

CHRIST GLORIFIED AS THE BUILDER OF HIS CHURCH

NO. 191

A SERMON
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 BY THE REV. C. H. SPURGEON
 AT THE MUSIC HALL, ROYAL SURREY GARDENS

“He shall build the temple of the LORD, and he shall bear the glory.”
Zechariah 6:13

“There’s music in all things, if men had ears;
 This world is but the echo of the spheres.”

HEAVEN sings evermore. Before the throne of God, angels and redeemed saints extol His name. And this world is singing too—sometimes with the loud noise of the rolling thunder, of the boiling sea, of the dashing cataract, and of the lowing cattle. And often with that still, solemn harmony which flows from the vast creation, when in its silence it praises God.

Such is the song which gushes in silence from the mountain lifting its head to the sky, covering its face sometimes with the wings of mist, and at other times unveiling its snow-white brow before its Maker, and reflecting back His sunshine, gratefully thanking Him for the light with which it has been made to glisten, and for the gladness of which it is the solitary spectator, as in its grandeur it looks down upon the laughing valleys.

The tune to which heaven and earth are set is the same. In heaven they sing, “The LORD be exalted; let his name be magnified for ever.” And the earth sings the same—“Great art thou in thy works, O LORD! and unto thee be glory.” It would seem, therefore, a strange anomaly if the church, the temple of the living God, should be void of song, and we bless God that such an anomaly does not exist, for, “day and night they praise God in his temple.”

And while it is true the ceaseless circles of the starry heavens are praising Him without cessation, it is also true that the stars of earth, the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, are each of them evermore singing their hymns of praise to Him. Today, in this house, thousands of voices shout His name, and when the sun of today shall set, it shall rise upon another land, where Christian hearts awakened shall begin to praise as we have just concluded.

And when tomorrow we shall enter upon the business of the week, we will praise Him when we rise, we will praise Him when we retire to rest, and we will solace ourselves with the sweet thought that when the link of praise here is covered with darkness, another golden link is sparkling in the sunshine in the lands where the sun is rising when it sets upon us.

And mark how the music of the church is set to the same tune as that of heaven and earth—“Great God, thou art to be magnified.” Is not this the unanimous song of all the redeemed below? When we sing, is not this the sole burden of our hosannas and hallelujahs?—“Unto him that liveth and sitteth upon the throne, unto him be glory, world without end.”

Now, my text is one note of the song. May God help me to understand and to make you to understand it also. “*He shall build the temple of the LORD, and he shall bear the glory.*” We all know that the Lord Jesus Christ is here alluded to, for the context runs—“Behold the man, whose name is the branch”—which title is always applied to the Messiah, Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

“He grew up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD; even he shall build the temple of the LORD, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and He shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”

Now we shall notice this morning, first of all, the *temple*, that is the church of Christ. We shall notice next, its *builder*—“He,” that is Jesus, “shall build the temple.” Then we shall stop a moment and pause to admire His *glory*—“He shall bear the glory.” Then we shall attempt, under the good hand of the Holy Spirit, to make some *practical applications of the subject*.

I. The first point is THE TEMPLE.

The temple is the church of God. And here let me begin by just observing, that when I use the term, “church of God,” I use it in a very different sense from that in which it is sometimes understood. It is usual with many Church of England people to use the term “church” as specially applying to the bishops, archdeacons, rectors, curates, and so forth—these are said to be the church and the young man who becomes a pastor of any congregation is said to “enter the church.”

Now I believe that such a use of the term is not Scriptural. I would never for one moment grant to any man that the ministers of the Gospel constitute the church. If you speak of the army, the whole of the soldiers constitute it—the officers may sometimes be spoken of first and foremost, but still the private soldier is as much a part of the army as the highest officer.

And it is so in the church of God—all Christians constitute the church. Any company of Christian men, gathered together in holy bonds of communion for the purpose of receiving God’s ordinances, and preaching what they regard to be God’s truths, is a church. And the whole of these churches gathered into one, in fact all the true believers in Christ scattered throughout the world, constitute the One true Universal Apostolic Church, built upon a rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Do not imagine, therefore, when I speak at any time of the church, that I mean the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and some twenty other dignitaries and the whole host of ministers. No, nor when I speak of the church do I mean the deacons, the elders, and pastors of the Baptist denomination or any other—I mean all them who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth—for these make up the one universal church which has communion in itself with itself, not always in the outward sign, but always in the inward grace.

This is the church which was elect of God before the foundation of the world, which was redeemed by Christ with His own precious blood, which has been called by His Spirit, which is preserved by His grace, and which at last shall be gathered in to make the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.

Well, now, this church is called the temple of God and Christ is said to be its builder. Why is the church called the temple? I reply very briefly, because the temple was the place where *God especially dwelt*. It was true that He did not wholly dwell in the temple made with hands, of man’s building, which Solomon piled upon Mount Sion, but it is true that in a special sense the Infinite Majesty there held its tabernacle and its dwelling place. Between the wings of the overshadowing cherubim, there did shine the bright light of the Shekinah, the type, the manifestation, and the proof of the special presence of JEHOVAH, the God of Israel.

It is true God is everywhere. In the highest heavens and in the deepest hell God is to be found, but especially did He dwell in His temple, so that when His people prayed, they were bidden to turn their eye towards the temple, as Daniel did, when he opened his window towards Jerusalem, and offered his prayer. Now such is the church.

If you would find God, He dwells on every hilltop and in every valley. God is everywhere in creation. But if you want a special display of Him, if you would know what is the secret place of the tabernacle of the Most High, the inner chamber of divinity—you must go where you find the church of true believers, for it is here He makes His continual residence known—in the hearts of the humble and contrite, who tremble at His Word.

Again, the temple was the place of the *clearest manifestation*. He who would see God the best of all must see Him in His temple. I repeat, He is to be discovered everywhere. If you stood on Carmel’s top and looked towards the great sea wherein are all the ships and the great leviathan He had made to play therein, there might God be discovered in His great strength.

If you turned your eyes on the same hill and looked towards the vale of Esdraelon, there was God to be seen in every blade of grass, in every sheep feeding by the stream. God is everywhere to be discovered. But if you would *see* Him, it is not on Bashan, it is not on Hermon, it is not on Tabor—it was on Mount Zion that the Lord God loved to make a special display of Himself. It is so with the church.

God is to be seen in the midst of her, her helper, her strength, her teacher, her guide, her deliverer, her sanctifier. In holy communion—in the breaking of bread, and in the pouring out of wine, in holy baptism—in the immersion of believers into the Lord Jesus Christ, in the preaching of the Word, in the constant declaration of the great salvation of Jesus, in the lifting up of the cross, in the high exalting of Him that died upon it, in the preaching of the covenant, in the declaration of the grace of God—here is He to be seen, here is His name written in brighter letters and in clearer lines than elsewhere the wide world o'er. Hence His church is said to be His temple.

Oh, Christian people, you know this, for God dwells in you and walks with you. You dwell in Him and he dwells in you—"The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him, and he will show them His covenant." It is your happy privilege to walk with God. He manifests Himself to you as He does not unto the world. He takes you into His inner chamber. He manifests His love. The Song of Solomon is sung in your courts and nowhere else. It is not the song of the world—it is the sonnet of the inner chamber, the song of the house of wine, the music of the banquet.

You understand this, for you have been brought into near acquaintance with Christ. You have been made to lean your head upon His bosom; you have been taught to look into His heart and to see eternal thoughts of love there towards you. You know well, better than we can tell you, what it is to be the temple of the living God.

And once more. We should fail to describe the reason why the word "temple" is used to picture the church if we did not observe that the church is like the temple—a *place of worship*. There was a law passed by God that no offering should be presented to Him except upon the one altar in His temple at Jerusalem, and that law is extant to this day.

No acceptable service can be offered to Christ except by His church. Only those who believe in Christ can offer songs, and prayers, and praises that shall be received of God. Whatever ordinances *you* attend to, who are without Christ in your hearts—you do belie that ordinance and prostitute it—you do not honor God therein.

Two men go up to the temple to pray—the one a believer, the other an unbeliever. He who is an unbeliever may have the gifts of oratory, the mightiest fluency of speech, but his prayer is an abomination unto God—whilst the most feeble utterance of the true believer is received with smiles by Him that sits upon the throne.

Two persons go to the Master's table—the one loves the ordinance in its outward sign and reverences it with superstition, but he knows not Christ. The other believes in Jesus and knows how to eat His flesh and drink His blood as a worthy partaker in that divine ordinance. God is honored in the one, the ordinance is dishonored in the other.

Two persons come to holy baptism—the one loves the Master, believes in His name, and trusts Him. He is baptized—he honors Christ. Another comes, perhaps an unconscious infant, one who is incapable of faith or has no faith. He dishonors God, he dishonors the ordinance in venturing to touch it, when he is not one of the church, and therefore, has no right to offer sacrifice of prayer and praise unto the Lord our God.

There is only one altar—that is Christ. And there is only one set of priests, namely, the church of God, the men chosen out of the world to be clothed in white robes to minister at His altar, and whosoever pretends to worship God, worships Him not aright. His offering is like that of Cain. God has no respect to his sacrifice, "for without faith it is impossible to please God."

We care not who it is that does the act—unless he believes, he cannot win pleasure from God, nor shall his sacrifice be accepted.

I have thus noted the reasons why the church is said to be the temple. As there was only one temple, so there is only one church. That one church is His holy place, where God dwells; where God accepts worship, where songs of praise are daily uttered, and the smoking incense of prayer continually comes up before His nostrils with acceptance.

II. We have an interesting subject in the second part of our text. “He shall build the temple of the LORD.” CHRIST IS THE CHURCH’S ONLY BUILDER.

Now I shall need to make a parallel between Christ’s building the church and Solomon, as the builder of the first temple. When Solomon built the temple, the first thing he did was to obtain instructions with regard to the model upon which he should build it. Solomon was exceeding wise, but I do not think he was his own architect.

The Lord, who had shown the pattern of the old tabernacle in the wilderness to Moses, doubtless showed the pattern of the temple to Solomon, so that the pillars and the roof and the floor thereof were all ordained of God and every one of them settled in heaven.

Now, Christ Jesus in this is no Solomon—with this exception—that being God over all, blessed forever, He was His own Architect. Christ has made the plan of His church. You and I have made a great many plans for the building up of that church. The Presbyterian makes his plans extremely precise. He will put an elder in every corner and the Presbytery is the great groundwork—the pillar and the ground of the truth—and right is he in so doing to an extent.

The Episcopalian builds his temple too. He will have a bishop at the doorpost and he will have a priest to shut the gate. He will have everything built according to the model that was seen by Cranmer in the mount, if he ever was there at all. And those of us who are of severer discipline and have a simpler style, must have Christ’s church always built in the congregational order—every congregation distinct and separate, and governed by its own bishop, and deacons, and elders.

But mark, Christ does not attend to our points of church government, for there is one part of Christ’s church that is Episcopalian, and looks as if a bishop of the Church of England had ordered it. Another part is Presbyterian, another Baptist, another Congregational. And yet all these styles of architecture somehow fused into one by the Great Architect make that goodly structure which is called, “The temple of Christ, the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Christ must be His own architect. He will bring out different points of His truth in different ways. Why, I believe that different denominations are sent on purpose to set out different truths. There are some of our brethren a little too high—they bring out better than any other people the grand old truths of sovereign grace.

There are some, on the other hand a little too low. They bring out with great clearness the great and truthful doctrines of man’s responsibility. So that two truths that might have been neglected, either the one or the other—if only one form of Christianity existed—are both brought out, both made resplendent by the different denominations of God’s people, who are alike chosen of God and precious to Him.

God forbid I should say anything that would bolster up any in their errors. Nevertheless God’s people, even in error, are a precious people. Even when they seem to be as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter, they are still comparable to fine gold. Rest assured that the Lord has deep designs to answer, even by the divisions of His church.

We must not interfere with Christ’s reasons, nor with His style of architecture. Every stone that is in the temple, Jesus Christ ordained should be put where it is. Even those stones that are most contemptible and unseen, were put in their places by Him. There is not one board of cedar, one piece of burnished pinnacle, that was not foreseen and prearranged in that eternal covenant of grace which was the great plan that Christ, the Almighty Architect, did draw for the building of the temple to His praise. Christ, then, is the only Architect and he shall bear the glory, for He designed the building.

Now, you remember that when Solomon set to work to build his temple, he found a mountain ready for his purpose, mount Moriah. The top of it was not quite broad enough—he had therefore to enlarge it, so that there might be room for the beautiful temple, the joy of the whole earth. When Jesus Christ came

to build His temple, he found no mountain on which to build it. He had no mountain in our nature, He had to find a mountain in His own, and the mountain upon which He has built His church is the mountain of His own unchangeable affection, His own strong love, His own omnipotent grace and infallible truthfulness.

It is this that constitutes the mountain upon which the church is built and on this the foundation has been digged, and the great stones laid in the trenches with oaths and promises and blood to make them stand secure, even though earth should rock and all creation suffer decay.

Then after Solomon had his mountain ready and the foundation builded, the next trouble was he had no trees near at hand—there were, however, fine trees growing in Lebanon, but his servants had not skill enough to cut them down. He had, therefore, to send for Hiram, king of Tyre, with his servants, to cut down the trees upon Lebanon, which, after being shaped according to the model, were to be sent by rafts or floats to Joppa, the port nearest to Jerusalem, and there brought a short distance over land for the building of the temple.

He had to do the same with the stones of the quarry. For the different stones that were needed for the building had to be hewn out of the quarry by Hiram's servants, assisted by some of Solomon's people, who had inferior skill, and therefore, were set about the more laborious and rougher parts of the work. The same fact you will notice, if you will read the history of the building of Solomon's temple, occurred with regard to the making of the vessels of the house. It is said that Hiram cast them and Solomon found the gold. And the molds were made in the great plain and Solomon cast them there, with Hiram for his chief designer and director.

Ah! but herein Solomon fails to be a type of Christ. Christ builds the temple Himself. There stand the cedars of Lebanon that the Lord has planted, but they are not ready for the building. They are not cut down, nor shaped, nor made into those planks of cedar whose odoriferous beauty shall make glad the courts of the Lord in paradise.

No. Jesus Christ must cut them down with the axe of conviction. He must cut them up with the great saw of His law. He must plane and polish them with His holy Gospel. And when He has made them fit to be pillars in the house of the Lord, then they shall be carried across the sea to heaven. Then shall they be placed in His temple forever. No Hiram is needed. The axe is in *His* hand, the plane is in *His* hand too. He understands well that business—was He not a carpenter on earth? And spiritually, He shall be the same to His church forever and ever.

It is even the same with the stones of the temple. We are like rough stones in the quarry. Behold the hole of the pit whence we were digged and the rock whence we were hewn. But we were hewn out of that rock by no hand but Christ's. He raised up seed unto Abraham out of the stones of the pit. It was His own hammer that broke the rock in pieces and His own arm of strength that wielded the hammer, when He dashed us from the rock of our sin.

Though we are each of us being polished so that we may be ready for the temple, yet there is nothing that polishes but Christ. Afflictions cannot sanctify us, except as they are used by Christ as His mallet and His chisel. Our joys and our efforts cannot make us ready for heaven apart from the hand of Jesus who fashions our hearts aright and prepares us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Thus you notice that herein Jesus Christ excels Solomon, for He provides all the materials. He hews them Himself. He roughcasts them first, and then afterwards, during life, polishes them till He makes them ready to transport them to the hill of God, whereon His temple is to be built.

I was thinking what a pretty figure was that floating of the trees of Lebanon after being sawn into planks and made ready to be fixed as pillars of the temple—what a fine emblem of death! Is it not just so with us? Here we grow and are at length cut down, and made ready to become pillars of the temple. Across the stream of death we are ferried by a loving hand and brought to the port of Jerusalem, where we are safely landed, to go no more out forever, but to abide as eternal pillars in the temple of our Lord.

Now you know the Tyrians floated these rafts, but no stranger, no foreigner shall float us across the stream of death. It is remarkable that Jesus Christ always uses expressions with regard to His people

which impute their death to Him alone. You will recollect the expression in the Revelation—“Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.”

But when He begins to reap, not the vintage—which represents the wicked that were to be crushed—but the harvest which represents the godly. Then it is said, “He that sat upon the throne thrust in the sickle.” He did not leave it to His angels, He did it Himself.

It is so with the bringing of those planks and the moving of those stones. I say no king of Tyre and Sidon shall do it—Jesus Christ, who is the death of death and hell’s destruction—He Himself shall pilot us across the stream and land us safe on Canaan’s side. “He shall build the temple of the LORD.”

Well, after these things were brought, Solomon had to employ many thousand workmen to put them in their proper places. You know that in Solomon’s temple there was no sound of hammer heard, for the stones were made ready in the quarries, and brought all shaped and marked so that the masons might know the exact spot in which they were to be placed—so that no sound of iron was needed.

All the planks and timbers were carried to their right places, and all the catches with which they were to be linked together were prepared, so that there might not even be the driving of a nail—everything was ready beforehand. It is the same with us.

When we get to heaven, there will be no sanctifying us there, no squaring us with affliction, no hammering us with the rod, no making us meet there—we must be made meet here. And blessed be His name, all *that* Christ will do beforehand. When we get there, we shall not need angels to put this member of the church in one place and that member in another. Christ who brought the stones from the quarry and made them ready, shall Himself place the people in their inheritance in paradise.

For He has Himself said, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go away, I will come again and I will receive you unto myself.” Christ shall be His own usher. He shall receive His people Himself. He shall stand at the gates of heaven Himself to take His own people and to put them in their allotted heritage in the land of the blessed.

I have no doubt you have read many times the story of Solomon’s temple and you have noticed that he overlaid all the temple with gold. He provided much of the substance, but his father David brought him a good store. Now Jesus will overlay all of us with gold when He builds us in heaven. Do not imagine we shall be in heaven what we are today.

No, beloved, if the cedar could see itself after it had been made into a pillar, it would not know itself. If you could see yourselves as you shall be made, you would say, “It does not yet appear how great we must be made.” Nor were these pillars of cedars to be left naked and unadorned—though they had been fair and lovely then—they were overlaid with sheets of gold. So shall we be. “It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body,” plated with pure gold—no longer what it was, but precious, lustrous, glorified.

And in the temple, we understand, there was a great brazen sea, in which the priests did wash themselves, and there were other brazen seas in which they washed the lambs and bullocks when they were offered. In heaven there is a great laver, in which all our souls have been washed, “for they have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

Now Christ Himself prepares this sacred sea. He filled it with blood from His own veins. As for our prayers and praises, the great laver in which they are washed was also made and filled by Christ—so that they with us are clean, and we offer acceptable sacrifices to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I say again, before I leave this head, there is no part of the great temple of the church which was not made by Christ. There is a great deal in the church on earth that Christ had nothing to do with, but there is nothing in His true church and nothing especially in His glorified church, which was not put there by Him. Therefore, we may well come to the conclusion, on the last head, He shall bear all the glory, for He was the only builder of it.

III. Now, what a sweet thing it is to try and GLORIFY CHRIST.

I am happy this morning to have a subject that will magnify my Master. But is it not a sad thing that when we would magnify Christ most, our poor, failing lips refuse to speak. Oh, if you would know my

Master's glory, you must see it for yourselves, for like the Queen of Sheba, the half can never be told you, even by those who know Him most and love Him best. Half His glory can never be told.

Pause a while and let me endeavor to address to you a few loving words. Your Master, O you saints of the Lord, has prepared you and will build you into His temple. Speak and say, He *shall* have all the glory. Let us note, first, that the glory which He shall have will be a weighty glory. Dr. Gill says, "The expression implies that the glory will be a weighty one, for it said, 'He shall bear the glory.'"

"They shall hang," says another expression, "upon him all the glory of His Father's house." And in another place, we are told that there is "an exceeding weight of glory" which is prepared for the righteous. How great, then, the weight of glory which shall be given to Christ.

Oh, think not that Christ is to be glorified in such humble measure, as He is on earth. The songs of heaven are nobler strains than ours. The hearts of the redeemed pay Him loftier homage than we can offer. Try not to judge of the magnificence of Christ by the pomp of kings or by the reverence paid to mighty men on earth—His glory far surpasses all the glory of this time and space.

The honor which shall be bestowed upon Him is as the brightness of the sun. The honors of earth are but the twinklings of a fading star. Before Him, at this very day, principalities and powers do bow themselves. Ten thousand times ten thousand seraphim wait at His footstool. "The chariots of the LORD are twenty thousand even thousands of angels," and all these wait His beck and His command.

And as for His redeemed, how do they magnify Him? never staying, never changing, never wearying—they raise their shout higher, and higher, and higher, and louder still, the strain is lifted up and evermore it is the same—"To him who liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore, unto him be glory, world without end."

And note again, that this glory is *undivided* glory. In the church of Christ in heaven, no one is glorified but Christ. He who is honored on earth has someone to share the honor with him, some inferior helper who labored with him in the work. But Christ has none. He is glorified and it is all His own glory.

Oh, when you get to heaven, you children of God, will you praise any but your Master? Calvinists, today you love John Calvin—will you praise him there? Lutheran, today you do love the memory of that stern reformer—will you sing the song of Luther in heaven? Followers of Wesley, you have a reverence for that evangelist—will you in heaven have a note for John Wesley? None, none, none! Giving up all names and all honors of men, the strain shall rise in undivided and unjarring unison—"Unto him who loved us, that washed us from our sins in his blood, unto him be glory for ever and ever."

But again—He shall have *all* the glory. All that can be conceived, all that can be desired, all that can be imagined shall come to Him. Today you praise Him, but not as you can wish. In heaven you shall praise Him to the summit of your desire. Today you see Him magnified, but you see not all things put under Him. In heaven all things shall acknowledge His dominion. There every knee shall bow before Him and every tongue confess that He is Lord. He shall have *all* the glory.

But to conclude on this point, this glory is *continual* glory. It says He *shall* bear all the glory. When shall this dominion become effete? When shall this promise be so fulfilled that it is put away as a worn out garment? Never,

*"While life, and thought, and being last,
Or immortality endures,"*

we shall never leave off praising Christ.

We think we can almost guess how we shall feel when we get to heaven with regard to our Master. I think if I should ever be privileged to behold His blessed face with joy, I shall want nothing but to be allowed to approach His throne and cast what little honor I may have before His feet, and then be there and evermore adore the matchless splendor of His love, the marvels of His might.

Suppose someone entering were to say to the redeemed, "Suspend your songs for a moment! You have been praising Christ, lo, these six thousand years—many of you have without cessation praised

Him now these many centuries! Stop your song a moment—pause and give your songs to someone else for an instant.”

Oh, can you conceive the scorn with which the myriad eyes of the redeemed would smite the tempter? “Stop from praising Him! No, never. Time may stop, for it shall be no more. The world may stop, for its revolutions must cease. The universe may stop its cycles and the moving of its world, but for us to stop our songs—never, never!”

And it shall be said, “Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.” He shall have all the glory and he shall have it forever. His name shall endure forever. His name shall continue as long as the sun—men shall be blessed in Him and all generations shall call Him blessed. Therefore shall they praise Him forever and ever.

IV. Now, in conclusion, let us make A PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF OUR TEXT.

Brothers and sisters, are we today built upon Christ? Can we say that we hope that we are a part of His temple—that His handiwork has been exhibited upon us and that we are built together with Christ? If so, listen to one word of exhortation. Let us evermore honor Him. Oh! methinks every beam of cedar, and every slab of gold, and every stone of the temple, felt honored when it was raised up to be a part of the fabric for JEHOVAH’s praise.

And if that cedar, that marble, could have been vocal in that day when the flame descended from heaven—the token of JEHOVAH’s presence—the stone, and the cedar, and the gold, and the silver, and the brass—all would have burst out into song and would have said, “We praise Thee, O God, for Thou hast made the gold more than gold, and the cedar more than cedar, inasmuch as Thou hast consecrated us to be the temple of Thine indwelling.”

And now, will you not do the same? O my brothers and sisters! God has highly honored you to be stones in the temple of Christ. When you think of what you were and what you might have been—how you might have been stones in the black dungeons of vengeance forever—dark damp stones, where the moss and the weed, and the slimy thing forever might have lived—disgraced, abandoned, cast away in blackness of darkness—when you think of this and then remember that you are stones in JEHOVAH’s temple—living stones—oh, you must say that you will praise Him, for man is more than man, now that God dwells in him.

Daughters of Jerusalem, rejoice! You are more than women now. Sons of Israel, rejoice! For your manhood is exalted—He has made you temples of the Holy Ghost—God dwelling in you and you in Him. Go out from this place and sing His praise. Go forth to honor Him. And while the dumb world wants you to be its mouth, go and speak for the mountain, for the hill, for the lake, for the river, for the oak, and for the insect—speak for all things—for you are to be like the temple, the seat of the worship of all worlds. You are to be like the priests and offerers of the sacrifices of all creatures.

Let me address myself last of all to others of you. Alas! my hearers, I have many here who have no portion in Israel, neither any lot in Jacob. How many of you there are who are not stones in the spiritual temple, never to be used in the building up of God’s Jerusalem.

Let me ask you one thing. It may seem a slight thing today to be left out of the muster-roll of Christ’s church—will it seem a slight thing to be left out when Christ shall call for His people? When you are all assembled around His great white throne at last and the books shall be opened, oh! how dreadful the suspense, while name after name is read! How dreadful your suspense, when it comes to the last name, and yours has been left out!

That verse of our hymn has often impressed me very solemnly:

*“I love to meet among them now,
Before Thy gracious feet to bow,
Though vilest of them all;
But can I bear the piercing thought—
What if my name should be left out,
When Thou for them shalt call?”*

Sinner, conceive it! The list is read and your name unmentioned. Laugh at religion now! Scoff at Christ now! Now that the angels are gathering for the judgment. Now that the trumpet sounds exceedingly loud and long—now that the heavens are red with fire, that the great furnace of hell o'erleaps its boundary and is about to encircle you in its flame—now despise religion!

Ah! no. I see you. Now your stiff knees are bending, now your bold forehead for the first time is covered with the hot sweat of trembling, now your eyes that once were full of scorn, are full of tears—you do look on Him whom you did despise and you are weeping for your sin.

O sinner, it will be too late then. There is no cutting of the stone after it gets to Jerusalem. Where you fall, there you lie. Where judgment finds you, there eternity shall leave you. Time shall be no more when judgment comes—and when time is no more—change is impossible! In eternity there can be no change, no deliverance, no signing of acquittal. Once lost, lost forever. Once damned, damned to all eternity.

Will you choose this and despise Christ? Or will you have Christ and have heaven? I charge you by Him that shall judge the quick and the dead, whose I am and whom I serve, who is the searcher of all hearts—choose you this day whom you will serve. If sin be best, serve sin and reap its wages. If you can make your bed in hell, if you can endure eternal burnings, be honest with yourself and look at the wages while you do the work.

But if you would have heaven, if you would be amongst the many who shall be glorified with Christ, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe now, today. “If you will hear his voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation.” “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.” Men, brethren, and fathers, believe and live. Cast yourself at Jesus' feet, put your trust in Him,

*“Renounce your works and ways with grief,
And fly to this most sure relief;”*

giving up all, you are to come to Him, to be saved by Him now, and saved eternally. O Lord, bless my weak but earnest appeal, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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