ABUNDANT PARDON

NO. 1195

A SERMON
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BY C. H. SPURGEON
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"He will abundantly pardon."
Isaiah 55:7

IN our childhood we learned from Dr. Watts' Catechism that Isaiah was that prophet who spoke more of Jesus Christ than all the rest. In the chapter before us, he had been declaring in the name of the Lord the coming and the character of the Redeemer, speaking of Him thus, "Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and a commander to the people." No sooner had he thus proclaimed the appearance of the Christ than he beheld whole nations of the heathen rushing to Him, and inspired by that sight, he began at once to address himself to the sinners around him, bade them fly to Him too.

As there is a natural connection between the physician and the sick, so is there between the Savior and the sinner. The prophet can hardly think of Christ as coming to be a leader, and a witness, and a commander without at once turning to the wicked, and to the unrighteous, and bidding them forsake their ways, enlist beneath their commander's banner, and participate in the blessings which He brings.

Jesus is a grand attraction for guilty men. "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him." Christ is always welcomed by those who know they want Him. The self-righteous Pharisees and Scribes murmur at Him, but those who are humble and contrite because conscious of their guilt, approach Him, wishing, as it were, but to touch the hem of His garment that they may be made whole.

As the sun is attended by his planets who borrow all their light from him, so is the Lord Jesus waited on by crowds of sinners, who find in Him their hope, their all. As the thirsty harts resort to the water brooks so do needy souls hasten to Jesus, and it is according to the divine order that it should be so.

Notice what the prophet has to say. He speaks to the unrighteous and the wicked, and invites them to immediate faith and repentance, for so I understand the passage to mean. "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near," is an exhortation to prayer and faith. We cannot approach God in prayer without faith, for a prayer that has no faith in it must die on the road.

To seek the Lord aright we must believe that "God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him." I take that sixth verse, coupled with the third, to be a plain exhortation to faith. Faith comes by hearing, and for this reason it is written, "Incline your ear and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live."

As for repentance, that is clear in the seventh verse. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." The whole passage reads like a paraphrase of the Gospel message, "repent ye and believe the gospel." It seems as if Isaiah were an evangelist rather than a prophet, as if he had lived before his time, and preached the Gospel like an apostle who had seen the Lord. Like the morning star, which shines upon the earth before the sun has risen, Isaiah rejoiced the hearts of believers with his clear radiance.

The gladness of his soul in the thought of the coming messenger of the covenant, even Jesus Christ, kindled his spirit and the light shone forth from him. He was so glad within his heart that his tongue was loosed, and straightway he addressed himself to those that "sat in darkness and the valley of the shadow of death," and bade them arise and quit the shades and go unto their God, for there was no reason for despair. There was mercy, great mercy, abounding pardon to be had, and he bade them obtain it there and then. "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."

The motive which he urged upon men was the certainty of their finding pardon. This was the tempting bait with which this ancient fisher of souls endeavored to "catch men." May the Holy Spirit aid me while I use the same, and invite you to consider with me—*the abundant pardon which God bestows upon the guilty*. Having discoursed upon that at length, we shall, in the second place, *consider what fair inferences may be drawn from this encouraging truth*.

I. First then, according to the text, God does ABUNDANTLY PARDON. We will turn that truth over and over, and see it in many lights.

The pardon of God may well be abundant, for *it wells up from an infinite fountain*, "Mercy, which endures for ever," is the attribute from which that pardon springs. Pardon is the child of mercy, not of justice, and we may reckon that God will give abundant pardon because He delighteth in mercy. All the attributes of God are well balanced, like Himself, they are infinite, and no one of them entrenches upon or dims the luster of another. He is infinitely just, yet infinitely good, infinitely powerful, yet infinitely tender. We are quite sure that whenever an attribute of God comes into action it will be sufficiently revealed to make its glory manifest.

There could be no mercy exercised by God until there was sin. Where all was blameless mercy had no sphere. As soon as the angels fell, the Lord might have exercised mercy had He pleased, but He did not choose to provide salvation for Satan and his rebellious hordes. As if to teach us that it is not inevitable that God should forgive, He suffered the fallen angels to fall irretrievably, and gave them up to everlasting fire as their due desert.

Deceived by the old serpent, man also fell, and again there was space for mercy. Man was an inferior creature to the angels, should he be allowed to perish or should grace step in? In this case mercy bowed the heavens and came down, and the Lord of all, as if to show that He "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom he will have compassion," though He had passed the angels by, took up the race of men and determined that His pardons should be bestowed upon them.

Now, when He had resolved to let mercy come to the front and be seen—which I again say could not have been if there had been no sin—it was not full of wonder that He allowed that blessed attribute to come forth in all the fullness of its might. In the creation you see power in its majesty and wisdom in its grandeur. In providence you see goodness unbounded and faithfulness unlimited. In the gulf to which the Lord has condemned the wicked you see justice in all its awful glory, and therefore when He determined to let mercy come forth from her ivory palaces it seemed but natural that He should give ample room and verge enough.

It was not according to His mind that from the unfathomable depths of His love there should trickle forth a stinted stream of mercy, which might wash out a little sin, and water a scanty patch of the desert of our nature. But He poured floods upon the dry ground. When our sin abounded His grace did yet more abound. He opened the sluices of His mercy, He let down the cataracts of His infinite love from above, and drowned the mountains of our sin in a deluge of grace, so that we sang rightly just now—

"See here an endless ocean flows
Of never-failing grace,
Behold a dying Savior's veins
The sacred flood increase.

"It rises high and drowns the hills,
Has neither shore nor bound,
Now, if we search to find our sins,
Our sins can ne'er be found."

"God is love" implies that love has a predominance in His character—not so as to mar other attributes, much less to destroy them—but as the consequence and blending of the whole, and therefore,

we may be sure that this most conspicuous of all the attributes, this summing up of them all, will have full range, and distribute abundantly its peculiar gifts.

But secondly, as the attribute from which the pardon comes is abundant, so we know of a truth that *the objects to which this pardon has been extended are abundant too*. Well is it said, "He will abundantly pardon," for God has already pardoned sinners more numerous than can be estimated by human arithmetic. From the first sinner down to the last that has ever fled for refuge to the hope set before him in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus what incalculable numbers have looked to Him and have been lightened.

Think, my brethren, of the myriads that have lived and died forgiven. Heaven is not scant of inhabitants. If you could now lift up your eyes, you should see that the old covenant promise has been in part fulfilled—"thy seed shall be as the sand, and the offspring of thy bowels like the gravel thereof."

The promised seed in covenant with God, of which covenant God spake to Abraham, is already as many as the stars in heaven and as the sand upon the sea shore, innumerable. They have come from every land, yea, from the uttermost parts of the earth have they come. Of every hue has their skin been and their raiment of divers colors. Their language has been varied and their condition also, but they have alike found grace in the sight of the Lord.

Multitudes of the poor and needy, ay, of the outcasts have come—the women that ground at the mill and the captives that fretted in the dungeon, God's wondrous eye of love has found out broken hearts by the millions and He has abundantly pardoned them.

Ay! and even on the face of the earth now what a multitude there are whom God has pardoned! Blessed be His name! There may not be so many as latitudinarianism imagines, but there are certainly more than bigotry conceives.

God has pardoned a great multitude of the sons of men, and He intends to pardon yet more, for the Gospel will spread. And brighter days are coming, and the halcyon period is on the wing when nations shall be converted at once, and like the flocks of doves that come to the dovecot, souls shall fly to Jesus for forgiveness. When the whole earth shall be filled with His glory, in the multitude of repentant and forgiven sinners of the golden age, men shall see that God does "abundantly pardon."

His pardon is, in the third place, abundant when we consider *the abundance of the sins which the love of God blots out*. Oh, what a subject I have now before me! Here is a river for depth unfathomable, and for breadth a river which cannot be passed over, it is a river to swim in! I must correct myself and call it an ocean. Indeed, what shall I say of this sea of sin? Therein are creeping things innumerable, both small and great beasts. There is that leviathan who doth mightily disport himself, and there are fierce tempests and horrible storms, which well may sink the barque which tempt them. I am overwhelmed with the thought of the abundance of transgression.

Sin! From your fruitful womb what myriads of ills proceed! What countless hosts of evils are the fruits of sin! How many are the sins themselves! Sins of *thought*—rebellious thoughts, proud thoughts, blasphemous thoughts, atheistical thoughts, covetous thoughts, lustful thoughts, impatient thoughts, cruel thoughts, false thoughts, thoughts of ill memory and dreams of an unholy future, what swarms are there!

Moreover, the omission of thoughts which should have been, such as thoughts of repentance, gratitude, reverence, faith, and the like, these are equally numerous. With the double list my roll is written within and without with a hideous catalog. As the gnats which swarm the air at eventide, so numerous are the transgressions of the mind.

Then there are sins of *word*. I should have to repeat the list again. What words have vexed the pure and holy ear of God! Words against Himself, against His Son, against His law and Gospel, against our neighbor, against everything that is good and true! Words proud and hectoring, words defiant and obstinate, words untruthful, words lascivious, words of vanity, and words of willful unbelief. Oh God! how many are our sinful words. The sins of our tongue—what man is there who is able to reckon them up?

Then come the sins of deed, which in very truth are but the fruits which grow out of sins of thought. Can any man here estimate the number of his own sins from the first transgression of his childhood until grey old age, or to his present period of life? "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

Perhaps the sins we do not know are more numerous than the sins we are conscious of. Conscience may not be properly enlightened, and hence many a thing may not seem to be sinful which really is so. But God's clear eye perceiveth everything that is obnoxious to His holy law, and all our errors are written down against us until the whole is wiped away by an abundant pardon through the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Our sins are as the countless horde of locusts which descend upon the fertile land and devour everything, leaving nothing for man but famine and despair. But as it was in Egypt so it is at this day, the Lord commands the wind of mercy to blow every locust from off the face of the land, and as they all depart at once our hearts rejoice and are glad.

Our sins are countless as the drops of dew in these autumn mornings when every leaf is wet, for every tree is weeping tears of sorrow over the dying year. And yet when the sun has risen, with a little of his heat the moisture is gone, the dews are all exhaled, they are as if they had never been. So countless are our sins, and so complete is the removal of our transgressions when the infinite love of Jesus shines upon us and God in His Son has reconciled us by His atoning blood. Innumerable sins are forgiven by one word from the life of divine love.

In the fourth place, we can see the truth of this in *the abundant sin of those sins which are pardoned*. Just think of the abundant sinfulness of any one transgression, for every sin has a myriad sins in its bowels. Did you ever find a spider's nest just when the young spiders have all come to life, it is a city of spiders. Now, such is any one sin, it is a colony of iniquities, a living mass of offense. You have but to stir it and you will see countless sins running out of it, it is an aggregation of evils.

I remember once studying with much care various works upon the sin of Adam, and I was convinced by each writer that it was a different sin, and came at last to the conclusion that the sin of Adam, simple as it was, had all sorts of sins hidden within it. Sin is not only a double flower, but it blooms sevenfold, it is a complicated mischief, in a thousand ways abhorrent to the holy God, and yet He pardons it! Abundantly pardons it!

Some sins are plotted and planned and performed with presumptuous deliberation, so that when the act itself is perpetrated it is only one part of a whole mass of transgression. The man has first to consider how to do it, and there is sin in the consideration. If it were a sin of revenge, for instance, the anger which first suggested it was a sin. Then the malice which preyed upon the supposed injury and turned it over was sin, and then the prostitution of wit and wisdom to the scheming of some cunning mode of vengeance—all this was sin.

Many a sin is a development from a long succession of sins, and may have a genealogy far longer than the pedigree of the man himself, and be intensely full of sin all along. Some sins have in them strange contradictory mixtures. We have known men sin from pride and covetousness, and yet fall into that which was at once mean and ruinous to their hope of gain. We have seen self-righteousness and lust riding on the same saddle.

What art thou, O sin! A monster of forms uncouth and contrary! I see you one moment as an angel of light, and the next you are a fiend, black as the midnight of Gehenna! You grovel like a serpent, and anon you shine like a seraph! You are "all things to all men," if by any means you may deceive some and cast them down into the pit! Yet this vile thing the Lord forgives of men for Jesus' sake! Does He not abundantly pardon?

In addition to there being many sins in one sin, I want you to remember how much virus of sin we sometimes manage to stow away in a sin. A man has done wrong and smarted for it, yet he does the very same thing again willfully, against his own conscience and against the warning he has received. A man

will sometimes acknowledge what a fool he has been, and yet play the fool again. Some men sin for no motive whatever—for mere wantonness of sin.

It is very astonishing to read in the newspapers of crimes that persons will sometimes fall into, who appear to have had no inducement to do so at all—persons in good circumstances, who might have purchased readily enough the very things they steal. This increases guilt and makes sin by far the more heinous, if we do it in sheer willfulness.

If any of us have been blessed with a tender conscience and with pious training, have heard the sound preaching of the Gospel and have had light and knowledge, if we go deliberately into sin there is in that sin a degree of obnoxiousness to God which is not to be found in the transgressions of the poor and the ignorant, who have lived in darkness and scarcely know what they do.

Yet, sins against light and knowledge God pardons. Deliberate and presumptuous sins He forgives. Blasphemous, impudent and provoking sins, sins that would otherwise sink us low as the lowest hell, His mighty mercy sweeps away in one single moment when we believe in Jesus Christ.

At the foot of the cross not merely sins vanish that are a little stain upon us, but the deep and double crimson of deliberate guilt, and the staring scarlet of gross iniquity, all disappear when we are washed in the "fountain filled with blood," which is open for sin and for uncleanness. Abundance of sinners are forgiven the abundance of sins, and the abundance of the sin which lies in each one of the sins is removed. "He will abundantly pardon." Our text grows, does it not?

Let us notice next, that the Lord "abundantly pardons," when we consider *the abundant means of pardon which He has been pleased to provide for sinners*. It was not possible that God should so pardon sin as to leave a slur upon His moral government. If a judge sitting on the bench should pass over great crimes without any kind of retribution, it would be a great misfortune to a country. For very soon crime would be regarded as a mere trifle.

Leniency to the wicked would turn out to be cruelty to the just. When a man who commits violence in the streets has the lash used upon him, we may pity him if we like, but if that lash were not used we should have a greater need to pity those good and honest citizens who are half killed when they are seeking their homes at nightfall.

A judge must never so pass by offenses as to increase them. God will not show pardon in such a way that men shall think of sin, or question the vigor of His justice. What, then, was He to do? Why, He must provide a way by which He can be "just and yet the justifier of the ungodly." And He did provide it. His own Son became the substitute for the guilty, and in their room and stead He suffered the wrath of God for man. So that now the severity of God is upheld in the death of Jesus, and the mercy of God in the forgiveness of those for whom He died.

Now, that there is abundant pardon may be clearly seen from the fact that the substitute was not an angel, was no creature of bounded power and merit, but He who came to save us was none other than God Himself—"very God of very God." The fountain filled for us to wash in is not a fountain which can only cleanse a little and then will be exhausted of its virtues. The Son of God has filled it from His pierced heart, and the merit of the atoning blood is without limit.

There was a limit to the purpose for which it was shed, for He loved His church and gave Himself *for it*. But it is blasphemous to imagine that there is any boundary to the merit of the atonement itself. There is in the sacrifice of the Son of God a degree of power which seraphim cannot conceive.

Were all the stars worlds, and were they all filled with myriads of inhabitants who had revolted against God, if an atonement had been wanted for them all, it is not within my power to conceive that a greater atonement could be required for the whole host of creatures than that which Christ presented upon the cross. The boundless merit of it, therefore, makes us rejoice, for our God "will abundantly pardon."

Sinner, if there had been a little Savior, you might have despaired. Sinner, if the Savior had offered a small sacrifice, if there had been but a narrow degree of merit in His agonies and cries, I might have spoken to you with bated breath. But now I know He is "able to save to the uttermost them that come

unto God by Him" and therefore, I am warranted to declare to you that God, even our God—in Christ Jesus "will abundantly pardon." May God send these things home to the hearts of those who are laboring under a sense of guilt.

And now I must notice, in the sixth place, the *abundant ease of the terms of pardon*. When a man says he will forgive another and does not mean it, he puts hard conditions and says, "I will forgive him under certain circumstances, if he does this and if he does that." This is not abundant pardon. It is a miserly spirit of forgiveness, in fact, it is no forgiveness at all.

But look how God puts it. Does He say to a man, "I will forgive you if you weep for seven years, or do penance for a lifetime," or "I will forgive you if you bring so much gold or silver, or promise this or promise that"? No, no, no. It is a hearty forgiveness and therefore the terms are simple and easy. When I say "terms" I merely use the word from want of a better, for indeed the terms are not terms at all.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD; for he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." That is all! No man can expect to be forgiven if he goes on with his sin. You cannot expect God to pardon that which you continue to provoke Him with. That were absurd.

The sin must be given up. The Gospel says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," you cannot expect a medicine to cure you if you will not take it. Neither can you expect God to pardon you if you will not accept pardon from His Son Jesus Christ. So all that He asks is that you do ask and are willing to receive. And even that He gives you, for the power to pray, to repent, and to believe, all come from Him! And though He bids men believe, and so makes it a duty, yet He gives them faith, and so makes it a privilege.

What a God He is! He gives to His enemies, to the rebellious, to revolters that go aside more and more, that which makes them repent of their sin and believe in His Son. And this puts their sin forever behind His back, and casts it into the depths of the sea. "He will abundantly pardon."

Observe, again, the *abundance of this pardon may be seen in the fullness of it*. God's pardons are no shams, no superficialities. "He will abundantly pardon"—that is to say, He will *really* pardon. Have you that are pardoned never asked yourselves this question, "Is it really true? Can it be so? Am I really forgiven?" Yes, it is true. God does not pretend to forgive. He does not play at pardoning. When once He says, "*Absolvo te*," He does indeed absolve. The forgiveness is valid. It is valid on earth in the court of conscience, and above in the court of heaven.

The pardoned sinner is truly pardoned, and no one shall ever condemn him. His sin is not merely supposed to be gone, it is gone. It is not put a little way off from him, but "as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." "I will cast their iniquities into the depths of the sea," saith He. "I will cast them behind my back," is another of His strong expressions.

Ah, soul! if you believe in Jesus, your sins do not exist. For it is written, "He hath finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness." And here is the consequence of it—that when God puts away sin He so abundantly pardons that He even imputes righteousness to those who were unrighteous. He does not impute sin, but He gives to us the righteousness of Christ, with which we are rendered acceptable in His sight and Christ Jesus is made unto us "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

Our Lord does nothing by halves. He found us black, He washes us white, we are naked and He clothes us.

"And lest even shadow of a spot
Should on our souls be found,
He took the robe the Savior wrought,
And cast it all around."

For filth there is washing, for nakedness dress, for deformity adornment, for uncomeliness beauty, for all our possible wants a boundless supply. Is not this pardon plenteous, when we see what is bound up with it?

I am sure I do not know how to speak well enough of this glorious pardon which our God gives. One point is always full of joy to me, and that is, that it is irreversible. Those whom the Lord forgives He never condemns. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." He does not play fast and loose with His creatures—forgive today and condemn tomorrow. Once let Him blot out the sin, the sin is gone *forever*. "If they search for it, it shall not be found; yes, it shall not be, saith the LORD."

How I delight to preach about everlasting salvation and irreversible pardon. My God and King changeth not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed, and the covenant blessings are yea and amen in Christ Jesus. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Once more only. There is so much to say that I am obliged to multiply particulars.

The eighth point is, He doth "abundantly pardon," because of *the abundant blessings which attend that pardon*. See how He takes the poor imprisoned soul out of bondage and delivers it, takes off every chain from its hands and feet, and makes it rejoice in Christ Jesus.

Oh, you that have once been set in the stocks of conviction on account of sin, and made to cry out in your sore bondage, you now know, since you are forgiven, what the glorious liberty of the children of God is. You are not now in "durance vile," but being justified by faith you have peace with God through Jesus Christ your Lord.

The Lord gives us freedom from the power as well as from the guilt of sin. Those dear lips of Christ are put to the wounds of our sin to suck the poison out, lest the virus of our old transgressions should breed a fresh disease. The blessed dove descends with a healing branch from the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations, and our soul is made to seek after holiness till it perfects it in the fear of God. This is abundant pardon indeed!

If a king were to forgive rebels it were great mercy certainly, but to take those rebels and make them his friends that is more abundant mercy. Then to adopt them and make them his children, ay, to put coronets on their heads and make them kings and priests in his empire, this were abundant pardon indeed! To take the rebels and provide them royal sustenance, place them at his table, educate and train them, admit them to his palace, grant their requests, commune with them, and take them into his palace with him, that would be an abundant pardon!

And yet all this God does for sinners. He makes them His children, He hears their prayers, He gives them fellowship with Himself and His dear Son. He employs them in offices of trust, sets them about bringing their fellow sinners to Himself, and by and by, He takes them home to heaven, where they shall dwell forever at His right hand in all the bliss and glory of His only-begotten Son. Oh, is not this abundantly to pardon?

I would to God some seraph could descend with burning tongue to take my place and speak to you this morning on such a theme as this, but no, perhaps I am a better speaker to you in such a case, for—

"Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love."

But I have tasted it. This forgiveness is mine today, and I rejoice in it, and as I preach it to you, I preach that which I do know and set before you that which I have enjoyed. Oh, that others may come and participate in this amazing pardon—this boundless forgiveness of boundless sin!

II. We shall consider next, very briefly, what are THE INFERENCES WHICH FLOW OUT OF ABUNDANT PARDON.

The first inference is this, *There is no room for anybody to despair*. If there be here this morning one who has been a drunkard, a man of filthy and unclean life, a thief, or worse, if worse can be, there is no reason why he should despair.

Suppose I were only able to say this morning, "God does pardon *sometimes some few* sinners. There are a few people who have been guilty of great sin, who have been forgiven and are in heaven." Why, if men were in their senses they would find hope even in this, and would exclaim, "Who can tell? Who can tell? Perhaps He will pardon us?" Even on such a slender thread as that they would have hang a hope, and if they were wise they would go and seek mercy.

Jonah could only go through Nineveh and say, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" Nothing about mercy—not a word of it. But the people of Nineveh said, "Who can tell? He may turn from his fierce anger that we perish not," and on the strength of "*Who can tell*?" they tried it, and the God of mercy spared the guilty city.

Oh, poor sinner! If you had only a "Who can tell?" it were worth while to go and try it. But look at my text, there is no "Who can tell?" in it. "He will abundantly pardon." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts," for it must be heart-work—"and let him turn unto the LORD"—let him seek his face by repentance and faith, that is the meaning—"and he will abundantly pardon." The Lord has great mercy for great sinners.

I will set the big bell a ringing, and I will let it ring and ring again, "Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Come and welcome, for the great gates are set wide open! The tables are long, and the oxen and fatlings upon them are plentiful, and myriads are coming! Come along with you!" The great bell rings out again, "Come and welcome! Come and welcome! Come and welcome! for he will abundantly pardon." Would God some soul would hear the proclamation of this best of news, and fly to Christ for pardon this very day!

Another inference from my subject is this—that *there is a loud call to every one who has not repented to do so*, for who would be so base as to offend so good, so kind a Lord? I think that ought to touch each man's heart.

Here is one whom you have offended. You think he is very angry and you feel very angry too, and you offend therefore again. You count him an enemy and you keep up the quarrel, and you do more mischief to him, you damage his estate and speak against his reputation. You suppose that all this while he is preparing to deal a very heavy blow at you and avenge the injuries he has sustained. So you grow more angry still, and hate him more and more. You chew the cud of malice and you get such bitterness out of it that you become worse and worse, until you find one day that you have been mistaken all along.

A friend meets you and says, "Why do you speak so ill of your neighbor?"

"I hate him, abhor him."

"What for?" asks the other. "Do you know that when he hears of all that you do he only says, 'I am very sorry for him. I never did him any hurt and I never will.' Do you know he has often done you great service? You were in debt and you would have been in prison, only he called and paid your debts for you. When you were very ill he sent the physician to you, although you never knew that he sent him, it was so, and you were restored.

"Do you know that he has been buying an estate for you against the time of your trouble which is creeping upon you, and he has settled it in your name and entailed it on you, and he means that you shall live in a mansion forever?"

The man says, "I never thought that, I could not have believed it, and I do not believe it now."

"Yet it is true," replies the other.

"Does he know of all that I have done against him?"

"Oh yes! He has been behind the door often, and heard you call him all sorts of bad names."

"What did he say then?"

"All he said was, "Poor soul! He will be sorry for what he did one of these days, when he knows me better."

"Do you mean to say that is all he said?"

"Yes."

"But did he not grow red in the face and threaten a lawsuit, or anything of that kind?"

"No—he said he should win you one of these days, when you came to know him."

Now, I am sure if you had thus treated any one of your fellow creatures, you would be ashamed of yourself and want to hide your face. Would you not? If you then received an invitation from the person whom you had so badly treated and he said, "You need not have any fear to come. I shall never say a word of upbraiding to you as long as you live." "Well," you would say, "bad as my nature is, I will go and make up with him."

So I pray God that He may plead with you ungodly ones and turn you to Himself. What hurt has God ever done you? His laws—is there anything wrong in them? Are they hard, harsh, severe? They are only meant for your good. They are nothing but danger signals, telling us not to hurt ourselves. Would God we would not persist in going where we should not.

God has prepared for some of you full, unqualified forgiveness, and He means to bring you to Himself, and bless you and carry you safely to heaven. Oh, hold not out against Him, but yield by mighty grace subdued. Can you resist its charms? Come now and reason with God while He thus reasons with you. Let your conscience say, "Lord, You are full of mercy. We come to You. We would be reconciled to You through the death of Your Son." God grant that the words of the text may have power with many of you.

Another inference is this. *If there is anybody in this house the text specially calls this morning, it is the biggest sinner here*, because there cannot be abundant pardon where there is not abundant sin. If anyone here feels that he or she is an abundant sinner, you are the person this text is meant for. Where are you, dear soul? Away back there in the fog? My Master calls you. "He will abundantly pardon."

Mary! You who have been a Magdalene, you are the woman! John, there! you who have been a persecutor and opposed of the Gospel, you are the man! There is room for abundant pardon in you. You that have never cared for God or devil, you who feel your hearts so hard and stubborn that you think you can never be saved, you are the very people the text is for, for there is room for abundant mercy in you.

While my text invites each sinner it has a special finger with which to beckon this morning to those who have abundant sin—"Come hither, come hither, come hither. For the Lord will abundantly pardon."

Now, *for such a forgiving God as this we ought in return to have great love*. If He "abundantly pardons" we ought to be abundantly grateful.

"Love I much, I've more forgiven;
I'm a miracle of grace."

You believe God has done much for you, never think you can do too much for Him. Black sinners, when they get saved, make the fairest saints. In proportion as they earnestly rebelled, they throw the same vigor often into the service of God, and become desperately in earnest for that dear Lord who loved them and gave Himself for them.

But to close, dear friends. What if that mercy should be slighted? What if there should be such abundant mercy, and it should be rejected? What if we do despite to the mercy of God, and to the blood of His dear Son? Those that are unwilling to be forgiven doubly deserve to be left to their own deserts.

If God speaks you fair and you will not have Him, you must not wonder if by and by He changes His note. The lamp holds out to burn, and while it burns you may have mercy. It will soon burn out, remember! The longest life is short, and after that there will be no further mercy, no terms of grace. The mercy seat will be gone, and the judgment throne will fill its place.

Oh, if God only gave us five minutes to find mercy in, surely, if we were not fools, we should avail ourselves of it. But while He has lingered with some of you for fifty years, and still lingers, do not

provoke Him. But "today if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts," but turn unto Him. Oh, may the Spirit of God turn you, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—
ISAIAH 1:10-20 AND 43:22-28 AND 48:1-11

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.