

THE HIGH ROCK

NO. 2728

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, MAY 26, 1901
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
AT NEW PARK STREET CHAPEL, SOUTHWARK
ON A THURSDAY EVENING, EARLY IN THE YEAR 1859

*“From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed:
lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”*

Psalm 61:2

IT is supposed by many that David wrote this Psalm at the time when he fled from his son Absalom. That trial was one of the most grievous of all the afflictions of David's greatly-checked life. It was but a little thing for him to be hunted by Saul like a partridge upon the mountains. It was a small matter for him to have to take refuge with Achish, and to sojourn among the Philistines, an alien from his mother's children.

No, all the afflictions of his preceding life were but light trials compared with the revolt of Absalom. He was his father's favorite son, one in whom his soul delighted, for he was a comely personage in his outward appearance, and he had a lordly and kingly bearing—he was David's darling, although, in his moral character, utterly unworthy of this distinction. This child of his, who was the nearest to his heart, had the greatest opportunity to cut him to the quick. Those things which we allow to take the chief place in our bosoms have the most power to give us grief.

Absalom, first of all, kills his brother, and then, by dint of courtesy and such pretended generosity, as demagogues always know how to use, won the affections of David's people from their rightful monarch, and then he blew the trumpet, and set himself up as king in opposition to his father. Nay, more than this, he sought his father's life. It was not sufficient for him to seize the crown, but he longed to murder the head that should have worn it.

His father was driven from his house and was made to cross, with a few attendants, over the brook Kidron and to go away from the sanctuary of God. He had to dwell in the midst of a wood, and sleep among his armed men, and at other times, to camp out upon the open plain. Who can tell the griefs of this monarch? Wave after wave had rolled over him. He had often said that he desired to be like the sparrow and the swallow, dwelling beneath the eaves of God's sanctuary—and now his great trouble is that he is driven far away from God's house to what he calls “the end of the earth.”

As he thought of the cause of his exile, how grieved must he have been! For his son, his darling son, the son of his heart, the son whom he had pardoned, the son whom he had honored, the son whom he had recalled from the banishment he richly deserved—this son had smitten him. We know that old quotation from Shakespeare, which is repeated many and many a time, and is always true,—

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

Yet here was one who was not only unthankful, but who drove his father into exile and sought his life. David always clung to this child of his even in the time of his greatest iniquity. When at last he was compelled to send out his army against the rebel, you remember how he commanded Joab and Abishai and Ittai, saying, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom.” And when he was killed, you know how David lamented over him, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

Now, from the very fact that David loved this young man so much, his sorrows must have been peculiarly poignant. If a man can bring his mind to thrust out from his bosom one who has proved ungrateful, then half the battle is over. If love can cut the link—can say, “I have done with you, I will reckon you now no more my child”—then the heart steels itself against its deepest sorrow, and the arrow rattles only against the harness. But it was not so with David—he still opened wide his breast to his unworthy son.

Let us who stand in the relation of children to our parents, remember that it is in our power to give them the greatest possible grief—and yet would we not, each of us, sooner die than that those who brought us forth should have to lament on account of us? Yet, haply, there are some of you who are bringing your parents’ grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. O you who are cursing your father’s God—who are desecrating the day that your parents reckon to be holy—you who despise the Gospel which your father and mother love, remember that you are not only grieving God, but you are grieving your parents also!

Push them not into the tomb before their time, lest their ashes testify against you, and lest, in the hour of *your* trouble, when *your* children treat you in like manner, you should have to learn the bitterness of rearing in your own bosom the serpent that shall sting you with the deadliest venom. Let each of us take heed that we deal gently with our parents and always treat kindly those who have tenderly fostered us.

With this preface, let us now turn to our text, and I think we shall understand it all the better from this little reference to David’s history. There are three truths here. The first is, that *prayer is always available*—“From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed.” The second truth is, that *sometimes even the believer cannot get to Christ as he could wish*, but that then there is a way provided for leading him to Christ—“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” Then, in the third place, we shall consider *Christ under the aspect of a rock that is higher than we are*.

I. In the first place, let us recollect that PRAYER IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE—in every place and in every condition of our spirit—“From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee.”

Suppose it is possible for us to be banished to the uttermost verge of the green earth, to “rivers unknown to song”? Suppose us to be hastened far away where dwindling daylight dies out and where the sun’s bleak ray scarcely scatters light on the world—where vegetation, dwarfing and declining, at last dies out? Suppose us to be banished into exile, without a friend and without a helper? Even there, from the end of the earth, we should find that prayer to God was still available.

In fact, if there be a place nearer than another to God’s throne, it is just the end of the earth, for the end of the earth is the beginning of heaven. When our strength ends, there God’s omnipotence begins. Nature’s extremity is God’s opportunity. If wicked monarchs should banish all God’s people, their banishment would be an object of contempt, for how can they banish those who are strangers wherever they may be?

Is not my Father’s house a large one? Yon dome, the blue sky, its roof? The rolling seas, the swelling floods, the green meads, the huge mountains—are not these the floors of His house? And where can I be driven out of the dominions of my God and beyond the reach of His love? Banishment may seem a trouble to the Christian, but if he looks up and sees his Father’s house—and beholds the smile of his God—he will know that such a thing as banishment is to him an impossibility. But supposing us to be exiled from everything that is dear to us, even then we should not be shut out from access to God’s throne.

I think David meant, by the expression, “the end of the earth,” a place where he should be far away from his friends, far away from human help, and far away from God’s sanctuary.

God’s people are sometimes brought into such a condition that they are *far away from friends*. Such a one walks the streets of London and thinks, “Oh, if I could only tell my sorrow to a friend, then I might find some relief! But amidst all the myriad faces that hurry like a stream along the road, I see not

one that tempts me to tell my tale. I look around and find myself a stranger amidst multitudes of my countrymen.”

Perhaps you know what it is to have a trouble which you are compelled to bear yourself, which you could not describe even to those in your own house, though your friends would have been ready to help you if they had known—yet it was such that, with all their readiness, they would not have had ability to assist you in it, the biggest words could not have told it, and the bitterest tears could not have spelled it out. You were far away from friends in reality, though they were all round you. Now this is what David meant by “the end of the earth”—far away from friends—yet even then, when friend and helper and lover failed, did he cry unto his God.

Again, he meant by, “the end of the earth,” *far away from human help*. There are difficulties into which the true believer is brought that no human hand can remove. His spiritual affairs are weights too heavy for human strength to lift. Though all the giants of earth should come and strain their backs until their shoulders should give way, and their limbs should totter beneath the enormous load, yet the spiritual necessities of the Christian could not be carried by them—they are an intolerable burden for human shoulders—none but God can sustain them.

There are times when we are sighing after spiritual mercies, when we are groaning under the withdrawal of God’s countenance, when our sins are hunting us like packs of wolves, when afflictions are rolling over us like huge billows—when faith is little, and fear is great, when hope is dim, and doubt becomes terrible and dark—then we are far away from human help. But blessed be God, even then we may cry unto Him.

*“When anxious cares disturb the breast,
When threatening foes are nigh,
To Him we pour our deep complaint,
To Him for succor fly.”*

Nay, more, even in temporal affairs there are times when the Christian gets into such a place that no earthly friend can help him. He has made some mistake, perhaps—in the ardency of his zeal to do right, he has done wrong—in the attempt to run in the ways of God, he overshot the road and got into another place, and found himself in the path of evil when he hoped to be in the way of right. Such things have happened.

Business men, with all their carefulness, have made miscalculations and have found themselves plunged into difficulties from which they see no way of escape. In vain do others offer help. Wealth would not avail, for character is at stake. Yet even then, “from the end of the earth,” when human help has failed them, they have cried unto God, and if they have cried in faith, they have never found that God has ceased to hear as long as they have continued to cry unto Him.

By “the end of the earth,” I think, too, David means *at a distance from the means of grace*. Sometimes, by sickness, either personal or the sickness of our relatives, we are detained from the house of God. At other times, in journeying by land or upon the sea, we are unable to be in God’s sanctuary and to use the means of grace.

This is a great deprivation to God’s people. You will find that a true Christian had rather miss a meal than lose his daily portion of Scripture, or his frequent resort to the house of prayer. That man is no child of God who does not value the means of grace. I tremble for that man’s piety who professes himself able to maintain the vital spark of grace within him when the means of grace are at hand and he lives in neglect of them.

Some people, if they go to a watering-place, or a little way out of town, say, “Well, there is nobody here who preaches my sentiments, so I shall not go anywhere.” I would remind them that the apostle Paul said, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.” If there is no place of worship specially dedicated to God, we bless Him that—

“Where’er we seek Him, He is found,

And every place is hallowed ground;”—

but if there is a building that is open for the worship of God, even if I could not enjoy the preaching of the minister, I would go there to join in the singing of Christ's praises and to offer my prayer with the multitude that keep holy-day.

Still, there must be in our lives different times when we are away from the sanctuary of God, and to the Christian, that will be like being at the end of the earth. But then, thanks be to God, we may still cry unto Him. When no Sabbath bell shall summon us to the house of prayer, when no servant of the Lord shall proclaim, with happy voice, the promise of pardoning mercy, when there shall not be seen the multitude on bended knee, and when the sacred shout of praise is unheard—and we are far away from the gatherings of God's house—yet we are not far away from Him and we may still say to Him, “From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee.”

It seems, however, that the psalmist was in a worse plight than this, for a man might be at the end of the earth and still be happy, for it is not the place that makes the man, but the man that makes the place. A man might be in paradise even in hell itself, if his heart were right with God. Let a man have his heart full of peace and joy and happiness, and it is impossible to make that man miserable.

I have often thought that when people find fault with their station in life, they are making a great mistake—they should find fault with themselves. Many a man is miserable whose head wears a crown, and many are happy whose heads have no place of repose. Some who are in rags have rich hearts, while many who are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, have starving spirits—for, after all, it is the mind that is the standard of the man, and if the mind be happy, the place where the man is does not matter at all.

But alas for poor David! He had been wrong without and wrong within, too, so that he had to cry, “My heart is overwhelmed.” I find, in Calvin's notes on this text a most extraordinary translation, and as he says, a very harsh one—“While my heart is turned about,” that is, tossed hither and thither, or agitated.

There is an expression of a similar character where John Bunyan says that he was exceedingly tumbled up and down in his mind. It does seem that one meaning of this text may be, “When my spirit is tumbled about”—when it is out of order, when it is brought into a kind of chaos and confusion—when, to use another word which expresses closely the idea of the Hebrew, “My spirit is wrapped over and over”—when it is covered as a man covers his face in the day of grief, because his sorrow is so great that he shuns the sun and would not have his fellow creature's eye behold the anguish of his soul—“even then,” says he, “when my spirit is overwhelmed, will I cry unto thee.”

Turn the heart upside down and then you will get the idea of its being overwhelmed. Even then, what does the psalmist say? “Ye people, pour out your heart before him.” If your heart is turned over, let it be emptied before the Lord. David says, in another Psalm, “I pour out my soul in me.” How foolish that was! It did him no good—it was the wrong place for his soul to be poured out.

He was much wiser when he said, “Pour out your heart before him.” It is a happy way to pray, when the heart is turned upside down, to spill all its contents at the foot of the throne of grace. Perhaps, sometimes, the overwhelming of our heart is only meant to empty all its dregs out of it, that the last particle of self-righteousness, and self-reliance, and self-confidence may be drained out at the mercy seat, that there may be room for an overflowing abundance of divine grace.

Imagine a vessel at sea and you can get an idea of the meaning of our text. It has been laboring in a storm, sometimes lifted up to heaven, as though its masts would sweep the stars. Then again descending until its keel seemed dragging on the ocean bed—first staggering this way, and then that way, reeling to and fro, now rushing forward and now starting back—like a drunken man, or like a madman who has lost his way.

At last a huge sea comes rolling on, its white crest of foam can be seen in the distance and the sailors give up all for lost. On comes the wave, gathering up all its strength till it dashes against the ship and—

down the vessel goes, it is overwhelmed. The decks are swept, the masts are gone, the timbers are creaking, the ship descends, and is sucked down as in a whirlpool—all is lost.

“Now,” says David, “that is the case with my heart. It is overwhelmed, drawn into a vortex of trouble, borne down by a tremendous sea of difficulty, crushed and broken. The ribs of my soul seem to have given way. Every timber of my vessel is cracked and gone out of its place. My heart is overwhelmed within me.”

Can you now get an idea of the extreme sorrow of the psalmist’s spirit? “Yet,” he says, “even then, will I cry unto thee.” Oh, noble faith that can cry amidst the shrieking of the tempest and the howling of the storm! Oh, glorious faith, that from the bottom of the sea can shoot its arrows to the heights of heaven! Oh, masterpiece of faith, that from a broken spirit can present prevailing prayer. Oh, glorious triumph, that from the end of the earth can send a prayer which can reach all the way to heaven!

And now, Christian, may God help you to make up your mind to this, that where’er you are, you will never leave off praying, whatever the devil says to you. If he should urge you to forsake the mercy seat, say to him, “Get behind me, Satan.” If he should say that you have sinned too much to pray, tell him his argument proves the reverse—the more you have sinned, the more you should pray. If he tells you that your difficulties are tremendous, tell him that the very greatness of the difficulties in which you are involved should bear you nearer to God.

Never cease to cry while you have breath. And when you have no breath, still cry. As long as you can speak, cry unto Him—and when you cannot speak—let groanings that cannot be uttered still go up before God’s throne. Cease not to pray in every difficulty and in every strait betake yourself to your closet, for there you shall find God, if you cannot find Him anywhere else.

Let me also say this word to anyone who has begun to pray, but who has not yet found peace with God, although he is overwhelmed by a sense of his guilt. My dear friend, if God has overwhelmed you with a sense of sin and if you feel as if you were far away from mercy—at the very end of the earth—yet, I beseech you, cry unto Him. Mark, our text says, “Cry.” Oh, what power there is in that simple act of crying!

As I rode here, this evening, I saw a boy sitting on the pavement crying with all his might about something or other he had broken. And I observed a lady, who was going by, stop a moment, for the poor fellow’s face was so much awry, and the tears were flowing so plentifully that she seemed as if she must give him something. And indeed I felt inclined, if I had not been in a hurry to come here, to stop and ask him what he was crying for, for one cannot bear to see a fellow creature weeping.

All beggars who want to deceive, take to crying, for they know that has an effect upon susceptible ladies who are passing by—there is great power in tears and these people know it. The best style of prayer is that which cannot be called anything else but a cry. Now, if you cannot pray as many do—if you cannot stand up in a prayer meeting and pray fluently and eloquently like others do—so long as the Lord enables you to cry, I beseech you, do not leave off crying.

Cry, “Lord, have mercy on me.” “Lord, save, or I perish.” “Lord, appear unto me.” “I am the chief of sinners am, Lord, manifest Yourself to me.” Cry, cry, cry, poor sinner. And He that hears the young ravens when they cry will hear you. Do not think that the voice of your crying shall be lost. The voice of boasting dies away unheard, but the voice of crying penetrates the ears of God, reaches His heart and moves His hand to give a plenitude of blessings.

Above all things, sinner, if you feel your need of a Savior, keep on crying—Satan can never harm you while God helps you to cry. So long as you have a word of prayer on your lip, the law of God has not a word of condemnation to utter against you. If you can cry at God’s mercy seat, then that is a proof that Christ is crying on your behalf at His Father’s glory seat. Be you instant in prayer and you shall be successful in it. When your heart is overwhelmed, even from the end of the earth, cry unto God.

II. I must speak very briefly upon the second point, which is this. THERE ARE TIMES WHEN EVEN A BELIEVER CANNOT GET TO CHRIST AS HE DESIRES.

Then, thank God there is the prayer of our text—“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.” Some people make out faith to be a marvelously easy thing—and so it is in theory—but it is the hardest thing in the world in practice. If men are to be saved on the condition of their repenting and believing, they can be no more saved than on the condition of their being perfect, unless there is added to this condition the promise that the God who requires faith will give faith and work repentance in them.

I have been astonished to find, in this age, that there are great preachers and men who, I have no doubt, gather many around them, who tell the people that the condition and the ground of the sinner’s justification are his faith, his repentance, and his obedience. Why, the ground of our justification is the righteousness of Christ. And as to conditions, there is no condition at all, for God gives justification freely, and He gives faith and He gives repentance, too—it is all His gift.

There never was a man saved by faith or repentance which he performed as a matter of duty. Albeit that the Word of God demands of every man that he should submit himself to God by repentance, and lay hold of Christ by faith, yet no man ever will or ever can do this of himself—it is only the sovereign will of God and the sovereign grace of God that give repentance and faith.

Sometimes God, in His sovereignty, is pleased to show a man his sin, and not to show him his Savior for a season. He strips the sinner—perhaps he leaves him to shiver in the cold before He clothes him, just to let him know what a boon that robe of Christ’s righteousness is. He kills him, pierces him through and through with the law, and there lets him lie in utter inability, for a season, before He quickens him again and makes him spiritually alive.

The fact is, God acts as He chooses with those whom He saves. He sometimes gives repentance and faith at the same time, just as the thunder sometimes follows the lightning at once. At other times, He gives repentance and then He makes us tarry for many a day before He gives us full assurance of our interest in Christ—but they are sure to follow one another, sooner or later.

God never gave conviction without at last giving faith. He never led a man out of himself without at last leading him to Christ. If He brought him down to despair, He afterwards lifted him up to hope. But still, there may be a gap between the two, and during such a period it is our business to use this blessed prayer, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I. Oh, help me to believe! Lord, enable me to see the need of Your Son, give me the power to look unto Him who was pierced, and as You have given me eyes to weep, so give me eyes to look on Him, and grace to rejoice in Him as mine.”

So, you see, if we cannot believe, if doubts so overwhelm us that we cannot get to Christ to our own satisfaction, remember that it is the Holy Spirit’s office to draw us to Christ, and we may therefore pray to Him, “Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

III. We are now coming to that part of the text which most of all delights my soul, the thought of JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THE ROCK THAT IS HIGHER THAN WE ARE.

We have all various standards for measuring things, and after all, men must measure by themselves. If you hear a man praising another, you will generally find that the reason he praises that other is because he sees in him something very much like what he possesses himself. “There,” says he, “I love a man who is honest and outspoken.” He means, all the while, that he thinks himself a remarkably honest and outspoken man, therefore he loves to see himself reproduced in another.

After all, we generally measure with our own measuring-rods. We take ourselves to be the standard for other people. A few nights ago I proved this in my own case. Going along Bermondsey, I looked in at the shop windows to see what time it was. One clock said ten minutes to seven, another said seven o’clock, and another said ten minutes past. Then I began to think what a pity it was I had not my own watch with me—what was that but a belief that my own watch was infallible and that all the clocks were probably wrong? There is a great deal of trying ourselves on the touchstones of our own infallible selves, and even the Christian is not altogether free from this practice till he gets to heaven. So the Lord graciously adapts His Word to our poor littleness and speaks of Jesus as the Rock higher than we are.

Come hither, beloved, and let us measure the Rock Christ Jesus so far as we can by comparison. Here is a man who is a great sinner. “Ah!” he says, “I am indeed a great sinner. My iniquities reach so

high that they have ascended above the very stars. They have gone before me to the judgment seat of God and they are clamoring for my destruction.”

Well, sinner, come here and measure this Rock. You are very high, it is true, but this Rock is higher than you are. Estimate yourself at the greatest you possibly can. Set your sins down at some inconceivable height. If you have thought yourself to be a very Goliath in sin, if you say, “I am as big a sinner as Saul of Tarsus was,” put your sin, pile on pile, tier on tier, nay, borrow your neighbor’s sins—take them all and then recollect that—

*“If all the sins that men have done
In will, in word, in thought and deed,
Since worlds were made, and time began,
Were laid on one poor sinner’s head;
The blood of Jesus Christ alone
Could for this mass of sin atone,
And sweep it all away.”*

However high your sin may be, there is the covert of a Rock in a weary land higher than you are, and under this you may shelter yourself.

Here comes another forward. He is not a man full of doubts and fears, but he is a man of hopeful spirit. “Oh!” says he, “I have many sins, but I hope that the Lord Jesus Christ will take them all away. I have many wants, but I hope that He will supply them. I shall have many temptations, but I hope that He will ward them off. I shall have many difficulties, but I hope He will carry me through them.”

Ah! man, I like to see you have a good long measuring rod, when it is made of hope. Hope is a tall companion—he wades right through the sea and is not drowned—you cannot kill him, do what you may. Hope is one of the last blessings God gives us and one that abides at the last with us. If a man is foodless and without covering, still he hopes to see better days by and by.

Now, sinner, your hopes, I would have you to see, are very tall and very high—but remember, this Rock is higher than any of your hopes. Hope whatever you please. Let your hope expand itself—let it climb the highest mountain and stand on it—let it lift up itself higher and yet higher, but this Rock is higher still. Christ is a better Christ than you can hope for—He has more mercy than you hope for. He has more power to save than you hope to receive, more love than you can hope to have. He has a better heaven for you than you could hope to enjoy.

But here comes another, and he says, “Ah! my hope has grown strong, I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is a precious Christ. I can speak well of Him, for He has been my sure defense in every time of war, my refuge in every time of distress, my granary in every hour of famine, my light in every night of darkness. I can speak well of Him, and in consequence of what I know of Him, I can believe that He is able to save unto the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him. I believe Him to be all that He says He is. I believe in His Word. I rejoice in Him—my faith scarcely knows a bound when I begin to think what He is, and what He has done for me.”

Ay, but He is a Rock higher than your faith. I love to see your faith mounting up very high, but Christ is better than your faith and higher than your faith. Why, man, if your faith were twice as great as it is, Christ would be a warrant for it all. Nay, if your faith could be multiplied a thousand fold, so that you could believe more of Him, and better things of Him, and higher things of Him, still He would be higher than your faith could ever climb.

I do hope to grow in faith, and get more and more of that celestial virtue. I think I believe my Master better now than I did once, though sometimes I think my faith fails me. Yet sure I am that I do enjoy a quieter conscience than I did, and a more peaceful calm than at one time I experienced. And I hope to believe in Him still more.

I pray that my faith may continually increase so that, being rooted and grounded in Him, I may grow up to the full stature of a man in Christ Jesus. But this I know, though you or I should grow till our faith

should be greater than that of Paul, till it should be such a faith that it should say to the fig tree, “Be thou plucked up by the roots,” or to the mountain, “Be thou cast into the sea,” and it should be done—still, even then—Christ would be higher than our faith. We might believe a great deal about Him, but would faith grasp all then? It has long arms, but not long enough to encompass Christ—He is greater than faith itself could conceive Him to be.

Here comes another. He says, “Ah! blessed be God, I have a golden measuring rod here—not that of hope, or fear, or faith, but better still, the measuring rod of enjoyment.” “Ah!” says one, “how high have I been in enjoyment of Christ! He has taken me to Calvary and there I have seen the flowing of His precious blood—

*‘With divine assurance knowing
He has made my peace with God.’*

Not content with that, he has taken me to Tabor. There I have seen my Lord transfigured and have beheld His glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Nay, more, He has taken me to the top of Pisgah and He has bidden me ‘view the landscape o’er.’ I have seen the joys which He has reserved for them that love Him.”

“But” says the believer, “Christ has said to me, ‘Friend, come up higher.’ When I first went to the feast, I sat in the lower room of repentance. He came in and said, ‘Friend, come up higher,’ and He took me into another chamber called faith. And then He came in again, and said, ‘Friend, come up higher.’ And He took me to the upper room of assurance. Then He saw me again, and He said, ‘Friend, come up higher,’ and He took me to the upper room of communion. And sometimes he seems to me to say, ‘Friend, come up higher, into the ecstatic bliss which the highest degrees of constant fellowship can give.’ And I am now waiting only till He should say, ‘Come up higher,’ and take me to His own bosom, to tarry with Him forever.”

Ah, well, I am glad to hear you talk thus. I wish I had many of those whose pastures are in these high places, many who could say that they had grown tall in these delightful things. But remember, this Rock is higher than you are. All you have ever enjoyed of Christ is but as the beginning of a topless mountain.

When I have been in Scotland, I have gone up some of the hills there and I have thought, “This is a very high place indeed. What a fine view there is, what a height I have reached!” “Ah!” someone has said, “but if you were to see the Alps, this hill would only seem like the beginning—you would only have got to the foot when you had climbed as high as this.”

And so it is with you. By your experience, your sweet enjoyment, you think you have reached the top of the mountain—but Christ comes and whispers to you, “Look yonder, far above those clouds—you have only begun to go up. This hill of communion is only one step. As yet, you have only taken a child’s leap—you have farther to go, far higher than you could imagine or conceive.” Ah! this is indeed a Rock higher than you are, the highest in communion—and the next to the throne of God.

“Well,” cries another, “from what I have heard, and what I have read in God’s Word, I am expecting very great things of Christ when I shall see Him as He is. Oh, sir, if He be better than the communion of His saints can make Him, if He be sweeter than all His most eloquent preachers can speak of Him, if He be so delightful that those who know Him best cannot tell His beauties, what a precious—what a glorious—what an inconceivable Christ He must be!”

Ah, friend, I am glad you are measuring Christ by your expectation! But let me tell you—high as your expectations are, He is higher than you are. Expect what you may, but when you see Him, you will say with the Queen of Sheba, “The half was not told me.” You may sit down and think of Christ’s glories and splendors, of the happiness that He has provided for His people, till you lose yourself in a very sea of delightful meditation. The promise dropped into your heart may go on widening in circles till you have grasped a whole universe of pleasure and delight in contemplating the name of Christ—but

remember, when you have conceived the most, Christ the Rock is still far above what you have conceived and imagined.

Let us pause here and ask—What shall we do with a hill that is higher than we are? Shall we lie forever at its base and not attempt to climb it? God forbid! Shall we pretend that we have climbed it? That were presumption. So let us press forward, evermore ascending it, ever crying when we get at the greatest height, “Lord, still lead me up, still lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am. Lead me on, O Lord, till I come to heaven, and even then, still lead me beside the living fountains of water, still lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am. Ever help me to be climbing, pressing forward, looking not on that which is behind, but on that which is before, pressing forward to the mark of the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus!”

Now, as some of you will be exercised with troubles, remember that the Rock is higher than you are. And when your troubles reach you, if you are not high enough to escape them, climb up to the Rock Christ, for there is no trouble that can reach you when you get there. Satan will be howling at you and perhaps he will be nibbling at your heel, barking and biting at you—so climb into the Rock Christ and he will not be able to reach you, and you will scarcely hear his howling—he will be low down in the valley when you are in the Rock higher than he is.

Fears will arise and doubts will come in like a flood—there is no place so safe in the time of a flood as a high rock, so climb to the Rock Christ—and then, though the waves of the sea roar and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, you will be secure if you are on the Rock that is higher than you are.

And oh! while the world is dragging you down, forever be seeking to be climbing up. If the devil says, “Come down, again, and be worldly. Come down and be selfish,” always cry, “Lord, lead me up, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am. My country is in the skies, help me to be climbing upwards—never permit me to descend, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am.”

And as for you who are still under a sense of sin, who have not yet found the Savior, let this be your prayer, “Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I am.” Do not get to measuring Christ by yourselves. As high as heaven is above the earth, so high are His thoughts above your thoughts, and His ways above your ways.

O beloved, you should measure God’s grace by the immeasurable—not by your nothingness, but by His infinity! Remember, God’s mercy is beyond all bounds, for it swells above the flood of our sins. If our sins be as mountains, Christ’s mercy, like the stars, shines as much above the mountains as above the valleys.

Cry out, sinner, when Satan is dragging you down to the pit, “Lord, save me from the devouring flames and lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.” And then, thank God, Christ is a Rock—not a mound that is raised by man. And that Rock shall stand forever. And if I get on it, there is no fear that the Rock will shake. I may shake on it, but it will never shake under me—and if my enemies try to attack me, I can hide myself in the clefts of the Rock, where they cannot reach me, and though ten thousand ages roll away, and many a stone is moved from its place, this Rock shall still abide,—

“When rolling years shall cease to move.”

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.