

DAVID'S SUBLIME CONSOLATION

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“Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.”
2 Samuel 23:5

NO GOLD but pure gold can stand the fire, and if a man's religion has been a pretentious sham, it is very likely to tumble to pieces under the rough hand of death. There have been a few hypocrites who have been able to brazen it out, even in the last solemn article, but these must always be the few. David, at any rate, was never the man who would play the hypocrite in the last extremity of death. You can see how true, how deep, how thorough his faith in God must have been, for his dying bed was by no means an enviable one.

His dying pillow was stuffed with sharp thorns. His was a life which, although it had much of divine grace about it, yet had much of sinful nature, too. He was dying as we might not wish to die in some respects, but his faith triumphed, as we may well desire that our faith may triumph, whatever the outward circumstances of our life or death may be.

We shall go at once, and without further preface, to consider our text and notice in turn *the Psalmist-King's grave lament*. And then, blessed compensation, *his glorious comfort*. First, then, we shall ponder, and may the Holy Spirit make it greatly to profit everyone of us—

I. DAVID'S GRAVE LAMENT.

His house, he declares, was “not so” with God. And the numbers and the power of that house did not grow as he could have wished. Brethren, there are some troubles that a man outgrows. There are some childish trials connected with our early Christian life which we without effort outlive and which in due course pass away. We shall not have to feel—thank God!—ever again the special perils of our youth and of our early manhood. When we have passed into riper years, we leave these things behind us.

But there are some troubles which accumulate as we grow. For instance, there is the peculiar trouble alluded to in the text. There are, no doubt, multitudes of cares and trials connected with a family of little children, but every parent knows that the trials connected with little children are as nothing compared with the sorrows of those who have grown-up children that cause them heartache and heartbreak.

We could better afford to bury them one by one in their infancy, than that they should live to dishonor their father's name and to blaspheme their father's God. The mother might be well satisfied to watch over their sick couches night after night, and to weary herself as though she labored in the very fire for their sakes.

We could well put up with the little mistakes, and petulancies, and follies, and even sins of their earliest days. But the sting is when, having left our roof, they leave our teaching. When, having gone from our trainings, they do not abide in them, but plunge into sin and prove to us most sadly that grace does not run in the blood, but that natural depravity most certainly does.

Now, this particular form of trial accumulates as we grow older. Some of us here have not yet come to it. May God grant that we never may, but I know there are some here whose hairs are plentifully sprinkled with grey, who have this as their daily cross to carry, and who look back on all the troubles of their youth and say that they were as nothing compared with this—the house being amiss with God, the

children being disobedient—the sons and daughters training up their children, but not in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

This is a trial which comes when the battle of life, as we think, is almost over and when we might naturally expect to take a little repose in the eventide of life, before the dawning of the everlasting morning. This seems to be one of the last thorns that is thrust into our rest. With some it has been a thorn which, as in the case of David, has pierced their heart in its last beats and throbs.

I may be addressing some such tonight. At any rate, I am addressing a great many who have need to pray against this trial. Oh! it is a dreadful thing—a terrible thing to look forward to, but what must it be to bear, none can tell but those whose hearts have been wrung by the iron hand of such an affliction, but too deeply—

*“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is
To have a thankless child.”*

David had an Absalom and an Amnon, and a Tamar—of whom the less said the better—and outside his dying-chamber door there was an Adonijah trying to upset his father’s last will and testament. And although Solomon was, in some respects, a great deal better, yet he was not, in those days, all that might be wished.

The fact is that, taken as a whole, they were a bad set. Was it any wonder that they should be such? David had himself very much to blame for it, for polygamy can never by any possibility work well. Jacob’s trouble arose out of that and no doubt David’s troubles began there, too, and this must have been the sting about it, to David, that some of his children could quote their father’s example for their sins.

Not but what his life had had in it very many virtues, but children will cover their eyes and not observe those things when it does not suit their whim to see them. But if there be a fault in the parent, there is none more quick than the child to spy it, and to make the fall—the mistake of the parent which was pardoned, because wept over—to be the one outstanding mark of that parent’s character and in that alone to imitate it.

Now, my brethren and sisters, at such a time, when we are stung with such a trouble, so near to us—for the troubles of our own house ought always to affect us more than any other—there we get our first comforts around the family hearth, and there we must expect to have our sweetest joys and our deepest pangs.

When, I say, we have this affliction, and have in it that drop of gall of knowing that we ourselves are somewhat responsible for the whole matter, and that we cannot throw it upon divine sovereignty, but must take some measure of it to ourselves—oh! it will be glorious faith if still, with all those pangs and griefs in their utmost bitterness, we can say, “Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure, for this is all my salvation and all my desire.”

Believe me, it is one thing to read that text, but quite another thing to feel it, and it is one thing to suppose ourselves, under these circumstances, rejoicing in the Lord, but quite another thing to come into these depths—these very depths—with God’s waves and billows going over us, and yet by joyous faith to lift our head out of the waves and sing with bravest confidence in our God.

Now we shall be allowed, since David’s is but one case among many, to show that apart from the family—supposing that to be right—that there may still be other forms of poignant sorrow under which we may labor and in which our only stay will be to triumph in God’s covenant faithfulness to our souls.

The trial to some of us will come possibly *from the church*. The faithful minister makes the church that he serves his family. The earnest deacon, the truly-called elder, considers the church, too, to be his household. The excellent and devoted conductors of the Bible classes, and Sunday school classes will come in the faith and love of sanctified souls to look upon those under their charge as children committed to them as a sacred trust, to train and nurture in Christian life and conduct.

And some of us can say, who have known it, that it is a grief that cuts very deep into the soul when the church, or the class, or whatever our circle of service, is not so with God as we could desire. When

we think of some who backslide, when we hear of some, as we have heard time and again, who fall into open sin, and worst of all, into cruel unkindness to the very person who was the means of their conversion, but of whom it is not now possible for them to say anything too bad or too unkind, because, perhaps, they think they have received further illumination, and have learned something which God grant they may unlearn.

Whenever these things occur, and they occur very frequently in a large church and occur very painfully in a small one—they throw the minister, they throw the Sabbath school teacher, they throw the earnest worker of any sort, flat on his face, and they make him shed many tears, and cry out to God in the bitterness of his soul, “You do not make my church grow. You do not make my church to be as I would have it to be—like Yourself. You do not give me the sheaves which I long to reap, nor the souls to be saved which I long to win.”

It is a great and deep sorrow, and it is a great blessing if at such times we can come back to this, “Yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant.” You know it is that precious doctrine which is meant to keep us quiet when we are succeeding, for the Lord Jesus said to His apostles when they came back overjoyed and said, “Lord, even the devils are subject to us”—“Ah! nevertheless, rejoice not in this; do not make this the mainstay of your joy, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” Well, when it is not so with us as we would wish, but we have to experience the very opposite, I think that then I can hear our Lord saying, “Nevertheless, be not brokenhearted about this, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven, that my covenant with you is everlasting.”

Beloved, you may not have either of the two sorrows I have spoken of, but if you are a child of God, you will have fellowship with a third, namely, *the inward state of your own soul*.

In a certain very special sense, *that* is the definite household of every one of us. These powers and passions, imaginings and emotions, thoughts and desires—these are, so to speak, the children of your house, and I am afraid that most of us will have to say, “Although my house is not so with God.”

I read a book the other day written by a brother whom I very highly esteem, and indeed reverence for his holiness, excellence, and usefulness, but when I found him speaking of himself as living in perfect allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, and perfect love to Him, and as having continued so for twenty years without sin, I must confess that I thought he must either use language in a different way from that in which I use it, or else that he and I must have very different kinds of hearts, for I do not find it as he said.

I do believe I have sincerely strived to serve my Master, and have served Him so as to have had given me many seals of my service, but I never did serve Him in such a way as to be satisfied with my service. I never could dare to feel content with a prayer I ever prayed, or a sermon I ever preached. I have always cultivated the idea that if I were to feel satisfied, I should be proud—and that if I did feel content I should be doing wrong, and so I have rather striven against the feeling of being satisfied with anything within me, but have tried to continually feel that I have still enemies to drive out of the Canaan of my heart, and corruptions still to subdue, glorifying God for anything that I could see that was gracious, but trying, at any rate, to mourn and lament over what was my own—and there is a good deal of that—and I find, if anything, more of it now than ever, not that there is more, but as we grow in grace I think we perceive it more clearly.

A room is not more dusty when it is shut up than it is when the sun shines in through the little crevice in the shutter, where the beam of sunlight comes through. There is no more dust in that particular part of the room where the sun shines in than there is anywhere else, and yet how very full of dust that slanting sunbeam seems to be. The room is not more dusty there, but there is more light there than anywhere else.

So it seems that the very coming in of light to the soul reveals more and more of the evil things, the spiritual unlovelinesses that yet lurks there, and which I fear will be there until the Lord takes us home. It is very pitiable to see so many persons perfectly content to be so very imperfect, sitting down as

though they—knowing they cannot here be absolutely perfect—have no desire to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

It does such persons good to hear a sermon on the doctrine of Scriptural perfection. If it does not make them angry with it, it does them good, for it makes them see that there is something better to be obtained in this world than they have ever yet dreamed and so stimulates their ambition. But for all that, I should still like to see the perfect man, and I would like to see Satan and he have a turn of conflict, and if Satan did not somehow or other get the better of him, I should be mistaken and surprised.

For this I know, that when we are most watchful and most guarded, still temptations will overtake us and surely these men must have some tragically unguarded moments. Ah! brethren, it will not do! “Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” is as certainly the cry of the Christian as the rest of the sentence, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It is, none the less, a sorrow to a truly sanctified soul, not to be sanctified perfectly. It is a most bitter grief to conceive that there should be any sin dwelling in him. It is his cross and his burden, and therefore at such times when the burden is heaviest, it is a gracious thing for faith to be able to say, “Although my heart be not so with God as I would have it, and I do not live so near to Him as I could desire, nor serve Him as I wish, yet still for all that I am a sinner saved by grace, and He has made with me, unworthy me, an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.”

The beauty of the comfort of the text is that it is set boldly, strikingly, upon so black a foil. In David's case a sorrow of the bitterest kind is associated with a joy of the sweetest description, and what I am driving at is this—whether it be family trouble, church trouble, or inward spiritual trouble arising from personal experience, it is the work, and boast, and glory of faith to be able to see light in the midst of the darkness, to find a way through the sea, and a path through the desert, and to sing, “Though this be not what I would have it, nor that, nor the other thing, nor a thousand things, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.”

I shall not stay to say anything about the latter part of the verse, namely, about the house not growing. David did not see his family grow in the estimation of the people, grow in strength, grow in numbers. It is a great sorrow not to see our families growing up in piety and advancing in holiness—a great grief not to see our churches making steady progress—and a heavy trouble, most of all, not to see our own hearts growing in love and other divine graces, and so going onward towards ripe maturity of blessed character.

Having thus spoken of David's great lament, we now turn with joyful relief to speak of—

II. DAVID'S GLORIOUS COMFORT.

As I said before, we will only give you a few plain, practical thoughts, praying the Holy Spirit to make them of divine power. The glorious comfort which David found lay in the covenant which God had made with him. With David it was a covenant of royalty for himself and for his seed, but we believed he also had a further vision of the covenant of grace. At any rate, we of the Gospel dispensation must do so, for though we shall not have earthly thrones, yet under Christ's covenant we are made kings and priests unto God.

Now, let us suppose ourselves to be sitting down alone, soliloquizing over all our griefs. There is a burden upon our mind and this thought crosses us—“Yet”—I have a “yet” to set over against my “although.” I have a heavy “although” to mar my prospects, but I have a delightful, inspiring “yet” to shed its light upon them—“*Yet* hath he made with me a covenant.”

Observe, first, that this covenant made with us *is a covenant of pure grace*. It would scarcely console Adam to think of the covenant under which he was—the covenant of works. It would be very sorry consolation to think of the covenant of works now, for we have all broken it and all that remains to us of its provisions is its curse.

But we rejoice to know that that covenant of works is, as far as we are concerned, fulfilled completely by Jesus Christ—and there remains nothing but God's side of it to be fulfilled. Christ undertook our side of it and He declared, “It is finished,” when He gave up the ghost. Man's side of the

covenant of grace is fulfilled and therefore the covenant stands now solely and only as a covenant of pure and unconditional promise on the part of God towards His elect people.

A delightful thought is this, for on these terms it is truly a covenant of grace. "I will and they shall—I will give them a new heart, and a right spirit, and they shall walk in My ways. I will purge, and wash, and cleanse them, and they shall be clean." It is a covenant without "ifs" or "buts" or "peradventures" in it, because its elements are unalloyed grace—grace, grace, grace, and not a single jot or tittle of merit in it.

Now, believer in Christ, you are under such a covenant, a covenant which is all promise to you and no threatening. Ought not this to cheer and comfort you? These dark afflictions—what are they? You can say, as one of old said, "Strike now, Lord, if You will, for I am forgiven. Now do what You will with me, for I am Your child."

***"If sin be pardoned, I'm secure
Death hath no sting beside."***

Nor has life any, either, for the worst sting is gone, sin is removed and I am saved. Now, Lord, I leave everything in Your hands, making no conditions or stipulations, but will be pleased, or strive to be pleased, with all Your will provides, since I know that the threatenings are all gone, and there remains for me nothing but promises full of boundless mercy which then shall be my heritage."

The next thought is, that *this covenant is made with me*. Beloved, I cannot preach on this as I would, but I pray that the Holy Spirit may bring home to your souls both the power and sweetness of the thought, "Yet hath he made *with me* an everlasting covenant." The doctrines in themselves are delightful, but it is the personal interest in and realization of the doctrines that give real delight.

The covenant—oh! yes, that is the well of Bethlehem—but it is "within the gate." But a covenant made with *me*. Ah! that is the water from the well rippling at my very lips. I drink it and am completely refreshed. It would be pleasant to hear of a covenant made with ten thousand men, that they might be saved, and our common humanity might make us rejoice therein. A covenant made with countless millions might well make us glad to overflowing, but after all, it is not selfish, but only laudable as the law of self-preservation God has Himself implanted in us, for us most of all to rejoice in our own personal faith in Christ, our personal property in the covenant of which He is the Surety. "Yet he hath made with me."

You know, sometimes, when I am thinking of God's mercy, trying to get a grip of my adoption and my acceptance in the Beloved, I find myself crying and at other times laughing. It seems such a wonder that an "heir of wrath" should be made an heir of heaven—an enemy of God made to be His own dear son, to whom He has made absolute promises of infinite love and unutterable grace.

Surely this ought to make our hearts leap like the heart of a warrior when the battle has come to a close and the victory has been won. How joyous ought to be the Christian's life! There ought to be a sacred exhilaration, a holy riot in our spiritual life at the thought that God has made personally with us—unworthy, sinful, but pardoned and accepted men and women—"a covenant ordered in all things and sure."

There is a very poor man in this place, just come from his labor. He has not even had time to go home to wash his face. He is very poor. If you could see his room, there is very little furniture in it and the wages he earns come to a very little. He has been poor for years and years. You, perhaps, would scarcely notice him. He is a mere drudge, a weight lifter, a carrier, one of the despised "masses," and yet God has made with him an everlasting covenant!

Why, what a contrast between the parties to this covenant! Here is the Infinite and Eternal God, with all the blazing splendor of His deity, and He has made a covenant with this poor despised child of poverty and toil. Well, now, if you come to think of it, there is no difference in spiritual need between the crossing-sweeper and the millionaire. They are only two frail mortals, with a little difference in their

circumstances and surroundings, but there is no difference when they go to their last resting place, and they sleep in the lap of mother earth.

And yet, with either or both, God is ready to make an everlasting covenant—with such insignificant ones, with you and me! Oh, dear Christian brothers and sisters! there is the music of it—“with me.” Now, may your faith lay her hand on the dear Savior's head afresh, look to Christ anew, see His blood flowing for you, wash again, and feel that you are clean, and then say, “Yet he hath made *with me* an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.”

It may increase our joy to recollect *the Person* who has made this covenant. If the covenant had been made with men, it might have been kept, or it might not have been—for the surest treaties have been broken—and when men have been bound with fetters, the proverb has not always been proved true, “Fast bind, fast find,” but men have slipped through a thousand nooses and have been untrustworthy, even when solemn oaths and obligations have been used to bind them down.

But God is true, so true that we might take His Word at once, and yet, since He knew our unbelief, He has been pleased to give us “two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie that we might have strong consolation who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us.” He has done this, He who has not twice destroyed the earth with a flood, notwithstanding all her sins. He who settled the mountains and fixed the hills in their sockets, has said that the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but that His love shall not depart from us, neither shall His covenant be removed from us. He has said it whose power is equal to His truth, whose love, with golden hands, encircles both His power and His faithfulness. He has said it who never knows the shadow of a change, the sun without a parallax, and without a tropic. He has said it, the great I AM has made with us a covenant of grace.

Then comes the thrilling truth—“an *everlasting covenant*.” We must not, above all things, leave out that. It is the duration of the mercy which is always the great theme of joy to the Christian. I do not know where my brethren get their comfort from, who believe in a temporary covenant of grace. I am not disposed to controvert with them, because if they like it and can get any comfort out of it, I am very glad that somebody should.

But it is a kind of land I should never think of plowing, nor should I ever wish to add to my farm. I shall never be tempted to covet that as Ahab covets Naboth's vineyard. That system of theology seems to me to play fast and loose with divine things, and make man stronger than God, and so I am content not to desire its possession. I suppose I am a greater sinner than they, and have more need of grace, and I come back to my Master's power alone to keep me, rather than depend on my own strength to keep myself.

And here are my comfort and joy, that if God has made a covenant with me, He has not done it for today or tomorrow, and next week, or even next year, but for all eternity. When the hair turns grey, the covenant will still be young, and when the pulse beats low, and the death sweat shall stand on our brow, the covenant will be as full of life as in our early days when first we knew the Lord. It is “an everlasting covenant,” and everlasting in the respect of its being made with me, not a covenant which is everlasting, but which changes with persons, and is first with one and then with another, but “He hath made *with me* an *everlasting covenant*.”

Oh! Christian, rejoice! Do not be afraid of rejoicing in that doctrine of the safety of the saints. Depend upon it, though some have used it to their own destruction and their end shall be terrible for having perverted the truth to make it a cloak for sin, yet the children of God have always found that when they are most happy they can be most active. When they feel most safe, they are most grateful, and when they are most grateful, they are most courageous and the most self-sacrificing.

Do not be afraid of knowing that you are safe in Christ, for if your thoughts are troubled about your eternal security, you will not be able to give the integrity of your manhood and womanhood to the cause of God. But if you know that you are saved, if you are sure of it, if you know that your ship can never be driven on the rocks, if you can give your whole selves, body, soul, and spirit unreservedly to God, out of

no legal motives, but under the divine constraints of gratitude, gratitude to eternal love—you are the man that God the Spirit can make into a fine strong Christian.

But if you are forever struggling and striving, now believing, now doubting, and thinking that your safety depends on something you can do, and that the whole matter may possibly tumble down—you will get no joy out of your salvation, will be forever a self-seeker of a certain kind. But grasp the truth that your salvation is finished once for all, and you can then say, nay *sing*, “Now for the love I bear His name, my whole spirit, my whole time, talents, substance—all shall be laid upon the altar of Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

***“Loved of my God, for Him again,
With love intense I burn:
Chosen of Him ere time began,
I choose Him in return.”***

And now note, very briefly indeed, that this everlasting covenant *is ordered and sure*. This, too, should fill us with holy musing and sacred exultation. It is so ordered that divine justice is not infringed, while divine mercy is magnified. So ordered that the safety of the soul is secured, and yet the soul is delivered from its sin. So ordered that holiness excludes the sinful from heaven, and yet the sinful are admitted, having been washed in the precious blood of the covenant.

“Ordered in *all* things”—its great things and its little things. Every wheel, and every cog of every wheel, was in the mind of the divine Artificer, and has been placed in its proper position to work out the divine result. Ordered with regard to the past, the present, and the future. Ordered with regard to nature and to providence. Ordered with regard to my body and my soul. Ordered as to the perfection of my divine manhood before the throne of God.

It is ordered in all things and is therefore *sure*. It would not have been sure had it not been well ordered, but being well ordered and fixed according to the truest law, there is no fear of any division of its parts or any dislocation of its members. It will never be a house divided against itself. You know that when a house has no order in it, nothing can be relied upon. Wills run contrary to one another and discord reigns.

But there is nothing of the kind in the covenant of grace. There are no conflicting elements. All the elements are of one kind. Boasting is excluded. Human merit is cast out. It has grace for its Alpha and grace for its Omega. It has grace for its foundation and the topstone shall be brought forth with shoutings of, “Grace, grace,” unto it. Infinite wisdom planned it, and so the ideas of human fallibility and mistake have been excluded from it. “Ordered in all things and sure.”

Let our souls then fall back upon this truth with the exclamation of David, “This is all my salvation and all my desire.” If, indeed, God has made such a covenant with me, then I am saved. I rest upon Christ whom God has said He has set forth to be a covenant for the people—a leader and commander to the people.

My dear friends, are you all trusting in Christ alone? Is He all your salvation? Is He all your desire? I think that is one of the ways by which to discover the true sons of Zion from those that are not so—by seeing whether Christ is all their salvation. There are some who save a little corner for something else besides Christ.

Beloved, it must come to this—if you and I are ever saved—that Christ as He is revealed in the covenant of grace must be all our salvation. He must be made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Christ is all. Oh! what blessed truth that is! How it drives all priestcraft out of the world. How it makes absurd and profane all pretended soul-saving ceremonies! How it brings us to the Savior, simply and alone to Him, “This is all my salvation”—what Christ has done for me and what God promises to give me as the result of what Christ has done in fulfilling the covenant of grace on my behalf—*this* is all my salvation.

And now, sinner, you who have never come to Christ, recollect that this must be all *your* salvation if ever you are saved. And does not this cheer you? You thought you were to get some good feelings. You need not. You may come to Christ for them. "Oh!" say you, "but I must repent." He is exalted on high to give you repentance. It is His work to give you repentance. Come to Him as you are, with nothing of your own, and rest wholly in Him, and you have then in your soul the true sign of God's electing love.

If you rest wholly upon Jesus, do not trouble your head about either the glorious past or the glorious future, but rejoice now. To lay hold on Christ is to lay hold on everlasting love and to find a resting place that shall last you when the world has melted away like a moment's foam dissolves into the wave that bears it and is gone forever. Rest in God patiently—with your whole soul relying upon the merit of Jesus—and the everlasting covenant is yours.

And the text closes with saying—"and all my desire." "I do not want anything else to rest upon, but this one thing do I covet—no other source of joy than this." So David seems to say. Ah! but some of you Christian people cannot say, "This is all my desire." Your desire is to make a great deal of money. Your desire is to dress so that people may think you a person of great taste and refinement. Or your desire is to be respectable, or your desire is to be something far away from the thoughts of God.

You smile, but it is really not at all a thing at which to smile. It is a great pity that so many whom we would hope to be Christian people do not find their chief delights in God and do not let their desires end in Him. This is a sad, sad thing. If there were a wife here who found her greatest pleasure in somebody else's company rather than her husband's, it would be a very great disgrace to her. And it is a terrible dishonor to a Christian when, in order to get his pleasures, he has to get out of the circle of communion with Christ. I have heard of such Christians. "Oh!" they say, "well, we try to be circumspect and so on, as a matter of duty, but may we not enjoy ourselves?"

Well, but where—where—where? You do not like to say where and I will not press the inquiry, but there are some who enjoy themselves most when they are where Christ would not go—nay, where Christ would not have them go, and where they would not like Christ to come and find them there. Now, question yourselves whether you belong to Christ at all, if that is the case, for our sweetest pleasures, if we are true Christians, we find when we are most conformed to Christ, doing His will most conscientiously in His sight, most denying ourselves, and most completely giving up our own wills and wishes, after a carnal sort, that the will of Christ may reign in our mortal bodies to His glory.

"This is all my salvation and all my desire." Let others roam through the world as they may, but the soul of the Christian is satisfied at home. He can say, in the words of our hymn—

*"I need not go abroad for joy;
I have a peace at home;
My sighs are turned into songs,
My heart has ceased to roam.*

*Down from above the blessed Dove
Has come into my breast,
To witness there eternal love,
And give my spirit rest."*

So may it be with you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 3:9-31

Verses 9-18. *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulcher: with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.

This is a description of man given by prophets in the olden times. “Now,” says Paul, “we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law.” So that this is a description of the Jews, a description of the people who had the light, the best people that then were upon the face of the earth—and if these be the good people—where are the Gentiles, the bad ones, without the light?

19-22. *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets: Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:*

There is no righteousness of works on the face of the earth. The law itself describes men as being sinful from their throat to their feet. Almost every member of the body is mentioned and described as being foul with sin. But, says Paul, there is another righteousness on the face of the earth—and that is the righteousness of God's grace, which comes through believing in Christ.

23-31. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*

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