

## SPRING IN THE HEART

### NO. 675

A SERMON  
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*“Thou blesseth the springing thereof.”*  
*Psalm 65:10*

THERE is something very delightful in the springtime of nature, and though other seasons excel in fullness, spring must always bear the palm for freshness and for beauty. We are accustomed to thank God when the harvest hours draw near, and the golden grain invites the sickle, but we ought equally to thank Him for the rougher and stormier days of spring, because all these are preparing the harvest.

April showers are mothers of the sweet May flowers, and the wet and cold of winter are the parents of the luxury and splendor of summer. God blesses the springing thereof, or else it could not be said, “Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.” There is as much necessity for divine benediction in spring as for heavenly bounty in summer, and therefore we should praise God all the year round. As the God of seasons, JEHOVAH deserves our thanksgiving.

This month happens to be springtime with our church. I know not when it began, but I do know it continues with us still to be a springtime. We see youthful piety developed, and on every hand we hear the joyful cry of those who say, “We have found the Lord.” Our sons are springing up as the grass and as willows by the watercourses, till as a church we are ready to hold up our hands in glad astonishment and cry, “Who hath begotten me these? Who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows?”

This is a happy springtime with us. There may come seasons of a more luxurious autumn, when the church shall grow riper in knowledge and gifts and graces, but certainly in the young days of the church, when God is blessing her with so many conversions, she has great cause to rejoice.

We have just begun a series of revival meetings, and this text seemed to me to be the most appropriate as I heard of conversions already given to us. Thou blesseth the springing thereof, You do not make us tarry, O God, for Your blessing for months and years, but even at the very commencement, as soon as Zion travails, she brings forth children, as soon as the desire goes up to heaven the answer comes down, and while we are crying, God is blessing.

However, I intend to take the text this morning in reference to individual cases. There is a time of springing of piety, when it is just in its bud, just breaking through the dull cold earth of unregeneracy. I desire to talk a little about that, and concerning the blessing which God graciously gives to the green blade of newborn godliness, to those who are in the early dawn, beginning to seek and to feel after God, if haply they may find Him.

I. First, I shall have a little to say about THE WORK PREVIOUS TO THE SPRINGING THEREOF.

It appears from the text that there is work for God alone to do before the springing comes, and we know that there is work for God to do through us as well. Beloved friends, before there can be springing up in the soul of any, there must be ploughing, harrowing, and sowing.

Perhaps the minister may for years appear to preach in vain in a certain case, and yet not in vain, for all the while the soil is being prepared by the Gospel plough that afterwards it may receive the quickened seed. I do not think that we ought to be altogether hopeless of those who have heard the Word in this place so long. It is a sorrowful thing that they should show no signs of grace as yet, but there may

be a great work going on which we have not yet perceived. I say not this at all to damp our earnestness to see it, but to encourage us, lest we should faint in not seeing immediately the Lord's hand made bare.

There must be a *ploughing*, and we do not expect that as soon as ever we plough we shall reap the sheaves. It is so, blessed be God, in many cases that the reaper overtakes the ploughman, but we must not always expect it. In some hearts God is long in preparing the soul by conviction. The spirit is broken, the conscience is smitten, pride is humbled, carnal self-sufficiency is subdued.

The law with its ten black horses drags the ploughshare of conviction up and down the soul from end to end of the field, till there is no one part of it left un-furrowed. And deeper than any plough can go, conviction goes to the very core and center of the spirit, till the whole heart is wounded. The ploughers make deep furrows indeed when God puts His hand to the plough. The soil of the heart is broken in pieces in the presence of the Most High.

Then comes the *sowing*. Before there can be springing up it is certain that there must be something put in, so that after the preacher has used the plough of the law, he then applies to his Master for the seed basket of the Gospel. Gospel promises, Gospel doctrines, especially a clear exposition of the atonement made by the Savior, these make the handfuls of corn which we try to scatter broadcast. Some of the handfuls of corn fall on the highway, and are lost. But other handfuls fall where the plough has been, and these drop into the furrows and there abide.

Then comes the *harrowing* work. We do not expect to sow seed and then leave it, the Gospel has to be prayed over. The prayer of the preacher and the prayer of the church make up God's harrow to rake in the seed after it is scattered, and so it is covered up within the clods of the soul, and is hidden in the heart of the hearer.

Now there is a reason why I dwell upon this, namely, that I may exhort my dear brethren, if any are working in parts of the land where they have not seen success, not to give it up, but to hope that they have been doing the plowing, and sowing, and harrowing work, and that the harvest is to come.

I mention this for yet another reason, and that is by way of warning to those who expect to have a harvest without this preliminary work. I do not believe that much good will come from attempts at sudden revivals made without previous prayerful labor.

A revival to be permanent must be a matter of growth, and the result of much holy effort, longing, pleading, and watching. I do not intend that it is necessary that when the minister begins his ministry there should be a preparedness amongst the people in order to his preaching. He is to preach whether they are prepared or not—that is not his business. But in order to success, depend upon it there is a preparedness necessary amongst the hearers. You may think it a strange assertion, but I can assure you I know who the preacher has been, what style of preaching he has given to the people, by the way in which I see them moved when I as a stranger happen to visit the church to preach the Gospel.

I find that upon some hearts warm earnest preaching drops like an unusual thing which startles but does not convince, and in other congregations, where good Gospel preaching has been the rule, I can see the words drop into the hearer's soul, by the glancing of their eyes and the motions of their countenances.

I can perceive that it is no new thing to them to hear the living truth, and that God has been setting some other brother both to plough, and to sow, and to harrow, and that then He sent me, as He often does, to many churches to be a reaper, and though I may seem to bring in the sheaves, yet it is the previous work that made room for the reaper to do his happy business.

We must not expect to have results without work. People get the idea that we are to get rich in spiritual things without toil. Take the word of any experienced man for it, there is no doing anything worth doing without giving your whole soul to it. And there is no hope of a church having an extensive revival in its midst unless there is an earnest continued waiting upon God, a bringing of itself into the condition of laboring, of intense anxiety, and of earnest expectation. There is in every case, I believe (of course there may be exceptions to this rule)—there is a work going beforehand which God does through His people.

But there is also a work with which His people have nothing to do instrumentally. After ploughing, sowing, and harrowing, there must then come the dropping of the shower. “Thou waterest it,” says the text. In vain are all our efforts unless God shall bless—only He has promised that He will bless.

I think we sometimes put words into texts and so spoil their meaning. “Paul planteth, Apollos watereth, but God giveth the increase,” say some, but that is not a Scriptural quotation. It is true, but it is not the truth taught in the text.

Let me quote the text, “Paul planteth, Apollos watereth, God giveth the increase.” There is no “but” in there by way of disjunction, but the sentences hang together. They come one after the other—“Paul planteth, Apollos watereth,” and as soon as that is done, God gives the increase. He may sometimes withhold it for certain reasons known to Himself, but as a rule, where Paul plants and Apollos waters, the increase certainly and surely comes. We must understand that it is God’s rule to bless the earnest cries and tears of His servants, and to send us success.

This success is given, it appears, by a descent of rain in the case of the husbandman, by a descent of spiritual influence in the case of the heart and conscience. O Holy Spirit! Thou, and Thou alone, work wonders in the human heart, and Thou comest from the Father and the Son to do the Father’s purposes, and to give the Son to see the travail of His soul.

There are three effects spoken of in the lines preceding my text. First, we are told *He waters the ridges*. All the ridges of the field get well saturated through and through with water. So God sends His Holy Spirit till the whole heart of man is moved and influenced by His divine operations. The understanding is enlightened, the conscience is quickened, the will is controlled, the affections are inflamed. All these powers—which I may call the ridges of the heart, and compare to the ridges of the field—come under the divine influence.

It is yours and it is mine to deal with men as men, and to bring to bear upon them Gospel truth, and to set before them motives that are suitable to move rational creatures, but after all, it is the rain from on high which must really get into the ridges, there is no hope of the heart being savingly affected except by divine operations.

Next it is added, “*Thou settlest the furrows*,” by which some think it is meant that the furrows are drenched with water. Others think there is an allusion here to the beating down of the earth by heavy rain till the ridges become flat, and by the soaking of the water are settled into a more compact mass. Certain it is that the influences of God’s Spirit have a very humbling effect upon a man.

He was unsettled once like the earth that is dry and crumbly, and blown about and carried away with every wind. But after the rain comes, the earth is compacted and knit together, and so the heart becomes solid and serious—no longer light and frivolous, and as the high parts of the ridge are beaten down into the furrows, so the lofty ideas, the grand schemes, and carnal boastings of the heart begin to level down when the Holy Spirit comes to work upon the soul.

Genuine humility is a very gracious fruit of the Spirit. To be broken in heart is a most efficient means of preparing a highway for the coming of Jesus into the soul. “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Brethren, always be thankful when you see high thoughts of man brought down. This settling the furrows is a very gracious preparatory work of grace.

Yet again, it is added, “*Thou makest it soft with showers*.” Man naturally is hardened against the Gospel, like the Eastern soil, it is hard as iron beneath the burning heat of the sun. Man’s heart receives not the Gospel—it is hard against it. No adamant can be more stern than is the human heart. Against spiritual influences it is hell-hardened steel. But oh, how the Spirit of God softens the man through and through! He is no longer towards the Word what he used to be. He feels everything, whereas once he felt nothing. The rock flows with water, the flinty rock gives forth its stream. The heart is dissolved in tenderness, the eyes are melted into tears.

All this is God’s work. I have said already that God works through us, but still it is God’s immediate work to send down the rain of His grace from on high. I do not know how many in this place may be going through the stages described in the text before us, as yet there may be no springing in your souls

Not a single green blade has yet appeared. Well, though your condition is still a sad and afflicting one, we will hope for you that ere long there shall be seen the precious seed, sending up its tender green shoot above the soil, that we may see the springing thereof and bless God for it.

**II.** In the second place, let us deliver A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SPRINGING THEREOF.

After the operations of the Holy Spirit have been quietly going on for a certain season as pleases the great Master and Husbandman, then there are signs of grace. Remember the apostle's words, "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." Some of our friends are greatly disturbed because they cannot see the full corn in the ear in themselves. They suppose that, if they were the subjects of a divine work, they would be precisely like certain advanced Christians with whom it is their privilege to commune, or of whom they may have read in sundry excellent biographies.

Beloved, this is a very great mistake. When first grace enters the heart, it is not a great tree covering with its shadow whole acres, but it is the least of all seeds, like a grain of mustard seed. When it first rises upon the soul, it is not the sun shining at its zenith, but it is the first dim ray, not light, but darkness visible. You are so simple as to expect the harvest before you have passed through the springing-time.

I shall hope this morning that by a very brief description of the earliest stage of Christian experience some here may be led to say, "I have gone as far as that," and then I hope you may be able to take the comfort of my very precious text home to yourselves. "Thou blesseth the springing thereof."

What then is the springing up of piety in the heart? What is this green blade? We think it is first seen in sincerely *earnest desires* after salvation. The man is not saved, in his own apprehension, but oh, he longs to be. That which was a matter of indifference is now a subject of intense concern. He could trifle once with eternal realities, but he cannot now.

Once he despised Christians, and thought them to be affected with an earnestness quite unnecessary. He thought religion to be a mere trifle, and he looked upon the things of time and sense as the only substantial matters, but now how changed he is! He envies the meanest Christian. He sometimes thinks he would be content to change places with the poorest believer in the world if he might but be able to read his title clear to mansions in the skies.

Now worldly things have lost that dominion over him which they once exercised, and spiritual things are uppermost. The joys which once delighted him now pall upon his taste. He thought them all, but now he thinks them nothing. Once with the unthinking many, he cried, "Who will show us any good?" But now he cries, "LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me." Once it was the corn and the wine to which he looked for comfort, but now he looks to God alone. His rock of refuge must be God, for he finds no comfort elsewhere.

His desires, which he had years ago were very temporary, they were like smoke from the chimney, soon blown away, like the morning cloud which disappears, and the early dew which is exhaled in the rising sun. But now his desires are permanent with him, not always to the same extent and degree, but still there they are. And at times these desires amount to a longing, to an earnest agony, to a breaking of his soul, a hungering and a thirsting after righteousness that he may be filled, and yet he is not satisfied with these desires, but he desires to desire more. He desires to have a more anxious longing after the things which make for his peace. These desires are among the first springings up of divine life in the soul.

In addition to these, "The springing thereof" shows itself next in *prayer*. It is prayer now. Once it was the mocking of God with holy sounds unattended by the heart. But now, though the prayer is such that he would not like a human ear to hear him, yet God approves it, for it is the talking of a spirit to a Spirit, and not the muttering of lips to an unknown God.

His prayers, perhaps, are not very long. They do not amount to more than this, "Oh!" "Ah!" "Would to God!" "Oh that He would have mercy upon me!" "God have mercy upon me, a sinner!" and such-like short ejaculations. But then, they *are* prayers. "Behold he prayeth," does not refer to a long prayer, but is quite as clear and sure a proof of spiritual life within, if it only refers to a sigh or to a tear, as if it

referred to an oration of an hour's length. These prayers, these "groanings that cannot be uttered," are amongst "the springings thereof."

Attending these there will also be manifest a *hearty love for the means of grace*, and to the house of God. The Bible, which laid long unread, and which was thought to be of little more use than an old almanac, is now treated with great consideration. It is not altogether understood, but it is searched, and though the reader finds little in it that comforts him just now, and much that alarms him, yet he feels that it is the book for him, and he turns over its leaves every spare moment he can find.

Now, when he goes up to God's house, he listens, if, perchance, there may be a message for him. Before, he sat in the pew as a sort of pious necessity incumbent upon all respectable people, but now he goes up to God's house that he may perhaps, find the Savior and may meet with something which shall set his spirit at liberty. Once there was no more religion in him than in the door which turns upon its hinge, but now he enters the house praying, "Lord, meet with my soul." And if he gets no blessing, he goes away again with, "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat." This is one of the blessed signs of "the springing thereof."

Yet more cheering is another, namely, that the soul in this state has *faith in Jesus Christ*, at least in some degree. It is not a faith which brings great joy and peace as we should wish them to feel, but still it is a faith which keeps them from despair, and prevents its sinking under a sense of sin. I have known the time when I do not believe any man living could see faith in me, and when I could scarcely perceive any in myself, and yet I have been able to say, with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things, *thou* knowest that I love thee."

What man cannot see, Christ can see. *We* may not possess any evidence except an inward consciousness that if we perish, we will perish at the foot of the cross, a sense that if we have not Christ, certainly we have given up everything else. That anyhow we have no other reliance—all our help, if we have any help at all, on Him is *stayed*—all our trust rests there. And we do feel (for there *are* happy moments with even those who are most distressed)—we do feel sometimes as if Christ were ours.

And oh! the joy which these young believers have when they get a sort of glimmering hope that they are on the rock! Why, they are as merry as the happiest of us then, only they have their relapses. They slip back into the filthy Slough of Despond again. They get on the promise for a moment, but they slip down again. This is both their misfortune and their folly. It is a mixture of both. There is both sin and suffering mixed together here, but it is a blessed token notwithstanding all faults of some "springing thereof," when your soul can say, "Sink or swim, I do rest on what Jesus Christ has done."

It strikes me that many people have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but they are so much engaged in looking at it that they do not see it. If they would look to Christ and not to their faith, they would not only see Christ but see their own faith too. But they look at their own faith, and it seems so little when they contrast it with the faith of full-grown Christians, that they think it is not faith at all.

You tried to pluck up the sycamore tree or to remove the mountain, and your faith would not do it. But if thy faith can only say that Jesus is the Christ, thou art born of God. If you have only faith to receive Christ, remember the promise, "To as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

Poor simple, weak-hearted, and troubled one, look to Jesus and answer, Can such a Savior suffer in vain? Can such an atonement be offered in vain? Can you trust Him, and yet be cast away? Can you look up into the tearful eyes of that loving Savior, and yet not receive his regard? Can you after faith in Him receive the sentence, "Depart ye cursed"? It cannot be. It never was in the Savior's heart to shake off one that did cling to His arm. He never did reject a single soul that helplessly did lie down at the foot of the cross. If you are lying there, rejoice, rejoice, that He blesseth even "the springing thereof."

You see the difficulty all arises from misapprehension on the one hand, and from want of confidence in God on the other. I say misapprehension, now if you are not acquainted with corn (like some Londoners, who never saw it growing), if you have only seen it when it has been ripe, and your friends have sent you up a little sheaf of corn from the country at harvest time—if you go into the field when it

is green, you would might say, “What! do you say that yonder green stuff is wheat?” “Yes,” the farmer says, “that is wheat.”

You look at it again and you say, “Why, man alive, that is nothing but grass. You do not mean to tell me that this grassy stuff will ever produce a loaf of bread such as I see in the baker’s window. I cannot conceive it.” No, you could not conceive it, but when you get accustomed to it, it is not at all wonderful to understand that they are stages through which it goes, first the blade, then the ear, and afterwards the full corn in the ear.

Some of you have never seen growing grace. You do not know anything about it, and when you get converted you meet with Christians who are like ripe golden ears, and you say, “I am not like them. I am no more like them than that grassy stuff in the furrows is like wheat.” Just so, but you will grow like them one of these days, you are undeveloped as yet. You must expect to go through the blade period before you get to the ear period, and in the ear period perhaps you will have doubts whether you will ever come to the full corn in the ear. But it will all arrive in due time.

Thank God if you are in Christ at all, and do not mind so much *what* you are in Christ. That is the point, “Am I resting in Jesus Christ?” Well then, whether I am highly sanctified, or sanctification is only begun in me, whether I have much faith or little faith, whether I can do much for Christ or little for Christ is not the question. I am saved, not on account of what I am, but on account of what Jesus Christ is. And if I am trusting to Him, however little in Israel I may be, I am as safe as the very brightest of his saints, and as the very greatest of His servants.

I have said, however, that mixed with misapprehension there is a great deal of unbelief. I cannot put it all down to an ignorance that may be forgiven. I think there must be much of unbelief. O sinner, why do you not trust Jesus Christ? Poor quickened, awakened conscience, God gives you His word that He who trusts in Christ is not condemned, and yet you are afraid that you are condemned! This is to give God the lie! Be ashamed and confounded that you should ever have been guilty of doubting the veracity of God.

All your other sins do not grieve Christ so much as the sin of thinking that He is unwilling to forgive you, or suspecting that if you trust in Him, He will cast you away. Do not belie His gracious character. Do not cast a slur and stain upon the generosity of His mighty heart. This man receiveth sinners, and rejecteth none. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” Come on the faith of His promise, and He will receive you just now, and then shall you glorify Him, and no longer slander Him by your doubts and fears.

I have thus given some description of “the springing thereof.”

**III.** Well now, thirdly, and very briefly, according to the text, THERE IS ONE WHO SEES THIS SPRINGING. Thou, Lord—*Thou* blesseth the springing thereof.

I wish dear friends, some of us had quicker eyes to see the beginning of grace in the souls of men. I am afraid some of you do not care enough about souls, consequently you let many opportunities slip of helping the weaklings. If a woman had the charge of a number of children that were not her own, I do not suppose she would notice some of the incipient stages of disease. But when a mother nurses her own dear children, she scarcely for an hour permits the first symptoms of disease to go unnoticed. As soon as ever upon the cheek or in the eye there is a token of approaching sickness, she perceives it at once. I wish we had just as quick an eye, because just as tender a heart, towards precious souls.

Men that are making money, when their hearts are set upon gain, can always see their chance. Where a clerk employed in the office sees nothing because he has not an interest in it, the principal who is to make the profit, quick as thought, perceives the way to work. And when our hearts are set on winning souls and getting treasure for Christ, we shall soon see the first good sign and opportunity, and we shall be at once ready to do what is required.

I do not doubt but what there are many young people attending at the Tabernacle, who are weeks and even months in distress, who need not be, if you who know the Lord were a little more watchful to help them in the time of their sorrow. The shepherds are out all night at this season of the year to catch up the

lambs, as soon as they find them, and take them in and nurse them for a little while. And we, who ought to be shepherds for God, should be looking out for all the lambs, especially at seasons when there are many lambs born into God's great fold. And as tender nursing parents, we should watch over them in their first stages of weakness and of pain. God, however, when His servants do not see "the springing thereof," sees it all.

Now, you silent, retired spirits, who dare not speak to father or mother, or brother or sister, I think this text ought to be a sweet morsel to you. "*Thou* blesseth the springing thereof," which proves that God sees you and your newborn grace. God sees the first sign of penitence. Though you only say to yourself, "I will arise and go to my Father," your Father hears you. Though it is nothing but a desire, your Father registers it. "Thou puttest my tears into thy bottle. Are they not in thy book?" He counts your sighs, and he is watching you as you return step by step. He runs to meet you, and puts His arms about you, and kisses you with the kisses of His accepting love.

O soul, be encouraged with that thought, that up in that chamber of yours, or down by that hedge, or wherever it is that you have sought secrecy, God is there. "Thou, God, seest me." That is a precious text, "All my desire is before thee." And here is another sweet one, "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy." He can see you when you only hope in His mercy, and He takes pleasure in you if you have only begun to fear Him.

Here is a third choice word, "Thou wilt perfect that which concerneth me." Have you a concern about these things? Is it a matter of soul-concern with you to be reconciled to God, and to have an interest in Jesu's precious blood? It is only the springing thereof, but He cares for your concern. It is written, "A bruised reed will he not break, and the smoking flax will he not quench, till he bring forth judgment unto victory."

There shall be victory for you, even before the judgment seat of God, though as yet you are only like the flax that smokes and gives no light, or like the reed that is broken and yields no music. I shall leave this point, commending it to your careful thought. God *does* see the springing thereof.

**IV.** A few words upon a fourth point, namely, WHAT A MISERY IT WOULD BE, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, TO HAVE THIS SPRINGING WITHOUT GOD'S BLESSING!

The text says, "Thou *blesseth* the springing thereof." We must, just a moment, by way of contrast, think of how the springing would have been without the blessing. Suppose we were to see, as members of a Christian church, a revival amongst us without God's blessing. It is my conviction that there are scores of revivals which have not God's blessing, which are not of God at all. They are produced by excitement merely.

Excitement *will* go with revivals, just as dust will go along with carriages on the high road. But the dust does not help the carriage, and excitement does not help revival. The banging of cushions and smiting of Bibles, and stamping of feet, and the pumping up of tears from excited people, does not produce genuine revival.

That was a very good remark from Dr. McDonald, the apostle of the North. He said, in reference to his experience of revivals, that the real success he always found, was in inverse proportion to the excitement. That is to say, that the more permanent the revival was the less of noise there was about it, and the more there was of mere carnal stir, the less there was of God and His grace. I believe it is so.

Now suppose we were to have a springing in this church, as we have now, and not God's blessing—what then? Why, true conversions would be very scarce. We are looking for hundreds, not for tens. I shall feel no great delight if the Lord only give us tens this month, because that is His usual measure, for which I will give Him my usual gratitude. But we want hundreds now—hundreds of conversions—and our soul will not be satisfied unless we see within the next few months hundreds brought before the Lord. We have asked it, God has promised to give us what we seek in faith, and we expect it. He is a faithful God, and we will get it.

But if we do not have His blessing, we shall not have the hundreds. Or if we do, it will be all a delusion—all apparent, not real, a bubble blown up into the air for a moment, and then burst and gone

away to nothing. We shall only see the people stirred to become the more dull and dead afterwards, and this is a great mischief to the church.

So in the individual heart, if there should be springing without God's blessing, there would be no good in it. Suppose you have good desires, but not God's blessing on these desires. They will only tantalize, and worry, and disturb you. And then, after a time, they will be gone and you, perhaps, will be more impervious than you were before to religious convictions. For, if desires after God are not of God's sending, but are caused by excitement, they will probably prevent, to a great extent, your giving a serious hearing to the Word of God in times to come. If they do not soften they will certainly harden you.

Oh to what extremities have some been driven who have had springings of a certain sort which has not led them to Christ! Some have been driven by despair. They tell us that religion crowds the madhouse, it is not true, but there is no doubt whatever that religiousness of a certain kind has driven many a man to madness. They have not understood the balm. They have only understood the wound. They have not known anything of Jesus. They have had a sense of sin and nothing more. They have not fled for refuge to the hope which God has set before them.

Marvel not if men go mad when they refuse the Savior. It is a judicial punishment of God upon those men who, when in great distress of mind, will not fly to Christ. I believe it is with some just this—you must either fly to Jesus or else your burden will become heavier and heavier till your spirit will utterly fail. And if the sense of sin does not lead you to where Christ was crucified, it will in a certain sense crucify you, it will crush you to despair, perhaps to madness, and then to hell.

But this is not the fault of religion. It is the fault of those who will not accept the remedy which religion presents. A springing up of desires without God's blessing would be an awful thing if it were possible.

**V.** And now I have to dwell upon THE COMFORTING THOUGHT THAT GOD DOES BLESS "THE SPRINGING THEREOF."

I wish to deal with you who are tender and troubled this morning. I want to show that God *does* bless your springing. He does it many ways. Sometimes He does it by the cordials which He brings to you. You have some very sweet moments, you cannot say that you are Christ's, but at times the bells of your heart ring very sweetly at the mention of His name. The means of grace are very precious to you. When you get into this house or into the prayer meeting, wherever it may be, you feel a holy calm, and you go away from the service wishing that there were seven Sundays in the week instead of one.

By the blessing of God the Word has just suited your case, as if the Lord had sent His servants on purpose to you. You laid aside your crutches for a while, and began to run without weariness, though these things have been only temporary and transient, I would have you think of them as tokens for good.

On the other hand, if you have had none of these comforts, or very few of them and the means of grace have not been consolations to you, I want you to look upon that as a blessing. It is sometimes the greatest blessing God can give us to take away all comforts on the road in order to quicken our running towards the great Refuge.

When a man is flying to the City of Refuge to be protected from the man-slayer, it may be an act of great consideration to give him something to eat on the way, to stay him for a moment that he may quench his thirst and run more swiftly afterwards. But perhaps, if it is a case of imminent peril, it may be the kindest thing to give him nothing to eat or to drink, nor invite him to stop for a moment, in order that he may fly with undiminished speed straight to the place of safety.

Now, God may be blessing you in the uneasiness which you feel. Inasmuch as you cannot say that you are in Christ, as I hope you are, it may be the greatest blessing which heaven can give to take away every other blessing from you, in order that you may be compelled to rest in the Lord. You perhaps have a little of your own self-righteousness left, and while you have, you cannot get joy and comfort. The royal robe which Jesus gives will never shine brilliantly upon us till every rag of our own goodness is



gone. Perhaps you are not empty enough, and God will never fill you with Christ till you are, and so this season of bitterness and sorrow is not to pass from you, till you shall be compelled to follow Christ.

I like the idea of John Bunyan, who says he was driven to such fear through sin, that though Jesus seemed terrible to him, yet he could not help coming to him. Said he, "If Christ had stood with a drawn sword in his hand, I would sooner have run on the point of His sword than remained as I was." Have you never heard of a person walking in the fields into whose bosom a bird has flown because pursued by the hawk? Poor timid thing, it would not have ventured there but a greater trouble compelled it.

All this may be so with you. Your fears may be sent to drive you more swiftly and more closely to the Savior, and if so, I will see in these present sorrows the signs that God is blessing the springing thereof.

In looking back upon my own "springing," I sometimes think God blessed me then in a way in which I desire He would bless me now. An apple tree when loaded with apples is a very comely sight, but give me, for beauty, the apple tree in bloom. The whole world does not present a more lovely sight than an apple blossom. Painters have declared that there is nothing in the whole world to excel it in beauty.

Now, a full-grown Christian laden with fruit is a blessed sight, but still there is a blessedness, a peculiar blessedness about the young Christian in bloom. Let me just tell you what I think that blessedness is. You have probably now a greater tenderness about sin than professors who have known the Lord for years. They might wish that they felt your tenderness of conscience. You have now a graver sense of duty, and a more solemn fear of the neglect of it than some who have known the Lord for years. And you have a greater zeal than many.

You are now doing your first works for God, and burning with your first love. Nothing is too hot for you or too hard for you. To go to a sermon now—no matter what weather it may be—seems to you to be an imperative necessity. You would go over hedge and ditch to hear the Word. But some who are of older growth want soft cushions to sit upon. They cannot stand in the aisle now as they used to do, everybody must be particularly polite when they come in, or they care not to worship at all.

At one time they were so hungry that if you had thrown them a piece of meat on a skewer they would have eaten it. But now it must be delicately cooked and all sorts of sauce served up with it. And it must be well garnished, or they cannot eat it.

They hear this minister, and they are tired of the other. They are in the state of the fools in the psalm, who abhorred all manner of meat, and I fear their souls draw nigh unto death. But at first there is such a good appetite, such zeal, such hunger, that I am sure you will look back in years to come to your springing and say, "Ah, God did bless the springing thereof!" Go on, dear friends, to something higher. Press forward to something more full and complete, but bless God for what you have.

And now to close. I think there are three lessons for us to learn. First, *let believers be very gentle and kind to young believers*. God blesses the springing thereof—mind that you do the same. Do not throw cold water upon young desires. Do not snuff out young believers with hard questions. When they are babes and need the milk of the Word, do not be choking them with your strong meat. They will eat strong meat by and by, but not just yet.

Remember, Jacob would not overdrive the lambs and do not you either. Teach and instruct them, but let it be with gentleness and tenderness, not as being their superiors, but as being their nursing fathers and their tender mothers in Christ Jesus. God, you see, blesses the springing thereof—may He bless it through you! May He make you the channel of communicating comfort to those who are in their early days!

The next thing I have to say is, *fulfill the duty of gratitude*. Beloved, if God blesses the springing of our revival here, let us praise Him. Let it cheer our hearts. Let us feel that if He is beginning the work with us, we are happy, and grateful, and thankful, and will work yet more. You who have this blessing in your own souls, be grateful for a little blessing. If you have only starlight, be grateful to God for it and He will give you moonlight. And when you have moonlight, bless Him for it and He will give you

sunlight. And when you have the sunlight, bless Him for it till He gives you the heavenly light. And when you have the heavenly light, then your occupation shall be to praise Him world without end.

Lastly, the other lesson is one of *encouragement*. If God blesses “the spring thereof,” dear beginners, what will He not do for you by and by? If He gives you such a meal when you break your fast, what dainties will be on your table when He says to you, “Come and dine”? And what banquets will He furnish when He takes you to His bosom, and bids you dip out of His own dish and drink out of His own cup!

O troubled one! let the storms which howl and the snows which fall, and the wintry blasts that nip your springing, all be forgotten in this one consoling, comforting thought, that God blesses your springing, and whom God blesses none can curse. Over your head, dear, desiring, pleading, languishing soul, God pronounces the blessing of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Take that blessing and rejoice in it evermore. Amen.

### **PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 65**

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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](http://www.spurgeongems.org).