

A SOLEMN DEPRIVAL NO. 3472

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THIS METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Without Christ.”
Ephesians 2:12.*

WE shall have two things to consider this evening—the *misery of our past estate, and the great deliverance which God has worked for us.* As for—

I. THE MISERY OF OUR PAST ESTATE, be it known unto you that in common with the rest of mankind, believers were once without Christ. No tongue can tell the depth of wretchedness that lies in those two words. There is no poverty like it, no need like it, and for those who die so, there is no ruin like that it will bring! Without Christ! If this is the description of some of you, we need not talk to you about the fires of hell—let this be enough to startle you that you are in such a desperate state as to be without Christ! Oh, what terrible evils lie clustering thick within these two words!

The man who is without Christ *is without any of those spiritual blessings which only Christ can bestow.* Christ is the life of the believer, but the man who is without Christ is dead in trespasses and sins. There he lies—let us stand and weep over his corpse! It is decent and clean, and well laid out, but life is absent and, life being absent, there is no knowledge, no feeling, no power! What can we do? Shall we take the Word of God and preach to this dead sinner? We are bid to do so and, therefore, we will attempt it. But as long as he is without Christ, no result will follow, any more than when Elisha’s servant laid the staff upon the child—there was no noise, nor sound, nor hearing. As long as that sinner is without Christ, we may give him ordinances, if we dare. We may pray for him, we may keep him under the sound of the ministry, but everything will be in vain! Till You, O quickening Spirit, come to that sinner, he will still be dead in trespasses and sins. Till Jesus is revealed to him there can be no life!

So, too, Christ is the light of the world. *Light* is the gift of Christ. “In Him was light, and the light was the life of men.” Men sit in darkness until Jesus appears. The gloom is thick and dense—not sun, nor moon, nor star appears, and there can be no light to illumine the understanding, the affections, the conscience. Man has no power to get light. He may strike the damp match of reason, but it will not yield him a clear flame. The candle of superstition, with its tiny glare, will but expose the darkness in which he is wrapped. Rise, morning star! Come, Jesus, come! You are the sun of righteousness, and healing is beneath Your wings. Without Christ there is no light of true spiritual knowledge, no light of true spiritual enjoyment, no light in which the brightness of the truth of God can be seen, or the warmth of fellowship proved. The soul, like the men of Naphtali, sits in darkness and sees no light.

Without Christ there *is no peace.* See that poor soul hunted by the dogs of hell? It flies swift as the wind, but far faster do the hunters pursue. It seeks cover yonder in the pleasures of the world, but the baying of the hell-hounds frighten it in the festive haunts. It seeks to toil up the mountain of good works, but its legs are all too weak to bear it beyond the oppressor’s rule. It doubles. It changes its tack. It goes from right to left but the hell-dogs are too swift of foot, and too strong of wind to lose their prey! And till Jesus Christ shall open His bosom for that poor hunted thing to hide itself within, it shall have no peace!

Without Christ *there is no rest.* The wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, and only Jesus can say to that sea, “Peace, be still.”

Without Christ *there is no safety.* The vessel must fly before the gale, for it has no anchor on board! It may dash upon the rocks, for it has no chart and no pilot. Come what may, it is given up to the mercy of wind and waves. Safety it cannot know without Christ! But let Christ come on board that soul, and it may laugh at all the storms of earth, and even the whirlwinds which the Prince of the Power of the air may raise, need not confound it—but without Christ there is no safety for it.

Without Christ again, *there is no hope*. Sitting wrecked upon this desert rock, the lone soul looks far away, but marks nothing that can give it joy. If, perchance, it fancies that a sail is in the distance, it is soon deceived. The poor soul is thirsty and around it flows only a sea of brine, soon to change to an ocean of fire! It looks upward and there is an angry God—downward, and there are yawning gulfs—on the right hand, and there are accusing sounds—on the left hand, and there are tempting fiends. It is all lost! Lost! Lost! Without Christ, utterly lost, and until Christ comes, not a single beam of hope can make glad that anxious soul.

Without Christ, beloved, remember that all the religious acts of men are vanity. What are they but mere airbags, having nothing in them whatever that God can accept? There is the semblance of worship—the altar, the victim, the wood laid in order, and the votaries bow the knee, or prostrate their bodies—but Christ alone can send the fire of heaven's acceptance! Without Christ, the offering, like that of Cain's, shall lie upon the stones, but it shall never rise in fragrant smoke, accepted by the God of heaven. Without Christ your church attendance is a form of slavery, your chapel meetings a bondage. Without Christ your prayers are but empty wind, your repentances are wasted tears, your almsgivings and your good deeds are but a coating of thin veneer to hide your base iniquities! Your professions are white-washed sepulchers, fair to look upon, but inwardly full of rottenness! Without Christ your religion is dead, corrupt, a stench, a nuisance before God—a thing of abhorrence—for where there is no Christ, there is no life in any devotion, nothing in it for God to see that can possibly please Him. And this, mark you, is a true description, not of some, but of all who are without Christ! You moral people without Christ, you are lost as much as the immoral! You rich and respectable people, without Christ, you will be as surely damned as the prostitute that walks the streets at midnight. Without Christ, though you should heap up your charitable donations, endow your almshouses and hospitals, yes, though you should give your bodies to be burned, no merit would be imputed to you! All these things would profit you nothing! Without Christ, even if you might be raised on the wings of flaming zeal, or pursue your eager course with the enthusiasm of a martyr, you shall yet prove to be but the slave of your own passion and the victim of your own folly! Unsanctified and unblessed, you must, then, be shut out of heaven and banished from the presence of God! Without Christ, you are destitute of every benefit which He, and He alone, can bestow.

Without Christ, implies, of course, that you are without the benefit of *all those gracious offices of Christ which are so necessary to the sons of men*, you have no true *prophet*. You may pin your faith to the sleeve of man and be deceived. You may be orthodox in your creed, but unless you have Christ in your heart, you have no hope of heaven. Without Christ, the truth of God, itself, will prove a terror to you! Like Balaam, your eyes may be open while your life is alienated. Without Christ that very *cross* which saves some will become to you as a *gallows* upon which your soul shall die! Without Christ you have no *priest* to atone or to intercede on your behalf. There is no fountain in which you can wash away your guilt. No passover blood which you can sprinkle on your lintel to turn aside the destroying angel. No smoking altar of incense for you. No smiling God sitting between the cherubim. Without Christ you are an alien from everything which the priesthood can procure for your welfare! Without Christ you have no shepherd to tend, no King to help you—you cannot call in the day of trouble upon one who is strong to deliver. The angels of God, who are the standing army of King Jesus, are your enemies and not your friends. Without Christ, Providence is working your ill—not your good. Without Christ you have no *advocate* to plead your cause in heaven. You have no representative to stand up yonder and represent you, and prepare a place for you! Without Christ you are as sheep without a shepherd. Without Christ you are a body without a head. Without Christ you are miserable orphans without a father, and your widowed soul is without a husband. Without Christ you are without a *Savior*—what will you do? What will become of you when you find out the value of salvation at the last pinch, the dreary point of despair? To sum up all, you are without anything that can make life blessed, or death happy! Without Christ, though you are rich as Croesus, famous as Alexander and wise as Socrates, yet are you naked, and poor, and miserable—for you lack Him by whom are all things, and for whom are all things, and who is Himself all in all!

Surely this might be enough to awaken the conscience of the most heedless! But ah, without any of the blessings which Christ brings, and to miss all the good offices which Christ fills—this is only to

linger on the side issues! The imminent peril is to be *without Christ, Himself*. Do you see, there, the Savior in human form—God made flesh, dwelling among us? He loves His people and came to earth to wipe out an iniquity which had stained them most vilely, and to work out a righteousness which should cover them most gloriously—but without Christ that living Savior is nothing to you! Do you see Him led away as a sheep to the slaughter, fastened to the cruel wood—bleeding, dying? Without Christ you are without the virtue of that great sacrifice! You are without the merit of that atoning blood! Do you see Him lying in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, asleep in death? That sleep is a burial of all the sins of His people, but without Christ your sins are not atoned for! Your transgressions are yet unburied—they walk the earth—they shall go before you to judgment! They shall clamor for your condemnation. They shall drag you down without hope. Without Christ, remember, you have no share in His resurrection. Bursting the bonds of death, you, too, shall rise, but not to newness of life, nor yet to glory, for shame and everlasting contempt shall be your portion if you are without Christ! See Him as He mounts on high! He rides in His triumphal car through the streets of heaven! He scatters gifts for men, but without Christ there are none of those gifts for you! There are no blessings for those who are without Christ! He sits on that exalted throne of God, and pleads, and reigns forever, but without Christ you have no part in His intercession and you shall have no share in His glory! He is coming. Listen! The trumpet rings. My prophetic ear seems to catch the strain! He comes, surrounded by majestic pomp, and all His saints shall reign with Him! But without Christ you can have neither part nor lot in that splendor. He goes back to His Father and surrenders His kingdom and His people are forever safe with Him. Without Christ there shall be none to wipe away the tears from your eyes; no one to lead you to the fountain of living waters; no hand to give you a palm branch; no smile to make your immortality blessed. Oh, my dear hearers, I cannot tell you what unutterable abysses of wretchedness and misery are comprised here within the fullness of the meaning of these dreadful words—*without Christ*.

At this present hour, if you are without Christ, you lack the very essence of good, by reason of which your choicest privileges are an empty boast instead of a substantial gift. Without Christ *all the ordinances and means of grace are worth nothing*. Even this precious Book that might be weighed with diamonds and he that was wise would choose the Book and leave the precious stones—even this sacred volume is of no benefit to you! You may have Bibles in your houses, as I trust you all have, but what is the Bible but a dead letter without Christ? Ah, I would you could all say what a poor woman once said. “I have Christ here,” as she put her hand on the Bible, “and I have Christ here,” as she put her hand on her heart, “and I have Christ there,” as she raised up her eyes towards heaven. But if you have not Christ in your heart, you will not find Christ in the Book, for He is discovered there in His sweetness, His blessedness and His excellence only by those who know Him and love Him in their hearts! Do not get the idea that a certain quantity of Bible reading, particular times spent in repeating prayers, regular attendance at a place of worship and the systematic contribution of a guinea or so to the support of public worship and private charities will ensure the salvation of your souls! No, you must be born-again! And that you cannot be, for it is not possible that you could have been born-again if you are still living without Christ! To have Christ is the indispensable condition of entering heaven. If you have Him, though compassed about with a thousand infirmities, you shall yet see the brightness of the eternal glory! But if you have not Christ, alas, for all your toil and the wearisome slavery of your religion, you can but weave a righteousness of your own which shall disappoint your hope and incur the displeasure of God!

And without Christ, dear friends, there comes the solemn reflection that *before long you shall perish*. Of that I do not like to talk, but I would like you to think of it. Without Christ you may live, young man—though, mark, you shall miss the richest joys of life. Without Christ you may live, hale, strong man, in middle age—though, mark, without Him you shall miss the greatest support amidst your troubles! Without Christ you may live, old man, and lean upon your staff content with the earth into which you are so soon to drop, though mark you, you shall lose the sweetest consolation which your weakness could have found! But remember, man, you are soon to die! It matters not how strong you are—death is stronger than you and he will pull you down, even as the stag hound drags down his victim, and then “how will you do in the swellings of Jordan,” without Christ? How will you do when the eyes begin to close, without Christ? How will you do, sinner, when the death rattle is in your throat,

without Christ? When they prop you up with pillows, when they stand weeping round your expiring form, when the pulse grows faint and few, when you have to lift the veil and stand disembodied before the dreadful eyes of an angry God, how will you do without Christ? And when the judgment trumpet shall wake you from your slumber in the tomb, and body and soul shall stand together at that last and dread assize—in the midst of that tremendous crowd, sinner, how will you do without Christ? When the reapers come forth to gather in the harvest of God, and the sickles are red with blood, and the vintage is cast into the winepress of His wrath, and it is trodden until the blood runs forth up to the horse's bellies—how will you do, then, I ask you, without Christ? Oh, sinner, I pray you let these words sound in your ears till they ring into your heart! I would like you to think of them tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. Without Christ! I would like to make you think of dying, of being judged, of being condemned without Christ! May God in His mercy enable you to see your state and fly to Him who is able to save, even unto the uttermost, all them that come unto God by Him! Christ is to be had for the asking! Christ is to be had for the receiving! Stretch out your withered hand and take Him! Trust Him and He will be yours forevermore! And you shall be with Him, where He is, in an eternity of joy! Having thus reviewed the misery of our past estate, let us endeavor, with the little time we have left, to—

II. EXCITE THE THANKFULNESS OF GOD'S PEOPLE FOR WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE FOR THEM.

We are not without Christ, now, but let me ask you, you who are believers, where you would have been now without Christ? As for some of you, you might—indeed you would have been, tonight, in the alehouse or gin palace. You would have been with the boisterous crew that makes merriment on the Lord's Day. You know you would, for "such were some of you." You might have been even worse—you might have been in the harlot's house. You might have been violating the laws of man as well as the laws of God, "for even such" were some of you, but you are washed, but you are sanctified. Where might you not have been without Christ? You might have been in hell! You might have been shut out forever from all mercy—condemned to eternal banishment from the presence of God!

I think the Indian's picture is a very fair one of where we would have been without Christ. When asked what Christ had done for him, he picked up a worm, put it on the ground, and made a ring of straw and wood round it, which he set alight. As the wood began to glow, the poor worm began to twist and wriggle in agony, whereupon the Indian stooped down, took it gently up with his finger, and said, "That is what Jesus did for me. I was surrounded, without power to help myself, by a ring of dreadful fire that would have been my ruin, but His pierced hand lifted me out of the burning." Think of that, Christians, and as your hearts melt, come to His table and praise Him that you are not now without Christ!

Then think what His blood has done for you. Take only one thing out of a thousand. It has put away your many, many sins. You were without Christ and your sins stood like yonder mountain, whose black and rugged cliffs threaten the very skies. There fell a drop of Jesus' blood upon it and it all vanished in a moment! The sins of all your days were gone in an instant by the application of the precious blood! Oh, bless Jehovah's name that you can now say—

*"Now freed from sin I walk at large,
My Savior's blood my full discharge!
Content at His dear feet I lay,
A sinner saved, and homage pay."*

Remember, too, now that you have Christ, *of the way in which He came and made you partaker of Himself*. Oh, how long He stood in the cold, knocking at the door of your heart! You would not have Him! You despised Him! You resisted Him! You kicked against Him—you did, as it were, spit in His face and put Him to open shame to be rid of Him! Yet He would have you, and so, overcoming all your objections, and overlooking all your unworthiness, at length He rescued you and acknowledged you to be His own!

Consider, beloved, *what might have been your case had He left you to your own free agency*. You might have had His blood on your head in aggravation of your guilt! Instead of that, you have got His blood applied to your heart in token of your pardon! You know right well what a difference that makes. Oh, that was a dreadful cry in the streets of Jerusalem, "His blood be on us and our children!" And

Jerusalem's streets flowing with gore witnessed how terrible a thing it is to have Christ's blood visited on His enemies! But, beloved, you have that precious blood for the cleansing of your conscience. It has sealed your acceptance and you can, therefore, rejoice in the ransom He has paid and the remission you have received with unspeakable joy and full of glory!

And I would not have you forget the vast *expense which it cost to procure this priceless gift*. Christ could not have been yours had He lived in heaven. He must come down to earth—but even then He could not be fully yours till He had bled and died. Oh, the dreadful portals through which Christ had to pass before He could find His way to you! He finds you now right easily, but before He could come to you He must, Himself, pass through the grave! Think of that and be astonished!

And why *are you not left to be without Christ?* I suppose there are some persons whose minds naturally incline towards the doctrines of free will. I can only say that mine inclines as naturally towards the doctrines of sovereign grace. I cannot understand the reason why I am saved, except upon the ground that God would have it so. I cannot, if I look ever so earnestly, discover any kind of reason in myself why I should be a partaker of divine grace. If I am not tonight without Christ, it is only because Jesus would have His will with me and that will was that I should be with Him where He is and should share His glory. I can put the crown nowhere but upon the head of Him whose mighty grace has saved me from going down into the pit!

Beloved, let us mention one thing more out of the thousand things which we must leave unsaid. *Remember what you have tonight now that you have Christ*. No, no, no, do not be telling me what you have not got! You have not got a certain income, you say! You have not got a competence! You have not got wealth. You have not got friends. You have not got a comfortable house. No, but you have your Savior—you have Christ! And what does that mean? "He that spared not His own Son, but freely delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him, also, freely give us all things?" The man who has Christ has everything! There are all things in one in Christ Jesus, and if you once get Him, you are rich to all the intents of bliss! What? Have Jesus Christ and be discontented? Have Christ and murmur? Beloved, let me chide you, gently, and pray you to lay aside that evil habit! If you have Christ, then you have God the Father to be your protector, and God the Spirit to be your comforter! You have present things working together for your good and future things to unravel your happier portion! You have angels to be your servitors, both on earth and in heaven! You have all the wheels of Providence revolving for your benefit! You have the stones of the field in league with you! You have your daily trials sanctified to your benefit! You have your earthly joys hinged from their doors and hallowed with a blessing! Your gains and your losses are alike profitable to you! Your additions and your reductions shall, alike, swell the tide of your soul's satisfaction! You have more than any other creatures can boast as their portion! You have more than the entire world beside could yield to regale your pure taste, and ravish your happy spirits! And now, will you not be glad? I would have you come to this feasting table this evening, saying within yourselves, "Since I am not without Christ, but Jesus Christ is mine, I do rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice!"

And oh, dear Christian friends, if you have lost your evidences, go to Christ to find them! Do not go striking your matches to light your candles, but go direct to the sun and get your light from His full orb. You who are doubting, desponding and cast down, do not get to foraging up the moldy bread of yesterday, but go and get the manna which falls fresh today at the foot of the cross! Now you who have been wandering and backsliding, do not stay away from Jesus because of your unworthiness, but let your very sins compel you to come to your Savior's feet. Come, you sinners! Come, you saints! Come, you who dare not say that you are His people! Come, you whose faith is but as a grain of mustard seed! Come, you who have not any faith at all! Come now to Jesus, who says, "Whoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

May God grant that some who feel that they are without Christ because they have no enjoyment, nor any sense of communion with Him, may now take hold of His name, His covenant, His promises, with a lively faith! No, more—may they find Him to the rapture of their souls and He shall have all the praise. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

PSALM 50:14-23; Ezekiel 36:21-38.***PSALM 50:14-23.***

In the first part of this Psalm God has solemnly expostulated with His people as to the utter worthlessness of sacrifice and ceremony apart from living faith in Him, and holy life as its fruit. And He sums it all up in the searching question of the 13th verse, “Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Have you such a groveling opinion of Me, your God, as to conceive that I am satisfied with these things?” See what contempt the Lord pours upon sacrifices—even those that were of His own ordaining—when men rested in them and made them their confidence and their end!

Verse 14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving.* This is what He wants—heart-work.

14. *And pay your vows unto the most High.* This is what He demands—obedience.

15. *And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.* Thus you see God has spoken to His professing people—to those who were moral, decent and observant of outward ritual. He now turns to some others—some others, perhaps, quite as outwardly religious, but their lives were immoral—their conduct was a breach of His law. At first He speaks of their neglect of the first table, which says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,” and shows that it is not bullocks and rams which can make amends for forgetfulness of God. Now He turns to the second table and shows that no amount of sacrifice can make up for breaches of the law of God as it touches our fellow men.

16. *But unto the wicked, God says, What have you to do to declare My statutes, or that you should take My covenant in your mouth?* Your unholiness, even though you were of the tribe of Levi, would disqualify you from declaring My statutes. Your mouth is full of slander, how could you dare to use it to speak of My covenant with it?

17. *Seeing you hate instruction, and cast My words behind you.* As if they were worthless things to be thrown away; as if they were obnoxious things to be thrown behind your back where you could not see them. “Do you talk about worshiping Me, while you are neglecting My words?” Now it is a very solemn thing when a man boasts about the covenant, or about the doctrines of grace, or about outward ceremonies, and yet there are parts of God’s Word that he neglects—there are portions of God’s will that he dares not look in the face. If ever I meet a text that I am afraid of, I begin to be afraid of myself! And if I feel any tendency to take away from a text any of its swooping charges or its strong demands, I feel that surely I must have quarreled with this text because it has quarreled with me. How can we think we are offering to God acceptable sacrifice when any of His Words are cast behind our backs?

18. *When you saw a thief, then you consented with him, and have been partaker with adulterers.* “When you saw a thief you consented with him,” and some professors do this. If they do not themselves, rob, there are some who will employ their clerks to tell lies in writing. They consent in the bad trade of others. They become accomplices, helping to make excuses for others. “And have been partaker with adulterers.” Can a man profess to be religious and yet do this? Well, I have known such, and such will still creep into the Church of God—unclean, unchaste men, who nevertheless will come and sit as God’s people sit, and sing as God’s people sing! And, indeed, anyone who listens to lascivious talk, or who smiles at an unchaste jest, is himself a partaker with adulterers more or less.

19. *You give your mouth to evil, and your tongue frames deceit.* How many do this, and yet think they are the children of God? They ruin other characters most remorselessly—they will spread false reports, if not actually invent them—and yet think themselves the people of God!

20. *You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son.* When a tongue has once learned the habit of calumny, it will spare none. The nearest relative and the dearest will become victims to the habit—first of gossip and afterwards of actual detraction and lying! Oh, the misery, the pain that is caused in the world by this habit which is so rife! And can we imagine ourselves to be the people of God when we delight in repeating false stories about others? Have we forgotten the truth of that word, “All liars shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone”? As surely as God is true and loves truth, if we love lies, where God is we can never come. It matters not how much we may pretend to have reverence for God, and to have an experience of His truth—we are not of the truth of God, neither are we of God.

21. *These things have you done, and I kept silent.* God, in His long-suffering, bears with these sinners. “You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself.” These men came at last to say, “Pooh! The prophets make too much fuss about holiness! You can serve God, and yet, after all, live as we do. So long as we give God a tithe, it matters not how we get our property. If we offer Him the bulls, He will be quite content.” Ah, to what do men degrade their God! Some made Him of old to be like a bull that has horns and hoofs, but many men nowadays think God to be like themselves—and that is worse!

21. *You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself: but I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes.* “I will lay your sins out before you—parcel them out, ‘Item this’—Item that.’ I will classify them: I will set them like a dreadful army in array before you. I will let you see that though I had patience with you, I was neither blind nor deaf, but heard and saw all that you have done and noted it all.” Oh, what a vista this opens up for unholy professors—for ungodly members of Christian churches!

22. *Now consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.* What solemn words! What dreadful words! God never plays at threats and His ministers, when they speak of wrath to come, are not to speak with velvet mouths and soft words, for “Oh, the wrath to come,” as George Whitefield used to say with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, “The wrath to come! The wrath to come—how dreadful will it be!” God Himself proves it. “Beware, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.” And then the Psalm finishes up with this kind word of gracious address which drops like raindrops out of the bosom of the tempest that went before—

23. *Whoever offers praise glorifies Me.* More than he that offers bullocks.

23. *And to Him that orders his conversation aright*—The man that strives in the sight of God to walk a holy life—this is the man to whom—

23. *Will I show the salvation of God.* If he needs saving, let him order his conversation as he may, he will owe all to sovereign grace! He will have no merit of his own, “but where I by grace,” says the Lord, “lead a man to order his conversation aright, there will I show more and more fully, and at last perfectly in him, the salvation of God.”

EZEKIEL 36:21-38.

The prophet had been bringing many heavy charges against God’s people. He had been thundering out the most tremendous threats against them. God was angry with them on account of sin. The chapter is full of dreadful utterances, enough to make one tremble as he reads them. But all of a sudden the note altogether changes and the prophet of thunder becomes the prophet of consolation! Free grace follows like a clear shining after the rain.

Verses 21-28. *But I had pity for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, where they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus says the LORD GOD—I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the heathen, where you went. And I will sanctify My great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which you have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, says the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.* Here, indeed, is matchless divine grace, that these very people who for their sins were banished from their land, and who in their exile added to their sin by the way in which they blasphemed God—those very people are to be brought back and the mercy of God is so to be displayed in them that, in the very people who blasphemed God’s name, God shall be had in honor!

25, 26. *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* Now notice that all this was spoken to persons who had no desire for these blessings! If they had had a desire for them, their hearts could not be considered to be stony, but they were set against God—they were His enemies—and yet He makes this solemn declaration in the sovereignty of His grace that He will give them a new heart and a right spirit! There may be some in this house, tonight, and I pray there

may, who are strangers to the God of Israel, who, if they know anything concerning His Son, only know enough to oppose Him. May God's eternal omnipotence work in them mightily that a new heart and a right spirit may be given them tonight according to that ancient word of God, "I am found of them that sought Me not." He can come and make them a people that were not a people. Oh, that His grace would do so now!

27. *And I will put My Spirit within you.* Not only a new spirit, but My Spirit. God Himself shall come and dwell in those hearts which once were a receptacle for the devil!

27, 28. *And cause you to walk in My statutes, and you shall keep My judgments and do them. And you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers: and you shall be My people, and I will be your God.* He who talks in this sovereign way is God Himself! He first made the world as He pleased, and in the second new creation, He does as He will, having power over us as the potter has over his clay. This is promised to the Jewish people, but it is also fulfilled in multitudes of others where God, in the same sovereign way, works out the purposes of His love.

29. *I will also save you from all your uncleanness and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you.* Temporal mercies shall follow where spiritual mercies are given.

30-36. *And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that you shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, says the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord GOD, In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be built up and the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD built up the ruined places, and planted that which was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it.* Prayer will always go with the divine working. Where God means to save, He sets men praying. Those who are saved intercede for others, and others who as yet are unsaved feel the need of the blessing and begin to cry for it—and the blessing comes! As the black cloud forebodes the shower, so does the gathering spirit of prayer always foretoken the coming blessing! Heaven and earth may pass away, but the memorial of Jehovah always is "The God who hears prayer." He is the God whose arm is always moved by the prayer of man. Did not Moses stand between them and vengeance, so that God said, "Let Me alone," as if He had said, "I cannot destroy them while you pray"? Did not Elijah open and shut the windows of heaven by his prayer? Nothing is impossible to those who know how believingly to enquire of God.

37. *Thus says the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them: I will increase them with men like a flock.* Take up this promise, members of this Church, and urge it before God that He would give us not few additions, but many, very many! "I will increase them with men like a flock."

38. *As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts.* When a great number of lambs would be brought up to Jerusalem for them to keep the Passover with, a great and countless company. Oh, that such additions may be given to the Church!

38. *So shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men; and they shall know that I am the LORD.*

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