

AN OLD-FASHIONED REMEDY

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A SERMON

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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,

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“He sent His word and healed them.”

Psalm 107:20.

THE healing of natural sickness is not accomplished without the power of God. Vain were the skill of the most learned physician unless the God of nature cooperated with the medicine. If any of you have been restored of late from sickness, I charge you to praise God for His goodness and for His wonderful works to the children of men. Remember your weary nights; remember your painful days; call to mind the vows of your soul in anguish made, and take care that you play not false to God. In the day of your health be true to the promises made on your sickbed. Let the song of gratitude go up from your heart and from your lips, and let the life which He has so graciously preserved be dedicated to His service. It ought to be so. God help you, that it may be so. However, the psalm is intended to speak of spiritual things, and so tonight we shall apply our text to the disorders of the mind—the diseases of the heart. There are some here present who have felt that worst of sicknesses—a sick heart, and many of us, blessed be God, have received that best of healing, the healing of the mind. They can praise God tonight while we speak of this precious fact. “He sent His word and healed them.”

Just in a few strokes let me sketch the patient in his extremity, and then at length let me describe the cure in its simplicity. “He sent His word and healed them.”

I. First, let us give the sketch of THE PATIENT IN HIS EXTREMITY. I hope he will see himself as in a glass and say, “That is myself.”

The first thing about him is that *he is a fool*. Turn to the 17th verse. “Fools because of their transgression and because of their iniquities are afflicted.” It is insulting to a man to call him a fool, but I question whether any man is saved unless he has called himself a fool. “Fool!” says the man under a conviction of sin, “you may write the word large about me, for it describes my condition.” We sometimes speak of a born fool; well, that is exactly what the convicted man feels he is; he has been born a fool, his very nature is foolish, for he puts bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, darkness for light and light for darkness, and that not now and then, but by the very force of nature he seems to constantly make a foolish choice. He has been one of those fools who has said in his heart, “No God,” for he has practically lived without thinking of his God. He has been one of those fools who has chosen the transient present, and left the eternal future to be forgotten. It is a difficult thing to cure a man of his folly. “Though you should bray a fool in the mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him,” says Solomon. That would be a rather rough process, would it not? But it would be useless. Folly would still remain in spite of all the grinding. When a man truly sees his sickness, he feels that he is just such a fool as that—a fool with folly ingrained. “Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child,” and in the life of a sinner.

But this man has played the fool. Besides being a fool, *he has acted like a fool*, for “fools because of their transgression and because of their iniquities are afflicted.” Transgression means breaking bounds and trespassing, and he that trespasses in the fields of a God who is so just and so strong to smite, is a fool. Iniquity means lack of equity, lack of truth, lack of rightness, lack of honesty, and surely he that tries to cheat God is a fool. How shall he hope to be able to deceive the omniscient One, or that those eyes which are like a flame of fire shall fail to detect the iniquity, the dishonesty of his doings? That he has thought for a moment that he could do it shows that he is a fool and that he has acted like a fool. Now, I am not going to say of any man present that this is true concerning him, but if any man here present feels it is the truth about himself, he is a man that God is going to bless; for when the Lord has shown you yourself, He will afterwards show you Himself, and when He has made you see that you are a fool by nature, and a

fool by practice, then it is that He will take you into the school of wisdom and yet teach you the right way. The patient's disease, you will see, is a very bad one and it is one that is very hard to cure.

You notice, according to the Psalm, that *he has come into a condition in which he has lost all appetite*. It is written, "Their soul abhors all manner of meat." A sick man in certain diseases loses his appetite for everything. It matters not how daintily cooked the delicate morsel may be, he turns against it. Ah, well do I remember my own season of suffering when I passed through this experience; I am only describing what has happened to myself, and therefore I know that it has happened to some of you, for though in detail our experiences differ, in the main they are wondrously alike. How we loathe everything in our sickness. Manna—that is light bread; bread—that is heavy; wine—it is too hot; water—it is too cold. It mattered not what was brought to me when I was in that spiritual condition, I could not receive it. Doubtless it is so with you too. Of the invitations of the gospel, the soul says, "Ah, Jesus Christ could not intend to invite me." Of the promises of the Word—the heart says, "Ah, they may be true to everybody else, but they cannot be true to me." One may preach the sweetest and the softest messages of love, but when a soul is under a sense of sin it abhors all manner of meat; it turns against all consolation; it refuses to be comforted. You may try to comfort such a case as much as ever you will, but the dreary thought rises in the soul, "It cannot be for me. As for me, I shall perish in my iniquity. I have played the fool exceedingly and God has given me up to my heart's lusts, and now I shall perish in the day when He judges mankind."

The psalmist goes on to say of the sick man that *he is drawing near unto the gates of death*. I know some souls that feel as if it could not be long before they shall be utterly lost. They have not had any peace, rest, happiness, comfort, for such a great while that it seems to them a wonder that the earth does not open and swallow them up! They cannot sleep at night for terrible dreams, and cannot rest at day for terrible sounds that are in their ears. They think of an angry God, the judgment seat, and the dreadful sword of the Most High that is made bare to smite the wicked. I do not say that many of you are in that state, but if any of you are it is to you that I am sent tonight with words of mercy, for the text says, "He sent His Word and healed them." These fools, these that have played the fool, these whose soul abhors all manner of meat, and these who draw near unto the gates of death—to these very people He sent His word and healed them. Oh, that infinite mercy might do the same with any such who are in this company!

There is one hopeful mark about this sick man, and that is, that *he has begun to pray*. "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble." It would not be much of a prayer if it had been printed; you could not have read it; indeed, you could not print it, for you cannot print a cry. The reporter has not got a sign in all his stenography, I think, by which he can record a cry. A cry is the heart's own language, with which the tongue cannot interfere. Is there anybody here that does pray and yet cannot pray—who groans before God, "Oh, that I might be saved"—whose only words are tears—whose only language is the anguish of his silent spirit? Ah, you are the man—the man that can cry. Cry then unto the Lord with all your might. It is said of such, "He sent His word and healed them."

Well, those few touches may suffice. An artist sometimes sketches a likeness with a piece of charcoal. So have I sketched my patient in words few and simple. I am now going to take a longer time to describe the healing in its wonderful simplicity. "He sent His word and healed them."

II. THE CURE IN ITS SIMPLICITY.

When a physician meets with a very bad case—a case in dire extremity—it will sometimes happen with him that he has to think awhile; perhaps to resort to his books of medicine or to his diary of former cases, or to hold a consultation with another physician before he will venture to prescribe, for something unknown is needed in this unusual disease. But I want you to observe that though the case represented in the psalm was a very bad one, there was no new thing needed to meet it. The old remedy would suffice. All that the infinite Lord had to do was to send His word and heal them. It was the old healing word that had healed many a fool before and could heal fools still; the old healing word that had brought back many from between the very gates of death, nothing more was needed in order to bring back these who were in such a dreadful condition. For the healing of the souls sick with sin, and sick of it, I have no new gospel to preach or any new thing to say. Thank God, the old, old gospel meets every case. New developments of sin, strange out-of-the-way diseases of iniquity, keep cropping up, but the old remedy meets them all. God needs not to consult nor make new compounds; the simple thing which healed men centuries ago heals them still. "He sent His word and healed them."

The text may be understood to mean three things. First God sent Christ the incarnate Word; that is the essence of the remedy. Then He sent the Bible, the revealed word; that is the instrument of the remedy. He sent, thirdly, His word of power by the Holy Spirit; that is the application of the remedy. Let us speak of these three things. They are all necessary. As there is a trinity in the one God, so must there be a trinity in the one word by which men are saved.

First, let us look at *the essence of the remedy*. Dear friends, when God heals a sinner He does it by Christ, who is the Word made flesh, which dwelt among us. Almighty healing lies in the person and work and merit of Him who is called the Word of God, of whom you read, in the first chapter of John's gospel, that "the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

Now, whatever your disease may be, Jesus Christ, the Word of God is able to meet it. *He can heal the guilt of sin*. However guilty a soul may be, Christ stands in the sinner's stead, bears the sin, and makes atonement for it unto God. So all sin can be put away. No matter how many your sins, or how black they may be, although they are double-dyed, yet the moment Jesus Christ comes to you and you accept Him—

***"Your sins shall vanish quite away
Though black as hell before,
Shall be dissolved beneath the sea
And shall be found no more."***

There is healing for the guilt of sin.

Probably, however, your conscience is troubled about the influence of sin over your life. Christ can meet that need too. *He can cure you of sinning*. Even if you could be forgiven the past, you cannot bear the thought of going on as you have done. Dear sick one, there is healing for your foolishness as well as for your sin, for the iniquity of your heart as well as for the iniquity of your life. Jesus Christ is able to set you all right. If the wheels of the watch are wrong, He is the great maker, and He can put it all right again, He can rectify every cog of every wheel till He shall have sanctified you wholly, spirit, soul, and body. Jesus Christ is made of God unto us not only justification but sanctification too. He is able to meet both the dire ills of life, the guilt and the power of sin.

Possibly you reply to me that you are suffering in your inmost soul. Well, the great Physician speaks, and *He can heal the depression of sin*. A sense of sin has broken your bones. A sense of sin has seemed to take away all courage from you. You do not seem to be half a man now, for sin has unstrung you—has made you weak as water. My Lord Jesus Christ can heal that—can take away the depression, the despondency, yes, and the despair. Though you may have written yourself down as damned, though you have made a league with hell and "a covenant with death," yet my Lord Jesus Christ with one touch of His pierced hand can make your spirit leap for joy. It is His way to pluck us out of the horrible pit and out of the miry clay, and set our feet upon the rock and put a new song into our mouths and establish our goings. You cannot tell how quickly despondency can be changed for delight when Jesus appears. He can put off your sackcloth and your ashes from you, so that you shall never wear them again; He can gird you with gladness, and put jewels in your ears and about your neck, and adorn you as a bridegroom decks his bride with ornaments. You little know the great joy which Christ can give, in a moment, to the most desponding sinner.

If you tell me that sin has done you all sorts of mischiefs—that you feel as if sin had poisoned you all over—that your whole nature is now out of gear, and even though it should be healed, yet there are scars which you will never lose, broken bones you will carry to your tomb, I still preach to you of the power of Christ. *He can remove even the scars*. My Lord has various ointments and remedies with which He can heal even these. What He did here on earth to the bodies of men, He is now prepared to do now to the souls of men. There came to Him the blind; they could not see, just as you cannot understand. You say truly that sin has darkened your judgment. What did the Master do but make clay with His spittle, anoint the eyes of the blind and say, "Go and wash," and the blind went and came back seeing. Sometimes He touched men's eyes and the scales fell, and so they saw. My Lord can give you back your calm and right judgment again. He can so overrule your spirit that it shall no more put the bitter for the sweet and the darkness for the light; He can give you back those eyes of your heart—

"He comes from thickest films of night

*To clear the mental ray,
And on the eyeballs of the blind
To pour celestial day."*

Ah, but you reply, "I can see well enough, but I cannot act; I know what I ought to do, but I do not do it; I perceive the right but I do the ill; I would, but I cannot." Still I invite you to Jesus. *He can give you the strength you have lost.* When my dear Lord was here on earth, there were men with withered hands, and He bade them stretch them out and they were restored. There were some that had lain on the bed and could not stir, sick of the palsy, but He bade them walk. And there was one that had been lying for years by Bethesda's side, that could not step into the pool; he lay there as you lie at the pool of ordinances, but Christ said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk," and he did so. My Lord can give you back all power that you have lost, the power to repent, the power to believe, the power to shake off sin, the power to walk in holiness. He can give you it all back, and He can do it now, even while you are sitting in this house of prayer. Was there ever a disease that came to Christ that puzzled Him? Do you remember one that He ever turned away? In the long list of human diseases reckoned to be incurable, almost all, if not quite all, came under His eye, but was there one that foiled Him? Was there one of which He said, "My power is not equal to that"? No, you know He even raised the dead. Even though Lazarus had begun to stink He raised him—he had been three days dead already, and yet he came forth; when the grave cloths were unwound, there was the living man. What cannot my Master do?

If I address someone who feels himself to be full of evil till he is almost like a man with a devil within him, I point that man to Christ. *He can dispossess the devil.* Do I speak to one whose raging passion, or whose lustful desire, or whose unsatisfied thirst of drunkenness, or whose long habit of blasphemy, has made him like the demoniac? Oh, come you here, come you but within range of that mighty voice and it shall say, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit, and enter no more into him." Christ can make even you to be clean.

Wherever Jesus Christ comes, He is that Word of God that makes men whole; so I say to you tonight that if any of you want to save others preach Jesus Christ, for He is the Word that heals them. And if any of you want to be saved, think much of Jesus Christ. Look to none else but Jesus Christ. Fix your mind's eye on Him and trust Him, and as surely as you trust Him, you shall be made whole. In your case it shall be written, "He sent His word and healed him." There is nothing about your case that Christ cannot reach. There is in Jesus Christ something exactly adapted to the peculiarly disastrous nature of your position. He can, He will, save even you, even you, if you do but trust Him now.

I am obliged to be brief for time flies so rapidly. And now, notice in the second place, *the instrument of the remedy.* "He sent His word and healed them." That is, He sent this book, this revelation, which is the Word of God. Though it is Christ that heals men, and not the Bible, the Bible is like the wrapper of the bottle in which the medicine is put, and we find the remedy by unfolding the wrapper. Remember, dear souls, if you are sick, that the medicine that is to reach your case is somewhere between these two covers. There is something in here for every sin-sick soul that seeks it.

Perhaps it is a *precept* you have been neglecting; something of that which the Lord would have you to do. I have known many a soul brought to Christ by a precept. The law has often been a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ that they might find peace in Him.

But for many more of you there is here *an invitation* such as this, "Ho, everyone that thirsts, come you to the waters." That refers to you, does it not? Do you not thirst? And there is the sweet invitation of last Sunday night, "Come unto Me all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That has been the instrument of healing to countless numbers.

Sometimes it is not an invitation, but a *promise* or a grand encouraging statement such as, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;" or such a sweet word as, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," which is used by the Great Physician as balm for the wounded soul.

Precepts, promises, invitations, gospel statements; here they are. The medicine is put into many forms because the disease assumes so many aspects, but within this sacred volume lies that living word of God which, if it is blessed by the Spirit, will bring peace to your souls. I wish you therefore to value this book beyond all price: to read it much, to read it praying as you read, "Lord, bless it to my soul:" to lay your

heart open to it when it cuts you like a knife: to receive those friendly wounds as meant for your healing. Then open your heart to receive its light that you may see by it: to receive its comforts that you may rejoice through them. Open wide the great doors of your soul that every part of this word may have entrance there.

You that preach to others preach much of the word of God. O dear sirs, remember good McCheyne's experience; he says that almost always when there was a case of conversion the hearer attributed it to a text of Scripture that had been quoted in the sermon. I believe it is largely so at all times; and when McCheyne again says, "It is God's word, not our own, but God's word that is generally blessed," I am sure it is so.

If you who are hearers have a choice in the matter, frequent a ministry that is full of Scripture. You are more likely to get a blessing there than anywhere else. Read books that are full of the very word of God, and then read the Word itself. But do not think you will be saved simply by reading it. That is impossible, for you are only saved by Christ, and He said to the people of His time, "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and you will not come unto Me that you might have life." But though you will not be saved by reading, you may be saved through reading, and through reading the Scriptures; while you are reading and hearing God's precious word He may send home some of the light and the truth and the life which lie concealed within the sacred page. "He sent His word and healed them." My learned doctor, we do not want your new gospel. We want the old word of God. My friend of the fine poetical speech, you of the grand rhetoric, you of the golden mouth, we want neither you nor your mouth unless you give us the word of God—just what is revealed in Scripture. There were great preachers before Luther and Calvin, before Wickliffe and Huss and Jerome; they went about preaching and preaching to great crowds too, but they did not save souls. That was not because they could not speak and were not attractive, but, because they had not this story to tell—the story that is in that book, the story of Him who did hang upon the cross. We must preach the word. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season," for it still stands true, "He sent His word and healed them."

Now again time checks me, and I must therefore notice that there is a third sense in which we may view this text. Let us speak then of *the application of the remedy*. Jesus Christ on the cross does not save men while they reject and refuse Him, and that book does not save anybody until the Holy Spirit with power speaks to the soul. When that happens, then it is the word of God in another sense. Just as of old He spoke and it was done, as He said, "Let there be light," and there was light, there seems to be needed a distinct call from God to men or they will not come to Him; the living word must leap from the mouth of the living God or else the Bible will be but a dead letter; even from Christ men will turn away as if it were nothing to them that Jesus died, unless the Spirit reveals the truth in power. Beloved, you that have been healed, do you not ascribe your healing to the secret mysterious power of the Holy Spirit? You know you give Him the glory. Hence when you wish to bring men to Christ always honor the Holy Spirit. Do not forget to adore Him, to lean entirely upon Him for all the power with which the healing of a soul is to be accomplished. There is no faith in the world that will save except the faith which is of the operation of the Spirit of God. There is no true glance of the eye toward Christ on the cross but such as the Spirit of God has given.

Now I want to speak just two or three words about this. Some of you will say, "Ah me! Would God that the Spirit of God would speak to me." Be not deceived, He is speaking to you now. The Word, when it is faithfully preached with prayerful spirit, has the Spirit of God going with it. Men may resist it, but they add to their sin in so doing. As said the man of God of old, "You do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did so do you."

Let us explain what the Spirit of God does not do. Since you can only be saved by hearing about Christ, He will not bring you a new way of salvation or reveal another Savior. And if you are not saved by reading the word of God and hearing it, He will not be likely to use any other means. The Spirit is of the same mind as father Abraham, who said about the five brothers of the man at whose gate Lazarus lay begging, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." You must not sit still, and say, "I expect to see signs and wonders, or else I will not believe." You shall have no sign and no wonder except the sign of a dying Savior, and a Savior risen from the dead; and the added sign of this great wonder that you refuse to believe in Him and put your trust in Him.

Now this know, that when men are led to Christ by the Spirit of God, they do not know at the time that it is the Spirit of God that is leading them. They have no idea of it. They think, they meditate, they judge, they decide, and they believe. They are free agents, and they act as such. It is afterwards that they discover that the Spirit of God has been leading them through it all. Now if you wait till you feel the Spirit of God and know it to be the Spirit of God while you are yet unbelieving, you will wait forever, for such an experience will never be granted to you. No man ever knows the Spirit of God so as consciously to be aware that the Spirit is at work with him until he knows Jesus Christ. As no man comes to the Father but through the Son, so no man comes to realize and to be aware of the work of the Spirit on his soul till he knows Jesus Christ.

What is the Spirit of God then to do for you? What I hope in many cases He is now doing, namely, to make you willing, as I trust you are; to make you conscious of your danger, as I trust you are; to make you understand the remedy, as I think you do; and to lead you sweetly and gently to accept what God provides, as I hope you will.

“Is that all?” asks one. Ah, beloved! It is a very great “all.” I know I cannot do that work, and all the ministers in the world put together could not do that which you think to be so little. I am certain if I were sent to you to proclaim that you could all be saved if you would go barefoot from here to John O’Groats, and start tonight, that the great northern road would be thronged by people going. People would do anything of that sort to be saved. They would not need to be persuaded. But if we tell them that they are to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is so simple, it is so easy, that God has to work a miracle before He can bring their proud hearts to consent to be saved in that way. He has to give men new life and new light before they will come to it. Oh! Have you come to it? Have you come to it now? Do you feel that, at this instant, you can say, “I do trust Jesus.” Well, dear brother, it is the Spirit of God that has brought you to it. He is within you. You need not raise any question about it. He has sent the word and healed you. If He has brought you there, keep saying—

*“While I view You wounded, grieving,
Breathless on the cursed tree,
Gladly I’d feel my heart believing
That You suffered thus for me.”*

Do you trust yourself now, whether you sink or swim? Do you trust yourself to Him that bled on the tree? That is the work of the Spirit of God: none but He could have done it.

“It seems so little,” says one. “It looks as if I might have done it myself.” Ah, but that little thing is the great thing here. When Elisha said, “Wash in Jordan and be clean,” that was the hard thing. “If the prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it?” asked his servant. But it was really a great thing the prophet had commanded. If our gospel were hard, it would be easy, but because it is easy it is hard. It needs a strong hand to bring us down to this, and I am praying while I am preaching to you that the Lord Jesus Christ would now send forth the ever blessed Spirit—His own word of power—to bring you to Himself. Look and live.

Oh, are you sick? Christ is a physician on purpose for the sick. Are you crying? Christ is one who always comes at the cry of sick souls. Are you willing to be saved in God’s way? Will you let Him do what He wills with you? Do you surrender at discretion? Do you say, “Anyway, anyhow, so that I may be but saved from the wrath to come?” Will you open wide your hearts now to receive Jesus Christ as your Lord? Then the Spirit of God is present healing you. He is at work with you. He has healed you, I trust already. Only trust the bleeding Lamb of God, only trust Him. It is done. It is done. All glory to the Lamb of God. It is done. All glory to the divine Spirit who has brought us into this state of salvation. Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: PSALM 107.

1. *O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good: for His mercy endures forever.*

Because we are sinners, God's goodness takes the form of mercy. Mercy—this was what we wanted; therefore, instead of mere benevolence towards the good, God's love takes the form of mercy towards the guilty, and this mercy is forever—it always was, always is, and always shall be.

2. *Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy:*

Let the redeemed be the first to sing, and let them sing the sweetest of all. O children of God, you are meant to be leaders in the chorus of God's praise. All nature is a great organ, and if you are what you should be, you are the men whose fingers of gratitude are to touch the keys and bring forth thunders of praise unto God.

3. *And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.*

It is a part of redemption's work to gather out all people—fetch them into a separated condition. The voice of redemption sounds—"Come out from among them and be you separate. Touch not the unclean thing." And the hand of redemption gathers out God's chosen and brings them into a saved unity where they enjoy fellowship with each other and with God.

Now, here he gives a description of the gratitude which is due to God from different persons who have been partakers of His mercy. First, souls are here compared to lost travelers.

4-6. *They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and He delivered them out of their distresses.*

Some of you know what this means. You have lost your way. You know not how to find it. Spiritually you are in a wilderness, and you would, if you could, get to the city of Jerusalem. You would get to the very heart of God, but you cannot. You find no city to dwell in—no peace—no rest. Moreover, your spiritual needs are very pressing. You are hungry and you are thirsty; but it is a wilderness, and you cannot find a morsel of food. No manna drops for you. Your soul is ready to faint. You feel as if you could not go another step nor search another inch. To lie down and die is all that you can do. But the vultures are in the air, and you are afraid even of despair. You are hard pressed. Notice it is said, "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble." Why did not they do so before? Because men do not begin to pray to God as long as they have any hope besides. But when all hope is gone, then comes the first real living, agonizing cry to heaven; and no sooner is that heard than God answers it. "He delivered them out of their distresses."

7-9. *And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness.*

Is there a longing soul here tonight? Amidst these thousands, surely there must be some! Well, dear soul, God will satisfy you. He will not merely stay your hunger for a little while, and help you to break your fast, but your longing shall be satisfied. And if you are hungry, He will fill you, and fill you not only with good, but with goodness itself—the very quintessence of everything that is excellent.

Next, the psalmist describes prisoners. We have a picture of the spiritual state of man from another point of view.

10-13. *Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and condemned the counsel of the Most High: therefore He brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses.*

These were prisoners in a prison where they were forced to work, and where they found no rest. A picture of a dark soul—a soul over which death spread his dragon wings. You know what it means to be brought into spiritual death—to feel the chill of spiritual death even to your very marrow, paralyzing you, and binding all your hopes in everlasting frost, do you not? Have you been in dread of the wrath to come? Have you set to work to redeem yourselves, and toiled like slaves, but toiled in vain? Has your heart been brought down from your high notions, and your proud desires, and your boastings, and your loftiness? Then is fulfilled in you the words of this text—"Therefore He brought down their heart with labor: they fell down, and there was none to help." "Then," but not till then,—“then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses.” Proud hearts will not pray. When a man can help himself, he will not cry to God. As long as he has any hope left within the compass of his nature, he will

not turn to the God who made him. But what a blessed despair that is which drives us to God! It is like the wave that sweeps the mariner up on to the rock where he is safe. May such a wave of despair catch some of us, and hurl us into safety! They cried and He saved them.

14-16. *He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and broke their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men; for He has broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*

The third picture of our lost estate is given us under the image of a sick man.

17-19. *Fools because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhors all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry—*

Even these fools! “Then they cry”—

19-22. *Unto the LORD in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing.*

One more picture is given, and that is of a soul at sea, tossed with tempest and not comforted—spiritually shipwrecked.

23-28. *They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep. For He commands, and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heavens, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry—*

Never till they get to their wit’s end do men cry to God. When nothing else is to be done, and all human might has utterly failed, then they cry. Now, you that have ever been in this storm—you know what it means. You recollect how you were sailing smoothly along with fair weather, and suddenly a spiritual cyclone took hold of you, and twisted your soul roundabout—threw you sometimes up with presumptuous hopes, and then down again with awful despairs. You could not stand or hold to anything, even the truth you did know you could not believe, and the promises which you could believe you could not apply to yourself. There was no hold-fast for you. You reeled and staggered, and your courage was gone. Your soul was melted because of trouble. There seemed nothing before you, but the abyss. Deep called to deep and Jehovah’s waterspouts sent forth a sound. Now, you thought “surely the end is come,” and then it was that you began to pray.

28-32. *Unto the LORD in their trouble, and He brings them out of their distresses. He makes the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they are quiet; so He brings them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders.*

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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