destroyed in that all-consuming fire?

And must it be that the ears that have heard the hallelujahs of this morning shall one day hear the shrieks and groans and howls, of the lost and damned spirits? It must be so if we are not Christ's. Oh, how frightful will it be! Methinks I see some grave professor at last condemned to Hell. There are multitudes of sinners, lying in their irons and tossing on their beds of flame—lifting themselves upon their elbows for a moment, they seem to forget their tortures as they see the professor come in and they cry—"Are you become like one of us? Is the preacher himself damned? What? Is the deacon of the Church come to sit with drunkards and with swearers? "Ah," they cry, "aha, aha, are you bound up in the same bundle with us, after all?" Surely the mockery of Hell must be itself a most fearful torture—professing sinners mocked by those who never professed religion.

But mortal fire can never describe the miseries of a disappointed hope, when that hope is lost—it involves the loss of mercy, the loss of Christ, the loss of life—and it involves moreover, the terrible destruction and the awful vengeance of Almighty God. Let us one and all go home this day, when yet God's sky is heavy, and let us bend ourselves at His altar and cry for mercy. Every man apart—husband apart from wife. Apart, let us seek our chambers—praying again and again, "Lord renew me—Lord forgive me—Lord accept me." And while, perhaps, the tempest which is now lowering over the sky and before another tempest direr still shall fall on us with its fearful terrors, may you find peace. May we not, then, find ourselves lost, lost forever, where hope can never come! It shall be my duty to search myself. I hope I shall be enabled to put myself into the scale—promise me, my Hearers, that each of you will do the same.

I was told one day this week by someone, that having preached for several Sabbaths lately upon the comforting doctrines of God's Word, he was afraid that some of you would begin to console yourselves with the idea that you were God's elect when perhaps you were not. Well, at least, such a thing shall not happen, if I have done what I hoped to do this morning. God bless you, for Jesus' sake.

Adapted from *The C.H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software, 1.800.297.4307